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DEL PASEO BORICUA

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28th FIESTA BORICUA

A Stunning Success with the Best Sounds and Rhythms of CIALES

PG.17



PG.12

GOV. PRITZKER, PUERTO RICAN AGENDA CELEBRATE SB1833 SETS STAGE FOR PUERTO RICO TOWN



PG.8

FROM DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT TO RAÍCES GALA NMPRAC REACHES A NEW MILESTONE



PG.6

URBAN THEATER COMPANY TO ANCHOR: NANCY FRANCO MALDONADO PASEO BORICUA ARTS BUILDING



ABOUT LA VOZ:

The most recent manifestation of Puerto Rican journalism in Chicago, La Voz del Paseo Boricua proudly continues in the legacy of our community's previous newspapers. Founded in 2004, La Voz del Paseo Boricua, or simply 'La Voz' as it is affectionately called by our readers, is a grassroots bilingual periodical published by the Juan Antonio Corretjer Puerto Rican Cultural Center. We report on stories relevant to our community on a bimonthly basis, disseminating news about local events, programs, resources, and developments. As an alternative source of media, we seek to acknowledge the achievements of the Puerto Rican community at large and to advocate for the preservation of the heart of our barrio in Humboldt Park - our "pedacito de patria" in Chicago.

SOBRE LA VOZ:

La más reciente manifestación del periodismo puertorriqueño en Chicago, La Voz del Paseo Boricua continúa orgullosamente el legado de nuestros primeros periódicos. Fundado en 2004, La Voz del Paseo Boricua, o 'La Voz' según se le conoce cariñosamente por nuestros lectores, es un periódico de pueblo, publicado de manera bilingüe por El Centro Cultural Puertorriqueño Juan Antonio Corretjer. Bimensualmente, divulga historias relevantes de nuestra comunidad, diseminando noticias sobre acontecimientos, programas, recursos, y progresos locales. Como fuente alternativa de medios, intentamos reconocer los logros de la comunidad puertorriqueña al igual que abogar por la preservación del corazón de nuestro barrio Humboldt Park - nuestro "pedacito de patria" en Chicago.

MEET OUR PRODUCTION TEAM



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¡LA HISTORIA DE LOS PIONEROS COMIENZA!



By Nadya Henríquez

La historia de
revitalización
comienza a ser realidad
Con la Ciudad de Chicago
Agarrándonos de la mano

Nuestra Alcalde Lori Lightfoot
Decretó un mandato
El de reducir la brecha de
inequidad
En nuestros barrios

Hoy comienza una nueva
historia para La North Ave.
Con un compromiso de
restaurar el pasado
Sin destruirlo o desplazarlo
Simplemente usarlo de base
para trabajarlo
Y convertirlo en un foco de
luz
Para nuestros negocios ser
revitalizados

No borramos nuestra historia
Más bien de ella nos
agarramos
Para enseñar a nuestras

generaciones de jóvenes
Lo que es posible si juntos
trabajamos

La comunidad se unió
Para exigir lo que en el pasado
nos fue dado
Un área llena de esplendor
Y entretenimiento por todos
lados

La Norte y La Pulaski eran
bien conocidas hace 80 años
Y el Pioneer Bank un símbolo
de Progreso
Que a la espera está de ser
restaurado

Nuestros viejos recuerdan esa
época
Que nuestros jóvenes no han
saboreado
Sólo queremos garantizar
oportunidades de desarrollo y
cambio
Para revivir esa Época Dorada
Y ser parte del crecimiento de
Chicago

Nuestra comunidad es
talentosa
Nuestra arte y cultura
un tesoro guardado
Queremos que
nuestro barrio sea
transformado
Entre edificios nuevos
y otros restaurados
Solo queremos que la
comunidad
Siga la Historia de los
Pioneros paso a paso
Queremos que sean
parte del proceso
De restauración de un
pasado

Los Pioneros serán las
semillas
Que traerán un cambio, ya por
mucho tiempo esperado
Las semillas ya crecidas
proporcionarán sombra y
cobijo
A los corazones cansados

Pero serán esos retoños
Los que inspirarán a nuestros
hijos
A ver un futuro posible y
distinto
El que sin duda se merecen
Por simplemente ser
individuos

Las piedras están listas
Para formar el camino
Para que esta Historia de los
Pioneros comience
Y devuelva el vigor a nuestro
barrio querido

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PRCC-C.A.A.C. RECEIVES 21st CENTURY GRANT

By Marvin García

This grant will run two after-school programs at West Park STEAM Academy and Richard Yates Elementary. The award includes the funding of a summer program full of enrichment



Illinois State Board of Education

ment activities for a total of \$300,000.00.

28th FIESTA BORICUA: C.A.A.C./S.C.A.N. BACK TO SCHOOL CARNIVAL

By: Marvin García

Family and Community Engagement (FACE) and the Clemente Parent University partnered with CAAC to distribute 1,600 bookbags over two days at the Fiesta Boricua Back to School Carnival.



DEPAUL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON TOUR AT PASEO BORICUA

By: Marvin García

Dr. Jesse Mumm addresses his students outside of Nelly's Restaurant. Students toured the Paseo Boricua district as part of their Latin American and Latino Studies orientation course.



C.A.A.C. SPORTS PROGRAM KICKS OFF

By: Marvin García
The CAAC Sports Program kicked off the 2022 season with Soccer and Volleyball competition between middle school students. Stowe's soccer team

bested Moos, and Moos' volleyball team beat Stowe.



ADULT JOB PLACEMENT PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY: **CELSO MARTINEZ**

By Marvin García

Congratulations to Celso Martínez for being hired full-time at Greater West Town Project as Maintenance Staff!

Celso originally came to GWTP's Adult Job Placement Program in 2009. Celso participated in the Job Readiness Training, and after completion he was placed at Freedman Seating from 2009 - 2018. In 2018 he worked at MV Transportation in Niles cleaning buses. Celso did not want to work outside in the winter, so he returned to GWTP for employment assistance in June 2018 to be placed in a safer and higher-paying job. Celso's resume was updated, and we went over interviewing skills. We assisted him in applying online for a maintenance position. Soon, Celso was placed in The Restaurant Depot full time as maintenance personnel where he earned slightly higher pay. Celso liked the job, but the company did not offer any benefits. In January of 2020, GWTP had a part time maintenance position available. Celso's



Employment Specialist asked him if he was interested. The position was in the pay range Celso

was looking for -- the other jobs offered much less. This maintenance job had the potential of becoming a full-time position. Celso was referred, and he was placed with GWTP as a part-time maintenance staff. In July 2021, Celso was offered full-time employment because he showed an exceptional work ethic and meticulous attention to detail. Celso now has a wage he is happy with plus the benefits he wanted.

When asked what he thinks about the Adult Job Placement Program, Celso said, "I'm grateful for the Adult Job Placement Program and for the service that was provided to me that led me to where I am now. The staff are very attentive and helpful. They have assisted me with being more comfortable using technology such as the computer, internet and especially smart phones when it came to applying for jobs and forwarding my resume. I will always be grateful for the opportunity of confidence that was given to me."

MUÉVETE AT YATES



By: Marvin García
Zumba classes at Richard Yates Elementary.

CONGRATULATIONS **DR. MELISSA LEWIS, NADYA HENRÍQUEZ, AND JESSIE FUENTES**



By: La Voz Staff

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center salutes the extraordinary women leaders who work among us as they are recognized for their immense talent, commitment, and ongoing contributions to this city and its communities.



