Teatrofaller

1993-2013

Teatrotaller

TEATRO TALLER 20th ANNIVERSARY

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QUIENES SOMOS

Teatrotaller was founded in 1993 by a group of enthusiastic and energetic students with the idea of promoting Spanish, Latin American and Latino cultures through theater. Every semester, the group develops a specific dramatic text for full-scale production. Teatrotaller produces plays in Spanish and "Spanglish" including classical, contemporary and experimental plays. These plays are presented to the community with a regular schedule of performances in April, August and November each year.

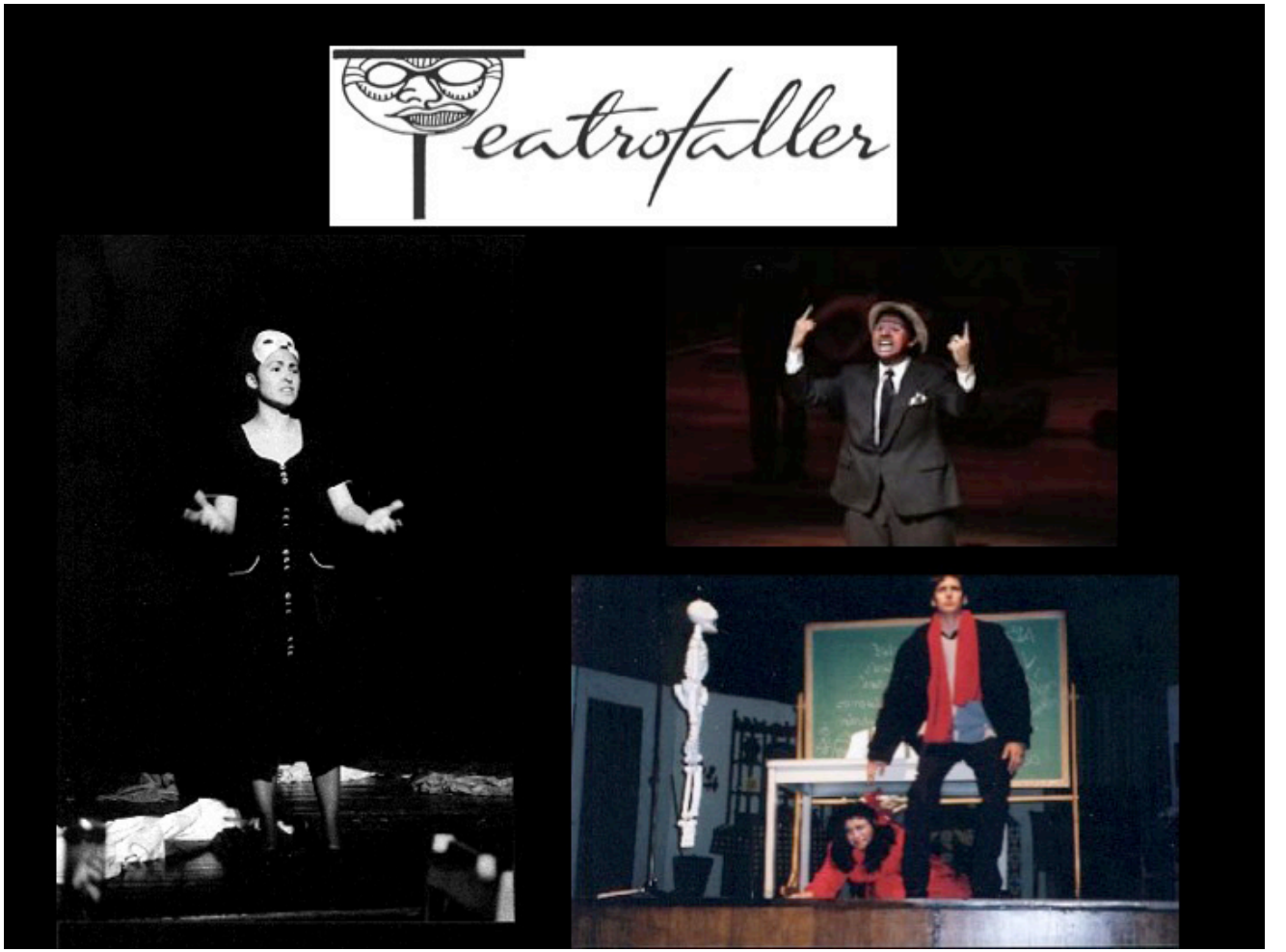
Summer plays (which are done on a volunteer basis) are usually lighter and shorter than the full-scale productions during the academic year, and are repeated for the community during the Latino Month celebrations in September and October.

In addition, many members of the group participate in theater-related community service activities. Over the years, often in collaboration with the "Esperanza" and "Cultura!" programs, member of Teatrotaller have worked with children and adults in the Ithaca community with the goal of sharing Latin American and U.S. Latino culture with the general community through educational artistic activities.

Now two decades and more than sixty shows after its founding, Teatrotaller holds a well earned reputation for excellence in artistic performances, and has frequently been approached by playwrights from throughout the Spanish-speaking world with offers of plays. The group has produced world-premier performances of plays by well-known writers including work by Argentine Nora Glickman, and US Latina Elaine Romero. In addition to working with existing scripts, Teatrotaller has also frequently performed original plays by group members, or developed collective creation projects.

The group has been frequently invited to perform nationally and internationally and has accepted invitations to present shows in New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Syracuse, Toronto, and Lawrence, Kansas, among other locations, as well as Liege, Belgium; Jerusalem, Israel; Mexico City, Puebla, and San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico; Quito, Ecuador; and Bucharest, Romania.

A TRAVÉS DE LOS AÑOS



Teatrotaller

Isabel Ramos

Veinte años pasó Ulises fuera de Ítaca. Veinte años de guerras y luchas, superados gracias a su tenaz añoranza por el regreso, la nostalgia del reencuentro con sus orígenes.

De la misa manera, veinte años han pasado desde que un día cualquiera y en otra Ítaca, bastante más fría, pero plagada de jóvenes ulises, iniciara esta aventura llamada Teatrotaller. Un proyecto que nació de una idea muy sencilla- hacer teatro en nuestra lengua, de trazar un puente hacia nuestros orígenes- y que jamás pensé estaría celebrando hoy día su casi mayoría de edad.

Según su etimología griega, la nostalgia es el ansia por el deseo de regresar. Y es que tras veinte años de una durísima carrera profesional en el mundo del teatro- plagada de éxitos y desaciertos, no puedo evitar mirar atrás y extrañar tiernamente aquella primera empresa de juventud que no solo marcó el inicio del viaje de mi vida, los pasos más dulces e idílicos, sino que también es mi Ítaca, mis orígenes, mi punto de referencia artística y que marcó una misión que aún persigo cada día por los caminos de esta ingrata profesión.

A pesar de que solo era una estudiante de segundo año de Cornell cuando comencé Teatrotaller, la idea de iniciar un grupo de teatro había estado siempre dentro de mí. Desde los trece años siempre quise ser directora. Había estado siempre en contacto con el teatro, y tal vez por esa temprana experiencia, siempre supe que como directora, formar y mantener una compañía era indispensable. El sueño de una compañía tiene que ser una convicción. Es la única vía de trazarse un crecimiento artístico coherente, un camino teatral propio y personal. De otro modo no hay una trayectoria, una historia común, una vida en el teatro, sino experiencias artísticas desarticuladas, obras y montajes en diferentes lugares sin una misión determinada.

Pero más allá de convicciones o ideales, Teatrotaller nació del deseo más puro de trabajar y de aprender equivocándome. Al llegar a la Universidad me encontré con un Departamento de Teatro sumamente limitante, que apenas me permitía trabajar y mucho menos hacer el tipo de trabajo que yo interesaba. Porque a pesar de que yo venía de Puerto Rico y de que el teatro de Cornell era más rico y desarrollado en apariencia, mi sensación era de que el teatro que yo había practicado en mis inicios, era más interesante y experimental que cualquier producción jamás vista en el Departamento de Teatro de Cornell.

Ante esta situación, me cuestioné seriamente transferirme de Cornell. Le comenté la idea de Teatrotaller a varios amigos (Nana, Víctor, Luis Raúl…) Pero antes de que yo misma me diera cuenta, ya Teatrotaller había tomado forma y estaba dando sus primeros pasos. Así que de cierta forma podemos decir que Teatrotaller surgió casi solo, sin grandes aspavientos ni maniobras, papeles ni tratados, pero si, producto de un proceso de reflexión de mis tempranos años universitarios, que tal vez solo ahora, veinte años después, logro articular.

La elección de hacer teatro en español es un tema que me resulta interesante aún. Debo confesar que hoy día que soy directora de teatro profesional no me siento para nada atraída por el término "latino" ni por el llamado "teatro latino" en sí. Adoro mi lengua, el español, y me siento sumamente orgullosa de mi cultura. Me encanta su teatralidad, su infinito legado artístico, y el genio de tantas plumas que nos han logrado hipnotizar con la cadencia de sus palabras.

Pero como artista puertorriqueña he sufrido en carnes propias el "encajonamiento" de ser "latina". Y como persona de teatro y tras muchos años de reflexión, puedo afirmar que para mí el teatro no es de latinos, ni de americanos, ni de chinos ni de extraterrestres. El teatro es sobre los grandes temas e incertidumbres de la humanidad, las personas y las complejidades de su mundo. ¿Qué es Hamlet al fin y al cabo, si no una tragedia sobre padres, madres, hijos, amantes…?

Sin embargo y aunque resulte contradictorio, como artista mi cultura y mis orígenes son la esencia de mi trabajo. La cultura es una experiencia colectiva, forjada por los eventos políticos, sociales e históricos de un denominado país o región y el teatro recae en estas referencias culturales que forman parte de nuestra memoria colectiva. Y por ende, el teatro es memoria. Es la

reinvención de la realidad, filtrada y editada por nuestra percepción subjetiva del mundo, pero también supeditada a la memoria colectiva, a la herencia denominada de una cultura, una lengua y un país.

En el año 2003 tuve la oportunidad de viajar a Italia y seguir los ensayos de Luca Ronconi en el Piccolo Teatro de Milán. Recuerdo que en una ocasión, una actriz que se encontraba a disgusto con la producción, renunció a la misma y para reemplazarla, trajeron a otra actriz. Mi sorpresa fue que la actriz suplente, que nunca había visto a la actriz original en su rol, hacía el papel de manera idéntica a la primera. Entonces, Myriam Acevedo, una excelente actriz cubana que trabajó durante gran parte de su vida en Italia y que formaba parte de la producción, me señaló que ambas actrices representaban el papel de maneras muy parecidas ya que respondían a los códigos culturales y de actuación italianos. Y que al igual que estas actrices, cada país tenía su propio código y lenguaje gestual que influenciaba la creación artística. Y entonces comprendí que un actor tiene que abrazar estos códigos para que filtrados por el lente prismático de sus propias experiencias personales y de vida, que son únicas de cada individuo, creen un trabajo original y enriquecedor.

Es por esto que a mi manera de entender el teatro, toda mi memoria cultural está integrada en el trabajo artístico y teatral que realizo, y por ende, todo mi trabajo tiene la carga de mi puertorriqueñidad y de mi hispanidad, de todo el legado cultural y artístico de siglos y siglos de herencia, que consciente o inconscientemente ayuda a darle forma a todas mis creaciones.

Y volviendo a esos ingenuos años de Teatrotaller, ahora reconozco que nuestra necesidad de crear un teatro "latino" y en español, era el inicio de esta búsqueda de nuestra memoria cultural y colectiva. De estos códigos culturales que tanto significaban para nosotros, pero que el Departamento de Teatro de Cornell desconocía por completo. Era la necesidad de encontrar un vehículo teatral en el que nos viéramos reflejados y que nos sirviera, como a Ulises en su regreso a Ítaca, para rencontrarnos con nuestras raíces, con nosotros mismos y con el legado de siglos y siglos de historia, cultura, literatura y arte a la vez.

Y de este modo, Teatrotaller también es mi Ítaca, porque sin saberlo marcó esos orígenes de una búsqueda teatral y personal que aún continúa. ¿Cómo trabajar con este legado cultural que llevo a mis espaldas y a la vez reinventarme, encontrar nueva luz en mi trabajo? ¿Cómo elucubrar un lenguaje común colectivo, pero a la misma vez original y retador?

Y tal como Ulises, cuando pienso en Teatrotaller, mi Ítaca, siento una dolorosa añoranza por lo que fue, por eso que viví y ya no regresará, y que ya solo podré evocar por el mágico recurso de la memoria, manipuladora y fugaz cuando de algo tan querido se trata.

Allí viví mi primer idilio con el teatro, me forjé como productora e hice los mejores amigos de mi vida. Algunos con los que todavía guardo estrecha relación: Debbie, Elvira, Julián, Jacky, Víctor, Calie, Nana, Luis Raúl, Vera, Héctor, Awymarie, Uriyoán y más… y otros de quienes he perdido la estela pero que recuerdo con igual ilusión: Bonnie, Vanessa, Jessica, Carla, Carlos Mallén, Steve… A ellos, desde la nostalgia, les dedico con cariño estas líneas, soñando como Ulises con regresar algún día a este añorado lugar privilegiado en el ocaso de mi memoria.

TeatroTaller 20 Year Anniversary

Casey Minella

My name is Casey Minella, and I have been a proud Teatrotaller member for two years and will be for years to come. I remember the first day I was asked to work on a small production with Teatrotaller. The president at the time was my first introduction into theatre at Cornell and invited me to . He exuded a confidence in me that I was thrown off by, but I now realize it is the "TT way." Teatrotaller has been giving freedom to students to express themselves for 20 long years because we believe that everyone has a unique skill to offer.

My involvement with Teatrotaller started as a light designer. Subsequently I stage managed for a very talented director and TT alum, Jimmy Noriega, who inspired me to direct some of my own plays. I then directed a play by Jose Casas called 14. I was elected Treasurer of TT and was able to bring the Casas, as well as Carlos Morton and Caridad Svich to speak and discuss their plays. As president I hope to continue the legacy of high quality performances and events.

For twenty long years Teatrotaller has made an impact not only on its members, but also its audiences. Our practices and performances strive to assert acceptance. I remember a production of Latins Anonomous vividly. The audience was set around the performance space. We all introduced ourselves before the performance like a real "LA" meeting. The performance was phenomenal, opening up hard topics productively through monologues based on vastly complicated experiences. During the discussion afterwards with the audience it was all they could do from creating their own monologues on the spot. We all laughed together. We all cried together. It was one of the most moving experiences I have had thus far, and I will never forget it. I will always be grateful for Teatrotaller to be able to provide such a wonderfully intimate experience with the community.

During my time in Teatrotaller I have been a part of all sides of production. The intricacies of each job teach a discipline, adaptability, and productivity like no other. I have learned a great deal. I have always been passionate about theatre, and with our open and welcoming group, members have the freedom to guide where their projects go and gain valuable hands on experience. I have seen Teatrotaller take members to Peru, Ecuador, and this year we will be going to perform at UNESCO's World Festival for Theatre Schools in Bucharest, Romania.

Teatrotaller provides a valuable space for all people, and I am honored to carry on that tradition.

Teatrotaller: Art, Activism, and Community through Theatre

Jimmy A. Noriega

The work being produced and created by Teatrotaller develops out of a rich genealogy of politically charged and culturally influenced Latina/o theatre in the United States. The most influential and important of these groups, of course, is El Teatro Campesino, founded by Luis Valdez in 1965. El Teatro Campesino, which in its beginning worked alongside Cesár Chavez and the United Farmworkers, used its theatre as a means of educating and activating its migrant and farmworker audiences. The early actos of El Teatro Campesino were the beginning of the Chicana/o Theatre Movement in the U.S. and have since inspired countless Latina/o playwrights, directors, performers, and scholars.

It should come as no surprise that some of the earliest and most important Chicana/o activist organizations involved young Chicana/os: the Brown Berets first organized in 1967 and El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA) was founded in 1969. Their presence across high school, college, and university campuses brought countless students to the cause. These young activists sought to create change using their bodies and voices as vehicles for their social agendas; politically charged theatre students saw their art as another tool for promoting political awareness and challenging the structures that oppressed their families and culture. In fact, in 1964, Valdez, while a drama student, had his first play produced at San Jose College. The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa became "the first Chicano play to be produced in this generation" (Huerta 9). It would subsequently become one of the foundational play texts of Latina/o theatre history, while Valdez would become nothing less than legendary.

In his "Notes on Chicano Theare," written in 1970, Valdez envisioned a thriving theatre where Latina/o artists and audiences could come together to stage the lives of la raza. His call to action stated, "If the raza will not come to the theatre, then the theatre must go to the raza," and concluded with, "We challenge Chicanos to become involved in the art, the life style, the political and religious act of doing teatro" (10). The response to this new theatre manifested itself in communities and cultural organizations across the Southwest, including college campuses. In 1970, El Teatro Espiritú de Aztlán was started at California State University, Fullerton. In 1971, Teatro de la Esperanza (previously Teatro Mecha), one of the most important and influential teatros of the Chicana/o Theatre Movement, was formed at the University of California, Santa Barbara, under the leadership of Jorge Huerta. The first all-female Chicana theatre collective, Teatro de las Chicanas, was founded at San Diego State University in 1971. These student groups, like many others, labored to create new works that reflected the social and political lives of their communities. It is important to note that though these teatros began in the university setting, they did not remain there: they continued to produce and create work once the students graduated and some transformed into new teatros.

Jorge Huerta, writing about the history of Chicana/o theatre in the United States, calls it a "necessary theatre" (5). His 1989 anthology of the same name, Necessary Theater: Six Plays about the Chicano Experience, includes two scripts from the famed Teatro de la Esperanza. These two plays, Guadalupe (1974) and La víctima (1976), are not only the group's most famous plays, but are also landmarks of Chicana/o theatrical history. As such, it was vital that these texts be documented and disseminated. Subsequent publications have also sought to unearth the work of teatros and provide an archive of their activities. More recently, Teatro Chicana: A Collective Memoire and Selected Plays, was published in 2008. It contained both memoirs written by group members and some of their theatrical texts. Yolanda Broyles-González, in her Foreword to the collection, calls it, "the single most powerful Chicana women's collective document" (ix). Countless other studies on Latina/o theatre and numerous anthologies of plays have been published in an attempt to account for the massive cultural production of Latina/o and Latin American theatre artists in the United States. It is my hope that this collection about Teatrotaller will help contribute to this growth of knowledge.

I begin my reflection about Teatrotaller with this earlier history because it is important to understand that the act of forming a Latina/o theatre troupe

on a university campus stems from a larger theatrical history, one that developed out of a common struggle for Latina/o rights and now carries with it a responsibility to the community. Teatrotaller, like the groundbreaking teatros before it, was formed as an independent theatre group, run by students and propelled by a political and progressive agenda. Founded in 1993, under the supervision of Debra Castillo, Teatrotaller emerged from the "idea of preserving and promoting Spanish, Latin American and Latino cultures through theater." The fact that Teatrotaller has continued its work for twenty years is no small achievement. Members of the collective, past and present, must be commended for their labor in making this history possible.

Teatrotaller strives to produce quality plays in Spanish and Spanglish, making it one of the few theatre groups in the U.S. that dedicates itself entirely to the production of Spanish language and Latina/o theatre. Equally influenced by Latin American theatre artists and collectives, including Augusto Boal, Enrique Buenaventura, Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani, Teatro la Candelaria, and Teatro Escambray, Teatrotaller also develops from the rich tradition and genealogy of collective theatre and creation located across the Americas. Responding to the lack of theatre by and about Latina/os in the Ithaca area, the group boasts a loyal theatre-going audience that makes it possible for the troupe to perform before sold-out houses. Teatrotaller stages both contemporary and classic plays from across the Americas, as well as Spain. It also serves as a venue for new Latin American and Latina/o works, staging international premieres by leading dramatists. Teatrotaller's international reputation has allows it to develop working relationships with award-winning playwrights from Latin America and the U.S.

The work of Teatrotaller can be understood as a combination of art, activism, and community-building. Teatrotaller serves an artistic role in the community, staging shows that otherwise would not be produced in more traditional spaces across campus and the Ithaca community. It provides a space and opportunity for Latina/o students to portray characters that speak to their own identities, histories, and experiences. It allows those interested in theatre an arena and program in which to learn, experiment, create, and grow. Over the years, Teatrotaller has been a training ground for artists that have gone on to develop their own careers in the theatre. Additionally, the group's open-door policy—which allows anyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, or background to participate—allows individuals eager to learn about Latin American and Latina/o cultures a space for growth and discovery, in addition to a place to learn and practice Spanish. Teatrotaller brings an international and diverse theatre history to the Ithaca area. It fulfills a vital role in the community, creating a space where audiences and performers can come together to watch, listen to, and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the Latina/o Americas.

Since this book is a collection of testimonies, I will offer my own memories of my involvement with Teatrotaller as a small piece of its history. I came to Cornell in 2005 from a theatre background. As an undergraduate at Missouri Southern State University, I majored in Theatre, English, and Spanish, merging these three areas into preparation for what I hoped would become a life in the theatre. In Missouri, I directed three main stage productions for the Theatre Department: Jean-Paul Sartre's No Exit, The Diary of Anne Frank, and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs: The Musical. It wasn't until I arrived at Cornell, however, that I began to direct in Spanish and understand the critical role that theatre could play in creating social change. As a graduate student in the Department of Theatre, Film, & Dance, from 2005-2011, I immersed myself in the study of theatre history and criticism, but it was my involvement in Teatrotaller that cemented my interests in Latina/o and Latin American theatre. Whether it was fate or coincidence, I will always be grateful for the chance meeting that I had with another student during orientation. After hearing that I had directed plays in college, he told me of a theatre group called Teatrotaller and urged me to attend the first meeting. Eager to make new friends and learn more about the different theatre opportunities on campus, I attended, but expected nothing more than to sit quietly and listen. By the end of the hour, however, I was selected as the director of that semester's production. Little did I know at that time that this would be the beginning of a long relationship with Teatrotaller.

During my six years at Cornell, I directed ten shows: eight were Teatrotaller productions and two were staged in collaboration with the Department of Theatre, Film, & Dance for the Black Box Series (Dog Lady in 2006 and Beautiful Señoritas in 2009). These two shows, which opened the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts to the Latina/o community, sold out performances and received standing ovations. The fact that many Latina/o students

were filling the seats and venturing to the Schwartz Center for the first time demonstrates that Teatrotaller fills a void in the artistic community. It was also at this time that I began teaching a series of Freshmen Writing Seminars on campus on Latina/o and Latin American theatre. The opportunity to combine my research with production work and teaching in the classroom helped me to develop my own set of skills that would become integral to my formation as a Latina/o theatre scholar and director. The fact that Teatrotaller could become the laboratory for my own work and exploration proved vital in my theatrical training.

Teatrotaller, however, offered more than just practical skills and a venue for experimentation. Over the years I developed some of my most important friendships and relationships with people that I worked with in the group: Stephanie Brosig, Marcela Fernandez, Ana Goya Arce, Frank Lopez, Casey Minella, Nathalie Nicod, Carolina Osorio-Gil, Alejandra Ruiz, Jorge Silva, Sofia Sotiropoulou, and Alexander Symes, to name a few. Undoubtedly, this list does not include everyone and for that I apologize. Most importantly, the friendship that I have developed with Debra Castillo, working side-by-side with her on so many projects, is one of my most cherished and valued relationships. Her mentorship and trust in me is without a doubt one of the reasons that I have been able to create for myself a life in the theatre. The fact that we continue to collaborate speaks volumes to the work that we have produced and will continue to produce in the future. I know that I am not the only one who developed these bonds and I am confident in saying that the network of Teatrotaller alumni is a strong one.

Three of my productions traveled and were featured as key performances at festivals, conferences, and theatres in the U.S., Israel, and Ecuador. In fall 2008, I worked with Nora Glickman on the development of a new play, Preludes, which is about three female musicians in 1940s Argentina. We also worked on a new monodrama, Lot's Wife, which I chose to stage along with two of her existing pieces: Mireille and Fanny. We billed these monologues under the title With Mothers Like These. Both Preludes and With Mothers Like These were selected by special invitation to be presented at the Thespis Jerusalem International Festival for the Performers of Tomorrow, which took place from November 23-26, 2008. In 2009, I directed the U.S. debut of Desiertos, by Hugo Alfredo Hinojosa Díaz. In addition to the Cornell performances, we were invited to present the play as the keynote performance for the Mid-American Conference on Hispanic Literature at the University of Kansas on November 7, 2009. A month later, on December 7, we presented the play at the historic Pregones Theater in New York City.

