

P R O G R A M   B O O K L E T

**THE FIRST ANNUAL**



# TAMEJAVI

**FESTIVAL**

Presented by the Central Valley Partnership's Civic Action Network  
Sponsored by the Pan Valley Institute

**APRIL 26-28, 2002**

**TOWER DISTRICT, FRESNO, CA**



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Top left: from the film "Blossoms of Fire"

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# WELCOME TO

## THE FIRST ANNUAL

# TAMEJAVI FESTIVAL

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**"The marketplace—the town plaza—plays a vital social role for many cultural groups in the Central Valley,"**



says Estela Galvan of the Pan Valley Institute, the festival's sponsoring organization. "In their home countries, the marketplace holds the fabric of community together. El Mercado is the window into a people—a place to celebrate their similarities and their differences."

The First Annual Tamejavi Festival recreates the cultural marketplace in Fresno's Tower District—presenting three days of cultural exchange activities including: live theater, music, and dance performances; food and goods from around the world; and workshops and exhibits focusing on the traditions, contributions and issues concerning Central Valley immigrant communities, play making, music in the community, immigrant civic participation and the ethnic media.

Sponsored by the Pan Valley Institute and organized by the Central Valley Partnership's Civic Action Network, the Tamejavi Advisory Committee has representation from Latino, Mixteco (indigenous people from Oaxaca, Mexico), Hmong, Cambodian, South Asian, and Anglo communities. The Civic Action Network is a growing network of over 100 grassroots community groups from across California's Central Valley that are working to engage immigrants in community and civic life.

Juan Felipe Herrera (Festival Advisory Committee member and CSUF Chicano and Latin American Studies Department chair) believes that, "There are few public venues for immigrant groups to come together and share their stories. Whether it's the Cambodian Opera or a multilingual presentation of songs and stories about residents' experiences of September 11, the festival will have face-to-face cultural exchange which is a key ingredient in building understanding between communities."

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A free public event presented by the Central Valley Partnership's Civic Action Network, sponsored by the Pan Valley Institute, with generous support from The James Irvine Foundation

Special thanks to John Sierra for original Tamejavi artwork and illustration.



## HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN THE TAMEJAVI FESTIVAL?

### TOWER THEATER MAIN STAGE PERFORMANCES

Tower Theater performances include: music, theater, dance, multi-media, poetry and film showcases that build the public voice, pride and recognition of a diversity of valley cultures.

### OUTDOOR TAMEJAVI MARKETPLACE

On April 27th booths with crafts, food, information about regional civic participation projects, video screenings, fresh produce, and hands-on educational activities will be located in the courtyard behind the Tower Theater. Music, theater and dance performances can be seen on the outdoor stages.

### INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS AND CONVERSATIONS (PLATICAS)

Intimate workshops and forums will take place in the Tower Lobby, Courtyard, The Second Space Theater, The Starline, and SEIU Local 250, all located in Fresno's Tower District. Workshops provide opportunities to experiment with new approaches to building community through civic action and cultural expression.

*Please see Insert with Schedule of Events and enclosed Map for complete times and locations.*

# BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH CULTURAL EXCHANGE

BY ERICA KOHL AND SHELLY CHA

*Imagine walking into a world of many distinct cultures—new sounds, smells, faces, and languages at every turn.*

At one corner a Cambodian Opera performs on a wooden stage to an audience of children gripped by an unfolding tale of triumph and loss. Down a nearby alley, a Mexican Charreada master teaches a crowd the fine art of rope lassoing. Oaxacan and Hmong dancers take turns on the stage and young and old musicians create songs across cultural and musical lines. Scattered across the courtyard, tables of fruits and vegetables grown on Valley family farms glisten in the sun. The smells of Mexican tamales, Indian curry, and Oaxacan mole blend into one, filling the air.

At the other end of this bustling open-air marketplace, a gathering of valley residents is sipping a strange drink called "The Tamejavi" and discussing ways to build alliances across social, economic and cultural boundaries. In the midst of the buzz multi-lingual media producers are busy documenting the activity around them.

This is the Tamejavi Festival—a place where cultures meet, share food, songs, and dance and build a deeper understanding of one another. New relationships are formed that weave the fabric of community.

TAMEJAVI IS DERIVED FROM THE HMONG, SPANISH, AND MIXTECO WORDS FOR A CULTURAL HARVEST MARKET...

TAj laj Tshav Puam...  
MErcado...  
nunJAVI...



Celebrating Hmong New Year in Fresno

Organized by the Central Valley Partnership's Civic Action Network, a unique collaboration of community leaders, organizers, artists, educators and students came together to discuss ways to create a learning environment across cultures in California's great Central Valley. With representation from Latino, Mixteco (Mexican indigenous people from Oaxaca), Hmong, Cambodian, and Anglo communities the Tamejavi Committee, recognizing the important role of the marketplace—the town plaza—in organizing supportive community relationships, got to work to create such a space in the Central Valley. The First Annual Tamejavi Festival is an exciting adventure into a marketplace for cultural exchange. ●

## TAMEJAVI STRIVES TO...

- **Build public pride and give voice** to the diversity of cultural groups that are working to improve Central Valley communities
- **Foster cross-cultural relationships** between people who share a commitment to strengthening the public voice of immigrant communities
- **Strengthen skills** for organizing communities through cultural expression
- **Celebrate and strengthen** the Central Valley Partnership's Civic Action Network



Oaxacan dancers

# ...TAMEJAVI!!

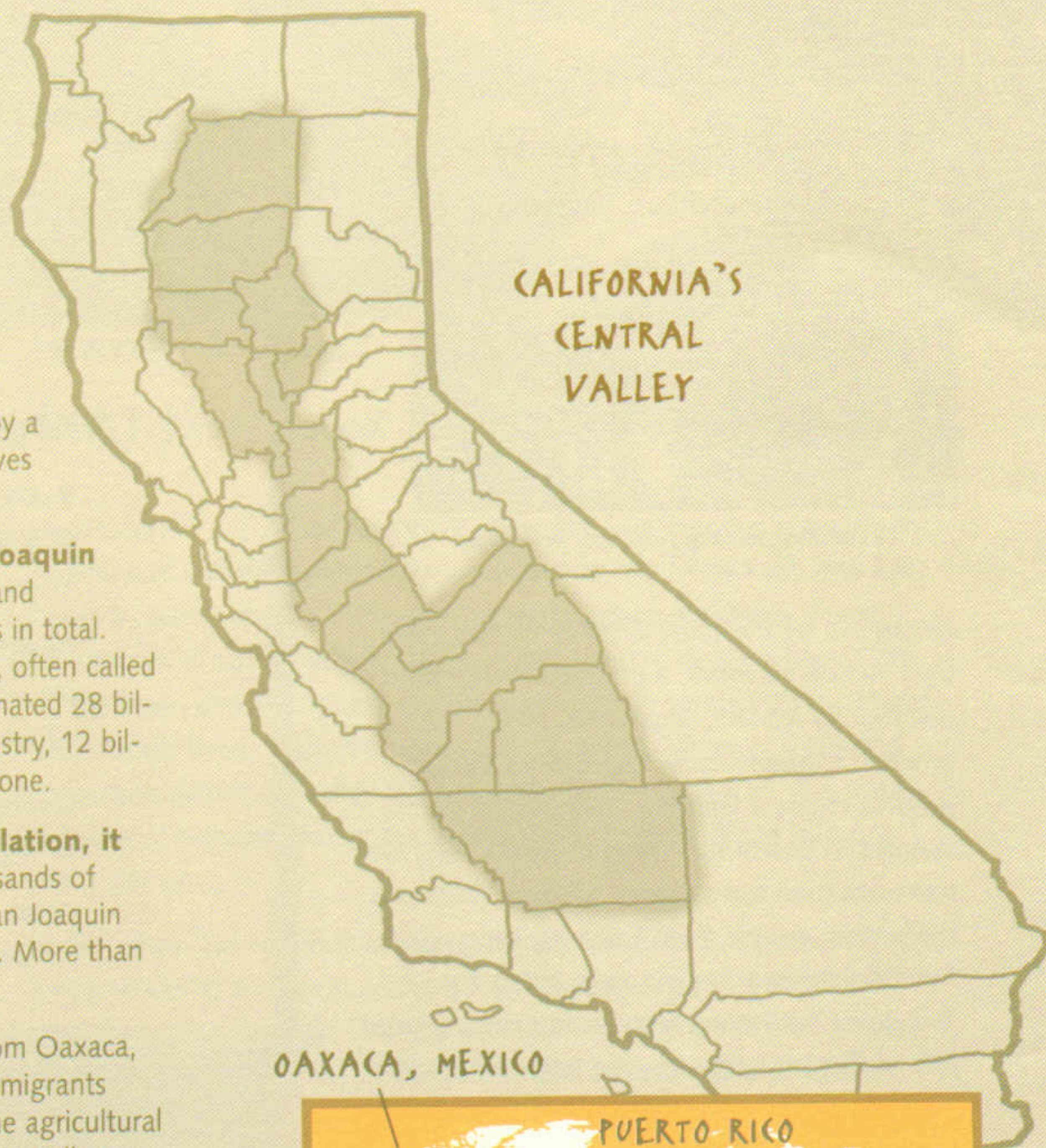
(pronounced "tah-meh-jah-vee")

