

mujercanto



The **Mujercanto** series began in 1991 highlighting women as writers, dancers, actors, poets, comedians, musicians and storytellers in a festival venue. It celebrated women as creators and inventors of culture—providing overdue opportunities for women artists of all cultures and communities. In 1991 and 1992 the festival took place under blue tarps in the patio at 1305 N. Flores. In 1993, **Mujercanto** expanded as it attracted larger audiences with the use of alternate venues like the **Guadalupe Theater** and

collaborations with **Jump-Start Theater**. This allowed **Mujercanto** to thrive during a time of transition for the **Esperanza**. It returned to the **Esperanza** when the new space on San Pedro Ave. opened its 2nd floor in 1997. The move became necessary because **Esperanza** was targeted by right wing Christian zealots for our LGBT programming that led to our ouster from our N. Flores home. It also led to the withdrawal of allotted arts funding by the City of San Antonio on September 11, 1997. **Mujercanto**



1993 Marga Gomez,
Puerto Rican comedian



1996 Carmelita Tropicana,
Cuban comedian



1994 & 1997 Azucar y Crema,
all woman band from San Francisco, CA

mujercanto'93

Esther Magaloni
Antoinette Franklin
Inez Newton &
Amy Dolan
Mujeres Grandes
Marga Gomez
Melissa Javors
Gertrude Baker (RIP)
Ana Sissett (RIP)
Lourdes Pérez
Mango Jam

mujercanto'92

Margo Tamez
Beverly Sánchez-Padilla
Kay Lindsey
Kitty Williams &
Mim Scharlack
Melinda Joyce Hernández
& Gail Everett
Angela de Hoyos (RIP)
Ruby Nelda Pérez
Belinda Acosta
Lourdes Pérez
Tina Bustamante

mujercanto'91

Anne Feeney
Gilka Wara & Marta Davids
Mariana Sculos (RIP)

mujercanto'94

Root Wy'mn
& Sharon Bridgforth
Alicia López
Valerie Ryals Morris
Mary Ganzón
Veronica Saldaña
& Edna García
Lourdes Pérez
Beth Ching
Alicia Fernández, RIP
Deb Garrís
Azúcar y Crema
Garrís, Musket, & Wave
Xochitl Codina, Micaela
Díaz-Sánchez,
Becky López &
Monica Méndez



1993 Inez Newton, singer



1996 Peggy Pettit,
performance artist

Mariana Sculos-Ornelas

Mariana Sculos-Ornelas, a “Greek Chicana,” professor, activist, jazz lover and harpist, passed into spirit on March 6, 2017. Mariana was born in Framingham, MA on September 18th, 1949, to Greek parents. A lover of politics and an accomplished pianist, she read that Willie Velásquez was teaching at Harvard while

she was in graduate school, and set out to interview him. Her mother cooked a feast in his honor, and the voting rights champion invited the bilingual Mariana, soon afterwards, to work for the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project in San Antonio. By then, Mariana had already lived in Mexico City and Paraguay, studying the harp with world-class musicians. Mariana sealed her ties to San Antonio as a boardmember of the Esperanza Center, as a neighborhood advocate, and later, as a member of the City’s Zoning Commission—“ground zero” of the city’s targeted real estate—where she saved trees, streets, and neighborhoods for District 1. She was a Humanities Professor at Palo Alto College for 20 years and was central to the development of the Mexican-American Studies program there.

Mariana was an only child, and had no children. But she leaves a city that will be forever listening to the strains of the



1991 *mujercanto*

a celebration of women, song and thought



had been scheduled for the weekend of September 12 & 13 of 1997 and it went on with artists leading protests against the city on stage performing with a celebratory zeal that eventually led to a win in court against the City in 2001. That is another story in our 30 year history that will be in a future issue of *La Voz*. The loss of funds and the focus on a lawsuit impacted **Esperanza's** programming for a few years and the **Mujercanto** festival did not reappear until 2003 for the last time. In this issue of *La Voz*,

we pay tribute to the **Mujercanto** series that provided us with a path to major programming with international stars with a social conscience like Lila Downs and Eugenia León from México and Susanna Baca from Peru who performed in larger venues beginning in 2004 continuing into the present. Our heartfelt thanks to Esperanza staff and mujeres artistas who have made it possible for Esperanza to prioritize women artists for 30 years!

2003 Yolanda Leyva,
poet



Monica Palacios,
Chicana comedian



mujercanto '96

Irene Farrera
Carmelita Tropicana
María Elena Gaitán
Peggy Pettit

mujercanto 2003

Ubaka Hill
Vicky Grise
Barbara Renaud González
Marga Gómez
Mango Tribe Collective
María Limón
Sharon Bridgforth
Nathalie Handal
Yolanda Leyva
Anel Flores



2009 Eugenia León
@ the Empire Theater



2004, 2009, 2012, 2014 Lila Downs
@ Guadalupe Plaza, Sunken Gardens,
Trinity University & the Majestic Theater

mujercanto'95

Nu Pua O Hawa'i Dancers
Leialoha Garza
& Kunipo Brown
Nancy Braun
Karla Rosales
Ana Sisnett
Leni Isaacs
Lourdes Pérez y
Pa'qui Pa'lla



2010 Susana Baca @ OLLU

mujercanto '97

Azucar y Crema
María Elena Gaitán

"Che Guevara" song on her harp, and a more humane city because of her efforts. She leaves two cats, "Midnight," and "Smoky" who will miss her, and legions of friends who she blessed with her advocacy, grace, compassion, and multiculturalism. The Esperanza gente extend our condolences to her surviving family members and many, many friends.

In her final weeks of life, politicians, personalities and people of all walks of life stopped by her home to spend time with her day and night. On one evening, Lourdes Pérez and compañera, Annette, dropped by with Graciela and Gloria of the Esperanza and Antonia Castañeda. Among the caregivers that night were Barbara Renaud González and her constant caregiver and long-time friend, Margarita Castillo. The evening was full of stories about Mariana and Lourdes singing *Gracias A La Vida* to her. Mariana smiled, knowing that hers was an exemplary life. Ironically,

she and Lourdes had both been performers in the early days of the Esperanza's **Mujercanto** series. We visited again the night before Mariana died and Lourdes graciously gave in to a request to sing the lullaby, *Duerme Negrito*.

With that, Mariana closed her eyes and smiled. She will long be remembered. *¡Mariana Ornelas, Presente!*

A service will be held at Gethsemane Lutheran Church on Sunday, April 2nd, at 5 pm, followed by a Celebration at Bill Haus Arts Center. Contact dcl901@gmail.com or 703.405.6447 for info.

