

SMUIN

CONTEMPORARY BALLET

CELIA FUSHILLE / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Limitless Michael Smuin

September 30 – October 4, 2021

ZORRO!

World Premiere: May 2, 2003

Choreography: Michael Smuin

Music: Charles Fox

Recording: Czech Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra,
conducted by Charles Fox

Libretto: Matthew Robbins

Décor: Douglas W. Schmidt

Lighting Design: Sara Linnie Slocum

Costumes: Ann Beck

Fencing Master: Richard Lane

Zorro/Don Diego

Emilio

Ticket Seller/Rosa

Theater Owner/Capitán Monastario

Bernardo

Theater Patrons, Soldiers, and

Ballroom Dancers

Rodolphe Cassand

Shannon Hurlburt

Claudia Alfieri

Easton Smith

John De Serio

Galina Alexandrova

Lee Bell

Robin Cornwell Semmelhack

John De Serio

Pedro Gamino

Amy Seiwert

David Strobbe

Nicole Trerise White

Sarah Barber-Wilson

The Story
by **Matthew Robbins**

Scene I: Prologue. Spanish California, in glorious black and white. Pulp cinema's mysterious swordsman ZORRO ("The Fox") challenges proud, dangerous CAPITÁN MONASTARIO. Zorro defends the lovely ROSA, who is anxious to know her masked hero.

Scene II: Los Angeles, 1959. EMILIO, a romantic young movie usher, endures some bullying at the hands of his boss, the THEATER OWNER.

Scene III: In a daydream, Emilio's screen hero comes to life. Zorro pursues the boy, showing him that swordplay is no lost art.

Scene IV: The alluring TICKET GIRL reports for work. Emilio tries in vain to attract her interest but fails to protect her from their seedy employer.

Scene V: Saturday night. Avid moviegoers rush the box office to buy tickets for tonight's main attraction: *Zorro!*

Scene VI: Emilio imagines himself at Zorro's side, fighting for justice.

Scene VII: Popcorn munching fans enjoy the show. On screen, Rosa enters a church, intending to confess amorous thoughts regarding her masked hero. The benevolent "Priest," however, wears a sword. A fight erupts.

Scene VIII: Aided by his trusted servant, BERNARDO, Zorro rushes home and hides his disguise. In hot pursuit, Capitán Monastario and his Lieutenant encounter DON DIEGO, a fop. After they leave, Bernardo and Don Diego discover a young stranger in their midst.

Scene IX: Rosa is the belle at an aristocrats' ball. Egged on by the mischievous Don Diego, Emilio confronts Capitán Monastario but he's no match for the soldier. Zorro must reappear to save the day.

Scene X: Discouraged and alone, Emilio returns to workaday reality. Rain falls as the movie patrons leave the theater. Again witnessing the Theater Owner's lechery, Emilio challenges him to a duel—with umbrellas.

Scene XI: At last Emilio wins his true love and the respect of his hero.

Choreographer's Notes
by Michael Smuin

In choreographing *ZORRO!* I wanted to create an experience as big, bold, and captivating as the Zorro comic books that enthralled me as a kid.

Johnston McCulley created Zorro the Fox in "The Curse of Capistrano," a five-installment serial published in All-Story Weekly in 1919. The romantic masked daredevil, fighting for right and justice in Old California by night and posing as an indolent fop by day, was so popular that McCulley continued to write new adventures until his death in 1959. Zorro has appeared in books, plays, television series, comic books and 37 movies.

I loved Zorro when I was a kid, partly I think because he was like a real person: he beat the bad guys with courage, wit, and skill, not supernatural powers. A mask, a cape, and a stick, and I could be Zorro too.

I want to thank Sandra Curtis and John Gertz, the owners of the Zorro trademarks. They have been incredibly helpful and generous; without their support, Zorro would never have become a ballet.

Bringing Zorro to the Stage
by Sandy Curtis, Former V.P. of Zorro Productions, Inc.

The idea of a Zorro ballet, choreographed to an original musical score, telling an innovative tale of the making of a hero, has become an inspiring reality through the genius of Michael's vision. We began sharing archival materials with Michael and Matthew [Robbins] in August of 2001. Our first meeting took place at the Zorro office in October. It was one of those spectacularly warm Indian summer days. The excitement generated in the office by Michael's energy was electric. In his inimitable fashion, he postured, cut Z's in the air with an imaginary sword and swirled off an imaginary cape. He immediately began to dramatize the character through the fluidity of his movement. Matthew's mind bubbled questions, forming his story ideas. Charles was eager to focus on the music with grand visions of a stirring orchestral work.

Michael's plan was to premiere the Zorro ballet in May 2003. And here we are opening on May 2nd! Only a consummate professional like Michael, managing a remarkably talented creative team, an exceptional group of dancers, a skilled fight director, a devoted board, an efficient administrative staff, and enthusiastic sponsors could bring a project together with such focus in this tight time frame. Our deepest appreciation to them all.

We are proud and excited to be part of the Smuin Ballet repertoire. We hope you enjoy the performance.

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