# HOW DIVERSE IS MY VALLEY?

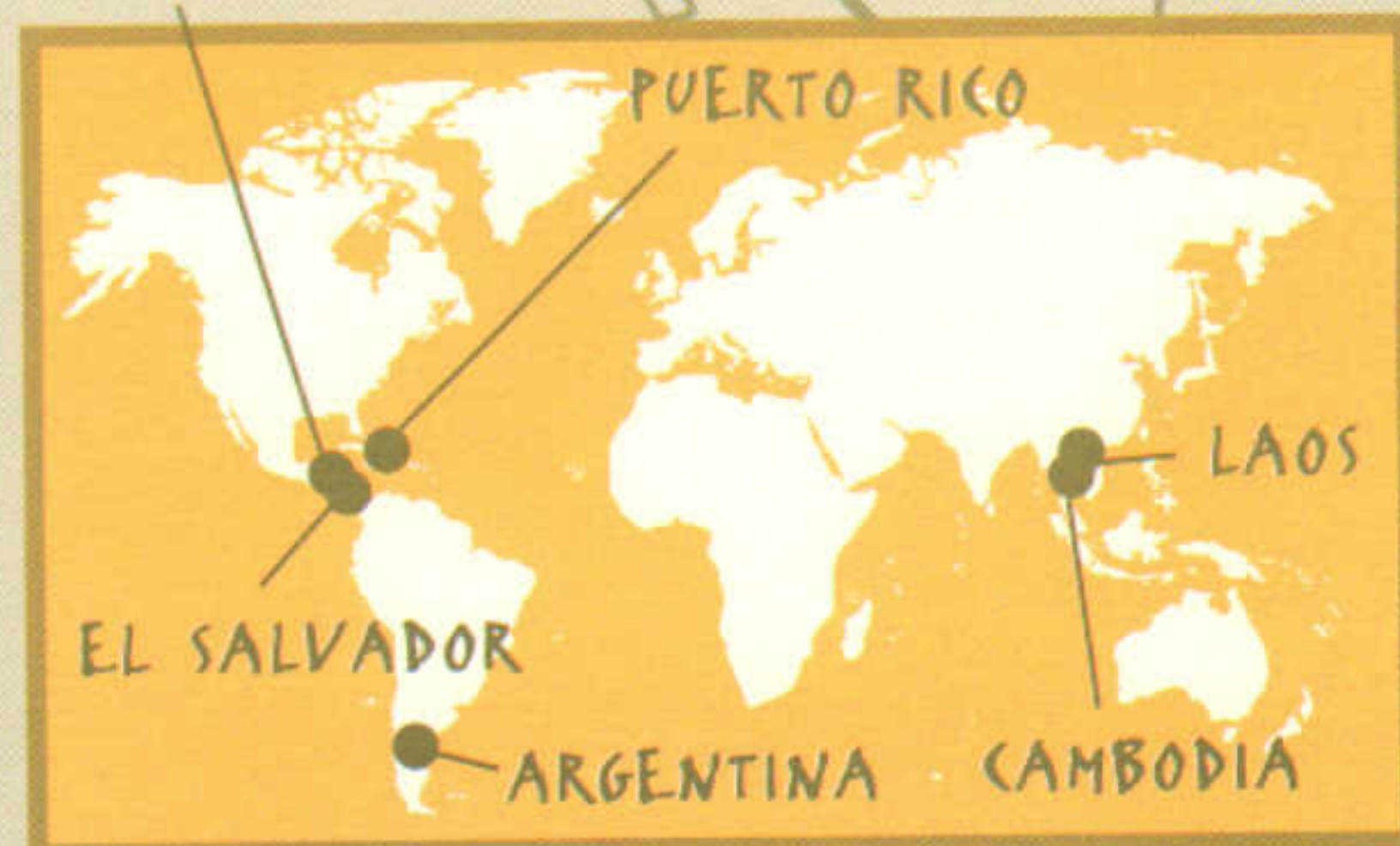
**I**n California's Central Valley there are more than 100 ethnic groups including Cambodians, Latinos, Hmongs, Mixtecos, Native-Americans, Eastern Europeans, Basques, Portuguese, Filipinos, Hindus, Punjabis, Irish...and many more.

Based on research conducted by Isao Fujimoto, Professor Emeritus, UC Davis

- **Diversity is nothing new to the Central Valley.** When the Spanish Conquistadors arrived to the area, more than 60 tribes of Native Americans inhabited the Valley, speaking 30 different languages. This historic diversity of languages can still be observed in the names of the places we see around us. Shasta (county) got its name from the native nation called *Shatasla*, *Sastise* or *Tshasta*. In the south, Tulare was named by a Spaniard after the Aztec name for the leaves of the plant called: *Tullin*, *Tollin* or *Tule*.
- **There are nine counties in the San Joaquin Valley.** Including the Sacramento Valley and beyond to the north there are 18 counties in total. Together they make up the Central Valley, often called the richest land on earth. Out of the estimated 28 billion dollars from the U.S. agricultural industry, 12 billion comes from the San Joaquin Valley alone.
- **As the Central Valley grows in population, it also grows in diversity.** In 1975, thousands of Hmong refugees started coming to the San Joaquin Valley from Laos during the Vietnam War. More than 50,000 Hmongs live here today.
- **The Mixtecos**, an indigenous people from Oaxaca, Mexico, represent the newest wave of immigrants coming to the Valley to work mainly in the agricultural fields. Over 65,000 are said to reside in the Valley.
- **The Latino population is the largest and fastest growing ethnic group in California.** Mostly Mexicans, Latinos represent more than 50 percent of the Tulare County population and more than one-third of the region's entire population.
- **Each ethnic group** brings its own language, traditions, and culture, contributing to a new and original society, which we are proud to be living in today.



OAXACA, MEXICO



Festival performers include immigrant groups from all over the world...

# ABOUT THE CENTRAL VALLEY PARTNERSHIP FOR CITIZENSHIP

The Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship (CVP) is a collaborative of more than a dozen nonprofit agencies from Bakersfield to Redding, working to help Valley communities improve their ability to encourage naturalization and full civic participation among immigrants.

