

# Tonight at the Palace!

## A *VARIADADES* TRIBUTE

Thursday, October 26, 2017  
The Downtown Palace Theatre

### VARIADADES

Spanish-language variety shows, or *variadares*, were centerpieces of early L.A. entertainment, bringing headline acts from Mexico and throughout Latin America to perform in a lineup with local musicians. This type of show flourished in Mexico and the Southwestern United States in the 1920s and '30s. In the 1950s, former movie palaces in downtown L.A. began hosting *variadares*, and the Broadway Theater District became an important cultural/entertainment corridor for L.A.'s Latinx communities.

### THE BROADWAY THEATER DISTRICT

The Broadway Theater District was once the epicenter of entertainment in L.A. With twelve spectacular movie palaces built between 1910 and 1931, this six-block stretch of Broadway drew nightly crowds of thousands and regularly hosted star-studded premieres in the early twentieth century. At its height, L.A.'s Broadway Theater District had the highest concentration of cinemas in the world. Many of the original neon marquees can be seen in films such as *D.O.A.*, *The Omega Man*, and *Blade Runner*.

After World War I, audiences for first-run Hollywood films started shifting to movie theatres in Hollywood, Westwood, and, later, the suburbs. The downtown theatres then became venues for Spanish-language movies and *variadares*.

Today, the Broadway Theater District is the only large concentration of movie palaces left in the United States. The district has been the subject of restoration and preservation efforts since the 1980s, notably by the Los Angeles Conservancy and the city's 2008 "Bringing Back Broadway" campaign. Amid rapid gentrification of downtown L.A., there are community concerns about how to restore, conserve, and draw expanded audiences to the theatres while also preserving and respecting the Latinx businesses and audiences that kept the movie palaces, and the Broadway Theater District, alive for most of the twentieth century.

## THE PALACE THEATRE

The Palace Theatre opened in 1911. Originally called the Orpheum, it was a vaudeville theatre from 1911 to 1926 and is the oldest remaining theatre in the United States from the Orpheum circuit, a famous historic chain of vaudeville and movie theatres. The structure was designed by G. Albert Lansburgh, a key architect of luxury theatres on the West Coast in the early twentieth century, based on a Florentine early Renaissance palazzo. The brick facade includes multi-colored terra-cotta swags and four panels depicting the muses of vaudeville by Domingo Mora, a Spanish-American sculptor who designed architectural sculptures for hundreds of buildings, including the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.

## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- What do you think about the variety show as a form? Do you enjoy the mix of different mediums and styles?
- How do migration, cross-cultural creativity, and the crossing of international and genre borders shape the music in this show?
- Is there a way to make downtown L.A. accessible, livable, and fun for diverse communities, from the Latinx businesses that have been bustling on Broadway for decades to the people struggling on the streets to new residents of luxury lofts?

## TO LEARN MORE, EXPLORE THESE RESOURCES:

- Other Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA events  
[pacificstandardtime.org](http://pacificstandardtime.org)
- A walking tour of the Broadway Theater District with the LA Conservancy  
[laconservancy.org](http://laconservancy.org)
- Versa-Style Dance Company on YouTube  
[youtube.com/channel/UCQ-GFgrwvnFa2S0tVmKGHA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQ-GFgrwvnFa2S0tVmKGHA)
- Josh Kun's *The Tide Was Always High: The Music of Latin America in Los Angeles*

## DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

**ANDREW JUSTICE** of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about tonight's performance. Many can be found at USC's Music Library, located on the ground floor of Doheny Memorial Library. You can access online resources through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at [libraries.usc.edu](http://libraries.usc.edu).

### BOOKS

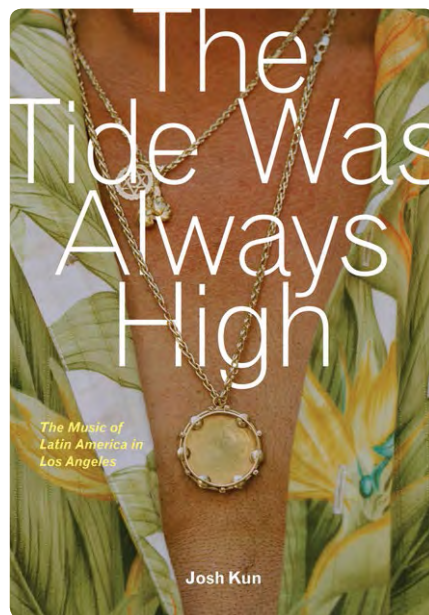
- Drake-Boyt, Elizabeth. *Latin Dance*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2011.  
DOHENY MEMORIAL LIBRARY: GV1626.D73 2011
- Habell-Pallan, Michelle. *Loca Motion: The Travels of Chicana and Latina Popular Culture*. New York: NYU Press, 2005.  
DOHENY MEMORIAL LIBRARY: PS153.H56 H33 2005 AND ONLINE
- Rivas-Rodriguez, Maggie, and B.V. Olguín, eds. *Latina/os and World War II: Mobility, Agency, and Ideology*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014  
DOHENY MEMORIAL LIBRARY: D769.8.H58 L385 2014 AND ONLINE



The Los Angeles Theatre



The Palace Theatre



⦿ Roberts, John Storm. *The Latin Tinge: The Impact of Latin American Music on the United States*. Boulder: Oxford University Press, 1999.  
**MUSIC LIBRARY: ML3477 R63 1999 AND ONLINE**

⦿ Vargas Cervantes, Susana. *El/La mataviejitas: Killing genders in Mexico City*. McGill University Doctoral Dissertation, 2008. [Online via ProQuest]

#### ARTICLES

- ⦿ Caramanica, Jon. "The Stage Is Set for a Child's Play, Though the Games Will Soon Grow Up. (Amanditita Sound Recording Review)." *The New York Times* 158, no. 54668 (2009): C8. [Online]
- ⦿ Lackner, Thomas. "Alex Acuña." *Musician, Player, and Listener (Archive: 1977-1982)* 1, no. 9 (1977): 32-35. [Online]
- ⦿ Mangual, Rudy. "Justo Almario: Before & After Tolú." *Latin Beat Magazine* 12, no. 3 (2002): 6. [Online]
- ⦿ Rodriguez, Nicole. "Versa-Style Dance Company Performance and After Party." *University Wire (Carlsbad)*, September 06, 2016. [Online]
- ⦿ Tamargo, Luis, and Rudy Mangual. "Justo Almario and Alex Acuña: The Return to Planet Tolu." *Latin Beat Magazine* 8, no. 6 (1998): 16-17. [Online]

#### MEDIA

- ⦿ Da Costa, Paulinho, et al. *Batucada the Sound of the Favelas*. London: Mr. Bongo, 1996.  
**MUSIC LIBRARY: CD 26131MUS**
- ⦿ Grusin, Dave, et al. *Havana: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*. New York: GRP Records, 1990.  
**MUSIC LIBRARY: CD 7938MUS**
- ⦿ Jarreau, Al. *Al Jarreau Live in Europe: Look to the Rainbow*. Burbank: Warner Bros. Records, 1980.  
**MUSIC LIBRARY: CD 14379MUS**
- ⦿ Kijak, Stephen, et al. *Jaco*. Los Angeles: Slang East/West, 2015.  
**MUSIC LIBRARY: MUSDVD 781**
- ⦿ Mitchell, Joni. *Shine*. Beverly Hills: Hear Music, 2007.  
**MUSIC LIBRARY: CD 27724MUS**
- ⦿ Weather Report. *Heavy Weather*. New York: Columbia/Legacy, 1997.  
**MUSIC LIBRARY: CD 14079MUS**

