

MEZCLAŌ Artist Bios

Giovanni Ortega (Artistic Director) is currently a professor of Voice and Speech at the Academy of Musical and Dramatic Arts (AMDA), and New York Film Academy (NYFA) where he teaches dance. He is also in the panel for the Spoken Word Poetry Workshop as well as the Voice/Speech Coach for Acting Showcases. In addition, he has taught at the Asian American Theater Workshop in San Francisco, Youth Academy of Dramatic Arts (YADA) and USC. At UCLA he taught Theater for Non-Majors and Spectrum Theater; a class that spans Shakespearean Rhetoric to Hip-Hop Theater. He was also an instructor of World Theater at Irving Middle School, Dance at Fairfax High School, Music at Le Conte and Bancroft Middle School and Creative Writing for Upward Bound. During the Summer and Fall, he goes on tour with Playfair, a one-man show that deals with Diversity and Community.

As an artist, Ortega recently sang in an operetta called Lalawigan which was held at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. He currently performs in and around Hollywood (East West Players, Playwright's Arena, Will and CO., The Actor's Gang, Boston Court, Latino Theater Company, American New Musical Theater, Colony and Kirk Douglas Theater). Film credits include: Clint Eastwood's Letters from Iwo Jima, Ray of Sunshine (Newport Beach Film Festival), Twixter, Coffee Date, CSI and the critically acclaimed NBC series Heroes. In addition, he has done numerous commercials and is a prominent Voice-Over actor as well.

Ortega studied at the University of Illinois (Chicago), where he wrote and directed Colonial Mentality, a Theater piece that combined traditional Indian dance (Barat Natyam) with Spoken Word. He also performed his one man show Ako, the Griot Speaks Out . Thereafter, Giovanni attended Graduate school at the UCLA MFA program in Theater, Film and TV where he found a new self in the Strasberg acting technique. While at UCLA, he curated musical pieces such as Felicity is a Cynical Art, Noche de Cultura, Carnal Cabaret and Corazon Perdido (Fowler Museum). In addition, he was also a dancer for Do Brasil Dance Co., Akimbo Dance Project, Silayan Dance Co. and Kayamanan ng Lahi.

Giovanni is the founder of MEZCLAŌ. In MEZCLAŌ, he has produced and directed Kwentong Pinoy, Pagbabalik, People Like Me, Vida y Muerto, Kalayaan, People Power, I am Born with Two Mothers, Juan Tamad, hosted Noche de Artistas, and recently produced a Playwright's Festival called KWENTO. With his involvement, MEZCLAŌ has been commissioned to perform original works for the Pacific Asia Museum, Fowler Museum, Occidental College, SIPA -Search to Involve Pilipino Americans, Aquarium of the Pacific, KulArts (SF) and Southern Utah University. Ortega has directed staged readings at East West Players (I Heart LA , Head Aches, Apple Falls from Tree, and Max and the Revolution) and has been commissioned recently by the same theater to write a one person show called ALLOS- the Story of Carlos Bulosan which just finished a successful tour in Southern California.

Ortega's work has been seen at Arizona State University, UCLA, University of the Pacific, Cal-State San Bernadino, San Diego State University, UCSD, Occidental College, UC Santa Cruz, Sonoma State University, Johnson and Wales University, Denver University, University of South Florida, Ringling School of Art and Design, Barry University, Shorter College, Mercer University, Berry College, Oxford College, Georgia Southwest University, Butler University, Luther College, Wartburg College, William Penn University, Bethany College, University of Louisiana, Lafayette, LMU, Tulane University, Eastern Michigan University, St. Olaf College, Missouri Baptist University, Case Western University, Wilmington College, Linfield College, Carson Newman University, Lambuth University, Our Lady of the Lake, Trinity University, University of North Texas, Schreiner University, North Harris College, Southern Utah University, and University of Wisconsin, Platteville. Please refer to www.giovanniortega.com for more information.

Wes Gabrillo (Performer) is a Southern California native and a graduate from the University of California - Irvine, where he was in several Claire Trevor School of the Arts productions, including: West Side Story, Anything Goes, The Last Day of Judas Iscariot, and Jesus Hopped the 'A' Train. He was previously a member of the LA-based Asian American improv troupe, Room to Improv, as well as the first season of Projekt NewSpeak's SketchComedyShow.com. Wes has written and performed sketch and improv comedy with the Associates of Awesome at different venues throughout LA, such as iO West and the Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre. He also performs stand-up comedy – having been up on the stages of the Hollywood Improv, The Comedy Store, and The Ice House. Recently he was the understudy for the role of Allos in the East West Players' Theatre For Youth Tour production of Allos: The Story of Carlos Bulosan.