The Partnership seeks to create an environment where members can learn from one another, sharing useful knowledge through associations with applied research organizations and other sources of technical support.

Partner agencies work together to enable immigrants in California's Central Valley to participate fully in the civic life of their communities, including becoming naturalized citizens, by focusing on the following areas:

- Citizenship education
- Community organizing and training
- Economic development in immigrant communities
- Popular education
- English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction
- Immigration legal services
- Information and referral to services
- Legal advocacy
- Cultural expression

...and other civic participation activities



## CVP PARTNER AGENCIES

American Friends Service Committee  
El Proyecto Campesino  
The Pan Valley Institute  
Rural Economic Alternatives Project  
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation  
Centro Binacional Para El Desarrollo Indigena Oaxaqueno  
Channel 49/KNXT  
El Colegio Popular/CT Learning  
One by One Leadership Foundation/  
Fresno Leadership Foundation  
Pacific Institute for Community Organization  
Central Valley Southeast Asian Organizing Project  
Sacramento Valley Organizing Community  
Valley Catholic Charities  
San Joaquin Valley Coalition for Immigrant Rights  
San Joaquin Valley Organizing Project  
Youth In Focus

## TA PROVIDERS

The Aguirre Group  
The California Institute for Rural Studies  
The CompuMentor Project  
Immigrant Legal Resource Center  
Jim Bracken—Video Consultant  
Isao Fujimoto—Project Facilitator  
Erica Kohl—Communications Consultant

## SPONSOR

The James Irvine Foundation

<http://www.citizenship.net>

# EL MERCADO,

## A PLACE OF CULTURAL VITALITY

BY GRACIE HINOJOSA

### The smell of tacos de carne asada,

the music of Ramon Ayala playing in the background, men wearing sombreros and cowboy boots, ladies in floral dresses. This is the image I remember as a young girl going to the *remate* (outdoor market) every Sunday with my parents in our small community of Kerman. It was the only time I felt that I belonged—as if I were transported to a different time and place, my homeland, Mexico. This is what the market means to many immigrants—a place where we can relate to others with the same customs and traditions.

The outdoor market is commonly known as a place where people exchange goods. In the indigenous Mexican tradition the outdoor market was called *tianguis* (a term still used to this day). *Tianguis* is an indigenous word of the Nahuatl people for mercado or market. In the *tianguis*, native artisans are organized according to their specialties where they sell or exchange merchandise. This system of interchange is called *trueque*—a great colorful exposition of artisans, foods, animals, music, and life. Even today in Indigenous communities in Mexico the *tianguis* takes place every week.

In Juchitán, Oaxaca, Mexico, "El día de la plaza" or day of the plaza, is an opportunity for the people of that region to buy goods for the household. More importantly, for some it is a chance to commune with close friends and family. For Oralía Maceda's (of Frente Indígena Oaxaqueño Binacional) mom, who lives in Oaxaca, it provides a chance to see her sisters who live too far away to visit daily.

In Thailand, markets are set up in major cities and families in rural areas must travel great distances every day to purchase food and goods. That is why going to the market is often relegated to the head of the

household. "There is a morning market and an evening market," says Chong Hu Cha.

Usually a person would go to the market once a day to purchase food and fresh vegetables for the day's meals. In Thailand vendors do not pay a set fee to set up a stand. Instead a government official goes to the market every day and collects a fee. The fees collected are used to purchase food for the king of that region.

Markets are not only traditional socio-economic systems, but are also places of cultural vitality. The marketplace is a window



that displays the essence of a people. Among the array of colors—green chilies, red tomatoes, ivory blocks of home made cheese—we find entrepreneurs, a stage for political activity, and a public space in which our voices can be heard. In the United States, markets provide immigrants with opportunities to meet others that share the same ambitions and struggles that come with immigrating to this country. These relationships become the ingredients for social change. ●

## LA PLAZA, THE POWER OF PUBLIC SPACE

"La Plaza" has constituted a space for social organization and action, from time immemorial. Brought to the new world by the Spaniards, *la plaza* has become the civic and social heart of many Latin American cities. The Spaniards constructed their cities with an architectonic criterion: government and powerful buildings including the church, all surrounded *la plaza*. Cities were then built around this center, extending to the outskirts, distancing from the center as they grew.

*La plaza*, the public space at the heart of town, is a place for socializing, a place where one could see others and be seen. For many cities, plazas are a source of pride and are decorated with exquisite varieties of trees and flowers. Often a kiosk stands at the center, providing space for bands to entertain crowds with popular 'sones' (songs), especially on week-

ends. Families gather around, enjoying familiar songs, conversing with friends and neighbors, and updating each other on the

latest village news. Today you can see youth exercising the age-old courtship rituals in *la plaza*: while single women circulate *la plaza* one way, the men encircle the opposite way. As they revolve around the plaza the young men and women meet regularly as they cross paths, initiating the process of dating.

*La plaza*'s physical position at the center of the village's powerful institutions has made it a popular place to congregate for religious and political meetings. For hundreds of years, discontented citizens have expressed their disagreements at the plaza in front of the houses of government. Rulers also take advantage of this public space and convoke towns' people to listen to announcements or speeches. One of Latin America's most famous plazas is Argentina's Plaza de Mayo of Buenos Aires. It was here that Eva Perón spoke to millions of Argentineans during the 1950's. The same plaza was the center of protests that terminated with Fernando de la Rúa's government on December 20th, 2001. At the plaza of Las Tres Culturas in Mexico City, a 1968 student protest culminated with the worst massive assassination of protestors by a government in modern decades.

—BY EDUARDO STANLEY





# SPEAKING OUR CULTURES

PORTRAITS OF  
FEATURED  
ARTISTS AND  
ORGANIZERS

**OPENING NIGHT,**  
Featuring "Twin Tower Songs"

**"La Guelaguetza,"**  
Oaxacan music and dance

**Tou Ger Xiong,** Hmong Comedian  
**"Mountain People of Laos,"** a play

**"Teatro del Alma,"**  
a one act play and workshop

**Lakhaun Bassac,** Cambodian Opera

**"Mosaic Voices,"**  
Poetry and Spoken Word

**"Immigrant Women Weaving  
Cultures:"** An Exhibit

**Tou Ger Xiong,** Hmong comedian  
and storyteller

**"Promise of a Love Song,"**  
by The Exchange Project

**Immigrant Film Series**

**"Esperanza y Luz"**  
by Teatro Inmigrante and  
**Skit** by the Ernesto Torchia Workshop

*Please see Insert with Schedule  
of Events or Tamajavi News for  
additional outdoor participants.*

**FRIDAY  
APRIL 26**

**TOWER THEATER  
6PM—10PM**

**OPENING NIGHT  
CELEBRATION**

**A public reception and sneak preview of festival highlights kicks off the Tamejavi Festival.**

Opening night features include **"The Twin Tower Songs: A 9/11 Performance Memorial"** coordinated by Juan Felipe Herrera from the Chicano and Latin American Studies Department at CSU-Fresno, performance artist Margarita Luna Robles and playwright and director Rodrigo Duarte-Clark. "The Twin Tower Songs Project" is a live theater collaboration composed of multi-lingual songs, poems, music and stories based on Valley residents' experiences of and responses to 9/11.

Other festival previews include music by **The Exchange Project** and performance highlights of **"La Guelaguetza," "Mosaic Voices," Lakhaun Bassac Cambodian Opera,** and Hmong comedian, **Tou Ger Xiong.**

**THE TWIN  
TOWER SONGS.**

**A 9/11 PERFORMANCE MEMORIAL**

**R**ECENTLY THERE HAVE BEEN MANY POETS, SINGERS, ACTORS and new arts community groups emerging in the Valley. The time is perfect for our communities to come together and express feeling and experiences regarding the September 11th tragedy. Art transforms, heals and can offer a new path for all. The Twin Tower Songs Project (coordinated by Juan Felipe Herrera from the Chicano and Latin American Studies Department at CSU-Fresno and funded by the Harry C. Mitchell Trust of the City of Fresno) takes these developments into consideration.

