

**Calpulli Mexican Dance Company**  
**“Día de los Muertos”**

**Artistic Director & Co-Founder:** Alberto C. Lopez Herrera  
**Choreography & Story Line:** Roberto Lara  
**Music Director:** George Saenz  
**Costume Design:** Alberto C. Lopez Herrera  
**Scenery and Projections:** Ariel Rodríguez Flores  
**Rehearsal Director:** Grisel Pren Monje

**Cast**

**Act 1 & 3: World of the Living**

**Lupita:** Abril Anchondo Reynaga

**Raúl:** Rafael Reyes

**Friends of Lupita:** Grisel Pren Monje, Belinda Saenz

**Maximiliano, Town Millionaire:** Alonso Ojeda

**Don José, Lupita’s Father:** Felix Perez

**Town/ Pueblo:** Maricarmen Betancourt, Crystal Deosaran, Cindy Garcia, Adina Lopez, Pilar Maez, Yhasmine Moran, Edith Ortiz, Diana Vivar, Lucero Velázquez, Juan Castaño, Christopher Cortez, José María Mendoza, Erick Modesto, Martin Rodríguez

**Act 2: Mictlán, World of the Dead**

**La Catrina, Queen of Mictlán:** Roberto Lara

**Fairies of Mictlán:** Grisel Pren Monje, Belinda Saenz

**Catrinitas:** Maricarmen Betancourt, Crystal Deosaran, Adina Lopez, Pilar Maez, Yhasmine Moran, Edith Ortiz

**Muxes:** Juan Castaño, Christopher Cortez, José María Mendoza, Alonso Ojeda, Martin Rodríguez

**Lloronas:** Cindy García, Lucero Velázquez, Diana Vivar

**Musicians:** Felipe Fournier (Conductor), Zoe Aqua (Violin), Luisa Bastidas (Violin), Lautaro Burgos (Drumset), Jackie Coleman (Trumpet/Bass), Juan Lucero (Vihuela/Vocals), George Saenz (Guitarron/Accordion/Vocals), Emily Wespiser (Flute)

## **Biographies**

### **Alberto C. Lopez Herrera, Artistic Director**

Mr. Lopez Herrera is a Choreographer, Costume Designer & Maker, and Teaching Artist with over 30 years of experience in Mexican folk dance. 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 Juarez de Acatlán de Osorio. Most recently, he completed the National Dance Institute's intensive Teaching Artist training in New York. In the USA, Mr. Lopez Herrera was a dancer and choreographer with several groups and companies working with distinguished choreographers Francisco Nevarez and Clarissa Marcovich. Mr. Lopez Herrera continues to create traditional costumes used in Mexican folkloric dance. With great attention to detail, he designs costumes from across Mexico. His pivotal role in costuming can be seen throughout the company's repertoire. Under his Artistic Direction, Calpulli Mexican Dance Company has 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. A few months later, Mr. Lopez Herrera was named "Star of Queens" by the Queens Courier for his artistic accomplishments and commitment to community arts programming.

### **Roberto Lara, Choreographer-in-Residency**

Roberto Lara joined Calpulli Mexican Dance Company as a Guest Choreographer in 2015 and was invited to contribute as Choreographer-in-Residence shortly thereafter. Mr. Lara is an acclaimed classical dancer and choreographer from Mexico City. He studied at the Escuela Nacional de Danza (Mexico) and, among others, danced with the Ballet Nacional de Cuba, Compañía Nacional de Danza (México), Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, Kamea Dance Company (Israel) and Ballet Hispanico of New York. He is also 3-time recipient of awards via The National Foundation for Culture and Arts in Mexico (FONCA). In 2014, Calpulli debuted "Jarabillo" and, in 2016, debuted "Ritual de Primavera" and "Bodas Mexicanas" choreographed by Mr. Lara.

### **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.

### **Grisel Pren Monje, Rehearsal Director**

Grisel Pren Monje was born and raised in Cancun, Mexico and always had a strong, passionate love for dance. She began dance training at a young age in local dance studios and the Casa de la Cultura Mexico. She would later become a professional dancer and entertainer in many of the Resorts in the Riviera Maya. Beginning in 2007, she studied at Broadway Dance Center under the International student program, Steps on Broadway, and The Alvin Ailey School. She performed with Arthur Aviles Typical Theater Company, Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance, Legros Cultural Arts, and appeared as a backup dancer in music videos produced by Weras Music and Tiny Baby Giants. Ms. Pren Monje made her Off Broadway debut in 2012 with "Zapata! The Musical" at the New York Musical Festival, where she played the role of Curandera and served as Dance Captain and Assistant to the Choreographer. Her training, teaching and performance skills are varied among Classical Ballet, Jazz, Modern, Mexican Folk Dance and many Latin styles. She is currently a Teaching Artist with the Society of the Educational Arts and, most recently, she completed the Mexican Folk Dance Teacher certification from the Ballet Folklorico de Mexico de Amalia Hernandez.

