



ENSAMBLES PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Half and Halves Show



The Punjabi-Mexican community is a unique cultural phenomenon that Ensembles displays through a lively collaboration with Duniya Dance and Drum Company. Together, the two groups explore how this new culture evolved into our present-day communities and traditions. With both cultures having such distinctive but similar characteristics, this rare portrayal of a union between two ethnic groups is presented through a beautiful expression of dance and music.



The fusion of the two cultures began with marriages between Punjabis and Mexicans in the second half of the 20th century as a result of similar immigration patterns. For decades in the early 20th century, Punjabi farming families began sending their sons out of Punjab to the United States to earn money. Most of these Punjabi men came alone and ended up establishing themselves in the newly budding farming economy of northern California. Shortly thereafter, Mexican families began migrating to these farming economies as well and ended up picking cotton in the fields farmed by Punjabi men.

Slowly, Punjabi men began marrying Mexican women laborers resulting in almost four hundred of these bi-ethnic couples clustered in California's agricultural Imperial Valley. The men tended to be older, in their late thirties or forties, and the women in their early twenties. The Punjabi men are thought to have chosen women of Mexican ancestry for several reasons. The reasons included similarities in physical characteristics, rural lifestyle, types of food and family values.



Now many decades later, we are making an effort to expand our understanding of the ethnic choices made by the Punjabi-Mexican descendants. While it is evident that the two cultures share many characteristics, we look forward to recognizing the influence that each has had on the beauty of both dance forms.

For more information call
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