



Calpulli Mexican Dance Company's
Dia de los Muertos

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Calpulli Mexican Dance Company

Dia de los Muertos



Artistic Director Grisel Pren Monje

Music Director George Saenz

Associate Music Director Alí Bello

Wardrobe Design Alberto C. Lopez Herrera, Jose Ixcoy, Rosalba Vivar,
& Agustina Juarez

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Lighting Director Carolina Ortiz

Rehearsals Assistants Christopher Cortez & Yhasmine Moran

Story Grisel Pren Monje, Roberto Lara, Juan Castaño & Alberto C.
Lopez Herrera

Cast

Act 1 & 3: World of the Living

Lupita: Stefanie Spiece

Raúl: José María Rojas

Dolores, Lupita's Sister: Crystal Deosaran

Friends of Lupita: Yhasmine Moran, Daniela Romero, & Yisel Xique

Maximiliano: Juan Castaño

Lupita's Mother: Nina Deacon

Town/ Pueblo: Sydney Almeida, Juan Castaño, Christopher Cortez, Andre Deosaran, Crystal Deosaran, Cindy Garcia, Victoria Leon, Adina Lopez, Carbin Palafox, Criis Vega, Daniel Vazquez, Lucero Velazquez, Yisel Xique

Act 2: Mictlán, World of the Dead

La Catrina, Queen of Mictlán: Gabriela Garcia

Fairies of Mictlán: Yhasmine Moran & Yisel Xique

Catrinitas: Crystal Deosaran, Sydney Almeida, Victoria Leon, Adina Lopez, Carbin Palafox, Lucero Velázquez

Muxes & Lloronas: Cindy Garcia, Juan Castaño, Christopher Cortez, Nina Deacon, Andre Deosaran, José María Rojas, Daniel Vasquez, Criis Vega

Musicians: Ali Bello, Luisa Bastidas, Jackie Coleman, Marilyn Castillo, Yahir Montes Natera, Victor Murillo, Abraham Saenz, Yayo Serka

Letter from Calpulli's New Directors

Dear Friends,

Calpulli Mexican Dance Company is so proud to be celebrating our 20th anniversary this year, sharing and elevating our beautiful Mexican traditions as well as the community we have built with our work. When this journey began in 2003, we never could have imagined that we would serve more than a million people with our performances, educational programs, and community classes. And we have so much more planned.

We announced earlier this month a transition in Artistic Direction, a change that will allow Calpulli to grow to the next level and leverage the time, passion, and expertise that we have. Together, we share a big vision for where we want Calpulli to go and are both so excited to do this work. This year we premiered a new show, *Monarcas*, that featured two immigrant stories that we were lucky to build together and showcase with supporters like you. In our 20th year, we also had more performances than ever before, expanding our touring in the northeastern USA, and we see huge interest in our education programs both in schools around NYC and in our own community classes. We hope you will continue to support our work and share it with friends and family.

As you watch *Día de los Muertos* today we hope you feel the magic and the hope that we do in beginning this next chapter with Calpulli. We are ready. *¡Estamos listos!*

Con Cariño,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grisel Pren Monje'.

Grisel Pren Monje
Artistic Director



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alberto Lopez Herrera'.

Alberto Lopez Herrera
Director of Arts-In-Education
& Co-Founder

Biographies

Grisel Pren Monje, Artistic Director

Grisel Pren Monje is a choreographer and teaching artist. She was born and raised in Cancun, Mexico to a Mayan family with deep connections to ancient culture. Pren began her dance training at a young age in local dance studios and became a professional dancer and entertainer in the resorts in the Riviera Maya. In 2007, Grisel moved to the USA to study ballet, jazz, and musical theater in New York City under the international student visa program for dance; she continued her dance training at Broadway Dance Center, Steps on Broadway, and Alvin Ailey, among others. She has performed and choreographed for several dance companies throughout her career and made her Off Broadway debut in 2012 with Zapata! The Musical at the New York Musical Festival in a principal role. In 2008, she joined Calpulli Mexican Dance Company touring both nationally and internationally. She is a 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, Guest Artist: La Catrina, and Choreographer

