

# Celebrating Latino Culture Through Dance

BY CHAPMAN CROSKELL, TIME OUT WRITER

There are plenty of ways to connect with your heritage. Stories, music and travel can all help people learn about the past of their culture and keep them connected. However, for a group of local students, their connection is through dance.

Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's Folklorico is a free, after-school program that allows them to learn Mexican folkloric dance. The program has been present in the Roaring Fork Valley and surrounding communities for over 20 years and has been led by Francisco Nevarez-Burgueño since 2002.

"We have the fortune to make this program for these kids to help them learn their families' cultures," said Nevarez-Burgueño. He went on to explain that he grew up in Mexico and he's happy to teach and show students about his culture.

Nevarez-Burgueño teaches the dance classes for over 350 students from Aspen to Rifle, and he also supervises and works with the two teachers of Folklorico in Santa Fe. He said that many of the students in the program have

been involved for 12 to 13 years, ever since they could dance. The students get opportunities to perform the dances all around the valley, and this weekend they have a very special performance at The Temporary in Basalt.

"We've been looking to partner with ASFB for eight months," said Marc Breslin, artistic director for The Temporary. "We're very excited to collaborate with them."

The Temporary is providing the performance space for 30 or so students as well as a live eight-piece mariachi band from Denver who Nevarez-Burgueño asserts are the best in the state. Folklorico has performed with the band in the past, including at the Aspen Ideas Festival, and Nevarez-Burgueño said that he appreciates them because they know his repertoire.

Nevarez-Burgueño also agrees with the sentiment that it's good to be getting ASFB and The Temporary working together because he said that they've brought Folklorico to most of the valley and it's a chance to give back to Basalt.

"This is a chance for the Basalt community to have us,"

Nevarez-Burgueño said. "We always like to give back to the community."

The Temporary will be closing in May, and Ryan Honey, the executive director of the space, said they couldn't be happier to work with the ballet and other groups in the valley as the space comes to an end and they look forward to The Permanent. He said that it's important for families to see their kids performing in their communities.

Nevarez-Burgueño also said that he wants to thank the parents in the valley who support their children in the programs. He added that without supportive parents, the kids, whom he is extremely proud of, would not be in the program.

The event starts at 7 p.m. on Saturday at The Temporary. Tickets range from \$20-\$25, and there will also be a cash bar. The Folklorico spring recital is also coming up in May, where over 200 students will be performing.

So, if you're looking to experience students of all ages celebrating Mexican culture and heritage, The Temporary is the place to be this weekend.



Photo by Jordan Curet

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