

# ZOELLNER ARTS CENTER

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY



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PLAYBILL



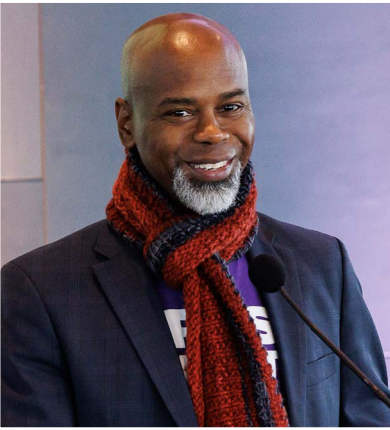


Photo By John Kish IV

## DEAR FRIENDS,

We are at the beginning of a new arts Renaissance. There are moments when one can feel the shifting tides of change and that moment is now as people return to live performing arts. I have had many conversations about the role of the arts in bringing our diverse urban, suburban, and rural Lehigh Valley communities together through shared experiences. The 2024-2025 season will rejuvenate our spirits through world-class artists as we continue to gather.

Montreal-based Cirque Kikasse starts our Presenting Series with a unique twist,

performing their production of *Santé* in front of Fritz Laboratory on our Lehigh University campus. This one-of-a-kind FREE performance, set on a food truck, will connect our campus, surrounding community, and local students in a truly memorable way. Our dedication to inclusivity and diversity in the arts is exemplified by our partnership with the internationally acclaimed disability arts ensemble, Kinetic Light. Their residency, a testament to our shared values, will intertwine with Touchstone Theatre's Festival Unbound, culminating in a breathtaking performance of *DESCENT*. This dance performance promises to be a powerful and moving experience, showcasing the transformative power of art and the positive impact of our partnerships.

In case you missed Marc Martel's sold-out tribute to Queen the last time, he is returning to perform his spectacular show, *One Vision of Queen*. I knew he had to come back. I could not go anywhere without people asking me to bring him back. He's back. And if you happen to be asking for a little R.E.S.P.E.C.T., join us for an electrifying tribute celebrating the music of the legendary Aretha Franklin.

With our commitment to nurturing the next generation of art enthusiasts and helping create a healthy community, we continue our Family Series partnership with Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital events like Family Day Fest, a celebration of community partners, free activities, and music by Somos Amigos featuring Sonia de la Santos and the Grammy Award-winning band, The Okee Dokee Brothers.

Zoellner Arts Center embraces our role as a university-based presenter to transcend entertainment. Lehigh University student artists are integral to this construct as they present concerts and plays celebrating their creativity and that of the faculty that inspires them.

We strive to empower the youth of our community by curating and co-curating high-quality multidisciplinary arts programs with educators that integrate the arts into their classrooms and inspire students to create their own artwork. We remain steadfast in our commitment to foster meaningful dialogue by utilizing the arts as a lens through which we explore and celebrate our shared humanity.

*Mark Fitzgerald Wilson*

Executive Director

# THANK YOU

## Leadership Funding: Victoria E. and Robert E. Zoellner '54 '15GP

### PROGRAM SUPPORT



### MEDIA PARTNERS



### ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Curtain Warmers: **The Arnan and Marlene Finkelstein Endowment Fund**

School Shows: **Richard H. Johnson '73G**

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Creative Campus Initiative: Supported in part by the

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Notations: **Lehigh University Creative Writing Program** and **Zoellner Arts Center**

Temple Grandin: **Lehigh University College of Education** and **Lehigh University Autism Services**

### SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



Zoellner Arts Center receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.





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APR 4 Friday  
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**CALPULLI**  
MEXICAN DANCE COMPANY

*PUEBLA: THE STORY OF CINCO DE MAYO*



**ZOELLNER**  
**ARTS CENTER**  
LEHIGH UNIVERSITY



2024.2025  
SEASON

Zoellner Arts Center receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.





**Calpulli Mexican Dance Company presents**  
***Puebla: The Story of Cinco de Mayo***

**Artistic Director:** Grisel Pren Monje  
**Music Director:** George Saenz  
**Dramaturg:** Gabriela Garcia  
**Lighting & Projections Director:** Carolina Ortiz  
**Light Editing:** Alex Velazquez  
**Stage Manager:** Leo Nobiletti  
**Story Written by:** Alberto C. Lopez Herrera & Juan Castaño

### **Cast**

**Soldier & Partner:** Jose Maria Rojas & Isabella Vergara  
**Patria/Maringuilla:** Cindy Garcia  
**Charlotte/ Carlota:** Nina Deacon  
**Maximilian:** Criis Vega  
**Napoleon III:** Juan Castaño  
**President Benito Juarez:** Andre Deosaran  
**Pueblo/ Townsfolk/ Mexican and French Soldiers:**  
Christopher Cortez, Crystal Deosaran, Adina Lopez, Yhasmine Moran,  
Carbin Palafox, Javier Rochel, Daniela Romero, and Alexi Salazar.

### **Musicians**

**Violin:** Ali Bello  
**Vocals + Guitar:** George Saenz  
**Percussion:** Yayo Serka

## DIRECTOR BIOS



### **Grisel Pren Monje – Artistic Director & Choreographer**

Grisel Pren Monje is a director, choreographer and teaching artist. She was born and raised in Cancun, Mexico and began her dance training at a young age in local dance studios. She became a professional dancer and entertainer in many of the Resorts in the Riviera Maya. In 2007, Grisel moved to the United States to study ballet, jazz, and musical theater in New York City under the International student visa program for dance and continued her dance training in renowned schools such as Broadway Dance Center, Steps on Broadway, and Alvin Ailey. She has performed and choreographed for several dance companies throughout her dance career and made her Off Broadway debut in 2012 with Zapata! The Musical at the New York Musical Festival with a principal role. In 2008, she joined the Calpulli Mexican Dance Company. She's toured with the company, both nationally and internationally. She is the co-writer for Calpulli's newest production Monarcas. As a teaching artist, Grisel works toward building an appreciation for dance and the arts by providing culturally enriched dance training and classes for children, adolescents, and adults. She currently works as a Dance Teaching Artist for Society of the Educational Arts, Center for Modern Dance Education, Grunin Performing Arts Academy, New Jersey Performing Arts Center and Calpulli Community. Grisel holds a Mexican Folk Dance teacher certification from El Ballet Folklórico de Mexico de Amalia Hernandez, a Mexican Folk Dance and Raza Technique Training Diploma from El Ballet Folklórico de la Universidad de Colima de el maestro Rafael Zamarripa and has attended and completed Traditional Mexican Dance workshops and a Stage Production training program in La Escuela Nacional de Danza Folklórica in Mexico City.