Gabriela Garcia is an artist dividing her time between the theater, dance, dramaturgy, & education with an extensive international career. She was the Dramaturg for *Navidad* and will support the process of tightening the storylines for each work. She choreographed *Sweet Charity* & *CHICAGO* for Preudio Cultural Association in Peru & has created works for the Joffrey Ballet School's NYC Jazz & Contemporary summer intensive performances, BC/EFA benefits & R.Evolución Latina's Choreographer Festival. Her ballet & theater dance classes have reached schools in Sweden, Peru, Mexico, China, Germany & other countries. In New York she has taught at Ellison Ballet, PACE University, Ithaca College, CAP 21 & was co-coordinator for the Joffrey Ballet School's Joffrey Ensemble. She is Co-Founder & Director of R.Evolución Latina, a nonprofit organization making a difference through the arts. To learn more visit Gabriela-Garcia.com.

Program Notes / Synopsis

Act 1

A small town in southern Mexico prepares for a celebration- the return of their beloved Lupita from her travels. Lupita's mother and sister arrive at the festivities and encounter Maximiliano, only son of the town's richest family. The town rejoices at Lupita's arrival, and that of Raul, her beloved and the town hero known for his kindness and bravery. Maximiliano reminds Lupita's mother of their deal- she keeps her status in the town in return for Lupita's hand in marriage. Upon learning of the arrangement, Lupita refuses and returns to Raul and their friends. Dejected, Maximiliano challenges Raul to a duel of which he is the loser. Blinded by vengeance after his humiliation, Maximiliano sends a poisoned drink to Raul. The deadly drink ends up mistakenly in the hands of Lupita, ending her life without the chance to say goodbye to her loved one.

Un pequeño pueblo del sur de México se prepara para una celebración: el regreso de su amada Lupita de sus viajes. La madre y la hermana de Lupita llegan a la fiesta y se encuentran con Maximiliano, hijo único de la familia más rica del pueblo. El pueblo se alegra de la llegada de Lupita y de Raúl, su amado y héroe por su bondad y valentía. Maximiliano recuerda a la madre de Lupita su acuerdo: ella mantiene su estatus en el pueblo a cambio de la mano de Lupita. Al enterarse del acuerdo, Lupita lo rechaza y vuelve con Raúl y sus amigos. Abatido, Maximiliano reta a Raúl a un duelo del que sale perdedor. Cegado por la venganza tras su humillación, Maximiliano envía una bebida envenenada a Raúl. La bebida mortal acaba por error en manos de Lupita, acabando con su vida sin poder despedirse de su amado.

[Pause, 5 min]

Act 2

Lupita is transported to Mictlán, the world of the dead, where she is received by La Catrina and her sisters. Lupita is in awe of the beauty

of this place and almost forgets about her past until, by accident, she remembers her love for Raul. La Catrina, surprised by seeing “sadness” for the first time in the world of the dead, gives Lupita an opportunity to say goodbye to her love.

Lupita se transporta a Mictlán, el mundo de los muertos, donde es recibida por La Catrina y sus hermanas. Lupita admira tan bello lugar olvidándose casi de su pasado cuando, por accidente, recuerda a su amor del alma Raúl. La Catrina, sorprendida de ver por primera vez “tristeza” en el mundo de los muertos, da a Lupita la oportunidad de despedirse de su amado.

[Intermission- 15 min]

Act 3

Lupita, guided by La Catrina, returns to the world of the living for a final dance with her loved one before returning to Mictlán. La Catrina leaves with Lupita but not before showing Raul that one day he will meet his beloved once again in the world of the departed. The realization brings hope and joy to Raul’s heart as he decorates and cares for Lupita’s resting place while the townsfolk continue to celebrate the return of their departed loved ones.

Lupita, guiada por La Catrina, regresa al mundo de los vivos para bailar por última vez con su amado antes de regresar a Mictlán. La Catrina se despide de Raúl, no sin antes dejarle saber que algún día reencontrará a su amada en el mundo de los muertos. Este fúnebre consuelo alegra el corazón de Raúl, quien da cuidado a la tumba de Lupita mientras el pueblo sigue festejando a sus amados difuntitos.