## Program Notes/ Synopsis

### Act 1

Our story begins in a quaint, busy plaza outside of Mexico City. The breadmaker Don Jose, in his attempt to have his daughter Lupita married to Maximiliano, the town's arrogant millionaire, begins an uncomfortable though humorous conversation with him. Lupita and Raul, two young lovers and their town's sweethearts, invite all to join in their merriment. Their courtship and games are interrupted when Don Jose announces Lupita's engagement with Maximiliano. Upset, Lupita escapes with Raul until they are discovered by Maximiliano. Furious after being made a fool, Maximiliano initiates a duel with Raul 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.

*El día inicia en una agitada plazuela a las afueras de la ciudad de México. El panadero Don José, en sus intentos por casar a su única hija (Lupita) con Lorenzo, el déspota ricachón del pueblo, entabla una agitada aunque entretenida plática con él. Lupita y Raúl, dos jóvenes enamorados y muy queridos por el pueblo entero, hacen acto de presencia animando a todos. Su amor y juguetes se ven interrumpidos cuando Don José le anuncia a Lupita su compromiso con Lorenzo. Enojada, ella escapa junto con Raúl hasta que son descubiertos por Lorenzo. Este, cegado por la furia de esta burla, inicia un duelo con Raúl del cuál sale perdedor. Al no soportar tal humillación, Lorenzo manda anónimamente a Raúl un caballazo de tequila amargado con veneno. Esta bebida mortal acaba por error en manos de Lupita, terminando así su vida sin darle si quiera tiempo a despedirse de su amor.*

[Pause, 5 min]

### Act 2

Flying on the arms of the Muxes, Lupita arrives in Mictlán, the world of the dead, where she is received by La Catrina and her entire, happy court. Lupita is in awe of the beauty of this place and almost forgets entirely 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.

*Volando bajo los brazos de los Muxes, Lupita llega a Mictlán, el mundo de los muertos, donde es recibida por La Catrina y toda su alegre y colorida corte. Lupita admira tan bello lugar olvidándose casi por completo 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 townfolk continue to celebrate the return of their departed loved ones.

*Lupita, guiada por La Catrina, regresa al mundo de los vivos para bailar por una 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 alegre el corazón de Raúl, quien da cuidado a la tumba de Lupita mientras el pueblo sigue festejando a sus amados difuntitos.*

**Managing Director & Co-Founder:** Juan Castaño  
**Costume Manager:** Rosalba Vivar

**Board of Directors:** Lisa Labrado (President), David Ayala (Treasurer), Juan Castaño, Emiko Furuya-Cortes, Danny Garza

**Sponsors:** Major support was received from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the McGraw Foundation, and Hispanic Federation. Media sponsors and community partners include El Diario de México, Acceso Total (Telemundo), and Spaceworks. This program is also supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

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

Founded in 2003, Calpulli Mexican Dance Company celebrates and explores Mexican and Mexican-American culture via dance including live music. Based in New York City, Calpulli produces professional performances via its international touring company, designs arts-in-education programming, and leads community outreach activities, most notably Calpulli Community in Queens, Staten Island, Red Bank, NJ and New Rochelle.

The word *calpulli* (pronounced cawl-pool-lee) is an Aztec word that means “big house,” “clan,” and “family.” We are a *calpulli* of dancers, musicians, and teachers that, as a non-profit organization, contributes to the city, country, and community we love. To learn more about Calpulli, visit us online at [www.calpullidance.org](http://www.calpullidance.org)

#### **Donate to and Support Calpulli!**

Calpulli Mexican Dance Company is non-profit (501c3) arts organization. Donations from individuals like you are critical to our sustainability and growth. Support future artistic works, art-in-education programs, and Calpulli’s community outreach through your donations. Donations can be made online at [nycharities.org](http://nycharities.org) search “Calpulli Mexican Dance.” Donations can also be made to “Calpulli Mexican Dance Company” and mailed to:

Mailing address: 2512 77<sup>th</sup> St., East Elmhurst, NY 11370

**Thank you! Gracias!**