



# MECA PRESENTS 2023 SEASON CALENDAR



FUNDED IN PART BY  
THE CITY OF HOUSTON  
THROUGH  
HOUSTON ARTS ALLIANCE





# A Letter From The Acting Executive Director

MECA is a Latino-based multi-disciplinary and multicultural arts community organization focused singularly on artists, the creation or presentation of art, and art making towards improving community outcomes. MECA has pioneered a holistic approach through the arts that tackles the needs of its constituents by responding to the cultural and social inequalities embedded in social structures.

MECA began in 1977, growing out of the St. Joseph Fun 'n Food Fest, the first citywide celebration of the various cultural groups that lived in inner-city Houston. St. Joseph's Catholic Church in the Old Sixth Ward led the festival; the church's pastor, Father Sam Rosales, asked MECA's founder, Alice E. Valdez, to build upon the spirit of community created by the festival by developing a program that would provide alternative arts activities for the city's youth and families. MECA received 501(c)(3) status and was incorporated in 1979; in 1993, MECA moved to its current home in the historic Dow School building in the Old Sixth Ward. Built in 1912 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the school is currently undergoing restoration through MECA's Dow School Rehabilitation Project; Phase I exterior restoration was completed in 2010.

MECA programs are nationally recognized for producing talented student artists. Such recognition includes being designated a Point of Light by President George H. W. Bush and being named a four-time semi-finalist for the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities Coming Up Taller Award. Student ensembles and artists also are known for their talent and achievements; In 1999, the National Endowment named the advanced Mariachi ensemble an American Masterpieces Touring Ensemble for the Arts.

Friends and family, I am excited to be serving as MECA's Acting Executive Director in the absence of our beloved founder, Alice Valdez. As a proud MECA alumni, I do not take this assignment lightly. On the contrary, I realize that I "stand on the shoulders of a giant." I know that I walk in the footsteps of a woman whose relentless drive has brought this organization to the forefront of arts education in our city and who has built a pillar of strength and resilience for our communities of color. I promise to give my all as I continue to implement, and attempt to grow her vision. I ask that you bear with me as I traverse this daunting task before me. Knowing that Alice is in my corner gives me all of the confidence necessary to plow through. As a dancer, this is but a "*failli*," a transition step preparing me for another jump. Come, take the leap with me!

Sincerely,



G. Armando Silva  
Acting Executive Director

# February 2023



THEATRE FOR EVERYONE  
**brave LITTLE company**

## GRANDPA'S GARDEN COURTESY OF BRAVE LITTLE COMPANY

Saturday, February 18th | 10:00 AM & 1:00 PM | Historic Dow School

Grandpa's Garden, a Brave Little Company production created by Brittny Bush, Rodrick Randall, Troy Scheid, and the students of Mitchell Elementary. Meet Bebe and her Grandpa, who's a world champion gardener! If you're ready to learn something new, he'll teach you how to plant your own fruits and vegetables. But curious Bebe can't stop wondering what's in Grandpa's mysterious shed - and she needs your help to find the key! Join Bebe and her Grandpa as they explore the garden - and their own roots and legacy as African Americans - through song, senses, and stories.

This unique, universal, and upbeat musical celebrating Black history through one family's story will have EVERY audience member on their feet. Get ready to get your hands dirty, plant your own seeds, and sing along to live music!

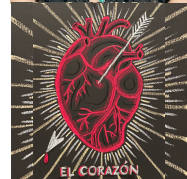
## VIVA EL AMOR CONCERT

Friday, February 24th | 7:30 PM | TBH Center



MECA's Annual Valentine's Day serenade returns to the TBH Center. This February 24th, beloved MECA alumni and mariachi music star, Vanessa Alonzo will share the stage with Jazz songstress, Ermelinda Cuellar. Alonzo will be accompanied by Trio Chapultepec of San Antonio, TX and Cuellar by pianist Bob Henschen and Thomas Helton on Bass. The evening will culminate in a collaboration that blends the two genres of music in an original adaption of "Cucurruccú Paloma," a Mexican huapango-style song written by Tomás Méndez Sosa in 1954 and made popular by music greats like Pedro Infante and Lola Beltrán.

*Viva El Amor is funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*



# March 2023



## PRIMAVERA PARTY

Saturday, March 4th | 1:00 PM | Historic Dow School

Celebrate spring with MECA! Featuring a performance from Charlie Y La Tribu Cubana, an array of artisan vendors, yummy food, and refreshing drinks! This outdoor event will be held at the Dow School Pavillion. Charlie y La Tribu Cubana plays Latin music indigenous to Cuba, including the traditional Son-Montuno from Santiago, the funky Havana-Miami style salsa, and timba. The current band includes vocals, bass, and percussion. Dance floor available, let the music move you!

