

Dive into Music, Dance, & Diversity in Florida History this September 17-18

Start Hispanic Heritage Month 2021 with an experience you'll never forget – 2 days of music and dancing from Florida's multicultural past. This year marks the 200th anniversary of Florida's transformation from Spanish colony to US territory. So Theater with a Mission (TWAM) is hosting a special Loco for Love Festival, where you can come face-to-face, ear-to-ear, and foot-to-foot with haunting melodies and smooth moves from Florida's Native American, African, Spanish, and English peoples.

Headlining the music that drives this journey into Florida's bicentennial is Piffaro, a magnificent band from Philadelphia, PA. For 40 years, Piffaro has been tracking how musical instruments and musical ideas moved from Spain to the New World and back again during the 1500s and 1600s. They have collected instruments that Shakespeare and Cervantes knew, played them brilliantly in programs like "The Musical World of Don Quixote," and gained accolades from Deutsche Grammophon and Google. This September, Piffaro's workshops, lecture-demonstrations, and concerts will let you meet a vihuela, the great-grandfather of today's guitar, make a shaker to accompany a toe-tapping tune on the Spanish bagpipe, hear Indigenous music that Piffaro discovered in Spanish archives, and dance in the streets to music that Spanish settlers in Florida used to celebrate state occasions.

Leading dance workshops are experts in five areas: Native American culture, music and dance of the African diaspora, Spanish dances from the 1600s, Spanish dances from the 1700s, and American social dance from the 1800s. Five 60-minute workshops will take you deep into these very different stories about Florida's diversity – stories told through music, costumes, and dance steps, during encounters where you're invited to ask questions, and where you're instructed in how to step into the dancing first-person.

Here's an example. Paige Whitley-Bauguess will be coming from North Carolina and Thomas Baird will be coming from Connecticut to teach Spanish dances from the 1700s. Their workshop will focus on the story of Escarramán y La Méndez, told in a series of dances with live music by Piffaro. Paige Whitley-Bauguess summarizes the story this way:

"Escarramán was a notorious quick-witted rogue from Seville, the star of dramatic interludes called *jácaras*, from the term '*jácara*' meaning 'ruffian.' Our *jácara* of Escarramán and his lover La Méndez is loosely based on works by two great Spanish playwrights, Cervantes and Quevedo. In our setting, the *Fandango* sets the stage as the recently escaped Escarramán dances a rhythmic *Canarios* in shackles. The lively *Canarios* originated in the Canary Islands and is filled with 'violent and quick' movements of the feet. La Méndez appears to him in a dream and unlocks the chains that bind him. La Méndez dances a *Zarabanda*, a roguish dance of the lower classes 'with all its wriggling and grimacing and immodest mimicry.' Together they dance a seductive *Jácara* where they swear loyalty to one another, and end with a *Villano*. The *Villano*, a *baile* in the style of a village dance, expresses their joy to be free once again and features directions to '*zapatear*' – that is, 'to accompany the instrumental piece by clapping one's hands together and alternately slapping them against one's feet.'"

A very different set of stories and experiences will immerse you in Florida's Native American culture. Misty Penton, traditional storyteller to the Muscogee Nation of Florida, will kick off the workshop on Native American dance by telling the story of "Eto the Tree," describing how the Creator invented dancing so that men would have a way to acquire some of the creative power that women are born with, and showing shell carvings that reflect ceremonial dances which the Muscogee still hold sacred. Then Lyndon Alec, a member of the Alabama-Coushatta tribe from Livingston, Texas, will demonstrate Native hoop dancing, in a show guaranteed to hold people of all ages spellbound.

All of the workshops, concerts, and dance lessons at Loco for Love are free, and it's all happening at the beginning of Hispanic Heritage Month this September 17-18. Tickets are available for participating in person or for joining us online, so reserve your tickets today at www.theaterwithamission.com.



Piffaro, America's Renaissance Band, coming to Loco for Love on September 17-18



Paige Whitley-Bauguess teaches and performs dances from the 1700s