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SEPTEMBER 1, 2010

Celebrate Mexico Now Festival Celebrates Mexican Bicentennial In NYC

Ely Guerra, Natalia Lafourcade, Moona Luna And More Slated To Perform Events At Citywide, Multimedia Festival

by Tom Pryor

The annual Celebrate Mexico Now festival is slated to return to New York City for its seventh season on September 16-30, 2011 - just in time to commemorate the bicentennial of the Mexican Revolution and 200 years of Mexican independence.

"Many young Mexican artists and thinkers are rediscovering their roots, the realities that make up their culture, but with a contemporary twist, adding new media, English, and cosmopolitan sensibilities," says festival director/founder Claudia Norman. "As modern Mexico enters its second century, it's not about abstract notions of identity for most artists; it's about connecting with local communities directly, about really incorporating and assimilating what they are, not about nationality."

The multimedia, multi-lingual festival of music, performance, film, installation, and cuisine bills itself as "a groundbreaking citywide festival, [that] offers an introduction to the vanguard of contemporary Mexican art and culture".

Among this year's events will be musical performances from pop singers Ely Guerra and Natalia Lafourcade, Brooklyn-based Mexican rockers *Moona Luna*, avant garde vocalist Juan Pablo Villa and The Tambuco Percussion Ensemble; installations from visual artists Monica Martinez and Arturo Lopez, selections from The Morelia Film Festival, mescal tastings, the ever-popular Mexican Restaurant Week and more.

See complete events listing below. For more information on tickets, etc consult the Celebrate Mexico Now website.

New York Authentic Mexican Restaurant Week

Thursday - Wednesday , September 16 - 29 , 11:00 am

The Authentic Mexican Flavors Foundation presents the third annual New York Authentic Mexican Restaurant Week with special menus at restaurants throughout the city.

Mexico City Noir

Thursday , September 16 , 7:00 pm

Reading and presentation by editor and writer Paco Igancio Taibo II on this anthology of short mysteries, set in neighborhoods across Mexico City.

Winners of the 2009 Morelia International Film Festival

Friday , September 17 , 7:00 pm

Screening of award-winning short films from the 2009 Morelia International Film Festival, followed by a Q&A; with the directors from Mexico.

Moona Luna

Saturday, September 18 , 12:00 pm

The family-friendly alter-ego of Latin alternative band Pistolera, Moona Luna creates toe-tapping songs in Spanish and English for kids and parents alike.

Opening Reception for 'Monica Martinez: Wurmhaus'

Saturday , September 18 , 2:00 pm

Artist Monica Martinez proposes an alternative to contemporary agriculture and its ecological impact by creating a micro architectural habitat for the edible mealworm.

Natalia Lafourcade

Saturday , September 18 , 7:30 pm

Young Mexican pop singer Natalia Lafourcade has been taken under the wing of superstars Julieta Venegas and Café Tacuba--and for a good reason.

Entomo-Cuisine: An Insect Pairing Dinner

Saturday , September 18 , 8:00 pm

Chef and visual artist Philip Ross prepares a four-course menu based on worms grown by artist Monica Martinez.

Natalia Lafourcade

Saturday , September 18 , 9:30 pm

Young Mexican pop singer Natalia Lafourcade has been taken under the wing of superstars Julieta Venegas and Café Tacuba--and for a good reason.

'The New Songs of the Ceiba'

Wednesday , September 22 , 7:00 pm

Book presentation on 'The New Songs of the Ceiba,'a trilingual anthology of literary works by contemporary Mayan writers from the Yucatán Peninsula.

Zarela's Mexican Corn Kitchen

Thursday , September 23 , 6:00 pm

A lecture and cooking demonstration with Mexican chef and food historian Zarela Martinez on corn.

Juan Pablo Villa + Arturo López: 'La Gruta de Baba'

Thursday , September 23 , 8:30 pm

Mexican singer and composer Juan Pablo Villa showcases his creative vocal skills in this improvisation-based concert, accompanied by Arturo López's live sequence of ephemeral projections.