Día de los Muertos Dances & Songs

Opening Song: Morir Por Tu Amor

Choreography: Grisel Pren Monje

Song: Cerro Prieto

Choreography: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera

Song: Jarabillos

Choreography: Roberto Lara

Song : Kitri

Choreography: Roberto Lara

Lupita arrives

Song: El Jarabe Ranchero

Choreography: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera & Noemy Hernandez

Raul arrives

Song: La Presumida

Choreography: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera & Noemy Hernandez

Maximiliano

Song: El Jalisciense

Choreography: Noemy Hernandez

Song: El Gavilan

Choreography: Marta Zarate & Alberto C. Lopez Herrera

Song: Pelea de Gallos

Choreography: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera

The duel

Song: El Querreque

Choreography: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera & Noemy Hernandez

Song: Xochipitzahuatl

Choreography: Grisel Pren Monje & Roberto Lara

Lupita's Death

Song: Apparition of Myrthe
Choreography: Gabriela Garcia
Musical arrangement: George Saenz

La Catrina

Song: Pas de Premier
Choreography: Grisel Pren Monje, Roberto Lara, & Gabriela Garcia;
Musical arrangement: George Saenz

Las Catrinitas

Song: La Llorona
Choreography: Juan Castaño

Song: La Bruja
Choreography: Alberto C. Lopez Herrera & Daniel Jaquez

Song: Cucurucucu Paloma
Choreography: Joshua Bergasse

Song: Amor Eterno
Choreography: Gabriela Garcia
Musical arrangement: George Saenz

Song: El Buey
Choreography: Noemy Hernandez & Grisel Pren Monje

Song: El Jarabe Nayarita
Choreography: Noemy Hernandez & Grisel Pren Monje

Executive Director & Co-Founder: Juan Castaño

Director of Arts-in-Education & Co-Founder: Alberto Lopez Herrera

Company Manager: Corey Randle

Development & Compliance Officer: Jay House

Educational Projects Coordinator: Colleen Edwards

Bookkeeper: Patricia Burges

Board of Directors: Danny Garza (President), Juan Castaño, Crystal Deosaran (Treasurer), Angelica Guel (Secretary), Alberto C. Lopez Herrera, Juan Rodriguez, & Julio Urbina

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; Dia 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

Donors:

Calpulli's programs are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, State Senator Jessica Ramos, and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council with support from Council Members Tiffany Caban, Shekar Krishnan, Pierina Sanchez, and Julie Won. Additional support for the organization comes from Howard Gilman Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, New York Community Trust, Curtis W. McGraw Foundation, Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Pfizer, Redaoui Charitable Contribution Fund, Juan Castaño, Daniel Garza, M.D., and other individual supporters. Project support for education and community programs comes from the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation and ConEdison. Event sponsors for our 20th Anniversary Celebration include Don Paco Lopez Panderia, La New Yorkina, RGNV Winery, and San Bartolo Mezcal.

How To Support Calpulli!

Calpulli Mexican Dance Company is non-profit (501c3) arts organization. We reach thousands of audiences and students annually, sharing the majesty of our Mexican cultural heritage with them all. Your donations are critical to our sustainability and growth. Please consider supporting Calpulli's future artistic works, art-in-education programs, and community outreach by making a tax-deductible donation today. You can scan the QR code below to make a donation right now! Checks can also be made out to Calpulli Mexican Dance Company and mailed to: 2512 77th St., East Elmhurst, NY 11370.

Thank you! ¡Gracias!



