

Date: 9/17/2019

Festival Latino of the Berkshires 2019 on Saturday, September 28th from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Press Release submitted by Liliana Ortiz-Bermudez,

For further information, contact Festival Volunteers: 413-717-1096, 413-717- 7123

The Festival Latino of the Berkshires celebrates its 24th anniversary on Saturday, September 28th, 2019 from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m., rain or shine, at the Town Hall Green Park and Saint James Place on Main Street in Great Barrington, MA. The Latino Festival is free of charge, open to the public, and alcohol-free.

This Hispanic heritage celebration, which takes place during Hispanic Heritage Month, is one of the most eagerly anticipated cultural events of the year. There is nothing more affirming for the Latino community as the opportunity to come together and take pride in the vibrancy of our heritage, and to share this joy with the Berkshire community.

From elementary school students to the elderly, the Festival Latino brings everyone together and makes them feel as though they are in a traditional Latin American village. For local students, there is no better way to contextualize their Latin American studies than to see authentic Latin performers, eat ethnic foods, and hear Spanish spoken everywhere around them. All attendees, will feel the magic and energy that infuse the entire day's events!

Beginning at 12:00 p.m. a variety of Latin American cuisine vendors will make delicious ethnic dishes available, including tacos, chorizos, arepas, tamales, empanadas, chuzos, arroz con pollo, frijoles, steak, churros, tostones, and more!

Faculty and students of all Berkshire county schools are especially encouraged to stop by the **Hablemos Español** table at 1:00 p.m. with Cristina Velez, Miss Hall's Spanish teacher, and other bilingual speakers, as an opportunity to practice casual conversation in Spanish!

Kicking off at 1:00 p.m., there will be a series of local performers including South County's own Berkshire Latin United representing dances from Ecuador, Mexico and Colombia; Williams College Ritmo; and Pittsfield's Guadalupenos. Lastly D.J. Bernardino will provide the best Latin music hits throughout the afternoon.

Between 2:00 and 6:00 p.m. the Festival Latino of the Berkshires will premiere two extremely talented and highly accomplished Latin American folkloric ballet companies at Saint James Place Theater:

Calpulli Mexican Dance Company based in New York City celebrates the rich dance and music traditions of Mexico's diverse cultural history interpreted through its unique artistic vision. The fresh, vital repertoire honors Mexico's past and Mexican-American cultural expression in the United States. Led by Alberto Lopez Herrera, who has over 30 years of experience in Mexican folk dance.

TUMBAGA, is also a New York City dance company showcasing the artistic character of the Colombian folklore with its cast of energetic dancers and eccentric costumes. Founded by director and choreographer, Armando Moreno, he drives his company to display the splendor of the Colombian heritage by promoting the history in the music and dance.

The Festival Latino will continue after hours with a Gala Dance Party at Eastover's Tally-Ho Hall, at 430 East Street in Lenox. The Gala will headline **Balantika** from New York City! The lead singer, **John Balanta** is a talented singer and percussionist who began his music career at age 10. Balanta has been a member of several orchestras, including stars: Tito Gomez, Latin Brothers, Fruko y sus Tesos, and Pastor Lopez! Balantika will feature classic salsa music, Caribbean tropical cumbias, Merengue, and a Pastor Lopez tribute. There will also be bachata, reggaeton and other Latin rhythms by **D.J. Jorgy**. The cover charge is kind donation of \$30 per person, and ID is required at the door (18 to dance accompany by a parent; 21+ to drink)

As the only area event that brings so many Latinos together to take pride in our heritage, we welcome donations to defray the expenses of producing the 2019 Festival Latino and to maintain the Festival's artistic excellence. Tax deductible donations can be made to: Festival Latino of the Berkshires Inc., P.O. Box 1021, Lee, MA 01238. The Festival organizers continue to seek business sponsors wishing to reach thousands of Latino residents all over Western Massachusetts and inform the community about their services.

For further information, please visit our Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/festivallatinooftheberkshires//> or our website: www.festivallatino.org