

Mp3 Zachary J. Mechlem - Sameera: Modern Music For Belly Dance



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Original belly dance music inspired by tribal, trance, and gypsi music of North Africa The Middle East. 10 MP3 Songs WORLD: World Traditions, WORLD: World Fusion Details: Zachary J. Mechlem is a member of World Fusion trio, Mohenjo Daro and the frontman for Alt-Country group, Mack West. His newest solo release, Sameera is a raw and dynamic collection of original belly dance music inspired by trance, tribal, and gypsi music of North Africa The Middle East. Mechlem performs every instrument on the album except the flute, which is brilliantly done by Johnny Ruzsa, also of Mohenjo Daro. For this recording Mechlem uses traditional Arabic percussion but string tracks were done using banjo, acoustic guitar, resonator guitar, and banjo-mandolin. Another unique touch is the use of drum kit on select tracks, providing a deeper groove and backbeat to accompany the more traditional Arabic rhythms. Mechlem's only personal ties to the East are his Roma (gypsi) roots but Sameera is intended more as a tribute to the 70's era of Belly Dance music he heard as a kid, when his own mother was a professional belly dancer. His solo debut was back in 2000 with "east meets west" soundtrack, "The Haight Gang", a Wild West concept record that combined Arabic, Indian, and Spanish music with Country and Rock. This year his band, Mohenjo Daro made their second appearance at the Montreal Jazz Festival. ***REVIEW*** It's hard to imagine an artist more perfectly suited to modernizing belly dance music than Zach Mechlem. In addition to his acclaimed Eastern Fusion trio, Mohenjo Daro, he has made numerous forays into popular music as a composer and multi-instrumentalist, all with impressive results. This musical style is also in his blood, with Romany Gypsy roots and a mother who was herself a belly dancer. It's no wonder then that Sameera is filled with gems that beautifully balance the rhythmic requirements of the dancer with finely crafted nods to prevailing musical taste. Instead of merging a plethora of modern elements as Tribal

Dance music does, Mechlem shoots for a more timeless approach, subtly applying Western musical theory and incorporating non-traditional sounds sparingly, such as the drum set on "Bedouins." Mechlem played each of the wide variety of Middle Eastern and Indian percussion and stringed instruments himself, except for several gorgeous flute performances by Johnny Ruzsa. Let's hope that preconceptions of what comprises Belly Dance music won't dissuade prospective listeners. Some might expect a collection of repetitive, trance-inducing tracks, but the disc is never monotonous. Even after repetitive listening, every song has a distinct identity, some very percussive and others graced with rapidly flowing melodies. "The Sand the Moon" is a standout, a dramatic, plucked lullaby that offers a brief respite at the album's halfway mark. Running about three or four minutes each, each of the 10 songs offers a climactic journey, making Sameera the perfect aural companion for a visually striking art form. -Ezra Waller, City Beat Magazine Cincinnati, OH

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