

Nuestra Plaza

Music - Dance - Community

by

Louis Kravitz

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For the Plaza community
who welcomed me and my camera
- This book is yours -

Para la comunidad que baila en La Plaza
- Este libro es suyo -

El que baila, no llora

He who dances does not cry
A Mexican folk saying



Introduction

This book of pictures celebrates the magic that happens almost every weekend across from Union Station, in the Plaza at El Pueblo de Los Angeles, the city's birthplace, founded in 1781. People gather in the Plaza and dance to Latin American music, most often played by Jhon Mosquera, known as Cayambe.

On a weekend afternoon in May 2018, after photographing in Union Station, I wandered across the street into the Plaza, where I found many people dancing to Latin American music. An elderly woman, about my age, let me take her picture. I returned the next week and brought her a print. I have photographed people all over the world, and it is the same everywhere: I like them, and they feel it. Over the weeks that followed, more and more of the dancers came to know me, and to welcome my camera.

The Plaza is like a town square where a community of local Latinos gather on the weekends to see friends, listen to music, and dance — with partners, or alone, swaying to the music.

I was drawn to this community of people and their incredible energy, dancing nonstop for hours. Their joy and camaraderie are contagious.

Covid brought the gatherings to an end in early 2020, as the city closed the parks to dancing. I returned in May 2024 with a book of pictures ("Dancing in Los Angeles Plaza Parks") to document the activity before Covid, and gave it to many of the people appearing in the book.

Many people were affected by Covid, and there were fewer dancers in 2024. However, the community was intact, and has since grown larger and the bond stronger — in spite of, or maybe because of, the fear that ICE and the Trump administration have brought.

Placita de Dolores, the smaller plaza where the dancing began, remains closed, but music and dancing are allowed in the much larger Plaza Park.

Here is my evidence that joy and community can still flourish.

Louis Kravitz, September 2026







Cayambe, "The Man from the Andes," a master musician. When he plays, the Plaza dances.













Mario welcomed me with his smile and generosity. His acceptance of me and my camera helped open the community to my photography. I will always be grateful.


EAST LA PARKS









Fermin Rodriguez may not dance but he can sing.


BRONCO




























LA










































NuVelu




























LA PLAZA


Comienza












































CEVICHERIA




















ON PLAZA



































Acknowledgements

There would be no dancing and no community without the musician Jhon Mosquera, better known as Cayambe, who has been entertaining on the Plaza for more than 25 years. My gratitude goes to the other entertainers Tony Bazurto and Flores as well. And there would be no pictures without the consent of the Plaza community, to whom I dedicate this book. I collected as many names as I could, and I regret that many more went unrecorded.

Guillermina “Guille” Allaniran
Carmen Beltrán
Candelaria Díaz
Tony Escobedo
José Feliciano
Teodoro Flores
Enrique Fonseca
Adriana Ganapol
Bélgica García
Guadalupe Garcia
Agustín González
Claudia Henríquez
Rosa Hermanez
Alejandrino Hernández
Cristina & Rafael Hernández
Rosa Jiménez
Martha Lozoya
Hilario Martínez
Mireya
María Monrreal
Rosa Morales
Michelle Myles
María Naranjo & Martín Membreño
Esperanta Núñez
Graciana Ortiz
Susana & Ramón Pérez
Roberto Randraze
Francisca Rendón
Fermín Rodríguez
Mary Rodríguez & Víctor Pérez
Marino Sánchez
Jenal & José Tarot
Isabel Vega





Louis Kravitz

Photographer



I photograph people. Not every person I photograph is remarkable, but they are wonderfully human. I try to show the themes most people share as they move through their lives — the joys and fears of childhood, the love and pride of parents, the intensity of people working, playing, cooking, buying, selling, dancing, worshiping, and, sometimes, the courage they bring just to living – our common humanity.
I live in Los Angeles and prior to becoming a photographer, I worked for 45 years as an actuary.

To see more of my photographs go to
www.louiskravitz.com


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