### **George Saenz – Music Director**

Trombonist/Multi-instrumentalist, composer, arranger and educator, George Saenz is originally from Laredo, Texas. In May 2005, he moved to Boston, Massachusetts to study brass performance and jazz composition at Berklee College of Music. Since graduating in 2008, he performed with many award-winning artists such as Gloria Estefan and The Edge (U2), Ruben Blades, McCoy Tyner at the Montreal Jazz Festival, Bob Mintzer at the Berklee Concert Jazz Orchestra, The Cornerstone Chorale and Brass Ensemble at Carnegie Hall, Maria Schneider and The Berklee Concert Jazz Orchestra, and Phil Wilson's Rainbow Band at the Beantown Jazz Festival. In addition to playing the trombone, Mr. Saenz is also a talented button accordionist, bassist, pianist, guitarist and composer/arranger, having an original arrangement of the jazz standard "I Love You" be debuted at the Heineken Jazz Festival in Puerto Rico in 2008. Mr. Saenz now resides and works in New York City, working as a freelance musician, composer/arranger and educator.



### **Gabriela Garcia – Dramaturg & Choreographer**

Gabriela Garcia is an artist dividing her time between the theater, dance, commercial and education industries. She holds a BA in Performing Arts from Saint Mary's College of California, and is Co-Founder and Director of R.Evolución Latina (RL), a nonprofit organization making a difference through the arts. Some of her theater credits are Half Time the musical directed and choreographed by Jerry Mitchell, CHICAGO The Musical Mexico City and Vienna (Velma Kelly), CHICAGO Broadway (cast member and dance captain), CHICAGO Düsseldorf (Dance Associate), and Sweeney Todd at the Barrow Street Theater (Movement Associate). As a choreographer, she served as Associate Choreographer for Public Works' musical production of Twelfth Night. She has created works for the Joffrey Ballet School's NYC Jazz and Contemporary summer intensive performances, BC/EFA benefits, R.Evolución Latina's Choreographer Festival and for Preludio Cultural Association in Peru, where she choreographed a production of Sweet Charity and CHICAGO. Her ballet and theater dance classes have reached schools in Sweden, Peru, Mexico, China, Germany and other countries. In New York she has taught at institutions such as Ellison Ballet, PACE University, Ithaca College, and was co-coordinator for the Joffrey Ballet School's Joffrey Ensemble. Professional dance companies include Tanzforum Koeln (Germany) and Pacific Northwest Ballet. TV credits include: Succession, Jessica Jones. Film credits: In The Heights, Whatever Lola Wants (Tribeca film festival) and Enchanted. As a voiceover actor, her voice can be heard in numerous TV commercials and radio spots for the US national Hispanic market as well as Spanish language audio books. To learn more visit Gabriela-Garcia.com

## Letter from the Artistic Director

Dear Friends,

It is a great honor to have the opportunity to present to you a story based on historical facts that shows the courage, strength, hope, pride and patriotism of the Mexican people. Knowing the history of my home country is a powerful tool that has helped me understand how we have evolved as a community, what challenges we have faced, and how we can improve. Being born in Mexico fills me with pride to be able to share an artistic interpretation that celebrates the beautiful free and sovereign State of Puebla, the history and culture of Mexico and all the people who were part of the history that took place on the 5th of May.

As I write these notes to you, I am more and more amazed by the power of community. The cast, the directors, the staff, and everyone involved in making this production happen have worked tirelessly to bring this story to life for you. I am happy and honored to be part of Calpulli Mexican Dance Company, an organization that truly belongs to the community and celebrates Mexican cultural traditions.

Con cariño,

Grisel Pren Monje  
*Artistic Director*  
**Calpulli Mexican Dance Company**

Queridos Amigos,

Es un gran honor tener la oportunidad de poder presentarles una historia basada en hechos históricos que muestra la valentía, fuerza, esperanza, orgullo y patriotismo del pueblo Mexicano. Conocer la historia de mi país de origen es una poderosa herramienta que me ha ayudado a entender cómo hemos evolucionado como comunidad, qué desafíos hemos enfrentado y cómo podemos mejorar. Haber nacido en México me llena de orgullo poder compartir una interpretación artística que celebra al hermoso Estado Libre y Soberano de Puebla y su gente, la historia y cultura de México y toda la gente que fue parte de la historia del 5 de Mayo.

Mientras escribo estas notas, me sorprende cada vez más el poder de la comunidad. El elenco, los directores, el personal y todos los involucrados en hacer realidad esta producción han trabajado incansablemente para dar vida a esta historia para ti. Me siento feliz y honrada de ser parte de la Compañía de Danza Mexicana Calpulli, una organización que realmente pertenece a la comunidad y celebra las tradiciones culturales mexicanas.

Con cariño,

Grisel Pren Monje  
*Director Artístico*  
**Calpulli Mexican Dance Company**

## **SYNOPSIS**

### **Act I**

#### **1860-1862**

Our story begins in the early 1860s at the Atlixcayotl festival in the flower-covered town of Atlixco, Puebla. A young soldier proclaims his loyalty to Mexican President Benito Juárez and the efforts to implement laws that separated church and state. Nearby, a friar and members of the Mexican elite stand against his proclamation. After a tense moment, the celebration continues. Concerned about the impact the new laws could have on their authority, the friar and the elite prepare a message for their European allies.

