A VISIONS AND VOICES SIGNATURE EVENT

GHOSTLY LABOR

by Vanessa Sanchez and La Mezcla



L.A. Premiere!

THUR **9.19.24 | 7 PM**

BOVARD AUDITORIUM

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

USC Visions & Voices

USC Kaufman Glorya Kaufman School of Dance

La CASA SINCE 1972 DE USC

La X Mezcla

KCRW

Photo: Domonique Washington

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

To the beautiful community of USC Visions and Voices,

I am so honored and excited to share with all of you La Mezcla's newest dance theater production, *Ghostly Labor*. Inspired by my family's history as laborers, I started working on this project in 2018 as a way to honor their work. Now, years later, the work has grown into a multidisciplinary production that spans hundreds of years of history, from the Indigenous farming practice of *las tres hermanas*, to the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, through the organizers making changes today.

Throughout the development of *Ghostly Labor* we have been honored to connect with and learn from amazing community organizations and individuals who are rolling up their sleeves and doing the work every single day. In working with Ayudando Latinos a Soñar, an organization that supports farm workers and their families, we had the opportunity of being invited to take our tap boards straight to the fields to perform for farm workers as they taught us about their love for the land, the process of harvesting local crops, and the ongoing societal challenges they face daily. Connecting with La Colectiva de Mujeres, a collective that advocates for the rights of Domestic Workers in the SF Bay Area, has taught me so much about perseverance, strength, and dignity in labor; I am inspired by the camaraderie and *convivencia* as the women come together to fight for fair pay and workers rights that they have been excluded from for centuries. In these spaces, I see the fire needed to make change and the joy created through collective resistance that has been repeated throughout history as communities have come together to fight against legacies of white supremacy time and time again.

We tell these stories by bringing together different dance and music forms. We incorporate Tap Dance, an African American dance form born out of African resistance; the tradition of Son Jarocho, from Veracruz, Mexico rooted in African, Indigenous and Spanish traditions, which we developed closely with Maestra Laura Rebolloso; and we intentionally incorporate movements inspired by Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian traditions, taught to me by my lifelong teachers Susana Arenas and Tania Santiago. As we talk about labor, we cannot overlook the forced labor and enslavement of Africans in the Americas. By incorporating ancestral Afro-Caribbean traditions, we honor the work and the people that went unnamed, and take their guidance and fortitude as we see the work being done today; connecting the machete used in the harvesting of brussel sprouts to the strength of *Ogun*, and the courage and strength of domestic workers who migrated north to the fierce warrior energy of *Oya*.

This performance, presented by USC Visions and Voices, marks La Mezcla's Los Angeles debut! We are so honored to be invited to your community, and grateful for all of your support.

In solidarity with liberation movements across the world,

Vanessa Sanchez
Executive Artistic Director & Choreographer, La Mezcla



SHOW & CAST INFO

Ghostly Labor explores the history of labor in the U.S.–Mexico borderlands through Tap Dance, Mexican Zapateado, Son Jarocho, Afro-Caribbean movement, and live music. This work brings together polyrhythmic movement and an original score to look at the (ongoing) years of systemic exploitation of labor while highlighting the power and joy of collective resistance.

Length of Show: Approximately 90 minutes with a 10-minute intermission

The performance will be followed by a Q&A moderated by USC Vice Provost for the Arts Josh Kun with Vanessa Sanchez and members of La Mezcla.

PERFORMERS	Argelia Arreola Nuñez, Carlitos Medrano, Casey Tessier, Christelle Durandy, Diana Aburto Vega, Kirsten Kaye Millan, Micah Sallid, Pedro Gomez, Sandy Vazquez, Tanya Benítez, Vanessa Sanchez
CREATOR, DIRECTOR & CHOREOGRAPHER	Vanessa Sanchez
MUSICAL DIRECTOR	Ayla Davila
PERCUSSION LEAD	Pedro Gomez
ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE & REHEARSAL DIRECTOR	Sandy Vazquez
MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS AND VERSES	Laura Rebolloso, Ayla Davila, Javier Navarette, Pedro Gomez, Sinuhé Padilla Isunza, Carlitos Medrano
ARTISTIC, CULTURAL & HISTORICAL ADVISORS	Laura Rebolloso, Susana Arenas, Tania Santiago, Jesus Diaz, Pedro Rosales, Juan de Dios Soto, Greg Landau, David Romo, John Jota Leaños
INTERVIEWEES	Antonio Castro, Don Ramon Sonoqui Martinez, Lorena Carrillo, Marcela Escamilla, Maria Aguilar, Rocío Avila Garcia, Serafin Avila Garcia
LA MEZCLA PRODUCTION MANAGER	Hector Zavala
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	Justine Fernandez
LIGHTING DESIGNER	Max Urruzmendi
LIGHTING & VIDEO OPERATOR	Saoirse-Naomie Weaver
VIDEO CREATOR	John Jota Leaños
COSTUME DESIGN AND STYLIST	Ariana Martinez-Cruz
AUDIO ENGINEER & SOUND DESIGN	David Molina
TAP FLOOR MANAGERS	Ariana & Victor Cruz
LA MEZCLA ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM	Vanessa Sanchez, Executive Artistic Director Sharon Benítez, Company Manager Shawn Garety, Operations Manager Kirsten Millan, Marketing Associate Sydney Chaikittirattana, La Mezcla Company Intern Sofia Alessandra Linggi-Perez, La Mezcla Company Intern

