

LAS CAFETERAS

Tuesday, March 26, 2024, 7:30 PM



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LAS CAFETERAS

Moisés Baqueiro
Jose Guadalupe Cruz Cano
Denise Carlos
Hector Paul Flores
Jasmine Lopez
Jorge Pococ Mijangos
Jesus Gonzalez Ramirez

Program to be announced from the stage.



GUEST ESSAY

This essay is part of a series of writings by Virginia Tech faculty, staff, and community members that contextualize Moss Arts Center visiting artist performances.

Yo no creo en fronteras Yo cruzaré, yo cruzaré, yo cruzaré

— Excerpt from Las Cafeteras' La Bomba Rebelde

"I don't believe in borders. I will cross, I will cross, I will cross..." This translation of the lyrics above, written and performed in a song by Las Cafeteras, calls out a vision of connection between the U.S. and Mexico and in a larger geographic imaginary of the Americas. People seeking to challenge norms and assumptions about the U.S.-Mexico border have used art and cultural practices as avenues for change, to build better worlds by expanding imaginative possibilities. In the arts-based activism of the 1960s Chicano movement, artists resisted imperialist and Anglo-centric national narratives of the U.S.-Mexico border region. Gloría Anzaldúa — a prominent queer, Chicanx, and feminist border/

lands scholar — wrote about "border artists" in her work, *Luz en lo oscuro*. These artists engaged with geographic territorial borders, as well as metaphoric and imaginative borders related to identity, nationality, and settler-colonial and imperialist logics.

During my doctoral studies at Virginia Tech, I worked with a binational group of performing artists who created interactive experiences using their stories from living on the U.S.-Mexico border. Members of the Frontera Project build connections across national, cultural, racial, and linguistic differences. The personal narratives they foreground challenge and complicate the grand, problematic stories often projected onto the border and those whose lives have become interwoven with it. In the U.S. and globally, some grand narratives uphold harmful and violent norms and stereotypes. For example, on the U.S.-Mexico border, the narrative of "criminality" related to Mexican people has been intimately tied to histories of white, setter-colonial occupation and framing of land disputes. Today, that same narrative persists in new forms, painting a black and white picture of people on each side of the border. My work with the Frontera Project showed me the importance of storytelling in individuals' understanding of the U.S.-Mexico border and their own lives. Frontera actors present audiences with personal accounts that highlight how people live on both sides of the border, how they make families on both sides and connect to more than one place, challenging the idea that the border can simply be "closed."

The power of rooting through story and personal narrative is something that community cultural development practitioners, politicians, and feminist scholars — particularly Black and feminists of color such as Richa Nagar, bell hooks, Gloría Anzaldúa, and Chandra Mohanty — have recognized. Telling and exploring your own story, as well as connecting and listening to others', builds knowledge and sparks the imagination. It also breaks apart grand narratives that silence stories that are in between the lines.

GUEST ESSAY, cont.

However, storytelling is not neutral — there is a politics of storytelling that influences whose stories we hear, whose are considered valid and important, and what kinds of stories are reinforced and replicated through institutions. By engaging with border artists, audiences are offered the opportunity to open themselves to a more complex world.

The music of Las Cafeteras embraces storytelling. On its website, the band describes its music as "a sonic explosion of Afro-Mexican rhythms, electronic beats, and powerful rhymes that document stories of a community seeking to 'build a world where many worlds fit." Building its sound from traditions of son jarocho, the band brings together African and Indigenous histories in both lyrics and musical forms. This amplification of voices that have been silenced by U.S. imperialism and longer histories of settler-colonial and colonial violence carries the potential to create belonging in the U.S. and Mexico. Las Cafeteras' lyrics and sound build on Los Angeles' long history of Mexican, Chicano/a/x, and Latinx art that challenges dominant ideas about the physical division between the two countries, and the history of people who live in those places, critiquing systems of inequality, white supremacy, heteronormativity, and patriarchy. Their work is "intersectional using various mediums to support immigrant rights, gender and trans justice, environmental justice, [and] BLM solidarity." The intersections that Las Cafeteras highlights point to the underlying ethos of crossing mentioned at the beginning of this essay: borders can and should be crossed with care. By paying attention to where those crossings intersect, we find rarely told stories. At these intersections is a nexus of social and political causes and possibilities for cultural connections beyond a monolithic story of a nation, border, or people. As you soak in Las Cafeteras' performance, I encourage you to reflect on what borders you sense in your own life and what invitations to cross may appear when you open yourself to alternative rhythms.