The Emperor of France, Napoleon III, receives the message of Mexico's civil war and its growing debt to his country. The friars propose to Napoleon III a French monarchy in Mexico to serve their interests and those of the elite. They describe all the riches that he and France will gain. Convinced, Napoleon III invades Mexico and proclaims Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, the new emperor of Mexico.

#### **1864**

The newly appointed Emperors of Mexico, Charlotte of Belgium and Maximilian, arrive in Mexico City at the capitol buildings of the Zócalo. They are greeted by Mexican aristocrats who exuberantly demonstrate support for the French monarchy hopeful for the opportunities it will create for them. The Mexican aristocrats showcase their imitation of French dance and are surprised when the empress displays interest in Mexico's native traditions.

### **Act II**

#### **1862**

The bright head piece honors the Quetzal bird, and its connection to the Aztec gods. The dances proudly represent Puebla, patriotism, and loyalty to President Benito Juárez as a leader against French intervention. At the same time, the strongest army of the time approaches the city of Puebla with its united force of French soldiers and foreign mercenaries.

On April 28, 1862, just a few days before the Battle of Puebla, a small Mexican army was unable to hold back the French forces at the Battle of Acultzingo, where our young soldier was mortally wounded. La Maringuilla, a mystical healer, performs a ritual of Totonac and African descent to heal the soldier to fight another day.

The soldier says goodbye to his loved ones. They are aware that the Mexican army has few soldiers and, even with commoners in arms, is much smaller than the approaching French army. A defeat seems certain, but they persist with courage. The soldier arrives at the Fort of Loreto and Guadalupe. On May 5, 1862, outnumbered but not out spirited, the Mexicans fought bravely and without end. To their own disbelief, the Mexican soldiers are triumphant. The strongest army in the world was defeated today in Puebla.

The people of Puebla celebrate their amazing feat by returning to their families and full of hope for the years to come.

## **SINOPSIS**

### **Acto I**

#### **1860-1862**

Nuestra historia comienza a principios de la década de 1860 en la fiesta de Atlixcayotl, en el pueblo floreado de Atlixco, Puebla. Un joven soldado proclama su lealtad al presidente mexicano Benito Juárez y a los esfuerzos por implantar leyes que separan Iglesia y Estado. Cerca de él, un fraile y miembros de la élite mexicana se oponen a su proclamación. Tras un momento de tensión, la celebración continúa. Preocupados por el impacto que las nuevas leyes podrían tener en su autoridad, el fraile y la élite preparan un mensaje para sus aliados europeos.

El emperador de Francia, Napoleón III, recibe el mensaje de la guerra civil de México y de su creciente deuda con su país. Los frailes proponen a Napoleón III una monarquía francesa en México que sirva a sus intereses y a los de la élite. Le describen todas las riquezas que él y Francia obtendrán. Convencido, Napoleón III invade México y proclama a Maximiliano, archiduque de Austria, nuevo emperador de México.

#### **1864**

Los recién nombrados emperadores de México, Carlota de Bélgica y Maximiliano, llegan a Ciudad de México a los edificios capitolinos del Zócalo. Son recibidos por aristócratas mexicanos que manifiestan exuberantemente su apoyo a la monarquía francesa con la esperanza de las oportunidades que les creará. Los aristócratas mexicanos muestran su imitación de la danza francesa y se sorprenden cuando la emperatriz muestra interés por las tradiciones autóctonas de México.

### **Acto II**

#### **1862**

El brillante tocado honra el ave Quetzal, y su conexión con los dioses aztecas. Las danzas representan con orgullo a Puebla, el patriotismo y la lealtad al Presidente Benito Juárez como líder contra la intervención francesa. Al mismo tiempo, el ejército más fuerte de la época se acerca a la ciudad de Puebla con su fuerza unida de soldados franceses y mercenarios extranjeros.

El 28 de abril de 1862, pocos días antes de la batalla de Puebla, un pequeño ejército mexicano es incapaz de contener a las fuerzas francesas en la batalla de Acultzingo, donde nuestro joven soldado resulta herido de muerte. La Maringuilla, una curandera mística, realiza un ritual de ascendencia Totonaca y Africana para sanar al soldado y que pueda luchar un día más.

El soldado se despide de sus seres queridos. Son conscientes de que el ejército mexicano tiene pocos soldados e, incluso con plebeyos en armas, es mucho más pequeño que el ejército francés que se aproxima. La derrota parece segura, pero persisten con valor. El soldado llega al Fuerte de Loreto y Guadalupe. El 5 de mayo de 1862, superados en número pero no en espíritu, los mexicanos luchan valientemente y sin descanso. Asombrados de sí mismos, los soldados mexicanos triunfan. El ejército más fuerte del mundo ha sido derrotado hoy en Puebla.

Los poblanos celebran su asombrosa hazaña volviendo con sus familias y llenos de esperanza para los años venideros.