DEDICADA

Ghostly Labor is dedicated to essential workers who, for generations, have labored in the fields, kitchens, sweatshops, and homes with little visibility. We honor your skill, knowledge, and perseverance, and thank you for sustaining our communities.

SHOW ORDER

PART 1
PRE COLONIZATION

ACAB
El Camotal: Manos Que Nos Dan
Sembrando
Rumba
These Motherfuckers Colonized Corn
El Buscapíes

PART 2
LABOR RELATIONS

National Labor Relations Act
Carmelita Torres & the Bath Riots

10-MINUTE INTERMISSION

PART 3
DOMESTIC MIGRATION

Maria Landó (composed by Chabuca Granda and César Calvo)
Festejo
El Trabajo Doméstico
El Zapateado

PART 4
LA LUCHA Y LA CONVIVENCIA

La Cosecha
The Collective Joy of Resistance
El Coco: Histórica Lucha por los Derechos
La Colectiva

LA MEZCLA WOULD LIKE TO THANK:

Dr. Belinda Hernandez-Arriga, Joaquin Jimenez, Avila Garcia Farms, Cecilia Panaloza, Ayundando Latinos a Soñar, La Colectiva de Mujeres, Guillermina Castellanos, Maria Aguilar, Laura Rebolloso, Tania Santiago, Susana Arenas, Ariana Cruz, Dr. Cat Ramírez, John Jota Leaños, Stacie Powers-Cuellar, Javier Navarette, Emily Waters, Emil Kang, Aaron Mattocks, Susanne Takehara, Jose Navarette, Paul Flores, Greg Landau, Rubí Oseguera, Andres Flores, Benito Cortés Padua, Sheri Sampson, Stella Adelman, Krissy Keefer, Elena de Troya, Lolis Garcia, Joti Singh, Carlos Sanchez, Mary Sanchez, Emilio Gallegos, Seryna Gallegos, Pillie Gallegos, Darío Mendoza, Tía Tela, Virginia Sanchez, Brava Theater, KQED Arts, Hummingbird Farm, Dance Mission Theater, Eastside Arts Alliance, Yerba Buena Gardens Festival, Paseo Artistico, Calle 24, MACLA, The Mellon Foundation, New England Foundation for the Arts, Dance/USA

An extra special thanks to the Mission District, the Excelsior District, NSSJ, the activists and union organizers that continue to fight for change, fair wages and safe working conditions, and the workers and laborers around the world that show up everyday! *Ghostly Labor* was originally presented by Brava! for Women in the Arts at Brava Theater Center in December, 2023.

La Mezcla and *Ghostly Labor* are funded by The Hewlett Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, National Performance Network, CCI, The Rainin Foundation, Dancers' Group, California Arts Council, Silicon Valley Community Fund, and Fiscal Sponsor Brava! For Women in the Arts.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- This is the Los Angeles debut of La Mezcla and L.A. premiere of *Ghostly Labor*. It premiered in San Francisco in 2023.
- La Mezcla is a San Francisco–based dance and music ensemble.

WOMEN'S LABOR AND RESISTANCE IN THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDERLANDS

"For a century, Mexican and Mexican American women have labored in border factories with poor working conditions and low pay. Equally important, they have long endeavored to better their conditions," writes Yolanda Chávez Leyva, a historian who was born and raised on the U.S.-Mexico border, at sitesofconscience.org.



In 1972, some 4,000 workers at five Farah, Inc. plants in El Paso, TX, went on strike for the right to be represented by a union.

THIS TIMELINE OFFERS SOME GLIMPSES OF THAT HISTORY.

Late 1800s: Mexican women become the primary domestic labor force on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border; they are consistently paid less than Anglo-Americans for similar work Mexican workers and their families are hit hard by yellow fever outbreaks in Texas; domestic workers in border cities organize to protect the health of their communities.