Congratulations Dr. Melissa Lewis on being honored by BUILD as one of Chicago's most accomplished Latino leaders. Congratulations Nadya Henríquez on being selected by Chicago Women in Philanthropy to join the Women's Leadership Mentoring



Program (WLMP) for the 2021-2022 year. Congratulations Jessie Fuentes on being honored as an outstanding alumna of Northeastern Illinois University with the Community Leadership Award!

MICHELLE MORALES: OUR COMMUNITY IS WITH YOU

By Luis Alejandro Molina

I first met Michelle Morales in late 1997, or early 1998 as part of the Dr. José Solís Jordan Defense Committee, a grouping of activists and students that came together at DePaul University, where Solís Jordan taught. I remember meeting Marisol and Miguel Morales (no relation) at that time also.

The three students quickly became a core part of Solís's defense work. At that time, the organization in the US leading the campaign to free the Puerto Rican political prisoners was the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War, which collaborated with many organizations in Puerto Rico but especially

Ofensiva '92 led by the brilliant author, attorney, and sociologist Dr. Luis Nieves Falcón. Shortly after the release of the prisoners in September 1999, the National Boricua Human Rights Network absorbed the Solís Defense Committee.

Michelle quickly became a core part of the National Boricua Human Rights Network, playing a significant role in the Network's education and mobilization around national issues like the expulsion of the US Navy from Vieques, Puerto Rico, and local issues like gentrification and public health access in the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago, the historic heart of the Puerto Rican community.

As the campaign to free the remaining prisoners expanded and evolved, Michelle took on more responsibility, accepting the role of treasurer and then stepping up to lead the Chicago chapter. Her work and that of many organizations and individuals resulted in the freedom of Carlos Alberto Torres after 30 years of unjust imprisonment in July of 2010.

Shortly after Carlos Alberto was released, Michelle penned the following article for La Voz del Paseo Boricua. We are re-publishing this article on the eve of her double-mastectomy, sending her love, revolutionary hope, and strength:

We Can Achieve Anything

On behalf of your compañeros/as, young and old, from the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School, The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, and National Boricua Human Rights Network, we know that YOU CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING.

We Can Achieve Anything

On July 26, 2010, our people, the Puerto Rican people, will celebrate yet another victory for our nation - the release of one of our compatriots, Carlos Alberto Torres. Carlos Alberto has been living behind bars for 30 years - 5 years less than my entire life. Because of his belief in the freedom of Puerto Rico, he has been devoid of a relationship with his daughter, with his sister, his niece, his grandchildren, his stepmother - something which I cannot imagine or perceive. The absolute absence of being able to kiss my son, or hug my mother or talk to my sister whenever I want to is completely outside my reality. But this is the reality that Carlos Alberto, and Oscar Lopez Rivera & Avelino Gonzalez Claudio, live with every day. I want to stress the word "live" because that is what they do, even behind bars. They live through their paintings, their ceramics, their wonderful letters to the outside, their phone calls.



The freedom of Carlos Alberto means more than I can express in this article. I have been privileged to be part of the amazing campaign to release Puerto Rican political prisoners since 1998. In 1999, when I was only 24 years old I witnessed the release of the 11 compañeros. Since then, I have actually become friends and peers with those men & women that I had read about and looked up to. In 2003, I witnessed the victory of the people of Vieques ousting the U.S. Navy from their island. To be part of two amazing events early in my activism was truly astounding. It showed me how hard work & years of struggle will pay off and how truly incredible we, Puerto Ricans, are. I learned that we can achieve anything. We are the only people who

have won the release of so many political prisoners - and now we can add Carlos Alberto to this list. And it has taught me that the impossible is never out of reach and that a new world is certainly possible. In the last 7 years, I have become friends with Carlos Alberto.

It started with simple correspondence, telling him about my work with the Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Chicago & the National Boricua Human Rights Network. But each time I would write him, he would send back such beautiful letters with words of encouragement and gratitude. I was taken aback by the beauty of those letters, of the gratitude of a man I had never met and had never met me. In the progressing letters, I sought advice from him and it was always received. And many times, when I was going through a rough time in life or in the work, I would receive a letter from Carlos Alberto with just the right encouragement and advice that I needed to continue. Many times I wondered how he, Oscar & Avelino timed such letters. How did they know what to say and when to say it and that it would correspond to what was happening in our lives? That, to me, is what is so amazing about them. Women and men who have spent so long behind bars, been deprived of so much, yet greet you with absolute love and warmth -

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two things that they have not allowed prison to take away from them. They could wallow in despair and bitterness, but they choose not to – they choose to live in love and to express that love.

Love is what this release means to me. The love we, as the Puerto Rican people, have for Carlos Alberto, Oscar, and Avelino – the love that has helped us persist after 30 years and to never give up on their release. And their love for us, their families, for themselves, and ultimately, their great love for our beautiful Isla – Puerto Rico.

And yet, this release is also bittersweet. While I am ecstatic to finally meet Carlos Alberto, I am also deeply saddened that Oscar & Avelino remain in prison. Carlos Alberto's release cannot make us complacent. It must motivate us and give us the extra fire to push on and continue to fight for our remaining two compañeros – Oscar López Rivera & Avelino González Claudio.

On behalf of your compañeros/as, young and old, from the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School, Puerto Rican Cultural Center and National Boricua Human Rights Network, we know that YOU CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING.

URBAN THEATER COMPANY TO ANCHOR: NANCY FRANCO MALDONADO PASEO BORICUA ARTS BUILDING



By Chicago Reader

When larger cultural institutions make plans for brick-and-mortar developments, it tends to grab the headlines. Steppenwolf Theatre plans to open its new 50,000-square-foot “campus” in February of 2022. (The Halsted Street expansion, which includes a new 400-seat in-the-round performance space, as well as bars and space for the theater’s education programs, came in at an estimated price tag of \$54 million.) Northlight Theatre, which under artistic director BJ Jones has long hoped to move back from Skokie’s North Shore Center for the Performing Arts to its roots in Evanston, announced earlier this summer that they were moving forward with the purchase of property at 1012-16 Church Street in downtown Evanston. They plan to build a new three-story structure housing a 300-seat theater, rehearsal space, offices, and several public gathering places.

But for UrbanTheater Company

and Facility Theatre, Humboldt Park is home. Both companies are getting ready to move on to new venues, while keeping their focus on the collaborative grassroots community vision central to their mission. UrbanTheater just turned 16, and as their producing

artistic director Miranda González puts it in an introductory video on their website, their mission is to “decolonize theater.” González and the rest of the UTC leadership team, including executive director Ivan Vega and company manager Tony Bruno, all have personal and family ties to the Humboldt Park neighborhood and its vital Puerto Rican community. Their programming, much of it performed over the years at the cozy Batey Urbano space on Division Street’s Paseo Boricua, has long reflected those ties, both onstage and off. As González told me in an interview early this year, “When you know each other and when you know what the gap is and what the necessities are for the community, there is a responsibility to sustain things.”

She was speaking more specifically about how UTC had stepped up to help their neighbors during the pandemic, but that vision also applies to how UTC works with other organizations.

Now those partnerships are paying off, and UTC is getting a new home in their old neighborhood.