Ely Guerra

Friday , September 24 , 7:00 pm

Mexican alt-rock icon Ely Guerra returns to NYC with her newest album, 'Hombre Invisible.'

'Hasta el ultimo Trago...Corazon' (Till the Last Drop...My Love)

Saturday , September 25 , 2:00 pm

A documentary valentine to Mexican music and the women who have shaped its development.

Reading: Carlos Monsiváis in New York

Wednesday , September 29 , 7:00 pm

Carlos Monsiváis (1938-2010) was one of Mexico's most important public intellectuals, serving as an indispensable chronicler of Mexican arts, culture and politics for more than 40 years.

Tambuco Percussion Ensemble

Thursday , September 30 , 7:30 pm

A three-time Grammy nominee, Tambuco is renowned for its wide-ranging repertoire and creative interpretations of percussion music.

Noche Latina, Concert Preview >> 09/16/10 >>

Celebrate Mexican Pride in New York City

by Darren Atkins 09.16.2010

New York City is full of festivals, but the 7th Annual Celebrate Mexico Now and the 3rd Annual Authentic Mexican Restaurant Week are a giant Latin soiree, showcasing contemporary Mexican art, culture, and cuisine. They kick off on Thursday, September 16th and continue until the 30th, featuring a myriad of events located in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

“This year’s festival provides New Yorkers with Mexican artists’ new form of social consciousness,” says festival founder and executive director Claudia Norman. “They are nurturing rural and urban traditions in the face of transnational influences. They’re keeping something alive—something very unique and Mexican.”

Music lovers will particularly have another reason to wine and dine this weekend. Featured artists throughout the festival include Latin sensations and idyllic teen sophisticates like Natalia Lafourcade, who’ll be bringing her Grammy-nominated talent and her six piece band to Manhattan’s Joe’s Pub. Grunge songstress Ely Guerra will also be showing off her new album with a live performance at Le

Poisson Rouge on September 24th as part of the festival. Moona Luna, the first female-inspired band that's headed by new mother Sandra Velasquez, will be pumping out family friendly songs at El Museo del Barrio on September 18th. Meanwhile cutting edge contemporary performances by Juan Pablo Villa (September 23rd, Atrium Lincoln Center) and internationally acclaimed percussionists Tambuco Percussion Ensemble (September 30th, Symphony Space) will lead a riotous fiesta during fall.

Mexico's talents aren't just personified by its many sounds. The country's flavors extend way past an audible pleasure and into a taste sensation, as highlighted by New York Authentic Mexican Restaurant Week. As a teamed affair to go with the music and art, Celebrate Mexico Now couples with Sabores Auténticos de México to present the week-long feast of Mexican delights all around the city. It's a prix-fixe *varietas* of fare welcomed by 23 of the foremost Latino dining establishments in New York City. On September 23rd at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Latin food historian Zarela Martinez will give a spirited tribute to corn, Mexico's yellow studded sweet vegetable. Patrons can expect a special tasting of four dishes catered by Zarela's, one of the oldest Mexican restaurants in the city.

From a country marred by violence comes a vivacious power of accomplishment and peace through food and music. This is Mexico the way it should be presented, in a festival celebrating through the eyes of its people who work and cherish their lives and loved ones, evoking a spirit that every culture should strive for.

NJ.com, Festival Preview >> 09/16/10 >>

Celebrate Mexico Now festival showcases music, film, readings, art and some surprising food

Published: Thursday, September 16, 2010, 7:30 AM

Claudia Norman, the director of New York City's Celebrate Mexico Now, has an intriguing recipe for the annual festival, which is designed to showcase the diversity of her native country's culture.

You curate strong musical performances, ranging from pop to avant-garde.

You add some multilingual literary events and screen some award-winning films.

And you throw in a sprinkling of worms.

