

MEXICAN HERITAGE PLAZA ARTISTIC VISION STATEMENT AND PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Approved
January 13, 2006

I. ABOUT THE MEXICAN HERITAGE PLAZA – MISSION, HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The *mission* of the Mexican Heritage Plaza is to affirm, celebrate and preserve the rich cultural heritage of the Mexican community and showcase multicultural arts within the region.

Founded in a partnership with the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Jose, the Plaza opened to the public in September 1999. Located in San Jose's Mayfair/Alum Rock community, it is one of the largest Latino cultural centers in the United States. The Plaza features a 500-seat state of the art theatre, a 3,500 square foot gallery with Smithsonian Institution affiliation; two classrooms including an art and technology lab, conference room, public gardens; a multi-use pavilion and a large central plaza for public gatherings and performances. Programming is multi-disciplinary, presented at the Plaza, in schools and at outreach sites in order to provide cultural and arts education opportunities for people of all ages. The center is a destination point and a gathering spot for people of all cultures in the area including Latinos, Blacks, Asians including Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese, East Indians and many others.

A cornerstone of the Plaza programs is the San Jose International Mariachi Festival and Conference, one of the largest in the state of California, and a standard-bearer for mariachi festivals throughout the nation. The Plaza's arts programs reach millions every year:

- over 30,000 people annually attend festival concerts and music workshops;
- 70,000 people from the region and the entire country attend Mexican Heritage Plaza multi-disciplinary programs annually;
- The Plaza's broadcast audience reaches a Hispanic population in the San Francisco Bay Area of 1.4 million, with an attendant consumer buying power of \$27 billion, and
- media impressions from Plaza advertising and media coverage reached 30 million.

The annual operating budget is approximately \$2 million. The Mexican Heritage Corporation is the non-profit corporate operator of the Plaza. It is led by a board of directors responsible for fiduciary oversight of the Plaza including program, operations, and insuring the organization's financial stability. These leaders represent some of Silicon Valley's most prominent leaders who appreciate and wish to foster greater understanding among cultures. The Plaza facilities are owned by the City of San Jose.

II. SUMMARY -- ARTISTIC VISION AND PROGRAMS

The Plaza realizes its mission through a multi-disciplinary **artistic program** that celebrates Mexican culture and illuminates and explores both the diversity within Mexico and the influence of Mexican culture on other communities worldwide through the visual, performing and media arts. MHP programming illuminates the passionate cadence of Mexican music, the complexity of Mexico's history and diversity, and the unique contributions of a culture which both literally and figuratively forms the underlying architecture of present day American life. In order to reach the large Spanish speaking audience served by the Plaza, MHP commits itself to present its exhibitions as well as relevant programming information in English and Spanish. In this way, MHP promotes, explores and appreciates the cultural contributions of the Mexican people and Mexican-Americans and fosters cross-cultural communication and understanding.

A. Structure

The Plaza's multi-disciplinary arts program consists of five categories:

- Performing arts (Club San José) – music, dance and theater;
- Visual arts (Luminarios) - gallery exhibitions;
- Arts and lectures (Salon de Mexico) -- conversations with artists, writers, performers, and public figures;
- Media arts (Ciné del Mundo) – film series;
- Community festivals (Festival Bellas Artes); and
- Arts education (Enseñanzas).

Through at least FY 2008/09, The Plaza's arts programming will use one of three constructs for program delivery:

1. Produced/organized by:

MHP acts as the presenter and is responsible for all costs of the production. From time to time, programs may encompass all of MHP's multi-disciplinary universe, e.g., performing, visual and media arts programs: music, dance, community celebrations, exhibitions, films and education programs.

Produced/organized programs will include, for example:

- A. The San Jose International Mariachi Festival and Conference, which continues to be a cornerstone of the Plaza's programs;
- B. Los Lupeños de San José, now operating under the Plaza's 501(C)3 umbrella. Los Lupeños is Silicon Valley's premier Mexican folklorico

dance company devoted to the outstanding performance and creation of this traditional dance form; and

- C. Regional, national and internationally known music, dance and theater artists in performance.

2. Curated by:

Through strategic partnerships, MHP will influence the development and production of culturally relevant programming at the Plaza. Programs that are curated by MHP, but produced by a strategic partner, will be primarily in the performing arts: music and musical theater. This also will be the mechanism for the Plaza' arts and lectures program. All costs associated with organizing these productions will be borne by the producer with the exception of marketing and promotion and certain technical support costs.

MHP will receive rental fee income from strategic partner producers. The Plaza's costs will include marketing, in cooperation with the program's producer, and facility manager/technical director staff support to assure consistency of production standards/presentation.

These programs will include, for example:

- A. Production partnerships with such organizations as: Marquez Brothers Entertainment, American Musical Theater of San Jose, History San Jose, the Commonwealth Club of California, and others.

3. Presented by: "The "Mexican Heritage Plaza Presents."

MHP will initiate a "Resident Artists" co-marketing program to publicize and attract new and increased audiences for multi-cultural performing arts at the Plaza.

Co-branding will provide "Resident Artist" organizations with an identifiable home venue, increased marketing exposure with the potential to expand audiences, and access to on-site, facility manager/technical director to assure consistency of production standards/presentation, and professional, on-site front of house and box office support on performance days. The co-marketing program "MHP Presents" will augment, not replace, the marketing efforts of the individual organizations included in this "umbrella" marketing/ advertising program.

This arrangement provides MHP with the opportunity to become increasingly well known as THE destination for multicultural engagement and this notoriety will bolster MHP's reputation as an attractive, quality performance facility rental for presenters.

