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ARTIST BIO: BALLET FOLKLORICO "QUETZALLI" de VERACRIZ

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BALLET FOLKLORICO "QUETZALLI" DE VERACRUZ

Founded in 1985 by Maestro Hugo Betancourt, Ballet Folklórico "Quetzalli" makes its home in the state capital, Xalapa, Veracruz. They have toured internationally performing traditional folkloric dances, as well as their Afro-Caribbean spectacular, "Carnaval Veracruzano". The company has been the official representatives for Secretary of Tourism and Economic Development for the State of Veracruz since 1986 having given hundreds of performances across Mexico and the United States, South America, Asia, Europe and the Caribbean. They have performed at the Carnaval of Veracruz every year since 1991, as well as taking their famous *comparsa xalapeña* to the Carnaval of Havana in Cuba on three different occasions. Other important appearances include the Miss Mexico pageant in Cancun, TV appearances on "Siempre en Domingo" from Mexico City, the Festival Cervantino in Guanajuato, and at the Festival of Culture in Koala Lumpur, Malaysia. They have also recently performed in Peru, Spain, Germany, Taiwan and Canada. Currently the group has grown to more than 45 dancers and 10 musicians and operates its school and training program for young dancers in Xalapa. "Quetzalli" continues to be one of the great cultural treasures of Veracruz, performing to thousands of people every year. "Quetzalli" will host the National Association of Grupos Folklóricos (ANGF) for the third time in the summer of 2003.

Hugo Betancourt—Born in the northern region of Veracruz known as *La Huasteca*, Maestro Betancourt was exposed to folk music and dance at an early age. His uncle, Humberto Betancourt was a well-known musician and composer, and he shared his great passion for the art and culture of his homeland with his nephew, Hugo. Hugo studied folkloric dance under Maestro Alejandro Gomez Solis in the Ballet Folklórico "Veracruz" sponsored by the department of popular education. He toured the United States on several occasions with that group and with Ballet Folklórico *Tonanzintla*. In 1985, along with Rosalinda Perez and Manuel Vasquez, formed "Quetzalli" and began to put together a repertoire and collect costumes and resources. He has served on the board for the National Association for Grupos Folklóricos (USA) and coordinated their international conference on two occasions in Xalapa. Under the direction of Maestro Betancourt "Quetzalli" has grown from 8 dancers to a company of more than 40 with their own training school. In the summer of 2000 "Quetzalli" celebrated its 15th anniversary with several gala performances in which Hugo was recognized for his great contribution to the company and to the cultural panorama of Veracruz. Hugo and his wife, Alejandra, are the proud parents of one daughter, Arantxa, born December, 2002.