On September 2, the company joined the groundbreaking ceremonies for the Nancy Franco Maldonado Paseo Boricua Arts Building. Located at 2709-15 W. Division, on the site of the former Ashland Sausage Company and named after the late wife of 26th Ward alderman Roberto Maldonado, the complex will hold a 99-seat ground floor theater for UTC, two retail spaces, and 24 units of affordable housing, which will be marketed specifically to artists and their families (though anyone who qualifies may apply). The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, headed by Jose Lopez, bought the land in 2014 and started the long process of raising funds to bring it to fruition. Brinshore Development is heading the construction team.

Vega credits Eduardo Arocho, a longtime community leader, activist, and poet in Humboldt Park, for also seeding the idea for the new center and bringing UTC into the mix. “Our goal is not to leave Batey Urbano behind,” he says. “We hope to keep the new 99-seat theater as our mainstage, and use Batey Urbano to really kick off an educational outreach component to UrbanTheater Company. So basically the youth can create work, write work, develop work, and experiment and run the place like it used to be.”

Arts centers run by primarily white institutions are often viewed as possible tools of gentrification, though as prominent urbanist Richard Florida noted in a 2018 article for Bloomberg, a study published in the journal *Urban Studies* suggested that “fine arts and commercial arts establishments were both much more concentrated in affluent areas, places that

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BOMBA SE TOCÓ TAMBIÉN

Celebrating La Escuelita's 12th Year Anniversary!

NOVEMBER 12TH 2021

7PM – 10PM

Documentary by Diana Quiñones
Batey de La Escuelita - BOMBAZO

Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center
4048 W Armitage Ave
Chicago, IL 60639



NOVEMBER 13TH 2021

3PM – 5PM

*Funds from the
concert will go
towards programing
for La Escuelita!*

Panel discussion & Concert
Paracumbé & Buya
\$10

Clemente Auditorium
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Chicago, IL 60622

9PM – 2AM

Celebration & Bombazo
21+

Little Wild at Ace Hotel
311 N Morgan St 7th Floor
Chicago, IL 60607

FROM DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT TO RAÍCES GALA NMPRAC REACHES A NEW MILESTONE

By Billy Ocasio

The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture (NMPRAC) made history last month when it hosted its first nationwide conference -- Engage 2021: Envisioning a National Puerto Rican Arts and Culture Diasporic Agenda. The purpose of the national conference was to bring Puerto Rican institutions together, recognize our collective existence, and figure out ways we can support each other. To do so, NMPRAC invited representatives from small Puerto Rican organizations in more than 20 cities across the country. Hosted in partnership with El Centro, Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College, and The Alliance of Puerto Rican Museums, the event included educational lectures and workshops, authentic Puerto Rican food and music, and other artistic programming.

NMPRAC

gathered experienced professionals working for Puerto Rican arts and culture organizations and artists throughout the Diaspora to present seven workshop sessions during the two-day conference. Laura Lott, President of The American Alliance of Museums, kicked off the conference with a special message for our guests. Lonnie Bunch, Secretary of the Smithsonian Museums, also addressed the attendees at the opening. Other speakers included Marianne Ramírez, President of The American Alliance of Museums and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Puerto Rico; senior staff from El Centro at Hunter College/CUNY, Dr. Jorge Rodríguez Beruff of Fundación

Luis Muñoz Marín, and from the following Foundations: Hispanic Federation, Chicago Community Trust, Flamboyán, MacArthur, National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures, among many others. We also invited Puerto Rican artists and three award-winning Puerto Rican authors to speak, including Esmeralda Santiago, Marisel Vera, and Carmelo Esterrich.

Focusing on the most valuable resources that help our institutions sustain themselves and grow to their full potential, our discussions

as well as musical performances by Frank's People, Grupo Renz, and Pianist Isabella Loreano. For artistic programming, NMPRAC unveiled its new outdoor Miranda Mural Gallery with a new initiative donated to the Museum, titled, *Latinx Diaspora: Stories from Upper Manhattan*. The mural project celebrates the rich and complex history of the Latinx community in Washington Heights, N.Y. and is based on quotes made by Luis Miranda and sponsored by HBO and Warner Bros. Created by New York-based Puerto Rican

artists, Carlos Jesús Martínez Domínguez, Dister Rondón, Danny Peguero and Carla Torres, the gallery includes sounds of the coquí, lighting, and blue cobblestone pavement to resemble the streets of Old San Juan.

On the last day of the conference, NMPRAC presented a screening of the award-winning documentary film, *Takeover*, directed by Emma Francis-Snyder, who was also in attendance. After the film, Luis Miranda moderated a panel with Snyder and Young Lord,

Juan González to discuss the making of the film, which highlights the takeover of New York's Lincoln Memorial Hospital in 1970 to demand better health services and a new hospital. Engage 2021 ended with a Piña Colada Tour of Paseo Boricua, led by Humboldt Park resident and tour guide, Eduardo Arocho, and the Raíces Gala in the evening, a signature event for NMPRAC, helping to raise funds needed to continue thriving as a cultural and economic anchor to our Humboldt Park community.

Celebrating NMPRAC's 20th Anniversary and the 25th of The Banderas and Paseo Boricua, the 8th Annual Raíces Gala turned out to be the

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included the following topics:

- Collaborating with Puerto Rican Museums and Artists on the Island
- Using El Centro for Puerto Rican Studies' Resources for Educational Programming
- Archiving and Collections: What's Important?
- Engaging the Literary Arts
- Engaging Arts & Culture Foundations
- Partnering with Your Local Artists
- Formulating a Diasporic Puerto Rican Arts & Culture Agenda

During the conference, guests enjoyed food from Nellie's Restaurant, Janellie's Kitchen, and pastries from Chucherias Tropical Creations,

(Continued from page 8)

most successful fundraiser and gala yet. Held at Galleria Marchetti, the 2021 gala was hosted by Zoraida Sambolín from NBC Channel 5 and included bomba performances by AfriCaribe, Los Pleneros de Don Segundo, youth singer and pianist Mia and Isabella Loreano, and Opera Singer Zulimar López Hernández. Keeping tradition, NMPRAC honored three Puerto Ricans for their creative contributions to our culture and support of Puerto Rican communities with our prestigious Ceiba Award- the only national award granted to Puerto Ricans for their artistic and cultural accomplishments. Custom-made by Puerto Rican sculptor, Enrique Ortiz Matos, the 2021 Ceiba Awards went to Dr. Carmen Febo San Miguel of Philadelphia's Taller Puertorriqueño and Luis Miranda Jr. and Dr. Luz Towns-Miranda, for their commitment and dedication to Puerto Ricans across the world. Ending the night with the amazing sounds of Project Caribe.

NMPRAC has received great positive feedback from our Diasporic brother and sister organizations who are looking forward to next year's events. As the only Puerto Rican Museum in the country, NMPRAC is ready to continue the work of supporting our fellow Puerto Rican organizations and artists, and create a network that will help all of us sustain ourselves and get to the next level. This is only the beginning.

"AMAL" MEANS HOPE DEBUTS AT 4TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL LATINO THEATER FESTIVAL



By Eduardo Arocho

For its Chicago debut, the play *AMAL* by The Combat Hippié's was featured at the Chopin Theater in the beginning of October, as part of the 4TH annual Chicago International LATINO Theater Festival.