MHP will continue to receive rental fee income from organizations included in this proposed marketing umbrella: "Mexican Heritage Plaza Presents."

The Mexican Heritage Plaza venue will provide services that will enhance the artistic production and audience experience. The Plaza's costs will include a

public relations/ marketing campaign to publicize “Mexican Heritage Plaza Presents” performances, facility manager/technical director to assure consistency of production standards/presentation, and professional, on-site front of house and box office support on performance days. Many of these, mostly small budget organizations, do not have the infrastructure in place to fully professionalize their operations.

A. Resident Artists performances will feature the performing arts: music, dance and theater.

1. A select number of multi-cultural arts organizations that currently use the Plaza theater or who have appeared at the Plaza will be invited to participate in the “Resident Artist” co-marketing program.

Sample list:

Latino Community

The Latino Film Festival
Los Cenzontles

Indian Community

Abhinaya Dance Company	Classical Dance of South India
Chitresh Das Company	North and South Indian Dance

Asian Community

Chinese Performing Artists of America

Multi-Ethnic

World Arts West	World dance traditions
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2. To augment this group, MHP will seek out high-quality multi-cultural “resident artists” who have not utilized its facility in the past. A number of additional regional, multi-cultural arts organizations will supplement those “resident artists” that currently use the Plaza’s theater as their main performance venue.

Among those under consideration for inclusion in this co-marketing program are the following:

San Jose Taiko	Japanese
Oriki Theater	African American
Lilly Kai	Chinese

B. Resident Companies

Since its inception, MHP has provided lower-than-market rate office and performance space to three organizations: Teatro Vision, Los Lupeños de San José and the San Jose Multicultural Artist's Guild, a consortium of three companies including Teatro Familia Aztlán, Tabia African American Theatre Ensemble, and Maiko Women's Drum and Poetry Ensemble. The Plaza also served as a co-presenter providing co-marketing and technical assistance to these organizations.

1. Teatro Vision, a 25 year-old Latino theatre company performing scripted work, will continue as the primary Resident Company of the Plaza. The features of this arrangement will remain as in the past – lower-than-market rate office and performance space, co-marketing and technical assistance. Teatro Vision operates as a 501(c)(3) with its own, independent board of directors. The Plaza fully expects that its relationship with Teatro Vision will continue to grow and that the organization will flourish. The Plaza is actively seeking ways to partner with Teatro to assist in improving that organization's programming and empower its artistic direction, as well as marketing/promotions for audience development.
2. Los Lupeños was absorbed under MHP's financial and operational umbrella in late 2005. It will still carry the moniker of "Resident Company." The long-term vision is for Plaza management to work with the Los Lupenos artistic leadership to achieve status as a full-time professional company. See, e.g., "Organized By" section above.

The artistic activities of San Jose Multicultural Artist's Guild companies have transitioned to an extent that their primary activity is in-school arts education and no longer public performances. In light of this, the Plaza is in conversation with SJMAG to mutually determine the most appropriate partnership for the future.

B. Audience Development

Rebuilding Through Presentation and Collaboration

MHP will focus on rebuilding its own programs in two broad areas: community outreach and the development of a broader, more diverse audience base and a dependable revenue stream, thereby contributing to its long-term financial stability. This will be accomplished through modestly growing the produced/organized programs and through collaborative partnerships.

The goal is two-fold: to deepen the Plaza's core Hispanic audience and to broaden MHP's artistic reach and attract new audiences not typically drawn to ethnic specific or multicultural programming by featuring artists from varied performance genres: music, dance, theater and others. "Mexican Heritage Plaza Presents" programs also will contribute to the Plaza's audience development efforts.

The plaza's long-term objective is to establish itself as a premier center for arts, innovation and community multicultural ventures that inspire our patrons to see the arts as an essential part of a sustainable community. The goal is to create a new collaborative vision and program for the future that will raise the bar in terms of audience experience and community service.

C. Earned and Contributed Income Potential

Earned income

Developing audiences for all Plaza programming will increase recognition for the Plaza as a high quality performing arts presenting venue – one with consistent, dependable and high quality performance and other artist offerings. Increased ticket revenues (earned income) will provide an important source of funding for the future expansion of the Plaza's produced/organized programming. This income stream, in turn, will build institutional confidence that audiences attribute "value" to the programming presented at the Plaza.

Contributed Income

It is well recognized that audiences demonstrate their commitment to an institution and recognition of its "value" by making monetary contributions to help assure continued and expanded programming. As a critical component of its fund development, MHP must develop and exploit the relationship with its program audience to develop an individual donor base of support.

It is fairly well recognized within the philanthropic community that a culture of mature and established private gift support in philanthropy is not well developed within the US Latino community, other than that attributed to religious oriented philanthropy. In this regard, MHP seeks to develop an individual giving philanthropic profile within the community.

The Plaza's hired its first full-time manager of development in 2006/07; thus placing a dedicated organization focus on developing and sustaining a contributed income stream. A donor perquisite program has been devised for use in fund development actions. The Plaza's fund development plan is now complete. Its outreach program builds awareness for the need for individual philanthropic support of its programs. Among the initiatives that will be put in place are placing 1) donation kiosks at entrances to the Plaza, which will function similarly to donation plates (tithing) at religious services), and 2) signage to recognize contributors of \$1,000 and greater at a visible visitor location within the Plaza courtyard. Other actions, such as targeted direct mail outreach, donor cultivation activities, materials and recognition of donors at performances/events, will augment these plans.