

# The University Musical Society

of  
The University of Michigan



*Presents*

The National Dance Company of Mexico

in

## Fiesta Folklórico

MONDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 3, 1975, AT 8:00

POWER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

### P R O G R A M

#### Tarascan Wedding

In the area around Lake Patzcuaro, in the state of Michioacan in the west of Mexico, a tribe known as the Tarascans founded a kingdom that wielded enormous power from the latter half of the thirteenth century on into the early sixteenth century. Even today, the decendants of the Tarascans still live a placid life here, catching fish with their butterfly-shaped nets, making pottery and folkcraft objects by the age-old methods.

Today, then, there is a Tarascan wedding . . . The ceremony is about to begin. Friends of the bride make a colorful entry, bearing an orange pierced by a sword, a sign of the bride's virginity. All the participants join in a gay dance, and the wedding party proceeds in mounting excitement.

#### Oaxacan Dances

##### *Marimba Solo*

In the southeast of Mexico lies a stretch of mountainous territory with names such as Oaxaca and Chiapas, and there is an attractively romantic dance known as Son Istmeno (dance of the Tehuantepec Isthmus). The melodies, which though influenced by Spanish music, harbor an appealing touch of the gentleness and melancholy that still characterizes the Indians of this area, are almost all played on the marimba. The marimba is a kind of xylophone fitted with resonators, the ends of these being covered with pigskin or something similar for increased resonance. There are all kinds of marimbas, ranging from the small variety played by one person to large instruments requiring six or seven persons. The keys are made of almond wood or oak, and the resonators of Himalayan cedar or mahogany.

## *Suliana*

In the Oaxaca area the women, graceful in their strikingly beautiful hupiles (a kind of shawl) adorned with fine embroidery and their elegant lace headdresses, are a particular object of admiration for the menfolk, and are known as *sulianas*.

## *Dance of the Turtle*

The Dance of the Turtle traditionally performed in the Tehuantepec region is a highly ceremonial dance with a profound religious significance. It is a symbolic depiction of a pair of turtles, male and female, who first prepare, on a sandy beach, the nest that will shelter the eggs that are the outcome of their love, then engage in the act of love itself.

As it appears in ballet form, this dance is one of the most beautiful to be presented; an extraordinary atmosphere is created by the delicate expressions of love between the man and woman who perform the dance and the gestures with which each of the eggs is folded within the woman's skirt as it is laid.

## *The Dance of the Feather*

In ancient Mexico there were all kinds of gods; the men of old saw divine beings in natural phenomena such as the sun, the moon, the rain, and the wind. They worshipped a god of agriculture, the Earth-Mother, and a god of war, and even saw divinity in such abstract concepts as love and death. Outstandingly powerful amongst them, it was believed, was the great god Quetzalcoatl, a snake with his entire body covered in beautiful feathers.

The Feather Dance portrays a dream of Emperor Montezuma of the Aztecs—whose empire was destroyed by the invading Spaniards in 1521—in which he sees himself as a sacred bird with enormous power, come to warn men of the need to defend the country against the aggressors.

## *The Zandunga*

The Zandunga, a type of ancient dance music preserved in the area around the Tehuantepec Isthmus, in Oaxaca, has an attractive melody in triple time, and is danced to the accompaniment of the marimba.

The word *zandunga* in Spanish means "stylish" or "graceful," and the dance is performed with tender romanticism by the women of the Tehuantepec area, who have an attractive femininity and dazzling beauty in their gay peasant clothes embroidered in red, green and yellow.

## Sonoran Dances

### *The Dance of the Deer*

The "Dance of the Deer," derives from a ceremony of the Yaquis, and Indian people inhabiting the state of Sonora in the northwest extremity of Mexico. Not only are the Yaquis relatively uninfluenced by the culture of Spain, but they also have a distinct culture of their own, differing from those of other Indians such as the Aztecs and Mayans who flourished in southern Mexico, and rooted in a life of hunting and fishing.