**Program**                      **PUEBLA: The Story of Cinco de Mayo**

- Atlixco de las Flores**                      Choreography: Grisel Pren Monje; Noemy Hernandez  
Songs: 1) Son Apareado 2) Jarabe Poblano (El Guajito y El durazno)  
Costumes: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera; Agustina Juarez; Araceli Mendez  
Choreography: Carlos Islas  
Songs: 1) El Pahuatleco 2) Las Poblanitas  
Costumes: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera; Jose Ixcoy
- Los Frailes/ The Friars**                      Choreography: Juan Castaño  
Songs: 1) La Martiniana 2) Excerpts from “Kyrie Chant,” “Agnus Dei Polyphony”, and  
“Dies Irae”; Recording by Chanticleer/ Brainwave Sync  
Costumes: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera; Jose Ixcoy; Agustina Juarez
- Carlota & Maximiliano**                      Choreography: Noemy Hernandez, Grisel Pren Monje & Javier Dzul  
Songs: 1) The Merry Widow 2) El Schottische 3) China Poblana 4) Espuelas de Amozoc  
Costumes: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera; Araceli Mendez; Alonso Ojeda; Agustina Juarez;  
Amanda Gladu

INTERMISSION

- Los Quetzales**                      Choreography: Noemy Hernandez & Juan Castaño  
Songs: 1) Danza de los Quetzales 2) Danza de la Mariposa  
Costumes: Agustina Juarez; Alberto C. Lopez Herrera
- Pañuelo Floreado**                      Choreography: Grisel Pren  
Song: "Los Comanches"  
Costumes: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera
- The French March  
Towards Puebla**                      Choreography: Javier Dzul & Juan Castaño  
Songs: 1) Tambours 2) La Marseillaise Flotte de Toulon  
Costumes: Amanda Gladu
- Acultzingo**                      Choreography: Grisel Pren Monje  
Song: Danza de Negritos  
Costumes: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera; Jose Ixcoy; Alonso Ojeda
- Noche Triste (The sad night)**                      Choreography: Javier Dzul & Grisel Pren Monje  
Songs: 1) Canción Mixteca 2) Adiós al Soldado  
Costumes: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera; Jose Ixcoy
- La Batalla de Puebla  
(The Battle of Puebla)**                      Choreography: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera, Noemy Hernandez, & Grisel Pren Monje  
Song: La Muerte Chiquita  
Costumes: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera; Amanda Gladu
- Musical Interlude                      Canto de la Chinaca
- Puebla Linda**                      Choreography: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera  
Songs: 1) Puebla Linda 2) Que Chula es Puebla  
Costumes: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera; Agustina Juarez; Alonso Ojeda; Araceli Mendez

## CHOREOGRAPHERS

### **Juan Castaño, Executive Director and Co-Founder**

Juan Castaño co-founded Calpulli Mexican Dance Company with the vision of celebrating and serving the Mexican and Mexican-American community across the USA. Mr. Castaño, a native of El Paso, TX, holds an MBA in General Management from the Metropolitan College of New York. He also holds a BA in Chemistry and studied Latin American Studies while at Grinnell College in Iowa. There he also began his studies of folk dance with student instructor Alicia Gonzalez. He continued his training in NYC with several choreographers most notably Noemy Hernandez, Daniel Jaquez, and Alberto Lopez. With over 20 years of dance experience in Mexican folk dance, Mr. Castaño is a Master Teacher with the YoungArts Foundation. In recent years, he is a guest choreographer for Calpulli Mexican Dance Company, setting pieces for several productions and co-writing "Puebla: The Story of Cinco de Mayo" and "Navidad: A Mexican-American Christmas," with the latter pulling from his upbringing on the US-Mexico border. He studied Arts Administration as continuing education at New York University and is a certified Non-Profit Financial Professional via the Fiscal Management Associates. Mr. Castaño is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) via the Project Management Institute. Since 2003, Mr. Castaño has worked as a managing director, teaching artist, grant writing, and producer in the arts and beyond. Specifically, he is currently an Associate Director at Pfizer supporting research and development projects. Castaño is inspired by the quality of the artistic and cultural programming by Calpulli, with whom he is still a dancer. Accessibility of high quality community programs, serving hundreds of students and families, is also a driving force for his dedication to the performing arts.

### **Alberto C. Lopez Herrera, Director of Arts-In-Education & Co-Founder**

Mr. Lopez Herrera is a Choreographer, Costume Designer & Maker, and Teaching Artist with over 30 years of experience in Mexican Folklorico. Originally from San Antonio Chiltepec in Puebla, Mr. Lopez Herrera began his studies of Mexican folkloric dance at the age of 12 at the Centro Escolar Benito Juárez de Acatlán de Osorio. He completed the National Dance Institute's intensive Teaching Artist training in New York. Mr. Lopez Herrera was a dancer and choreographer with several groups and companies working with distinguished choreographers Francisco Nevarez and Clarissa Marcovich. He continues to create traditional garments used in Mexican folkloric dance. With great attention to detail, he designs garments from across Mexico. His pivotal role in costuming can be seen throughout the company's repertoire. Under his Artistic Direction, Calpulli Mexican Dance Company performed at noted venues including Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (Inside/Out Series), Wortham Center (Houston, TX), Humboldt State University, the Kingdom of Bahrain, Penn State Erie, and Lincoln Center Out of Doors, where Dance Critic Brian Siebert hailed Calpulli a "terrific company" after its performance. Mr. Lopez Herrera was named "Star of Queens" by the Queens Courier for his artistic accomplishments and commitment to community arts programming. He was also featured by People en Español in the program "New American Voices" and is a Crain's NY 2022 Notable Hispanic Leader. He was co-choreographer with Joshua Bergasse and dramaturg of the off-Broadway production "A Crossing." Most recently, Mr. Lopez Herrera was commissioned by the Ft. Wayne Dance Collective in Indiana for contemporary and folkloric dances telling dia de muertos-inspired stories. Mr. Lopez was also Calpulli Mexican Dance Company's Artistic Director from 2013 to 2023.

### **Javier Dzul**

Javier Dzul grew up in the jungles of southern Mexico, performing Maya ritual dance and studying ancient Maya teachings under the direction of his parents. Formal dance training began at the Universidad de Veracruz, followed by the Ballet Nacional de Cuba and the Martha Graham School. Javier performed as a Principal Dancer with Ballet Nacional de Mexico and Ballet Folklorico de Mexico and in New York with the Martha Graham Dance Company, Pearl Lang Dance Theater, Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble and American Indian Dance Theatre. Javier created Dzul Dance in 2003. He and his diverse company of performers have been presented throughout the world, garnering reviews that hail Dzul's "acrobatic wizardry" (*Attitude: The Dancers' Magazine*) and his ability to turn his dancers of "remarkable elasticity into creatures of the air as well as of the earth." (*The New York Times*). Javier was commissioned by Calpulli in Spring 2018 to create "Xibalba" for the production *Boda Mexicana*.