1910–1920: Mexican Revolution

Early 1900s: Labor uprisings across the U.S.

1917–1920s: Amid a Red Scare and growing xenophobia, the U.S. enacts a series of new laws restricting immigration.

1917: Domestic workers attempting to cross the border for work (which was common and legal in border towns for much of the 19th and early 20th century) revolt against violence by U.S. border patrol agents.

1919: A wave of labor strikes across the U.S. Frustrated by pay disparities and more, Mexican American women workers lead a laundry strike in El Paso.

1920s–1950s: Indigenous women employed as domestic workers in cities organize social dances for community connection and relaxation.

1933: Mexican American domestic workers strike in El Paso; they form the Asociación de Trabajadoras Domésticas (Association of Domestic Workers).

1938: The Fair Labor Standards Act, part of the New Deal, does not include domestic workers.

1942–1962: Through the Bracero Program, Mexican men come to the U.S. to work in agriculture during a labor shortage; some Mexican women who migrate with their families find employment in domestic work, forming a sort of underground Bracera Program.

1965: *Maquiladoras*, factories in border towns in Mexico that are often foreign-owned and process goods for export, begin operating; the industry relies heavily on women's labor.

1972–1974: 4,000 workers, most of them Mexican American women, strike at clothing manufacturer Farah, Inc., in El Paso.

1993–2011: Hundreds of women, many of them working in *maquiladoras*, are murdered in the border town of Ciudad Juárez; feminists on both sides of the border organize to end the femicides.

1994: The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) takes effect, forming a trade bloc between Canada, Mexico, and the U.S.; the agreement enables freedom of movement across these borders for goods and capital, but not for people, and has concerning impacts for labor and the environment.

To the present: Women and community organizations continue to resist exploitation and mobilize for human rights, better working conditions, and healthy communities.

Sources: Sites of Conscience, Women on the Border, National Domestic Workers Alliance, New York Historical Society, Texas Historical Society

A DIVERSITY OF MUSIC AND DANCE STYLES

Some of the dance styles included in this performance include

Tap — Tap originated in the United States in the 19th century, with multiple roots including West African step dance and Scottish, Irish, and English clog and jig dancing; researchers believe these dance traditions fused in New York's Five Points District, where different ethnic groups lived side by side amid the rhythms and sounds of modern urban life

Mexican Zapateado — a dance style that involves rhythmic striking and stamping of the feet; Zapateado has roots dating back to 17th-century Spain

Afro-Caribbean — Afro-Caribbean is used to describe a range of dance and musical styles developed by members of the African diaspora in the Caribbean

Son Jarocho — a folk musical and dance style developed in Veracruz, Mexico, with African, Indigenous, and Spanish influences; Son Jarocho traditionally occurs in *fandangos*, where community members gather and communicate through song, dance, and poetry

Sources: Britannica, *Songlines*

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- What does "Ghostly" refer to in the show's title?
- What is the significance of fusing different musical and dance styles in this work?
- How have dance and music been used throughout history as forms of resistance? Do you see dance and music being used for protest or community mobilization today?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- Vanessa Sanchez y La Mezcla
  vanessasanchez.net/lamezcla
- A History of Domestic Work and Worker Organizing
  dwherstories.com
- Women on the Border, a social justice educational resource
  womenontheborder.org
- La Mujer Obrera
  mujerobrera.org
- Classes and performances at the USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance
  kaufman.usc.edu
- Classes and performances at the USC Thornton School of Music
  music.usc.edu

