

PRESS RELEASE:

December 16, 2008

For immediate release:

Through December 28, 2008

For more information:

Laura C. Lieberman, 770/949-2787

Lorraine Tully, 678/741-5318

DIA DE LOS REYES FESTIVAL AT THE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

Douglasville, Georgia – The Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County presents the second annual *Dia de los Reyes* Festival, January 6th, from 4 until 6 p.m., at the Cultural Arts Center. Supported in part by members of the Chamber of Commerce’s Hispanic Business RoundTable with the assistance of Spanish Honor Society students in Turner Middle and Lithia Springs High Schools, this family *fiesta* celebrates the Latino holiday with the Magi, music and much, much more.

Not only will the Three Kings – Melchor, Gaspar and Baltazar – be there, but the well-known Atlanta-based trio, *Tahino* will perform *Sabor Latino* with music from the Caribbean, South and Central America, and Mexico; clowns will create sculpture from balloons; carols will be sung in Spanish and English by St. Theresa’s Bilingual Youth Choir; traditional foods (like *rosca* cakes, grapes and *tamales*) and drinks like *atole* (a special Mexican hot chocolate thickened with corn meal), *tamarindo* and *horchata* will be served; and there will be hands-on activities for children and their families including *piñatas* and letter-writing to the Wise Men. In this charming Hispanic tradition, children write their wishes on letters, which are tied to helium-filled balloons and then released to carry their wishes into the sky. The *Dia de los Reyes* refreshments have been donated by many local restaurants and small businesses.

Founded in 1992 to teach children in Atlanta about the wonderful music and cultures of Latin America, *Tahino* features the musical talents of Venezuelan Otto Rondon on guitar, pianist Hector Macia from El Salvador, and drummer Ivan Majorquen from Colombia on congas. Their program, *Sabor Latino*, offers a taste of music from throughout Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. Sponsored by Young Audiences of Atlanta, *Tahino* has been honored for their high-energy, educational performances with awards from Georgia State University, Cousins Middle School, and the Governor Harris and Senate Committee Chair.

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In conjunction with the *Dia de los Reyes* celebration, *Vejigante* masks and costumes from the private collection of Rosa M. Sanchez will be displayed at the Cultural Arts Center. Made from paper mache, coconut shells, metal and gourds, *Vejigante* masks are a classical example of the fusion of African, Spanish and Caribbean cultures in Puerto Rico. Every major Puerto Rican Carnival has its unique *Vejigante* character. For example, the *Fiestas de Hatillo* (a small town in Puerto Rico) commemorate the death of the Innocent Saints. The masks for these parties are made with nets of colored metal strings, representing or mocking Spanish soldiers. Traditionally, these masks are made for the *Fiestas de Santiago Apostol* (Saint James Festivals). The *Vejigante* symbolizes the Moslems that Saint James fought with in Spain. The *Vejigantes* costume consists of a large overall made of brightly colored fabric with wide sleeves that simulate wings. The masks are often coconut shells carved into grotesque faces with prominent lips and noses, teeth made of bamboo, and protruding tongues made of coconut shell. Paper mache masks often use *carton piedra* (hard cardboard), a technique developed in Spain and used in Ecuador, Mexico, Dominican Republic and Venezuela. A recent arrival in Georgia, Rosa M. Sanchez is the founder and President of *La Organización Puertorriqueños al Rescate del Arte y la Cultura, Inc.*, which has developed educational programming and community outreach activities for Hispanic communities in Massachusetts and New York since 2003.

The mission of the Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County is to nurture, guide and stimulate the enjoyment of and participation in the arts among Douglas County residents by providing an atmosphere conducive to the arts, broadening the spectrum of quality exhibits and performances available to the community, and fostering individual interactions with the arts through a wide range of satellite groups. The Cultural Arts Council and its exhibitions at the Cultural Arts Center are supported in part by the City of Douglasville, the Douglas County Board of Commissioners, and the Georgia Council for the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville/Douglas County is located at 8652 Campbellton Street in historic downtown Douglasville, Georgia. Hours of operation are Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays, 1 until 5 p.m. Directions from Atlanta: Take I-20 west 18 miles past I-285 to the Chapel Hills exit (Exit 36); stay right off the exit following signs for Campbellton Street; stay on Campbellton through 1 stop light and three stop signs; after Douglas County High School on the left, the Cultural Art Center is on the right; turn right on Duncan Street and take an immediate right into CAC's free public parking. For more information, contact the Cultural Arts Council, 770/949-2787.

THE CULTURAL ARTS COUNCIL OF DOUGLASVILLE/DOUGLAS COUNTY

8652 Campbellton Street
Douglasville, Georgia 30134
Phone 770/949-2787 Fax 770-949-5788

www.artsdouglas.org

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CALENDAR LISTINGS: FESTIVALS

TITLES: *DIA DE LOS REYES FESTIVAL*

PLACE: The Cultural Arts Center of Douglasville / Douglas County
8652 Campbellton Street
Douglasville, Georgia 30134

DATES: Tuesday, January 6, 2009
4 – 6 p.m.

COST: Free and open to the public

CONTACT: Laura C. Lieberman, 770-949-2787