### **Noemy Hernandez**

Noemy Hernandez is a passionate choreographer, artistic director, and arts administrator. Ms. Hernandez earned Certificate in Arts Management from the UC Irvine Paul Merage School of Business And Claire Trevor School of the Arts and a B.F.A. in Dance from the University of California, Irvine with a Choreography Specialization. She works



extensively in New York and Los Angeles. As Artistic Director of Calpulli Mexican Dance Company in New York City through 2014, she choreographed for The Brooklyn Philharmonic and collaborated with Grammy Award-winning artist Arturo O'Farrill & his Jazz Orchestra. Her choreography was presented at the Bahrain Grand Prix in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the New York Metropolitan Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, and NYC's Shakespeare in the Park. She coached finalists for the Young Arts Foundation, and has worked as a Teaching Artist in public schools and for several non-profit organizations. Ms. Hernandez co-founded the nonprofit organization, Everyday Arts. Ms. Hernandez was Calpulli Mexican Dance Company's second Artistic Director from 2009 to 2013.

### **Carlos Islas**

Originally from Mexico City, Carlos Islas began dancing at age six and was 12 when he entered the Escuela Nacional de Danza Folklórica, where he served as a representative group dancer for 6 years. Mr. Islas graduated with a degree in Mexican folkloric dance from the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes de México. He performed with several companies in different important forums in Mexico such as Palacio de Bellas Artes, Auditorio Nacional, Teatro de la Ciudad, Teatro de la Danza, Estadio Azteca y Centro Nacional de las Artes to name a few. In 2005 he founded "Estampas de México" dance company with which he has represented Mexico in more than 20 countries on 4 continents. He has worked as a teacher and choreographer at the Escuela del Ballet Folklórico de México de Amalia Hernández, Academia de la Danza Mexicana, y Escuela Nacional de Danza Folklórica. He has judged dance competitions in the Philippines, South Korea and Romania.

## **DANCERS**

**José María Rojas** is a professional dancer and teacher of traditional Argentine folklore originally from Paraná, Entre Ríos, Argentina. Starting from the age of 6, José participated in various folkloric contests and festivals in Argentina. His passion for dance encouraged José to develop other dance techniques such as ballet, jazz and contemporary. José also had the opportunity to participate in the production between the Municipal Dance School of Paraná and the Teatro Colon of Buenos Aires, on two occasions: *Don Quixote* and *Giselle*. In 2015, José received a full scholarship to the Joffrey Ballet School in New York City. José is an independent professional dancer residing in New York. He has worked with different companies and choreographers such as: Ballet Hispanico, Arim Dance Company, Amalia Basanta Hernandez of National Folkloric Ballet of Mexico, American Swiss Ballet Company, D'Zul dance Company, Axelrod Contemporary Dance Company, and has had the opportunity to perform at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Dumbo Dance Festival, New York City Center, Alvin Ailey Dance Theater, Victory Dance Theater, Town Hall Theater. He currently works for Calpulli Mexican Dance Company, Connecticut Ballet, and other Tango and Argentine Folklore projects.

**Isabella Vergara** is a multifaceted Mexican-American artist from Westfield, NJ. She graduated Summa Cum Laude with a B.F.A. in Dance from Mason Gross School of The Arts at Rutgers University in 2018. In 2019, she joined Calpulli Mexican Dance Company where she started training in baile folklórico. Since then she has worked her way up from understudy to performing principal roles. As a dancer in the greater New York area, she has performed with companies such as Dzul Dance, Oca Dance, and most recently was a company member with Ballet Hispánico for 2 years. Throughout her career she has performed works by renowned artists such as Yvonne Rainer, Martha Graham, Lar Lubovitch, Pam Tanowitz, Maxine Doyle, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Omar Román De Jesús, and Michelle Manzanales. Vergara is also the Social Media Manager for Calpulli, a 200 hour RYT, and a member of LXDEA the Latinx Dance Educators Alliance.

**Cindy Garcia** started dancing at the age of seven at Callina's Classical School of Ballet in Astoria, NY. She went to CUNY, Queens College and earned a BA in Drama Theatre and Dance, where she had the opportunity to study with Professor Edisa Weeks and Yin Mei. She was part of the Queens College competitive dance team. In 2014, she participated in ACDFA (American College Dance Festival Association) representing Queens College with her choreographed flamenco piece "Cinco Flores," and was awarded The Farah Marcelus Award for Choreography at Queens College.

**Nina Deacon** has the delight of having a very varied professional career! Off-Broadway credits include *Tchaikovsky – A New Stage Play*, *Still on the Corner*, *Finding the Golden Bird* (lead), and *Lake of Sorrows* (Odile). Dance company credits include Ballet for Young Audiences, Jersey City Ballet, Homo Veritas Dance Theatre, New American Youth Ballet (guest artist). She is honored to have danced in Broadway Cares *Easter Bonnet*. She currently is a principal dancer with Ballade Ballet Theatre. Nina feels so blessed to be dancing with this amazingly wonderful Calpulli Mexican Dance Company!