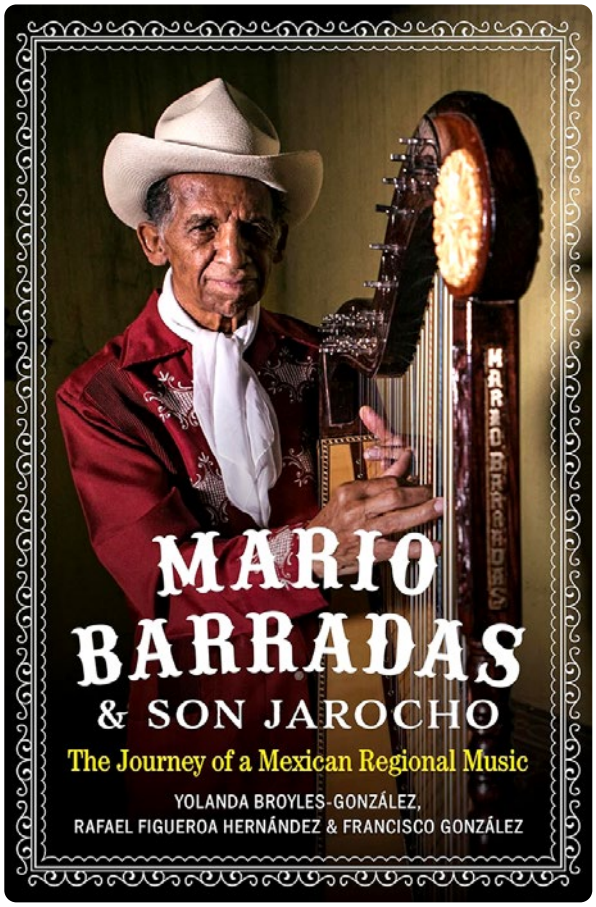
A synthesis of rural *mestizo*, *mulatto* and African influences, fandangos can be traced back to around the 1770s when several dances were imported to the state of Veracruz by [enslaved people from Angola], brought from Cuba via the Gulf of Mexico. The Catholic church was suspicious of lascivious dances such as *chuchumbé*, which involved gatherings where [enslaved people] sang about their oppressors. Afraid that they would become breeding grounds for rebels planning revolts against their authority, they took steps to veto them. Prohibition only served to fuel creativity. Banned from using hand drums, legs and feet substituted for percussion, giving birth to the dance known as the *zapateado*. The *sones* (songs) became a complex weave of metaphors that often mocked or criticised the establishment. The style therefore became the music of resistance of the time known as *son jarocho*. "Jarocho" refers to people and things associated with southern Veracruz, but was originally a derogatory term for someone of mixed African and indigenous ancestry.

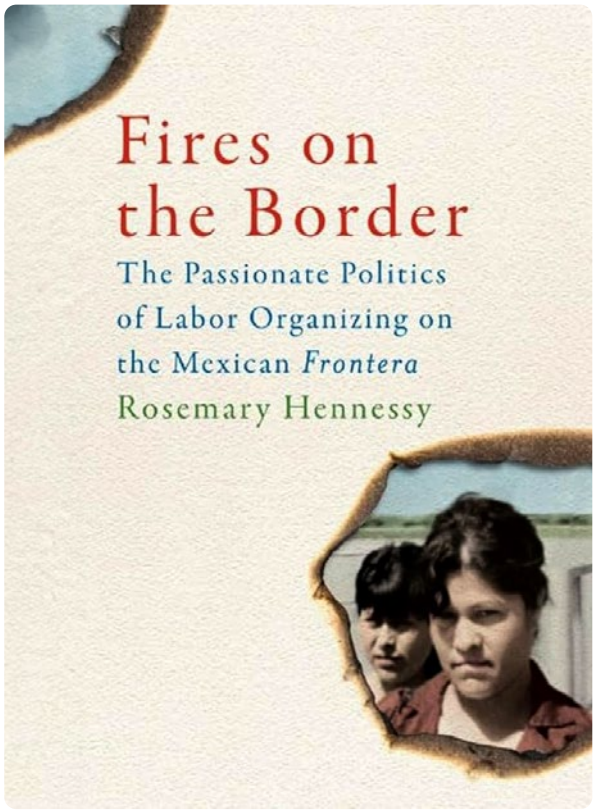
—Excerpted from "Son Jarocho: A Beginner's Guide" by Kary Stewart, in *Songlines*



Photo: Domonique Washington

Ghostly Labor, Brava Theater, December 2023





- Upcoming Visions and Voices Events
  9/20 Screening Quincy Jones: *Duke Ellington... We Love You Madly*
  9/23 Grounds for Change: Coffee with Artivists: A Conversation with D'Lo Hosted by Locatora Radio
  9/26 An Evening with Laura Ortman and Raven Chacon
  10/16 LayeRhythm: *SWITCH*
  10/18 Behind the Scenes of K-pop
  10/23 Presenting Patti Austin: A Vocal Masterclass
  10/23 In Tune with Quincy Jones: A Special Panel Event Featuring Q's Key Collaborators
  10/27 The Met in HD: *Grounded*

DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

JAVIER GARIBAY of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this event. Electronic resources are accessible through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu but may require the user to log in using their USC credentials.

BOOKS

- Yolanda Broyles-González, *Mario Barradas and Son Jarocho: The Journey of a Mexican Regional Music* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2022).
- Rosemary Hennessy, *Fires on the Border: The Passionate Politics of Labor Organizing on the Mexican Frontera* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2013).
- Seth M. Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2013).

DATABASES

- Border and Migration Studies Online
- Chicano Database

JOURNAL

- *Aztlán*



Upcoming Visions and Voices Event: LayeRhythm: *SWITCH*