AMAL is many stories that have not been heard from the Puerto Rican war veteran's perspective. It touches on the themes of PTSD, immigration, death, spirituality, living in the urban diaspora, and the deep truths of colonialism among others. The play opens with a dramatic recounting of the U.S. bombardment of the Puerto Rican Town of Jayuya, in 1950, during the Nationalist insurrection on the island and it ends with a mini Bombazo. The latter performed by Chicago's own "Bomba Divas" Ivelisse "Bombera de

Corazón" Díaz and Lauren Brooks.

This high-energy spoken word performance, staged in the round, with dazzling improvised percussion sounds by master percussionist Angel Ruben Rodríguez Sr. His fellow cast members Anthony Torres Jr and Hipólito Arriaga exchanged stories that are clear and powerful, forcing many in the audience to tears while at the same time rescuing them with loving hope. That is the essence of *AMAL*.

Based in Miami, The Combat Hippiés is an all Puerto Rican Theater Company of military / war veterans that has come under the Artistic Direction of veteran director and

actor Teo Castellano, who has played an essential role in developing the talents of the Combat Hippiés and helping them to heal old wounds through artistic expression.

Originally opened in

Miami in March of 2019, *AMAL* toured in five cities, the last one being New York in January 2020, before being interrupted by the pandemic. This Chicago premier was their first public show of the year. Find more upcoming tour dates by The Combat Hippiés on their website @ thecombathippiés.com.



Centerfold

Centerfold

AT N.M.P.R.A.C. GOV. PRITZKER JOINS PUERTO RICAN AGENDA

TO CELEBRATE PASSAGE OF SB1833: SETS STAGE FOR **PUERTO RICO TOWN**

By Jessie Fuentes

The following is a speech delivered by Jessie Fuentes before Governor Pritzker signed the Puerto Rico Town legislation:

More than three years ago, the Puerto Rican Agenda birthed this legislation, and it all began at our Housing Summit. Many of you who are sitting in this room, were sitting with us then - strategizing around the sustainability of our community. At that summit there were two problems we wanted to address:

Historic disinvestment

And the onslaught of gentrification in our community

The only way to ensure the sustainability of our community was to be informed by equity and the voices of the people impacted by this trajectory. We all left the summit with a plan that would grapple with these issues with boots on the ground, pens to paper producing policy, and relationship building with elected officials to be our champions and there are three dynamic champions that made this possible: State Representative Delia Ramírez & Senator Cristina Pacione-Zayas, and our very own Senator Omar Aquino.

Pens to paper produced this legislation. And we are honored to have Governor J.B. Pritzker with us here to celebrate the passing and signing of the State Designated District Bill. Before we leave here today, I want to reflect and honor the work of those with boots on the ground. There are five sectors of work that the Puerto Rican Agenda has taken on: Arts & Culture, Economic Development, Education, Health, and Housing. Let's talk about the work being done:

Arts & Culture

Here we are all witness to the beauty of preserving, promoting, and exhibiting the art

of our Puerto Rican History, lived experiences, and creative minds at the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture. The museum will be breaking ground soon to build a facility that will become the archival space to all of Puerto Rican history here in the city of Chicago.

We have the Humboldt Park Boathouse that exhibits Puerto Rican art in a gallery that allows artists to build community, tell their stories, and build community.

We are currently in the process of



proposing a Puerto Rican heritage outdoor walkable photo exhibit by Así Somos right here in Humboldt Park.

And lastly, if you drive down Paseo you will see the construction of a new affordable housing development by The Puerto Rican Cultural Center. The Nancy Franco Arts building will provide 24 affordable housing units to artists in our community. This building will be anchored by Urban Theatre Company, the only theatre that is Puerto Rican led and focused in the city of Chicago.

Economic Development

The State Designated Cultural District legislation will provide communities with the bandwidth to create commercial corridors that are made up of small business owners in those communities. Here in Humboldt Park we are proud to have begun the work of supporting small business owners. We have a small business incubator many of you all have visited called i Wepa! Mercado del Pueblo, this incubator currently supports 17 vendors who are beginning the process with SBDC to get their business license so that they can take up the vacant storefronts in our community.

Several of us are in discussions and are strategizing to ensure the viability of our businesses. We are planning on creating a micro-lending community business initiative - similar to what many of you all know as credit unions. You see, we must ensure that all 50 of our current businesses continue to thrive and that we also continue to support and advocate for our cocineros in the park.

Through creative financing we will ensure that every vacant building within the commercial corridor will be utilized for our small business owners and that the units above the commercial space can be housing for them. We cannot discuss economic development without housing, and we cannot discuss housing if we are not discussing wealth building in this community.

Education

The Puerto Rican Agenda alongside our educators are working on an urban education initiative that will develop an aligned curriculum for many of the area schools with Roberto Clemente Community Academy being the hub.

We believe that creating a seamless pipeline from pre-k to college and beyond will

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ensure that all our young people see a future here in this community. We are talking about creating future agricultural scientists. The students in this community can ensure food justice for the entire community.

Health

It is no secret that our community suffers from the highest rates of diabetes, high blood pressure, and asthma. We are excited to learn that the state has committed \$20 million to Humboldt Health to build a wellness center right here on Division St - it will be our very own John Hopkins. This has all been under the leadership of CEO José Sánchez who is here in the room with us.

Housing

I feel lucky being in a room with folks like yourself, today I feel the same amount of gratitude I felt the day we closed our housing summit. I am grateful for the Leadership of Joy Aruguete at Bickerdike, Lisette Casteneda at LUCHA, and Paul Roldán at Hispanic Housing. Three housing organizations that have been leading the vision of community sustainability in the context of affordable housing.

We know within a couple of months that Hispanic Housing will be building affordable housing units on Division and California that will also have art projection space on the side of the building dedicated to artists in our

community. We also know that Hispanic Housing will develop additional housing on California & Crystal and are investing in building a cost-effective home for families to buy on Division & Spaulding.

In Spring of 2022 the Teachers Village in the old Von Humboldt Building will begin reconstruction. This initiative will provide affordable housing to teachers and school employees who work in our community.

We are reversing the process of spatial deconcentration by concentrating the displaced members of our community. If you all have not realized it has and always will be about intersectionality for us. We can no longer only address one sector of work; we must discuss them all and advocate for them all.

Today we have the microcosm of possibilities to realize Puerto Rico Town. We hope that Puerto Rico Town will be the model that other communities can emulate and add a new dimension to. This long stretch of La Division speaks to the small towns mainstreet U.S.A in which culture and heritage will be part and parcel to the economic development and growth of our communities.

Today we celebrate and tomorrow we return to work. I could not be more proud to continue to see this through alongside you all. Thank you.

EVENTS PROMOTE PUERTO RICO SELF DETERMINATION BILL

By Melissa Mark-Viverito

September and now October have been busy months for The PRCC on the self-determination front. Many activities took place that kept our community in Chicago and the larger Diaspora informed about support for The Puerto Rico Self-determination Act of 2021, a.k.a HR 2070, which is sponsored by Boricua Congresswomen Nydia Velázquez and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, as well as our own Congressman Chuy García. The companion senate bill is sponsored by Senator Bob Menéndez.

