

54 HOURS

DECEMBER 22-DECEMBER 28, 1995 LA WEEKLY

A Holiday Celebration of Song and Dance

Keeping with the spirit of the holidays—and with the diversity of Los Angeles—the 36th annual L.A. County Holiday Celebration offers an array of music and dance troupes, choirs and performance artists that encompass the multicultural essence of the city.

"We represented the Jewish population the first year we performed," says Genie Benson, a dancer who is managing director of the Keshet Chaim Dance Ensemble, which is making its third appearance at the annual show. There are now several Jewish music and dance troupes among the more than 30 professional and community groups that will converge on the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion on Sunday.

"It's a very nice thing to do for the holidays," says Benson. "We're all celebrating a happy time of year, peace on earth and all that goes with it."

The Keshet Chaim is a contemporary Israeli dance group based in the San Fernando Valley, and will be joined by other groups such as the Children of the World Choir of Beverly Hills, the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church Chorale of Pasadena, the Jazz Tap Ensemble, Bob Baker Marionette Theatre, the Gay Men's Chorus, Danza Floricanto U.S.A., Lula Washington Contemporary Dance Theatre and the Mary Star of the Sea Croatian Choir.

"A lot of people may not otherwise come to the Music Center, Benson says. "And it's always a thrill for us to perform here."

The most inspiring part of the upbeat holiday show is that it's free. Reservations are not required, but seating is on a first come, first served basis. The six-hour show begins at 3 p.m., and will be televised on KCET-TV. Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., downtown Los Angeles. Free parking. (213) 974-1396.

—LAURIE K. SCHENDEN

DANCE PICK OF THE WEEK

L.A. COUNTY HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

For dance fans who lust for those high-priced center front row and Founder's Circle seats at the Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the free annual Holiday Celebration sponsored by L.A. County is a once-a-year opportunity to live the dream. Now in its 36th year, the traditional production is associated with a spectrum of locally based choirs and music groups, but dance has generally received limited representation, usually an excerpt from *The Nutcracker* ballet. This year's lineup boasts six excellent dance groups, reflecting the range and diversity of local dance — and only one *Nutcracker* among them. While the program runs from 3 to 9 p.m., Jazz Tap Ensemble, directed by Lynn Dally, leads off the dance at 4 p.m. with its astonishing tap artists and a live jazz band. Lula Washington Youth Dance Ensemble is up at 4:30 p.m. with a sampling of her modern dance repertoire. Gemma Sandoval's Danza Floricanto/USA performs Mexican folkloric dance at 5:15 p.m., and at 6 p.m. the Joffrey Ballet offers a taste of *The Nutcracker*, which occupies the Pavilion the rest of the week. A Hasidic Russian folk dance suite from Keshet Chaim Dance Ensemble is scheduled at 6:20 p.m. and Dance Celeste presents classical Cambodian dance at 6:40 p.m. Be warned — start times are only estimates. In other good news, not only is the performance without charge, the parking is also free. At the Music Center's Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., dntwn.; Sun., Dec. 24, 3 p.m. (213) 974-1396. See Good Times for complete schedule.



Keshet Chaim Dance Ensemble

—Ann Haskins

We also recommend: *Joffrey Ballet of Chicago* at the Music Center, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Fri.-Sat., Tues.-Wed.; *Los Angeles Classical Ballet* at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, Fri.-Sun.