"The Twin Tower Songs" performance piece will be composed of songs, poems, music and stories. Members of all Fresno communities and languages were invited to participate—encouraging beginners in the performing arts to come and learn new techniques and express themselves. Participants gathered in all-day workshops to weave the performance together with highly acclaimed director and playwright, Rodrigo Duarte-Clark, and performance artist Margarita Luna Robles, who worked with community members in developing stories for the performance piece. Based on individual and collective experiences of 9/11 here in the Valley, the performance will be shared with local schools and brought to the people of New York City through a video documenting the making of the performance piece. ●

—BY JUAN FELIPE HERRERA

"The Twin Tower Songs," is directed by Juan Felipe Herrera, Rodrigo Duarte-Clarke and Margarita Luna Robles





**SATURDAY  
APRIL 27**

**TOWER THEATER  
11AM—12PM**

**"La Guelaguetza,"  
Oaxacan Dance  
and Music**

The "Guelaguetza", recognized for its beautiful dances, also called "Fiestas de los Lunes del Cerro" (Monday Fiestas of the Hill) is a popular celebration from the state of Oaxaca, Mexico.

*Guelaguetza* is a word of Zapotec origin that signifies gift or offering. It is a ceremony of brotherhood, peace and solidarity. The custom of giving has been practiced since ancestral times in Oaxaca and is considered a symbol of social participation.

## THE MAGIC OF THE GUELAGUETZA

**T**HE FIESTA AND DANCES OF THE Guelaguetza are associated with indigenous celebrations to Centeátl, goddess of maize. With the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors to Mexico, the Catholic Church prohibited these celebrations, and destroyed indigenous ceremonial centers, constructing in their place catholic churches dedicated to the virgin of Monte Carmelo. The practice of replacing temples for churches and indigenous deities for their catholic counterparts furthered the process of Spanish conquest.

The Oaxacan celebrations to the goddess Centeátl were made to coincide with catholic celebrations of the Corpus of the Carmen Alto church, on Sunday July 16 and repeated a week later. This religious synchronization contributed to maintaining the indigenous celebrations—slowly more elements were brought back, like music, marches and masks.

The dance and musical spectacle known as La Guelaguetza takes place in the city of Oaxaca where all seven regions of the state are represented: The Central Valleys, La Sierra Juárez, La Cañada, Tuxtepec, La Mixteca, the Coast and Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Each region presents its

dances, music, attire and songs. As the presentation comes to a conclusion, each region presents to the public an offering, their "guelaguetza" composed of products native of that region. During this celebration a representative for the goddess Centeátl is chosen, who must be a young girl with knowledge of Oaxacan traditions.

Today La Guelaguetza is a symbol of the cultural traditions of Oaxaca and of the fusion of indigenous and Spanish cultures. Its beautiful dances and colorful costumes come alive to the sound of traditional Oaxacan music—bringing pride to all from this region of Mexico and delight to diverse spectators.

Many immigrants of indigenous Oaxacan origin live in California's Central Valley and have brought this celebration to places like Fresno and Los Angeles. Here in California, many local Oaxacans have musical bands and dance groups that perform in their traditional styles and costumes. ●

—BY LEONCIO VÁSQUEZ  
AND EDUARDO STANLEY



**SATURDAY  
APRIL 27**

**TOWER THEATER  
1PM—3PM**

**THEATER MATINEE  
DOUBLE FEATURE:**

**Tou Ger Xiong**

A nationally acclaimed Hmong rap, comedy and cultural presentation. Also performing Saturday on the OUTDOOR STAGE at 5:30PM.

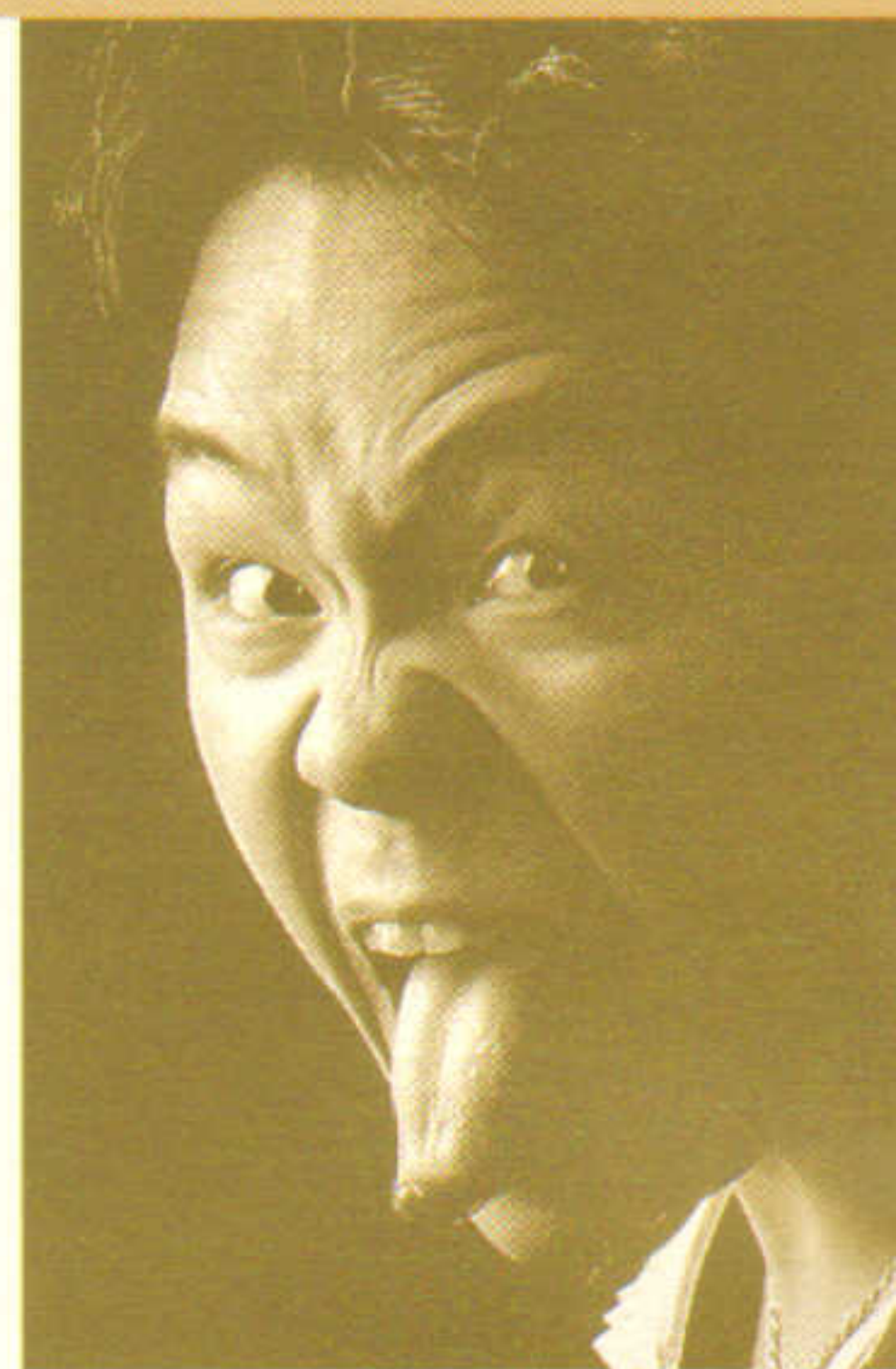
**"Mountain People of Laos"**

A play presented by the Asian Advancement Association and InterACT. A cast of Hmong actors portrays the struggles and hardship encountered during the Hmong journey from Laos to Thailand to the Central Valley. Action, romance, humor and struggles collide—educating and entertaining audiences of all ages and cultures.