Actions taken include:

- PRCC's Melissa Mark-Viverito provided a presentation on H.R. 2070 during a briefing facilitated by Congressman García for the staff of Illinois congressional delegation members.
- In partnership with Power 4 Puerto Rico, of which PRCC is a coalition member, and the Puerto Rican Agenda, Chicago residents led by Jessie Fuentes visited the office of Illinois Congresswoman Kelly to thank her for being an original co-sponsor

of HR 2070. The visit was also to request a meeting to discuss her recent sign-on of the bill in Congress that would impose statehood on Puerto Rico and request that she withdraw support for that bill.

- Met with Offices of Senators Durbin and Duckworth to discuss signing on to the accompanying Senate bill.
- Organized panel at recent national Netroots Nation conference titled, From Standing Rock to Vieques: The Costs of U.S. Colonialism. The panel was facilitated by Democracy NOW's Amy Goodman and Juan González. The panel is available to watch online.

- Facilitated briefing with Detroit Ricans who are meeting with Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib to provide additional support for HR 2070.
- "Crooked Media" recruited Melissa Mark-Viverito to narrate an informative video explaining why DC and Puerto Rico statehood are not the same. The video is titled, The Shocking History of Puerto Rico Statehood, and is available on YouTube.

We will continue to provide leadership on this matter and are working actively to build even greater support for the self-determination and decolonization of Puerto Rico.



FROM STANDING ROCK TO VIEQUES,
PUERTO RICO: THE COST OF U.S. COLONI...

CON CUBA HOY MÁS QUE NUNCA

Por Periódico CLARIDAD

El estrecho vínculo histórico entre Cuba y Puerto Rico ha sido uno de los más largos y duraderos en la historia de El Caribe. El batir acompasado de “las dos alas del pájaro antillano” se remonta a los tiempos de la colonia bajo España y se refuerza durante la Guerra de Independencia de Cuba, la cual el gobierno de Estados Unidos intentó sabotear por todos los medios, para intentar alcanzar su objetivo de someter a Cuba al colonialismo clásico del cual Puerto Rico aún sigue siendo presa. La independencia de Cuba y de Puerto Rico fue el sueño largamente compartido por José Martí, padre de la patria cubana y Ramón Emeterio Betances, padre de la patria puertorriqueña. Patriotas nuestros de la talla de Juan Rius Rivera y Francisco (Pachín) y Wenceslao Marín dieron el todo por el todo en la manigua cubana, hacia el objetivo de alcanzar la victoria que impidiera que el Águila terminara tragándose a Cuba y Puerto Rico de un solo bocado. Desde entonces, ambos pueblos compartimos historia y bandera, y también el anhelo común de algún día forjar la unión Antillana que el imperio estadounidense les arrancó de las manos a nuestros ancestros. Tan fuerte era el vínculo entre Cuba y Puerto Rico por su independencia, que así se proclama en el documento constituyente del Partido Revolucionario de Cuba, donde se consigna el objetivo de “luchar por la independencia absoluta de Cuba, y fomentar y auxiliar la independencia de Puerto Rico”.

Ese vínculo patriótico se ha extendido desde entonces a lo largo de más de un siglo, y más aún se fortaleció cuando Cuba cimentó su soberanía, a raíz del triunfo de la Revolución en 1959. Desde Puerto Rico se habían recaudado fondos importantes para auxiliar la lucha revolucionaria que se libraba en Cuba, encabezada por el Movimiento 26 de julio. Por eso, al momento de triunfar la Revolución, el

Movimiento Pro Independencia de Puerto Rico (MPI) y demás fuerzas patrióticas puertorriqueñas proclamaron inequívocamente su adhesión y solidaridad al nuevo proyecto revolucionario en Cuba, solidaridad que ha seguido creciendo y nutriéndose desde entonces.

La Cuba revolucionaria ha sido un pilar de la lucha independentista puertorriqueña.



Particularmente en el plano internacional, su contribución ha sido incalculable. Mientras el gobierno de Estados Unidos mentía a la Organización de Naciones Unidas (ONU) para esconder el carácter colonial de su régimen en Puerto Rico, Cuba contribuía a desenmascarar la patraña y abrirle camino en foros y espacios internacionales al independentismo puertorriqueño, para que este pudiese llevar la verdad sobre la realidad colonial de Puerto Rico y el reclamo de su autodeterminación e independencia.

Esto se hizo tanto en el Comité de Descolonización de la ONU, como en la Organización de Países No Alineados, y en todos los foros gubernamentales y no gubernamentales a los que Cuba compareció. Junto al independentismo puertorriqueño, Cuba fue también punta de lanza en la campaña internacional hacia lograr la excarcelación de los prisioneros políticos independentistas - desde Don Pedro Albi zu Campos y los Nacionalistas, especialmente Oscar Collazo, Lolita Lebrón, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irvin Flores, Andrés Figueroa Cordero, y todas las subsiguientes generaciones de prisioneras y prisioneros políticos puertorriqueños

Un factor del coraje y las represalias del gobierno de Estados Unidos con Cuba está relacionado con la solidaridad activa que el hermano país ha sostenido con la lucha por la independencia de Puerto Rico. Esa solidaridad activa incluye haber desenmascarado al gobierno de Estados Unidos como una potencia colonial ante la comunidad internacional. He ahí una de las razones ocultas tras su campaña de odio contra Cuba y el criminal bloqueo económico y financiero al que la ha mantenido sometida durante los pasados 60 años, sin nunca lograr doblegarla.

Por eso, en la hora actual, cuando el gobierno de Estados Unidos endurece aún más sus sanciones económicas y financieras contra Cuba, es imperativo que los amigos de Cuba, en Puerto Rico y el mundo, cerremos filas en su defensa y nos sumemos a las voces que reclaman el cese inmediato del bloqueo. El presidente de Estados Unidos, Joe Biden, lleva años cultivando cuidadosamente una imagen de “persona decente”. Pero, no es de personas decentes ni de gobiernos civilizados aprovechar el recrudescimiento de la pandemia del COVID-19, para estrangular al pueblo de Cuba con nuevas sanciones y medidas coercitivas, como las que anunció Biden recientemente.

FIESTA BORICUA: CUARENTA AÑOS DEFENDIENDO LA IDENTIDAD PUERTORRIQUEÑA DE BANDERA A BANDERA

By Carlos Quiles

Esto que aquí escribo es algo así como un cuento corto. Un cuento de la vida real, con su escenario real, con sus personajes reales. Para dejar las cosas asentadas sobre una base sólida, utilicemos la definición de cuento. Bien, un cuento, en términos literarios, “es una narración breve, oral o escrita, en la que se narra una historia de ficción, con reducido número de personajes, una intriga poco desarrollada y un clímax y desenlace final rápidos.”

Si nos dejamos llevar por esta definición, entonces, las dos primeras oraciones de este escrito chocan de frente con la misma. Un cuento corto, sí, está bien, concuerda. Pero, ¿un cuento de la vida real, desarrollado en un escenario real, con personajes que existen en la realidad?, uhm, choca, ¿verdad? Pero insisto. Déjeme contarle el cuento.

El primer escenario, Aeropuerto Internacional Luis Muñoz Marín, de Carolina, Puerto Rico, aunque digan San Juan. Los personajes en orden de aparición: un poeta, un cantautor, un trovador y su esposa, un alcalde, un patriota que estuvo encarcelado por treinta y seis años en cárceles federales por el solo hecho de luchar por la independencia de su Patria; un grupo representativo de un pueblo de las montañas de Puerto Rico.

