



For immediate release:

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Mano a Mano to participate at the 31st New York's Village Halloween Parade. Over 100 musicians and dancers will perform traditional dances from Mexico culminating at Madison Square Park with a centennial tradition: a Conchero dance and a community altar. Sunday, October 31, 2004, starting at 7:00pm

The Mexican community, one of the fastest growing ethnic communities in the City is known for the flair and gusto of its celebrations. Around the time for Halloween we celebrate the All Saints Day and All Souls Day, also known as "Día de los Muertos" (Day of the Dead). For us, this is a particularly important festivity in our calendar. To continue our traditions here in New York, Mano a Mano will participate at the 31st Annual Village Parade by bringing together over 100 musicians and dancers from the Mexican communities of the Bronx, Brooklyn and Yonkers and display traditional dances linked these celebrations with Mexico's renowned tradition of the Day of the Dead.

Lineup:

- *Banda and Folklorico Dancers* from Nuestra Señora del Refugio Church in the Bronx. This troupe of 26 dancers, under Jesus Cortez's direction, will perform the Nahuatl dance in pre-Columbian style, with imagery of eagles, serpents and skulls.
- A 24 piece- *Banda de Guerra*, under the direction of Juan Cortez, featuring percussion instruments and brass.
- The *Tecuanis*, a group of dancers from Brooklyn, with director, Adolfo Chino, which performs the traditional Mexican village-based regional dance from the state of Puebla, with masks and colorful costumes -performed exclusively by men.
- The *Chinelos* Dance Troupe from Yonkers, New York, under the direction of Aurelia Fernández Marure; an all-female troupe that participates at the parade for the second year with this traditional dance from the state of Morelos, Mexico, characterized by its oversized turbans, masks and richly sequined velvet gowns.
- A huge "mojiganga" head done up as a "calavera de azucar" (sugar skull) and a score of participants with sugar skull masks.

The highlight of the evening is a spectacular **Velación** and the construction of a **Community Altar**, which will take place from 8-10pm at Madison Square Park (23rd Street near Broadway). The ritual of the *velación* is typically a nightlong vigil with music, songs and flowers held throughout rural Mexico each year on November 1st and 2nd. It has a náhuatl origin (one of the largest ethnic groups of pre-Hispanic origin from Mexico) and it pays tribute to the cycle of death, life and rebirth commemorating the arrival of the spirits of the deceased. The ceremony presented by Mano a Mano will be led by Antonia Guerrero and Jose Ramos from the Mexican Danza de Concheros "Citlaltónac".

The **Altar-building** will be a community activity and the public is welcome to participate! An altar is typically built in Mexico around the time of the day of the dead to honor the departed. It consists of three levels, roughly representing the material, mental and the spiritual – in accordance with the Mexican tradition. The altar's elements are flowers, like the chrysanthemum or cempazúchil (marigold), food, drinks, cigarettes, candy and photographs of the departed loved ones decorate the altar. We invite the audience to bring flowers, photos of loved ones (or even deceased artists or sports stars, politicians, such as Frida Kahlo, Marlon Brando, etc.) or any other personal mementos to place on the altar.



In addition, we will offer a **series of community appearances** with Professor Ramos who will talk about the concheros and their deeply rooted traditions in Mexico.

- Saturday, October 30th at 7:00 pm at Nativity Church, 44 Second Avenue in Manhattan, Subway: F,V to Lower East Side/2 Avenue, Call 917-628-7112 for more info.
- Tuesday, November 2 at 7:00pm at Nuestra Señora del Refugio Church in the Bronx, 290 E. 196 St, Subway: D or 4 to Kingsbridge Road. Call 1-718-329-3548 for more info.

Presentations are free and offered in Spanish. Dates and times to be confirmed.

The Halloween Parade (www.halloween-nyc.com) steps off at 7 pm from 6th Avenue, south of Spring Street and travels up Sixth Avenue to 23rd Street. The *Velación* takes place from 8 -10pm in Madison Square Park at 23rd and Broadway. Free admission.

Presented by Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture Without Borders at the Center for Traditional Music and Dance in New York City. Info available at: www.manoamano.us / www.ctmd.org 212-571-1555x35 / mgarcia@manoamano.us.

We need volunteers! If you wish to participate in the Halloween Parade and/or the Velación, contact Emily Socolov @ 212-571-1555x35 or esocolov@ctmd.org. Thanks you!

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