In the "Dance of the Deer," one of the very oldest of the national dances of Mexico, the dancer represents a deer driven before the arrows of the huntsmen. The movements of the young deer, supple and full of youthful freshness, convey a sense of dignity, of gentleness, and of the cruelty of the chase. A subtle pantomime acted to music that is almost entirely rhythmic, with little melody, it conveys a rapid succession of emotions—courage, fear, hope, despair, pity, and so on.

## Jalisco Dance

Mention of the state of Jalisco in the west of Mexico inevitably calls to mind the mariachi. The mariachi, with its bright, cheerful, typically Mexican sound, was produced by adding other instruments to the strings formerly used almost exclusively for performing provincial dance music, thus gradually evolving the present performing style, which is suitable for popular music in general.

In the familiar short-waisted jacket known as *charro*, with narrow pants, and wearing *sombreros*, the men are proud and dashing, and the lassoes in their hands dart like living things as they stamp in time to the cheerful mariachi music, partnered in their joyful, extroverted dancing by their attractive women folk with the flashing, passionate eyes.

In Guadalajara there is a piece called *Jarabe Tapatio*, familiar under the title of "Mexican Hat Dance." In this dance, which is said to represent the courtship of doves, the man places his *sombrero* on the ground, whereupon the woman dances lightly around it. If she steps on the brim, it is a sign that she has accepted his advances. The gaiety of the scene reaches its peak under the brilliant sunlight . . .

## Jarana of Yucatan

Yucatan is the area that gave rise to the Mayan culture, and the people who live there are prouder to be called Yucatecas than Mexicans. With the blood of the Mayans, that great ancient race, in their veins, they take pleasure in a relaxed, human way of life that ignores the bustle of the modern world. The jarana is a dance heavily influenced by Spain; the form danced here comes from the Yucatan region, and the dancers wear a characteristic folk costume.

## Chiapas Dance

Chiapas is situated in the southwest of Yucatan. Amidst the mountains the Indians, the original inhabitants before the arrival of the Spanish, live an unsophisticated life preserving age-old customs and ways of life. This is the home of the Zapoteca tribe, who produce folkcraft objects and gold and silver-ware of astonishing beauty. Musically too, a large number of the dances are accompanied by the marimba. Besides numbers accompanied by the song and marimba of the Hermanas Esqueda, a "Dance of the Wild Boar" will be performed, in which a male dancer dressed as the "boar" is captured alive by the female dancers.

## Pueblan Dance

The "Pueblan" presented here represents the worship of the god of flowers—which were credited with magical powers by the Nahuatl people, who though extremely bellicose had a great love of flowers and poetry, and the whole dance has a kind of religious atmosphere.

## Fiesta in Veracruz

The typical music of Veracruz is a fast, light, rustic-sounding dance known as Son Jarocho. Resolutely peasantry, redolent of the good earth, it is surely one of the finest among the many different types of Mexican music.

The dance, which is energetic and accompanied by a very complex zapateo, is irresistibly exciting in its passionate bodily movements. In one of the dances, a man and woman tie a long, brightly colored silken thread with their fingertips while dancing—a prayer, it is said, that their love will be consummated.

Another type of dance found in Veracruz is called Huapango and involves a violently rhythmical zapateo resembling tap-dancing and performed on a wooden stage called tarima. This is obviously derived from the dancing of Spain.

Part of the attraction of the dances of the Veracruz area is that they are obviously an outlet for the energies of the common people; they tend to be noisy, punctuated by—often rather vulgar—interjections or by rhymed couplets that the onlookers have improvised. Beneath the occasional crudities of the sound, one can sense something of the vital, resolutely gay atmosphere of Veracruz, as well as the unquenchable life-force that has borne up the proud and sincere Mexican people through the centuries.