Molly F. Todd is a teaching assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and the International Affairs Program at the University of Colorado Boulder. Todd earned a Ph.D. in 2023 from the interdisciplinary ASPECT program at Virginia Tech, where her research focused on community-engaged art and borders in the Americas. Todd's research employs collaborative methods across sites in Brazil, Mexico, and the United States to observe and participate in the ways that artistic production navigates and shapes border politics and their imaginaries.



BIOGRAPHIES

LAS CAFETERAS

Las Cafeteras has taken the music scene by storm with its infectious live performances, crossing genre and musical borders. Its electric sound and energy has taken it around the world, playing shows from Bonnaroo to the Hollywood Bowl, WOMAD New Zealand to Montreal Jazz, and beyond!

Born and raised east of the Los Angeles River, Las Cafeteras is remixing roots music and telling modern day stories. Las Cafeteras creates a vibrant musical fusion with a unique East L.A. sound and positive message. Its Afro-Mexican beats, rhythms, and rhymes deliver inspiring lyrics that document stories of a community seeking love and justice in the concrete jungle of Los Angeles.

Using traditional *Son Jarocho* instruments like the *jarana*, *requinto*, *quijada* (donkey jawbone), and *tarima* (a wooden platform), Las Cafeteras sings in English, Spanish, and Spanglish and adds a remix of sounds, from rock and hip-hop to rancheras. Las Cafeteras

uses music as a vehicle to build bridges among different cultures and communities and creates "a world where many worlds fit."

The group has performed in the good company of Mexican icons Caifanes, Lila Downs, Colombian superstar Juanes, Los Angeles legends Ozomatli, folk/indie favorites Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, and Talib Kweli.

Los Angeles Times described Las Cafeteras as a "uniquely Angeleno mishmash of punk, hip-hop, beat music, cumbia and rock ... live, they're magnetic."



MOISÉS BAQUEIRO, BASS, PRODUCER, AND MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Moisés Baqueiro is the musical director and bass player for East L.A.'s darlings, Las Cafeteras. Born and raised in Mexico City, Baqueiro comes from a lineage of musical pioneers, being a direct descendant of Cirilo "Chancil" Baqueiro,

the father of Yucatecan *trova*; great-nephew of Gerónimo Baqueiro Foster, director of the National Conservatory of Music; and Antonio Mediz-Bolio, co-author of *Caminante del Mayab*.

Baqueiro migrated to the U.S. in 1991, enrolled in ESL classes upon arrival, and a year later started attending Fullerton College, where he studied music theory and composition. On December 12, 1994, he bought his first instrument — a bass guitar — and immediately immersed himself into the Roc en Español scene of Los Angeles, becoming one of its primordial characters and pioneers. Baqueiro has played with local bands such as Maria Fatal and Pastilla, as well as international artists such as Ceci Bastida,

BIOGRAPHIES, cont.

Ximena Sarińana, and Spanish guitar extraordinaire Diego Garcia, a.k.a. "Twanguero."

In 2001 Baqueiro joined bilingual/bicultural seminal band Los Abandoned, and the same year received the ASCAP Award for Best Latin Rock Band with Satélite. Baqueiro is also the founder and creator of L.A.'s premier Cumbia band, El Conjunto Nueva Ola, and the Smiths/Morrissey mariachi tribute group El Mariachi Manchester. In 2015 he was hired to direct the house band for Mexican comedian Franco Escamilla on the Hispanic television network Estrella TV.

In 2019 Hector Flores and Baqueiro had a conversation that led to the beginning of their musical collaboration. The topic: an idea that sets Oaxaca, Mexico in a '60s rock-and-roll utopia and in which perhaps the words *Tlayuda*, *quesillo*, and *chilatole* are used for the first time in a song — *Oaxaca Love Song No. 2*, which Baqueiro produced.