El poeta y el cantautor, por aquello de buscar el aplomo y el valor para montarse en el pájaro de acero que los llevaría a su destino final, deciden tomarse una cerveza. Se toman tres cada uno. Pidieron la cuenta; cincuenta dólares. ¡Wao! En la calle serían dieciocho. Pero la necesidad obligaba.

Todavía faltaba algo para el aplomo y la valentía. Entraron a una tienda “duty free” ¿Tendrán una caneca de chichaíto por ahí?, fue la pregunta para una muchacha joven, bonita y encantadora que atendía el público. Claro que sí. Mire, allí está,

en aquella tablilla, cuesta cinco dólares. Wao, que chévere, respondió el poeta. Pero, añadió ella, estoy segura que no la van a abrir, que se la van a llevar en una bolsita y se la van a tomar cuando lleguen a su destino. Estoy segura de eso, ¿verdad que eso va a ser así? Así será, no tenga la menor duda. Nosotros somos respetuosos de las normas. Salieron de la tienda, fueron al baño, abrieron la caneca y se sumbaron cada uno un buen palo de chichaíto.

Saliendo del baño se encontraron con el patriota. Saludos respetuosos, breves. Se dirigieron al “gate” de salida. Ese grupo que está ahí va para la



fiesta, son los de Ciales, le dijo el cantautor al poeta. Mira, allá veo a Jovino González y a su esposa. Se acercaron, saludos cordiales.

Llaman para abordar y hacen la fila. Más o menos media hora después el pájaro de acero salió volando. Los cincuenta dólares por seis cervezas, se me olvidó decir que eran Medallas de botella, y el par de juanetazos de chichaíto habían hecho su trabajo. Poeta y cantautor iban relajados, con una sonrisa amplia. Si se cae no te preocupes, dijo el poeta, el avión no es de nosotros.

El tiempo pasó volando. Aeropuerto Midway, Chicago. La caneca llegó vacía. Encuentro con la gente que llegaron a recoger a los visitantes, liderados por Luis Rosa, patriota expresidente

de guerra. Cada quien se fue por su lado; el cantautor y el poeta se fueron con una amiga que muy generosamente les permitió quedarse en un apartamento espectacular en la Kedzie, nevera llena de comida y cervezas. Una maravilla de mujeres que viven y se protegen en aquel edificio. Antes de ir al apartamento, llegaron a un lugar en la calle Division donde la comunidad le dió la bienvenida al grupo que acababa de llegar. Exquisita la comida y la velada. El poeta leyó una décima dedicada a la Diáspora de la comunidad puertorriqueña de Chicago. El cantautor interpretó, acompañado de su guitarra, las décimas de Juan Antonio Corretjer, poeta nacional y de Ciales, Boricua en la luna, con la letra que hace mención de Chicago; excelente interpretación la del cantautor.

Así comenzó la Fiesta Boricua de 2021, con ese canto de identidad: “Yo sería borincano aunque naciera en la luna.” Una excelente delegación representando al pueblo de Ciales, Puerto Rico, cuna de nuestro poeta nacional Juan Antonio Corretjer Montes, junto a su alcalde, vinieron a celebrar esa identidad nacional a la ciudad de Chicago, Illinois. Había un aire de montaña en el ambiente y las décimas de Corretjer, musicalizadas hace muchos años atrás por el grandioso cantautor Roy Brown, se pasearon por aquel espacio en la voz de Elbin Torres.

El grupo representativo de Ciales celebraba el momento, su alcalde se gozaba la ocasión. José López sonreía satisfecho y la gente de la comunidad, que trabajaban para complacer a todos brillaban de la satisfacción. Los cialeños llegaban para ver aquella comunidad que se había levantado, poquito a poquito, de lugar en lugar, empujados por el “gentrification”, pero siempre en lucha, siempre resistiendo. Lo hicieron, y lo siguen haciendo, con grandes esfuerzos y sacrificios, motivados por una sola cosa: su identidad puertorriqueña. Les costó sudor y sangre, cárceles y ausencias...

Allí comenzó la Fiesta Boricua, que celebraba veintiocho años de existencia, veintiocho años celebrando la puertorriqueñidad, la cultura,

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(Continued from page 15)

la Patria. Este año fue dedicado a Ciales, que se convertía en ese vínculo con la Patria en el Mar Caribe. También celebraban los cuarenta años de las décimas de don Juan, Boricua en la luna. Tres días de fiesta grande, tres días de bandera y nación; veintiocho años de fe y esperanza. Una vida entera de muchas familias que se asentaron en aquella ciudad, sin otra cosa que su puertorriqueñidad. Nuevas generaciones que fueron surgiendo al paso de los años, que todavía luchan por su espacio, que exigen sus derechos y pelean por ellos, con una sola bandera, la suya, la puertorriqueña; que se sienten boricuas de corazón, aunque nacieran en la luna. ¡Pa'que tú lo sepas!

Ciales cantó y bailó. Sus cuatros, guitarra, güiro y percusión, sus trovadores, llenaron el espacio de bandera a bandera. Su trovador Jovino González improvisó décimas desde su fina inspiración y su voz extraordinaria. Se celebró la Misa Jíbara, con la oración de Padre Raúl y la música sacra de un grupo de comerieños y de otros lugares, con los feligreses de la comunidad. Sonó la salsa, sonaron los artistas de allí, los locales. El cantautor se gozó la fiesta y se quedó con la tarima. El poeta se trajo en el corazón a toda aquella gente maravillosa, que se organizaron para celebrar magistralmente los veintiocho años de Fiesta Boricua, su gran fiesta boricua al otro lado del Atlántico.

Al final me he dado cuenta que esto no es ningún cuento. ¡Es una hermosa realidad! ¡Que viva la Patria puertorriqueña en Chicago!

(Continued from page 6)

had already gentrified, and even in ZIP codes that had no potential to gentrify. Gentrifying neighborhoods actually had the smallest concentration of, and slowest growth in, arts establishments.”

Still, it's undeniable that Humboldt Park and other west-side neighborhoods, particularly those along the 606 trail, have seen rising property tax values and other economic pressures associated with gentrification. Vega sees the new center as a way to stem the tide. “It continues to anchor us. The only way to fight gentrification is to continue to invest in the community, and to give those people, those artists who have been in Humboldt Park, an opportunity to showcase their work. And that's what's happening.” UTC also recently received \$140,000 through the Chicago's Cultural Treasures grants for BIPOC arts organizations—a pittance compared to the budgets of primarily white-led institutions, to be sure. But as Vega points out, the increased funding means that for the first time, the leadership team of UTC can draw salaries as they build for the future.

For Kirk Anderson, artistic director of Facility Theatre, the goal is to build out their storefront space (formerly a machine shop) in Humboldt Park in a way that will give his company and other arts groups a home. He views it as particularly important at a time when other venues that served as reliable spaces for experimental troupes are no longer available. Facility had started rehearsals on a new show in March of 2020 at Prop Thtr when the pandemic shutdown hit. A few months later, Prop (which for many years hosted the annual Rhino Fest and rented to numerous itinerant companies) announced they were giving up their Avondale home. Anderson says, “I have always wanted

to have a place. Just a place where me and all the people I love who make work can gather to do so.” Anderson's resume includes stints in the ensemble of the defunct European Repertory Theatre and TUTA, as well as other companies large (Steppenwolf, Goodman) and small-but-stalwart (Trap Door, Theater Oobleck).