**TOU GER XIONG,  
HMONG COMEDIAN**

**B**ORN IN LAOS IN 1973, XIONG'S family had to flee Laos after the Communist takeover in 1975. His family escaped across the border and sought refuge in a Thai refugee camp. After four years in the camp, Xiong's family immigrated to the United States as refugees of war. His childhood in America began in the public housing projects of St. Paul, Minnesota. While at Carleton College, Xiong developed a passion for the performance arts and created Project Respectism, an educational service project that uses comedy, storytelling, and rap music to bridge cultures and generations.

Since then, Xiong has taken his message of respect to 31 states in the past five years and has given over 700 presentations nationwide to audiences of all ages and ethnic backgrounds. Xiong's work as a Hmong artist and activist has been featured on national television, radio, and newspapers. Fresno's Hmong community is proud to bring Xiong to Fresno's First Annual Tamejavi Festival. ●



**"THE MOUNTAIN PEOPLE OF LAOS"**

**A**CTION, ROMANCE, HUMOR AND struggle collide together in the play, "The Mountain People of Laos."

"America's jungle was not of trees, but of concrete, high buildings and electrical gadgets," recalls John Thao, founder of Asian Advancement Association, as he reflects on the challenges the Hmong people faced as refugees in America. As a first generation Hmong in America, Thao was frequently approached and questioned about his own people. Questions such as, "Where did you come from and what is Hmong" motivated Thao to answer these questions through his talent—acting. Along with a cast of members from Sacramento's Hmong community, Thao relives the

struggles and hardship that Hmong families encountered during their journey from Laos to Thailand and then to America.

Audiences witness culture clashes common in today's society, especially among teenagers. The play begins by portraying the traditional Hmong woman—who is slowly transformed into an Americanized woman, holding on to traditional Hmong values. "My goal is to show how much the Hmong people have changed since we've been here in America," states Thao.

Although this play is primarily designed to educate the non-Hmong community, there is a significant underlying meaning for Hmong-Americans. As the author of the play states, "This play offers something that the Hmong people can refer back to, to see how far they have gone, and furthermore, to motivate them to move forward." During the eight performances in Sacramento last November, several Hmong audience members were brought to tears—recognizing the struggles and difficulties that they faced during their journey to America and even here in the Central Valley. ●

**PARADISE BAND**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 27  
TOWER THEATER OUTDOOR STAGE  
5:30PM**

Hailing from Fresno, CA, Paradise has a large following and has released several CD's and music videos that have appeared on MTV.

(Appearance is yet to be confirmed due to scheduling.)

—BY SHELLY CHA

THE ART THAT IS BORN FROM THE SOUL.

## TEATRO DEL ALMA

**L**IKE A CONVICTION THAT IS BORN from the soul; with connotations artistic and cultural; with a form of expression, to open the door to art, to exteriorize the needs and ways of thinking, but overall with the same drive of diversion, was born in the city of Fresno almost three years ago, now known as Teatro del Alma (Theater of the Soul). Founded in the year 1999 by its current director Desiree Castro, Emmett Castro and Armando Valdez, The Teatro del Alma turned into a tool to promote Hispanic culture and to promote local talent, emphasizing the use of Cervantes' language, Spanish, in each representation.

The Teatro del Alma is an organization not lucrative, whose goal is, according to Desiree Castro, "To give to the community and to the youth an avenue to pass the time by way of doing something that benefits them," or at least that was the principle idea. And it is from that goal, to make time pass by in a way that is healthy for its constituents, that the Teatro del Alma creates art, and makes out of the ordinary a work of theater. "In the beginning it was more diversion, fantasy, drama, and now it is more like the voice of the community," affirmed Castro.

The idea of forming this group, says Desiree, was hers and the love she had for this practice. "It was born from me. I have been interested in the theater for a very long time, but I had never done theater in Spanish, and I wanted to try a new venue," comments the native of Valencia, Spain. When the Teatro del Alma began the works offered were classical ones, presented in Spanish. Later, as a way to adapt to needs, the organization evolved. Now they have incorporated English as the principle language in some works.

The classical works by well known authors have passed to a new end, since now the principle material is produced at home; that is to say, the works are written in major part by Desiree

Castro, and treat themes of social interest to the community. "We touch on youth themes to make them think about the future and how the decisions they make today will affect them. Ultimately we are playing on the theme of immigration," she said.

Despite its short existence, Teatro del Alma carries an enviable history. In its first year, this organization produced, directed and presented four works completely in Spanish and one in



English, in different parts of the San Joaquin Valley. Up to this moment Teatro del Alma has produced and presented works like, "El Dia que se Robaron los Juguetes/ The Day they Stole the Toys," "El Angel Arrepentido/ The Repented Angel," "Independence Day—In a Foreign Land," "Eyes Upon a Cross," "Cesar Chavez: La Lucha no ha Terminado," "Nerlandia," "Rosa de Dos Aromas/ Roses of Two Scents," "La Gente contra Cristo."

The community of Fresno has responded to the convocation of Teatro del Alma, and besides its artistic labor, this organization also develops a great social labor. "We have had youth that have been in gangs; that don't want to work with anyone, don't want to collaborate, and after seeing two or three acts become emotional and leave," Desiree proudly recounts. "Now they are members that sincerely want to give of themselves and stay," she adds. "We want them to turn out fine in life." ●

—BY MIGUEL ANGEL BÁEZ

**SATURDAY  
APRIL 27**

**SECOND SPACE THEATER  
2PM—5PM**

**Teatro del Alma  
presents  
one act from,  
"Dinero, Coyotes  
y Fronteras"**

Teatro del Alma is a theater troupe of Fresno youth, founded and directed by local actress, writer, and teacher Desiree Castro.

Castro dreams that, "One day this theater will be well known and will continue to do what it has set out to accomplish: involve the youth in a school of art and inspire them to learn a career or vocation that can help them succeed."

Teatro del Alma will present scenes from the work, "Dinero, Coyotes y Frontera/ Money, Coyotes and Border," written by Desiree Castro and Hector Mendiola, in an interactive workshop with Ernesto Torchia at the **SECOND SPACE THEATER**.

*Please consult the  
Schedule Insert for a complete  
performance schedule.*

**SATURDAY  
APRIL 27**

**TOWER COURTYARD  
MAIN STAGE  
3:30PM—4:30PM**

**Lakhaun Bassac,  
A Cambodian  
Opera**

Lakhaun Bassac, the Cambodian folk opera, is a peasant form of live entertainment traditionally played for outdoor festivals in Cambodia.

The opera is composed of traditional music, dance, and dialogue between characters dressed in intricately detailed costumes. The story depicts the love, conflict, and comedy between Cambodian royal families and supernatural figures.



**CAMBODIAN  
OPERA**

**ORGANIZES COMMUNITY**

**L**ate last winter, community organizers in Phnom Penh, Cambodia staged the traditional Cambodian peasant opera, "Lakhuan Bassac" in public squares to community members during general elections. Plagued by low voter turnout and election fraud, organizers used the popular folk opera to attract hundreds of unsuspecting villagers to see voter education skits entitled "A Clear Day in the Village."

Here in Fresno a small group of Cambodian civic education teachers sought out the only remaining elders in their community who know how to play the instruments, songs, and dances of this popular opera. Like the voter education organizers in Cambodia, Fresno community leader, Van Lam, recognizes that "Lakhaun Bassac has a long history as a civic organizing tool," and hopes to, "... bring more Cambodians out into the public to see the opera and hopefully get more involved in civic life."