"Worms contain the highest levels of protein — more than any meat," said Norman, who, as an adjunct to Celebrate Mexico Now's usual New York Authentic Mexican Restaurant Week, has programmed two "worm" events: "Mónica Martínez: Wurmhaus," an art exhibit at the Eyelevel BQE

Gallery in Brooklyn that creates a “micro-architectural habitat for the edible mealworm,” and a presentation at the Brooklyn Kitchen by chef and visual artist Phillip Ross, who will prepare a four-course menu based on worms grown by Martínez.

“Ross sees it as the food of the future, because it’s ecologically sustainable,” said Norman. “The Mayans and other indigenous people ate this way centuries ago, and he thinks we should go in that direction.”

Celebrate Mexico Now, coinciding with Hispanic Heritage Month (which began yesterday) as well as the bicentennial of Mexican Independence, always has been a festival that focuses on the dynamism of urban Mexico while never losing sight of the country’s regional diversity. Featuring 15 events spread over three weekends in several venues, this seventh annual version of the festival wants to engage the tri-state area with a Mexico they never knew existed.

“There has been a large increase in the Mexican community in the New York area,” said Norman, “but a large part of it is a middle-class intellectual community that creates a need for arts programming. Many people come to the festival and make new friends in the Latin-American community — we even have a couple that met at the festival that is now engaged.”

One of the main draws of the festival is the music programming; Norman also has served as the curator/director of the Queens Latino Festival, which has drawn an eclectic array of top talent from Latin America for the last 14 years. This year, alternative rockers Ely Guerra, Natalia Lafourcade, and Moona Luna (an alter ego of local band Pistolera) have come to reclaim their audience, while the more classically oriented Tambuco Percussion Ensemble and Juan Pablo Villa make rare New York appearances.

Continuing a Celebrate Mexico Now tradition, the festival will screen the winners of the previous year’s Morelia International Film Festival. There is a special anticipation for the documentary “Hasta el Último Trago . . . Corazón,” which translates as “Till the Last Drop . . . My Love.” The film is an intimate look at treasured female singers Chavela Vargas, Lila Downs, Eugenia León, Astrid Hadad, La Negra Graciana, Chayito Valdez and Iraida Noriega, touching not only on their talents but also on their part in changing women’s roles in Mexican society.

The festival’s literary component is also thoughtful and vital. Editor and writer Paco Ignacio Taibo does a reading and presentation of “Mexico City Noir,” an anthology of mystery stories about our hemisphere’s biggest megalopolis. In addition, Norman has curated a presentation of “The New Songs of the Ceiba,” a trilingual (Spanish, English, Mayan) anthology of short stories, essays, poetry and plays co-edited by Carlos Montemayor, an advocate of indigenous literature who passed away earlier this year.

There will also be a special panel featuring Columbia University professor Jean Franco and “La Jornada” cartoonist Rafael Barajas, among others, called “Reading Carlos Monsiváis in New York.”

The legacy of Monsiváis, an enigmatic public intellectual who also died this year, will no doubt instigate a lively debate. “Exactly what his legacy will be will create the most controversy,” said Norman.

But the debate surely won’t be as controversial as the worms.

“It’s a nouvelle cuisine, not like the way they have them in the traditional mercados (markets) in Oaxaca,” said Norman. “Down there, they’re alive and moving — you have to catch them to eat them. Surely, this is not the traditional taco al pastor (pork taco). But from the point of view of a

nutritionist, it could be more horrendous to eat pork meat than an insect.”

Tespis Magazine, Feature >> 09/12/10 >>

7th CELEBRATE MEXICO NOW! FESTIVAL. Entrevista y programa
9/12/10 , Posted by ALEX GUERRERO at 9:55 AM

Me reuní con Claudia Norman, fundadora y directora de Celebrate Mexico Now! para conversar un poco sobre el festival que se realizará en Nueva York del 16 al 30 de Septiembre. Claudia nos habla un poco de los orígenes del festival hace ya 7 años y de los eventos que nos tiene preparados en esta séptima edición.

MUSICA:

- 1- **Natalia Lafourcade. September 18; Joe's Pub.**
- 2- **Ely Guerra** . September 24; Le Poisson Rouge.
- 3- **Moona Luna** . September 18; El Museo del Barrio.
- 4- **Juan Pablo Villa** and artist **Arturo Lopez**.
September 23; Atrium Lincoln Center.
- 5- **Tambuco Percussion Ensemble** . September 30; Symphony Space.

