Puebla: The Story of Cinco de Mayo

ABOUT THE SHOW
"Puebla: The Story of Cinco de Mayo" was conceived by Artistic Director & Co-Founder Alberto Lopez Herrera who sought to honor the culture of his birthplace in Puebla, Mexico. At the same time, he wanted to take advantage of the American celebration of Cinco de Mayo, and the many misconceptions about what it represents and why. Lastly, its retelling of the history is through our own eyes as Mexicans, Poblanxs, and immigrants.

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 free community outreach activities.

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.

Learn more at www.calpullidance.org

ABOUT MEXICO
- Capital: Mexico City
- Official Language: Spanish
- Other Languages: 68 Indigenous languages
- Two coastlines: Pacific and Atlantic

ABOUT PUEBLA
The city of Puebla is the fourth largest city in Mexico with 1.7 million inhabitants (2020), with 3.2 million in the metro area. It is the capital of the State of Puebla. It was founded on April 16, 1531 as "La Puebla de los Ángeles". It is in the Puebla Valley, surrounded by volcanoes and snow-capped mountains, slightly over 110 km (68 miles) southeast of Mexico City. It has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site because of its architecture. Puebla is also considered to be the "cradle of Mexican Baroque" in architecture and in the decorative arts, and one of the five most important colonial cities in Mexico. The historic center is filled with churches, monasteries, mansions and the like, mostly done in gray cantera stone, red brick and decorated with multicolored tiles.

The city's main claim to fame, however, is Cinco de Mayo, a festival commemorating the May 5, 1862 defeat of a French expeditionary army by Mexican General Ignacio Zaragoza. It was after this battle that the name of the city was changed to "Heróica Puebla de Zaragoza".

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**Cinco de Mayo**, (Spanish: “Fifth of May”) also called Anniversary of the Battle of Puebla, is a holiday celebrated in parts of Mexico and the United States in honor of a military victory in 1862 over the French forces of Napoleon III. When in 1861 Mexico declared a temporary moratorium on the repayment of foreign debts, English, Spanish, and French troops invaded the country. By April 1862 the English and Spanish had withdrawn, but the French, with the support of wealthy landowners, remained in an attempt to establish a monarchy to curb U.S. power in North America. On May 5, 1862, a poorly equipped mestizo and Zapotec force under the command of General Ignacio Zaragoza defeated French troops at the Battle of Puebla; about 1,000 French troops were killed. Although the fighting continued and the French were not driven out for another five years, the victory at Puebla became a symbol of Mexican and North American resistance to foreign domination.

**President Benito Juárez**

Benito Pablo Juárez García was a National hero and president of Mexico (1861–72), who for three years (1864–67) fought against foreign occupation under the emperor Maximilian and who sought constitutional reforms to create a democratic federal republic. Juárez was Mexico’s first native-born president.

**General Ignacio Zaragoza**

Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín was a Mexican general and politician. He led the Mexican army of 600 men that defeated 6,500 invading French forces, including the elite French legionnaires at the Battle of Puebla.

**Maximilian of Habsburg & Carlota Amalia**

Ferdinand Maximilian Joseph was an Austrian archduke who reigned as the only emperor of the Second Mexican Empire from 10 April 1864 until his execution on 19 June 1867. Carlota was the only daughter of Leopold I, King of the Belgians.

**CHECK IT OUT!**

Calpulli Dancers portraying their interpretations of these historical figures.

www.calpullidance.org
**About the Dances**

**Danza de Negritos**
There are several variations of this dance. Legend has it that an African boy was walking through a sugar cane field when a snake bit him. His mother went to get help to a nearby town of African immigrants, who proceeded to perform magical rituals and dances to help the boy. Local indigenous people, Totonacas, witnessed the events and, bewildered, started to imitate the movements they observed, which in turn became this dance.

**Danza de los Quetzales**
Original to the municipality of Cuetzalan, which in Nahuatl it means “place with the most beautiful feathers.” It is a spectacular dance since its costumes include a very large semi-circular headdress covered originally in colored feathers. The dancers evoke the flight of the mighty quetzal bird, which flights in an undulating way that they try to reproduce with their choreography.

**Sones Antiguos de Puebla**
The key element with these dances is their flirtatious and romantic nature. Each dance reflects different beliefs, values, and virtues, and the steps are extraordinarily fine and somewhat complicated, with lots of waltzing and challenging zapateados (footwork).

**Huasteca Poblana**
Son huasteco is a Mexican song style comprised of three musical instruments (jarana, bass guitar, and violin) and singers with bright falsettos. The music originates from a six-state area of northeastern Mexico called La Huasteca and dates back to the 19th century with influences from Spain and Native American cultures. The state of Puebla has a small section of the Huasteca area and a big contribution with the festive dances and percussive footwork.
Post-Show Activities

Learn more about Puebla

Mole Poblano
Mole Poblano is one of Mexico’s national dishes. It is a dark red-brown sauce usually served with turkey or chicken. Although it contains approximately twenty-five ingredients, Mole Poblano can be prepared in nearly infinite numbers of ways. Of the many different ingredients found in the dish, the main ones are chili peppers, chocolate, plantains, almonds, pumpkin seeds, cinnamon sticks, anise, and cloves. These eight ingredients are among the most interesting ingredients found in Mole Poblano, not only because they are essential to the dish, but because they have long complex histories that date back to the ancient pre-Columbian empires of Mesoamerica.

Questions for Reflection

1. What did you like best about the show and why?
2. Was the program different from what you expected? How?
3. How do the musical rhythms in the performance compare to the music you are familiar with?
4. How do the dances you enjoyed in the performance compare to the ones you are familiar with in your personal life? How were the costuming and garments in the performance similar to clothing now?

ACTIVITIES:

Mole Poblano is a very traditional and well-known dish from Puebla. Find out the story behind this dish, and make a list of the ingredients needed to prepare it. What do you think about this dish? Does it remind you of a dish from other cultures? If so, which one?

Talavera tile is a traditional Mexican ceramic art form highly acclaimed for its quality and beauty. Research Talavera tile designs and create your own Talavera tile-inspired designs with colored pencils or markers.

Talavera
Talavera Poblana is a world-renowned hand-painted pottery that comes in various forms, including both functional and decorative items such as plates, serving dishes, vases, and tiles. Puebla is sometimes called “The City of Tiles” because of the Talavera tiles used on the buildings. This Mexican craft is a tin-enameded earthenware (Majolica) made in the state of Puebla. Originally, Talavera was white and blue. In the 18th Century new colors were introduced and green, orange and yellow began to be used. Talavera tiles are decorative tiles you may see lining kitchens, bathrooms, and walkways.

Questions?
Feedback?
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