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## Calpulli Danza Mexicana Celebrates at QTP

BY CLIFF KASDEN  
Thursday, October 4, 2007 10:53 AM CDT

The houselights slowly dim. The beat begins to pound. Stronger and stronger. Faster and faster. However, the curtains remain closed. Suddenly footsteps are heard from both aisles. The dancers descend from the rear of the theatre. They brighten the evening with broad smiles and beautiful, colorful costumes. The curtains finally open. Calpulli Danza Mexicana, Colores y Pasiones has begun!

For the next two hours, over forty singers, dancers and musicians celebrate ancient Mexican culture. They also celebrate that ancient spirit in modern Mexican music. No one in the audience will be disappointed. Under the inspired leadership of Artistic Director Daniel Jaquez, Associate Artistic Director Martha Nora Zarate, Musical Director Ernesto Villa-Lobos and Managing Director Juan Castano, the evening is clearly a success.

The beautiful auditorium at Queens Theatre in the Park (QTP) is the venue for tonight's festivities. Performances are also planned for much of the region. In addition to QTP, the group receives support from NALAC (National Association of Latino Arts and Culture) the Queens Council on the Arts, American Express and others.

The first act has already established the pace. A wonderfully colorful performance leaves the audience applauding and eager for more. The curtains close. A brief musical interlude with songs and instrumental solos is a feast in itself. Naturally, this also gives the rest of the troupe some time to change their sets and costumes. Wonderful!

The Calpulli were the basic family unit in the ancient Aztec culture of Mexico. This Danza Mexicana seeks to revitalize that ancient spirit. In the second act, the dancers perform in full ancient Aztec costumes. They wear ceremonial make-up, bird feathers, and seashell anklets. They play traditional instruments as well. It is truly a feast for the eyes and ears. Earlier, the ancient Mayan civilization from the Yucatan is also brought to life in music and dance. Other dances include Los Viejitos de Michoacan (The Little Old Men from Michoacan) which has been performed for more than four centuries. Although it is a satire of old age, it's a fond embrace from the young. Later, the well-known mariachi style is presented. Authentic costumes enhance the exuberant music, lyrics and dance. The famous Mexican hat dance (el jarabe tapatio) is also performed to

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the delight of all.

You certainly don't need to speak Spanish or understand instrumentation and dance. The musicians play with such exuberance and the dancers show such honesty and talent that it is a welcome evening for everyone. There is an especially warm family feeling at the performance. Not surprising that musical director Ernesto Villa-Lobos is joined by his very talented brothers Alberto and Luis. They also perform as a fusion group called BambaNY. Other musical families are also represented.

The Calpulli Danza Mexicana is only four years old. They are a joy to the eyes and ears. Check their website at [www.calpullidance.org](http://www.calpullidance.org) for their next tour.

As always, save me a seat on the aisle.

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Russ 2000	798.79	-26.24
AMEX	2440.28	-36.31
NYSE	9920.27	254.34
30 YR BOND	46.89	-0.90

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