*Charlie Y La Tribu Cubana is funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*

## HOMENAJE A LA MUJER: A TRIBUTE TO ALICE VALDEZ

Friday, March 24th | 7:30 PM | MECA TBH Center

Known as a visionary and community leader, MECA's Founder, Alice Valdez has worked for over four decades to help disadvantaged youth and families create a brighter future for themselves and the community. Determination, commitment and a refusal to yield to the impossible are her trademarks, and her work has had a tremendous impact on hundreds of Houstonians. Join us for HOMENAJE A LA MUJER: A TRIBUTE TO ALICE VALDEZ, a performance featuring an all female cast of Mariachi MECA Alumni and MECA Ballet Folklorico dancers as we celebrate her contribution to the arts in Houston.

*Homenaje A La Mujer: A Tribute to Alice Valdez is funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*



## RIYAAZ QAWWALI

Friday, April 14th | 7:30 PM | TBH Center

Riyaz Qawwali performs the gripping music style called Qawwali. The qawwali musicians represent the diversity and plurality of South Asia. The ensemble's musicians, who are settled in the United States, hail from India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh and represent multiple religious and spiritual backgrounds. Trained in eastern and western classical music, the members have been professionally performing qawwali for the past 16 years. Currently their work is focused on raising up suppressed voices/perspectives and engaging in cross-cultural dialogue.



*Riyaz Qawwali is funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*

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## 18TH ANNUAL FRIDA FESTIVAL

Saturday, April 29th | 11 AM - 7 PM | Historic Dow School

Join us in celebrating the 18th Annual Frida Festival curated by Lizbeth Ortiz and this year hosted at MECA Historic Dow School! Since 2004 they have been gathering to celebrate the legacy and inspiration of Frida Kahlo.

The Frida Festival aims to unite the community through creative expression by collaborating with local artists, organizations and businesses to celebrate the life of one of Latin America's most highly respected visual artists - Frida Kahlo. The Festival was established as a celebration of the birthday of Frida and her life, art and passions.

The festival is used as a platform to promote the story of Frida's life to teach the Houston community about art, culture, heritage, and history. The celebrations will showcase our diverse community talents in art, music, dance, and other forms of artistic expression in an art urban arts market.

*Performances in the Frida Festival is funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*

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## AFTERNOON OF CHILDREN'S THEATER

Sunday, April 30th | 2:00 PM | TBH Center

Short plays in French, English, and Spanish performed by Houston actors and theater groups. Performances by Main Street Theater, Grupo de Teatro Indigo, 1989 Dreams Productions, Grupo Somos Todos.

*Theater performances are funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*



# May 2023

# Encuentro

*The Native American Roots of Texas Mexican Food*

Saturday & Sunday, May 19 & 20 | 7:30 PM | TBH Center

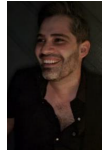
Eleven celebrity chefs converge at TBH in Houston to engage with humanities scholars and discuss the culinary and personal connections of food to the land. They will share personal stories demonstrating how the food experience connects the early ancestral food ways to today's indigenous Texas Mexican American community. The event will include guest music performances and a dance presentation by MECA Ballet Folklórico.

*Guest music performances are funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*

## FEATURED CELEBRITY CHEFS



Nadia Casaperalta | Elsa, Texas



Joseph Gomez | Austin, Texas



Sylvia Casares | Houston, Texas



Roberto Gonzalez | Laredo, Texas



Larry Delgado | McAllen, Texas



Rebel Mariposa | San Antonio, Texas



Victoria Elizondo | Houston, Texas



Luis F. Olvera | Dallas, Texas



Andrés Garza | Austin, Texas



Arlene Kay O' Neal | Fort Worth, Texas



Vianney Rodriguez | Aransas Pass, Texas

# May 2023



## TRIO CAIMANES

Friday, May 26th | 7:30 PM | TBH Center

Trio Caimanes brings to MECA the music of La Huasteca, a geographical and cultural region located partially along the Gulf of Mexico and including parts of the states of Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Puebla, Hidalgo, San Luis Potosí, Querétaro, and Guanajuato. This traditional Mexican musical style dates back to the end of the 19th century and is influenced by Spanish and indigenous cultures. A trio Huasteco is comprised of a jarana (a guitar-like chordophone with 5 strings, tuned in thirds, low to high), a violin, and a guitarra quinta huapanguera (a five course, eight stringed guitar-like instrument).

