

thINKIngDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Sergio Escorcia

Kitchen Tables Turned Sacred

by Zoe Farnsworth

Dame la Receta! ("Give Me the Recipe!" in English) by [Carne Viva Dance Theatre](#) is both a demand and a conjuring for immigrants to live vibrant, rooted, and sustaining lives. Though Trump and his fascistic reign are alluded to through projections of anti-immigration protestors on the scrim, rather than spending energy lamenting these harsh realities, the performers tackle the nuances of several immigrant stories and experiences. They radiate joy, sensuality, sadness, and divinity through their movement, faces, and dialogue.

The dancers concoct a kitchen on stage, which is cultivated by feminine elders as a sacred space in which to create nourishing recipes for survival of the so-called American Dream. Their gestures originate from everyday tasks like cooking, serving, and hanging laundry, and they move against powerful latine-rock music. This pedestrian vocabulary evolves into more playful movement as they tell stories of systemic healthcare injustice and the plight of the underpaid and overworked through dramatized conversations.

We learn about the grief and innovation that arise when raising children in a foreign country from projections of *abuelas* (grandmothers) and *madres* (mothers). As these projections play, the performers face upstage, leaning on each other tenderly while slowly raising their arms in prayer-like motions. This motif is then mirrored through a longer group unison that transforms into layered solos and duets. The dancers bound upward each time they fall, expressing their strength and sorrow through weight sharing and melting floorwork.

Throughout the piece, I was blown away by the performers' swift footwork and emotional vulnerability. In one standout moment, a dancer takes center stage as four others circle her, supporting her as she embodies a warrior [orisha](#). They cut, stomp, and undulate in time to live hand drums with wide eyes and serious faces. Explosive jumps and turns draw cheers from the crowd.

The piece closes with each dancer offering a final solo. They are no longer dressed in red, white, and blue but in comfortable multi-colored outfits that symbolize their diversity and vivacity. The lights fade out as the performers mime eating at the table together,

laughing and pointing mischievous looks over their shoulders.

Dame La Receta!, Carne Viva Dance Theatre, Icebox Project Space Gallery, September 10th-13th.

Homepage and Article Page Image Description: *Seven smiling dancers wearing multicolored flowing outfits stand with wide legs and arms stretched out to the sides, their hair flowing with their sideward motion.*

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September 16, 2025