FEATURES

Fancy Footwork

■ The Ballroom Dance Club welcomes University students and community members to its Friday night dances

By Marcus Hathcock Oregon Daily Emerald

Slow... slow... quick, quick. More than 100 synchronized feet shuffle across the hardwood floors on Nov. 16 while doing the box step in 220 Gerlinger.

It's just another Friday night for the Oregon Ballroom Dance Club, as the Cuban dance known as the rumba comes alive.

This fancy footwork doesn't occur solely during special occasions or during Department of Dance classes.

With the exception of some holiday weekends, the OBDC hosts a dance in Gerlinger Hall every Friday night. These dances, which usually run from 7:30 to 11:30 p.m., start with beginning and intermediate dance lessons, followed by a three-hour open

Although OBDC is a registered student group in the ASUO, the benefits of the club aren't reserved for University students. Regardless of age or school attendance, anyone can attend an OBDC

dance, group president, Selina Braun said.

Braun said about half of those who attend the functions are University students. Virtually every age range was represented at the Nov. 16 dance.

"We used to say the age range was between 15 and 50," said Lane Community College freshman



'But now, it looks a lot more like between and 90. It's real eclectic

Zane Hart.

Friday night dances start with an hourlong lesson. Braun said most people attend the beginning lessons, which are designed for people who have had little to no experience. Two dances are taught at each lesson.

The intermediate lessons are aimed at individuals who have a base knowledge of certain styles of dance, and they

build on ! that knowledge to give participants greater ability within that dance style, Braun said.

"(Dance) classes only two hours week," former Uni-

versity student Rob Alba said. "These dances give you a chance to build on what you learn there."

Ballroom I instructor Elizábeth Wartluft demonstrated the rumba and the samba at the beginners' lesson Nov. 16.

Wartluft taught the dances step by step. Within 30 minutes, the room of amateurs danced together with impressive accuracy.

And almost every face in room was smiling.

The smiles only faded slightly later that evening, participants attempted the fast-paced samba.

"Samba is a hard dance to begin with," Hart said. "Constant triple steps (three steps for two beats) are hard to do."

At-around 8:30 p.m., Wartluft thanked the crowd for their hard work and left them to put their new knowledge to use. The lights dimmed, and ballroom dance mution of the evening began.

really starts," Hart

Nov. 16, they were talking and having a good time with each other. "It's just a great place to hang out with friends and dance,

Alba said he enjoyed the community as well, and he claimed to recognize one-third of the people at the Friday night dance.

What builds such community, Braun said, are the consistent core

There are definitely regulars who are always at the dances," Braun said. "You can count on them to be there and have some-

People dance for many reasons, Braun said, but her main reason is relaxation from everyday stress.

"It's nice to be able to just forget about things for a few hours and to just dance," Braun said.

joy the workout dancing provides.

"It's fun, it doesn't take up much time, burns up as many calories as a StairMaster and is much more fun," Hart said.

Dancers pay \$4 if they are stu-

Braun said the overall goal of the OBDC is to promote social dance and provide an alternative to partying.

hol-free environment for people of the community to come together and have fun," Braun said.

Emerald features reporter Marcus Hathcock can be reached at marcushathcock@dailyemerald.com.

sic blared as the dancing por-

"This is when it

For the rest of the dance, the dancers are left to their own devices, and they don't necessarily dance the style taught in the lesson.

When the people weren't out on the dance floor on

of people who love to dance.

one to dance with.'

Alba and Hart said they both en-

dents or senior citizens, or \$5 if they are from the general community. Members of the ballroom club get free admission, Braun said.

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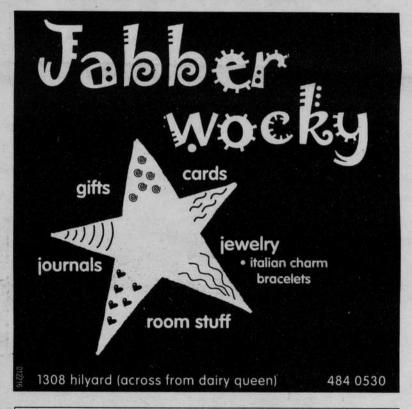
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