

Artists offer glimpses of world cultures

Artists from around the world will join hands to help Routt County Youth "Bridging Cultures."

Among the highlights are:

- Cleo Parker Robinson's Dance Ensemble — The Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Theatre began as a grass-roots organization in 1970. It is now a 24-year-old multi-racial institution in Denver with a long history as a nationally renowned professional black modern dance ensemble, a neighborhood dance school, and a newly renovated 300-seat theatre offering space for community performances in Denver's Five Points district.

The dance ensemble consists of 14 professional dancers who have toured extensively throughout the nation. The ensemble was selected to tour Singapore and represented Colorado in the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. It represented the United States at the Second World Festival of Arts and Culture in Lago, Nigeria, in 1977.

The ensemble participated in the *Black Choreographers' Moving to the 21st Century* in San Francisco, and hosted the Third Annual International Conference on Black Dance Companies in 1990. The company performed in Durham, N.C., at the American Dance Festival in 1990.

Most recently, the ensemble was invited to perform in the Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors Festival. One of the pieces it performed, *Lunar Transformations*, was commissioned by, and premiered at, the festival.

- Opalanga D. Pugh — A storyteller in the African oral tradition, Opalanga is a Denver native who was introduced to this ancient tradition as an exchange student in Nigeria, West Africa, in the 1970s.

"Inside her mind is a world of wisdom and laughter," wrote Patricia Raybon for the *Rocky Mountain News*. "She opens wide her soul and the folk heroes of a hundred stories step forth and say hello!"

While tapping African and Afro-American folklore, Opalanga tells modern and

traditional stories from Native American, Hispanic, Asian and other cultures. She chooses stories that offer messages of hope and positive thinking, and she weaves stories and songs that address self-esteem, decision-making and conflict resolution.

•Ron Tomock — This Denver-based accordion player is a versatile ethnic musician who plays German, French, Spanish and Korean music.

•Resavda "Rose" Cordova — This Hispanic storyteller illustrates her stories with elaborate dolls.

She has collected 1,084 *dichos* (sayings) from her mother, and 115 stories. She wrote, illustrated and published her collection, *Secrétos de los Arboles de Piñon: A Relic of Legends, Sayings and Doings of the Southwest*.

A few years ago, she began performing with guitarist Louis Gallegos, who doesn't hesitate to don a silver hat and blue wig to help her portray a role.

•El Grupo Folklórico Semillas de la Tierra — This group presents the original dance styles of Mexico and the Southwest United States.

It was founded by Dr. Herman Martinez and is celebrating its 21st anniversary on the campus of Adams State College.

•Teri Rasmusson — Teri's dancing "limberjack" dolls carry the audience on a musical journey from the tall sailing ships off the coast of England to the campfires of the cowboy's chuck wagon.

Throughout this variety show, she performs on the tin whistle, fiddle, dulcimer, pitch fork, accordion and more. She may have everyone up for a dance lesson, activity stories and sing-alongs that feature songs from Africa, Mexico and America — plus original and modern songs.

She has come full circle from her Celtic music beginnings in Canada and England to classical, jazz stints with American folk and traditional dance styles. She holds a degree in music therapy from the University of the Pacific, was a member of The Moving Company Jazz Band in San Francisco, and she helped to found and now directs programming for the nonprofit Colorado Friends of Old Time Music and Dance.

The City of Denver Pipe Band & Highland Dancers, the

Band & Highland Dancers, the Japanese Ayame Minyo Kai troupe, Scandinavian musicians and dancers and Zuni Pueblo dancers are also among those slated to perform.



Opalanga D. Pugh