Brava presents
Imperial Silence: Una Ópera Muerta
A Day of the Dead opera from the other side

Friday, November 3, 2017

A multimedia folk-opera, *Imperial Silence* explores the cultural norms of silence and death in a fearless, *north of the border* expression of Mexican and Chicanx traditions. The performance fuses dark humored animation with contemporary interpretations of Mexican folkloric dance and traditional Mariachi and Son Jarocho music. The work is an intervention into the long history of tactics used to silence alternative and dissident viewpoints in the United States of America: the "Imperial Silence."

The opera takes place in four acts, each one representing a phase of the life cycle, as told by *muertitos*, and involves live musical interpretations of songs such as "El Corrido de Pat Tillman," "Lamento Desaparecido," "This is the House that Blacks Built," "La Llorona," and others.

- Act I: "Los ABCs ¡Qué Vivan los Muertos!", an animated introduction on war and empire
- Act II: "Deadtime Stories with Mariachi Goose and Friends," an animation re-examining the children's rhymes of Mother Goose and ending with the great fall of Humpty Mariachi Dumpty
- Act III: "¡Radio Muerto!", a performance and animation of a skeleton that travels along the road to Mictlan, the Aztec underworld.
- Act IV: "DNN: Dead News Network," a news program for dead people, exposing the silencing of dissidence and the propaganda of the corporations linked to the means of social communication.

Director **John Jota Leaños**
Musicians **Dolores Garcia, Cecilia Peña Govea, and Kyla Danysh**
Libretto **John Jota Leaños** and **Sean Levon Nash**
Animators **Luz Cabrales, Tony Coleman**, **Crystal Gonzalez, John Jota Leaños**, **Sean Levon Nash, Andrea Vargas and Ivan Wachter**
Choreographers **Joel Valentín-Martinez** and **Vanessa Sanchez**
Dancers **Jesus Cortes** and **Vanessa Sanchez**
Lighting and Technical Director **José María Francos**

John Jota Leaños (*Director, Librettist*) is an award-winning Xicano-mestzo new media artist who uses animation, documentary and performance to focus on the convergence of memory, social space and decolonization. Leaños' animation work has been shown internationally at festivals and museums including Sundance Film Festival; Cannes Short Film Corner; the Morelia International Film Festival, Mexico; San Francisco International Festival of Animation; the KOS '07 and the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego. Leaños has also exhibited at the 2002 and 20008 Whitney Biennial in New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Leaños is a Guggenheim Fellow in Film (2012); Creative Capitol Grantee; a United States Artist Fellow and has been an artist in residence at the University of California, Santa Barbara Center for Chicano Studies; Carnegie Mellon University Center for Arts in Society; and the Headlands Center for the Arts. Leaños is currently an Associate Professor of Social Documentation at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Sean Levon Nash (*Librettist*) is a San Francisco writer, visual artist and educator who has lived in the Mission district for nearly 20 years. Born in Oakland, California of mixed Indian heritage, Nash produces collage and multimedia work, in addition to painting. He is an animator, storyteller and standup comedian, His early visual work is predominantly concerned with pre-Columbian Indigenous Art and his more recent work is part of the Northwest coast art movement. Nash is responsible for the production of a wide range of imagery related to the Day of the Dead. His more recent work is concerned with memory, narrative and color. Sean graduated from UC Davis in Fine Art History and teaches throughout the Bay Area.

For Calendar Editors:

What: Imperial Silence: Una Ópera Muerta

When: Friday, November 3 – 8pm

Where: Brava Theater Center, 2781 24th Street (at York), San Francisco 94110

Tickets: $25 - $40

brava.org