

Discovery Theater

presents

Carnaval Smithsonian!

with the dancers of *Alma Boliviana*,
Centro Cultural Bolivia, & the
Sociedad Cultural Tradiciones Bolivianas

About Bolivia, Jewel of the Andes

A land of exciting contrasts, the South American nation of Bolivia covers about as much territory as Texas and California put together. Most of the population lives in the highlands near the towering Andes mountains, where the terrain averages over 12,000 feet above sea level – so high that the air is thin and visitors can find it difficult to breathe. Two-thirds of the country, however, lies much lower, in the green tropical and semi-tropical “Oriente” region.

Two great ancient civilizations controlled the Bolivian highlands. The Empire of the Tiwanakans reached its peak from around 400 to 900 AD. The remains of their great city, Tiwanaka, show that they were masters of architecture, engineering, and irrigation. Later, around 1430, the powerful Inca spread into the region. Only a century later, however, the Spaniards conquered the Inca. They enslaved the native peoples of the region and imported Africans to mine billions of dollars of silver to send back to Spain.

In 1809, a struggle for freedom began, led by Simón Bolívar, who also demanded independence for Venezuela, Columbia, Peru, and Ecuador. Named for the great hero, Bolivia became a republic in 1825. But the country remained unstable, often ruled by cruel dictators. The native peoples continued to be oppressed and exploited. Only in the last two or three decades have there been peaceful elections and more opportunity.

Discovery Theater Artistic Director: Roberta Gasbarre
Learning Guide: Anne Stewart O'Donnell

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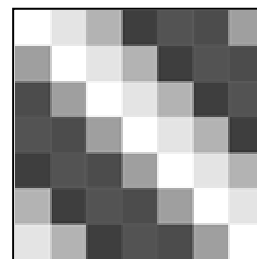
Guenther and Siewchen Yong Sommer

(202) 633-8700 • DTinfo@ DiscoveryTheater.org • DiscoveryTheater.org

See our website for tickets, location, directions, resources for teachers, and much more!

Bolivia's Native Peoples

Native Americans make up about 55% of Bolivia's population—more than in any other Latin America country. The two main groups are the **Aymara**, who are thought to be descended from the Tiwanakan culture, and the **Quechua**, who prize their Incan history. Today, a proud emblem of Bolivia's native peoples is the **Whipala**, a checkered flag of 49 squares in seven different colors (one version is shown here). The squares represent the many different native communities and the bonds between them, and the colors represent important ideas: **Red** – the Earth and the Andean man; **Orange** – Society and culture; **Yellow** – Energy; **White** – Time; **Green** – Natural resources; **Blue** – the heavens and the infinite; **Violet** – Andean government and self-determination.



About the Dances...



Tinku: A ritual dance of combat that sometimes adds the word *sangre* (blood) to its name.

Pujillay: A festival dance to the *Pachamama*, or Mother Earth. The word means “game” or “to play.” Its festival includes flowered ladders adorned with fruit and sweets, which decorate the playing area and are then enjoyed by participants after the celebration.



Tobas: A dance of shamanism and magic that sometimes honors the jaguar, this dance is a favorite of young people because of its acrobatic leaps and great energy. The costumes sometimes feature large feathered headdresses or masks.

Caporales: A dance originating as a way to mimic the differences between the Spanish masters and Indian slaves. The flashy costumes are quite different from the others, reflecting an adaptation of European style. The noise made by the bells on the Caporal's boots is symbolic of the chains worn by the slaves. In the modern day they represent a festive freedom.

...and the Dancers

Alma Boliviana, or “Bolivian Soul,” was founded in 1991 to cultivate and share the folkloric dances of Bolivia. The fact that most members are aged from 5 and 20, and that several come from non-Bolivian backgrounds, testifies to the group's success in passing on these traditions. Based in the DC area, these young dancers have appeared at the Kennedy Center, in presidential inauguration celebrations, and at community festivals, and have also been invited to perform in New Jersey, Florida, and New York. See their website, www.almaboliviana.org.

Sociedad Cultural Tradiciones Bolivianas, or “Bolivian Traditions,” was started by an enthusiastic group of Bolivian mothers committed to paying tribute to their ancestors by preserving and sharing the culture, music, dance, and traditions of Bolivian communities. Working together, kids and adults present dances based on the different regional forms of the **huayno**, a pre-Hispanic dance of the Incan empire.

Centro Cultural Bolivia, a non-profit organization, was founded in 2001 by a community of immigrants from Bolivia seeking to embrace the culture they had left behind. Nowadays, this culture has also been embraced by their children, who proudly demonstrate the agility, colorful plumed costumes, and distinctive music that characterize Bolivian folkloric dance.



More Great Music and Hispanic-Heritage-Month Fun! Don't miss Discovery Theater's vibrant **African Roots, Latino Soul**. Performances October 4-12 (the Family Special on October 6 includes salsa and merengue lessons, plus sweet treats). Call or see the DT website for details.



boliviaweb.com—links to music & much more! ♦ www.bolivia-usa.org—the Bolivian Embassy