With a grant from the Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship's Civic Action Network, Lam and the Khmer Society of Fresno organized a group of elders to teach Cambodian youth the traditional opera. For a whole year the group rehearsed and constructed a traditional wooden stage to perform on—similar to those used in the public festivals and celebrations in Cambodia.

Last spring, the Khmer Society of Fresno presented the first ever West Coast production of Lakhaun Bassac to an audience of approximately 600 at Fresno's Cambodian New Year celebrations. "Now other Cambodian temples know of our players," explains Van, "and the performers

are running up and down the valley playing in Stockton and all over the place. It is so popular because there are not many community centers or entertainment for Cambodian communities here in the valley."

"Lakhaun Bassac" explains Lam, "is a peasant form of live entertainment, which was both

played at the theater and for outdoor festivals in Cambodia. The opera is composed of traditional music, dance, monologue and dialogue between characters dressed in intricately detailed costumes. The story depicts the love, conflict, and comedy between royal families and supernatural figures—mainly the giants. Old artists, representing situations that existed once upon a time, wrote all of the stories. The

moral of the story is that the act of the king or the prince is of honor and good deed."

Currently rehearsing in a storage barn on a Cambodian persimmon farm outside of Fresno, the musicians and performers are preparing for a live presentation of Lakhaun Bassac at the First Annual Tamejavi Festival. To tempt audiences of all cultures and backgrounds to come experience the Cambodian Opera, Van Lam leaves us with a traditional Lakhaun Bassac story:

"The Story—Soriya Vong is about the prince of the Pearang Sey Kingdom. After learning how to fight with his teacher, the hermit, Soriya Vong (the prince) returned home where his sister is waiting. His sister, Chan Taevy, was under pressure to be engaged with the Giant named Meara





Vorne, who declared war with her Kingdom when she disagreed. She expected her brother Soriya Vong to defend their Kingdom..." Come find out what happens on the Tamejavi outdoor stage...

—BY ERICA KOHL



Above: Lakhaun Bassac performers. Inset: Cambodian temple in Fresno.

## TAMEJAVI EXHIBITS



Photo by Sandra Sturdevant.

**APRIL 26—28**  
**SEIU LOCAL 250**

1279 N. Wishon, TOWER DISTRICT

### "Immigrant Women Weaving Cultures,"

Photographs by Sandra Sturdevant

This photo exhibition is the result of an educational experience that a group of Latina, indigenous Mexican and Hmong women have been involved in for over two years. Their mission has been "To provide immigrant and refugee women with the opportunity to raise their voices and those of their communities in the process of deciding what is best for them." This process has enabled the women to support each other in building independence and initiative to take action toward solving their own problems.

Also exhibiting at SEIU LOCAL 250: **Traditional Oaxacan Clothing.**  
Both exhibitions are open Saturday from 10AM—7PM, Sunday from 10AM—5PM.

**SATURDAY**  
**APRIL 27**

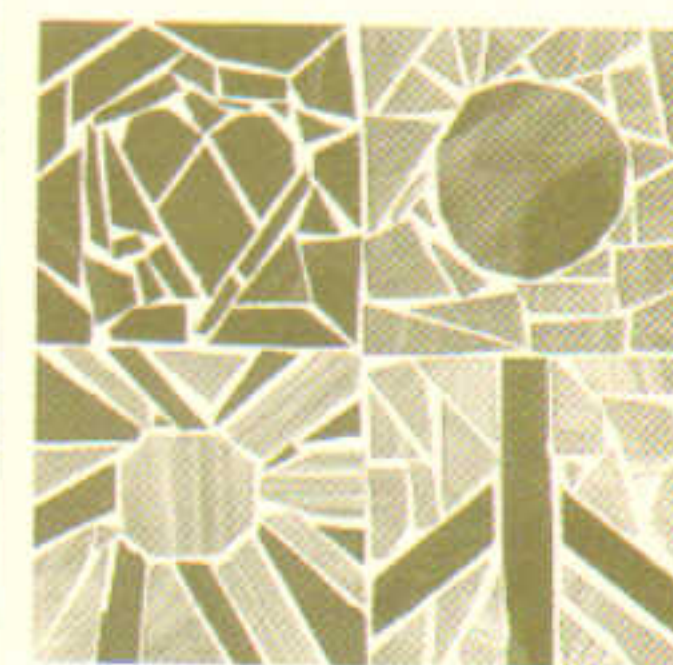
**TOWER THEATER**  
**4:30PM—5:30PM**

### "The Mosaic Voices," a poetry and spoken-word performance

"Mosaic Voices" assembles 15 poets from the San Joaquin Valley into one colorful and diverse performance.

This performance includes sketches of the earth, the Valley, the mountains, the city, and the diversity of people who live in these places. Poems, music, and stories illuminate the different sounds and walks of life in the Central Valley. The performance coincides with Mosaic Voices book release and signing.

**mosaic**  
**voices**



A spectrum of  
Central Valley poets

**SATURDAY  
APRIL 27**

**TOWER THEATER  
7PM—9PM**

**FEATURE EVENING  
PERFORMANCE**

**"Promise of a  
Love Song"**

"Promise of a Love Song" wraps three theaters, three cultures, and three stories of love into a musical play presented by **The Exchange Project**. The Exchange Project is a collaborative project of three nationally acclaimed theater companies: Junebug Productions, an African American theater company of New Orleans, LA, Teatro Pregones, a Puerto Rican theater ensemble of the Bronx, NY, and Roadside Theater, an Appalachian theater ensemble from Whitesburg, KY.

**WORKSHOPS WITH  
THE EXCHANGE PROJECT**

On April 27th, The Exchange Project will also facilitate free workshops including a Theater Workshop at 10am in the **SECOND SPACE THEATER**, Story Circles in the **TOWER LOBBY** at 3:30, and will co-host the 9:30pm Outdoor Musical Jam & Dance Party.



**THE EXCHANGE PROJECT  
PRESENTS "PROMISE OF A LOVE SONG"**

**"P**ROMISE OF A LOVE SONG" was born out of ambition: To connect otherwise isolated cultures and bring them face-to-face in the making of art; to encourage artists with very different experiences and aesthetics to compare notes and pool their creative resources; to then stage and tour a play relevant to each community and of vital interest to the nation at large. Conceived back in 1995, the Exchange Project initially saw Junebug, Roadside, and Pregones theaters traveling in a round-robin fashion to introduce themselves and their works to each other's world.

Artists met with the community in story circles, music jam sessions and informal discussion and celebration. Each time, they were greeted in home-style, enjoying the best home cooking and the stories that are best heard around it. The performance stage was clearly but one of many spaces where The Exchange Project would develop.

In "Promise of a Love Song," the actors from

the three theater companies create vivid characters to tell stories unique to their own cultural experiences. Taken together, these poignant, funny and intimate moments create a weaving with its own tale to tell about diversity. Musicians from the three traditions also meet on stage to discover how rhythms and music illuminate the

strengths, struggles, similarities and differences of these cultures. Their musical collaboration tells love stories with harmonies and rhythms that touch our souls.

This play brings valley audiences three strong, diverse, powerful cultural love stories and, in so doing, deepens our understanding of the struggles and joys of the people in these

tales. It is a musical play that reaches a magical point of communication, mutual respect and understanding between the companies' three cultures and communities, and, it is their hope, that it does the same for the communities across the country where it is performed. ●

—BY THERESA HOLDEN



Special thanks to Theresa Holden and The Exchange Project for Festival cultural exchange consulting.



# IMMIGRANT FILM SERIES

FEATURING FOUR FILMS ABOUT IMMIGRANT  
COMMUNITIES AND THEIR SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND  
POLITICAL STRUGGLES AND TRIUMPHS.

