



KAIXO!*

In mid-October, Dan Ansotegui sent me an E-mail describing two wonderful events that occurred at the Great Basin Folk Festival in Elko, Nevada, September 18-21. The Festival invited trikitixa masters: Joseba Tapia, accordionist, and Xabier Leturia, tambourinist, from the Basque Country. Trikitixa refers to the genre of music played by a button accordionist accompanied by a tambourine player, or to the combination of those instruments.

When Dan learned that his former masters Tapia and Leturia would be giving a concert in Elko, he thought it would be great to take the Txantxan Gorriak students he and tambourine player Sean Auccutt teach. In conversation with Merry Lea Hemstra, one of the festival organizers, they arranged for the Txantxan Gorriak to attend workshops with the visiting artists and to participate in a contest.

Txantxan Gorriak—children, families, and instructors—rented a bus and left for Elko. Olaia Urquidi and Madalen Bieter placed first in the trikitixa contest, followed by Eneko Bereziartua and Nick Ansotegui who took second place. To top it off, Olaia and Madalen opened for Tapia and Leturia's closing concert.

Shortly after receiving Dan's message, I went to the Basque Center on a Tuesday night to interview the winners. Dan and I sat with Nick and Olaia so they could retell their experiences.

Olaia, Nick, and Eneko are amazingly like any other children their age. Olaia loves hanging out with friends, ice skating, and roller blading. She continues to learn and play the accordion for younger dancers desiring live music, and she wants to teach others how to play the songs she knows. Nick likes guitar music and wants to be a rock guitarist when he grows up. He learned new rhythms from Leturia and is familiar with jotas, jaranas, marches, and waltzes.

Olaia, Nick, and Eneko continue a family tradition of musicianship initiated by grandfather Domingo Ansotegui, who accompanied Jim Jausoro on the tambourine; a tradition continued by Dan, Nick's father and Olaia and Eneko's "tio." Seemingly unaware of their role in continuing their family's



Dan, Olaia, and Nick, Basque Center, Boise. MCG photos.

musical heritage, they play music as if it is what they are supposed to do, naturally, with few questions.

While participating in the trikitixa workshops, Olaia was pleasantly surprised that "tio" Dan had already taught her some of the same songs that Tapia was teaching in the workshop. "It was easy," said Olaia, referring to Tapia's instruction and the contest. Getting her to tell that she and her tambourine player Madalen Bieter had earned first prize was a more difficult task.

Nick, at age nine, accompanies his father during community presentations, and when they play for the youngest group of Basque dancers. He played unabashedly with Dad at the Trailing of the Sheep Festival in Ketchum this fall. He and cousin Eneko form a trikitixa ensemble. This winter, Eneko will be playing a signed accordion he bought from Tapia during the Great Basin Folk Festival.

Stories such as these underscore the importance of the continuation of artistic and cultural traditions within families and their extended communities. Dan has been an apprentice to Tapia; Sean has been an apprentice to Leturia; together they teach Olaia, Eneko, and Nick, who will teach others in turn as they master their instruments and repertoires.

- Maria Carmen Gambliel, Director, Folk & Traditional Arts Program

Learning Trikitixa is supported through the Traditional Arts Apprenticeships program, along with other artistic expressions of different communities such as quilting, community traditional dance, instrument-making, cowboy and horse gear-making, foodways, rosemaking.

For information on how to apply for Traditional Arts Apprenticeships, E-mail the Folk & Traditional Arts Program director at mgambliel@ica.state.id.us or call 208/334-2119, ext. 32 or 800/278-3863. Upcoming deadline: March 1, 2004.

*Hello!



Basque Center, Boise.