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Media Contact:

Brava! for Women in the Arts and Vanessa Sanchez
Selected as One of Ten Recipients of Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions for
“Ghostly Labor,” a new work by Vanessa Sanchez that illuminates a history of abuse, activism and perseverance by Chicana and Native women working in the US-Mexico borderlands.

June 9, 2020 – San Francisco, Calif. -- Today, Brava! for Women in the Arts announced it has been selected as one of ten recipients of this year’s Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions, a program of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Brava is among a stellar group of 10 Bay Area-based non-profit organizations and world-class artists that will receive $150,000 each to commission new works in the field of dance and movement-based performance. The artists in this cohort of recipients include innovators in the field of dance, veteran masters and artists who are deeply rooted in their communities. These awards are part of the Hewlett Foundation’s ongoing commitment to investing in new and innovative works of art that offer both joy and solace, even in difficult times.

“To have an opportunity to commission a new work in dance, and provide an artist the ability to completely immerse themselves in the process, is an arts organization’s dream. Supporting the creation of this work not only allows us to service our mission to amplify the voices of unrepresented artists, but feeds our community’s desire for stories that reflect their lives.”

– Anastacia Powers Cuellar, Brava’s Executive Director

“This project brings to light the resilience, beauty and strength of Chicana, Latina and Indigenous laborers and farmworkers, who are the backbone of our society but have been unseen, exploited and ignored for generations. This award offers me the opportunity to connect directly with these women while diving into a cross-cultural rhythmic exploration of movement to tell their stories, innovating within the tradition of generational story-telling and highlighting an underrepresented community voice on stage.”

– Vanessa Sanchez, lead artist

Building on Brava Theater’s successful 2019 presentation of “Pachuquismo,” a dance theater production about Mexican-American women during the Zoot Suit Riots, Vanessa Sanchez and Brava come together to develop and present her new work, “Ghostly Labor.” Exploring the exploitation of female labor in the US-Mexico borderlands, Sanchez deepens her storytelling vocabulary fusing Tap dance, Mexican Zapateado and Afro-Caribbean movement with live percussion, original Son Jarocho arrangements and video projection. Featuring her dance company La Mezcla, Sanchez is developing an intersectional, percussive production through outreach and interviews with Latina, Chicana and Indigenous laborers, extensive research with academics and historians, and creative collaborations with artistic partners.
including *Son Jarocho* composer Laura Rebolloso, media artist John Jota Leaños and percussionist Javier Navarrete.

Featuring an all-female cast of eight dancers and five musicians, “Ghostly Labor” will premiere at Brava’s historic theater in San Francisco’s Mission District.

The Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions were launched in 2017 to celebrate the foundation’s 50th anniversary. It is a five-year, $8 million initiative supporting the creation and premiere of 50 new works from outstanding artists working in five performing arts disciplines. The largest commissioning effort of its kind in the country, the initiative is a symbol of the Hewlett Foundation’s longstanding commitment to supporting art that matters to the people and communities of the San Francisco Bay Area. The Hewlett Foundation has supported the arts in the region for more than 50 years, and currently makes grants of roughly $20 million per year to more than 200 nonprofit arts organizations, mostly in the form of long-term general operating support.

More information about the Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions can be found at: hewlett.org/50Commissions.

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**Brava! for Women in the Arts celebrates** over 30 years as a professional arts organization dedicated to cultivating the artistic expression of women, LGBTQIA, people of color, youth, and other underrepresented voices. Brava owns and operates the Brava Theater Center, producing and promoting traditional and contemporary music festivals, a variety of film festivals, contemporary and experimental theatrical productions, international comedy shows, lectures, and professional dance productions—making Brava one of the most eclectic and multifaceted arts venues in the Bay Area.

brava.org
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