**Criis Vega** is a dancer, actor and singer from Oaxaca, Mexico, raised in Mexico City. He graduated from Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA - EIA4). When he was 18 he received a scholarship to study at Joffrey Ballet School Musical theatre Program and months later at the Institute for American Musical Theatre (IAMT) NYC and Graduated as a Musical Theater dancer. He has danced on important stages in Mexico City such as Teatro Metropolitan and Auditorio Nacional dancing with the National Dance Company of Mexico City and in New York City at Apollo theater and Off-Broadway at New Victory Theatre. Working with renowned artists on Broadway such as Andrew Drost (*Phantom of the Opera*), Justin Ramos (*Here Lies Love* and *Dear Evan Hansen*). His great passion is musical theater and his dream roles are Angel from the musical *RENT* and May from *Juliet*. Criis Vega is also teaching Artist with Calpulli Mexican Dance Company and The Museum of Broadway. *"I just wanna thank God, my mom, family, friends and teachers for helping me to achieve my dreams."* - Make it Shine.

**Juan Castaño** began his dance training at Grinnell College with student instructor Alicia Gonzalez. More than 24 years later, he has performed with several companies in NYC, is a Master Teacher with the YoungArts Foundation, and co-founded Calpulli. He co-developed, co-wrote, and choreographed works for several of Calpulli's productions and conducted research projects in the US and Mexico involving folkloric dance. He is a dancer, arts administrator, and educator in the arts. He holds a BA in Chemistry and MBA in Management.

**Andre Deosaran** is a Mexican Trinidadian American born and raised in NYC. Andre started his folklórico dance training with the Calpulli Community program in 2011. He received "Honorable Mention" from the prestigious YoungArts Foundation 2019 National Competition in the Mexican Folkloric World Dance Forms category and completed their Regional Program and Showcase in Miami. Andre officially joined the company in 2021 and has been performing in a variety of productions ever since. Andre graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Engineering degree in Biomedical Engineering from the CUNY City College of New York and now works as a Biomedical Engineer at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

**Christopher Cortez** is a California native who began his Folklorico training at 17 yrs old in Righetti High's The Marimba Band and Ballet Folklorico group and then continued at Allan Hancock College where he graduated in 2011 with an AA in Fine Arts: Dance. In 2012 Cortez joined Calpulli for their 2012/13 calendar year, attended Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and graduated in 2015 with a Certificate in Dance. He continued in his professional career primarily with touring companies Calpulli Mexican Dance Co and Ballet Nepantla. Due to the pandemic, Christopher chose to return to California in 2020 and began studying the healing modality of Massage Therapy where he graduated in 2021 from San Diego's Pacific College of Health & Science. His return to NYC in late 2022 also marked his return to dance after 3 years. During his free time, Cortez can be found enjoying a new spot to eat, exploring skincare, going to the movie theater, visiting a thrift store, enjoying the performing arts, finding inspiration for independent dance projects and traveling when possible.

**Crystal Deosaran** is originally from Atlixco, Puebla, México. She began dancing folklorico in summer festivals in her hometown. Crystal began her training as a dancer with Calpulli and has been a performing artist with the company since 2010. She has traveled and performed with Calpulli nationally and internationally in places like Queens Theatre, Lincoln Center, Jacob's Pillow, Kingdom of Bahrain, Istanbul, etc. Crystal has served as Program Coordinator for the Calpulli Community Program in Staten Island and continues to collaborate in diverse educational and cultural projects. Crystal is a proud Calpulli Board Member. Crystal received her BS in International Business and Marketing from the College of Staten Island, CUNY and her MBA in Marketing from Baruch College, CUNY.

**Adina Lopez** played music from the age of eight and continued until she was 18 years old. Thereafter, she began dancing and joined Ballet Tierra Nueva Mexicana for six years. Adina has been a dancer with Calpulli for 14 years. She credits many different artists who have helped her grow as a dancer and performer learning zapateado, skirtwork, ballet technique, and dance theater from choreographers including Martha Zarate, Daniel Jaquez, and Noemy Hernandez. She has learned about the history of dances, different regional styles, and how to be a teaching artist from Calpulli's former Artistic Director, Alberto Lopez.

**Yhasmine Moran** is a Mexican Indigenous advocate, dancer, teaching artist, and choreographer based in New York City. Born in Brooklyn, NY, Yhasmine was raised in Acatlán de Osorio, Puebla, Mexico. She earned her BA in Dance from Hunter College and has participated in emerging artist mentorship programs such as the inaugural National Cohort of the LatinXtensions Program by David Herrera Performance Company and the JuntosxChange Program by Juntos Collective. Yhasmine has been an active dancer with Calpulli for 10 years, performing with the company at renowned venues including Lincoln Center, Town Hall, Queens Theatre, Jacob's Pillow, the New Victory Theater, the Apollo Theater, and the Is Sanat in Istanbul, Turkey. She has performed for Grammy Award-winner Lila Downs, the legendary Mexican group Los Tigres del Norte and exponent of Jarocha Music, Tlen Huicani. Additionally, she is a dancer with Mexico Beyond Mariachi and Mexica Danza Folklórica, where she also serves as Assistant Director. She is a proud daughter of immigrants.

**Carbin Palafox** joined Calpulli Community when she was 7 years old and has been with Calpulli since 2006. She went to William Cullen Bryant High School, where she joined a dance club and learned jazz and ballet technique. In 2020 she graduated from Hunter College, where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Film while also minoring in Theatre. In pursuit of expanding her technique she was also enrolled in multiple ballet courses at Hunter. Currently she is a teaching artist assistant in training with Calpulli Community.

**Javier Rochel** (he/him/él) is a Mexican-American artist born in El Paso, TX who grew up in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua and currently based in Queens, NY. Inspired by his sister, he started to dance in several Mexican Folk groups when he was 11 and was part of musical theatre school productions. Rochel has a BFA in Dance from Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo, graduating with honors. He continued his training on scholarship with Joffrey Ballet School Texas. He was part of the first generation of Ballet Hispánico Pa'lante SoD Professional Studies having attended dance intensives such as Complexions Dance Academy and Martha Graham School. Professionally he was an Apprentice with Ballet Folklórico de México de Amalia Hernández and also participated with Mexico's Compañía Nacional de Danza for Swan Lake 2018, both in Palacio de Bellas Artes. He performed on National TV for the Thanksgiving Macy's Parade 2021. He has been a dancer with Nimbus Dance 2, Calpulli Mexican Dance Company and most recently finished a tour with Ballet Nepantla. At the same time, Rochel has fused his passion for dance with teaching and administrating in public and private dance schools within the United States and Mexico for five years.

