



## ARTIST OF THE MONTH

### Dalal Troupe for Popular Arts



The Dalal Institution for Culture and Arts was established and registered in Bethlehem in 2000 with the aim to attract Palestinian youth eager to participate in a variety of activities that aim to strengthen their sense of belonging and to enable them to enjoy their right to a cultural life - of which they are mostly deprived. The Culture and Arts program focuses on presenting cultural and heritage stories in order to preserve Palestinian culture and promote community awareness of related issues. This is achieved through workshops in drama, dancing, and body language and by providing recreational activities during which children - consciously or unconsciously - learn how to deal with and express their feelings in non-formal manners, including drawing, painting, clay modeling, handicrafts, songs, dancing, storytelling, and theater.

The Dalal Troupe for Popular Arts is the institution's ambassador of Palestinian culture and used as advocacy tool. It has participated in internationally renowned festivals such as the Jerash Festival in Jordan, the European Dance Festival in the Slovak Republic, the

Marmara Folklore Festival in Turkey, the International Dance Festival in Palestine, and more. What distinguishes Dalal Troupe is its ability to produce a complete and comprehensive work of art through its performance of dabkeh and Palestinian folkloric dance. Dalal members, both male and female, write lyrics to folkloric songs, compose their music, and produce their choreography. Dalal Troupe furthermore integrates folkloric dance with irregular dance to serve its cultural message and to raise community awareness for different issues, be they historical, heritage-related, social, or political.

In its upcoming show, Dalal intends to tell the story of its home town Bethlehem by going beyond its religious and historical importance and showing stories that reflect the city's uniqueness. To this end, elderly women and men of both Christian and Muslim denomination were interviewed and proved all too eager to share their stories on traditions, social life, food, harvest, names of places, and more. The Troupe asserts: "These stories of our grandparents are valuable to the new generation because they shed light



on our history and give it life and value. Their stories become our stories and our history, handed by word from mouth to mouth, typical of the Palestinian heritage."

Dalal Institution for Culture and Arts is working on embodying these stories in a thirty-five-minute folkloric show that will be redolent with the experiences and reality of Bethlehem city, also highlighting the artistic professionalism among youth in Bethlehem. The show is produced with music by John Handal, scenography by Yazan Ghareeb, dance design and training by Mohammad Khatab, and under the direction of Khaled Al-Massou. Its opening will take place at the Convention Palace in Bethlehem in the spring of 2016. This project is funded by the Pontifical Mission with the aim to promote the community's awareness of Bethlehem City, its heritage and culture.

Come and enjoy with us the history and heritage of Bethlehem City!