**T**he first film, "Echando Raíces/Taking Root," directed by J.T. Takagi/Produced by The American Friends Service Committee, tells the stories of immigrant communities and their struggle for human rights. Stories and reflections of refugees and immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia, Cambodia and Laos are combined with scenes of community life and struggle.

"Split Horn: Life of a Hmong Shaman in America," Directed by Taggart Siegel/Produced by Jim McSilver, T. Siegel. Director Taggart Siegel spent 17 years chronicling the life of Paja Thao and his family from the mountains of Laos to the heartland of America. This poignant film shows a shaman's struggles to maintain his ancient traditions as his children embrace American culture.

"Blossoms of Fire," Directed/Produced by Maureen Gosling and Ellen Osborne, presents a

dazzling, whirling dance of a film that celebrates the extraordinary lives of the Istmus Zapotec women of southern Oaxaca, Mexico. The strong work ethic and fierce independent streak of the Istmus women is rooted in their culture and has greatly contributed to the region's progressive politics and unusual tolerance of alternative gender roles.

Community Alliance for a Fair Economy (CAFÉ) presents "Bread and Roses," Directed by Ken Loach. From acclaimed director Ken Loach comes the gripping story of a group of immigrant workers who take a stand against the million dollar corporations who employ them. Newly arrived illegal immigrant Maya (Pilar Padilla) has just joined her sister on the job as a janitor in a downtown LA office building. Appalled at the work conditions and unfair labor practices, she teams up with Sam (Adrian Brody), a labor organizer, to fight their ruthless employer. ●

From the film "Blossoms of Fire," by Maureen Gosling and Ellen Osborne.

SUNDAY  
APRIL 28

TOWER THEATER  
1PM—5:30PM

IMMIGRANT  
FILM SERIES

12:30PM—1PM

"Echando Raíces/  
Taking Root"

1:15PM—2:15PM

"Split Horn:  
Life of a  
Hmong Shaman  
in America"

2:30PM—3:40PM

"Blossoms of Fire"

3:55PM—5:35PM

"Bread and Roses"



**SUNDAY  
APRIL 28**

**TOWER THEATER  
7PM—9PM**

**TEATRO FINALE**

**"Esperanza y Luz,"  
by Teatro  
Inmigrante.**

Agustin Lira, former founder of the El Teatro Campesino along with Luis Valdez, directs a new play about the journey of two immigrant women, "Esperanza Y Luz," and the circumstances that led them to traverse the dangerous U.S.-Mexican border, and their new lives in the United States. Teatro Inmigrante strives to educate the public about immigrant issues today—especially in light of the recent World Trade Center terrorist attacks. The performing group is composed of people who share the common experience as first, second, and third generation immigrants in this country.

A one-act skit, by The Ernesto Torchia Workshop will open for Esperanza y Luz.

**"ESPERANZA Y LUZ"  
BY TEATRO INMIGRANTE**

**I**N LIGHT OF THE MANY immigration changes in the last few years Agustin Lira (former founder of the El Teatro Campesino along with Luis Valdez around the time of the Grape Strike in California) knew he had to do something to educate the public about immigrants in the Central Valley and elsewhere in the U. S. This growing fear of the worsening conditions for immigrants motivated Lira to found El Teatro de la Tierra. One of the goals of this educational arts organization is to preserve the arts and culture; however, first and foremost they want to help educate the public about immigrant issues today. Especially in light of the recent World Trade Center terrorist attacks.

El Teatro de la Tierra is currently working with a group of people who share Lira's vision of educating and engaging communities through theater. With a deep understanding of the issues faced by immigrants this newly formed group calls themselves Teatro Inmigrante. Lira is working closely with this group to stage plays about the immigrant experience.

The members are first, second or third generation immigrants—some who have labored in the vast agricultural fields of the Valley. They have minimal or no experience in the theater but share a desire to tell their stories to public audiences. The group produces plays which highlight immigrant life. Themes include the so-called illegal crossings, and

attaining citizenship status. Teatro Inmigrante hopes to create a forum, which will speak positively about the immigrant situation, "challenging the notion, for example, that immigrants are lazy and therefore end up on welfare," noted Agustin Lira.

Ultimately, Lira explains, "We hope to initiate a dialogue that may lead to creating problem solving skills among the immigrant population." ●

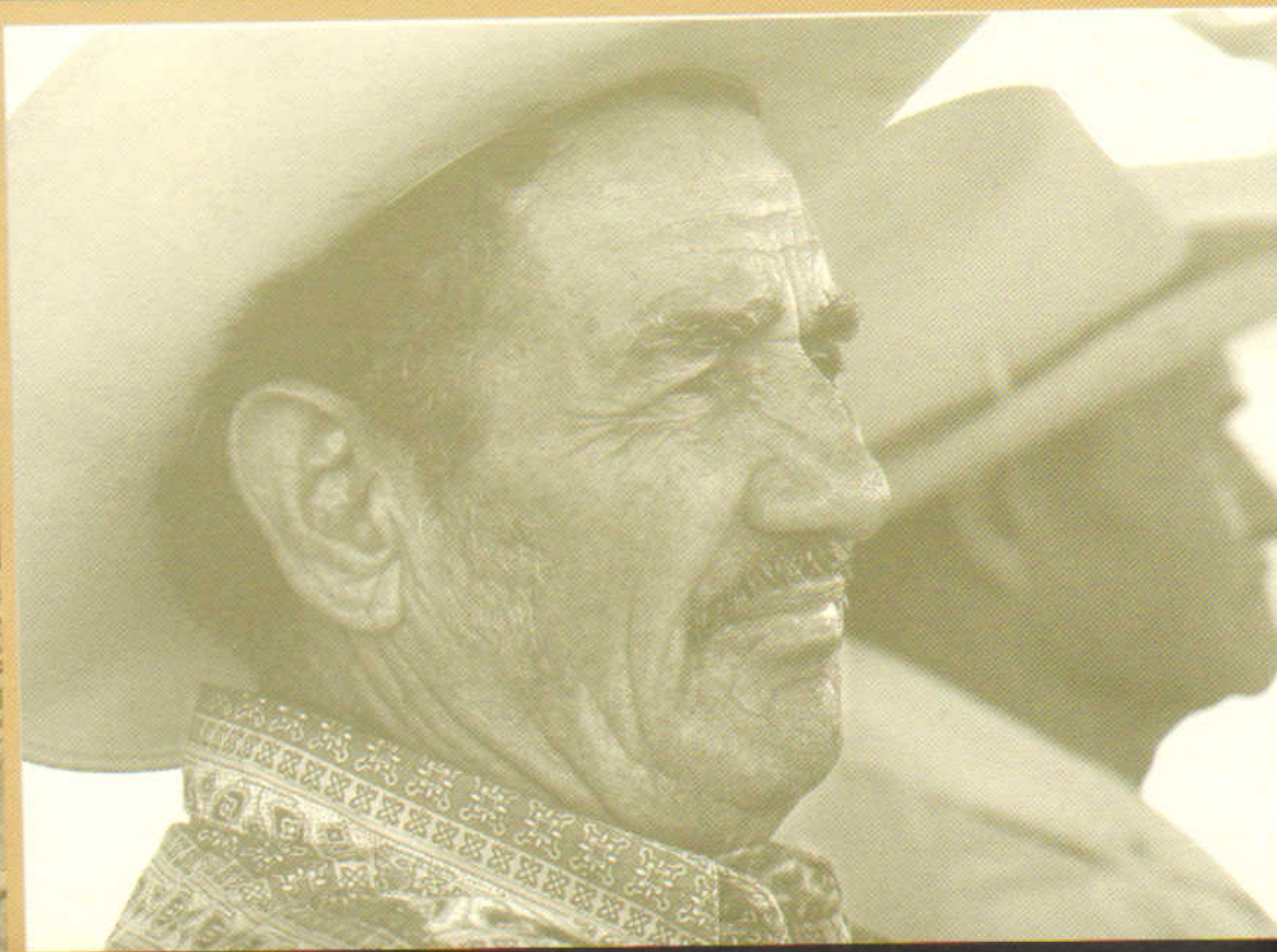
—BY GRACIE HINOJOSA



top: Teatro Inmigrante performance

right: Braceros community members

bottom: from "Immigrant Women Weaving Cultures." Photo by Sandra Sturdevant.



