

# COLORADO LIVING

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The Denver Post / Dave Buresh

**PERFORMERS:** Trujillo Family members are 'Orié,' foreground, Eva Nuñez, left background, Filbert, Lorenzo, Lorencito and Melissa Chavez.

The priest asked the bride and groom to say  
If they wanted to be married,  
And all the people in the church heard them  
When they both said 'Yes.'

By Richard Johnson  
Denver Post Staff Writer

When those verses are sung in Spanish at Hispanic wedding receptions, some guests inevitably begin to cry.

"The lyrics are tender," explained Lorenzo Trujillo, "and people are not only moved with joy for the bride and groom, but they also feel deep emotions in celebrating an ancient tradition, which the song represents."

"*Entrega de los Novios*" ("Presentation of the Bride and Groom") consists of many verses, rigidly structured.

The song has its origins in medieval Spain and has been passed on for centuries through an oral tradition in the villages of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.

Even the spelling — *entriega* — is Old Spanish, added Trujillo. The modern spelling is *entrega*.

Trujillo, 41, is musical director of the Trujillo Family Southwest Folk Musicians and Dancers. The *Entriega* is one of hundreds of ancient Hispanic songs the family is preserving.

Ranging in age from 13 (Trujillo's son, Lorencito, and

# Heritage in Harmony

Hispanic family  
trying to keep  
old songs alive

niece, Melissa Chavez) to 72 (his aunt, Eva Nuñez), the six-member metro-Denver group is one of only a few in New Mexico and Colorado dedicated to the preservation of Hispanic music and dance as practiced since Spanish conquistadors arrived in New Mexico in the 16th century.

While motivated by a love for the music, the Trujillos also find that the old songs enrich their lives by connecting them to their ancestors.

Marie Oralia "Orié" Trujillo, Lorenzo's mother and the group's primary dancer, traces her New Mexican heritage to 1530.

Her husband, Filbert, who plays the guitar, is a retired insurance and real-estate broker who counts Juan Navarro among his forebears.

Navarro served on the commission to make New Mexico a state and represented the Mora district in the state's first senate.

Both Filbert ("Phil") and Orié, as she likes to be called, are choir members at Denver's St. Cajetan Roman Catholic Church.

Orié, however, is best known as a dance teacher, and some of her students are training children in the centuries-old folk art.

Eva, Filbert's sister, learned the violin at 13, while grow-

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# Trujillo sang old songs to learn his Spanish

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ing up in north Denver. She also became an accomplished singer, and it is she who sings the *Entriega* while the others in the family accompany her.

"I used to love her music when I was a kid," Lorenzo recalled. "I wanted to learn Spanish really well, and she said, 'The best way to learn is to sing the old songs.' So she taught me."

## Pursued two careers

In time, Lorenzo, who is divorced, pursued two careers while rearing Lorencito and an older son, Javier.

As an educator with a doctorate from the University of San Francisco, he served as an administrator with the Jefferson County schools, resigning in 1990 to study law.

Concurrently, he became prominent musically, performing with groups ranging from Mariachi Alegre to Lakewood's Rocky Mountain Symphony.

During 1975-76, he traveled throughout Colorado and surrounding states, teaching music as an artist in residence under the auspices of the National Endowment for the Arts.

As part of his work, he coordinated a week-long Pueblo workshop that drew folk artists from throughout the United States, as well as from Spain and Mexico.

## Began collecting violins

"After that," he said, "I wanted to focus on music native to us, instead of playing *flamenco* or Mexican folk music."

He began collecting antique vio-

In 1979, Lorenzo organized his family as a performing group devoted to the old songs and dances.

lins, which he and his family play. One is a court instrument from 18th century France.

Meanwhile, he studied with the late Victor Cárdenas, a celebrated Denver musician who had taped many of the ancient New Mexican songs.

In 1979, Lorenzo organized his family as a performing group devoted to the old songs and dances. He has scored more than 100 such songs, often in collaboration with another musician, Jennie Baca.

Their work is on file in the archives of Albuquerque's University of New Mexico.

## On a light schedule

Normally, the Trujillo performers are busy year-round, especially on weekends. But they are following a light schedule until July, when Lorenzo will take exams to be admitted to the Colorado bar.

Lorencito, an award-winning violinist, wants a career in music, and he said he will seek to preserve the ancient songs.

His cousin, Melissa, who plans to be a marine biologist, shares his desire to keep the traditional music alive.

For more information about the group, call 556-6677.