

Edward Villella to present lecture/demonstration

April 4, 1980

American dancer Edward Villella, principal dancer with the New York City Ballet for over 15 years, will present a lecture/demonstration Thursday, April 17, in the Mandeville Auditorium at the University of California, San Diego.

The performance, which will begin at 8 p.m., will explore the intricacies of dance and movement and will include a female dancing partner and a 20-minute film clip of "Dance of the Athletes." Tickets are \$3.50 for UC San Diego students, \$4.50 for UC San Diego faculty and staff and other students, and \$5.50 for general admission. They may be purchased through the UCSD Central Box Office at 452-40559.

Villella has been dancing since the age of nine. At 15 he stopped dancing temporarily to pursue a B.S. degree in marine transportation at the New York State Maritime College where he also won a varsity letter in baseball and the campus welterweight boxing championship.

In November 1957, Villella joined the New York City Ballet Corps where his rise through the ranks was rapid. He was given solo roles almost immediately and by 1964, he was a star in the company that prides itself on having no celebrities and lists its principal dancers alphabetically.

In addition to his many roles with the New York City Ballet, Villella has appeared with the Royal Danish Ballet, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, at the Brussels World's Fair, London Festival Hall, Jacob's Pillow and the Boston Arts Festival. He also danced at President Kennedy's Inaugural celebrations and has danced for Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Ford at the White House.

While dancing with the New York City Ballet at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, Villella became the first and only American male dancer compelled to grant an encore and repeat one of his variations in response to Russian applause. He received rave reviews for his performance as Harry Beaton in the New York City Center's production of "Brigadoon." He also appeared with the New York City Opera in its production of "Prince Igor" and danced with the New York Philharmonic for the first time at the 1970 "Promenades."

Villella is deeply dedicated to creating a broader base of public acceptance of ballet as a popular art form. He has lectured extensively in New York's inner city schools and his "tell-it-like-it-is" delivery has made converts out of many students. He has also found that emphasizing the athletic aspects of dance is a great way of breaking down what he calls the general public's "ballet barrier."

An Emmy-Award winner, he has written, choreographed and danced in two specials for CBS: "Harlequin" and "Dance of the Athletes." He has three ballet schools in New Jersey, is the artistic advisor for the New Jersey Ballet and serves on the National Endowment for the Arts Dance Panel and the Expansion Arts Panel.

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