**Daniela Romero** a native from Maracaibo, Venezuela, recently graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from the University of Houston. She began her dance training at DANMAR Academy of Performing Arts located in Katy, TX, where she danced professionally for their 2018/19 season. During her time at the University of Houston, Daniela was an active member of the UH Dance Ensemble for two years. She has also had the opportunity to collaborate with John Beasant & Dancers, performing at festivals such as the Solo Duo Dance Festival in New York, NY, and the Barnstorm Dance Festival in Houston, TX. Currently, Daniela is an apprentice with Calpulli Mexican Dance Company.

**Alexi Salazar** began her dance journey in Portland, Oregon at the age of 4. She joined The Jefferson Dancers Touring Company in 2011 for 3 seasons under the direction of Steve Gonzales, performing in new works across China, New York, Philadelphia, Oregon and Miami. Following her graduation from High School, she went on to receive a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. Subsequently she continued her training in the maiden 'Fire' year at Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance in Salzburg, Austria, under the direction of Susan Quinn. Since returning to the United States she has performed in original works by Alexander Dones, Eury German and Brice Mousset. Most recently she was selected to perform in an original work by Oleg Stepanov for B12's "Asteroids" Summer 2024 Festival in Berlin, Germany. She is now pursuing her Masters of Science in Dance Movement Therapy from Pratt Institute. Alexi is honored for the opportunity to dance with Calpulli and continue the legacy of Ballet Folklorico in her family. Alexi would like to thank her Parents, Abuelita, Tío Victor, Reed and Elfie for their never ending support.

## MUSICIANS

**Alí Bello** is a Venezuelan violinist who has forged a dynamic career that effortlessly bridges classical, jazz, and folkloric traditions. A product of El Sistema—Venezuela’s esteemed music education program—he honed his artistry in New York, becoming a highly sought-after performer known for his stylistic versatility and improvisational brilliance. While grounded in classical technique, Bello’s musical reach extends across jazz, pop, R&B, Middle Eastern, flamenco, and, most notably, the rich tapestry of South American music. His genre-blending approach transcends boundaries, creating a fluid and distinctive sound. He has recorded, performed, and toured with an array of world-class artists, from Paquito D’Rivera to Jay-Z, captivating audiences at major festivals and prestigious venues worldwide. Currently, Bello leads two innovative projects. His Sweet Wire Band fuses Latin jazz with Afro-Venezuelan and Caribbean influences, delivering a high-energy sound. Meanwhile, The Charanga Syndicate breathes new life into the vibrant traditions of Charanga music, offering fresh interpretations of the genre. His discography features three acclaimed albums: Connection Caracas – New York, Inheritance, and his latest, The Charanga Syndicate, all of which have garnered widespread recognition.

**George Saenz** is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, arranger and educator originally from Laredo, Texas. He graduated from Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA where he studied music performance and Jazz Composition and currently resides in New York City. He serves as musical director and educator for NYC’s Calpulli Mexican Dance Company, and works with various acclaimed musical projects, including as Musical Director, trombonist-accordionist and arranger with multi Grammy Award-winning artist Lila Downs. His travels have led him to performances and productions around the world throughout Europe, Latin America, as well as extensive tours of the United States and Canada.

**Yayo Serka** is a Chilean drummer and percussionist currently for Mexican pop singer Lila Downs and Beninese singer-songwriter Angélique Kidjo. He has also performed with Claudia Acuña, Bobby Watson, Frankie Paris, the Chico O’Farrill Orchestra, the gospel choir of the Walker Memorial Baptist Group, and various other artists.

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### **About Calpulli Mexican Dance Company**

Founded in 2003, Calpulli Mexican Dance Company has served over one million people through its various cultural performances, arts-in-education programming, and community classes and events. Based in New York City, Calpulli provides a home for artists and audiences to explore a range of themes through a Mexican folkloric lens. Calpulli creates and tours original full-scale dance theater productions featuring folkloric and contemporary dance, rich traditional and theatrical wardrobe, and both folkloric music and new compositions. Calpulli stories speak to Americans of all backgrounds, and represent an opportunity to tell Mexican American stories from a place of dignity and beauty. Calpulli tours locally and nationally, and made their international debut in the Kingdom of Bahrain in 2015 and their European debut in Turkey in 2019. In 2018, Calpulli received a prestigious National Dance Project grant from New England Foundation for the Arts for the creation of *Puebla: The Story of Cinco de Mayo*. Calpulli's five full-length productions include *Boda Mexicana*; *Día de los Muertos*; *Navidad: A Mexican American Christmas*; *Puebla: The Story of Cinco de Mayo*, and *Monarcas*. Calpulli also delivers free and donation-based music and dance lessons to Mexican and Mexican-American families in community settings; Calpulli school-based arts-in-education programs serve students, seniors, and educators. To learn more about Calpulli, visit us online at [calpullidance.org](http://calpullidance.org)

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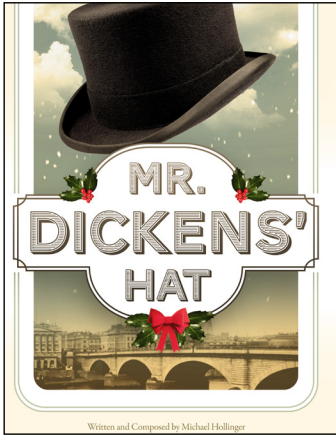
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610.625.3200 | [viamediatv.com](http://viamediatv.com)

# INFORMATION

## CAN'T MAKE IT? EXCHANGE OR DONATE YOUR TICKETS.

Contact us before the show to either **exchange** for another event, or convert the value of your tickets to a charitable contribution to Zoellner Arts Center. Subscribers and Friends may exchange for free, just \$1 per ticket for all others. Patrons are responsible for any difference in ticket price, exchanges must occur within event category (e.g., Music Dept. ticket for Music Dept. ticket). Excludes rental events. No refunds.