My final play for Teatrotaller was Mujeres de Ciudad Juárez, by Cristina Michaus, and it represents a culmination of my time at Cornell. Not only did the play stem directly from my dissertation research, but it was also the first Teatrotaller production to be performed on one of the main stages of the Schwartz Center. I was so moved by the text when I first read it that I could not imagine directing any other play. My belief that theatre can create change and open up space for necessary dialogue and reflection meant I had to direct the play before I left, even if it meant working on a production that would be emotionally challenging and draining for me and the actresses. The play, which is about the murder of women and girls along the U.S.-Mexico border, gives voice to these countless victims of misogyny and impunity and calls for a collective action and awareness. Out of the dozens of scripts that I could choose from, I chose a Spanish text to honor and speak for the women. In the staging, I chose to name as many of the women as possible, using the actresses, recordings, and projection screens to create this list of names. The public naming of these women, for me, was one of the most powerful moments of theatre I have created, not because of the staging, but because perhaps for the first time these names would be heard out loud and together. The production was selected for presentation at an international theatre festival in Quito, Ecuador: El V Encuentro de Maestros y Escuelas de Teatro. Debra Castillo and I traveled with the four actresses—Marcela Fernández, Ana Goya Arce, Paige Feldman, and Ana Florencia Lopezulloa—to Ecuador for two weeks and we presented the play before an international audience on March 29, 2011.

In addition to these plays, over the years I also directed Después de la lluvia (fall 2005), Watsonville: Someplace not Here (spring 2006), La mujer que cayó del cielo (fall 2008), and References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot (fall 2010). In spring 2007, I organized a one-act Latina/o theatre festival, which in addition to performances by Teatrotaller, featured the work of guests from Queens College, Ithaca College, and Hobart and William Smith Colleges. My work with the group has also consisted in theatre education and training. As I look over the programs from the shows that I worked on, I am surprised

to see that I directed over 50 actresses and actors in my productions, several of them working with me on multiple shows. When I tally the number of technical crew and designers involved in these productions, I count over a hundred additional individuals. These numbers, which only represent the ten productions that I directed, indicate that over the past twenty years, Teatrotaller has been supported by and comprised of hundreds of individuals who have worked on productions, possibly even more than a thousand. These numbers are impressive indeed!

In what follows, as a way of documenting my own contributions to this group, and of capturing a Teatrotaller history that ranges from 2005 to 2011, are my "Director's Notes" from the ten productions that I directed. They provide not just a glimpse into my own reasons for selecting these plays, but also capture the political nature and consciousness behind the group. Teatrotaller archives also include video recordings of our productions, which offer future possibilities for the study of this teatros important contribution to Latina/o and Latin American theatre history. I am humbled and grateful to have been a part of Teatrotaller for so many years and I look forward to continued partnership and engagement with this important and necessary theatre group. I want to thank everyone that I have worked with in Teatrotaller and hope that the group continues to grow and create art, activism, and community through its theatre.

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Director's Note: Después de la lluvia
Fall 2005

I was not exactly sure what I was looking for when I first set out to find a play to direct for Teatrotaller. The guidelines were simple: it had to be a play written in Spanish, it had to be a full-length production, and it had to be performed this semester. Everything else was left entirely up to me. So with suggestions from others in the group, I began reading several plays and my reactions were all the same: I wanted more.

Throughout the process I kept coming back to Sergi Belbel's Después de la lluvia. The script, although complex and challenging, intrigued me. Perhaps it was the unique situation that Belbel created for his characters: the play is set in a city that has been draught-stricken for more than two years, on the rooftop of an office building where smoking is prohibited. In order to escape the brutal world of their mundane lives, eight men and women meet in secrecy on the rooftop of this office building to smoke, and along the way they reveal their innermost secrets and desires. By the end of the play, however, everything changes and the action culminates in a climactic release of energy and emotion.

So, it seemed to me this play contained that "more" I had been looking for. After discussing it with the members of Teatrotaller, and by my fifth reading of the text, I knew that I had no other option but to direct this play.

Winner of the 1999 Molière Award for Best Comedy (the French equivalent

of the Tony), the play is a mixture of humor, tragedy, and every other emotion that is part of the human spectrum. Después de la lluvia is a reflection of man in an alienating and oppressive corporate world—one where business affairs and human desires undergo a battle for the human soul. Dealing with such issues as nicotine addiction, corporate ambition and greed, gender discrimination, marriage and infidelity, infertility, sexual desire, gossip, and love, the inhabitants of this complex and cruel world undergo a journey of self-discovery that ultimately leads to an awareness of what it means to be alive. With dry hearts and emotions, these people undergo a transformation that can only be brought on by the liberating and cleansing waters of the desperately needed rain.

With that said, I am hoping that the play that intrigued me for so long will intrigue you, the audience, as well. On behalf of all those involved in this production, I would like to thank you for supporting Teatrotaller.

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Director's Note: Watsonville: Someplace Not Here
Spring 2006

I read Watsonville: Someplace Not Here on my flight back home this Christmas. I had just finished directing my first show at Cornell, and although I was beginning my vacation, I was looking forward to my second production with Teatrotaller. I was only a few pages into Cherríe Moraga's script when I knew that I wanted to direct this play. So after coming back to Cornell, I met with my colleagues and we immediately began work on this production.

Thinking about the factors that drew me to Watsonville forces me to reflect on my own life. You see, I grew up in Douglas, Arizona, a small town on the U.S.-Mexico border. Living in a community where the culture is Mexican but the system (school/government) is "American" makes one very aware of the differences that exist in social class and status (something that is too easily indicated by being labeled "legal" or "illegal"). It wasn't until I moved to Missouri, for college, that I became aware of what it meant to be a minority in the United States. All too quickly I became accustomed to prejudice, labels, and stereotypes. It was in my undergraduate years that I began to form a new identity—one that recognized and embraced both parts of my being. As a Mexican-American I made it my goal to help others who found themselves

in similar situations. Working for the Missouri Migrant Education Program, I helped migrant workers find both medical and educational help for their children. And, in what was perhaps my most fulfilling job, I worked as a reading tutor for Purdy Elementary School, where I worked one-on-one with eight Mexican children who had recently immigrated to the United States. Learning and about and understanding the situation of the people who I came into contact with during those years, as well as my own family's history, gave me the insight needed to work on this production.

What surprised all of us as we worked on Watsonville was the growing similarity between the events of the play and the ones currently playing out in Washington, D.C. Illegal immigration, mostly by Mexican workers, is a key concern to a large majority in this country and is too often fueled by fear and misunderstanding. During the weeks of rehearsals, we read about and discussed what was happening to the Latina/o community throughout the U.S.: the Mexican government criticized the U.S. Congress for approving an immigration bill that would tighten border controls and make it harder for undocumented immigrants to get jobs; the House of Representatives voted in favor of measures that would enlist military and local law enforcement to help stop illegal entry into the U.S.; the building of a fence across 700 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border was authorized; and measures were set in place to make illegally crossing the border a felony. As the debate around immigration grew and as fierce activism from Latina/o groups intensified, we heard of immigration supporters protesting restrictions viewed as fundamentally un-American. We were proud to hear about the student walkouts, marches, and rallies that took place in California, Texas, Arizona, Nevada, and other states.

Although I was unable to join my fellow protesters along my home—the borderland—I am proud to present a play that challenges inequality and prejudice, and speaks to the power of determination, faith, love, and community. As I write this, I am reminded of a line from the play: "Un pedacito de papel no puede separar un pueblo." ("A little piece of paper cannot separate a community.") It gives me hope to know that this is true. Whether it is a physical barrier like a fence, an obstacle created by laws, or a social block created by fear, it is community and solidarity that allow people to maintain their dignity as they fight for a future without oppression. This play is written about the past, speaks about the present, and works to affect the future. It is my hope that this production of Watsonville will help promote conversation across campus (and, who knows, may perhaps even help to prompt some change).

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Director's Note: Dog Lady
Fall 2006

Dog Lady is a comedy guaranteed to please. The play, which first premiered in 1980, is situated firmly in the Latina/o community and culture and is a social commentary on the restrictions placed on Latina women in the United States. Mixing Mexican humor with a uniquely Mexican-American experience, the play offers a comedic view of life in the barrio. Offering a lighter analysis on the current state of Latina/os in our society, Dog Lady contributes to the dialogue concerning immigration and cultural awareness in the United States today.

Rosalinda, a teenager living in Los Angeles, is training for "Our Lady of a Thousand Sorrows Marathon." With a trip to Rome as the grand prize, the entire barrio is supporting her. In particular, her neighbor, a curandera (Mexican faith healer) named Luisa Ruiz, is determined to help her, using

magic to give Rosalinda the speed and spirit of a dog. This magical intervention sparks a series of chaotic and comic events. Believing she is a dog, Rosalinda wreaks havoc on her neighbors by running around the barrio, followed by a pack of excited dogs. By the end of the play, relationships are changed and the characters discover a new way of looking at the world.

I chose to direct Dog Lady for four main reasons: 1) it reflects many of the personalities and attitudes that I grew up with along the U.S.-Mexican border, 2) it makes a commentary on many of the important issues facing the U.S. Latina/o population, including traditional social expectations, the role of religion, the importance of community and family, and the differences that exist between generations because of immigration, 3) it portrays Latinas as strong and independent women who are in control of their own destinies, and 4) the script is filled with so much comedy that anyone, no matter the age or background, will want to laugh out loud and have fun while watching this play.

The directing and acting are influenced by the comic styles and techniques of El Chavo del Ocho, the famed and hilarious Mexican television program, which at its peak was the most popular show in Mexico. Throughout the play, lively music, from the 1970s-2000s, adds to the pacing and rhythm. In Dog Lady, nothing is sacred and no one is safe from the mayhem that will erupt on the stage. We ask you to sit back and get ready to laugh as you watch Milcha Sanchez-Scott's award-winning play!

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Director's Note: La mujer que cayó del cielo
Fall 2008

In 1982, a dark-skinned woman was found rummaging for food in trash-cans in the streets of Kansas City. She was dressed in several colorful skirts and spoke a language that no one understood. Police and doctors mistook her behavior and demeanor as signs of mental illness. Labeled insane by those who saw captivity as the solution to the mystery that surrounded her, she was taken to a state mental institution, where she remained locked away for twelve years. Subjected to medical experimentation disguised as treatment, she was given an overwhelming number and variety of drugs and electroshock therapy. Isolation, fear, and humiliation became her way of life.

Unfortunately, La mujer que cayó del cielo, by Mexican dramatist Victor Hugo Rascón Banda, is based on a true story. Rita, a Tarahumara Indian from the northern part of Mexico, is the victim of this institutional and legal drama. Although she speaks a few words of Spanish, it is in her native language, Rarámuri, that she communicates her fears and dreams. For Rita, in 1982 Kansas, there wasn't much, if any, understanding or awareness of the type of cultural barriers and misunderstandings that exist between U.S., Latina/o, Latin American, and native cultures. Through this script, the playwright seems to be saying that not much has changed.

La mujer que cayó del cielo is written in English, Spanish, and Rarámuri as a way of alienating the audience and creating a critique of the hierarchical structures that define and categorize languages and cultures. In his note to the play, the author asks that no translations be provided: "Sólo así se puede hacer sentir al público el conflicto y la tortura por la incominicación." The audience becomes a part of this miscommunication as they watch and, more importantly, listen to they play. Like the doctors who monitor and control Rita, the audience will see her physically, but they will not be able to understand her: some may have sympathy, some might find her curious or interesting, and others may just get frustrated by her incomprehensible monologues. From her unrecognizable sounds, the public will make its own judgments. For audience members, different languages will be accessible at different times: many will understand the English and Spanish, while others may only understand one language. What is important to note, however, is that at no point in the performance will there be an audience member who fully understands every sound uttered on the stage. Like Rita, you, the spectators, are being placed in a position where you can only sit and watch, unable to understand all that is happening around you.

As a cast, we all navigated the difficult territories of translation and mis-translation. Actors and actresses have shared scenes where not everyone was understanding the words being spoken at rehearsals. At times we felt frustrated and at others we played along as if the words were a part of an intricate game. All the while, we reminded ourselves of the truth of this story and of the great importance of retelling the events in a public forum. This play is important and offers a warning against state-sponsored violence through identification and categorization. Who knows how many more Ritas there have been and there will continue to be?

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Director's Note: With Mothers Like These and Preludes

(for the Thespis Jerusalem International Festival for the Performers of Tomorrow)

Fall 2008

It has been my great pleasure to work with Teatrotaller at Cornell University for the past four years. Under the leadership of Debra Castillo, Teatrotaller gives a much needed and important voice to the Latina/o community of the campus and surrounding area. Working not only to train young artists and produce quality shows, the members of this student-run organization also strive to promote cultural understanding and enhance diversity through its productions.

During my years with Teatrotaller I have directed several shows, starting my first year with Después de la Lluvia (fall 2005) and Watsonville: Some-place Not Here (spring 2006). From that moment, I have been involved in the organization, happy with its success and growth. In that time I have also directed plays in collaboration with other organizations across campus to reach

a wider audience: Dog Lady was produced in fall 2006 in collaboration with the Department of Theatre, Film & Dance, and Psst… I Have Something to Tell You, Mi Amor was produced in fall 2007 with the Minority, Indigenous and Third World Studies Program (and with guest playwright Ana Castillo). This past week, I had the pleasure of once again working with Teatrotaller when I directed La Mujer Que Cayó del Cielo.

In November 2006, Debra Castillo and I worked to organize a one-act Latino theatre festival at Cornell, and it was at this festival, Las Américas, that I first met Nora Glickman. It is my pleasure to once again work with Nora, directing two of her previously produced monologues, and presenting for the very first time on the stage her two newest works: the monodrama Lot's Wife and the play Preludes.

Nora Glickman's monodramas are collected in this production under the title With Mothers Like These. The monologues are the stories of women who were thrust into difficult situations by their children, by the men in their life, and at times by history itself. These mothers, alone on the stage, are left with their pasts and their disappointments as they speak their minds for the first time. Coming to terms with the roles they were cast into as women, the mothers of the stage demand attention and understanding as they tell their own versions of their stories.

Preludes is about the friendship of three women who live in Bahía, Argentina in the 1930s. They are classical musicians with a passion for life and they express themselves through their music. Full of hopes and dreams, these women are bound by their circumstances—motherhood, youth, and provincial life—and yearn to break free from their responsibilities. As one of the characters exclaims: "What I want to know is, what are we doing, playing here, in this forgotten town, in this godforsaken continent?" Unable to escape and follow their desires like their male counterparts, these women find refuge in Chopin, and in their friendship, as they struggle to make dreams come true and face what challenges lie ahead.

I am pleased to work with five talented and lovely ladies as we present these works that offer the feminist perspective and voice into the theatre. I would like to thank Stephanie Cajina for her commitment and dedication as I direct her in our seventh production together. I would also like to congratulate Kayley Bebber and Alejandra Ruiz of Cornell University and Charlotte Colón and Katya Soll of Syracuse University. I am very happy that together we are making our, and Teatrotaller's, theatrical debut in Israel.

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Director's Note: Beautiful Señoritas
Spring 2009

The process of selecting a script to direct is always a difficult task. When I directed Milcha Sanchez-Scott's Dog Lady for the Schwartz Center's Black Box Series in September 2006, I noted that I chose the play because it reflected many of the personalities and attitudes that I grew up with on the Arizona-Mexico border. I also said that the play made an important commentary on many of the social issues facing the U.S. Latina/o population today. Well, these

issues have not changed and my reasons for directing Latina/o plays have not changed either. Beautiful Señoritas makes an important commentary on the stereotypes placed on Latina women, both inside and outside of the Latina/o culture. The play speaks to traditional social expectations, the role of religion in women's lives, the challenges facing immigrant communities, sex, labor, and poverty. Most importantly, of course, the play examines gender roles and stereotypes, portraying Latina women as strong and independent. Beautiful Señoritas does this and more, and it accomplishes all of it with a good mix of Latina/o humor and spice.

Dolores Prida wrote Beautiful Señoritas in 1976 after attending an international theatre festival in Caracas, Venezuela. After noting that "not a single one of the plays took up issues then being aired by the feminist movement," Prida returned to the U.S. determined to write a play about the Latina experience. Beautiful Señoritas was staged in New York City in 1977 at the DUO Theatre. Since then it has become an international hit and Prida a pioneer and symbol of U.S.-Latina theatre.

I have had the fortune of teaching Beautiful Señoritas in two of my courses at Cornell, and both times the students voted it one of their favorite scripts of the semester. Prida's combination of humor and popular culture make it a play that people enjoy and want to discuss. Often in class discussions students would comment on the play's continuing relevance to women today. Many of the women in class would also note, however, that some of the references made the play seem outdated and foreign, and that an update of the play would show that Latinas still face the same issues thirty years later. In directing this play, I chose to update a few of the references in the script, hoping that this would make it more accessible and more immediate to the college audience. For inspiration, I played around with the theatricality of the ever-popular Latin American beauty pageant, as well as the style of the famed Sabado Gigante, the oldest American TV program in Spanish still running today. The television show is an eclectic mix of variety and game show, featuring guest stars, comic skits, and musical performances. If you are not familiar with the style, don't worry, the cast and I have tried very hard to make its mass appeal work its way from the households of Latin America to the Schwartz Black Box. In this play, Latinas take center stage, and they do it with strength, a lot of fun, and a desire to be respected and understood.

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Director's Note: Desiertos
Fall 2009

Debra Castillo and I first read Desiertos in the spring of 2008 and immediately we both knew it was a play that needed to be staged. Intrigued by the playwright's style and moved by the stories of the individuals presented, we were excited by the idea of Teatrotaller presenting this play. With the debate on illegal immigration still growing and with violence against Latina/o bodies increasing along the U.S.-Mexico border, this play offers a necessary counter-narrative to the anti-immigration perspective.

Growing up in Douglas, AZ, immigration and the stories of those who cross illegally into the U.S. have always been a part of my life. My family, friends, and classmates were all entangled in the controversy of the border, and at that time in my life it seemed like nothing out of the ordinary. It wasn't until I moved away from the border that I began to develop a more informed picture of what it actually means to be a border crosser. Now, with friends across the U.S. who live day-to-day in fear of deportation, and with others

who fight everyday against abuse and inhumane legislation, I offer this play as my contribution to the fight against social injustice. With respect for every individual's viewpoint on illegal immigration, I hope that at the very least we can all agree that human life is sacred, regardless of immigrant status.

Within the immigration debate, undocumented immigrants are often stripped of a human identity and as victims of violence become unrecognizable—in fact, alien—to the U.S. population. Reduced to statistics, the bodies of Latin Americans who die crossing the border into the United States become forgotten in the fight against illegal immigration. While the debates surrounding the nation—national identity, national borders, national security—continue to escalate, the response by artists to U.S. immigration policy has been the creation of a body of work among Latin American and Latina/o theatre artists that gives voice to the too often ignored immigrant perspective. These plays work in dialogue with those activists seeking reform as a way of preventing violence and death. These productions ask the audience to identify with the immigrant subjects—their search to find stable and reliable work in order to provide for their families, their struggle to retain a cultural identity in the face of assimilation, their dreams for a new home and better future, and their need to feel safe from deportation and discrimination. By staging the stories of the forgotten—the alien, illegal, and undocumented—it is my hope that plays like Desiertos continue to offer the necessary voice and perspective of those who suffer violence in the search of a better quality of life.

I am honored to have the playwright, Hugo Alfredo Hinojosa Díaz, here with us at Cornell and thank him for his support of our theatre group. I am also thankful to the University of Kansas and to Pregones Theater in NYC, who have invited us to stage our play in their theatres in the upcoming weeks. I would like to dedicate this show to my family for always being there for me and for all their support. I also dedicate this show to the individuals I know who live day-to-day as undocumented immigrants in order to support their families, as well as to those who continue to work to pass the DREAM Act. On behalf of all those involved in this production, I would like to thank you for supporting Teatrotaller.

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Director's Note: References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot
Fall 2010

José Rivera attracted much attention when he became the first Puerto Rican screenwriter to be nominated for an Academy Award for his work on the 2004 film The Motorcycle Diaries. A hit across college campuses and a favorite among students interested in Latin American and Latina/o Studies, the Hollywood blockbuster based on the memoir of Ernesto "Che" Guevara is only one of many achievements by this talented writer. Author of more than two dozen plays, he won his first OBIE Award for Playwriting in 1993 for Marisol. In 2001, he won his second OBIE for References to Salvador Make Me Hot. His theatrical work is known for its vivid and poetic language and use of magical realism. His plays are charged with beautiful imagery and a masterful blend of strong characters with even stronger emotions, making his texts a delight for directors, actors, designers, and audiences. When we first read References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot there was no doubt in anyone's mind that this

was our next play. In the first reading, we laughed, cried, and were moved at the core by this story of love and loss.

Written in 2000, References is set in Barstow, CA, in the early 1990s. Benito and Gabriela have been married for eleven years, but at this moment in their lives they couldn't feel any further apart. Benito has just returned from Iraq and is haunted by the acts that he was forced to commit while serving in the first Gulf War. Meanwhile, Gabriela has waited for him to return. Her fears and loneliness have left her in a state of emptiness and confusion: she imagines that the cacti are slowly invading her yard and she carries on conversations with her cat. Both Benito and Gabriela have scars that cannot easily be healed. Throughout the play, they struggle to tell their individual stories and recapture their love by the time the first night of their reunion comes to an end. Equally charged and powerful is their sexual passion and energy. As the two exhaust emotion and memory, they must come to terms with the fact that each has changed during their separation.

A coyote and cat serve as counterparts to the two lovers, shedding a comedic and animalistic viewpoint onto the situation. Sex between these wild animals—raw and forbidden—allows them to experience the conflicting and dangerous territories of love and life. Add into this mix a horny teenager who lives next door and a lustful moon in a mariachi outfit, both with their eyes set on Gabriela, and the night is set for adventure, romance, and a lot of fighting and misunderstanding. By the end of the play, ask yourself: What was real? What was imagined? And is there really any difference between the two?

The cast, crew, and I have truly enjoyed working on this wonderful and magical play. We hope that you enjoy References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot as much as we have, and as always, we thank you for supporting Teatrotaller!

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Director's Note: Mujeres de Ciudad Juárez
Spring 2011

Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua lies on the U.S.-Mexico border just south of El Paso, Texas. Home to hundreds of factories, the city represents the oppressive and exploitative side of neoliberal reform and free market trade. Often cited as the most dangerous city in the world, Juárez continues to attract impoverished individuals in search of work in the cities many maquiladoras—despite the known dangers—including indigenous people and women of all ages.

Since 1993, over a thousand women have been brutally raped, tortured, and murdered in Ciudad Juárez and the surrounding areas. The murderers have dismembered, burned, and left these women's bodies unmarked in the desert in an attempt to evade police and ensure that the victims cannot be identified. These crimes remain unsolved and the murders continue. Many estimate several thousand more women—as many as 5,000—have been killed in and around the city of Juárez over the past eighteen years. Official government tallies

estimate the numbers to be far below those provided by human rights activists.

Mujeres de Ciudad Juárez, by Mexican actress and playwright Cristina Michaus, was originally written for one actress, but represents the countless voices of those who can no longer speak. In her introduction to the play, Michaus explains: "It's important to understand that this play gives voice to women and girls who are more than muertas ("the dead") of Juarez; they are, in fact, the MURDERED of JUAREZ, since none of them ever died of illness. Not to understand this subtlety constitutes a grave error politically, artistically, and historically. Those that insist on speaking of these women as muertas offend the memories of the victims. These women are martyrs of the factory system, anonymous heroines that lost the battle while working to provide for their households."

Mujeres de Ciudad Juarez uses the theatre as a space to examine, reflect on, and speak about the femicides taking place in the industrial city. The play offers a voice and a space for the countless female victims whose murders have been reduced to figures and a gross display of injustice. The play is not just poignant and heartbreaking; it is call for action. Showing multiple female perspectives of life in Juárez—from mothers and daughters, to factory workers and prostitutes—the play speaks out against all forms of violence against the female body and psyche. The play weaves emotionally between horror and heartbreak, fragility and vulgarity, and anger and activism. In our staging of this show, four actresses take on the roles of the women, their families, and the officials investigating the murders—but the story cannot end there. As the playwright says in the script, "We are all at fault. We are all accomplices." We urge you to leave the theatre and do your own research into what is happening in Juárez.

The actresses and I have been humbled and horrified by our research into the atrocities taking place south of our border. It is our sincerest hope that the staging of this play helps bring awareness and a needed dialogue about the injustices taking place in Ciudad Juárez. In the next week, we will be performing this play in Quito, Ecuador, where we have been invited to share this powerful story at an international theatre festival. We hope that the production's message moves between borders and becomes part of a larger transnational dialogue about women's rights, government accountability, and justice.

Teatrotaller

Carolina Osorio Gil

I joined Teatrotaller the first semester of my freshman year in 1998. I was very active in theater in high school, and, having attended a very Anglo-American homogenous school, I was really excited to meet more Latino students. Teatrotaller seemed like a perfect fit for me. I started off as a costume designer, because I didn't get cast in the show that semester, but I would soon be cast in many of Teatrotaller's plays. My debut role was as the funny old lady Serafina in Te Juro Juana Que Tengo Ganas. Teatrotaller has given me the opportunity to develop myself as an actress and as a director as well.