*Trio Caimanes is funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*

**Jesus Airam Rosas**

*Violinista*

Tuxpan, Veracruz, Mexico

**José Abraham Morales**

*Jarana*

Guanajuato, Guanajuato, Mexico

**Viko Garcia**

*Guitarra Quinta*

Aquismon, San Luis Potosí, Mexico

# June 2023

## FEEL MY PRIDE / SIENTE MI ORGULLO

### COLLABORATION WITH THE T.R.U.T.H. PROJECT INC

JUNE 9TH - 10TH | 7:30 PM | TBH CENTER

The T.R.U.T.H. Project INC is an educational and community mobilization platform focusing on LGBTQ Communities of Color and allies that utilizes social art to promote mental, emotional and sexual health.

This is the first time a collaboration between the T.R.U.T.H. Project INC and MECA occurs, they will be presenting "Feel My Pride / Siente Mi Orgullo" a multi-disciplinary social art experience that will explore the depths of the word Pride and its effects are revealed through the expression of communities of color. Join us for an uplifting evening of art and engaging conversation during our talk back with the artist.

*Feel My Pride / Siente Mi Orgullo is funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*

**THE TRUTH PROJECT INC.**

TELLING REAL UNAPOLOGETIC TRUTH THROUGH HEALING



# September 2023

## SINIWALI

### PERFORMED BY ANI/MALAYAWORKS

September 20th - 25th | 7:30 PM  
Historic Dow School & TBH Center

Siniwali is a research to performance highlighting the many interconnecting stories between Mexico and the Philippines that date back before Spanish colonialism to post-migration to the United States. It dives into cross-cultural dialogues by studying the movements of indigenous people (Panay Bukidnon), people of Mexico and many others who broke bread, fought, celebrated, and coexisted as brothers and sisters even during pre-colonization .

*This project was supported by the National Performance Network (NPN) Artist Engagement Fund. More information: [www.npnweb.org](http://www.npnweb.org).*

*Siniwali is funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*



# October 2023

## FESTIVAL EN EL JARDIN

October 14, 2023 | 1 PM - 5 PM  
Houston Botanic Garden

Join MECA and the Houston Botanic Garden for **Festival en el Jardin** as we celebrate our past and honor our future, through music, dance, and visual arts. Learn to create your own altar, make paper marigolds, shop with vendors selling authentic Latin American arts and crafts, and enjoy performances by guest artists and the MECA Ballet Folklórico.

*Performances for Festival En El Jardin are funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*



## ANNUAL DIA DE MUERTOS FESTIVAL: HONOR OUR PAST, CELEBRATING OUR FUTURE

October 28 & 29, 2023  
11 AM - 7 PM  
Historic Dow School

In its 23rd year, MECA's Día de Muertos is a FREE community celebration of Latin American folk art traditions that commemorate family and ancestry. Día de los Muertos is a culmination of pre-Colombian heritage and Catholic influence honoring the souls of the dead in a lively, cheerful celebration. Over the years, MECA's Día de Muertos celebration has flourished into a two-day festival boasting a variety of traditional foods, folk and fine arts, and three performance stages. This year's festival will include special performances by MECA Ballet Folklórico, children's art activities, cultural cuisine, an ofrendas/altar exhibit, artist and artisan vendors, festival delights and many more musical and dance performances by artists who will soon be announced.

*Performances for MECA's Annual Dia De Muertos Festival are funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*



## FIESTA GUADALUPANA

Monday, December 12 at 6 PM  
Historic Dow School

MECA is excited to invite you to join us for Fiesta Guadalupe, a celebration and special serenade honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe, featuring a Night Market, musical performances by MECA Mariachi alumni, and dance performances by MECA Ballet Folklorico! This celebration will include artist and artisan vendors, performances, and free pan dulce for guests provided by El Bolillo Bakery.

*Performances for Fiesta Guadalupe are funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*



## LA POSADA

Friday, December 16 at 6PM  
Historic Dow School

*La Posada in the Old Sixth Ward: A community-based reenactment of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem with original processional music.*

*Performances for La Posada are funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.*



MECA's work to provide year-round, high quality arts education, social service and vigorous academic support is made possible by generous contributions from the following donors:



**Houston Endowment.**



**Qatar Harvey Fund**



**Greater Houston**



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Texas Commission on the Arts



CULLEN TRUST FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS



HOUSTON IN ACTION



Nancy & David Bombach



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