In 2021 Baqueiro was invited to be the musical director for Las Cafeteras.



JOSE GUADALUPE CRUZ CANO, DRUMS AND CAJON

The second-born child of immigrant parents from Jalisco, Mexico, Jose Guadalupe Cruz Cano grew up in Oxnard, California. Cano's interest in music was sparked in sixth grade, seeing his future middle school's concert band

perform; he immediately joined the percussion section. His first drum kit came in high school after seeing some friends play at a family party. Over the years he would go on to be part of several other local bands, before becoming one of the founding members of Las Cafeteras in 2006. Cano dedicates most of his time now to music production, recording, songwriting, and regularly collaborating with other musicians and producing other artists. He earned a degree in mechanical engineering from California State University, Los Angeles and started several businesses before dedicating himself to music full time. Outside of music, he is an advocate for entrepreneurship, home ownership, and good financial planning. Sustainable living, social justice, mindfulness, good health, the outdoors, art, and boxing are some of his passions. Cano currently resides in Oxnard, where he owns and operates his own studio.



DENISE CARLOS, VOCALS, JARANA PRIMERA, AND ZAPATEADO

Denise Carlos, MSW, is a lyricist, lead vocalist, jaranera, and teaching artivist for the East L.A. band Las Cafeteras, which has increasingly gained national recognition for its vibrant musical fusion of Afro-Mexican/East L.A.

sounds and socially-conscious message. Featured on *Democracy Now!*, Carlos and Las Cafeteras utilize music as a means for marginalized communities to heal, claim space, and re-tell their own stories through a power lens.

Carlos is a proud Chicana daughter of Mexican immigrants. She was born and raised in (South East) Los Angeles. She holds a bachelor's degree in social work from California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA) with an emphasis on women and children, and a master's degree in clinical social work from Loyola University, Chicago, where she focused her career in community mental health.

BIOGRAPHIES, cont.

Before fully committing herself as a professional musician and dancer, Carlos served as the coordinator of the Gender & Sexuality Resource Center at CSULA for six years, where she provided counseling services and programs around gender identity, feminism, and ethnic identity, and assisted in increasing powerful spaces for LGBTQ+ students on campus.

As an artivist, Carlos has dedicated her 15 years as an internationally touring artist to developing critical thought around community feminisms, Chicana identity, and building with various communities of color through dance and musical expression, all while dancing Mexican *folklórico* professionally since she was 15 years old. Carlos offers authentic explorations of wellness, storytelling, and movement as a form of liberation, both for self and community.



HECTOR PAUL FLORES, VOCALS AND ZAPATEADO

Hector Flores is an L.A.-based artist using song, film, and storytelling to elevate, shift, and shine light on the narrative of BIPOC communities over the last 10 years as a musician and cultural worker. Flores is also an

artistic director and co-founder of Las Cafeteras.

The eldest of six children, he was raised in East Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley with parents born of Indigenous and Mexican roots. Flores graduated from Cal State Long Beach and, before transitioning to a career as an artist, he was an organizer for over 10 years in South and East L.A.



JASMINE LOPEZ, VOCALS

Born and raised in Modesto, California, Jasmine Lopez moved to Los Angeles at the age of 18 in pursuit of a singing career. Lopez is a versatile vocalist and musician with a background in mariachi. She toured and

performed all over the country with her former bands and received two Grammy nominations during her time with Mariachi Divas. After seven years of being a member in several musical projects, she is excited to have begun her solo career. Lopez started touring with Las Cafeteras in 2022.



JORGE POCOC MIJANGOS, REQUINTO JAROCHO, JARANA, AND VOCALS

Jorge Mijangos is a multi instrumentalist, master *Son Jarocho* musician, and luthier. Born in San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas in Mexico, Mijangos began playing music at the age of five. He has since performed throughout

the Americas at esteemed venues such as the Walt Disney Concert Hall and Santa Barbara Bowl, as well as the National Hispanic Corporate Council (NHCC). Mijangos currently lives in Ventura, California with his wife and newborn son, where he teaches youth music and builds custom *Son Jarocho* musical instruments.

