

Meet Pulso de Barro

Maria Puente Flores and Mateo Cano

My name is Maria Puente Flores. I was born and raised in Mexico City, but I am currently living in upstate New York (very grateful to be surrounded by forests and rivers). My mom says I was already singing before I could even talk. Yet, despite my love for songs and music, I had always felt very intimidated by instruments. That changed when Son Jarocho became a part of my life. Son Jarocho is a folk genre from the state of Veracruz in Mexico, and people gather to play it in community celebrations called *Fandangos*. My first Fandango took place under a tree in Central Park in NYC. One of the musicians came up to me and gave me a *jarana* (a stringed instrument that looks like a small guitar). They taught me a couple of chords and suddenly I became part of the music. Filled with joy and excitement by that experience, I learnt little by little the traditional verses that are sung – now I can even compose my own! – and I also learnt the *zapateado* which is the dance that also functions as the percussion of the music. Being part of the Son Jarocho community demonstrated to me that I can play many instruments, but most importantly, it surrounded me with people who make me feel closer to my home in Mexico. What I'm hoping to share with you all is the joy that I feel when I play the *jarana*, when I sing the poetry at the top of my lungs, or when I'm stomping my feet for the *zapateado*. See you soon! Best, Maria.

My name is Mateo Cano. I am a Mexican American teaching artist, and I will be teaching you about storytelling. I will teach you how to tell stories but also how to listen to them. I have always loved a good story. I remember my mom telling me stories in Mexico, where I was raised, about amazing people with tremendous courage and I remember being inspired and in awe. Now I am a storyteller and I tell stories through my body with dance, through sounds with music, and in any way I can come up with! My mission is to help you tell your story, and to have lots of fun in the process. Throughout my life I have moved a lot from place to place — changing schools, states, and even countries almost every couple of years. All the changes made me realize that there are an astonishing number of good stories everywhere, so eventually I developed a keen skill for listening to what others had to say; that will be a very important part of our time together, listening. I want to help you become more sensible toward your environment and listen to all the breathtaking stories the world we live in has to tell. I'm looking forward to meeting you.