I have participated in one way or another with more Teatrotaller productions than I can remember. One of my most memorable acting experiences was playing the role of Rita in La Mujer Que Callo del Cielo, which we took on the road to Chiapas, Mexico. The role was a challenge itself because Rita was a woman from the Tarahumara tribe of Northern Mexico, and she didn't speak Spanish - she spoke Raramuri, which meant that I had to learn half my lines phonetically through rote memorization. However, the greatest challenge came when I had to present excerpts from the play to an audience in Chiapas which included members of several Mayan communities. Representing an indigenous character to an indigenous audience was a challenge, but the audience members ended up really loving it! It was total relief, but also made an incredible impact on me as an actor.

These days, I continue to be involved with Teatrotaller as a community member. I am glad to meet the students each year, and enjoy helping them make connections with the downtown Ithaca community. Teatrotaller is known for creating quality theater in this community and across the globe, and I am proud to be a part of it.

Ella and He

Saúl Mercado

Objects ground our memories and orient our perspectives. As a symbolizing species, we anoint what we sense and much out of the grasp of our taste or touch with significance—this basic act is the substance of what makes us human. A crystal in the hands of a Mayan shaman is much more than simply a mineral, but a portal to the transcendent.

What about the significance of a toothbrush? The question may seem absurd, but for me a toothbrush isn't simply an ordinary hygienic implement. My first foray into theater—setting aside my role as an "islander" in my high school's production of South Pacific—was as "Él" in Teatrotaller's production of El cepillo de dientes by the Chilean playwright Jorge Díaz. The work is an absurdist comedy that satirizes a loveless bourgeois marriage. The brilliance and attraction of the play is not only its sheer theatrics—the couple does everything from enact a murder to sing TV commercial jingles—but its sheer language play.

In honor of the meaningful role Teatrotaller played in forming who I am today, here's a small scene I wrote honoring Díaz's El cepillo de dientes.

Act I, Scene 1

Early morning in a hyper-modern apartment. He, freshly showered, hair lacquered, wears a resplendent red velvet robe as he sits on the balcony. He's stare moves between a newspaper and leafy boulevard below. He's peace is disturbed by Ella's movement inside the home. Ella emerges onto the balcony in a simple white nightgown, her hair completely unkempt; a cigarette dangles at her lips.

Ella (comically): ¡Pero bueno! … ¿Qué haces levantao tan te'prano? ¿Tú 'ta loco o qué?

He (under his breath): Well, it was a good morning until now.

Ella (smiling broadly): ¿Qué tu diji'te?

He: Nothing, nothing … good morning, did you sleep well?

Ella (Laughing): ¡Ay, tú roncando como un perro, ¿quién va dormi' bien en e'te bohío? ¡Y ese sicote de tu pie', ja … eso e' suficiente para resusita' a cualquier muerrrrr'to!

He (forcing a smile, standoffish, pointing to an empty espresso cup): Would you be so kind as to make me some coffee?

Ella (playfully):¿Oye, pero quién cree' tú que soy yo, tu sirvienta … pero bueno? ¡Ofre'come Dio'!

He: And make sure it's that civet coffee I bought last night at Dean and Dilucca. I don't much enjoy the Café Santo Domingo your mother brought back from Santiago.

Ella (slowly losing her good mood at the audience): Pero e' verda'. E'te hombre e' un asarozo de primera calida'.

Ella: ¿Café "si-vit"? ¿De qué tú e'ta' hablando?

He: Not "si-vit", "civ-et".

Ella (getting increasingly frustrated): ¡Qué "si-vit" ni "si-vit" de mierda, carajo!

He (staring at his paper, didactically in a condescending tone): Precisely,

excrement. Excrement is an overlooked, yet terribly consequential … object, in one sense of the word. … Otherwise known as kopi luwak, civet coffee beans are the divine product of their fermentation in the civet cat's stomach and intestines. The beans are later excavated in its dung. A murky mucky mess, if you'd ask me (he laughs at himself); but delicious nonetheless. I digress … Found in Asia and Africa, the civet cat is nocturnal. The name also refers to a wide variety of similar Mammalia in the Viverridae family. The physical characteristics of this animal are simply fascinating, just simply consider …

Ella looks over Him, her hands at her hips, incredulous. Ella's expression goes unnoticed by Him. Ella leans down, shoves the paper away, and gets right in He's face.

Ella (in a low, but forceful and disdainful tone): … ¿Tú sabe' qué?… Tú sabe' tanto que sabe' a mierda.

He (after a quick, uncomfortable and restrained chuckle): I disagree with you there, mami; the civet's droppings are far more exquisitely delicious than I could ever be. You should be so lucky.

Ella (to the audience): ¡Qué a'queroso! Un come-mierda de verda'. Y eso, que yo pensaba que me casé con el hombre ma' desabri'o y soso de e'te mundo, santísimo Dio'. ¿De dónde saca Él tanta vaina?

Ella exits the balcony and goes towards the kitchen.

He (after a pause, shouts inside the house): Oh, and be careful not to spill the grounds; that shit costs eighty bucks a pound … on sale!

A dish breaks in the kitchen. Ella quickly remerges with a bag of coffee in her hands.

Ella (with growing intensity and anger): ¿Cóooomooo? Pero e' verda' que yo me case con un loco hijo-'e-puta. Pero bueno, papito, ¿tú cree' que nosotro' podemo' darno' ese lujaso? Muchaaaaachoooo… ¿No ve' que ga'tamo' to' lo que teniamo' en este bohío de mierda que todavía parece una guácara?

El (still staring at his paper, seemingly unmoved): Don't worry, mami, we still have plenty of mon …

Ella: … don't "mami" me, señorito.

Ella lunges at him, grabs his neck, and pours the civet grounded coffee she's carrying all over He's face and robe. They struggle almost falling over the ledge. He frees himself and runs into the living room, choking; Ella follows in pursuit and jumps on He's back and continues to strangle him.

Ella: ¡Asarozo del diache! Tú te cree' un tigre, eh. Te voy a sacar la mierda de la mi'ma tripa. Ni el mi'mo fukú te va poder salvar cuando termine con tigo. Si-vit ni si-vit café del carajo.

Ella on his back, he gasps for air and flagellates around the room. Coffee grounds begin to cloud over them as they knock down lamps, decorative artifacts, pictures on the wall … Finally, Ella relents. She stands catching her breath; He lays down on the floor and coughs up wet coffee grounds from his mouth leaving an unsavory foamy brown puddle on the floor. He gets up, Ella leans against the wall, and begins to laugh at He.

Ella (in a mocking tone): ¡Qué ridiculo te ve', papito lindo! Parece como si te cagara' ese si-vit de mierda de'de la propia boca.

He, stupefied, runs into the bedroom and reemerges into the living room with her electronic toothbrush in hand.

He (shouting, bordering on hysterical): You think I'm a joke for loving my shit coffee? We'll you see this, you see this … this is what I call the height of ridiculousness!

Ella (calm and collected): Amor, no te vuelvas loco, cariño. Ya sabes que me pongo un poco agitada, por decirlo de alguna manera, cuando no duermo

bien; se me sube la bilirrubina.

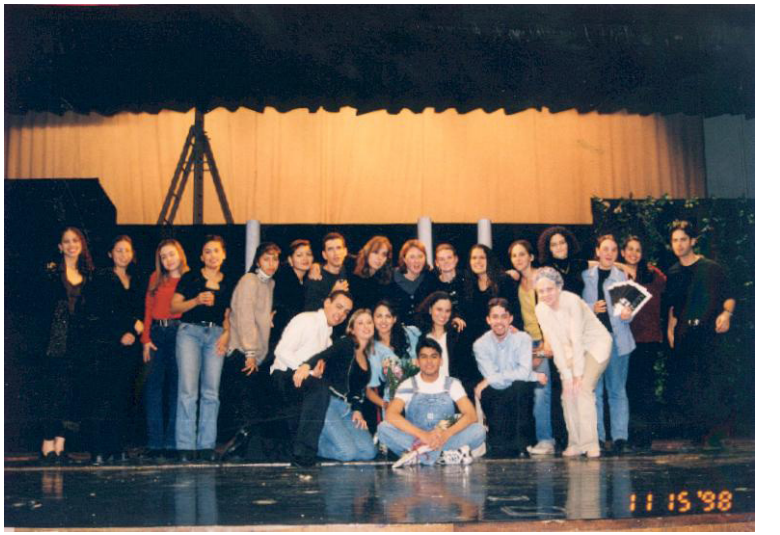
He stands still, the electric toothbrush in the air, but visibly furious. Ella approaches him slowly; as she speaks, his hands get lower and lower. The scene resembles a law enforcement official trying to get a gun out of a madman's grip.

Ella: No te inquietes por ese aparato, papasito. Es el Ultrium Ultrasound 3000 con tecnología waveguide cuyas cerdas funcionan através de ondulas sónicas, me deja los dientes limpios, blancos, y resplendentes. Y eso, que me deja la boca con un aliento puro y dulce. 8 de 10 personas lo prefieren y el 9.761235 de 10 odontólogos aprueban de su uso. Además, reduce el gingivitis en solamente 30 días. ¡Imagínate, eso! Yo misma leí las investigaciones clínicas en los Anales de la Higiene Odontológica Latinoamericana. Hasta don Francisco y Cristina lo promocionan en sus programas. No se porque no te has comprado una Ultri Ultra. Te quitaría las manchas del café con poco esfuerzo, mi rey. El Ultrium Ultrasound 3000, deseñado por un conjunto de científicos suisos y japoneses, también previene la erosión progresiva del esmalte dental. Y eso que sólo me costo dos mil y pico de dolares. Lo compre el mes pasado en Amazon usando tu tarjeta Platinum American Express.

He, fuming, opens his mouth but does not utter a word. A pause, the audience can hear a pin drop. After a while, he turns the brush on, breaking the silence. Ella gasps. He runs to the balcony and dangles the brush over the side of the balcony, as Ella looks on in horror. He laughs outrageously and tosses the toothbrush over the balcony. Ella let's out a small yelp and instinctively jumps after the toothbrush. Ella goes over the side of the balcony. Luckily, they're only one flight up. An audible thump is heard below. He sits back down at the coffee table in the balcony, picks up the crumpled newspaper from the ground, and continues to read right where he left off.

He: I suppose this is not an opportune time to discuss with my lovely Ella my recent coup culinaire japonais: matsutake mushrooms … a steal at $800/lb!

Curtain.



El Recuento De Los Años: Teatrotaller

Guillermo Izabal

My involvement with Teatrotaller began in the winter of 1999. Colbert, a dorm mate of mine, invited me to audition for a part in the play 'Las Mocedades del Cid'. Without much thinking, I accepted the invitation; before you knew it I started a long lasting relationship with the company.

My first term with Teatrotaller presented many challenges. I was cast as the main role of 'Las Mocedades del Cid' which proved to be daunting. The play was in renaissance style Spanish and my role had long and complex monologues. Circumstances made me give up this role. Timing was not right, however, I remain part of the play and the company. The best was yet to come.

During the summer of 1999, I was cast in the play 'Amores Efímeros', where I played one of the main roles. My role was simple though it involved my first kiss in public. I was terrified of such a display in public but realized it was one of the deeds of acting. Looking back, I realize this role was decisive in my development as an actor. It made me experience the uncomfortable though I had to act it as the usual.

The next year was focused on the development of the play 'Una tal Raquel'. This was truly one of my highlights with the company. The bar was raised as we were invited on a world tour. The cast would travel to New York City, Belgium, Mexico, and potentially Israel. Also, we were to collaborate closely with the playwright, and with a director from New York City. To my luck, I was cast as Simon Brutkiewicz, the main villain role.

'Una tal Raquel' remains an unforgettable experience. The story line was ever touching. It was based on a true story involving human trafficking and prostitution. Production was taken to the next level. The company worked with the playwright on the development of the script. Personally, this play represents a milestone. I never had the opportunity to be in a world tour with such spotlight. I will never forget people coming to stage asking for autographs after our performance in Belgium.

Next, I accepted an invitation to direct. The play was 'Johnny Tenorio' a Chicano adaptation of Don Juan Tenorio. Being a director was entertaining. Creativity came in a different flavor. My role allowed me to close my learning cycle with the company. I was exposed to an unfamiliar angle and given a perspective of theatre as a whole. Going from script selection to performance made me understand plays differently.

A decade after my last involvement with Teatrotaller my passion for theatre and the creative remains. Living in New York City has allowed me to see countless plays and shows. Six years ago, I began a journey into dance. Recently, I became involved in talent management and event production. I have been privileged to collaborate with Grammy awardees. In January, I drafted a contract for an artist performance at the Creative Artists Agency (CAA) 2013 Golden Globes after ceremony event. Teatrotaller was central in such development and success, gracias por todo!

TeatroTaller~ 10 años de buenos recuerdos

Ana P. (Cajina) Vasudeo

En la primavera del 2001, forme parte de un grupo de teatro en la universidad que me cambio la vida. Era mi primera vez viviendo tan lejos de mi familia y tenía apenas 18 años. Cuando conocí al grupo, recuerdo que era mi segundo semestre en Cornell y estaba contando las semanas que faltaban para el verano, ya que me sentía muy sola en la universidad.

En mi clase de literatura latinoamericana, la Profesora Elvira Sanchez-Blake, había anunciado que el grupo de teatro en español, TeatroTaller, necesitaba actores para una obra y que si queríamos audicionar, podíamos ir a Goldwyn Smith Hall. Esa noche, me fui caminando a Goldwyn Smith entre una gran tormenta de nieve en Ithaca. Llegue a un auditorio en Goldwyn Smith Hall y ahí me encontré con un grupo de 20 estudiantes, la mayoría latinos, que formaban parte del grupo. Lo que más me impresiono del grupo era que todos los miembros venían de diversos países y disciplinas y que todos se sentían orgullosos de estar ahí. Es mas, todos los estudiantes se sentían comprometidos en presentar la mejor obra a la comunidad de Cornell.

Antes de llegar a Cornell, ya me había acostumbrado en ser parte de la minoría de cada comunidad. Asistí a una de las secundarias más reconocidas de San Francisco, y era la única latina en mi clase. Recuerdo que en mi grupo de teatro en la secundaria, estábamos presentando una obra de teatro que se llamaba Working, escrita por el autor Studs Terkel, y el director me pidió a mi que protagonizara el papel de Emilia Hernandez, una trabajadora en el campo, porque era la única latina en el grupo. Recuerdo que cuando presente esa obra, me sentí un poco triste porque el único papel que tenían para una actriz latina era de trabajadora.

Mis padres, de origen nicaragüense, siempre nos hacían leer literatura latinoamericana. Como toda buena niña nicaragüense, me había memorizado el poema Sonatina de Rubén Dario y sabia recitar el poema cuando venían los amigos de mis padres a la casa. Me crié en un ambiente donde la literatura latinoamericana formaba un papel céntrico en nuestras conversaciones y ese dialogo no era parte de mi ambiente escolar, por más selecta que haya sido mi secundaria.

Cuando llegue a Cornell y conocí a mis amigos de TeatroTaller, me sentí tan feliz de poder compartir mi orgullo y admiración por la literatura latinoamericana con otros jóvenes latinos. Que gran diferencia la que sentí al encontrar un grupo de jóvenes de mi edad que compartían mi interés en literatura latinoamericana. TeatroTaller era nuestro foro para poder compartir la riqueza de nuestra cultura latina con nuestra comunidad universitaria.

Durante los tres años que fui miembro del grupo (del 2001-2004), participé en las obras del grupo como actriz, directora, y ayudando con el diseño de los escenarios. Mi recuerdo mas querido fue cuando tuve la oportunidad de dirigir la primer obra centroamericana del grupo, Funeral Home.

No puedo creer que han pasado diez años desde que forme parte de este grupo. Ahora que soy mama, se que le enseñare a mi hijo a tener el mismo orgullo por su cultura latina que tuve yo al ser parte de este lindo grupo. Tan grande ha sido la influencia de TeatroTaller en mi vida que aun cuento a miembros del grupo como mis amigos mas cercanos. Gracias a las Profesoras Debbie Castillo y Elvira Sanchez-Blake por continuar a creer estas experiencias tan profundas para los demás estudiantes en Cornell.

Abrazos,

Difícil but Memorable

May 2003

Giselle Muñoz

You would think that after one grueling semester of Teatrotaller, one would finally come to terms with the fact that Teatrotaller no es fácil. Even if you're not an actor spending practically five days a week memorizing lines, agonizing over the outlandish costume they expect you to steal the show in, and trying to get acquainted with a bunch of silly strangers, it is still quite a commitment. Initially, I had convinced myself that I was not going to do it again this semester. I had learned my lesson; people get scary when opening day is approaching. All of a sudden, the pressure is on, tasks have to get completed, and Teatrotaller has to become the priority over all of the other work you have to catch up on. Pero, Rebeca and Jessica changed my stubborn mind. And, regardless of the time, the work, and the pressure, I am honestly glad that they did.

Being co-chairman of sets last semester scarred me for life. To this very day I still find myself listening to people's comments and critiques some of which include, "It was the ugliest house I have ever seen." Jessica and I spent most of the semester visiting funeral homes, rummaging through the Salvation Army, bargaining over used furniture, and organizing a bunch of uncooperative students to help us paint and construct flats.

And, yet some still have the tendency to judge the final product, and do so solely on its appearance when in fact, it is the effort that counts. If there is anything that I have learned while being a part of Teatrotaller, it is just that. Sadly, no matter how hard you try, there will always be a select few who will always tell you they could have done the job better.

The fact of the matter is, those very people were no where to be found when a helping hand was truly needed. However, I didn't want to have to stress over such things this semester. I didn't want to deal with the remarks of some and the expectations of others. I sat quietly through the first few meetings. I had no idea of how I would contribute to this semester's production, and secretly I was hoping that my mere presence and moral support would be enough. Yet, when you are a part of something and you see all of the enthused people around you who are eager to contribute, it animates you and instills in you the desire to help out in whatever way you can.

For the first month or so I felt awkward because I still had no idea of what I wanted to do, but I did know that I did not want to do anything too difficult, too time consuming, and too significant. What you soon realize, however, is that in Teatrotaller every job is difficult since every job is significant. When people have a vision and desire things to turn out brilliantly, they are going to want the very best out of everything. Everything, from the set, to the costumes, to the program has to be wonderful. And, sooner or later such expectations become your driving force.

I eventually gave in to helping out with publicity and creating the program, something I had never done before. Yet, in a way, I looked forward to it. I thought, "why not". Afterwards, I would be able to fulfill the same role in other organizations and would be able to add "Experienced in Microsoft Publisher" to my résumé. The only problem was that I am a perfectionist. A task that take some a day, would take me a week. I worked on the program for weeks adding texts, cropping photos, altering fonts; and, I honestly enjoyed it The fact that everyone in attendance would be reading through it encouraged me to be extra careful about spelling errors and my choice of a cover photo.

The nice thing about it was that pretty much everything was up to me. With such a small group both this semester and the one prior, the students had to take the initiative. When you meet a single day a week simply to brush up on things, you soon realize that for the most part you are on your own, and that has both its advantages and disadvantages. You make your own decisions and complete responsibilities in your own time. The downside is that there is no one to diffuse responsibilities to, and the final product is a reflection of one's own efforts. You alone take both the criticism and the praise.

However, regardless of how hard you may be working outside of rehearsal, during rehearsals, it is pretty much grown up play time. Spanglish bounces off the walls, people joke and cameras flash, which is one of the most rewarding things about also being historian. People express themselves in unusual ways and some purposefully make fools of themselves, and the historian catches it all on film. Even as show time approaches, people are still for the most part in

good spirits. Besides some people expecting you to do more than you can possibly get done on your own, they also understand that we are still just a bunch of kids, which creates a very comfortable, relaxed environment. Sometimes it is hard to believe that it is even a class because you don't have the kind of teacher-student hierarchy that exists within the normal classroom setting. It is, for the most part, a student run organization. Thus, you have just as much say on things as anyone else. And, the person you form the closest bond with could possibly be la amable TA. or la simpática directora.

Though there may be a good deal of play, things eventually do get done. At the end of the production, you look at what you have completed and how you have contributed and you try to convince yourself that without whatever it was that you did, the production would not have been the same. At the end of a performance, attendants compliment the actors and admire the directing. After the five hectic months, all you try to remember are the good times, not the hard work. Yet, when people compliment what you have done, you can't help but overemphasize how much effort you put into things.

Those that aren't actors or directors, compliment themselves, admiring the breathtaking lights, the brilliant set, the moving sound, and the inspiring program. Though the audience may not verbalize such thoughts, we convince ourselves that they admired all just the same. And, when the phenomenal historian gathers everyone for a group picture at the end of the final performance, you can't help but be touched by how close everyone has become. You form the kind of genuine friendships with people that you pursue even after "class" is over.

After a year of Teatrotaller, my Spanglish is flawless and my appreciation for theater is at an all-time high. After you experience it all for yourself, you cannot help but admire those that do it for a living. You learn to work well under time constraints and to not take things too seriously, but seriously enough to get the job done. Most importantly, you learn the arts of social interaction and creativity. In Teatrotaller I found myself having to deal with the bad moods of others and at the same time having to set mine aside and helping out in whatever way I could. Additionally, you learn how to turn some scraps of old fabric into a costume, how to transform flats into walls, how to call potato chips, chocolate chip cookies, and soda dinner, and how to turn a bunch of college students into a gifted theater assemble. As a measly little first year college student, I glance at myself and then reflect back on the experience, and I cannot help but be in awe over what we have all accomplished. I have never really thought of Teatrotaller as a class; I think of it as a break from class; a bunch of rowdy college students putting on a show, entertaining a paying audience, sending out a message, and having fun while doing. All in all, there is no greater feeling than to see other people actually gain something from something you did simplemente como entretenimiento. Gracias por la experiencia.

Teatrotaller Story

Phoenix Paz

I arrived early, not knowing what to expect. I'd never had a night-time class before and I felt so grown-up. A College Freshman with a real night-time class. So grown-up.

And there I was, sitting in McGraw 165 when a she comes bubbling in, a swirl of curly brown hair, dancing eyes and smiles.

- Hi. You're new. I'm Marina. (Big smile with hand extanded)

- Yes… (Insert Awkward pause)…My name is Phoenix. (Relief that it's out)

- That's awesome! Well, let me tell you about TT. (Tour guide voice) We're the Hispanic theatre troop. We do plays from all over the Spanish speaking world, including Spain… (Thoughtful interlude) And the Philippines and Morocco if we find plays we like in Spanish from there.

- That's really cool. Are we doing a play from Morocco or the Philippines this semester?

- No. But it's always good to know we can do them.

I laugh. She's so earnest; just being in the same room makes me happy, like I already have a place to belong. Marina begins to introduce me to all the figures walking into the room.

- So, that's Jimmy. He just got a haircut. He wasn't bald last semester. That's Veronica. She's amazing. And brilliant. And beautiful. I want to be just like her when I grow up. (Calls out) Veronica, come sit with us! (tone change) Ah, and here's Caro. She's super talented and super creative and you'll never meet a more fun person ever. She's super supportive to. Last semester was my first play and Caro was the star, and she was my mentor. She's directing this semester. It'll be great. And here he is: my hubby!

My eyes widen slightly and Veronica starts to laugh as Marina flies over to the slight young man walking into the room, grabbing his wrist and dragging him over to join us.

- This is Sean. Sean, introduce yourself.

- Hi. I'm Sean.

- Hi. I'm Phoenix ….. I hear you and Marina are married; congratulations.

Sean turns bright red as the girls burst out laughing.

- We're not really married.

Confused.

- Sorry about that

Marina gasps between laughs.

- We were married in the play last semester and so I've been calling Sean my hubby ever since.

Ok. If you say so.

- You'll get used to it.

Smile and nod.

- Welcome to the family

- Welcome to TT

And since the very first, TT has always been exactly that: a family. Five shows – Kan Balaam, California's Most Wanted, Desiertos, Mujeres, FaceBooked – and three and half years later, TT still remains my first Cornell family. Perhaps we didn't always agree all the time. Perhaps, we didn't like each other always. But, we were always there for one another, and each helped the other make their vision for a show come true. Spanish, English, and passion for theatre tie us together with a language of dreams that goes beyond just one show, just one person's Cornell career.

For 20 years now, TT has been stretching its arms wide and offering family, friends and a forum to reach out to Cornell and to the world through theatre. Congratulations, Teatrotaller. Congratulations on 20 years of incredible success and a warm welcome all those years yet to come.