# EXPERIMENTING ACROSS CULTURES. TAMEJAVI WORKSHOPS

All Festival events are free and open to the public

**SATURDAY, APRIL 27TH**

## Stories into Plays: Sharing Theater Techniques and Styles

SECOND SPACE THEATER

10AM-12PM

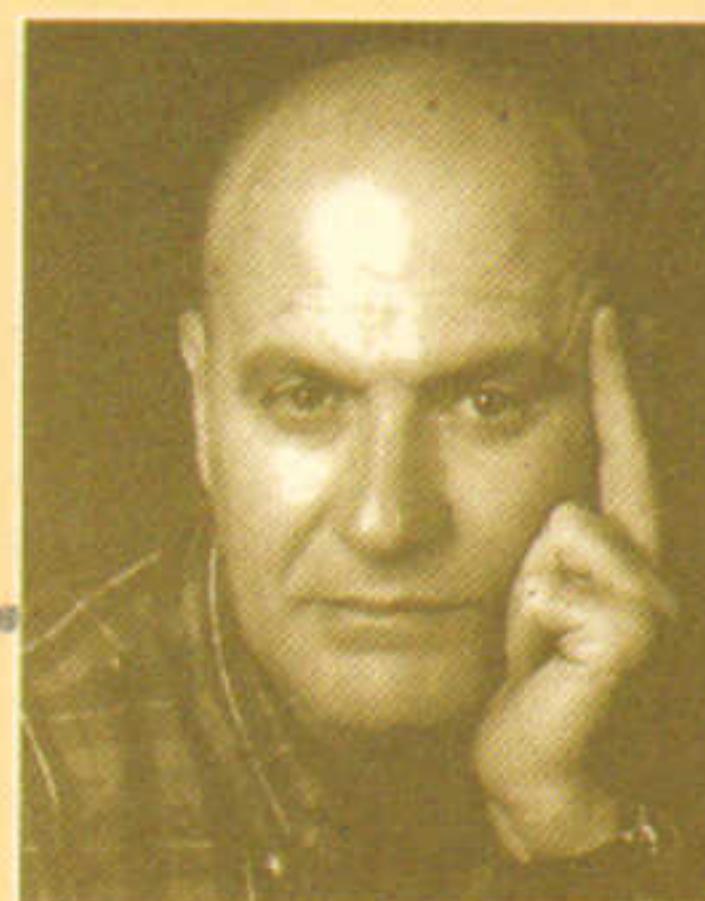
Rosalba Rolon, Artistic Director of Pregones Theater, a Puerto Rican theater ensemble of the Bronx, New York, and **Dudley Cocke**, Artistic Director of Roadside Theater, an Appalachian company from Kentucky facilitate this workshop on using community stories to create original plays.

## Music Exchange and Jam Workshop

TOWER OUTDOOR  
MAIN STAGE

10AM—11:30AM

Ron Short, composer and musician with Roadside Theater (KY), Desmar Guevara, composer and musician with Pregones Theater (NY), and **Jeremy Hofer**, a Fresno-based musician join together to lead this musical exchange to discover how rhythms and music illuminate the strengths, struggles, similarities and differences of diverse cultures.



Workshop leader Ernesto Torchia

## Teatro Traditions with Ernesto Torchia and Teatro del Alma

THE SECOND SPACE THEATER

2PM—5PM

Join in an interactive theater workshop with **Ernesto Torchia**, internationally known professional theater teacher, director and actor of film, radio and television. Joining him will be members from the theater group **Teatro del Alma**.

## Story Circles: A methodology for community building and creativity

TOWER LOBBY

3PM-4:30PM

**John O'Neal**, Artistic Director of Junebug Productions, and **Theresa Holden**, Producer for The Exchange Project will teach participants how to use the story circle as a key instrument for communication, exchange between diverse groups, and creativity.

## Ethnic Media Forum: Exploring Content & Participation

THE STARLINE

833 EAST FERN, TOWER DISTRICT

9AM—11AM

Organized by Pacific News Service's New California Media, professionals from Spanish language, Hmong, Oaxacan and other ethnic media will join on a panel to discuss the issues, concerns, and trends facing the ethnic media in the increasingly diverse state of California.

**Panelists:** **Gabriel Lerner**, La Opinion, State News Editor; **Sandy Close**, Executive Director Pacific News Service; **Mary Jo McConahay**, Reporter/Editor Pacific News Service; **Ben Vue**, Hmong Today KNXT Channel 27; **David Bacon**, freelance reporter, Covering Labor News and the Mexico/US Border; **Miguel Baez**, Editor "Noticiero Semanal" Porterville.

## The Immigrant Path Towards Civic Participation\*

THE STARLINE

833 EAST FERN, TOWER DISTRICT

2PM—4PM

This *plática* will bring together researchers, practitioners, and individuals that live, study, and organize to form spaces for immigrant civic, political, and cultural expression.

**Panelists:** **Jesus Martínez Saldaña**, Professor at Chicano Latino Studies California State University, Fresno; **Rafael Alarcon**, Investigador, Departamento de Estudios Sociales del Colegio de la Frontera, Tijuana, Mexico; **Nayamin Martínez**, Frente Indígena Oaxaqueño Binacional.

\*Organized by Nayamin Martinez, Frente Indígena Oaxaqueño Binacional, Myrna Martinez Nateras and Lourdes Sevilla, Pan Valley Institute.

## Making Our Place: A Gender Perspective on Immigration\*

SEIU LOCAL 250

1279 N.WISHON STREET  
TOWER DISTRICT

2PM—4PM

This *plática* will address migration from the perspective of immigrant women.

**Panelists:** **Devra Weber**, Associate Professor, UC Riverside; **Oralia Maceda**, Frente Indígena Oaxaqueño Binacional; **May Lee**, Hmong American Immigrant Women from Merced; **Rosa Lopez**, Frente Indígena Oaxaqueño Binacional.

**SUNDAY, APRIL 28TH**

## Braceros:

**Testimonies Familiares de  
una Experiencia Migrante**

THE STARLINE

833 EAST FERN, TOWER DISTRICT

12PM—2PM

**Luis Magaña**, Rural Economic Alternatives Project, **Leonel Flores**, Coalicion por los Derechos de los Inmigrantes del Valle de San Joaquin, and **Myrna Martinez Nateras** and **Lourdes Sevilla**, Pan Valley Institute organized this *plática* that will gather families of ex-braceros to give testimonies about the Bracero experience and the impact it had on their family relations. The Bracero program was established from 1940 to 1964 to bring workers, particularly from Mexico, to supply the depleted work force in the U.S. during World War II.

# THE FIRST ANNUAL TAMEJAVI FESTIVAL

A Free Public Event

**PRESENTED BY**  
the Central Valley Partnership's  
Civic Action Network



**SPONSORED BY**  
the Pan Valley Institute  
of the American Friends Service Committee

**WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM**  
The James Irvine Foundation

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**BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH CULTURAL EXCHANGE**

For more information contact Lourdes Sevilla at the Pan Valley Institute (559) 222-7678.

<http://www.citizenship.net>