Among the artists associated with Facility are longtime Chicago director Dado (who is also an ensemble member with A Red Orchid Theatre) and actor Maria Stephens, who has worked with numerous companies over the past several years. Managing director Shawna Franks also has long roots in Chicago ensembles, including originating the role of Dottie in Tracy Letts's Killer Joe.

Investing in the time needed to really nurture new work is one of the guiding principles for Facility. Their mission statement says, “The collective intends to cultivate the collaborative process as a means of empowerment for the artists, and foster an environment of inclusivity and curiosity with the community.”

Anderson expands upon that idea, noting that the goal is “to take the time to do what is required, to be as inclusive as possible, and across every discipline there is, and do work that matters to us, because I don't know any other barometer.” Last month, the company presented the Staged Summer Festival of new plays by BIPOC writers.

The company recently launched a GoFundMe to raise \$25,000 for renovations on the Humboldt Park building (owned by Anderson and his wife) that will provide ADA-compliant accessibility for the entrance and bathrooms, provide a new facade, and fund a new HVAC system. The space includes the former garage, which Anderson says has a footprint of about

1,200 square feet, as well as a storefront and an upstairs apartment.

“My idea is that it's a place where many things can happen at once. I want it to be that always-searching experimental incubator.” Anderson notes that Facility is developing plans to offer three-week residencies for other artists to be able to work intensively on new pieces, with a work-in-progress presentation to follow each residency.

Anderson acknowledges that UTC and other cultural and community groups have much longer roots in Humboldt Park than Facility, but he says, “I want very much to be included in this without insinuating ourselves in any way into the culture here, which I really admire. It's tricky. We're not actually on the Paseo Boricua, but it's still a Puerto Rican neighborhood. It's their neighborhood.” He notes that Facility has met with Maldonado, Lopez of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, and with Vega. “We had a very short but fruitful discussion about how we want to be symbiotic here, and be of use, I guess.”

Among the hats I wear away from my Reader job is chairing the Francesca Primus Prize committee for the American Theatre Critics Association. The award is usually presented annually to an emerging female-identifying playwright and writers can self-submit. Submissions are open until November 1, 2021, and we're emphasizing in particular that the award can be for a body of work, not just a recently produced play as has often been the case in recent years. (Nobody was getting many productions in 2020!) Submission guidelines are at the ATCA website, and I'm more than happy to answer any questions writers may have in the meantime, so spread the word!

28th FIESTA BORICUA: UN ABRAZO BORICUA ENTRE CHICAGO Y CIALES EN PASEO BORICUA

By La Voz Staff

The 28th Fiesta Boricua “de Bandera a Bandera” was a stunning success where thousands upon thousands of people, particularly families, immersed themselves in the Puerto Rican cultural experience. Every participant was able to grasp the beauty, the depth, and the wonderment of our culture as expressed by the Cialeños. All our invited performers, vendors, event sponsors, and invited guests from Puerto Rico, particularly from Ciales, which this year represented “Lo Mejor de Nuestros Pueblos” were mesmerized by what transpired during this Labor Day weekend on Paseo Boricua.

While our performers, vendors, sponsors, and invited guests contributed so much to the success of our 28th Fiesta Boricua, it would not have been possible without the amazing labor of love of our volunteers who weaved this incredible cultural masterpiece. To them we extend our deepest gratitude, because their commitment made this unforgettable event another outstanding chapter in the 28 years of Fiesta Boricua.

The following events highlighted the 28th Fiesta Boricua/de Bandera a Bandera:

- Thursday, Sept. 2nd The Puerto Rican Cultural Center welcomed Mayor Alexander Burgos and the entire delegation that accompanied him from Ciales to Paseo Boricua with a sumptuous dinner and a powerful musical/poetry presentation by Poet Carlos Quiles and Singer Elbin Torres, which honored the 40th anniversary of the writing of “Boricua en la Luna” (the epic musicalized poem of the Puerto Rican Diaspora written by the Ciales born Juan Antonio Corretjer);



- Friday, Sept. 3rd two major components of Fiesta Boricua began-
 1. the C.A.A.C./S.C.A.N. back to school carnival where hundreds of youths were provided with full all-day passes for rides once fully vaccinated.
 2. The Noche Jíbara/Guayabera Gala at the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture, which formally ushered in the 28th

contained in the verses of the décimas of our trovadores; following the Misa the main stage was transformed into the best sounds and rhythms of every genre of Puerto Rican music including: Bomba, plena, and trova culminating with an electrifying performance by Willito Otero and his salsa beats from Puerto Rico. Additionally, that evening a riveting bombazo was held at the Casita de

Don Pedro y Doña Lolita and the carnival with its many rides enthralled our youngsters.

- Sunday, Sept. 3rd from Bandera to Bandera 1000s strolled along Paseo Boricua beginning at noon; they savored the best frituras, the smooth piña coladas, as well as attracted by the aroma of Cafe Cibales and captivated by the very intricate demonstrations by the Villalobos family of Puerto Rican furniture making, and the graceful physicality of Nora as she created her turbans from Guayama. By

5pm the traditional protocol ceremony was held honoring the town of Ciales as the representative of Lo Mejor de Nuestros Pueblos. While the Carnival continued throughout the evening, thousands gathered in front of the mainstage creating a sea of Puerto Rican flags to welcome the final act of the 28th Fiesta Boricua. The engrossing historical syncretism of Puerto Rican salsa was presented by Flaco Navaja who took the audience through a journey of the best exponents of Puerto Rican salsa from his original home - his native Bronx, New York.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS





The Master "Jovino González" honoring his Student Willito Otero with improvised Puerto Rican decima



