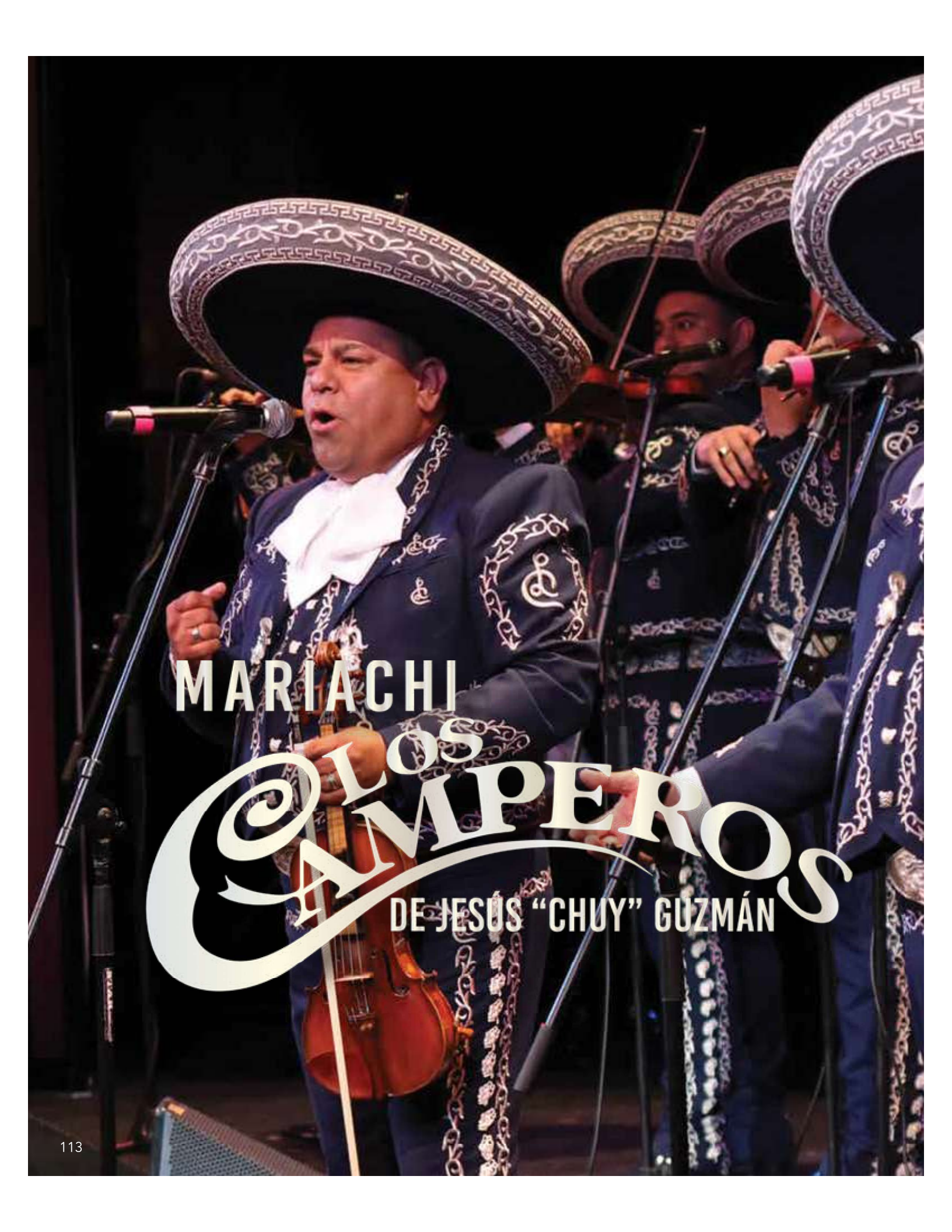




MARIACHI

LOS
CAPIPEROS

DE JESUS "CHUY" GUZMÁN



Fri.
APR. 23
at 7:30pm

Sat.
APR. 24
at 7:30pm

Pikes Peak Center for the Performing Arts

Thomas Wilson *conductor*
Mariachi Los Camperos

The rich tradition of mariachi comes to the Philharmonic by those who pioneered its introduction in the United States. Mariachi Los Camperos, led by Jesus "Chuy" Guzman, bring world-class mariachi arrangements rich in the cultural heritage of Mexico.

Season presented by:



Lodging provided by:



Barbara P. Byerly Fund at the Colorado Springs Philharmonic Foundation
The H.A. & Mary K. Chapman Foundation

Kathy and Dick McCaskill
Madonna Miller





Mariachi Los Camperos

"The Los Angeles-based Mariachi Los Camperos is considered by many to be the finest mariachi ensemble in the world. Undoubtedly, it has played a central role in the United States in raising both the artistic standards and the public perceptions of mariachi music, which is now recognized by UNESCO as a masterpiece of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity."