BIOGRAPHIES, cont.



JESUS GONZALEZ RAMIREZ, KEYS AND VOCALS

Jesus Gonzalez Ramirez was born on December 25, 1979, in Cordoba, Veracruz in Mexico to Mexican parents (also born in Cordoba). Don Chucho and Doña Chela educated Ramirez at Francisco I. Madero Elementary, where he

received basic musical training on the flute. At the age of eight his grandfather, Marcelino, taught him his first lines of a famous Son Jarocho on the guitar, initiating his beginnings and love for the folkloric music of the region. In middle school, Ramirez joined the school's musical group, playing first lead guitar and soon leading the orchestra and playing the tololoche (a traditional instrument from southern Mexico). At the age of 15 he began studying classical music, specifically classical piano and guitar. At the age of 16 he joined a local rock band, launching his professional career and the development of his technique. At 20 years of age, Ramirez earned a graduate degree in popular harmony, composition, and counterpoint, playing jazz with renowned musicians across the state at jazz festivals in the port of Veracruz. Later in his journey, his piano teacher, Salomon Sanches, invited him to join the Cordoba City Children's Choir, working with the municipality for various cultural events. Not fully content with so many musical phases, Ramirez decided to migrate to the United States, establishing himself in Los Angeles, where he has worked with various local and international bands as a performer and session musician. This work has given him a vision for production and the creative process in genres like pop, rock, norteno, cumbia, jazz, and folk. This range of experience has created a wider and more open panorama for him to be able to work in different projects and allowing him to take part in various productions across different genres, from heavy metal to regional music, a well as the traditional music of his homeland. This is how he was called to Las Cafeteras, now collaborating on some songs, including the group's new song, *Oaxaca Love Song No. 2.*

This is the first performance by Las Cafeteras at the Moss Arts Center.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!



We'd love your feedback on this performance. If you complete the short survey, you can enter for a chance to win two tickets to *Small Island*, *Big Song* on Wednesday, April 17, 2024. bit.ly/las-cafeteras-feedback

ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

MONDAY, MARCH 25, 2024 UNIVERSITY CLASS VISIT: INTRODUCTION TO LATINO AMERICAN STUDIES

Members of Las Cafeteras performed several songs and spoke with students about the cultural roots of their music and social justice advocacy efforts.

WORKSHOP AT EL CENTRO

The Hispanic and Latinx Cultural and Community Center hosted this interactive workshop with Las Cafeteras, focused on how music has been used as a tool globally for liberation and dismantling oppression.

TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024 IN-SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Students at Pulaski County High School experienced a private performance by Las Cafeteras.

TALK: IMMIGRATION POLICY AND POSSIBILITIES

Featuring Rebecca J. Hester, associate professor in the Department of Science, Technology, and Society, this pre-show talk explored present policies, practices, and possibilities in immigration reform around the globe.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2024 SCHOOL-DAY PERFORMANCE

Students in grades PK-2 — largely from Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Floyd, and Giles County — attended this free performance tailored for youth by Las Cafeteras.

CULTURE AND CONTEXT THROUGH THE ARTS

Virginia Tech staff attended a performance by Las Cafeteras and engaged in a post-show discussion focused on identity and culture as a part of this diversity education program.

Special thanks to El Centro, Office for Inclusion and Diversity, Pulaski County High School, Elisabeth Austin, Michele Deramo, Andrea Heavner, Rebecca Hester, Veronica Montes, Lauren Songer, and Molly Todd

GO DEEPER

In a Medium review of a Las Cafeteras performance, the band is quoted as saying that the message in its song, Yo No Creo En Fronteras ("I do not believe in borders"), applies "beyond political borders to matters of art and of the mind suggesting that in art, as well as in life, borders are meant to be crossed." Where do you hear and see "border crossing" — metaphorically and musically — in the band's performance?





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Messengers explores the use of photography to communicate — not only through visual aesthetics, but to transmit more profound personal, cultural, and societal messages. Photography acts as a conduit for the artists' hybrid interdisciplinary approaches, enabling them to convey rich and multifaceted narratives, evolving through their formal and material languages.

