



Calpulli celebrates the rich, regional dance traditions of Mexico's diverse cultural history interpreted through its unique artistic vision. The fresh, vital repertoire honors Mexico's past and immigrant life in the United States.

Mission

Calpulli** Mexican Dance Company's mission is to teach and produce dance based programming incorporating music and theatre to promote the rich diversity of Mexico's cultural heritage.

History

The group of artists who in 2003 founded Calpulli Mexican Dance Company [Calpulli Danza Mexicana] seeks to enrich the quality of Mexican traditional dance and to make it relevant to contemporary life both in New York City where it is based and throughout the United States where it tours. The Company works year-round as performers and teaching artists.

** Calpulli comes from the Nahuatl [Aztec] language meaning "clans". The Aztec city was made up of calpulli, each forming a neighborhood. The calpulli performed different economic roles and trade functions. The Aztec emperor was selected from the calpulli leadership. Our young, energetic group is a calpulli of dancers, musicians and artists.

"One of the goals of Calpulli is to find the heart of what we know as traditional; find how tradition impacts our lives today and honor it using both folk and contemporary forms of expression. It is an exciting, ever-changing road."

- Daniel Jáquez, Artistic Director



Dance — Calpulli Mexican Dance Company’s performances are like the traditions of Mexico: rich, colorful, passionate and inviting. Calpulli has established a vibrant repertoire of dance with live music featuring Mexico’s most cherished dance traditions as well as its lesser known regional dance works. From polkas in Northern Mexico to the fiestas of the Yucatan Peninsula, Calpulli’s goal is to expand its audience’s knowledge and appreciation of Mexican dance forms. Although Calpulli is wedded to traditional dance forms, it incorporates other art forms such as photography, original musical compositions, and theater.

Music — Talented musicians work under the direction of Musical Director Ernesto Villa-Lobos. Music plays an integral role in Calpulli’s dance pieces. It complements the dancers and makes for a total visual, emotional and musical experience. As diverse as the dance program, musicians perform a broad repertoire including coastal Mexican rhythms, Aztec drums and sounds, and even the world renowned music of the Mariachi.

Costumes — All the costumes that grace Calpulli’s performances are meticulously detailed, each garment representing the native, European and African influences in Mexican regional dance traditions. Costume maker and tailor Alberto Lopez is passionate about his craft and dedicates countless hours for each handmade flowing gown. Every costume highlights the unique traits of the regional or indigenous dance it portrays.

Artistic Vision — Artistic Director Daniel Jáquez and Associate Director Martha Zárate are exploring new ways of interpreting Mexico’s history and traditions through Calpulli’s dance theater. Specifically in Retratos y Corridos they blend the music of revolutionary era Mexico with photographic images in a synergistic representation of the human experience from that era. Mr. Jáquez is also developing a series of musical dance stories about present-day immigrants in NYC.



CALPULLI
MEXICAN DANCE COMPANY

Dances Performed

Los Viejitos De Michoacan

Los viejitos dances have been performed for over 450 years, reaching throughout Mexico to become a key staple in Día de los Muertos festivities. A celebration of the life cycle in Michoacán, this humorous depiction of old age, embellished with movements that constitute the theatrics of this genre, is interpreted by the young as they honor their elders. This fountain of youth and agility is inspired by the distinct rhythms of the P'urepecha indians of Michoacán.



Jalisco (Sones Jalicienses)

The patriotic essence of the state of Jalisco is captured in festive music, romantic dances, and the graceful strength of its interpreters. A potpourri of classics - dancers and musicians blend the recognized sounds and images of the region.

Veracruz (Noches de Veracruz)

The most elegant of the gulf coast states, Veracruz is a rich, vibrant fusion of Spanish, African and Caribbean rhythms. The Jarochos, the people of Veracruz, are renowned jokesters, teasing and constantly competing with each other. Most representative of this competitive spirit is El zapateado which pits boastful dancers and proud musicians in a "battle" for audiences to enjoy.



The tradition of fandango nights singing and dancing around the "tarima" (a raised wooden platform) originated in the southern town of Tlacotalpan, to date still the most important gathering point for dancers and musicians alike. Some of the sones are de monton traditionally danced only by women, and others are de pareja or meant for couples. A large number of jaraneros congregate around the dancers and improvise poems called decimas.



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Dances Performed (continued)



Norte

Before the revolution, the German settlers brought their own musical instruments: the accordion, the sax, and bass guitar and the original taste of these rhythms, which were immediately adopted by the locales. The polkas, redovas, schottische, the waltz, and the corrido are still big favorites in Northern Mexico and Southern U.S. one hundred years after their introduction into Mexico and boasting a proud history that tells about the joys and sorrows of nortenos.

Huasteca (Mi Huasteca)

La presumida takes the stage, her hands poised as if to touch the air delicately. She takes us to the town of San Lorenzo in Tamaulipas where couples wind and spin to the sounds of northeast Mexico.

There, el bejuquito talks to us of love without limitations, understanding of emotions, and, most importantly, that courting is better with a bottle of tequila balanced on your head...

