

# Hotter than hot more often than not

BY TAMARA BOND

Colours, lights, singing, dancing and food, it all could be found at Canada's largest annual Arabic Banquet. Organized and directed by the Dalhousie Arabic Society, *The Arabian Night* gave over 500 guests a rare taste of Middle Eastern culture.

The theme of the night was based on an ancient Middle Eastern king's magic carpet ride into the future. He arrived at many celebrations, still held today in Middle Eastern countries, with a beautiful servant desperately trying to postpone her death sentence through her visions of the future.

In Kuwait young girls danced, swaying their waist length hair to the music, while in Saudi Arabia, their national symbol of justice, a brilliantly crafted sword, was waved in a marching dance. In Egypt's famous Alexandrian market, women and men swirled around with scarves as though bartering for love. In another part of Egypt farmers danced with long wooden poles which they swirled and tossed like batons.



The colours of the clothing were deep royal shades rich with dye and flowing jewellery. Even the most special of occasions, a traditional wedding, was performed with much dancing, singing, stomping, and cheering. The dancers were energetic and showed amazing stamina per-

forming in several dances each, keeping many on stage for hours.

Live bands entertained during the dinner with Middle Eastern songs which were enjoyable even to those who did not speak Arabic.

The meal offered both non-vegetarian and vegetarian fare.

Among the favourites were hummus, a ground chick pea sauce eaten with pita bread, and baklava, a delightful pastry covered in honey.

Unfortunately, as occurred last year, so many people showed up that there was a lack of food. However, servers were slightly more prepared this year for a full sell out of tickets; comparatively fewer people did not receive a main course due to better preparations. Complimentary dinners at Halifax's B and B cafe and grill were given to all those who did not receive all three courses of the meal. Next year the organizers plan to be even more prepared for a sell out of tickets and will make excess food beyond the number of ticket sales expected to make sure everyone receives their fill of fine Middle Eastern cuisine.

The most exciting part of the evening however is yet to be told. A fashion show well beyond the capabilities of Fashion Television's designers highlighted the diversity of the Arabic Nations. From a pharaoh's wardrobe to modern Palestinian headpieces the outfits were colourful, fancy and almost all were shaped like dresses, for both men and women.

*The Arabian Nights Banquet* is not just for those who can speak or have extensive knowledge about the Middle East. It is for everyone and anyone interested in learning about another part of the world.

This also goes for the Dalhousie Arabic Society. With

over seventy members forming one of Dal's most active societies, their goals include exposing the Arabic culture and creating a conscious Arabic community. The society works towards these goals through biweekly meetings (Fridays 6 to 8 p.m. in the Council Chambers), banquets and other similar activities, and through the society's radio show ("The Arabic Voice" on 97.5 FM CKDU).



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