

Bastille Day Does Not Always Conveniently Fall On A Week End!



PHOTO: ONDINE GRACE

"A Bastille Day dance has to be held on the 14th July, it does not always conveniently fall on a week end," says Kate Grace, leader of the French dancing group **Les Belles Vilaines**. Kate and *Les Belles* did not know how many people would be keen enough to brave the nippy winds to celebrate the French national day that Wednesday. To their delight, the North East Valley hall was packed

with a hundred people willing to give it a go. "The misconception I had of NZ shyness when it comes to dancing got blown away at *Le Petit Bal*," says Kate. "The picture of all these people dancing and enjoying the music will stay with me for a long time. It was a real treat!"

People enthusiastically tried out various ancient dances from France as well as dances from close French neighbours. "There is nothing difficult or fancy in these dances. Anybody can learn them. Of course, there are people who learn faster than others, some of us are more creative, some of us less inclined to express. That is where the richness lies. The idea is to have as many people up as possible because dance is a community sharing experience."

Baba Yaga opened the bal with energetic Gypsy music and **Les Charibois** led the core of the bal with French tunes and songs. **Martin Takac** provided Slovakian interludes on his folk bagpipes. *Le Petit Bal* was definitely the place to be on that cold evening! The successful event was supported by the Dunedin City Council Creative Communities and the Community Trust of Otago. *Les Belles* are keen to present another *bal* later in the year. Information at frenchdancing.co.nz

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