Teatrotaller: The Safest Space for a Latino Thespian

Jorge A Silva *Class of 2012*

My good friend and filmmaker Andre Lee once told me, "The entertainment business, especially theatre, is for those who can't do anything else." As I reflect on those words now, I remember the experiences of a younger, more naïve Latino who arrived on the hill intent on becoming a lawyer, driven by the sense of obligation I felt as a privileged Hispano attending an Ivy League institution, with parents whose pride depended on a narrow and select choice of careers. However, it was not long after arriving at Cornell in the fall of 2009 that I discovered a space where I could better challenge this assumption of identity and choice of vocation.

I arrived at CU as a transfer student my sophomore year, leaving behind my home state of Illinois and a much smaller liberal arts college. CU's campus and its student body were understandably overwhelming in comparison. Like all first year students I was required to take a first year writing seminar, and that is where I met Dr. Jimmy Noriega, then a PhD candidate, teaching a course on border plays called "Crossing the Border: Latinos Perform the Theatre of Immigration." This class was a perfect cross section of my interests and also introduced me to my first role on stage at Cornell. Jimmy was also preparing to direct the play *Desiertos* by Hugo Alfredo Hinojosa Díaz.

The play was being produced by the student group Teatrotaller, whose membership consisted of a wide range of degrees and majors and was advised by the great Debra Castillo. The range of talent and diversity was immediately recognizable and extremely welcoming. When Jimmy gave me the opportunity to work on the show *Desiertos* as an actor, it meant an opportunity to explore Latinidad through an artistic lens. The play's subject dealt with not only the experience of those crossing the border, but also how the hardships of crossing affects everyone from family and friends to onlookers. At the time, immigration as political issue centered mostly on the economic effects created by already present undocumented immigrants and the supposed importance of border security. Seldom did media highlight the risks taken by those crossing and often lacked the most basic of human empathy. The play's subject matter was especially personal to me as a child of immigrants, as a Bolivian-Mexican-American, and as an artist with an interest in social justice. The piece's language and style was entirely new to me, not to mention I had never performed a role entirely in Spanish. The show's opening brought together several different demographics that I had yet to see at Cornell at the same event, including various artists, those invested in the play's subject matter, and many who were looking for something outside the western canon in a theatrical experience. At our debut we had the playwright, Hugo Alfredo Hinojosa Díaz, join us in a talk back that helped to engage our community further by discussing the importance of political theatre and storytelling.

Desiertos' significance was made clear to me as we made strides forward and took the production on the road. This, like so much of the show, was a new experience to for me. Traveling with a show only after having just arrived at Cornell taught me so much about the different roles and responsibilities needed to make a theatre piece like this work. We arrived at the University of Kansas, to perform at a national conference of Spanish language and literature professors, unaware of the high expectations and hype created by the conference attendees, but Jimmy Noriega made sure that we were focused and ready to

perform in a new space. The success of the University of Kansas performance made me feel so much more confident as a performer and as person that our next stop simply overjoyed me: New York City. We had a contract to perform at the well-known Pregones Theater, located in the heart of the Bronx, and as a young actor nothing made me more proud to say that I was embarking on my first New York City Performance. This performance had a whole other set of responsibilities that I had a chance to observe, including what is necessary to work in a professional venue and the level of communication required to work with other industry professionals. Upon returning to Ithaca, the large and well-traveled cast of *Desiertos* experienced a great sense of accomplishment and some relief, but I was left with a sense of longing and wanted to continue this journey Debra Castillo and Jimmy Noriega helped to forge.

The following semester I returned to Teatrotaller intent to continue educating myself about Latino theatre and the skills necessary to build a production. It was important for me to continue supporting this sort of work, having seen how visceral and significant Desiertos was on audience members independent of their relationship to immigration. I returned the following year as a part of the executive board and committed to the group's mission to bringing socially conscience Latino and Latin American theatre to our community. At this time Jimmy Noriega was preparing to direct a very different piece than *Desiertos*: Jose's Rivera's *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot.* Taking up responsibilities as an organizer, designer and actor, References proved to be a great challenge and in the process helped me to forge long lasting working relationships. The play introduced me to my close friend and colleague Casey Minella, who started her career with Teatrotaller as a stage manager with this particular production and gave me an opportunity to work alongside Alexander Symes and Alessandra Hirsch, now long-time friends and collaborators. Following *References*, I worked under Jimmy again as a lighting designer for the heartbreaking docu-drama *Mujeres de Ciudad Juárez* by Cristina Michaus. *Mujeres* was performed at the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts at the Department of Theatre, Film, & Dance, bringing together theatrical communities and exposing performing arts students to a type of theatre they had yet to encounter. In addition, the show brought several different communities from Cornell and the greater Ithaca area into the Schwartz Center for the first time. The hugely successful Mujeres de Cuidad Juárez was invited to perform in a festival in Ecuador and I could not have been prouder.

Meanwhile, I had made the move to practice the skills given to me by Jimmy Noriega and Debra Castillo and I organized my own production. Given a space to perform at the Schwartz Center, I was set to stage a collaborative piece entitled *Latins Anonymous*, named after and inspired by the play *Latins Anonymous* by Rick Najera, Cris Franco, Luisa Leschin, Armando Molina, and Diane Rodriguez. The goal of this piece was to understand the process of creating collaborative work using the same methods as the playwrights; using safe space and exchanging memories through storytelling, we began to form a piece that utilized excerpts of the play that segued into stories of our individual identities. The cast's diversity allowed audiences to relate with various aspects of identity, from gender, race, class, and sexual orientation, and provided a space in which safe exchange was possible. Thanks to Jimmy Noriega's mentorship and mediation during this process and the cast's willingness to share, the production was a huge success.

During my senior year, Debra Castillo encouraged the long standing tradition of student produced work by urging Casey Minella to take on the role of director in our fall production 14 by Jose Casas. Debra Castillo was instrumental in Casey's debut as a director and aided us immensely in bringing the playwright to campus. It was inspiring having Casas affirm Teatrotaller as a positive force in the arts and exemplary of the tradition that is Latino theatre. His professional advice as a Latino in the theatrical arts was invaluable and he vocalized his support for our next production that brought together the Department of Theatre, Film, & Dance and Teatrotaller in full collaboration.

My greatest challenge to date followed 14 in the spring where my original piece, *Adult Roy's Badland*: A Rave Play, was accepted as a part of the 2011-2012 season at the Schwartz Center. It was an opportunity to use all of the resources and relationship I had formed and produce a piece that questioned what theatre could be and collaborate with peers and professionals alike. While many students in theatre were very focused on the popular and more traditional notion of performance, I, much like Teatrotaller, sought to invest in more meaningful "non-normative" theatre that addressed the crossroads of performance and intersectionality. With our sound designer and DJ, Sam Tannert, dramaturg Alexander Symes, and director Casey Minella, Adult Roy pushed the boundaries of theatre through the use of lighting, sound, movement and space. Using rave as an aesthetic we created a world where our hero Roy's nationlessness manifested personifications of the conflicting forces of immigration. We had the distinct privilege of being able to collaborate not only with the industry professionals at the Schwartz Center, but also with members from Ithaca College and other local artists; I had never been so proud to have such a hugely diverse cast and production team and to this day I look back at Adult Roy as being one of the best times of my life. As graduation and adulthood loomed over me, Debra Castillo gave me one more gift—a visit from Carlos Morton. Author of *Johnny Tenorio,* Carlos came to see the show and called it "amazing" and "the next *In The Heights*." I was in awe that I was able to gain such positive and constructive feedback from an admired member of the Latino theatre community; that experience essentially cemented my decision concerning my future as an artist.

After graduation, I went on to work again for Jimmy Noriega, now a theatre professor at the College of Wooster, for five weeks in Peru, where I joined him and his students to create and present a new play during summer 2012. I also returned to Teatrotaller that fall in preparation to take *Adult Roy's Badland*: A Rave Play to UNESCO's World Festival of Theatre Schools in Romania. By this time I had been drawn away from this idea of an obligatory career and began investing in my own future and agency the way I envisioned it. I look back now at my experiences with Teatrotaller as nothing less than a miracle. I could not have been happier to find a group with such passionate members practicing the very area of study that was of interest to me. Jimmy Noriega and Debra Castillo were godsends to me, mentoring and teaching me while nurturing my passion for Latino theatre.

Needless to say, Teatrotaller came into my life at a critical time, especially considering this was not only a tumultuous period for me, but also for many Latino and Hispanic students across the nation. This institution of Spanish language theatre taught me the value of social justice theatre and the power of change through the stage; our democratic system and play selection drew in friends of members to participate and continue that tradition of solidarity. Teatrotaller has been incredibly crucial in shaping my identity as a Latino and as an artist and provided me with friendships that can only be described as priceless and lifelong. As we celebrate this anniversary, I take pride in being able to say that I have been a part of this tradition, and I salute

the many generations of Teatrotaller member's for saving me from normalcy and allowing me to do the only thing I know I can do— *con mucho amor.*

November 2009

Stephen Chader

I signed up for Hispanic Theater Production, not because I was interested in the class or the production, but because I needed to fulfill my Arts and Sciences foreign language requirement. With my main area of interest being applied physics and surgical medicine, I expected the class to be somewhat miserable, but that I could suffer through it to get the required credits. Looking back over the past semester, my initial views were very, very wrong, and while I joined the class for the wrong reason, I soon learned that the class was something that, had I been more informed, I would not have thought twice about taking, even if it did not satisfy any requirement.

The class far exceeded my expectations in almost every way, and was my favorite class this semester, by a wide margin (perhaps even my favorite class of the entire three years I have spent at Cornell), It is the only class that I can recall looking forward to. While I probably learned less about the language and culture than I would have by taking a more traditional class, I enjoyed this class much more, and because of that, I am absolutely certain that what I did learn will stay with me much longer than anything I would have memorized to pass a test. I have taken plenty of classes in the past, which required memorizing lots of little details for exams, which no normal person could be expected to remember past the end of the class. While there are some things that everyone undoubtedly remembers, most of it is forgotten as soon as the final exam is over, With this class, however, I got a simpler, broader understanding of the culture, and I have no doubt I will remember most if not everything I have learned for a significant amount of time. For this reason, I feel that this class was far more valuable than any other similar subject class I have taken or will take.

The class turned out to be a lot more work than I expected, but most of it was enjoyable, When I joined Teatrotaller, based on my previous experience at Schwartz, I expected to do work with the lights as needed, but just enough to meet the hour requirement for credits. As it turned out, I ended up doing work in just about every "designation. "I did everything from several trips shopping for costumes, to repairing sound equipment and props, and stapling (and then re-stapling) programs. While I lost count of any approximation of total hours spent with the class, there is no doubt in my mind that I ended up spending far more hours than technically required (by my rough approximations, I was more than 1/3 done with my required hours before we even started hanging lights in Barnes Hall). However, because of the diversity of my responsibilities, I rarely had enough chance to become bored or tired of a particular task, and I enjoyed the process much more than if I had been doing just one thing, even for much less time.

Overall, I am very pleased with my experience with Teatrotaller, and I am glad that I decided to take the course (even though it was for the wrong reasons), Many parts of the class were a lot of fun, and as you observed, the end result was quite good. I know I indicated a lot of areas for improvement, but even as the class was very good, and I'm proud to have been a part of our excellent shows.

Devising as Pedagogical Practice

Debra A. Castillo

When we think of the most important collective creation groups (what in English is often called devising or devise theater) in the Hispanic world we inevitably remember Peru's Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani (founded l971), Colombia's Teatro La Candelaria (founded l966), Cataluña's Els Joglars (founded l962). Do the arithmetic: these people have spent 37, 42, and a mind-boggling 46 years together devising original performances. One inevitable consequence: the actor-authors and other members of these groups, who have worked together for many years, some since the founding of the group, are highly seasoned professionals who know each other's working methods exceptionally well. Still, they will spend long stretches in the creative process—each new, original performance will have successive iterations, often taking several years of intense work to reach its final form. For those of us who work with performance in an academic setting, and would like to give our students a taste of the challenges and rewards of developing rigorous collective projects, the big question, when taking these groups as models, is where to begin.

My context: I work with a theater troupe named Teatrotaller, a largely student-run project, although with collaboration (and sometimes leadership) from community members, as well as my colleague Elvira Sanchez-Blake, who alternates with me in teaching the associated theater production course. The illustrations you see on the screen are all from various of our productions, including more traditionally staged ones, and highlighting recent, workshopped and devise productions related to Mexico. The group is justly proud of its accomplishments. It is one of the few long-standing independent Spanish-language theater projects in the US (now with a fifteen year track record of excellent productions, and a regular 3-play a year schedule—April, August, November). It has performed nationally and internationally, including: Canada, Belgium, Mexico, and (next week) Israel. Teatrotaller has an affiliation with Cornell University through the Romance Studies Program—the Theater department has declined any level of collaboration or support—and a modest budget line from the College of Arts and Sciences, supplemented by income from sponsors and ticket sales. We also frequently collaborate with one of Ithaca's small professional theaters, Kitchen Theater, and community groups like the Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County and upstate farmworker groups. We perform in a variety of auditoriums and theaters, mostly on campus, but have also presented plays in churches, in community centers, and outdoors on the Ithaca commons. While many of the students who participate with the course/troupe will do so on a one-time basis, we have a surprising number of faithful veterans, including students who participate every semester during their entire Cornell career (this will frequently add up to participating in 6-12 productions), and, in a couple of cases, for years beyond—one of our most valued members, Carolina Osorio Gil, began with the group in l999 and continues active today. We are a repertoire group, interested in reaching out to the community (aka in the social activist sense—hence projects like our informative video skits aimed at upstate farmworkers--and also in the more crass butts-in-seats sense—introducing the Spanish speaking and learning public to this cultural form). We offer a variety of different kinds of performances from comic staples to thought-provoking drama, and are also deeply concerned with providing new and interesting challenges for our performers.

Hence devising, a form that responds profoundly to the "taller" part of our troupe's name. Because our participants are generally very smart and creative, the temptation is almost irresistible. However, here we run into our first challenge: our timeline to production is typically 10 weeks, generous by professional theater standards, but far short of the intense and lengthy commitment made by members of, say, Yuyachkani. In addition, we know that many of our group members will have absolutely no background in theater work, while others will have a considerable body of experience—another challenge for the instructor, who has to measure the needs for training and apprenticeship for some of the participants, while remaining intellectually exciting for the more experienced troupe members.

A few years ago, The Association for Theater in Higher Education devoted a special issue of its journal to the topic of devising. As I read through the issue, I found the articles thought-provoking and suggestive, but was struck by the fact that not a single example of or case study came from the Hispanic or US Latino world; this despite the widespread acknowledgment of the influence exerted by Brazilian Augusto Boal's fundamental work in his Theater of the Oppressed . This blind spot adds a rather ironic perspective to comments like that of Anne Berkeley ("Critical teaching and everyday life"), who stresses that devised theater highlights, "The uses of theatrical performance for ALL students in the work of forming identities and values" (3). At the same time, I take very seriously the repeated message of these articles: devise drama and its radical pedagogies are typically seen as having a transformative mission, and it is a performative mode that speaks, or should speak, to all. As Ronlin Foreman of the Dell'Arte School comments, "The goal is to create a courageous theater, based on people in relationship, passing beyond the peripheral situations of our lives and into the circumstances that define the human condition" (97).

Most of Teatrotaller's plays are workshopped to some extent, more often with relatively modest revisions to an extant script. At time, the project evolves over the course of a semester as a real devise collaboration between the actor-authors who developed modules out of directed play and improvisional work, the director who refined and shaped the results, and the instructor-playwright (myself in the former; colleague Elvira in the latter case) who served as scribe and organizer of textual material. This is true, for example, in our satirical "Día de campo"—inspired by our students' outrage at the US invasion of Iraq, or in our most recent of several projects on immigration, "Crossing the line", a response to the wave of deportations in upstate New York and the increasing isolation of the farmworker population. The result was a high energy work-in-progress, both satisfying on its own as an ethical and aesthetic project, and at the same time satisfying pedagogically. These devise drama projects are a product of intense research in both the more traditional academic sense, as well as research into the body and its possibilities.

What both of these works have in common is their origin in current events. Teatroaller members were profoundly concerned about the political environment, and committed to finding an appropriate artistic response, one that would supplement other forms of activism going on in the area. In "Día de campo," some of the building blocks of the performance included research into army recruitment methods and rhetoric, children's games with militant overtones, poetry, letters home from soldiers to their loved ones, and George Bush's speeches leading up to the war. The "president's" speech eventually became one highlights of the play, and people still remembered and commented on it to me years later, and identified the actor with that character. The speech consisted of a pastiche taken verbatim from several of Bush's speeches, with the "Iraq" and "Saddam Hussein" substituted by the word "enemigo". It was a perfect device, both familiar and strange at the same time.

In addition, when staging the play, we reminded the audience of media manipulations and censorship, by not allowing them into the theater until five minutes after the play was supposed to start—that is, the play began in the foyer before the closed doors, where the actors were mingling with the audience, acting confused and disgruntled, and inciting the audience. Once allowed into the dimly lit theater, there was another impasse: yellow "caution" tape blocked most of the seats, and ushers in military uniform chose certain audience members (the actors) and forced them to sit in places other than the ones they had chosen. It was startling how stressed and unhappy these disruptions made the audience—something that conditioned their reception of the rest of the play.

For "Crossing the Line," news reports covering the issue of immigration served as an important source of material, especially the rabid broadcasts of Lou Dobbs and the xenophobic materials on the Minuteman website. Students were also inspired by the transformation of the telenovela format of "Betty la fea" into "Ugly Betty" as the show crossed the border into the USA, by the energy of l960s-style happenings, and the children's protests occurring in many parts of the country. Equally importantly, because many of the farmworkers in our area are increasingly fearful and isolated in the current atmosphere, a set of students did intensive research on immigrant rights, and created pedagogical scripts, vetted by legal experts, to serve as the basis for short videos on topics identified by farmworker leaders as highly important to them. These videos are intended for free distribution in the community in the form of DVDs, which we—in consultation with the local

farmworker leaders—felt would be a more effective form of communication than pamphlets or brochures, because of the variable levels of literacy.

Devise work is a structured exploration of the unknown. Fundamentally, we need to think about how an idea or image becomes embodied, provoking dialogue, and how that dialogue needs to help clarify the project's focus, and continue clarifying it as the project evolves.

Teatro Taller's Impact on My Long-Term Trajectory

Stephanie M. Brosig – "Sani"

I can honestly say that I am where I am today because of my involvement with Teatrotaller. During my time in TT, I had the honor of stage managing two shows: Desiertos, which was about immigration and traveled to the University of Kansas and Pregones Theater in NYC; and Mujeres de Ciudad Juárez, which was about the femicides taking place in Mexico, which we presented on the Schwartz Center mainstage and at the V Encuentro de Maestros y Escuelas de Teatro (an international theatre festival in Quito, Ecuador). In my three years at Cornell, I worked on these shows, as well as Kan Balaam. These three plays dealt with serious social issues affecting both domestic and international communities. My work with TT stimulated my interest in women's rights and social development in underprivileged communities, which culminated in an Honor's Thesis at Cornell.

Moreover, working with Teatrotaller instilled in me a sense of confidence and responsibility. By entrusting me with the task of stage managing two of his largest and most complicated productions, director Jimmy A. Noriega allowed me to strengthen my managerial, organizational, and communication skills. By giving me the opportunity to become a leader within the organization and to invest my time and energy into the productions, my mentors, Director Jimmy A. Noriega and Professor Debra Castillo, allowed me to grow as a student and professional. Today, the skills and perspective I gained as a result of working with the cast and crew of Teatrotaller have been instrumental in allowing me to achieve my goals.

So where am I today? I am currently a second year law student at one of the best law schools in the country. Working with Teatrotaller on issues I cared about in innovative ways opened my eyes to the need for talented individuals to serve the most underprivileged and marginalized communities. As a result, I have volunteered extensively with nonprofit organizations around the South Texas border to provide legal services to indigent persons seeking immigration relief. By participating in Teatrotaller I learned innovative techniques that borrow from the fields of theatre, activism, and community building to provoke audiences and awaken their social consciousness.

Teatrotaller solidified my desire to dedicate my professional career to shedding light on important social issues. Most importantly, Teatrotaller inspired me to follow my passions and to identify other persons and organizations that share these passions. The last line of Mujeres de Ciudad Juárez prompts the audience to look in the mirrors and to check whether they see an accomplice starting back at them. The audience is asked to see its own role in these social issues and decides whether or not they want to be a part of the problem or solution. The people I met while in the theatre group and through my travels with TT inspired me to carve out a long-term career trajectory that will serve the Latina/o and Latin American communities.

Thanks to Teatrotaller and the awe-inspiring casts, crews, and audiences I crossed paths with during my three years with TT, I gained the confidence, skills, and direction I needed to jumpstart my career providing legal services to underserved communities in the border region.

A Unique Synthesis of Academics and Performance

Linda Glaser

Exuberant clapping, whistles, and cheers mark the curtain calls for Cornell's unique Teatrotaller (Spanish for "theater-workshop). Even students without fluent Spanish or who've never acted in a play before, like Christina Jarymowycz '05, find themselves drawn to Teatrotaller, as evidenced by the crowd at the auditions for last semester's production of "Desiertos," a hard-hitting drama on the human cost of immigration, or the laughter and enthusiasm accompanying this semester's rehearsals of the collective creation project (still untitled, but to be performed in Risley theater April 8-10) centered in a Mexican-Californian whorehouse.

Teatrotaller is a unique synthesis of academics and performance, founded by students in 1993 with the idea of preserving and promoting Spanish, Latin American and Latino cultures through theater. The Hispanic Theater Production class serves as the core of Teatrotaller, which is augmented by volunteer participants. Because the class is a variable credit topic course, it can be repeated. One student took the class six times.

A wide mix of people and ethnicities participate in Teatrotaller: native Spanish speakers and those learning Spanish for the first time; students from Cornell, Ithaca College, and those who travel an hour and a half from Syracuse University; undergraduates, graduates, alumni, and people from the wider Ithaca community; Spanish literature majors as well as a student doing a post-doctorate in astrophysics.

Some, like Kayley Bebber '09, are passionate about theatre and acting for its own sake. Others, like Saul Mercado '01, see their work as deeply political, raising awareness about linguistic civil rights, and educating people about indigenous cultures and the challenges they face. For Diana Capous '10, it's "a time of cultural exploration and creative flow."

About fifteen to twenty people participate in a typical season. The year the group swelled to fifty, Castillo says they did a "the biggest production we've ever done, a full-out medieval play, with twenty some actors in period costumes." The students sewed, created a fully built set with balcony, choreographed sword fights and a Renaissance dance, and even had authentic twelfth century music.

Despite little funding and no dedicated space, the group produces three plays a year. "The students are really ingenious in overcoming challenges. It's a real credit to them," says Debra Castillo, professor of Romance Studies and Comparative Literature and faculty advisor to Teatrotaller. For Capous, participating in Teatrotaller has taught her "the essence of collaboration and the power of passion," she says.

Because the composition of the group changes each season, Castillo recommends plays that reflect the language skills, interests, and abilities of the particular students that semester. Students also want the plays to have some meaning, more than just entertainment, so that plays are often chosen for their relevance to current events. But Castillo emphasizes the importance of knowing the audience and being responsive to their needs as well. Teatrotaller's summer production, for example, attracts a family audience from the greater Ithaca community, so the plays have to be appropriate for children too.

Students in Teatrotaller face challenges unlike that of other Cornell theater groups. The performance of Victor Hugo Rascón Banda's "La Mujer Que Cayó del Cielo" ("The Woman Who Fell from the Sky") included Spanish, English, and an indigenous Mexican language that no one at Cornell speaks. The actress playing the main role had to learn her lines syllable by syllable.

Because of Teatrotaller's exceptional reputation, well-known Latino playwrights often send Teatrotaller plays in the hope that the group will produce them. Castillo notes that Teatrotaller's impact can extend beyond Cornell: "Quite a few graduate students have told me that their involvement with Teatrotaller is what made their applications for university positions stand out, effectively getting them their jobs."

Teatrotaller is in great demand internationally and throughout the U.S., and has performed in Belgium, Mexico, Canada, New York City, Boston, Lawrence, Kansas and, most recently, Israel. Castillo recalls with a laugh the group's introduction to theatre in the third world, at a performance in Mexico of 'Una Tal Raquel." "We were setting up lights and this guy helping us took

a couple of wires, sliced them and stuck them into the wall. Sparks flew out and we jumped. 'Yup, that one's live," he said."

Sidebar: Teatrotaller's Fifteenth Anniversary

To commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of Teatrotaller's founding, the group participated last year in a year-long interdisciplinary project focused on Chiapas, Mexico. The Chiapas project pioneered a new model in North American higher education, and was Cornell's first-ever systematic effort to insert Spanish across its curriculum. The initiative featured interdisciplinary studies and included a two-week field study in multiethnic Chiapas, Mexico, exploring Chiapas' rich and diverse cultural environment.

Teatrotaller provided a creative component to the interdisciplinary project. During the two-week field study in Chiapas, students in Teatrotaller presented the Mexican play "La Mujer Que Cayó del Cielo" ("The Woman Who Fell From the Sky"), based on the true story of a Tarahumara woman who spent twelve years in a Kansas insane asylum.

"I've participated in a number of study abroad programs," says Debra Castillo, faculty advisor for Teatrotaller, "and this is the best of them all." She adds that for many students, the project proved a life-changing experience, because it combined "an exceptionally well-conceived study abroad component with a deeply intellectual research focus, and may be the only time some students take on a serious research project."

As part of the field course and its on-campus continuation, students researched indigenous Mayan history and learned about current issues and concerns from local Chiapan indigenous people. This research inspired the students in Teatrotaller to present a play depicting Mayan past and present. In particular, they were inspired by a revelation the project participants had in a church in Chiapas. "The indiginous people seemed to be worshipping Christian saints in the church, but what they were really doing was worshipping Mayan gods," says Elvira Sánchez-Blake, former faculty advisor for Teatrotaller. "There was no play with this component so we decided to write it."

The result, "Kan Balaam," is a play that integrates ancient Mayan myths and cosmology with contemporary issues faced by indigenous communities in Chiapas. In particular, the play addresses Mayan survival when faced with the threat of big corporations and their impact on the Mayan's native environment and traditional cultural practices.

Every component of the play was thoroughly researched and as authentic as possible, down to the corn husk costume worn by the actor depicting the Mayan corn god. The extremely complex set required the help of architects to construct: it included a Mayan pyramid that had to convert to a church in a brief ten-second scene change. But "despite the stress, the grueling rehearsals, and the panic associated with putting on any production," says Marina Boushra '11, "'Kan Balaam' was one of the most rewarding and enlightening experiences of my college career."

The play proved a great success, garnering an audience of over 400 people.

Reflection On My Participation In TeatroTaller

Kayley Bebber

When I first auditioned for Teatrotaller's production of Yo tengo un tío en América, I wasn't sure what to expect. It was the beginning of the spring semester of my junior year at Cornell and I had just returned from Buenos Aires, where I spent two semesters studying at the University of Buenos Aires and where I began working as a freelance Spanish translator. I saw flyers advertising the audition posted around campus, and thought that the play would be a fun way for me to keep my Spanish fresh and to rekindle the love of theatre that I developed in high school. During the following year and a half, Teatrotaller quickly became the defining experience of my time at Cornell. I made lasting friendships, developed a strong interest in several different social justice issues, traveled to Israel and Jordan, and performed at the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts.

Yo tengo un tío en América is a play written by Albert Boadella. It is similar to Ken Kesey's One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, but set in Spain, performed in Spanish, and laced with colonial tensions. At the surface, it was fun to act out the wild antics of my character – to wear a colander on my head, to exaggerate symptoms of paranoia and delusions of grandeur, and to participate in the ridiculous group activities devised by the nurses. At a deeper level, this play made me, the rest of the cast, and I hope the audience, reflect on the way society treats persons with mental illness (both socially and medically), and on the parallels between abuses inherent to both institutionalization and colonization. By the time Yo tengo un tío en América had its final performance, I knew that I had become a part of an incredibly dedicated and supportive community. Leading this community was faculty adviser, Professor Debra Castillo. In addition to making my Teatrotaller experience memorable and meaningful, Professor Castillo also agreed to become my faculty adviser for my senior thesis.

While I didn't perform in Teatrotaller's Fall 2008 production of La mujer que cayó del cielo, it nevertheless exerted an enormous impact on me. Written by Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda, La mujer que cayó del cielo is based on the true story of a Tarahumara woman who, because she was wearing several layers of traditional clothing and was unable to speak English when police officers encountered her in 1982 in Kansas City, was sent to a mental institution against her will where she was held for twelve years. The doctors' failure to make any efforts to identify the language the woman spoke and their misinterpretation of her limited Spanish leads to them to diagnosis the woman with schizophrenia and to forcibly medicate her. After losing twelve years and suffering physical and medical harm caused by unnecessary drug therapy, a psychologist finally discovers that the woman speaks the Tarahumara language Rarámuri and she is eventually released. The fact that the events depicted in this play actually occurred renders it all the more haunting and heartbreaking.

In addition to presenting La mujer que cayó del cielo on campus, Teatrotaller also had the opportunity to present a new play by Argentinian playwright Nora Glickman's at the International Theatre Festival in Jerusalem that fall. Preludes is the story of a trio of amateur musicians in 1940s Argentina who were driven apart by family and career responsibilities, jealousy, and betrayal. Along with two other members of Teatrotaller, Alejandra Ruiz and Stephanie Cajina, director Jimmy Noriega, and two students at Syracuse University, acting in Preludes gave me the unique opportunities of traveling to the Middle East and performing before theatre groups from around the world. The play also reunited me with my violin, which I hadn't practiced since entering college. We performed in a beautiful and unique theatre that was cave-like in appearance, and we were able to meet Nora Glickman, who attended our performance. During the festival, the Preludes cast, director, and I attended performances by other theatre groups from Belgium, Ecuador, and Israel. After the festival came to a close, we visited historic sites in Jerusalem, explored the Eilat desert, swam in the Dead Sea, and admired the breathtaking beauty and awe-inspiring architecture of Petra.

During my final semester at Cornell, I was very excited to be cast in Beautiful Señoritas, also directed by Jimmy Noriega, along with my two co-stars from Preludes. Although it was not directly connected to Teatrotaller, the people involved in its production and the issues it examined certainly felt like

an extension of Teatrotaller. This play, written by Dolores Prida, provokes a reflection on stereotypes of Latina women through light-hearted song and dance and somber monologues. Performing in the black box theatre at the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts was a wonderful experience, allowing for increased freedom of movement and expression. Had it not been for my previous involvement in Teatrotaller, I doubt that I would have had the confidence and ability necessary to be cast and successfully perform in this show.

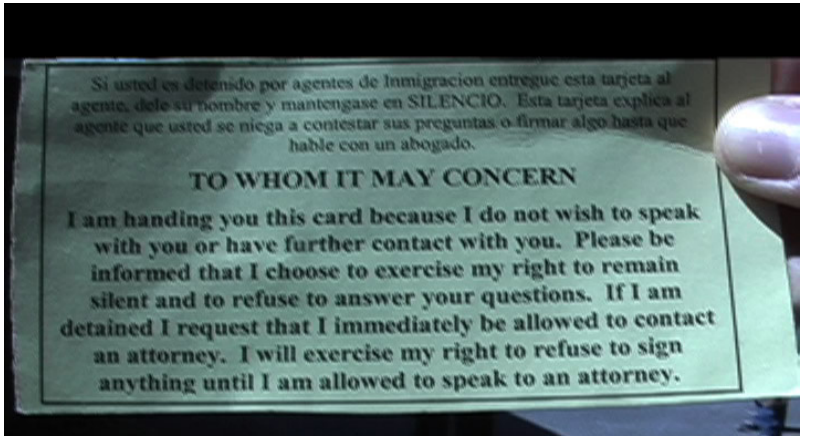
My participation in Teatrotaller not only enriched my junior and senior years at Cornell, it has also had repercussions in my professional and personal life since college. Professionally, I have developed an interest in disability rights, prisoners' rights, immigrants' rights, language access rights and women's rights law, sparked, I'm sure, by the the reflections provoked by Yo tengo un tío en América, La mujer que cayó del cielo, and Beautiful Señoritas. I am also certain that performing in front of Cornell and international audiences helped make me a more effective and less nervous public speaker. On a personal level, I have maintained my love of performing, traveling internationally, and playing music, rekindled and strengthened by my participation in Teatrotaller.

PRODUCCIONES

- English-Only Restaurant 4/4/93
- Cuentos sin ton ni son 2/10/94
- Quíntuples 4/29/94
- Botánica 10/18/94
- Rosa de dos aromas 2/23-25/95
- Violines y trompetas 11/17/95
- La barca sin pescador (no video) 4/13/96
- Color de agosto 6/28-29/96
- Tres sombreros de copa 11/16/96
- Farsa de amor compradito 5/3/97
- Suplicio de placer 11/14-15/97
- La vida es sueño 4/25/98
- Coser y cantar 7/18/98
- La eterna Eva y el insoportable Adán 11/14/98
- Cepillo de dientes 11/14/98
- Las mocedades del Cid 4/30 & 5/2/99
- Noches de amor efímero 8/99
- Una tal Raquel Fall 99-Summer 00
- Noche de los asesinos 4/00
- Fuschia 8/5-6/00
- Te juro Juana que tengo ganas 11/00
- Johnny Tenorio 4/01
- Delantal blanco/Lomo a lo pobre 8/4-5/01
- Casa de Bernarda Alba 11/16-17/01
- Cuentos infantiles for everyone 11/3-17/01
- Los cocorocos 4/02
- A Night with Martha Divine 8/02
- Funeral Home 11/02
- Hoy se comen al flaco 4/03
- Día de campo 11/20-21/03
- Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda 4/23-24/04
- Diatriba de amor contra un hombre sentado 7/04
- Ana en el trópico 11/04
- La muerte y la doncella 4/1-2/05
- Nosferatu 8/05
- Despúes de la lluvia 11/05
- Watsonville: Some Place Not Here 4/06
- Fron/teras 8/06
- Dog Lady 10/06
- Las Américas festival (includes “Estudio en blanco y negro,” “Fron/Teras,” “Justicia,” and “Voces.”) 11/17-18/06
- Locas de amar 4/27-28/07
- Crossing the Line 11/17/07
- Yo tengo un tío en América 4/4-5/08
- En esta esquina 8/08
- La mujer que cayó del cielo 11/08
- Nora Glickman short plays 11/08
- Beautiful Señoritas 3/09
- Kan Balaam 4/09
- Casa matriz 8/09
- Desiertos 11/09
- California’s Most Wanted 4/10
- El despojamiento 9/10
- References to Salvador Dalí make me hot 11/10
- Las mujeres de Ciudad Juárez 3/11
- FaceBOOKED 4/11
- “14” 10/11
- Iphigenia Crash Fall Lands on the Neon Shell that Was Once her Heart 3/12
- Adult Roy’s Badland 3/12
- Two Loves and A Creature 11/12
- Mother of Exiles 4/13

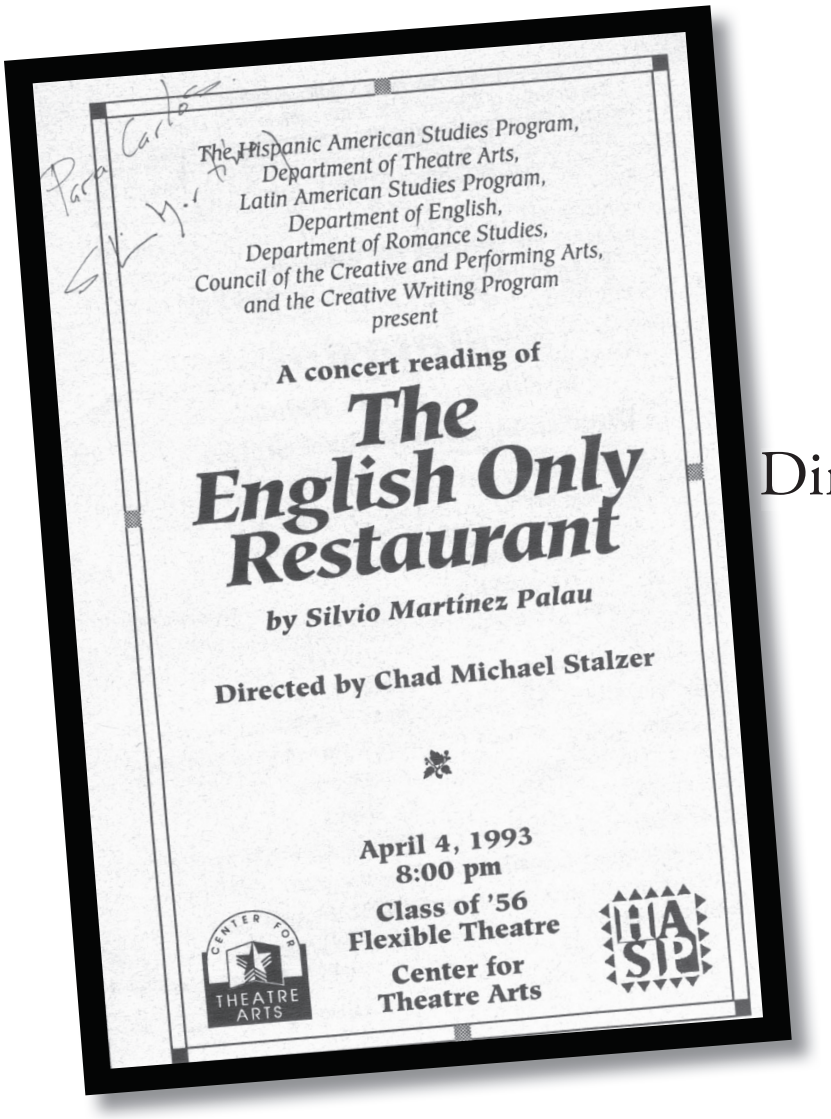
Producciones De Enlace Con La Comunidad

- Cuéntame Un Cuento (August 96)
- Health Care Provider (fall 98)
- Día de las madres (summer 99)
- Navidad de “Esperanza” (fall 99)
- María González (fall 02)
- Derechos de los Inmigrantes (May 04)
- El lobo de Belém (fall 06)
- Dailán Kifki and 4 de Maslíah (summer 10)
- The Way of Water (April 12)
- Tropicana Dreams (May 12)
- El Rey Frack (July 13)
- Somos Fuertes (November 13)



Fundado En 1993

Tercera Llamada, ¡Comenzamos!



English-Only Restaurant

By: *Silvio Martínez Palau*

4/4/93 At: *Schwartz Center*

Flexible Theatre

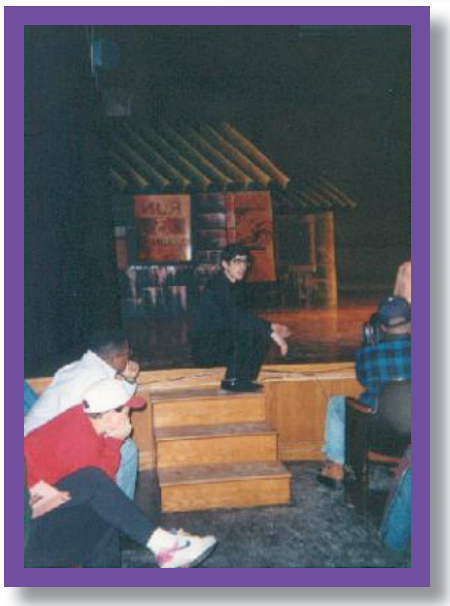
Directed by: *Chad Michael Stalzer*

Cuentos Sin Ton Ni Son

By: *Various Authors*

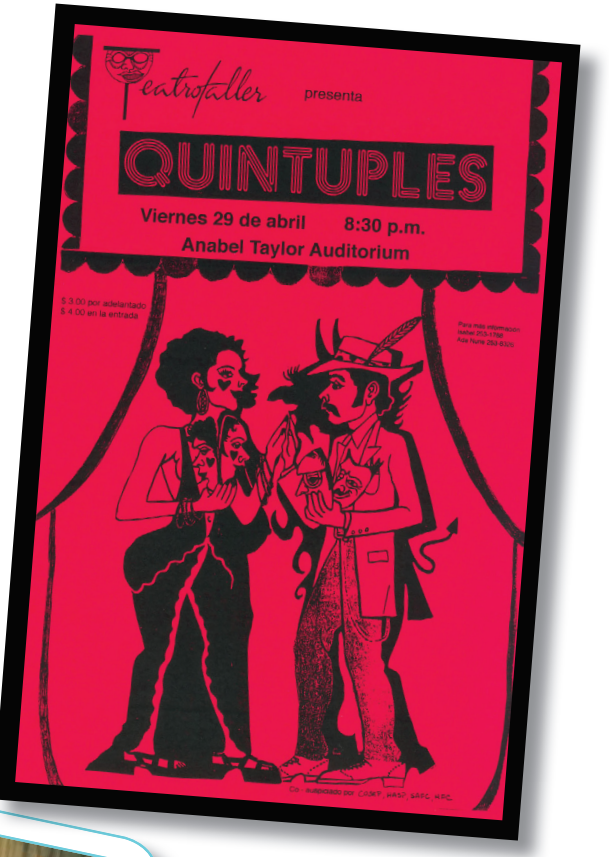
2/10/94 At: *Barnes Hall, Music Auditorium*

Directed by: *Isabel Ramos*



Quíntuples

By: *Luis Rafael Sánchez*
4/29/94 At: *Anabel Taylor Auditorium*
Directed by: *Isabel Ramos*



Botánica

By: *Dolores Prida*

10/18/94 At: *Statler Auditorium*

Directed by: *Isabel Ramos*

Sigma Lambda Upsilon/ Señoritas Latinas Unidas Sorority
presenta a

Teatrofaller

en

Botánica

de Dolores Prida

18 de octubre de 1994
Statler Auditorium

Rosa De Dos Aromas

By: *Emilio Carballido*

2/23 - 25/95 At: *Hartell Gallery, Sibley Hall*

Directed by: *Isabel Ramos*

Violines Y Trompetas

By: *Santiago Moncada*

11/17/95 At: *Statler Auditorium*

Directed by: *Isabel Ramos*

La Barca Sin Pescador

By: *Alejandro Casona* / adaptación bilingüe
4/13/96 At: *Kulp Auditorium,*
Ithaca High School
Directed by: *Isabel Ramos*

Color De Agosto

By: *Paloma Pedrero*

6/28 - 29/96 At: *Hartell Gallery, Sibley Hall*

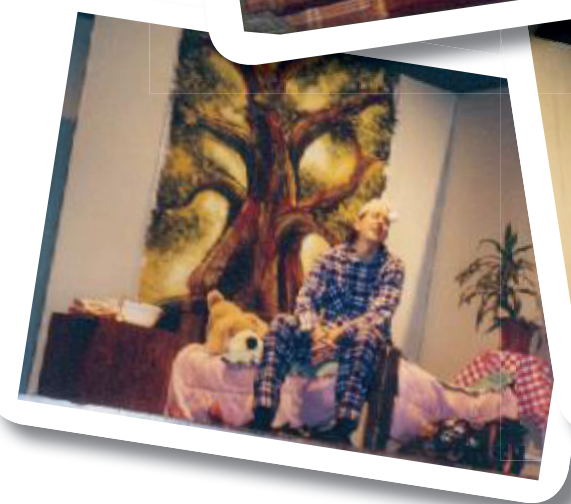
Directed by: *Isabel Ramos*

Tres Sombreros De Copa

By: *Miguel Mihura*

11/16/96 At: *Statler Auditorium*

Directed by: *Uriyoán Colón*



Farsa Del Amor Compradito

By: *Luis Rafael Sánchez*

5/3/97 At: *Statler Auditorium*

Directed by: *Uriyoán Colón*

Otro día en la locura de...

Uriyoán Colón Ramos

May 1997

Colombina recogió la cola de su traje con desespero y fijó su mirada en el más allá.¿Podría sentir el brillo de la iluminación reflejado en sus pestañas postizas? La máscaranegra que emplegostaba cada hilacha de material sintético se iba haciendo cada vez más pesada, y el fogoneo de la iluminación iba penetrando todas las capas de nilón-algodón blanco hasta quemar por dentro.

--¿Qué pasó, cue # 42? ¿qué pasó?

Esta pregunta cruzaba por todas las mentes de los otros miembros presentes, mientras iba acompañada por otros recuentos mentales, tales como el recordar aflautar la voz al entrar en personaje, mecerse mientras camine, mientras se detenga, mirar inocentemente hacia público, alzar la voz en el 'musical' atonar con el resto de los personajes.., y que no se le olvide que la alforja roja se colocó esta vez dentro del baúl, y que debe tomar menos tiempo el abrocharla, porque si no la música no alcanzaría hasta el final, además...

--Colombina ¿sientes la luz en tus pestañas?

¿Cómo no sentirla si llevaba más de quince minutos parada en el mismo espacio 2x2 que se le había conferido? Un 'sí' sonoro rebotó contra las paredes del auditorio. Desde las cabinas del más allá se oyen fragmentos de respuestas incoherentes:

--¿Cómo quedó el pasado? ¿Se oyó lo suficientemente alto?/Quedó perfecto, muy bien el sonido/ Lo que pasa es que acá luces tenemos que subirnos al techo otra vez y re-enfocar la ristra al frente, porque la volvieron a cambiar. Doña Ana no está aquí no cuadra/

Pues no te ves Colombina. Tienes sombras en la cara; recuerden, actores, que tienen que permanecer iluminados Busquen la luz.

Pulcinello se levanta de su silla trasbastidores, había estado practicando todo tipo de monerías y culivicentes con la capa.., que todavía no tenía. Al oír esta última dirección de buscar la luz Pirulí se acerca hacia el micrófono de trasbastidores y aprieta.

"Call"

--Señorita dictadora y presentes compañeros luminotécnicos me parece que la luz nos debe buscar a nosotros, y no al revés.

Silencio. "Ah, tengo sueño, tengo hambre, estoy cansado, tengo exámenes..." La señorita Quintina que en esos momentos ejerce sus derechos de entrar al cuarto de los chicos sin ser reportada, deja escapar un suspiro largo y hambriento,

--Tengo hambre,

--Yo también Quinta, Quintinita,.. responde el moñudo de Pirulí Pulcinello.—Ultrájame.

--Esa línea no es tuya, moñudo.., además no tengo de qué qujarme, mi marido, el corredor de bienes raíces, era un galgo en la noche ¡¡que hombros tenía!!-Quintina se asoma coquetamente al espejo y arregla los rolos que cuelgan de su cabellera negra.

Toques en la puerta de los chicos. "Quintina, ya nos toca. Acuérdate de llenar la copa del General con agua."

La puerta se abre y aparece, enclaustrada en el marco de la misma, un personaje indiscutiblemente revolucionario. Madame se calza sus tacones de 6 pulgadas, agarra a Quintina por la manga y se aleja del camerino con sus pasos cortos y su andar furtivo, arrastrando tras de sí todo un embrollo de rolos y peluca.

Pulcinello, encontrándose sólo en su camerino, y absolutamente cansado de practicar sus chistecitos, decide salir a entre bastidores. Allí parados se encuentran Pierrot y Goyito Verde, practicando todo tipo de punzadas y cortes

con cuchillos imaginarios.

Goyito se ha apropiado de un bastón y hace y deshace como le parece. “Que siga la farsa!’

Los dos se han puesto detrás de las cortinas transparentes y ensayan más monerías de las que se supone, provocando carcajadas de las escasas cinco personas que se encuentran como público esa noche. Pirulí avanza hacia ellos y enuncia la Quinta Palabra:

“Tengo sed.”

Del otro lado de las cortinas se asoma una cabeza ensombretada y con voz firme exclama: “Pum, pum, pum… creo que deberíamos coger un descanso”, Por alguna razón al oír esas palabras el resto de la producción se calló por par de segundos, y desde escena se oyeron las voces de las tres ‘compraditas”: Todavía no te toca/ Eso no es todavía no entras, General/ Asistente, asistente 10:4, déme un reporte de lo que sucede trasbastidores, el General no entra todavía.”

Fuera de escena Arlequín camina entre las filas de sillas del auditorio. Así mismo saca tres bolines y comienza a jugar con ellos a la vez que un figurín endemoniado surge de abajo de su camisa. El escaso público vuelve a vertir toda su atención fuera de escena;

Arlequín ejerce todo tipo de esfuerzos por permanecer en la vista del público, y ya se ha convertido en un espectáculo aparte. Tal vez debería utilizar un antifaz... ¿quién sabe?

Un antifaz escondería las expresiones faciales, pero a la vez expresaría el sentido de la farsa.., es una opción, tal vez dejarlo en la cabeza parcialmente para las entradas y salidas...

--Muy bien, muy bien. Nos gustó mucho este acto; descanso entre actos que tomará tres minutos, pero para los efectos ahora vamos a seguirlo corrido.

Arlequín sube a escena por trasbastidores dispuesto/a a colocarse en su sitio para comenzar el próximo acto. Las tres “donnas” que se encontraban abrazándose en escena corren detrás de las cortinas.

--Asistente, prevenido, cierre cortinas ahora. Luces, sonido, prevenidos...

—Prevenidos, luces.

--Sonido…un momento, estoy tratando de encontrar ‘Naranja Dulce’ en este cassette,

¿Dónde está el muchacho que se supone esté a cargo del auditorio esta noche? Coquí, no entiendo este sistema...

--Actores, un momento, estamos teniendo problemas con el sistema de sonido. Arlequín, usted que es poeta y todo lo compone, ¿puede ayudarnos a buscar al chico del auditorio?