MEXICAN RESTAURANT WEEK:

New York's top Mexican chefs from 24 restaurants invent authentic prix fixe menus around the city. Foodies will have a chance to explore Mexico's flavors at Zarela's Mexican Corn Kitchen (September 23; Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian), a lecture demonstration by chef Zarela Martinez. **Mezcal Tasting** (September 18) Oaxaca's premier family-made spirits. At the Brooklyn Kitchen.

ARTE:

Monica Martinez's WURMHAUS (September 18; BQE Eyelevel Gallery), an installation that will allow viewers to watch the traditional practice of worm raising crawl, squirm, and change before their eyes.

MORELIA SHORTS SELECTIONS:

Fresh perspectives also shine through in featured selected short films and animations from the Morelia Film Festival (September 17; School of Visual Arts). Juried by directors from Sundance to Cannes, Morelia's winners include the striking "Y el agua?," an animated film written and narrated by the children of Valle de Bravo and the short film "Nebraska" (foto)—about the struggle of a migrant who can't bear to cross the U.S. border or to return to his family—with its director Adrian Ortiz during a Q&A.

The seventh annual **Celebrate México Now!** is a multimedia, multi-lingual festival of music, performance, film, installation, and cuisine at multiple venues around New York City. It takes place **September 16-30**.

The Village Voice, Concert Preview >> 09/13/10 >>

MEXICO RISES

Paying tribute to our neighbors over the border

By Araceli Cruz

We might be a little biased about Celebrate Mexico Now—OK, a lot biased—but it's Mexico's Independence celebration so we gladly say *salud* by indulging in the very best of Mexico's contemporary arts and fine foods. Writer Paco Ignacio Taibo II kicks off the festival with a reading from *Mexico City Noir* at King Juan Carlos Center. Other highlights include performances by pop-alt songstress Natalia Lafourcade at Joe's Pub and rock queen Ely Guerra, who returns after a three-year absence for a gig at (le) poisson rouge. And our favorite Mexican restaurants, such as Café El Portal, Café Frida, Hecho en Dumbo, and Pampan, will be taking part in the New York Authentic Mexican Restaurant Week.

The New York Times

Diner' Journal
The New York Times log on Dining Out

Weekend Fare

By **Bao Ong** September 17, 2010 4:49 pm

It's said that the eye is bigger than the stomach. "Appetite," curated by the Herb Lubalin Study Center at The Cooper Union, explores the influence of design in the food industry in a free exhibition at 41 Cooper Gallery, 41 Cooper Square (East Seventh Street). The exhibition opens at noon on Saturday and runs through Oct. 9. The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, has also opened a food-themed exhibition: "Counter Space: Design and the Modern Kitchen." It explores the transformation of kitchen design in the past century and how it played a role in women's lives and consumerism. It runs until March 14.

The Feast of San Gennaro, in its 84th year on Mulberry Street, runs through Sept. 26. It goes from 11:30 a.m. to about 11:30 p.m. This year, stop by Torrisi Italian Specialties booth.

Coney Island hosts The Great Irish Fair of New York this weekend on both days, from 10 a.m. to 7:30, at Keyspan Park, 1904 Surf Avenue. It's a family-friendly event full of traditional and contemporary music, bands, dancing, rides and Irish food. Admission is \$12 but family discounts are available at \$30 for two adults and their children.

Oktoberfest kicks off in New York with the debut of Oktoberfest on the Hudson. From noon to 4:30 p.m. Saturday you can hoist German beers and snack on giant pretzels and a variety of bratwurst. A \$15 ticket pays for entry

and an hourlong cruise, and the \$10 tickets get you into the Bavarian celebration at Pier 81, West 41st Street.

