

For Immediate Release
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***Los Bandits* Premier at Kalamazoo College**

KALAMAZOO, MI—A feature length documentary about a Kalamazoo musical group, *Los Bandits: More Than a Tex-Mex Band*, produced and directed by Kalamazoo College media producer and instructor, Dhera Strauss, will premier at 8 p.m. on Friday, May 20, 2005 at the Dalton Theatre in the Light Fine Arts Building, Kalamazoo College. The showing is free and open to the public. For special accommodations, please call 269.337.7000.

Los Bandits, the group featured in the film, was inspired by two men—René Meave and Guillermo Martinez—and was launched more than a dozen years ago. In addition to featuring originally written and scored music, the program presents many stories about the music, but also poignant interviews with René and Guillermo. The musicians talk about their origins in Mexico and Texas and how they brought their talent, creativity, and mission to western Michigan. René and Guillermo reflect the feelings of a community of hundreds of immigrants that have followed the same route—from picking vegetables to the purchase of small farms and the opening of restaurants, taking pride in their new lives and country. The music of Los Bandits borrows heavily from rock and roll, reggae, and the blues while their politics are inspired by their heroes: Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata, George Washington, and Cesar Chavez. More than a Tex-Mex band, they cumbia their own beat.

Dhera Strauss, director and producer of the documentary, is Media Producer and teaches introductory and advanced documentary production at Kalamazoo College. She has produced her own documentaries, including *Neighbors in the Square*, which recently

took third place in the documentary category of East Lansing Film Festival's Lake Michigan Film Competition.

"This documentary project has been filled with surprises," Dhera Strauss said, "taking all of us to new places and challenging us with new perspectives. Besides, what can be more fun than hanging with a band?"

The project was funded by the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo, the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation Emerging Artist Grant Program, the Arts Fund of Kalamazoo County, and Kalamazoo College.

Kalamazoo College is a national liberal arts college and the creator and home of the *Kalamazoo Plan*. Kalamazoo College students shape elements of the *Kalamazoo Plan*, which includes rigorous academics, career internships, study abroad, and senior individualized project, into a valuable learning experience that fits their talents and aspirations.

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