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## THE NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY OF MEXICO

Under the auspices of the National Institute of Fine Arts of Mexico

<i>Director General and Choreographer</i> .....	SILVIA LOZANO
<i>Assistant Choreographer</i> .....	JORGE ESCOTO
<i>Musical Director</i> .....	RUDOLF VILLALVASO
<i>Costumes</i> .....	SILVIA LOZANO
<i>Decor</i> .....	JOSE ASCENCION
<i>Dance Captain</i> .....	LUIS VARGAS
<i>Lighting</i> .....	DEMETRIU CRIMPALI
<i>Company Manager</i> .....	THEO SHANAB

## COMING EVENTS

- SCOTTISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA . . . . . Saturday, November 8  
 ALEXANDER GIBSON, *Conductor*; MICHAEL DAVIS, *Violinist*  
 MacCunn: "The Land of the Mountain and the Flood"; Iain Hamilton: Violin Concerto  
 No. 1; Sibelius: Symphony 2
- MICHAEL LORIMER, *Guitarist* . . . . . Friday, November 14  
 17th and 18th century works; William Bolcom: "Seasons" (world première)
- "WORLD OF JELLY ROLL MORTON" . . . . . Wednesday, November 19
- LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC . . . . . Thursday, November 20  
 ZUBIN MEHTA, *Conductor*; SAMUEL MAYES, *Cellist*  
 Haydn: Symphony No. 22 ("The Philosopher"); Dvořák: Cello Concerto; Wagner: Dawn  
 and Siegfried's Rhine Journey, Siegfried's Funeral March, from *Götterdämmerung*, Prelude  
 to *Die Meistersinger*
- PABLO CASALS TRIO . . . . . Sunday, November 23  
 Mozart: Trio in C major, K. 548; Leon Kirchner: Trio (1954); Brahms: Trio in C major,  
 Op. 87
- STOCKHOLM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA . . . . . Monday, November 24  
 GENNADY ROZHDESTVENSKY, *Conductor*; VIKTORIA POSTNIKOVA, *Pianist*  
 Karl-Birger Blomdahl: Symphony No. 3 ("Facetter"); Prokofieff: Piano Concerto No. 3 in  
 C major; Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5
- HANDEL'S "MESSIAH" . . . . . Friday, Saturday, Sunday,  
 December 5, 6, and 7
- PUCCINI'S *La Bohème*, Canadian Opera Company . . . Saturday, January 10
- DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA . . . . . Sunday, January 11  
 ALDO CECCATO, *Conductor*; GINA BACHAUER, *Pianist*  
 Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 3; and Symphony No. 3 ("The Eroica")
- BEAUX ARTS TRIO . . . . . Friday, January 16
- PRAGUE MADRIGAL ANTIQUA . . . . . Sunday, January 25
- CHRISTOPHER PARKENING, *Guitarist* . . . . . Friday, January 30
- THE ROMEROS, *Guitarists* . . . . . Monday, February 9
- LUCIANO PAVAROTTI, *Tenor* . . . . . Sunday, February 15
- LJUBLJANA DANCERS, YUGOSLAVIA . . . . . Sunday, February 22
- P.D.Q. BACH . . . . . Thursday, February 26
- SPECIAL BENEFIT CONCERT . . . . . Saturday, February 28
- ROYAL TAHITIAN DANCERS . . . . . Monday, March 1
- ENSEMBLE NIPPONIA . . . . . Thursday, March 4
- PRAGUE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA . . . . . Friday, March 19
- PRESERVATION HALL JAZZ BAND . . . . . Saturday, March 20
- BERLIN STRING QUARTET . . . . . Monday, March 22  
 Beethoven: Quartet in E-flat, Op. 74 ("The Harp"); Schubert: Quartet in A minor, Op. 29
- DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA . . . . . Friday, March 26  
 ALDO CECCATO, *Conductor*; The University Choral Union; KAREN ALTMAN, *soprano*; BEVERLY  
 WOLFF, *contralto*; SETH MCCOY, *tenor*; SIMON ESTES, *bass*  
 Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 in D minor ("Choral")
- PENNSYLVANIA BALLET . . . . . Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,  
 March 29, 30, and 31
- WAVERLY CONSORT, "LAS CANTIGAS DE SANTA MARIA" . . . Thursday, April 1
- DON COSSACKS OF ROSTOV . . . . . Sunday, April 4
- SITARA, *Kathak Dancer* . . . . . Tuesday, April 6

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### UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY