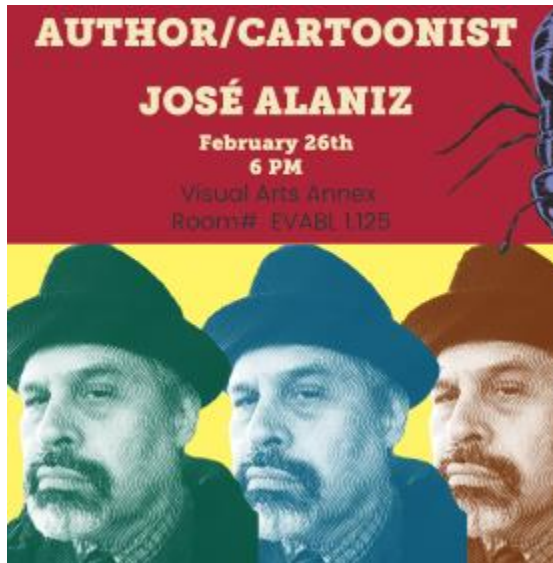


## FESTIBA 2024 - DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

### VISTING WRITER JOSE ALANIZ



José Alaniz was born in Edinburg, TX and went on to graduate from the University of Texas at Austin in 1993 with dual degrees in Radio-Television-Film Production and Russian Studies. He worked in Moscow as a journalist from 1993-1994. In 2003, he earned a PhD in Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley.

He has released three comics/prose collections: *The Phantom Zone and Other Stories* (2020) and *The Compleat Moscow Calling* (2023), both from Amatl Comix, and *Puro Pinche True Fictions* (2023, FlowerSong Press). His comics have also appeared in *The Stranger*, the Seattle anthology *Dune*, *Tales from La Vida: A Latinx Comics Anthology* (2018), *BorderX: A Crisis Graphic Detail* (2020) and *SCARFFF*

**Date:** February 26

**Location:** EVABL 1.125

**Time:** 6-8 p.m.

**Date:** February 29

**Location:** Online event. Contact [jean.braithwaite@utrgv.edu](mailto:jean.braithwaite@utrgv.edu) for zoom link.

**Time:** 7-9 p.m.

---

"EAST MEETS WEST"



**East Meets West** is a captivating program that transcends cultural boundaries, bridging the gap between Eastern and Western music and highlighting the profound influence they exert on each other. This unique musical journey takes audiences on a transformative exploration, showcasing traditional Eastern Turkmen, Armenian, and Azerbaijani pieces alongside captivating performances of modern works that reflect the rich cultural heritage of the musicians themselves. Featuring Diana Seitz, violin, Nick May, saxophone, and Maya Tuylieva, piano.

**Date:** February 27

**Location:** Gelman Stained Glass Museum

**VIP Reception:** 6 p.m.

**Concert Time:** 7 p.m.

---

**JAZMINNE MENDEZ**



**Jazminne Mendez** is a poet, educator and award-winning author. Mendez has had poetry and essays published by The New England review, Crab Creek Review, Kenyon Review, Gulf Coast, The Rumpus, and others. She is the author of two poetry/prose collections: *Island of Dreams*, which won an International Latino Book Award, and *Night-Blooming Jasmin(n)e: Personal Essays and Poetry* (Arte Publico Press, 2018). She is an MFA graduate of the creative writing program at the Rainier Writing Workshop at Pacific Lutheran University and a University of Houston alumni. Her second YA memoir- *A Bucket of Dirty Water: Memories of my Childhood* and her debut picture book *Josefina's Habichuelas* (Arte Publico Press) was released in 2021.