This weekend's Williamsburg Cask Ale Festival starts Friday at d.b.a. Brooklyn, 113 North Seventh Street, and ends Sunday at midnight. Forget the Pabst Blue Ribbon. The owner, Ray Deter, and Alex Hall, founder of Gotham Imbiber, will pour 16 cask beers — all unfiltered, unpasteurized ales, like Boulder Planet Porter and Ridgeway Bad King John. On Sunday, from 2:30 to 8 p.m., you can pair ales (most are \$8 and under) with New Orleans-style barbecue from Tchoup Shop.

The meatpacking district typically comes to life at night. On Sunday, however, more than two dozen restaurants and farmers will gather at the Gansevoort Plaza, 42 Gansevoort Street, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. It's the first annual Back to Basis Good Food Festival, which features local food and beverages. You'll need to buy tickets for tastings (\$20 for four tastings to \$75 for 20) and the farm-to-table dinner capping the evening at 6 p.m. is \$125. The proceeds benefit Just Food and The Feed Foundation's 30 Project, which seeks to improve the way food is produced.

A two-week festival of Mexican culture, with music, film, literature and food, will be held at different locations in New York from Sept. 16 to 30. A Mexican restaurant week (two weeks, actually) runs from Sept. 16 to 29 at 24 restaurants. On Saturday at The Brooklyn Kitchen, 100 Frost Street, will host an insect pairing dinner. The four-course meal includes insects from the artist Monica Martinez's Wurmhaus installation.

A stretch of West 41st Street west of Bryant Park will be a Turkish street festival and grand bazaar Sunday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Besides a wide variety of food, there will be arts and crafts, cultural exhibitions and music.

An earlier version of this post said the San Gennaro Festival ended this weekend.

The New York Times |

MUSIC | MUSIC REVIEW

Versatile Voice From Mexico, in Rock Mode

By **JON PARELES** SEPT. 27, 2010

Passion is never less than tempestuous in the music of Ely Guerra, the Mexican songwriter who performed at Le Poisson Rouge on Friday night as part of the Celebrate Mexico Now festival, which this year marks Mexico's bicentennial. For Ms. Guerra, passion is profound and all-consuming, a matter of ecstasy or desperate need, and it's the eternal subject of songs that climb toward catharsis or plummet into lonely desolation.

Ms. Guerra is well known in Mexico and hampered by a language barrier in the United States. Her lyrics are in Spanish with, at times, a few words in English; "Women make men messy," one song declared in English. Her words convey moods, not stories, awaiting the alchemy of her voice. "I am a prisoner of pleasure/as dawn returns I feel the poison of this silence," she sang in Spanish in "Lontano," a song about a faraway lover from her most recent album, "Hombre Invisible" (Homey Company).

On her albums since the mid-1990s, Ms. Guerra, 38, has restlessly shifted idioms, dipping into funk and ballads, electronica and bossa nova, revealing more and more facets of a voice that can coo like a chanteuse or let loose a shattering wail, sustain a long-breathed ballad line or cheerlead the "ooh, ooh" of pop hooks. To match "Hombre Invisible," on which Ms. Guerra collaborated

with leading Latin alternative rockers, her stage band was centered on rock guitar, flanking her voice with power chords and wah-wah syncopations.

It could also tilt toward reggae or slinky slow vamps for older songs, but its core was sinewy, straightforward rock. The arrangements evolved with every verse, changing tempos from slow to fast, following and goading her as her voice opened up. Her songs rarely ended as they began. And she didn't need the band at all; for an encore, she sang "Jurame" ("Swear to Me") a cappella, with and without a microphone, as much of the audience shouted along.

While Ms. Guerra sang about being overwhelmed by emotion, her stage postures were transformed. She was bare-shouldered in a black top, and her arms could be as expressive as her face: twisting, caressing, imploring, exulting. She was a creature of control and abandon, measuring her gestures as carefully as she hit her notes, but also letting the music move her. Rock is unlikely to be the last stop in Ms. Guerra's musical itinerary, but at the moment, it brings out all the beauties in her songs.

A version of this review appears in print on September 28, 2010, on page C2 of the New York edition with the headline: Versatile Voice From Mexico, in Rock Mode.

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