Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Travelers who are planning a trip to Washington, D. C., next month, can add an Indian Dance Festival to their itinerary. The Department of the Interior's Center for Indian Arts in America will stage a performing arts program made up entirely of Indians and scheduled for Carter Barron Amphitheatre on June 1, 3, 4 and 5. It will be produced by the staff and students of the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, and includes 75 performers representing 31 Indian tribes from all over the United States.

Thousands of vacationists viewed this Dance Festival last year and came away marveling at its color, its humor, its authenticity and its charm. This year's program, staged in a five-thousand seat outdoor arena, will offer even more in the way of spectacle and native talent. The drama is under the direction of Rolland Meinholtz of the Santa Fe Institute with a musical score composed by Louis Ballard, a Cherokee pianist and composer, who heads the Performing Arts Department there. Neil Parsons, a Blackfoot, has designed the sets, and the overall producer-director is Lloyd New, a Cherokee, who is Arts Director at Santa Fe.

A modern dance group, directed by Rosalie Jones, also of Indian descent, connects the various native dances into a complete story. The drama is called SIPAPU, based upon the doings of Coyote, who appears in one form or another in most Indian legends. Coyote is sometimes a kind of Reynard the Fox, another time a good person who teaches the Indian the ways of nature. The plot develops as Coyote weaves the story about man and life's experiences.

The title of the production derives from a Pueblo word meaning "opening in the earth," and has its concept in the religious myth, common to Indian groups, that man evolved through a number of underworlds of various colors and conditions, finally coming out of chaos into a world of light.

The entire SIPAPU production was designed to utilize the old, authentic forms of dance, song and pageantry, and to introduce new, creative approaches. The result is that the unique qualities of Indian culture are being extended into contemporary life by young Indian artists who value their tradition and are able to relate them to their own times.

NOTE: Mail orders should be addressed to: Indian Festival, Super Music City Box Office, 1344 F Street, NW., Washington, D. C. 20004.

Prices: $1.75, $2.50, $3.00, $3.85