**Date:** February 28

**Location:** Edinburg Campus, UTRGV Performing Arts Complex

**Times:** 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

#### **VISTING WRITER JONAH MIXON-WEBSTER**



**Jonah Mixon-Webster** is a poet, educator, scholar, and art activist from Flint, MI. He is the founder of the Flint-based non-profit Center for Imaginative Freedoms and Economic Relief (C.I.F.E.R.) and serves as chapter leader of PEN America-Detroit. His

debut poetry collection, *Stereo(TYPE)*, received the PEN America/Joyce Osterweil Award and was a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award for Gay Poetry. He is an alumnus of Eastern Michigan University and obtained a Ph.D. in Creative Writing from Illinois State University. He is the inaugural Mellon Arts Postdoctoral Fellow in African American and African Diaspora Studies at Columbia University, the recipient of the Windham Campbell Prize for Poetry and fellowships from Vermont Studio Center, Center for African American Poetry and Poetics, Images & Voices of Hope, The Conversation Literary Festival, and the PEN Writing for Justice Program. His poetry and hybrid works are featured in various publications including *Obsidian*, *Harper's*, *The Yale Review*, *The Rumpus*, *Callaloo*, *Pennsound*, *Best New Poets*, and *Best American Experimental Writing*.

**Date:** February 28

**Location:** ELABS 107

**Time:** 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

### **FLY DANCE COMPANY**



### **Street Dance with Classical Choreographic Principles**

Labeled an artistic phenomenon, FLY crosses street dance with classical choreographic principles. Their technique is hip hop, very creative, and highly gymnastic. FLY's concerts are clean-cut, wholesome artistry designed to cross all audience boundaries, young and old, men and women, with pieces combining styles and cultures to reflect contemporary Americana.

**Date:** February 28

**Location:** UTRGV Edinburg Campus, Performing Arts Complex

**Time:** 7 p.m.

---

## ART EXHIBITS BY FACULTY, STUDENTS AND GUESTS

### JULIA SANTOS SOLOMON



**Julia Santos Solomon** is a Contemporary Dominican artist creating paintings, sculpture, and digital media for over forty years. Her vision shaped generations of successful LatinX artists as a founding member of Altos de Chavon School of Design, and she taught Fashion Illustration and Design at Parsons School of Design in NY. Santos Solomon's work has been exhibited and collected nationally and abroad. Represented in permanent collections at Latin Art Museum, Hudson River Museum, Indiana University Museum, Museo de Arte Moderno, Altos de Chavon Foundation. She is archived at the Smithsonian Archives of American Art and the Dominican Studies Institute at CUNY.

**Dates:** February 26 through the fall.

**Opening Reception Date:** To be announced

**Artist's talk:** To be announced

**Location:** UTRGV Edinburg Campus, Performing Arts Complex Exhibit Hall

### ANTHROMORDANT - TIM GONCHOROFF EXHIBITION



Cross Connections 2024: International Exhibition and Competition of Visual Communication Design and Emerging Media Design.

**Dates:** February 26 - March 13

**Opening Reception:** February 29 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

**Location:** UTRGV Edinburg Campus, Visual Arts Building (EVABL)

---

## MUSEUM OF SOUTH TEXAS HISTORY

### GUEST PRESENTERS

**FRANCISCO GUAJARDO, MELISSA PEÑA &  
TONY PEÑA**







### **FAMILY STORIES OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD**

Description: The story of the Underground Railroad as it moved through South Texas and into northeastern Mexico is shaped particularly through family stories along the border. It is an under told part of American history. This session will explore the history of the Underground Railroad to find commonalities and differences that may be geographical, political, cultural, and social.

**Presenters:** Museum CEO Francisco Guajardo, Exhibits & Collections Coordinator Melissa Peña and Communications Officer Pamela Morales de Hendricks

**Location:** River Highway galleries at the Museum of South Texas History (2nd floor)

**Time:** 10 a.m.

### **DR. GARCIA'S GOLD**

Description: Let's tell the story of gold that was buried under a house during the Great Depression and then uncovered by a plumber many years later. It is an exciting story and yet under told story in South



Texas history that highlights not only a family that buried the gold, but a story of unprecedented philanthropic generosity in the history of South Texas and in American history. The content for this session comes from a family archival collection that was donated to the Museum of South Texas History in 2022.

**Presenters:** Museum CEO Francisco Guajardo & Communications Assistant Tony Peña

**Location:** Dr. García's Gold at the Museum of South Texas History in the Cell Block Gallery on the second floor of the 1910 Jail

**Time:** 2 p.m.

---



## **READING ROCK STARS**

### **Visits to Public Schools with Book Distributions**

"Reading Rock Stars" program in collaboration with the Texas Book Festival, is a popular mainstay of FESTIBA. Children receive a reading and signed book by an author of national repute.

### **2024 Reading Rock Stars Schools and Authors:**

**Dates:** Thursday & Friday, February 29 - March 1

**Reading Rock Stars Schools:** Rayburn Elementary, McAllen; Singleterry Elementary, Donna; Stainke Elementary, Donna; Canterbury Elementary, Edinburg; PFC Mario Ybarra Elementary, Weslaco; Dr. R.E. Margo Elementary, Weslaco.

**Authors:** Raul the Third; Jasminne Mendez, Michael Genhart, David Bowles, Adriana Camacho-Church, Diana Lopez and Monica Brown

---

## **RAUL THE THIRD**



**Raúl The Third** is a New York Times bestselling and three-time Pura Belpre award-winning illustrator, author, and artist living in Boston. *Vamos! Let's Cross the Bridge* was awarded one of the year's Best Illustrated Children's Books of 2021 from the New York Times and the New York Public Library. His work centers around the contemporary Mexican-American experience and his memories of growing up in El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

---

**JASMINNE MENDEZ**



**Jasminne Mendez** is a Dominican-American poet, playwright, translator and award winning author of several books for children and adults. Her most recent publication *Anina del Mar Jumps In* (Dial), a novel in verse about a young girl diagnosed with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis, received starred reviews from Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly, School Library Journal and others. Her YA memoir, *Islands Apart: Becoming Dominican American* (Arte Público Press) and her debut poetry collection, *City Without Altar* (Noemi Press), were recently recognized with honors and awards by the Texas Institute of Letters and her debut picture book *Josefina's Habichuelas* (Arte Público Press) was the 2022 Writer's League of Texas Children's Book Discovery Prize Winner. She has translated Amanda Gorman's best-selling picture books *Change Sings* (La canción del cambio) and *Something, Someday* (Algo, algún día), the best selling picture book *The 1619 Project: Born on the Water* (El proyecto 1619: Nacieron sobre el agua) by Nikole Hannah Jones and Reneé Watson and the Pura Belpré Award Winning graphic novel *Frizzy* (Rizos) by Claribel Ortega.

---

## **MICHAEL GENHART**



**Michael Genhart**, PhD, is a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice in San Francisco and Mill Valley, California. He lives with his family in Marin County.

He received his BA in psychology from the University of California, San Diego and his PhD in clinical and community psychology from the University of Maryland, College Park.

He is the author of several picture books including: *Ouch! Moments: When Words Are Used in Hurtful Ways* (2016), *Peanut Butter & Jellyous* (2017), *Mac & Geeeez!* (2017), *Cake & I Scream!* (2017), *So Many Smarts!* (2017), *I See You* (2017), *Rainbow: A First Book of Pride* (2019), and *Accordionly: Abuelo and Opa Make Music* (2020) all from Magination Press, as well as *Love Is Love* (Little Pickle Press/Sourcebooks, 2018).

---

#### **DAVID BOWLES**



**David Bowles** is a Mexican American author and translator from south Texas, where he teaches at the University of Texas Río Grande Valley. He has written over three dozen award-winning titles, most notably *They Call Me Güero* and *My Two Border Towns*.

His work has also been published in multiple anthologies, plus venues such as *The New York Times*, *Strange Horizons*, *Apex Magazine*, *School Library Journal*, *Rattle*, *Translation Review*, and the *Journal of Children's Literature*.

Additionally, David has worked on several TV/film projects, including *Victor and Valentino* (Cartoon Network), the *Moctezuma & Cortés* miniseries (Amazon/Amblin) and *Monsters and Mysteries in America* (Discovery).

---

## ADRIANA CAMACHO-CHURCH



Grandma, Where Will Your Love Go? is **Adriana Camacho-Church**'s first book and is based on memories she has of her grandmother, who helped raise her and her siblings in Colombia. After Adriana and her immediate family moved to the United States, she never saw her grandmother again, but never forgot her strong and compassionate character. Adriana grew up in Chicago and Los Angeles where she learned to integrate two cultures and languages. She currently lives in Delaware, where she works as a freelance writer and as a paraprofessional in Delaware's public libraries.

*Photography Christopher Tijerino.*

---

## DIANA LOPEZ



**Diana López** is the author of the adult novella Sofia's Saints and numerous middle grade novels, including Confetti Girl, Nothing Up My Sleeve, and Lucky Luna. Her debut picture book, Sing With Me: The Story of Selena Quintanilla, is available in English and Spanish. She also wrote the novel adaptation for the Disney/Pixar film Coco. Diana retired after a 28-year career in education at both the middle grade and college levels, but she still enjoys meeting with students when she visits schools to chat about books and writing. She lives in her hometown of Corpus Christi, Texas.

---

#### **MONICA BROWN**



**Monica Brown** is the Peruvian-American author of many award-winning multicultural books for children, including, Sharuko: El Arqueólogo Peruano /Peruvian

Archeologist Julio C. Tello, Frida and her Animalitos, Waiting for the Biblioburro/Esperando al Biblioburro, Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/no combina, and the Lola Levine chapter book series, among others. Her books have garnered multiple starred reviews and awards, and is available in a dozen languages. Her books have been featured in the New York Times, The Washington Post, and on NPR's All Things Considered. Her most recent picture book, is Small Room, Big Dreams: The Journey of Julián and Joaquin Castro, out from HarperCollins/Quill Tree in an English and Spanish editions. Her next picture book is The Turquoise Room/El Cuarto Turquesa forthcoming from Lee and Low in 2022. Monica Brown lives in Arizona with her family.

For more information about the Texas Book Festival visit: [Texas Book Festival](#).

---

#### MARIACHI FESTIVAL GUEST ARTISTS





## **FESTIBA 2024 MARIACHI FESTIVAL**

**Masterclasses, Competitions &  
Concert featuring Mariachi Los Camperos**

**Dates: March 1-2**

**Location: Edinburg Campus, UTRGV Performing Arts Complex**

### **SPECIAL GUESTS:**

**Maestro Chuy Guzman**, Chuy Guzman is known for his musical arrangements that highlight the skills and voices of the group. He is widely recognized as arranger, director, instructor, and musician in the genre of Mariachi music. Mr. Guzman has served as head instructor for numerous international mariachi festivals in the United States and Mexico. He is the Musical Director for the Mariachi Master Apprentice Program (MMAP) in San Fernando and continues as the instructor for Music of Mexico, at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Under Guzman's Direction, in 2006 Mariachi Los Camperos received a Grammy nomination for their Album "Llegaron Los Camperos", In 2008 Mariachi Los Camperos took home a Grammy Award for Best Regional Mexican Music Album with "Amor, Dolor y Lagrimas". They later released a 2015 Grammy-nominated musical tribute to Nati Cano called: Tradición, Arte, y Pasión, this album gave Mariachi Los Camperos a Grammy nomination. Determined for a Grammy Award, In January 2020 at the 62nd Grammy award celebration, Mariachi Los Camperos took home another Grammy Award with their album release "De Ayer Para Siempre" for Best Regional Mexican Music Album.

**Mariachi Los Camperos** represent the dignity, heart, and soul of traditional Mexican music. Founded in 1961 by the visionary Natividad "Nati" Cano, the Grammy award-winning group has played a significant role in developing the mariachi tradition across the United States and worldwide. They made history as the first mariachi ensemble ever to play Carnegie Hall in New York City, recorded and toured with Linda Ronstadt, and have released a dozen artful albums that breathe new life into traditional pieces, contributing to the recognition that mariachi music has attained. After years of working under Nati's

tutelage, musical director Jesús "Chuy" Guzmán leads the Mariachi Los Camperos legacy today, providing the vision for their sound and repertoire through rich and elegant arrangements.

The FESTIBA 2024 Mariachi Festival is proud to welcome **Jonathan Palomar** as a guest artist and vocal instructor for the workshop on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Jonathan toured as a vocalist and guitarist with **Mariachi Vargas Tecalitlán** from 2017–2023. For the past seven years, he performed to sold-out audiences throughout the world, toured with Luis Miguel on his *México por Siempre* tour, and rose to the pinnacle of the mariachi genre as one of the lead vocalists and guitarists with Mexico's premiere ensemble. Jonathan is one of the most beloved and iconic mariachi musicians today and descends from a legendary musical family in Mexico. His father, Rafael Palomar, was a vocalist and guitarist with Mariachi Vargas for 23 years (1980–2003) and his grandfather, the legendary bandleader Román Palomar is best known as the author of the famous cumbia "El Mariachi Loco." Jonathan was born in Mexico City and raised in Guadalajara. Jonathan currently lives in San Antonio, Texas and wowed audiences as a performer and artistic director for the 29th Annual Mariachi Extravaganza.

**Maestro Jorge Iván Velasco** is a world-renowned folk harpist who is unmatched in his amazing dexterity, skill and virtuosity. He specializes in the research of the authentic performance practices, historical development, and instruction of the folkloric music of the State of Veracruz. He is currently on the faculty of the Universidad Veracruzana in Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico. He has performed as harp soloist and with numerous ensembles, including the Ballet folklórico de la Universidad Veracruzana, and the musical ensemble Tlen Huicani.

Jorge Ivan Velasco has released fifteen CDs/DVD, and has performed as harp soloist throughout the United States, and in numerous festivals in Australia, Venezuela, Irán, France, Colombia, Switzerland, Japan, Spain, and Paraguay. He has recently authored a book called "Ivan Velasco Harp Method" to promote the teaching-learning of the Mexican folk harp.

**Josue Eduardo "Eddy" Lopez**, a native of Monclova, Mexico, is an instructor, arranger, composer, multi-instrumentalist and Mariachi Strand Director at GPFAA. In 2010 he graduated Summa Cum Laude with a B.M. in Professional Music from Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA.

As a conference instructor, he has taught violin, trumpet, guitarrón, and armonía and arranged for almost all of the large mariachi conferences in the US, including: FESTIBA Mariachi Festival in Edinburg, TX, Tucson International Mariachi Conference in Tucson, AZ, Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza in San Antonio, TX, International Mariachi Festival in National City, CA, Mariachi Espectacular in Albuquerque, NM, New York City Mariachi Conference in Brooklyn, NY and more.

As a clinician, he has traveled across the country and Mexico to offer instrumental and arranging clinics to both student and professional groups. As a freelance arranger, he has written hundreds of original arrangements for mariachi groups and symphony orchestras across the USA and México as well, including: Mariachi Internacional Los Perez, Mariachi Aztlán from UTRGV, Mariachi Herencia De México, The San Antonio Symphony Orchestra, The Tucson Symphony, Orquesta Sinfónica de Xalapa among many others.

As a recording artist, he has arranged and recorded for many professional and Grammy Award-winning producers and artists including: Natalia Jimenez, Lupillo Rivera, Carlos Rivera, Maluma, Bacilos, CNCO, Paulina Rubio, Camilo, Pipe Bueno, Alex Campos, Ricardo Montaner, Turizo, Becky G among others.

He currently resides in Grand Prairie, TX, and continues to be in high demand as a guest clinician, arranger, and recording artist.

**Dr. Adolfo Estrada** has received numerous invitations to perform as a guitarist and vocalist for concerts and studio recording sessions with professional mariachi ensembles. Notable performances include the 2013 Inaugural Ceremonies for the U.S. President in Washington D.C., the performance of the Houston Grand Opera's commissioned work "Cruzar La Cara De La Luna," the 2015 world premiere of the Chicago Lyric mariachi opera "El Pasado Nunca Se Termina," and appearances on the Tonight Show and the Stephen Colbert Show. Professional mariachi accompaniment of note include Plácido Domingo, Flor Silvestre, Vikki Carr, Little Joe, Nydia Rojas, Virginia Tola, Azucena, and Pablo Montero. In 2010, he had the opportunity to perform with Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán for a significant concert performance. (Mariachi Vargas was founded in 1897 and is currently in its sixth generation; their official title is "El Mejor Mariachi del Mundo." Within the mariachi community, he is known as an expert in the mariachi armonía section, which functions similarly to the continuo section of the baroque ensemble comprising classical guitar, vihuela, guitarra de golpe, arpa, and guitarrón). Since 2002, Adolfo has been continually invited to give masterclasses at various mariachi workshops in the United States and Mexico.

Since 1989, **Mariachi Aztlán** has traveled throughout Mexico and the United States as musical ambassadors representing the beauty of the Hispanic music and cultural traditions. Recognitions for performance excellence initiated an invitation from the White House to perform at the signing ceremony of an Executive Order renewing and enhancing the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, performing for President Barack Obama in 2010.

In collaboration with the Houston Grand Opera, Mariachi Aztlán premiered the stage production of *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, the world's first "Mariachi/Opera" in December, 2010. A second performance of the same production took place in 2013 with the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Mariachi Aztlán also premiered the mariachi opera *El Pasado Nunca Se Termina* with the Chicago Lyric Opera in 2015. Other national performances include guest artists at the Tucson International Mariachi Conference in 2015 and 2019, guest artists at the 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 San Diego International Mariachi Festivals, and guest artists at the 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 Chicago Mariachi Festivals. The mariachi was invited as guest clinicians and performing artists for the Mariachi Spectacular Workshop in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018. For several years, Mariachi Aztlán has been invited as guest clinicians and performing artists Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza Competition in San Antonio. National performances include concerts at the Santa Barbara Bowl in August of 2019, with the famous Mexican singer, Aida Cuevas, and guest artists at the Chicago Mariachi Festival which was held at the Millenium Amphitheatre, Jay Pritzker Pavilion, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Other national performances at prestigious venues include Hollywood Bowl, the John F. Kennedy Performing Arts Center, and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Mariachi Aztlán has performed with symphony orchestras in Mexico, including performances in Monterrey, Pachuca, and Tampico, and with the Valley Symphony Orchestra and the Houston Symphony Orchestra.

Mariachi Aztlán has accompanied other famous artists such as Juan Valentin, Vikki Carr, Nydia Rojas, Azucena, Ramon Ayala, Leo Dan, Paquita La Del Barrio, and many others. International performances include the Mexican cities of Monterrey, Pachuca, Tampico, Guadalajara, Mexico City and San Miguel de Allende, and Ottawa, Canada.

In 2022 and 2023, Mariachi Aztlán toured with the “The Queen of Mariachi”, and esteemed figure in Mexico, Aida Cuevas, throughout the U.S., performing at more than 20 distinguished venues across America.

Mariachi Aztlán released a CD, *Mi Nombre Es México* to commemorate their 25th Anniversary.

[FESTIBA Mariachi Festival](#)