

Fiesta sponsored by Third College Cultural Center

December 17, 1971

FROM: Centro Cultural de La Raza

A public family-style fiesta with Mexican food, songs, dances, and pinatas will be held Tuesday, December 28, in the Centro Cultural de La Raza, the Chicano Cultural Center located in the Pepper Grove area of Balboa Park opposite the Naval Hospital.

The fiesta, scheduled to begin at 5 p.m., is sponsored by the Toltecas de Aztlan, a group of artists, musicians and dancers who operate the Cultural Center, The Third College of the University of California, San Diego, and other cultural organizations. It is open to the public with a general admission charge of 25 cents. Food will be sold and pinatas will be broken prior to the musical entertainment.

Highlight of the celebration will be "Fiesta Indigena" (Native Fiesta), a program of songs and dances depicting the cultural heritage of the Chicano, presented by San Diego's Ballet Folklorico en Aztlan. The 15-member troupe will present five different sequences of music and dance representing the various areas of Mexico. The two-hour program is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. in the Cultural Center.

The Ballet Folklorico en Aztlan was originally started in National City as a free dance class in 1969 by Mrs. Herminia Enrique. Mrs. Enrique's objective was to teach the traditional and interpreted Mexican ethnic dances to the youngsters in her neighborhood. After one month of lessons, five times a week, the class was asked to perform at several benefits in the community. The enthusiastic response to the group's work prompted the transition of the former "dance class" into a performing body and the adoption of the name Ballet Folklorico en Aztlan.

Mrs. Enrique is the mother of eight daughters and three sons, all of whom have danced with the Ballet at one time or another. Two of the daughters, who served as the first instructors, are professional dancers currently studying in Spain. Three others, Elizabeth, Teresa and Silvia, are currently dancing with the Ballet. Elizabeth and Silvia, both students in The Third College at UCSD, now serve as instructors for the dance class.

At present dance classes are conducted three nights a week at the Cultural Center in Balboa Park. The students and members of the Ballet come from the National City, southeast San Diego, and Logan Heights areas and range in age from 5 to 21 years. All are students attending schools ranging from Kimball Elementary School in National City to UCSD.

The Ballet's performing experience for the past three years has been in functions which focus on the social, historical, religious and educational panorama of the Chicano community. Performances have been given at the UCSD-MECHA Cultural Symposium, the San Diego State College Chicano Student Conference, the Centro Cultural de La Raza dedication as well as other benefits, conferences and celebrations.

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