**PARKING IS FREE** in the garage attached to the center for all Presenting Series, Lehigh University Music Dept. and Dept. of Theatre events (excluding some weekday morning events, Christmas Vespers in Packer Chapel and Dolce in Lamberton Hall). Please note, there may be a parking charge for non-Zoellner sponsored events.

**GROUPS SAVE UP TO 15%** Just buy 10 or more tickets to a performance. Orders incur a one-time per-performance fee of \$6 per group order in lieu of per-ticket fees.

## TAXES AND FEES


Single tickets ordered by phone or online carry fees ranging from \$2.25-\$8.50 per ticket. Tickets purchased in-person may carry fees of up to 50 cents per ticket. The City of Bethlehem Amusement tax is 5% on tickets above \$10, with a cap of \$2 per ticket. Additional delivery charges may apply, check online for details.


# OUR GIFT CERTIFICATES NEVER EXPIRE.

Purchase these at Ticket Services or online  
in any amount and give  
the gift of entertainment.

Certificates cannot be redeemed for rental events.

## CONNECT WITH US!

 ZoellnerArts

 zoellnerartscenter

 zoellnerarts

 inzactix@lehigh.edu



GO TO WEBSITE

[zoellnerartscenter.org](http://zoellnerartscenter.org)

[#artshaveimpact](https://twitter.com/artshaveimpact)

# HOUSE NOTES

**Concessions:** At this time, food and beverage service will likely be limited or not available. Check the “Know Before You Go” email sent to ticket holders the week of the show. Be sure to give Ticket Services your email.

**Please silence all mobile devices upon entering the theatre.**

**To leave theatres during performances,** use the rear doors, if you are able, to minimize disruption of performance.

**Late seating occurs at suitable intervals.** While waiting, you may watch performance on lobby monitors.

**Lost & Found:** Contact Ticket Services. Not responsible for lost or stolen items.

**Families with Children:**

We welcome children of all ages to our Family Series shows. For performances not listed as Family Series in our brochure, we recommend that attendees be ages four and over. Everyone entering the theatre must have a ticket, and sit quietly in a seat throughout the performance. There are closed-circuit monitors in the lobby which supervised children may use to watch performances if they need a break.

**Accessible seating** can be requested when purchasing tickets. Accessible parking is on levels 1 and 3 in the parking garage.

**Free assistive-listening devices** are available through Ticket Services for amplified performances.

**Free Sensory Kits** are available to checkout, please inquire at the box office or with an usher.

## Questions about your tickets?

**Contact Ticket Services:**  
Phone: 610-758-2787 ext. 0  
Email: [inzactix@lehigh.edu](mailto:inzactix@lehigh.edu)

**Box Office Hours:**  
TUE 12-6; WED-FRI 12-5  
For ticketed events: SAT 2 hours prior to curtain, 90 mins. all other days.






All programs and artists are subject to change. In the event of a cancellation or material change, we will make every effort to contact all ticket holders. We must reserve the right to make any changes whatsoever in the event owing to any unforeseen or unavoidable cause or to cancel the event for any reason beyond our control without being liable to pay any ticket holder compensation for damages other than a ticket of comparable value to an event (based on availability).

Video recording or photography may occur for this performance that might include images of audience members. Your attendance at today’s performance grants permission for further usage of such images.

# ZOELLNER ARTS CENTER

## 2025 SPRING SEASON AT A GLANCE



LUVME .....	JAN 31
YAMATO: THE DRUMMERS OF JAPAN .....	FEB 1
JAZZ FACULTY .....	FEB 2
KING'S RETURN .....	FEB 7
ONE VISION OF QUEEN FEATURING MARC MARTEL .....	FEB 8
FIRST BIENNIAL SALERNI ART SONG RECITAL .....	FEB 9
PHILHARMONIC .....	FEB 14, 15
THE PRINCETON SINGERS .....	FEB 16
PROOF .....	FEB 21-MAR 1
THE ALUMINUM SHOW  FAMILY SERIES .....	FEB 22
BELLA GAIA .....	FEB 28
JAZZ REPERTORY ORCHESTRA .....	MAR 1
EUGENE ALBULESCU .....	MAR 2
ACADEMY OF ST MARTIN IN THE FIELDS .....	MAR 7
NEW YORK JAZZ REPERTORY ORCHESTRA .....	MAR 8
CHOIR, DOLCE AND GLEE CLUB .....	MAR 21, 22
GOODNIGHT MOON & THE RUNAWAY BUNNY  FAMILY SERIES .....	MAR 23
EARL.  .....	MAR 27
PASCUALA ILABACA Y FAUNA .....	MAR 28
THE SOUND OF (BLACK) MUSIC .....	MAR 29
CALPULLI MEXICAN DANCE COMPANY .....	APR 4
MICHAEL JORGENSEN, VIOLIN AND STEVE BECK, PIANO .....	APR 5
R.E.S.P.E.C.T. .....	APR 6
PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER .....	APR 10
AMERICAN BRASS QUINTET .....	APR 11
THE BOOKSTORE .....	APR 11-19
SYMPHONIC BAND  .....	APR 13
PHILHARMONIC .....	APR 25, 26
WIND ENSEMBLE .....	APR 27
CHORAL ARTS .....	MAY 2, 3
STUDENT JAZZ CONCERT .....	MAY 4
THE PAPER ESCAPER  FAMILY SERIES .....	MAY 11
THE DOO WOP PROJECT .....	MAY 17

KEY: PRESENTING SERIES | MUSIC DEPARTMENT | DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE

