

# Juanita Ulloa to headline faculty Hispanic voice recital at Texas State

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— Juanita Ulloa, Hispanic solo artist and professor of Latin American Music at Texas State University, will be performing in a Faculty Hispanic Voice Recital in Evans Auditorium at 6 p.m. Nov 14. The recital is free to the public.

Ulloa will be accompanied by piano faculty member Faith De Bow, and Mariachi Tamazula, directed by percussion faculty member Robert Lopez. The recital will also feature two flamenco dancers from España Viva, Beatriz Aguilar and Jessica Ahr. All faculty members featured will unite classical and Hispanic music, in diverse genres.

“It’s very exciting for me to be performing in Texas,” Ulloa said, “because there is such a great appreciation for Hispanic music. It’s a great pleasure, I don’t have to convert them as in many other states around the USA”.

Some of the diverse genres include: Bellini’s bel canto, Spanish zarzuela by Gimenez, Portuguese art song by Ernani Braga, Turina’s Homenaje a Lope de Vega song cycle and prize-winning Mexican mariachi original compositions by Ulloa. The solo artist promotes the sophistication of mariachi music, while also portraying a fusion of opera and mariachi, called Operachi. Ulloa makes use of high operatic notes in an otherwise limited-range genre for women.

“For me, as a concert musician, it makes sense to take pride in mariachi and Mexican culture as it being something with class and nobility. And Operachi, for me, is an expression of that,” she said.

This recital will not only express the music itself, but also premieres a live mariachi group in concert with live flamenco at Texas State University. Ulloa is not only a promoter and performer, but also an educator. She was raised in Mexico and Panama and has listened to Latin American music since she was born. As a child, she would listen to mariachi music from “El caballo bayo,” the famous mariachi restaurant next door to her home, and also would play piano and sing along to mariachi songs at birthday “serenatas” and parties.

She started performing professionally in church at age thirteen for weddings on keyboard and on organ for the mass.

Trained in piano and Classical voice from Yale University, UC Berkeley, and the Nice Conservatory in France, Ulloa is very familiar with many genres of vocal repertoire. However, Ulloa decided to pursue Latin American music instead of furthering her opera career, due to her passion for folk music, and loving the use of Mexican “falsete” flips and Spanish melismas.

“That is the unique part of my voice” Ulloa said. “My voice seemed to really sound better in Mexican music.”

She says she loves educating students in Spanish and Latin American music, both historically and vocally while on tour and at Texas State University. One of her other goals, is to revive the role of the solo artist in Hispanic music in Texas.

She has found that in Texas, many musicians in mariachis are playing instruments, with singing as a secondary art, and not as highly trained. While many mariachis have made their name in mariachi history through the soloists that they accompanied, to be only a soloist, instead of being a mariachi, currently seems rather uncommon in South Texas.

“I’m about reestablishing the role of the solo artist,” Ulloa said, “for as a model for my students because some of them are already in ensembles, and I want them to know there are other options. Not all of them are going to play traditional mariachi instruments or play them as well as sing and some are losing direction without seeing more solo performers.”

Finally, an ultimate mission of this concert is to just promote the music, combine different cultures and educate the audience on the historical roots of mariachi through Italian bel canto and Spanish vocal styles. “It’s just beautiful music, there is a lot of it, few are performing it, and it’s great music to train students on,” Ulloa said.

The concert is sponsored in part by the Multicultural Department at the Texas State University School of Music and by Vocal Power Productions.

For more information: [www.juanitamusic.com](http://www.juanitamusic.com), Texas State University  
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