

# 'Musical Madness' is showcase for talents of 75-member cast



Clarinetist Bill Ellison dons the costume of an Arabian potter for his role as The Sheik of Araby.

Members of the Gathering Place will stage their first full scale musical production at 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8, in Mercy Center.

"Musical Madness" has a cast of 75, showcasing the talents of the area's senior citizens in a script that runs a gamut from a musical number on the spoons to a chorus line of 25 dancers.

"Finding a plot to include all of the talent at hand was the only difficult thing about our musical," said Loretta Conway, supervisor of the senior adult program in Farmington Hills. "Everything else just sort of fell into place."

The dilemma was solved by Ms. Conway who wrote the first act of "Musical Madness" as an audition for a musical. The second act of the show is a play within a play.

"But we still didn't get everybody into the act," she said. "We already have a list of those who will get first crack at it next time around."

Arthur Cervi, a former TV Bozo, is acting as technical advisor.

Maggie Loradis, a professional dancer who is now the Gathering Place's new program director, is choreographer.

Nancy Hildebrandt, once a member of the Connecticut Light Opera Company and now an intern in the Gathering Place working towards a human resources development degree, is musical director.

Artist Yvonne Singer, who heads up the Gathering Place's arts and crafts division, is heading up the costumes and props department.

"WITH ALL THESE people around I

knew this was my chance to get a musical started," Ms. Conway said. "Staging a musical with all the talent, our seniors have has been a dream of mine for the past five years."

Cervi's comment to this was: "We have a world of talent here that has

made the show a spontaneous type of play.

"All I'm doing is bridging act to act to act."

Other spontaneity has come from "everyone's relatives and friends, dozens of them, who have got enthused

about what we were doing and offered help," Ms. Conway said. "We even have a teenager, Craig Hame from Farmington High School, who volunteered to do our lighting."

Tickets at the door are \$2, or \$1 for seniors and students.



The chorus line, Flo Ziegfeld style, is made up of Leola Rammel (at left) Rauline Petricca, Ruth Sherlock, Mary Marshall, Billy Hatty and Nellie Frasure.



Mary Wison and Margaret Pette play a rousing rendition of "Baby Face" which wins them an audition and paves their way to fame and fortune in Musical Madness, directed by Arthur Cervi. The piano duo is featured throughout the play with the Farmington Area Senior Adult Band.



The Farmington Area Senior Adult Band, which plays at The Gathering Place every Friday, takes center stage for "Musical Madness." Betty Bloom is at the piano. In back are Marion Greene (at left) Al Saliccioli, Bill Ellison, Art Krause and Herman Costanza.

## Staff photos by Randy Borst

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