Global Fest invites cultures of the world to WL

By Tim Brouk, Journal and Courier

The world is West Lafayette's oyster this weekend.

The annual Global Fest turns 10 this weekend, and it will celebrate with dozens of cultural displays, live acts and a smorgasbord of food from Europe, Africa, Asia and South America.

While Hoosiers are exposed to different cultures at Global Fest, organizations have gained many new members through the festival. The Purdue University Tango Club benefited a great deal from last year's performance of the sultry Latin American dance.

"Some people have called tango a three-minute love affair," said Michelle Murphy, La Milonguera Tango Club president. A milonguera is a Spanish name for a woman who dances tango late into the night.

Global Fest starts at 4 p.m. today and continues at 11 a.m. Saturday at Morton Community Center, 222 N. Chauncey Ave.

Tango Club is one of the most popular student groups at Purdue with more than 50 members. It meets twice a week. It will perform at 8 p.m. Saturday at Global Fest.

Dancers in Tango Club are made of mostly international graduate students. The group has also ushered in undergraduate students, Purdue faculty and staff and members of the community.

"It's addictive," said Murphy, a psychobiology graduate student. "There's so much more freedom in tango. It's very creative. In ballroom, you're following certain steps, but in tango you can do pretty much anything."

Tango is recognizable in television and movies. Tango can be danced to fast music as well.

"Within one song, it can get very fast or very slow," Cassell said.

Ricardo Bartosik, a doctoral student in agricultural and biological engineering, founded the club in the spring of 2000 to have a venue for tango dancers. It has grown with each passing semester.

Bartosik's classmate, Hong Huang, was a folk dancer in her native China. She became interested in tango recently.

"You can dance with different people from different countries, and I enjoy talking with them," Huang said.

Idilir Proseku rarely found himself on the dance floor before he discovered tango.

"This is the only dance I've tried and stuck with," said Proseku, who is from Albania. "There's something about it, and if you stick with it, there's no end to it. You keep dancing."
Another popular Purdue international dance organization will get a chance to shine at Global Fest. The Turkish Folk Dance Club concentrates on dances from the northern region of Turkey. The dances are up-tempo and done in groups.

"The northern is always festive. ... Northern people are high energy. They move fast," said Mercan Topkara, Turkish dancer and computer science doctoral student. "The dances are short but take all of the energy out."

Group president Levent Gun said most Turkish dances are easy to learn.

"If you can count '1, 2, 3' you can learn Turkish dance," he said.

The Purdue group's stance on Turkish dance is that it is a part of the country's friendly, hospitable nature. Gun estimated that there are about 200 tight-knit Turkish people in the Purdue community.

More dancing will come from the Oasis Middle Eastern Dance Troupe, a staple at Morton that has been gaining popularity in recent years.

Oasis director Kat Lebo said her group has been doing more free "street performances" this summer. Dancers simply show up and dance to beats provided by a drum circle. The dancers have performed at Riehle Plaza and Wabash Landing in recent months.

"It's like pick-up basketball. We use whoever shows up," Lebo said.

Oasis will perform folkier numbers from various regions of the Middle East at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturday. The dancers will be backed by recorded music and drummers, and they will take the crowd through "a little tour through Middle Eastern rhythms," Lebo said.

Oasis will give a flashier cabaret show at 8:30 p.m. tonight.

Much of Global Fest's live music will be on the European and Celtic side. Newer traditional Irish band The Culchies will perform at 2 p.m. Saturday at Global Fest. The Bloomington trio play a "rowdy" form of Irish music, said guitarist Steven V. Johnson. Along with Min Gates' bodhrán and bones, Johnson provides more rhythm to T.J. Hull's fiddle.

The trio plays in an Irish pub session style and gets its name from the Irish city word for country musicians. Johnson learned of the word after he and Gates visited Ireland in 2002.

"We found that it has a whole lot in common with our word 'Hoosier,' " he said. "If you ask a dozen people where it came from, you'll get a dozen different answers."

Global Fest will also feature an "international petting zoo" courtesy of Columbian Park Zoo. The zoo's education coordinator Carol Stradling said lizards, snakes, tarantulas, birds and rabbits were exhibited in the past.

Perhaps the most important part of Global Fest is the nationalization ceremony where people become American citizens. Morton Center director Brenda Lorenz said about 100 men, women and