Artists

Stefanie Spiece was raised in Orem, UT, where she attended her first ballet class at the age of 20. Stefanie graduated from Utah Valley University (UVU) with a BFA in Ballet before moving to New York City to begin her professional dance career with BHdos. Her performance experience includes Bhdos, FJK Dance, Calpulli Mexican Dance Company, Repertory Ballet Ensemble, and guest artist appearances with Utah Metropolitan Ballet. Her musical theater experience includes dance captain in *In the Heights* and assistant choreographer in *Little Shop of Horrors* (West Valley Arts, Utah), and ensemble in *Hello, Dolly!* (Hale Centre Theatre, Utah). Stefanie has performed at the Joyce Theater, Apollo Theater, Lincoln Center, NYC Opera, the White House, and Coliseo de Puerto Rico, as well as stages around the world with Cultural Envoy, a dance company affiliated with UVU. Stefanie's late start in dance has been featured in articles and videos published by Dance Spirit and Pointe Magazine. She teaches at Ballet Hispánico's School of Dance and continues to share her passion for dance and culture any way she can. Stefanie is so excited to return with Calpulli in this amazing production of *Día de los Muertos*!

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 Hispánico, 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.

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.

Sydney Almeida (Apprentice) is a Mexican American dancer born and raised in NYC. With 18 years of experience, she began dancing Mexican Folklorico as a way to connect to her family and roots. In 2011 she joined Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Nueva York which she credits her training to, along with teachers and investigators from across Mexico. In 2018 her desire to learn led her to produce the first Master Class in NY with Ballet Folklórico de Mexico de Amalia Hernández. She is passionate about educating the community on the diversity and beauty of Mexico by way of dance. This is her debut performance with Calpulli.

Christopher Cortez is a California native who began his Folklorico training around 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 the West Coast 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 and is also

certified by the California Massage Therapy Council (CAMTC). His return to NYC in 2022 also marked his return to dance but 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 art projects and traveling when possible.

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!

Andre Deosaran started his folklórico dance training with the Calpulli Community program in 2011. Andre received “Honorable Mention” from the prestigious YoungArts Foundation 2019 National Competition in the Mexican Folkloric World Dance Forms category. Currently, Andre is a Biomedical Engineering student at the CUNY City College of New York.

Crystal Deosaran has been a performing artist with Calpulli since 2010. She has traveled and performed with the company nationally and internationally in places like Lincoln Center, Jacob’s Pillow, The Town Hall, Apollo Theater, the Kingdom of Bahrain, Turkey and more. Crystal has served as Program Coordinator for the Calpulli Community Program in Staten Island and continues to collaborate in diverse educational and cultural projects.

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 AC DFA (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.

Victoria Leon (Apprentice) is a Folklorico dancer born and raised in New York City. Victoria started dancing in her late teenage years with various Mexican Folklorico dance groups such as Ballet Folklórico Xochiquetzal and Ballet Folklórico Nueva Juventud. In February of 2023, Victoria was part of Mexica Danza Folklorica’s Mexican polka dance production, “Asi se baila en el norte” at the Chain Theater in NYC. Prior to joining Calpulli this March, Victoria participated in a few adult dance workshops with Calpulli Community in 2018 and 2019. She is excited to premiere Calpulli’s latest dance production, Monarcas, this Spring at The Queens Theatre.

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 NYC. Born in Brooklyn, Yhasmine was raised in Acatlan de Osorio Puebla, Mexico. She earned her BA in Dance at Hunter College and is currently a dancer and rehearsal assistant with Calpulli Mexican Dance Company. Yhasmine has performed with the company at Lincoln Center, Town Hall, Queens Theatre, Jacobs Pillow, the New Victory Theater, and the Apollo Theater. In 2022, she was selected as a Latinx emerging artist to be part of the First National Cohort in David Herrera Performance Company’s LatinXtensions program.

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.

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.

Daniel Vasquez is from Sonora, México. He started his training and passion for dance and Mexican Folklore at an early age. Throughout his career, he had the opportunity to perform as a dancer and show host for companies like “Walt Disney World” “Universal Orlando Resort” “Norwegian Cruise Lines” “Nickelodeon” and “Disney Live!”