Nora Cruz passing on her Guayama Turban tradition



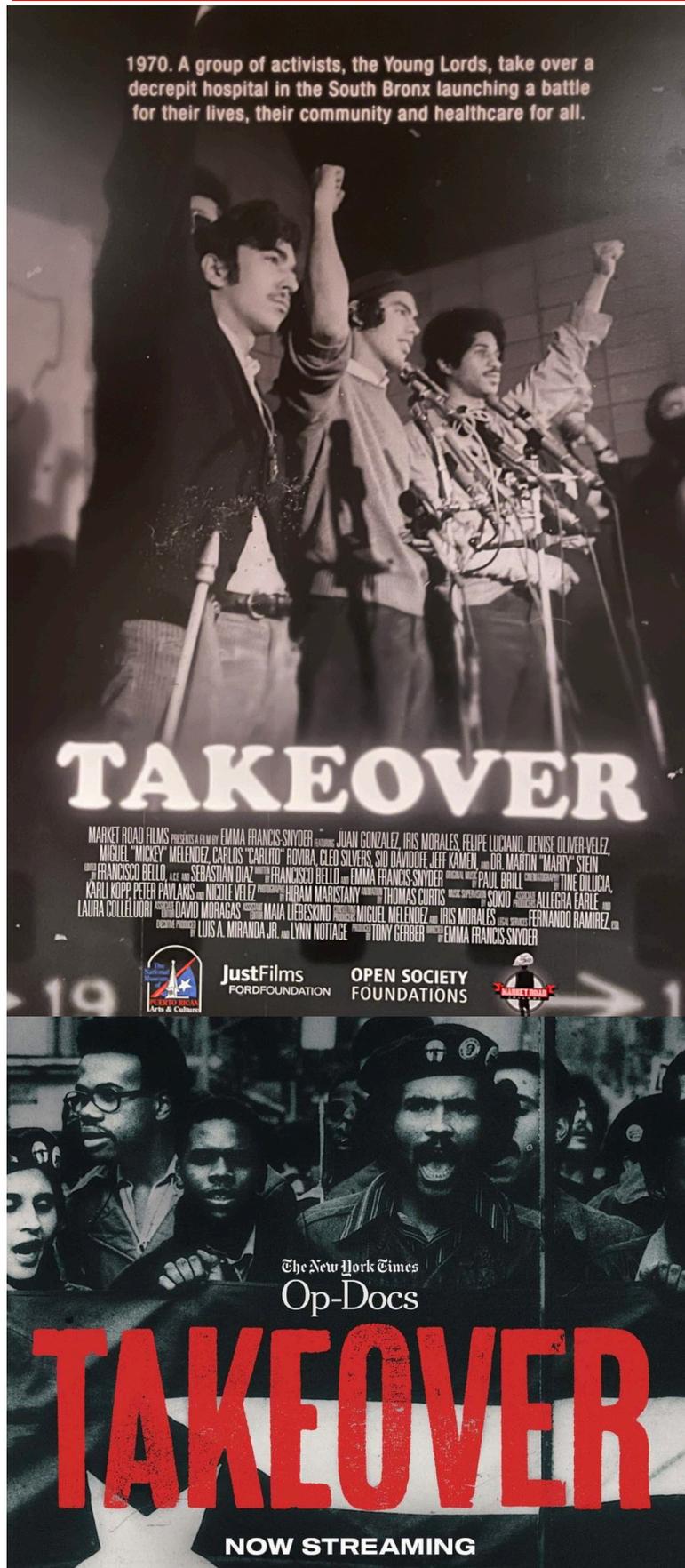
Misa Jíbara an engagement of our traditional music to communicate deep spiritual and social messages



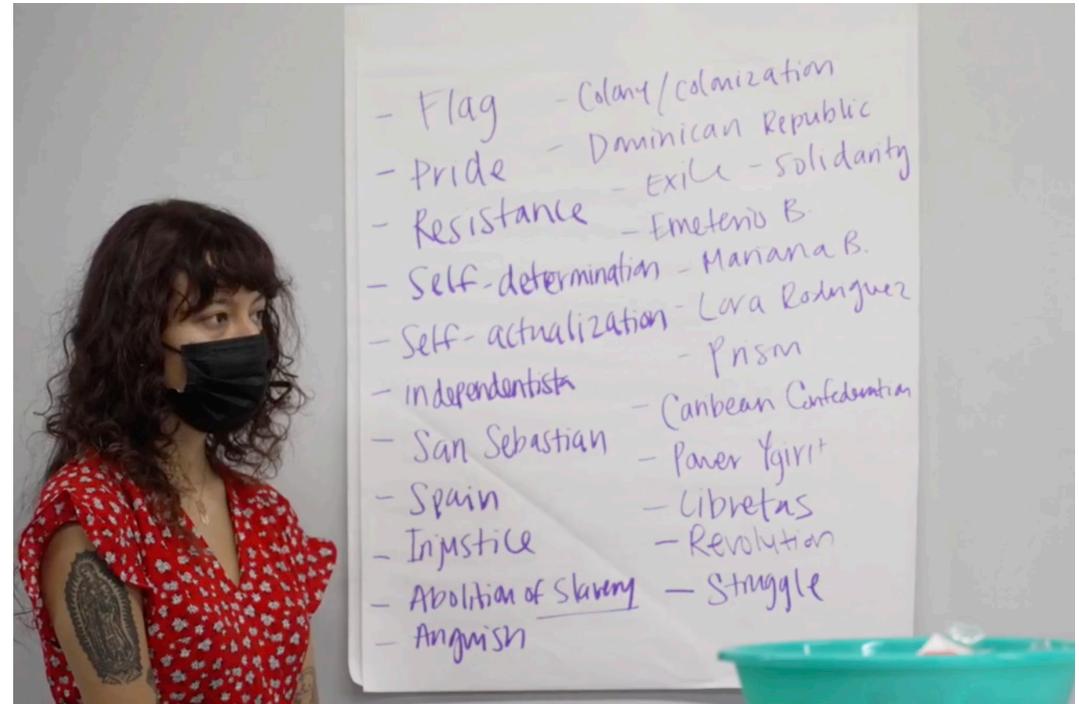
Flaco Navaja's electrifying performance honors Salsa pioneers and adds new dimensions to the genre



Bombazo at La Casita celebrating a heritage of resistance through dance



PRCC CELEBRATES 153RD ANNIVERSARY OF EL GRITO DE LARES



By La Voz Staff

This year in honor of the 153rd anniversary of El Grito de Lares, The Puerto Rican Cultural Center held a “charla informativa” and short film screening of “Road of no Return: The Banishment of María de Las Mercedes Barbudo”. 153 years later, El Grito de Lares continues to have profound relevance for Puerto Ricans because our struggle against the exploitation of colonialism is ongoing; we fight for many of the same human rights the revolutionaries of El Grito de Lares fought for, such as: self-determination, freedom from exploitation of our labor, Black liberation, independence, and much

more. In this charla on the Grito de Lares, we discussed the significance of the Grito as a revolutionary movement of resistance and solidarity across Puerto Rico. The charla began with an activity in which all participants were asked to say one word/concept that came to mind when they thought of El Grito de Lares. This participatory exercise, led by PRCC Executive Director José E. López, became a powerful learning moment as we discussed the cruel realities of colonialism, and the great resourcefulness of the Puerto Rican people as they resist colonialism. Director López detailed how Black abolitionist and liberation movements,

maroon societies, and slave uprisings were foundational to El Grito de Lares. He challenged the attendees to survey our rich history, to make connections, and consider the lessons we can draw from all of these. The charla was thought-provoking throughout. Toward the end, we were moved to consider this moment, and to stand in solidarity with all people who continually struggle under the weight that centuries of colonialism have unloaded on them. We stand in solidarity with our Caribbean siblings in struggle, and particularly with Haitian asylum seekers at the US-Mexico border who are criminally whipped and tortured by U.S. border agents.



La plena inmortal The immortal plena

Woodcuts by Antonio Martorell

Zoom event from the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture on Nov. 3

This series of octagonal woodcuts, printed on a variety of papers fixed to plastic, with verses following the plena's traditional pattern of versification, the octosyllabic line, portray today's Puerto Rican, Caribbean, and worldwide panorama, with figures from both the past and present (the Pope), the island (the snow-cone vendor), and the United States (the president), from the arts (the mask-maker), the professions (the judge), and the military (the soldier) — in a word, a kaleidoscope as lethal as it is colorful, as rhetorical as it is critical.

Antonio Martorell, born in Santurce, Puerto Rico in 1939. He keeps his workshop in La Playa de Ponce. Has been artist-in-residence for more than 30 years at the University of Puerto Rico in Cayey. He keeps busy at painting, drawing, installation and performance art, graphics, set and costume design, theatre, films, TV, radio, writing for the press and as a writer.



NAVI ARTS
Festival

The National Museum
of Puerto Rican
Arts and Culture

20TH & 21ST OF NOVEMBER
SATURDAY 11 AM - 6 PM | SUNDAY 11 AM - 5 PM
3015 WEST DIVISION STREET, CHICAGO, IL