Detrás de las cortinas se oye un sublime parloteo insensato. La maquinista corre de una esquina a otra retocando maquillaje y pestañas postizas a la vez que pide a gritos;

“I need some help here... I need a make-up assistant, what’s up with the people of costumes?” La gente de vestuario sale de otra esquina remota, entre carcajadas y agujas, tratando de atar la cola del traje de Colombina. Mientras tanto Quintina se deja pasar un poco más de barra de labios que le ha prestado Madame. Goyito, tan viejo verde como ha de ser, se acerca silenciosamente

por detrás de Quintina, y susurra: “Quinta es la mujer que me templa las cuerdas.” Madame, en un grito desaforado, le reestablece la coherencia: “Óyeme, putón, más respeto con éstas…” Quintina, sin embargo, suelta al aire unos besos ensayados.

Así transcurre trasbastidores mientras afuera ya ha llegado más potencial de público: la diseñadora de escenografía y sus ayudantes. Andan con bolsas de flores y maletines de herramientas, A pesar del desaforeo detrás de las cortinas, que el asistente trata de calmar—o de auspiciar--se oyen los pensamientos en voz alta de la diseñadora:

“Aja, un poco más de color en ese medio negro no vendría nada mal… ¿Cómo funcionaron las cortinas transparentes? Ah, …. se ven muy bien. A ver, que hagan piruetas y cosas, para verlos, ¿las puertas abren y cierran con facilidad? Voy a treparme en escena para arreglar unos mínimos detalles….”

De atrás de las cortinas el bullicio ha ido aumentando y ya es entendible un grito unísono para/con la justicia: “Directora, dictadora; directora, dictadora,,.”

Del micrófono se oye la voz desesperada entretenida asistente:” 10:4, 10:4, a dirección, los actores se han rebelado” Cinco minutos de caos en lo que la maquinista, las de vestuario y escenografía, por alguna razón campos dominados por el elemento femenino, apean el escenario. Del aparato de micrófonos se oyen las ondas inconfundibles de la tortura; la voz de la dirección es el cuco de la noche...

“OK, vamos a cogerlo otra vez--desde el principio!’

Suplicio De Placer

By: *Sabina Berman*

11/14 - 15/97 At: *Risley Auditorium*

Directed by: *Uriyoán Colón*

La Vida Es Sueño

By: *Pedro Calderón De La Barca*

4/25/98

At: *Martha Van Rensselaer Auditorium*

Directed by: *Jacobo Bibliowicz & Calie Santana*

De cómo me convertí en dictadora (digo, directora)

May 1998

Calie Santana

Erase una vez dos novatos directores que, en su inexperiencia, decidieron que entre ambos podían dirigir, producir (y hasta actuar) en una adaptación de La vida es sueño de Pedro Calderón de la Barca. Este maestro de la literatura española se dispuso, quizás en algún rato de ocio, como resultado de alguna quimera de amor o provocado por alguna duda teológica, a escribir una obra de . . . pues, ¿de qué es esta obra? De todo. En los parlamentos se habla y se habla, y a veces parece que no se dice nada, pero tomada toda junta, surge una obra densa y muy provocativa. "Deep" dirían por estos lares, pero más que un conjunto palabras rebuscadas sin más intención que la de impresionar a la audiencia, esta obra es sobre todo, personal. Su calidad radica en la asombrosa capacidad que tiene para hacernos pensar en el mundo que nos rodea la "realidad" que vivimos o que pensamos que vivimos.

Pero empezemos por el principio. Erase una vez dos ilusos estudiantes de último año que decidieron tomar las riendas de Teatrotaller inego de que la segundadirectora del grupo, Uriyoán Colón, prefiriera un semestre en la Ciudad de las Luces, a otro invierno en Ithaca. No la culpo (aunque este invierno no estuvo tan mal). Locierto es que, a lo Titanic ("You jump, I jump") decidimos, pues . . . dar salto. ¡Yqué salto! Supongo que para Jacky (mi querido co-director Jacobo Bibliowicz fue paso grande, pero que proseguía con su metamorfosis de luminotécnico (y "stuntsman") a miembro del elenco, y ahora director. Para mí fue un cambio drástico que me transplantó de mis labores como tesorera y ayudante de escenografía, al creativo de la dirección. Aunque puede ser que el toque de drama que hay que impartirle a las reunions en defensa de nuestro presupuesto me prepararon para esta empresa.

Lo cierto es que decidimos dirigir juntos, probablemente mas por impedir queTeatrotaller fallara en brindarle a Ithaca una producción teatral este semestre, y paradejar nuestra huella en este lugar que nos hospedado por cuatro años, que porque estuviéramos interesados en dirigir como tal. De ésto me di cuenta ya en febrero cuando comenzamos los ensayos y desubrí lo que iba a estar haciendo por el resto del semestre. Pero en diciembre todavía no teníamos ni obra. A Jacky se le ocurrió que deberíamos hacer un clásico, algo más serio, porque Teatrotaller se ha distinguido más por traer comedias y obras modernas a Cornell. Estuve de acuerdo en hacer algo ''diferente" y aunque me sospechaba que iba a ser_más difícil que montar algo breve y moderno, pensé que entre dos se haría más fácil. Ahora pienso que equivoqué en lo primero y acerté en la segundo. Dirigir cualquier obra es difícil aunque, ciertamente, los retos de La vida es sueño no son los mismos que los dehacer Flores de papel o Información para visitantes.

Llegó el momento de escoger una obra y Debbie, en su calidad de profesora y consejera del grupo nos recomendó que la escogiéramos ante de irnos para así poder ordenar los libros con anticipación y estar preparados para trabajar tan pronto comenzaran las clases. Esto seguramento o hubiera ahorrado mucho tiemp porque pudimos haber trabajado en un concepto de la obra durante las vacaciones. De todos modos, entre tantos viajes que yo tuve, los exámenes y otras preocupaciones, lo más que pudimos hacer fue reducir la lista a Don Tuan Tenorio y Entremeses de Cervantes, si mi memoria no me falla, ni La vida es sueño ni Bodas de sangre estuvieron entre las finalistas en ese momento. No recuerdo con exactitud cómo estas dos últimas obras llegaron a ser nuestras preferidas pero cuando regresamos campus a finales de enero decidimos audicionar con ellas en mente.

Considero que el problema de escoger obras a tiempo es una de las dificultades mayores las que se enfrenta Teatrotaller. Ahora que existe la posibilidad de tener el auditorio de Statler reservado con antelación, quizás Teatrotaller deba comenzar audicionar el semestre anterior a la obra. Así equipo técnico/creativo puede formular un concepto y tenerlo bastante refinado para cuando empiezen los ensayos. Esto también ayudaría a los profesores de español de Cornell y otras universidades y escuelas superiores del área a preparar sus estudiantes para ver obra. En el caso de La vida es sueño, tanto los actores como el futuro público se hubieran beneficiado de tener más tiempo para analizar y estudiar la obra. Creo que el desvincular el proceso de escoger la obra del proceso de escoger el elenco beneficiaría a Teatrotaller, pues así las audiciones se concentrarían en examinar el talento del actor para algún personaje en específico, y los

interesados vendrían preparados a leer ciertos parlamentos. Es injusto esperar que una persona se convierta en un personaje como Rosaura o Segismundo en los 10 o 15 minutos que les damos para que se preparen para audicionar.

Pasaron los días de las audiciones y aún no teníamos obra. Escoger la obra se hizo difícil porque Jacky prefería La vida es sueño y a mí me gustaba más Bodas de sangre. Me parecía que La vida es sueño iba a ser mucho más difícil de comunicarai público y que era demasiado seria para mi gusto. Además, estaba ilusionada con la idea de colaborar con Sabor Latino para los bailes y de explotar todo potencial decolor y drama que contiene la obra de Federico García Lorca. Debo admitir que no teníamos el elenco para hacer Bodas de sangre este semester, aunque me encantaría que Teatrotaller la hiciera en el futuro. Esta obra exige un elenco audaz, que seatreva a ser dramático y hasta trágico, sin caer en el cinismo. Es difícil entender la rivalidad a muerte del campo lorquiano desde nuestra perspectiva tan urbana (aún en Ithaca. En nuestra sociedad, muy pocas cosas que todavia se consideran tan sagradas que hay quien esté dispuesto a morir por ellas, y el buen nombre parece haberse borrado de esta categoria. Por consiguiente, no estamos familiarizados con el concepto de las afrentas heredadas, que se perpetúan a sí mismas e intentan (infrutuosamente) reprimir las energias más primitivas de los hombres y las mujeres.

Precisamente, las diatribas de Rosaura y su falta de honor fueron probablemente lo que más trabajo nos dio entender y por consiguiente adaptar. Aunque estoy satisfecha con el concepto que ideamos para sustituir a la corte del rey Basilio por los salones de conferencia de las Industrias Polonia, creo que la desesperación de Rosaura solo se entiende acabalidad dentro del contexto del 17. En el ámbito moderno, su insistencia se puede interpretar como un deseo devenganza a causa de un engaño, pero no como la tragedia de una mujer agraviada, lo cual tiene implicaciones mucho más serias. De todos modos, fue interesante ayudar a Laura Aquino a construir un_personaje con una determinación inalterable y lleno de energías para luchar por su meta. El problema es que Calderón nunca define bien cuál es esa meta y, a consequencia, justificar la actitud de Rosaura, se hace doblemente difícil en el contexto de los años noventa. Astolfo le dice "Yo tuya, villano . . . ¡mientes!" y luego, en última escena de obra, se muestra satisfecha con la decision de Segismundo de exigirle a Astolfo que se case con ella.

Creo que si hubiera tenido más tiempo y más energías, hubiera rescrito el final, pues si Rosaura se sabe de buena familia, no tiene por qué casarse con un camaleón como Astolfo, simplemente porque cometió el error de creerle sus promesasanteriormente. Pero mejor no entrar en terreno telnovelero porque no acabaríamos nunca.

Me parece que entiendo mejor lucha de Rosaura por algo que ocurrió el primer día de ensayos. Laura y yo nos quedamos en un salón mientras Jacky, Jacob Rodríguez (Segismundo) y Eldar Noé (el Clotaldo original, aunque luego lo hizo Jacky) buscaban otro salón para practicar la segunda parte de la primera escena. Siempre que leía esta obra (un total como de cuatro veces), la entrada de Rosaura me parecía confusa e innecesariamente rebuscada. Laura me miraba comoesperando que yo le diera alguna dirección yo lo que hacía era preguntarme en silencio: ¿qué se supone que yo haga ahora?, ¿qué palabras sabias le puedo yo decir a esta muchacha que no conozco, para que dé vida a estos improperios que ni yo mism entiendo bien? Lo único que se me ocurrió fue decirle que leyera las líneas porque creo que una de las instrucciones para los directores del Production Manual que Isabel Ramos escribió, era que una debía dejar que los actors descubrieran los matices de sus personajes y que se sintieran en control del proceso creativo.

También crea que leí que el director siempre debe parecer que sabe lo que está haciendo aunque no tenga ni idea de nada. Lo cierto es que mientras Laura empezaba con su ya famoso "Hipógrifo violento que corrías parejas con el viento. . . ", como por arte de magia, me di cuenta por fin del propósito de esas palabras, y de la función que servían para establecer a Rosaura como personaje y a ltrama de la obra. Desde ese momento comencé a_ saborearme el proceso de discutir con los actores cómo debían entonar sus líneas y qué emociones sentían sus personajes en cada escena. Descubri lo fascinante de la puesta en escena de una obra comparada con simplemente leerla. El teatro puede darle vida a la voz de la conciencia, a la voz de un amigo, de un amante o de un padre, a la voz de la Muerte, o la voz de la Historia (o la historia). Es impresionante ver y escuchar a otro decir algo que quizás antes uno ha pensado o sentido.

Probablemente la trama de La vide es sueño no sea ya pertinente, y el textosea. muy difícil de entender para la mayoría de los de los hispanoparlantes modernos, pero estoy convencida de que el 25 de abril, Teatrotaller le comunico

al público un extraño sentido de familiaridad y de intimidad. Quizás seguimos llendo al teatro, aunque disponemos de otras formas de entretenimiento, porque nos recuerda a las vees que nos contaron historias de antes de ir a la cama_o alrededor de una fogata bajo las estrellas. Nunca he conocido a nadie a quien le haya pasado algo como lo que le pasó a los personajes de esta obra y sin embargo, cuando

me senté en balcón de MVR el día de la obra, me pude identificar con la furia de Segismundo, con la curiosidad y la irreverencia de Clarín, con el sentido de culpa de Basilio, y con la guerra no declarada entre Rosaura y Estrella. No sé hasta que punto le hicimos justicia a esta obra, pero sé que pasará mucho tiempo antes de que deje de decir "¡Válgame cielo!" cuando algo me sorprende, o que escuche la canción Bésame mucho y no piense en "Pésame mucho" de Basilio, o que no se me escape una carcajada al oír la frase ¡es grande!". Es una pena . . . en Harvard, ya nadie me llamará "Fornia."

Quiero que queden aquí, en récord. los nombres de aquéllos que nos ayudaron y cuyos nombres no aparecieron en el programa:

Escenografía
Teresa Delgado (diseño)
Cristina Delgado
Ronald Urdaz
Chema Garrido
Edcel ….

Luces:
Colbert Valdéz (diseño)
Benita_González
Jermaine Soto
Marta Valdivia
Gary Ingraham (equipo de Cornell Media Services)
Y lista del elenco con los nombres de los personajes que faltó en el programa:

Pilar Alvarez-Palazio-	Secretaría
Laura Aquino-	Rosaura
Jacobo Bibliowicz-	Clotaldo
José Cruz-	Basilio
Miguel Dangond-	Astolfo
Benita González-	Estrella
Jimmy Nieves-	Criado, Soldado
Rachel Pulverman-	Soldado
Jacob Rodríguez-	Segismundo
Jermaine Soto-	Criado, Soldado
Bryant Tenorio-	Criado, Soldado
ColbertValdez-	Clarín
Martha Valdivia-	Secretaria

*Eldar Noe (no actuó por razones ajenas a su voluntad)

Coser y Cantar

A Spanglish Play By: *Dolores Prida*

7/18/98 At: *Hollis E. Cornell Auditorium*

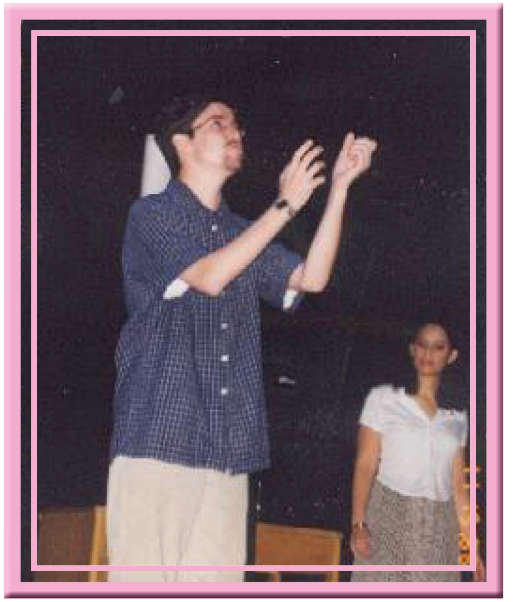
Directed by: *Colbert Alembert (Valdéz)*

La Eterna Eva Y El Insoportable Adán

By: *Carmen Quidello de Bosch*

11/14/98 At: *Statler Auditorium*

Directed by: *María del Rocío Galarza*



Cepillo De Dientes

By: *Jorge Díaz*

11/14/98 At: *Statler Auditorium*

Directed by: *Colbert Alembert (Valdéz)*

Las Mocedades Del Cid

By: *Guillén De Castro y Bellvis*

4/30/99 & 5/2/99 At: *Statler Auditorium*

Directed by: *Colbert Alembert (Valdéz)*

Directing Las Mocedades del Cid

Colbert Alembert (Valdéz) *May 1999*

Mi experiencia con Tetrotaller este semestre fue una experiencia muy educativa e intensa con una variedad de aspectos tanto positivos como negativos, No cabe duda queel resultado fue algo increíblemente fenomenal donde todos los aspectos de mi visión

artística se hicieron realidad como una réplica por la mayor parte. Sin duda la colaboración de otras personas fue lo que hizo este resultado posible aun con mucho más eficiencia. Por otro lado, creo que el proceso por el cual pasé, adjunto a otros colegas, para hacer esta producción realidad pudo haber sido mucho más calmante. De manera que tenemos dos aspectos importantes inculcados en esta experiencia, los cuales son el proceso de la producción y el resultado de la misma. Éste fue sin duda uno de los más deleitosos y satisfactorios que he visto hasta este entonces. El otro (el proceso) fue un poco decepcionante por lo tanto creo que pudo haber sido más eficiente. Pienso que en cualquier organización teatral, no obstante el calibre de la producción, es imprescindible tener un balance de los dos aspectos dado que uno influye al otro y si uno de estos dos aspectos falta, la calidad y posible satisfacción creada por la representación tendrá un resultado inesperado.

El resultado fue uno de los resultados más divinos que he visto durante mi experiencia teatral. Al inicio tenía tantos sueños de poder hacer esta producción realidadque sin duda estaba esperando una gran cantidad de retos. De tal modo hize lo que pude, liderazgo que una producción de tal naturaleza requiere. Pienso que para poder realizar tal sueño de manera eficaz se tiene que empezar por la organización de grupo, la cual en semestres anteriores ha afectado bastante el trabajo y resultado la producción. Mas sin embargo este semestre no hay dudar que el nivel de organización que tratamos de mantener tuvo un gran efecto en el trabajo de todos y que ayudó bastante a poder llevar a cabo tal producción de manera deleitosa y de gran calidad. Luego llegó el resultado, el cual es la representación de la obra. Los diseños quedaron de maravilla, el flujo artístico fue natural y enérgico, y más importante aun, la reacción general de la audiencia fue muy emocionante. La audiencia por la mayor parte quedó impresionada al ver una producción que les causó tanta alegría y satisfacción.

También debo comentar sobre otros aspectos del resultado sin relación primaria al resultado artístico, tales como los aspectos de relaciones públicas (programas, boletos, etc.) y la puntualidad y coherencia que se mostró durante la representación. Los programas, no obstante algunos errores gramaticales, quedaron genial e incluso tales partes como el sinopsis hicieron la experiencia de muchos miembros de la audiencia aun más encantadora. Esto es bastante importante porque creo que nuestro objetivo en términos de audiencia es mucho más que adquirir una audiencia hispanohablante. De manera que al proveer una sinopsis en inglés expresamos nuestro honor al recibir una gran variedad de personas que están interesadas en aprender nuevos aspectos de nuestra cultura por medio de una experiencia teatral. La puntualidad, aunque se empezó unos diez minutos tarde, creo que también fue muy efectiva dado a que no se les hizo esperar por tanto tiempo, sobre todo durante el intermedio, y el sentirse satisfecho fuera de la representación también es esencial. El encanto que recibieron tantas personas fue una de las cosas maravillosas que me encantó y lo que sin duda hizo que esta producción fuese tan exitosa. Esto es dado a que uno de mis propósitos al participar en una producción, sobre todo al dirigir una obra, es poder afectar de alguna manera u otra a nuestra audiencia, preferiblemente de manera positiva, y de poder aprender de ellos para así mejorar ciertos aspectos en el futuro siempre y cuando esté ami alcance.

Este semestre Teatrotaller fue la experiencia más intensa que he tenido en mi vida hasta este entonces. A la vez fue la experiencia más educativa que me ha enseñado cosas que recordaré para el resto de mi vida. No obstante algunos de los retos inmensurables y de las dificultades que encontré, fue el resultado más divino que he podido experimentar y el sueño más encantador que he gozado al poderlo hacer realidad. Espero que en el futuro se sigan haciendo producciones tan prestigiosas y deleitosas y que se puedan mejorar algunos de los aspectos y así se puedan llevar a cabo estos resultados con mucho más eficacia.

Working on costumes for Mocedades del Cid

May 1999

Elisha A. Ramos

When my advisor suggested Spanish literature 301 (Spanish Theater) in order to fulfill my credit requirement, a look of utter despair glazed over my face. I had absolutely no experience with theater, unless of course one would consider being Cinderella in a fourth grade play "experience". I had anticipated something like this happening. There had to be some other classes available but, much to my dismay, she offered no other options. Things never seem to work out. I half-heartedly nodded my head to the suggestion, grabbed an add/drop slip, made my way out into the crowded hallway and thus began my journey into what was to be one of my most memorable experiences.

Being a part of Teatrotaller has been quite an experience for me. Even though I did get involved a bit late there was no work loss. I had absolutely no idea what to expect. When Kevin let me know that I would be a part of the costume design crew, I immediately thought, "Now how difficult can that be? It's not like we're going to be making anything from scratch." ERR, wrong again Elisha, and boy was I in for a big surprise. When I met with Joyce, the costume designer, I finally had a chance to see her sketches. At first sight I thought to myself, "What do I look like? Part of Donna Karen's design crew." I let her know as soon as possible that I could not sew to save my life. I couldn't even sew a button on a shirt! I saw a little grimace cross her face and she replied, "Believe me, there's going to be a lot more to this than just sewing, And it's really not that difficult to learn how to sew." I was then told there were only going to be 4 people working on costumes and out of the four, only one was experienced in sewing (Joyce herself). I was in disbelief. How did something that seemed as simple as picking out an outfit, turn into what seemed as a monstrosity of an undertaking.

We decided to have a meeting that following Thursday. We were told we had a designated room at Goldwin Smith, so that's where we began. The first meeting wasn't as tough as I had expected (I'm such a pessimist sometimes!). We had to begin with the basics, pattern cutting. So that's what occupied the whole time. We had a chance to get to know one another and I realized something quite interesting. I had this notion that since it was Spanish Theater production, most, if not all the people involved, would have heritage in a Spanish speaking country. I was quite surprised to see that half the costume crew defied my misconception! She told us that the next time we met, we would begin with cutting out fabric, and perhaps have time to sew some of the pieces together. I left there feeling a little less intimidated, thanks to the fact that I wasn't the only one who had no clue as to what they were doing. I realized that I had to take things as they came, tackle each obstacle when faced with it.

That's exactly what I did. The following meeting came and I faced my biggest fear, the "machine." At first glance it looked quite harmless, but I was forewarned about how malicious it could be. Well once underway, I was sewing my first garment! We continued to cut out more patterns and more material, while I continued my snails pace with the robe I was attempting to sew. I'd say nine times out of the ten, either Colbert or Kevin would stop by to see how things were going. It was a positive thing cause it kept us on our toes. Colbert was a tough guy to please but he was usually well aware of things that didn't only pertain to the actual acting out of the play. He made constructive criticism and tried to be fair when delegating tasks.

It felt kind of strange cause each group was so removed from one another. The actors and actresses, scene design, costume crew, public relations, etc. were all off and running with their individual goals. I thought it was great the way the weekly Monday meetings were divided. It saved a lot of time and the interaction with Colbert, and other members was invaluable. Crunch time came for us two weeks before tech week. We were told that we would be moving in costumes on the Monday of tech week. Joyce seemed to have it under control but we did end up seeing a lot more of each other. We'd spend two even three times a week for good number of hours just working away, I hope this doesn't sound bad in anyway but we started to call it "Our little sweatshop". Since we only had one machine, Joyce had us sign up for slots during the week. She would have only one of us meet with her so it seemed like we were becoming even more separated, I was amazed because one day we would cut a dress pattern and the next time we saw Joyce, the dress was

put together. She did such a great job.

While she handled the making of the women's clothing, we handled the men (there was a lot more room for error:).Once tech week rolled around, we still had quite a few things to do. We spent a good part of that Monday trying to cut down the workload. That was the only night that week that I actually got home early. Come Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday I found myself at Statler to the wee hours of morning. Actually I couldn't believe my ears when Joyce told me she had been there from anywhere from 4-6 am. Who knew it would turn out to be this much work. I underestimated it big time. Joyce thought we would be able to have everything done by Monday but we were still working those two hours before the show. The "biggest" dilemma came that Tuesday night when a model shoe that Joyce made didn't look as good as she had expected. That was the first time I had ever seen her panic but with the groups calming tactics and suggestions, the situation was back under control. It was kind of funny when I had to go out to the auditorium to ask one of the actors to try on the shoe. He tried it on and started dancing around saying "Look at me, I'm peterpan or something out of Star Wars." I just laughed and said, "Hey not everything can be perfect." It eventually served its purpose well.

