

The Mama Negra

(SANTISIMA TRAGEDIA PARTY OR CAPITANIA PARTY)

It is probably born by the middle of the XVIII century, when by terror people of that colonial time saw to erupt to the volcanos Pichincha and Cotopaxi. As good Catholic town the laticungueños proclaimed the Mercedes' Virgin "Lawyer and Patron of the Volcanos", in order for they would have to take place eucaristic acts and tremendous processions that little by little has gone mixing the pagan thing and the religious thing until acquiring an own personality, only in the world.

The Parade of the Mama Negra that travels the streets of Latacunga is carried out it in some cases, on September 24th, in homage to the Mercedes' Virgin and in other cases on November 11th, in the employer parties of the city, stand out curious folkloric characters that to the heat of their preset teatral acts, they go opening up step between a curious multitude that doesn't escape to the occurrences, traps or magic omens from some of them.

Among the most colorful characters in the party we can find:

THE MAMA NEGRA



Adorned with a blouse of mirror cloth and fittings that make set with the showy embroidery, of wide follones (skirt), and luxurious shawls. This character will always be a male disguised of woman that designates with a year of anticipation, some times his face it is colored of black with rich allegories that denote the character's exaggeration, other times the face will simply be covered with a black mask equally very well adorned. The Mama Negra always travels to horse, in her right hand takes a black doll (her daughter Baltasara) that she makes it dance to the rhythm of the

band of the town that accompanies her and in her left hand she takes a syringe with milk and water that splashes to curious and distracted ones.

THE STAR'S ANGEL



It represents to the Gabriel archangel, it is a young man that rides dressing a white tunic adorned with golden or silver fittings, to the back takes a couple of equally white cardboard wings, it takes a crown where a great star stands out and in his hand the scepter with a star in the tip; this character is the one in charge of to recite where there is bigger people concentration, the commendations to the Virgin.

THE KING



Richly adorned with the whole necessary tinsel to represent a Moorish king, he is the one in charge of decking out the procession.

THE ENGASTADORES

As it happens in all society, the division of classes offers to be demonstrated by the ostentation and the appearance, those they are the aboriginal ones that have reached certain economic status and they can be ambassadors of the other dominant nobility.

THE ABANDERADO.-

It's a kind of a military decked out who is the one in charge of making the public's delights flaming a great square flag coordinately .

THE CAPITAN.-

This is the biggest prioste, probably the one who payd the party, "elegantly" uniformed and with sword to the hand, he also travels accompanied by his "elegant" edecanes.

THE ASHANGUERO.-



Paper that is represented by the stronggest men, because to their backs they take a great basket with foods like bread, fruits, hens, guinea pigs and liquors, necessary to distribute to the companies while the party lasts.

THE HUACOS.-



Dresses entirely of white, with a special shield full with trinkets that they transport to the back, his hidden face behind a white mask with multicolored lines, in his hands takes a bell and other a deer horn that serves them to "make the clean ones" to the assistants, invoking to the mounts and volcanos.

THE NEGROS CHAMPUCEROS.-



Young copleros with their faces colored of black, a military cap and dresses to distribute the “champús” or drink to the openmouthed onlookers.

THE LOANTES.-

In charge of reciting the commendations to exalt the party or “to find out” to the public with having improvised and picaresque ballads.

THE CAMISONAS, CARISHINAS OR WUARMILLAS

Male youths ridiculously adorned as women, they take a whip in the hand to go opening road to the procession, at the same time that they throw candies to the public.

THE CLOWNS



Elegantly dresses with attractive suits of shine multicolored, mask, cap, gloves and a sausage with the one that they pursue who doesn't cooperate in the parade, go dancing to the rhythm that music's Band offers .

Source: Ballet Folklórico de Ecuador de Luis Beltrán