

Lebanese Club and Arab Student Organization at MIT proudly present

Tribute to world-acclaimed director

Moustapha Akkad

who passed away on the 9th of November 2005 in Jordan's terrorist attacks

Special screening of Akkad's masterpiece **"Lion of the Desert"**
preceded by a personal commemoration of Akkad by dramatist Michel ElAshkar

7pm on Wednesday, December 7th

56-114



About "Lion of the Desert"

Libyan leader Moummar Quaddafi financed this desert epic about a Libyan hero who helped his nation fend off an Italian invasion in 1929. Anthony Quinn stars as Omar Mukhtar, who organizes Libyan forces to hold off the encroaching Italian troops under General Rodolfo Graziana (Oliver Reed), who are trying to gain a foothold on Libyan soil under direct orders from the Italian dictator Mussolini (Rod Steiger). With the persistence of Mukhtar, the Libyans, battling the tanks and guns of the Italian army with their Bedouin troops on horseback, managed to hold off the Italians for twenty years, until Mukhtar was finally captured and executed. ~ *Paul Brenner, All Movie Guide*

About Moustapha Akkad

Moustapha Akkad was born in Aleppo, Syria in 1930. His passion for movies grew at an early age and this is why at the age of 19 he wanted to go to the States and follow his dream. When he left Syria his father gave him the money for the ticket and a copy of the Qura'an, telling him it was all he could manage. In the USA he studied theatre arts at UCLA and got his masters from USC. He started his professional work in TV where he did a biography on the different ethnic groups in the States and how their backgrounds affect their lives in America. NBC offered him a better salary if he chose not to put his name on the project, and this is where he learned a great lesson. That for a film maker recognition is more important than money. In 1976 he made his first feature film, *The Message*, where he directed and produced; the film was about the birth of Islam starring Anthony Quinn and Irene Papas. The film did not score at the American box office because the face of the prophet Mohammed (the main character in the movie) did not show on the screen due to religious reasons, but it did very well world wide. In 1978 John Carpenter came to him with the screenplay for *Halloween* and Akkad produced it while Carpenter directed it. The movie was a big success. In 1981 he went back to directing when he directed Anthony Quinn again in *Lion of the Desert*, a movie funded by Moa'amer al Qaddafi and due to his political persona the movie did not score at the box office. It was about the Libyan freedom fighter Omar Al-Mokhtar and the Libyans fight for freedom against the Italians, and was his last directorial project. After that he went back to producing the *Halloween* sequels. In 1995 he decided to make a film about the life of Saladin the great Muslim leader who fought the crusaders but he was never able to get the appropriate funding. On the 9th of November 2005 he was killed in a tragic terrorist attack in Amman Jordan... (www.imdb.com)

About Michel ElAshkar

Michel ElAshkar is an actor, dramatist, producer, and engineer. Born in Zahle, Lebanon, Michel immigrated to the United States in 1983 and graduated as a Civil Engineer from the University of Massachusetts at Lowell. He founded ASHKAR Consulting Group, a civil engineering and land surveying firm in 1989 and became member of the board of Surveyors in the state of Massachusetts in 1996. Hailing from a family of artists, his passion for poetry, writing, and acting culminated in his internationally acclaimed monodrama, "A Child of Life", a theatrical interpretation of 2 acts chronicling many of the highlights of Lebanese-American poet and artist Kahlil Gibran's life. *A Child of Life*, performed to standing ovations in many world capitals, has received a number of international awards and "Kahlil Gibran Day" proclamations from the mayors of nine U.S. cities since its debut in 1999. In January 2003, Al-Jazeera network ran an exclusive documentary highlighting Michel's artistic contribution as an Arab-American.