Finally the big day had come and even I had the jitters. Seeing our hard work on stage would be the most rewarding thing of all. We were all back stage. Actors and actresses were getting prepped. We were doing some last minute ironing. The stage crew was attending to their props. We could faintly here the whispering voices of the fight crew over the intercom en el cuarto de "maquillaje." Everything was finally coming together. Joyce came over, handed me a scarf, a couple of safety pins, and said, "Here, try to make this into a turban for the Moorish king." With minutes to showtime, I doubted my talents. I managed to pull something off and most people who passed by commented on how "cool" it looked. Hey, I was satisfied that it just stayed on okay, I didn't want him losing it into the crowd once the swashbuckling began. Someone yelled out "5 minutes to curtain!" and the fuss began. The Queen (Adis) still needed to have her veil and crown attached, we eventually thought of something.

Finally the actresses and actors took their

place on stage and that was our "Q" to make our way into the audience. We scurried to our seats, and waited for the curtain to rise. The infamous song (from hearing it so many times during tech week) droned on, the curtain rose, the King and Queen made the grandentrance, and the cast lay before us. The costumes were beautiful and the play was great.

Teatrotaller's hard work had paid off. That Saturday evening I came down with a bad head cold and I unfortunately could not make the second showing but I heard that it went just as well. After it was all over I eventually resumed my usual routine but I had this strange feeling I was missing something. Perhaps it was the stale smell of the room that sort of had become my second home for two weeks, or maybe the musical hum of the sewing machine in the background, well whatever it was I still find myself thinking how good it felt to be a part of something of that magnitude.

With most critiques, negative comments are often times plentiful, however, not in this one. Overall I was extremely satisfied with my experience and I'm sure this is something I will plan to do again. I was impressed on how well a student run organization can produce something that looked so professional. I really enjoyed this class and hope to be a part of it again, perhaps dealing with a different aspect of production next time.

Noches De Amor Efímero

By: *Paloma Pedrero*

8/99 At: *Barnes Hall Auditorium*

Directed by: *Jacobo Bibliowicz*

Una Tal Raquel

World Premiere Performance

By: *Nora Glickman*

Fall 99 & Summer 00

Directed by: *Jacobo Bibliowicz*

Backstage with Una tal Raquel

December 1999

I have completed another semester with the group and I'm just as excited to start on a third. As a theatre major, working with you guys gave me a chance to learn things in non-threatening environment. I was able to explore lighting, walking on the catwalk, and taking down blocking, for the first time since I graduated three years ago from high school. Working on Una Tal Raquel, has truly been the highlight of my semester. The rush I get from working on a show, the sense of accomplishment, being a part of something. This has been a chance to further work on team building skills, and building my confidence.

The team part I'm usually pretty good at, it's the other part that I have trouble with. Its funny, really self-consciousness is not something going into theatre that I would think I would have problems with.. And I

definitely figured it to be something I would have gotten over by now. However I haven't, so this has really helped me in the continual process of overcoming it.

There is no pressure in the group, We are encouraged to try things out, and to explore. We are allowed to work on what interests us and to fully explore as much as we want to. We do not to have to have prior knowledge in what we want to do. The group never makes us feel inadequate or stupid, for wanting to try things out. The environment is one of love and support, it reminds me a lot of my high school theatre club, maybe that's is why I feel so comfortable around everyone.

It is true that I am a part of the theater department at CTA, but I do not always feel comfortable in CTA. When. I am there I feel a lot of people are always trying to prove something...yes that is exactly it, I do not feel that I need to prove anything to this group.

The one thing that I expected to be a bit of a problem, was the fact that I speak virtually no Spanish I live in a mainly Spanish area, so the words aren't foreign to me like French or German, but the language barrier is still there. It doesn't bother me though and ironically enough as non-Spanish speaking person, I only have to listen to what is said in English, sorting through only those small bits to extract the important stuff I need to know.

Athena Harris

This being my second play I have done with the group, I feel as if I'm acquiring another family in a way. For me theatre has always been like having an extended family, with its high points and its low points, its bickering, its laughing, its frustration, its pride. The post show blues, when only those who have gone through can really understand.

When I enrolled in the course for credit, I wandered if that would effect the way I would feel about the group and people, and just the whole thing in general. But, it didn't; it wasn't all that much different this time around then the first time around. The only difference was that somehow taking it for credit made the bond I had with the whole thing stronger.

Doing the play for credit did not as I feared take away form my schedule. It in fact lightened it up, instead of burdening it. All of my other classes had their good moments and their bad ones, but this class, this play was always good. I was always enjoying myself and having fun, even during the difficult times, someone was there with a joke. No matter what happened we knew we were in it together, and only together could we make it come together.

Una Tal Raquel was very exhilarating and energizing, allowing me to do something that I not only want to make a career out of, but also something I love to do. It's funny, because now I'm getting college credit, one day I'll be getting money. This class was the embodiment of what I want to do, what I want to be a part of.

Una Tal Raquel has been a learning experience not just in the theatre realm but also in a historical one as well. I learned for the first time through working with the group, that there was such a thing as Jews in South America. It was a lesson that I abstractly knew, but never really come face to face with it. Its something they leave out of part of history on the Jews. I was lead to believe they all settled here. I know cultures are everywhere, with all different types of peoples, who believe different types of things, but it still wasn't something I'd heard before or even knew people who belonged to that particular group.

I will forever be grateful that I had a chance to learn something that I'll make sure to tell my children that was learned out of the standard academic

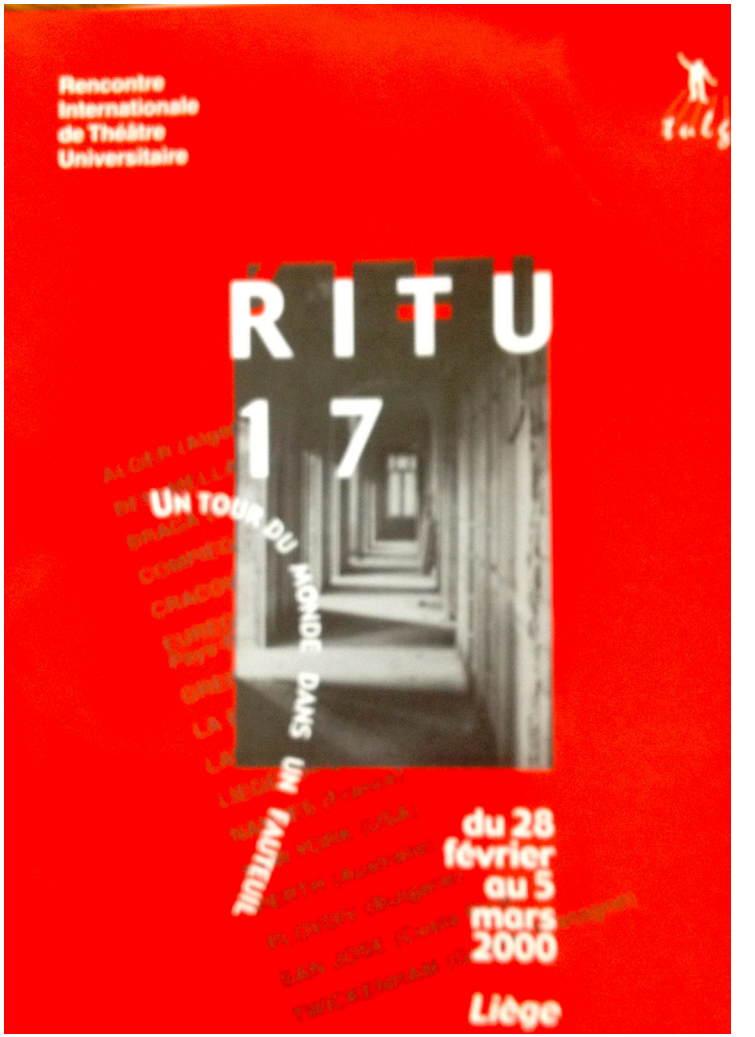
classroom—especially since it should have been something I learned in the standard academic classroom.

It was pretty funny most of the time trying to change those gels, and lowering and raising the electric all the time. It's a show that depends mostly on lights, so there was always a lot of adjustment of something. Then there was the whole catwalk thing. I have never been on one, and I'm not too sure I'm ready to go back up there. But I did have fun up there, or should I say looking back I had fun up there.

I still feel connected with the show, maybe it is because its being put on again 3 more times, I don't know but I do not have that continual the show is over feeling. It is a bittersweetness that happens after

every show I work I on. I had a bout of the sniffles either the opening night or right before our second performance.

There is something magical about working to get a show up and then in less time it takes to wash, dry, and fold laundry, its all over. It leaves you breathless for a bit. But it's an experience that I love to repeat over and over again. Theatre is a place of magic. One never knows what is going to happen, with the set, light, sound; but most importantly it is the actors who surprise us and makes us forget for a short amount of time the world around us. The technical is what I love to do, but it is the actors and director who make what we techies do all the more worthwhile.

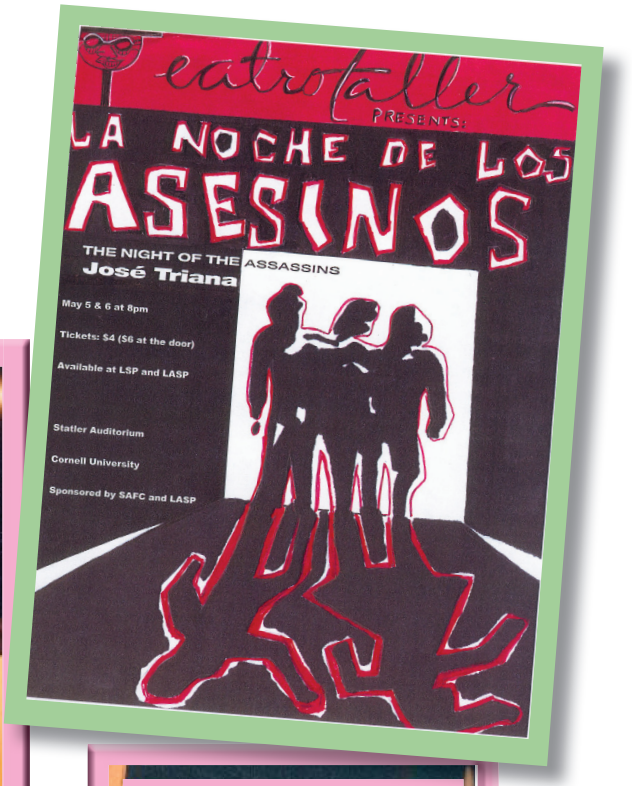


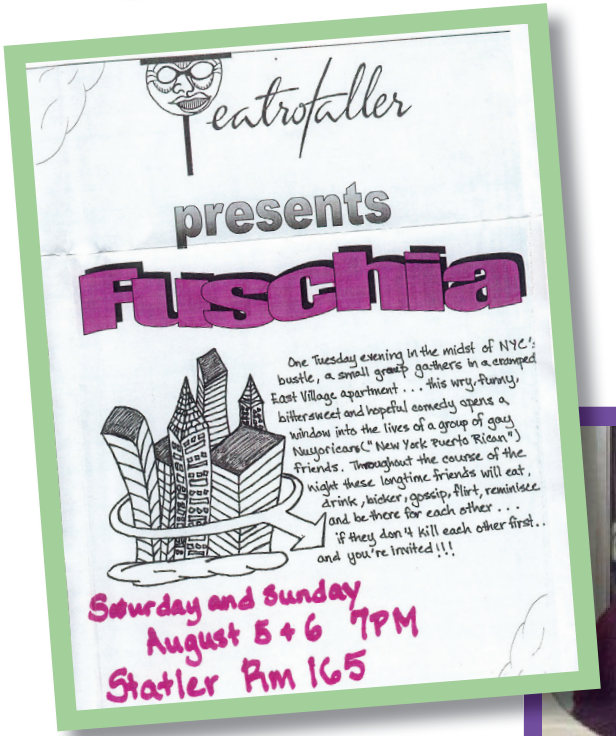
Noche De Los Asesinos

By: *José Triana*

4/00 At: *Statler Auditorium*

Directed by: *Alexander Santiago-Jirau*





Fuschia

By: *Janis Astor Del Valle*

8/5 -6/00 At: *Statler Room 165*

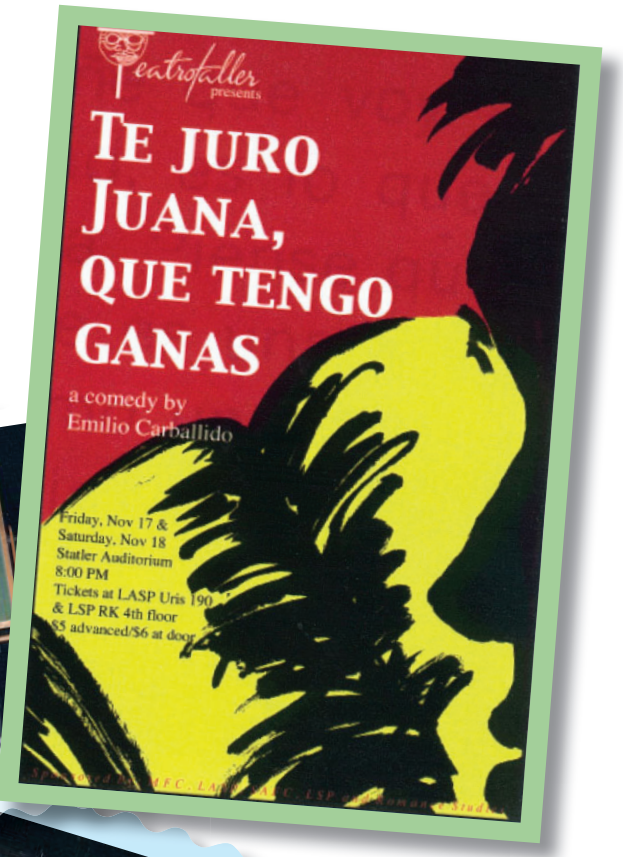
Directed by: *María Burgos Ojeda*

Te Juro Juana Que Tengo Ganas

By: *Emilio Carballido*

11/17-18/00 At: *Statler Auditorium*

Directed by: *Saúl Mercado*

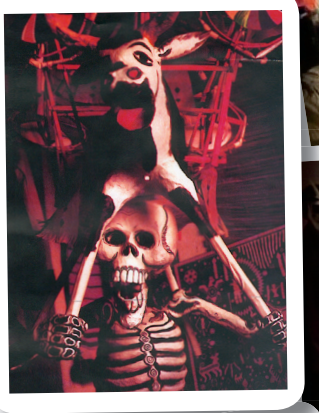


Johnny Tenorio

By: *Carlos Morton*

4/13/01 At: *Hollis E. Cornell Auditorium*

Directed by: *Guillermo Izabal III & Brian Armstrong*



Delantal Blanco / Lomo A Lo Pobre

By: *Sergio Vodánovic / Dan Colón*

8/4-5/01 At: *HEC Auditorium*

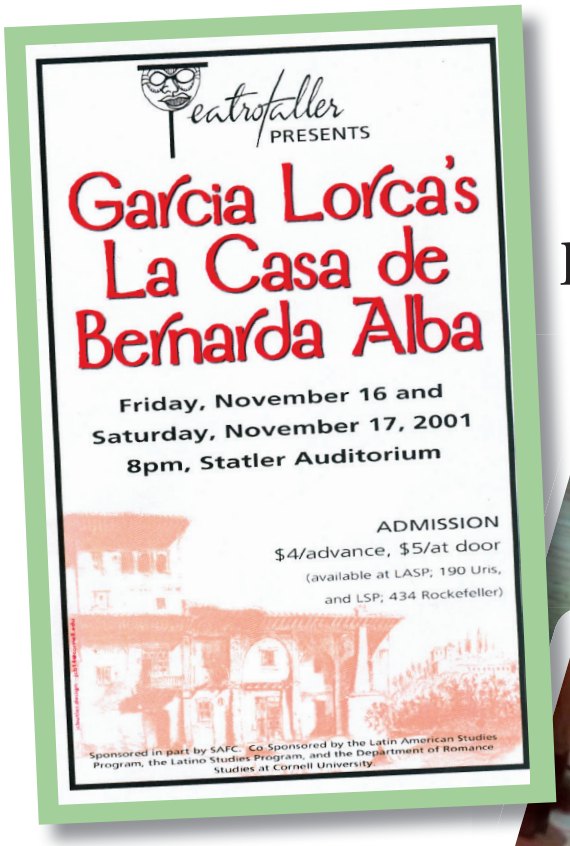
Directed by: *Melissa E. Dávila Morris / Antonio Zúñiga*

Casa De Bernarda Alba

By: *Federico García Lorca*

11/16-17/01 At: *Statler Auditorium*

Directed by: *Antonio Zúñiga & Katia Yurguis*

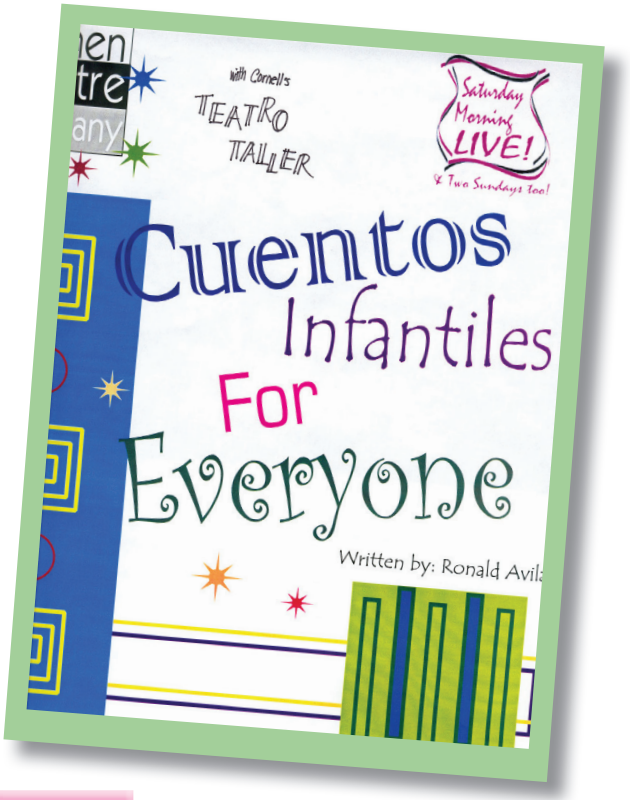


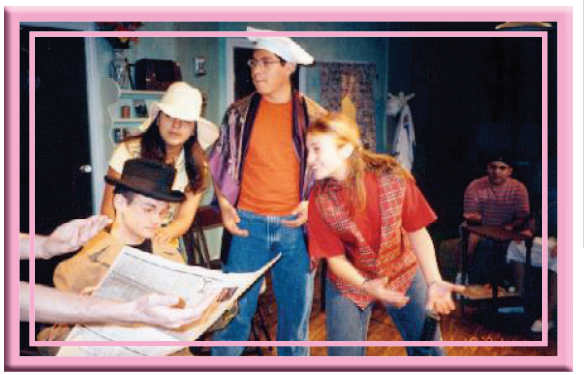
Cuentos Infantiles For Everyone

By: *Ronald Ávila*

11/3-17/01 At: *Kitchen Theater*

Directed by: *Nancy Kleaver*





Mi razón

Ronald Ávila

Mi razón por hacerme parte de TeatroTaller fue simple: para practicar mi lengua natal. Estoy mas que seguro que esa razón ha sido y, sospecho que sigue siendo, una de las mayores razónes para ingresarse al grupo hasta hoy en día. Los cuatro años de experiencias inesperadas que me esperaban en TeatroTaller, me siguen dando inspiración hasta hoy en día.

Como punto de partida, quisiera actualizarles sobre lo que he hecho desde mi graduación. Me regrese a New Orleans para pasar un tiempo con mi familia después de haber pasado los cuatro años anteriores separados. La idea era de actualizarme con los que-haceres de la familia y luego postular para estudiar derecho. Todo marchaba maravilloso! Conseguí un trabajo con un bufete de abogados de defensa en New Orleans con mi propia oficina y estaba ansioso por empezar mi futura carrera.

Pero como la vida siempre da sus vueltas auspiciosas, solo duré en ese trabajo por unos pocos meses. Ese agosto el devastador huracán Katrina destruyó el hogar de mi niñez y mi vida se volvió patas-arriba. En esos días de desesperación, yo me recordaba del lindo tiempo que pase en Cornell, especialmente con TeatroTaller. Lo único que me motivaba en esos días era que había tenido la oportunidad de formar parte de otro tipo de taller en la ciudad de Miami.

Antes de conseguir mi trabajo con el bufete de abogados, motivado por pura curiosidad, decidí postular para un concurso llamado, "Taller Telemundo: Escritores." Era un programa para desarrollar escritores latinos estadounidenses para que se familiarizaran con la industria de las telenovelas en este mismo país. De mas de 3,000 candidatos, seleccionaron a 30 y a mi me ofrecieron uno de los 30 cupos. Pero no fui. En cambio me quede en New Orleans como ya lo mencione.

Porqué, se dirá usted, quiero que sepa esta anécdota? Al fin y al cabo no fui a ese Taller y eso solo es un remordimiento personal. Lo que me inspiro para postular para el Taller Telemundo y lo que sigue siendo mi fuente de inspiración para casi todo lo creativo de mi vida fueron mis experiencias en TeatroTaller.

El otoño del año 2001, fue fundamental para mi. En ese entonces, Debbie Castillo me propuso un proyecto genial. El Kitchen Theater en Ithaca quería diversificar sus ofrecimientos teatrales para los niños y, por consecuencia, acudieron a Debbie y a TeatroTaller para allegar al publico latino. El propósito era simple, yo iba a investigar sobre el teatro para los niños en Latinoamérica y modificar el fruto de mis investigaciones para un publico estadounidense. Lamentablemente, o por fortuna, ese propósito no se realizo.

Como yo aprendí en TeatroTaller, no hay proyectos teatrales simples. Todo proyecto toma su propia vida y consume a los participantes hasta el punto de no querer seguir con ello. Sin embargo, no creo que en los ya 20 años de TeatroTaller ha habido ningún proyecto que no se haya realizado. Afortunadamente, el mío tampoco fallo. Pero si en la historia de TeatroTaller alguno estaba en las garras del fracaso, yo pienso que el mío se acercó a esa frontera.

Desde el inicio parece que el universo estaba conspirando para que no se llevara a cabo el proyecto con Kitchen Theater. A la misma vez, a cada paso había una solución. Todo aquel verano antes del otoño del año 2001 me la pase investigando y craneando como iba a realizar ese trabajo. Hasta viajé a mi país natal de Honduras para investigar una perspectiva distinta a lo que yo tenia en los estados unidos. No obstante, todas mis investigaciones me llevaban a una sola conclusión: yo iba a tener que escribir mi propia obra. Da la casualidad que el autor Carlos Morton iba a dar un taller sobre ese mismo tema, como elaborar una obra original. Así fue como empezó Cuentos Infantiles for Everyone.

Por lo largo de un semestre, pude escribir, editar, y de todas formas colaborar con el Kitchen Theater en la producción de mi obra. El haber hecho esta obra me dio la valentía de seguir creciendo las fronteras de mis talentos. No obstante, ese crecimiento disminuyó hasta casi desfallecer después de tantos eventos en mi vida personal. Eso es, hasta que este verano decidí emprender otros proyectos con mi escritura, pero para eso les actualizo en otra oportunidad.

TeatroTaller no solo me dio esa oportunidad de desarrollar mi talento por la escritura, pero también facilito varias amistades valerosas. En particular, Ana Patricia Vasudeo (Cajina), y yo, co-dirigimos la obra, Funeral Home. Siempre era una experiencia de alta tensión montar una obra con TeatroTaller, pero yo nunca había dirigido alguna. En ese entonces me di cuenta de la alta responsabilidad que lleva un director. Por lo tanto, quiero tomar este espacio

para disculparme con todos los directores de TeatroTaller que yo aterroricé dentro del escenario tanto como fuera.

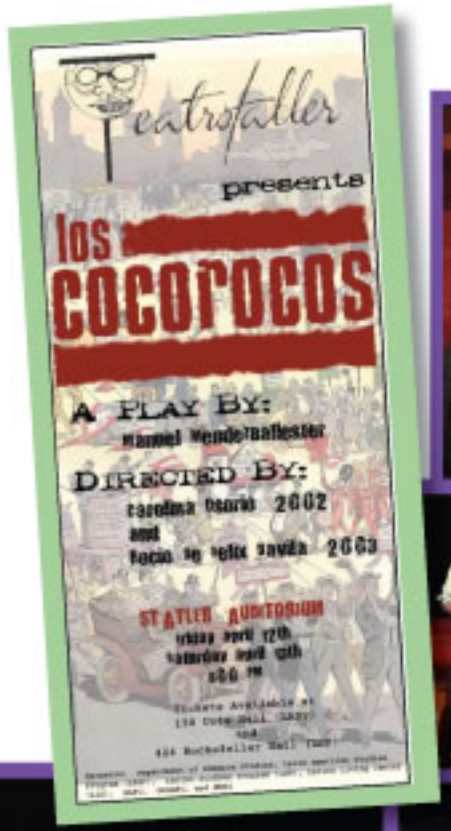
Para el futuro, espero que TeatroTaller siga creciendo y siga brindándoles a todos los que pasen por sus escenarios experiencias que motiven sus vidas y su creatividad. Le deseo a TeatroTaller unos felices 20 años de éxito y que puedan seguir otros 100 mas!