Criis Vega is a dreamer, dancer, actor and singer from Oaxaca, Mexico. Raised in Mexico City, he graduated From The National Institute of Fine Arts Mexico (INBA). He studied at The Institute for American Musical Theatre NYC, graduating as a Musical Theater dancer. He has danced on important stages in Mexico City such as Teatro Metropolitan and Auditorio Nacional, sharing stage with the National Dance Company of Mexico City. His great passion is Musical Theatre and his dream role is Angel from the musical “RENT”. -I just want to thank God, my mom Patricia, my husband Jiravat, family, friends Quetzalli & Arantza and teachers Alberto Peniche, Itzel Gali, Andrew Drost, Michael Minarik, Justin Ramos, Withney Sprayberry & Andrea Herrera for helping me to

achieve my dreams. “Make it Shine”

Lucero (Luz) Velazquez was born in Queens, NY and raised in her parents’ hometown in Puebla, Mexico. There, at the age of 6, she began to dance folklorico. She then moved back to New York and joined Ballet Xochiquetzal where she danced for 4 years and later joined Ballet Nueva Juventud. She joined Calpulli in 2016 and initiated her dance training at Hunter College, where she received her BA in psychology with a minor in dance. Lucero has had the opportunity to perform works from Kyle Abraham and participated in intensives by MODP and Contra Tiempo Company. She has worked as a dance specialist with various youth ages, teaching dance movement and creating works. Aside from dancing, Lucero works as a case planner and is a mommy to a 7 month old baby girl.

Yisel Xique graduated as a Dance Theater major from the American Musical and Dramatic Arts Conservatory in New York. A student of Calpulli Community since the age of 12, she now not only performs with Calpulli Mexican Dance Company, but also is a Teaching Artist in training with the company’s Arts-In-Education division. She is grateful for her parents who always pushed and supported her throughout her journey.

Luisa Bastidas is a Latin Grammy nominee that gives the violin a unique sound. She was born and raised in Cali Colombia and migrated to New York City in 2000. She has shared the stage with Red Bull World Champion Dancer Bboy Neguin as the resident violinist for the Kinetic Junglist Movement founded by dancer Amy Secada.

Alí Bello is Venezuelan-born, and has become one of the most dazzling and sought after violinists, distinguishing himself for his versatility among different music styles in addition to his well-founded classical training and multidimensional improvisational skills, which have made him a top violinist of the Latin jazz arena.

Marilyn Castillo is a singer and songwriter from Juarez, Chihuahua and El Paso, TX. She has worked extensively with many Mexican and Latin-American musical groups and entities that promote arts and culture

throughout NYC. She was awarded a 'Premios Fama' in 2019. Living in NYC, and being far from Mexico, she finds that music helps her find herself and is the perfect vehicle for bringing people together in a sense of unity.

Jackie Coleman was born in Indiana and is a Trumpeter and Electric Bassist. Jackie is well trained in a wide variety of musical styles. After receiving a Bachelor's degree from Indiana University and a Masters degree from NYU, she decided to pursue music in New York full-time. In 2017 she won a Latin Grammy with the all-female group Flor de Toloache for their album "Las Caras Lindas." In the past she has worked with artists such as Solange, Leon Bridges, Wu-tang Clan, Kali Uchis, Miguel, Natalia Lafourcade, Mon Laferte, Cuco, and Chris Perez. She was also able to work with H.E.R., Fantasia, Yolanda Adams, Victory, Jazmine Sullivan and Ledisi as part of the 2018 Black Girls Rock Band. Currently she can be seen performing with Durand Jones and The Indications, Antibalas, and many more artists.

Yahir Montes is a Mexican guitarist, vocalist, bassist, composer, songwriter and arranger originally from Guadalajara, Jalisco. At the age of fourteen he enrolled at the Instituto Universitario de Bellas Artes in the state of Colima, where he completed a Bachelor of Music with honorable mention. He also has a Masters in Composition and Arrangement from Universidad Tito Puente in Puebla, Mexico. Yahir has performed at important venues like Lincoln Center, Joe's Pub and Mass MOCA for Frida, The Musical and Broadway in Spanglish and has also written, arranged and produced for several film and musical theater projects in New York City. Yahir also is part of Calpulli Mexican Dance Company from New York which brings Mexican folklore to the stage.

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 as a freelance musician with various acclaimed

musical projects in and around NYC, 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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