Tarrah Krajnak; Self-Portrait as Weston/as Charis Wilson, 1934/2020, 1925/2020, 2020 (detail); from Master Rituals II: Weston's Nudes series; silver gelatin print; 10 x 8 inches; ed. of 5, 2 AP; exhibition copy on view; © Tarrah Krajnak, courtesy Zander Galerie



is just the opening act.

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Experiences with the arts cultivate the next generation of creative thinkers, engage learners of diverse backgrounds, and foster community dialogue. The Moss Arts Center has been dedicated to providing K-12 students in the region with free, high-quality, and exciting arts programming since opening our doors in 2013. Through school-day matinee programs, gallery tours, in-school performances, and workshops with artists, we are passionate about serving our youngest community members and schools.

Learn more at bit.ly/moss-K12.

DID YOU KNOW?

Since opening its doors in 2013, 41,191 Virginia Tech students have attended Moss performances. Student tickets for Moss Arts Center performances are only \$10. This offer is available for any college or university student with a school ID, as well as youth ages 18 and under. In addition, free, last-minute rush tickets are available for Virginia Tech students who sign up for text notifications. To sign up, text "arts" to 833-966-1838. Free rush seats are available on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last, and availability varies by performance.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Virginia Tech acknowledges that we live and work on the Tutelo/ Monacan People's homeland, and we recognize their continued relationships with their lands and waterways. We further acknowledge that the Morrill Land-Grant College Act (1862) enabled the commonwealth of Virginia to finance and found Virginia Tech through the forced removal of Native Nations from their lands in California and other areas in the West.

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Virginia Tech acknowledges that its Blacksburg campus sits partly on land that was previously the site of the Smithfield and Solitude Plantations, owned by members of the Preston family. Between the 1770s and the 1860s, the Prestons and other local White families that owned parcels of what became Virginia Tech also owned hundreds of enslaved people. Enslaved Black people generated resources that financed Virginia Tech's predecessor institution, the Preston and Olin Institute, and they also worked on the construction of its building.

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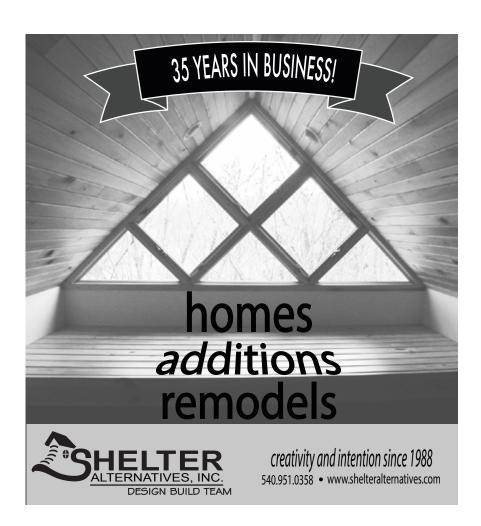
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Meet the Y Team

Neha Nauman

Junior at Virginia Tech majoring in Public Health

Program Leader for Meals On Main

I decided to be a Program Leader at the YMCA at Virginia Tech to give back to my community and be a part of this amazing group!

I love everyone on this team so planning events with them is definitely my favorite thing.

The facet that the Y is celebrating its 150th year of service excites me for the future years!

A fun fact is that I love traveling

Meet more Y Team members in the next MAC program!



Lucias Cordial (top picture)

Bachelor's in History at Radford University, Class of 2023. Entering Graduate School this fall

I am the Assistant Store Manager at the YMCA Thrift Shop

I love seeing the impact we have on the local community through our various programs and initiatives.

Reaching 150 years of service is a historically significant milestone which warrants celebration and I have enjoyed learning about our history as an organization during my time here



Programs that "Graduated" from the Y

MY International Programs became the programs for the Cranwell International Center



MY students initiated the University's recycling program, leading to the creation of the Office of Sustainability



MY service learning projects, student leadership and volunteer development programs helped lead to the formation of Virginia Tech Engage

MY Community Gardens grew into a multi-acre community asset and transitioned to the Town of Blacksburg's Community Gardening program