

# EAST BAY TIMES

## Photos: Oakland Ballet brings a Day of the Dead celebration to San Leandro school

K-2 students applaud the colorful performance



Oakland Ballet dancers perform an excerpt of Luna Mexicana, a Day of the Dead theme ballet for K-2 students at Yu Ming Charter School in San Leandro, Calif., on Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023. Luna Mexicana is story of a young girl who falls asleep by her family's ofrenda. Then her relatives arrive dressed as skeletons and dance with them during the night. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)

By RAY CHAVEZ | Bay Area News Group  
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As kindergartners to second-graders looked on, 10 dancers of the Oakland Ballet dressed as skeletons walked one by one through the door, moving stiff and zombielike, to begin the show "Luna Mexicana," a Day of the Dead ballet educational performance Wednesday at Yu Ming Charter School in San Leandro.

Soon after, the kids were mesmerized by the music, dancing and colorful attire.

“Luna Mexicana” is a story of a young girl who falls asleep by her family’s ofrenda. Then her relatives arrive dressed as skeletons and she spends the night dancing with different ancestors, to traditional Mexican music, folkloric and hip hop, said Graham Lustig, the Oakland Ballet artistic director.



Oakland Ballet dancer Jazmine Quezada performs an excerpt of Luna Mexicana, a Day of the Dead theme ballet for K-2 students at Yu Ming Charter School in San Leandro, Calif., on Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023. Luna Mexicana is story of a young girl who falls asleep by her family’s ofrenda. Then her relatives arrive dressed as skeletons and dance with them during the night. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)

This Friday, the Oakland Ballet will host a show for 2,600 students at the Paramount Theater in Oakland, followed by public performances in the evening and Saturday. The company has performed Luna Mexicana since 2016.

The Oakland Ballet is collaborating with Ballet Folklorico Mexico Danza of Hayward, featuring a piece of “Viva La Vida,” which is about the life of Frida Kahlo.

Day of the Dead is a Mexican tradition to honor deceased loved ones on Nov. 1 and 2. See more staff photos of Day of the Dead celebrations in the Bay Area here.

For more information and tickets for the shows check the Oakland Ballet webpage.



Oakland Ballet dancers perform an excerpt of *Luna Mexicana*, a Day of the Dead theme ballet for K-2 students at Yu Ming Charter School in San Leandro, Calif., on Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)



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Kids watch Oakland Ballet dancers performing an excerpt of *Luna Mexicana*. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)



Oakland Ballet dancers perform an excerpt of Luna Mexicana. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)



Kids are mesmerized as Oakland Ballet dancers perform an excerpt of Luna Mexicana, a Day of the Dead theme ballet. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)



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Kids applaud Oakland Ballet dancers after an excerpt of *Luna Mexicana*, a Day of the Dead theme ballet for K-2 students at Yu Ming Charter School in San Leandro, Calif., on Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)



Oakland Ballet dancers answer questions after performing a Day of the Dead theme ballet for K-2 students at Yu Ming Charter School in San Leandro, Calif., on Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)



Oakland Ballet dancers answer questions after performing excerpts of *Luna Mexicana*, a Day of the Dead theme ballet for K-2 students at Yu Ming Charter School in San Leandro, Calif., on Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)

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