

**José Rubén De León**  
**ARTIST STATEMENT**

I am an artist with knowledge and proficiency in more than one field. My musical performances incorporate English and Spanish biographical and historical narratives, with an emphasis on preserving songs by Latino composers. I have also long enjoyed writing and research, which allows me to create one-person theatrical performances that showcase my bilingual acting, writing, and singing abilities to give audience members an historical and cultural perspective they may not have otherwise been exposed to.

My appreciation and passion for music goes back to my childhood in Laredo, Texas. As a 5-year-old, I'd love to climb one of the trees in our front yard and perch myself on one of the branches and sing my heart out so that the entire neighborhood could hear me. One of our neighbors gave me the nickname, *Pajarito de Oro*, or the Golden Little Bird, because she said that I reminded her of a singing canary. One of the greatest influences in my music career came from sitting in front of the radio, on my mother's lap, and singing along with her and the romantic voices of Mexican singers. This strong musical foundation inspired me to learn to play the trombone and piano in high school and to begin singing professionally.

Although I consider myself a solo performer, I employ the best local artists who can assist me in creating a polished, professional theatrical experience. I value the creative ideas that unfold from collaborating with high-caliber musicians, theatre directors, lighting and costumes designers. And I enter the collaborative process with a playful spirit of innovation, improvisation and listening. Also vital to my work are the new perspectives and revelations that come from collaborating with other artists invested in my projects.

Recently inspired by the large influx of unaccompanied minors, the continual abuse of immigrant women and children by both individual actors and institutions, sex trafficking, and the high rate of spousal abuse in San Antonio, I have started writing an adaptation of Euripides' *Medea* where I set the two act tragedy in 1519 México during the time of the Spanish conquest. Even though I set the Spanish conquest as the historical foundation of my work, I take much care to ensure that there is a dialogue between this past and today's issues. In fact, my work is a commentary on today's issues that unfolds on the dramatic stage where different worlds-the classical, the Meso-American/Spanish, and the contemporary collide to raise our consciousness about how injustice, survival, and transformation. I am excited about creating a theatrical experience that brings awareness to the issues that befall women and children in our city. The greatest challenge for me is writing for multiple voices instead for a solo voice - my voice. It is my hope that funding from your prestigious agency will allow me to overcome this challenge.