—The National Folk Festival

Los Angeles-based Mariachi Los Camperos' abundant accolades and performances on premier concert stages can easily obscure the fact that its leaders come from humble roots, deep within a mariachi tradition. The group's founder, Nati Cano, was a third-generation mariachi musician from the Mexican state of Jalisco. He lived his dream, forging his own mariachi group in 1961 from his artistic vision and determination. Until his death in 2014, he challenged the attitudes that, during his youth in Mexico, led formally trained musical peers to look down on his beloved rural and working-class music. In the words of Jesús "Chuy" Guzmán, his disciple and successor as Camperos leader, "He wanted to have a mariachi that would have dignity, that would have heart, that would have soul, and he made Los Camperos."

"I owe a lot to Mr. Cano," says Guzmán. "He was my tutor; he was my artist. Really, he was everything for me. He guided me. He would tell me, 'Look, when you write arrangements, look for simplicity. The song is already there. Look for a touch-up.' " By 1992, Guzmán was arranging

pieces for Mariachi Los Camperos under Cano's supervision, and his talents grew rapidly. Guzmán's creativity was key to the Grammy-nominated albums *Llegaron Los Camperos: Concert Favorites of Nati Cano's Mariachi Los Camperos* (2006) and *Tradición Arte y Pasión: Mariachi Los Camperos de Nati Cano* (2015), as well as Grammy-winning *Amor, Dolor y Lágrimas: Mariachi Los Camperos de Nati Cano* (2008) and *De Ayer Para Siempre* (2019). In 2014, Nati Cano performed his last show with Mariachi Los Camperos before he lost his battle with cancer.

For over half a century, Los Camperos has been bringing life to mariachi music from Mexican history with twelve passion-filled albums, five of which were released by Smithsonian Folkways. Their most recent album *De Ayer Para Siempre* was released in 2019 and revitalizes classic sones, rancheras, and boleros with artistry and ingenuity. This album also features medleys, known as *popurrís*, that honor and highlight the work of influential composers.

An essential component of Mariachi Los Camperos' mission is nurturing future generations' appreciation of mariachi music. The group actively engages in educating young people about the rich heritage and significance of mariachi music, empowering them to explore Mexican culture and their own musical side. Every year, Mariachi Los Camperos leads multiple workshops that open up the minds of young people to the joys of mariachi. Multiple members of Los Camperos, including Guzmán and Sergio "Checo" Alonso, also hold teaching positions at high schools and colleges, extending their commitment to mariachi music education beyond their activities with the ensemble.

Today, Guzmán leads the Los Camperos legacy, providing the vision for its sound and repertoire. He continues Cano's work of teaching the tradition throughout the United States and beyond. Looking back on his career, he says, "I'm not going to tell you that the work was easy, but... I feel good about what has happened in my life, in my path as a musician." Looking ahead, he adds, "There's still a lot to do. My dream will come to an end when I am gone." Mariachi Los Camperos stands as a beacon of cultural heritage, preserving the traditional roots of mariachi music by expounding on the heart and soul that has saturated these songs for generations.

CONDUCTOR

Thomas Wilson

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Thomas Wilson

Associate Conductor

Thomas Wilson is one of today's most versatile and dynamic musicians, celebrated as a conductor, composer, orchestrator, and trumpeter. His extensive catalog of works and arrangements has been performed worldwide, creating new opportunities for orchestras and artists alike. His orchestrations have been heard with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Gothenburg Symphony, and dozens of other ensembles.

As Associate Conductor of the Colorado Springs Philharmonic, Thomas leads nearly half the season across Pops, Classical, and educational concerts, and often joins the trumpet section when not on the podium. He also serves as Music Director of the Chamber Orchestra of the Springs, transforming it into one of the nation's most vibrant chamber ensembles. Under his leadership, the orchestra has earned national recognition for bold, and diverse programming.

Education is at the heart of Thomas's work. He has conducted the Colorado Springs Youth Symphony, founded the Young Concert Artists Orchestra, and continues to mentor young musicians as a guest conductor, clinician, and faculty member at Colorado College and the Colorado Springs Conservatory.

Equally at home in the concert hall, theater, or opera house, Thomas has collaborated on countless projects in dance, film, and stage. Recent productions such as *Blind Injustice* and *Glory Denied* highlight his dedication to making the arts vital and relevant to contemporary audiences.

A summa cum laude graduate of the University of Northern Colorado, where he received the School of Music's highest honor, Thomas also holds a master's degree in Conducting from Colorado State University. He has studied with leading mentors including Lawrence Leighton Smith, Gustav Meier, and Michael Tilson Thomas, who described him as "someone to watch." Away from the podium, Thomas is a lifelong learner and adventurer. He is a voracious reader, a classic car enthusiast, and happiest exploring Colorado trails with his beloved dog, Ella.