Los Cocorocos

By: *Manuel Méndez Ballester*

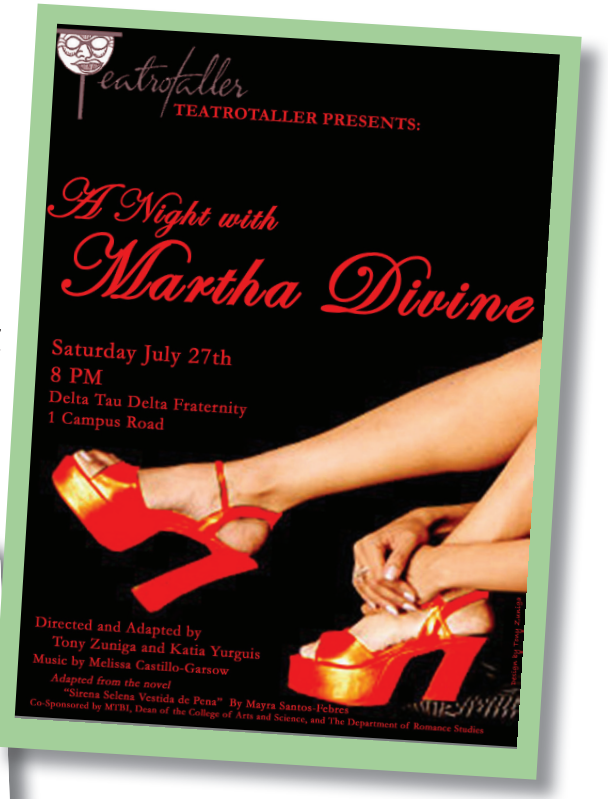
4/13-14/02 At: *Statler Auditorium*

Directed by: *Carolina Osorio Gil & Rocio de Félix Dávila*



A Night With Martha Divine

Adapted from the novel "Sirena Selena Vestida de Pena" By: *Mayra Santos Febres*
7/27/02 At: *Delta Tau Delta Fraternity*
Directed and Adapted by: *Antonio Zúñiga & Katia Yurguis*
Music by: *Melissa Castillo-Garsow*



Funeral Home

By: *Walter Beneke*

11/22 - 23/02 At: *James Law Auditorium*

Directed by: *Ana Patricia Cajina (Vasudeo)*

Algunas reflexiones de Teatrotaller: más que un taller

November 2002

Rebeca Franqui

Esta primera experiencia con Teatrotaller me ha llevado a repensar la importancia de integrar literatura con otras ramas del arte. Después de todo la literatura forma parte del campo de las artes. Con esto me refiero al hecho de que gracias a este curso todos nosotros tuvimos la oportunidad de aproximarnos lo más posible a una obra literaria aún sin saber que lo hacíamos. Ver cómo los muchachos internalizaban sus personajes, los interpretaban y los entendían para poder entonces representar al público lo que a su entender eran los sentimientos y emociones que estaban presentes en caracteres sin rostro definido, me hizo admirar el valor de este grupo -en su mayoría inexperto en cuanto a actuaciónse refiere-. Muchas veces creemos que por el hecho de analizar una obra desde un punto de vista crítico somos "más expertos en materia", sin embargo, no nos podríamos comparar en lo absoluto con aquellas personas que como Natalia, Renato, Dean, María, Jorge y Carolina dan no sólo de su tiempo sino también de su energía y, por que no, de su ser interior, para adentrarse completamente en lo más íntimo de los personajes que durante meses formaron parte de su ser. Más aún, me atrevería a decir en cierto modo los chicos perdieron sus nombres y adquirieron los nombres de los personajes que representaban. Recuerdo asistir a los ensayos y escuchar a Ana Patricia llamar Nancy a María y María a Natalia. Yo misma llamaba Nancy a María y Percy a Dean, por ejemplo. De hecho, aún se me hace difícil recordar que el nombre de María es María y no Nancy.

Si bien los actores dieron casi el máximo para sacar adelante la obra,considero que la representación de la obra no hubiese sido posible sin la labor de Ana Patricia. Su empeño y dedicación son de admirar. Honestamente creo que ella dio más del máximo posible, de ahí su frustración con muchos de nosotros cuando no hacíamos nuestro trabajo a tiempo, Confieso que no soy muy amante de enviar correos electrónicos, mucho menos de llegar a casa luego de un largo día a sentarme a enviar mensajes, pero Ana Patricia sí lo hacía. En la mañana cuando verificaba mi correo me asombraba darme cuenta de que aún cansada como debía estar de todo un día de clases y encima de trabajar con los muchachos en los ensayos -cosa que para nada era fácil probablemente tan pronto como llegaba a su casa, Ana Patricia dedicaba más de su tiempo a recordarnos a todos nosotros nuestras labores para el día o la semana próxima. Creo que en cierto modo, su dedicación era tomada por sentado y se le daba el crédito que ella merecía.

Sería muy injusto de mi parte si olvidara la labor del resto del grupo. Isabel y Patricia, por ejemplo, fueron modelo de la profesionalidad y responsabilidad. Sin su labor, me atrevería a decir, no hubiesemos tenido un público tan amplio como el que tuvimos. Se dedicaron por completo a trabajar con TT y en todo momento tenían una actitud positiva. Ronald, por otra parte, en muchas ocasiones sirvió de intermediario entre los actores y Ana Patricia. Creo que podría decir que siempre trató de mantener a los actores "contentos".

Por supuesto, ninguna obra está completa si no se tiene una escenografía y vestimenta adecuadas. También Delara, Giselle, Jessica y Alejandro tuvieron que adentrarse al mundo teatral y a Funeral Home para poder brindarle a la obra la atmósfera más adecuada dentro de límites con los que se toparon. Fue muy lindo ver cómo "Nancy" hablaba de su casa y le preguntaba a "su marido": "qué opinas de esto o de aquello".

Como mencioné anteriormente, todos nos adentramos por completo al mundo de esta obra. Me imagino que cada uno de nosotros tendría varias anécdotas que contar sobre el impacto directo o inderecto que TT tuvo sobre nosotros. Algunos de mis estudiantes, por ejemplo, cuando se enteraron de que yo era la productora de la obra se acercaron a mi muy emocionados para decirme que habían leído sobre la presentación de la obra y que querían ir a verla. Fue muy emotivo ver a varios de mis estudiantes entre el público, mucho más cuando sabía que era muy poco lo que la mayoría de ellos entendían.

Por otro lado, mi expericiencia como "productora" fue muy enriquecedora en el sentido de que pude compartir directamente con los chicos. A veces algunos de ellos venían donde mí a quejarse de que no escuchaban ninguna palabra de agradecimiento por parte de nosotros, o de que estaban cansados de trabajar tanto, o de que tenían hambre. En cierto modo creo que algunos de los muchachos me consideraban como una consejera. Aunque en varias

ocasiones mi paciencia llegó a su límite y no era la persona agradable que estaban acostumbrados a ver, creo que en general podría decir que algunos de nosotros hemos comenzado a entablar una relación muy amigable.

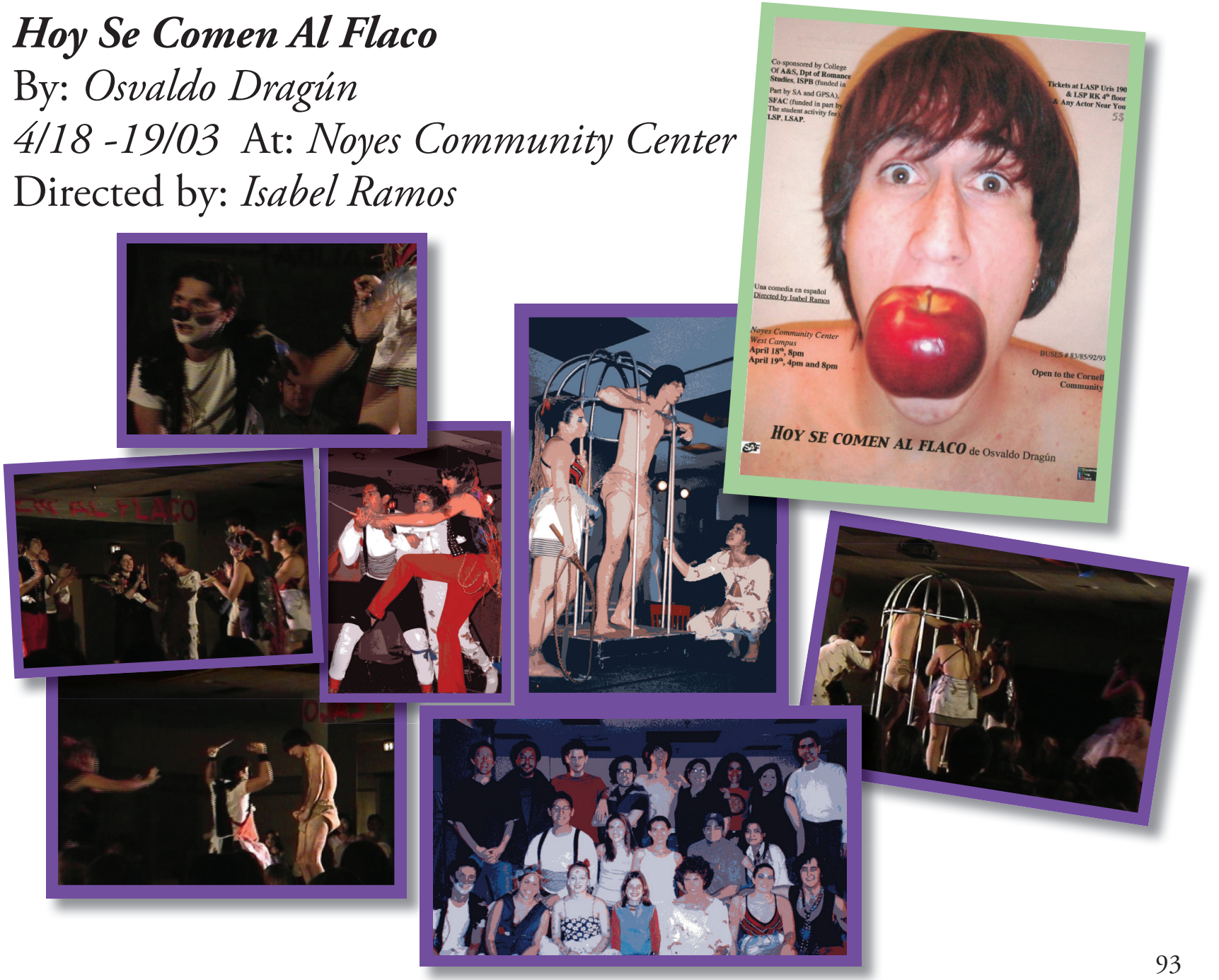
Al comparar mi experiencia de enseñar con la de trabajar con Teatrotaller-puedo decir sin ninguna duda que con TT se creó un lazo más íntimo en el sentido de que más que estar en un salón de clases por corto o largo tiempo compartimos la experiencia de montar una obra. Lo que en un principio no es más que una vaga idea de lo que será, se va convirtiendo poco a poco en algomás palpable hasta llegar a transformarse por completo en el aplauso del público espectador.

Hoy Se Comen Al Flaco

By: *Osvaldo Dragún*

4/18 -19/03 At: *Noyes Community Center*

Directed by: *Isabel Ramos*

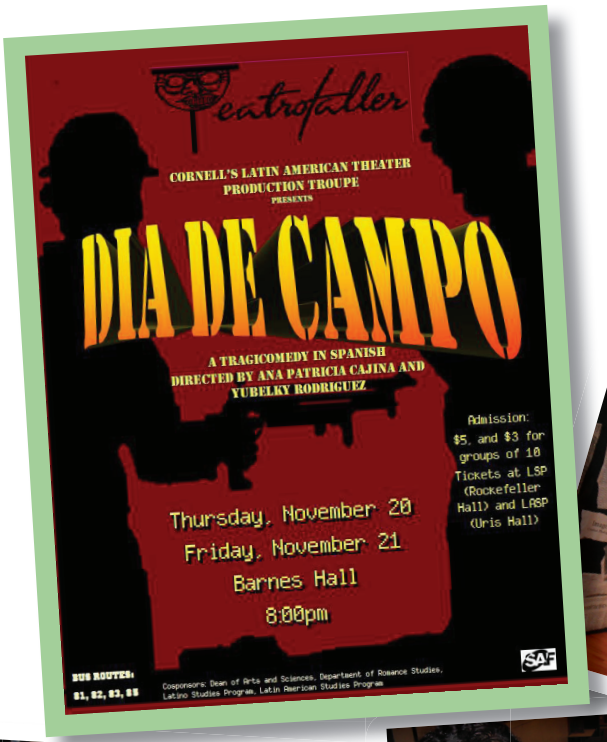


Día De Campo

By: *Colective Creation*

11/20 & 21/03 At: *Statler Auditorium*

Directed by: *Ana Patricia Cajina & Yubelky Rodríguez*

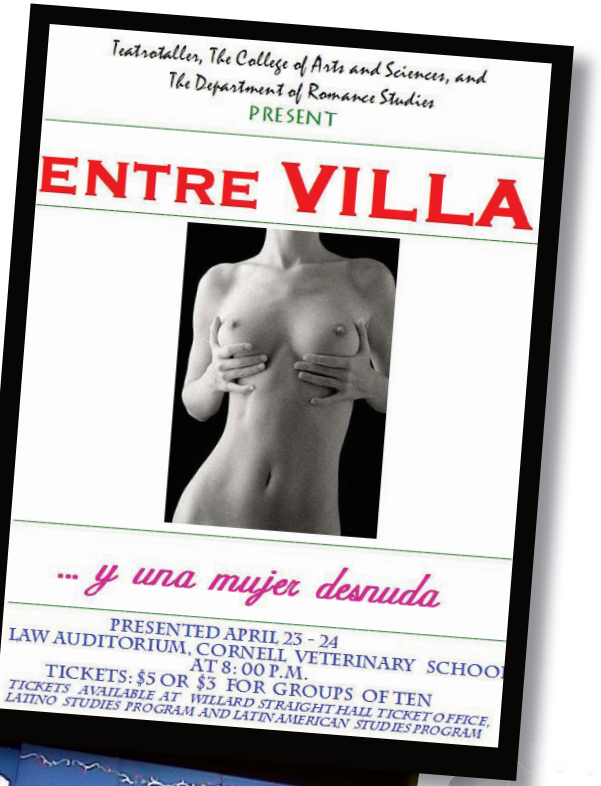


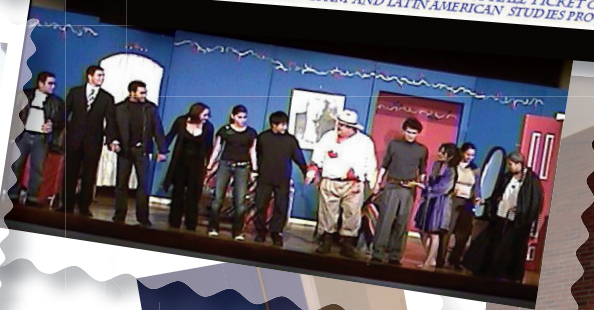
Entre Villa Y Una Mujer Desnuda

By: *Sabina Berman*

4/23 & 24/04 At: *James Law Auditorium*

Directed by: *Katia Yurguis*



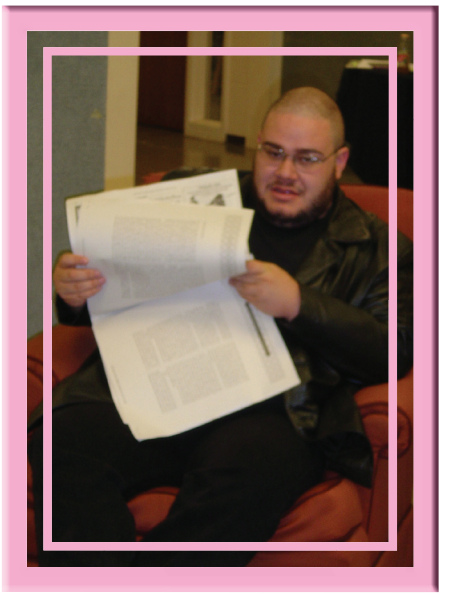


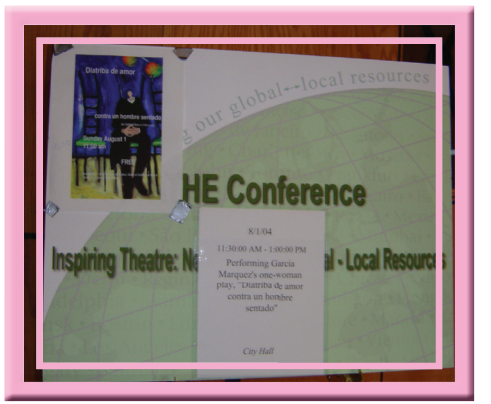
Diatriba De Amor Contra Un Hombre Sentado

By: *Gabriel García Márquez*

7/04 At: *Community School of Music and Arts*

Directed by: *Debra Castillo*





Ana En el Trópico

By: *Nilo Cruz*

11/11 - 12/04 At: *Barnes Hall*

Directed by: *Manuel Fihman*

La Muerte Y La Doncella

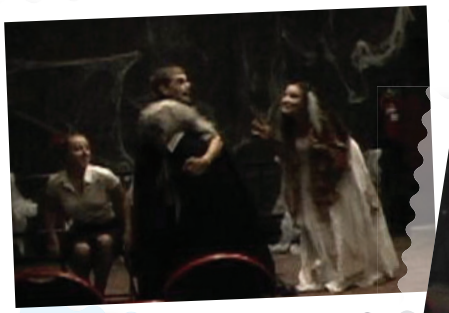
By: *Ariel Dorfman*

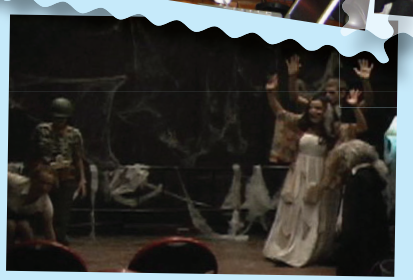
4/1 & 2/05 At: *Barnes Hall*

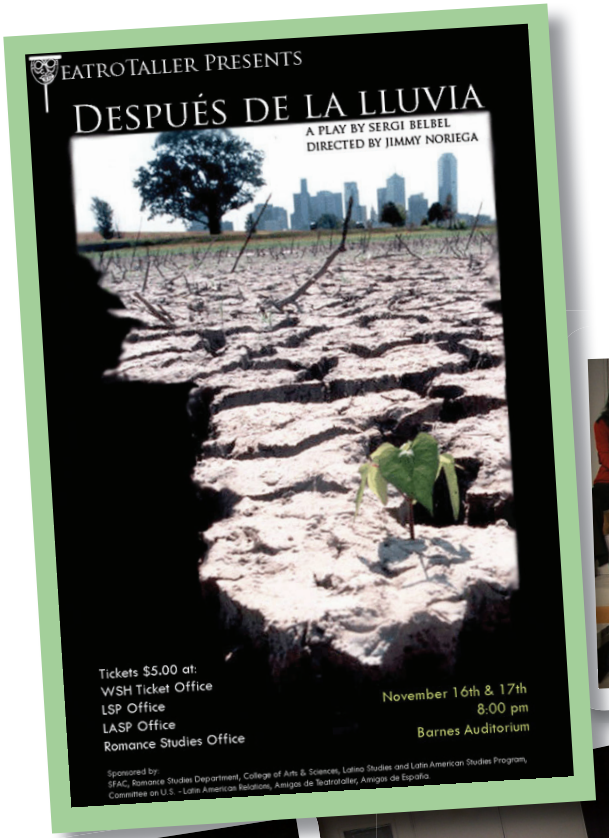
Directed by: *Calvin Selth*

Nosferatu

By: *Griselda Gambaro*
8/5-6/05 At: *Green Dragon Cafe*
Directed by: *Debra Castillo*







Después De La Lluvia

By: *Sergi Belbel*

11/16 & 17/05 At: *Barnes Hall*

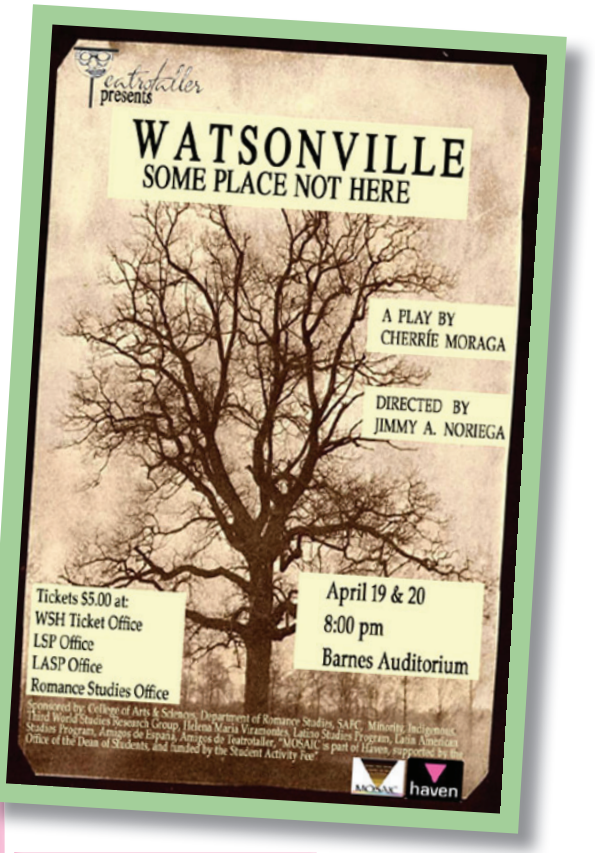
Directed by: *Jimmy Noriega*

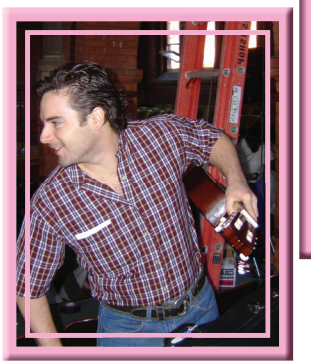
Watsonville: Some Place Not Here

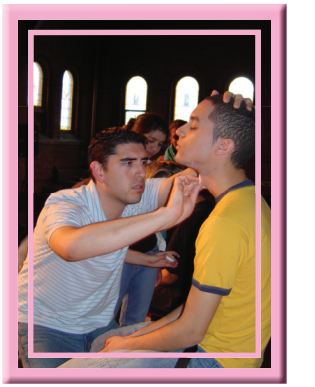
By: *Cherrie Moraga*

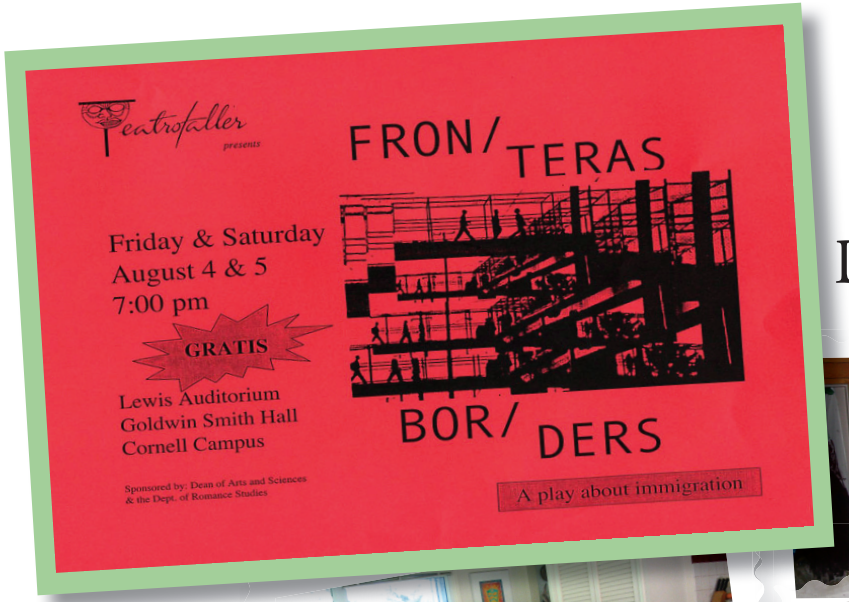
4/19 & 20/06 At: *Barnes Hall*

Directed by: *Jimmy Noriega*









Fron/teras

By: *Elvira Sánchez-Blake*

8/4 - 5/06 At: *Lewis Auditorium*

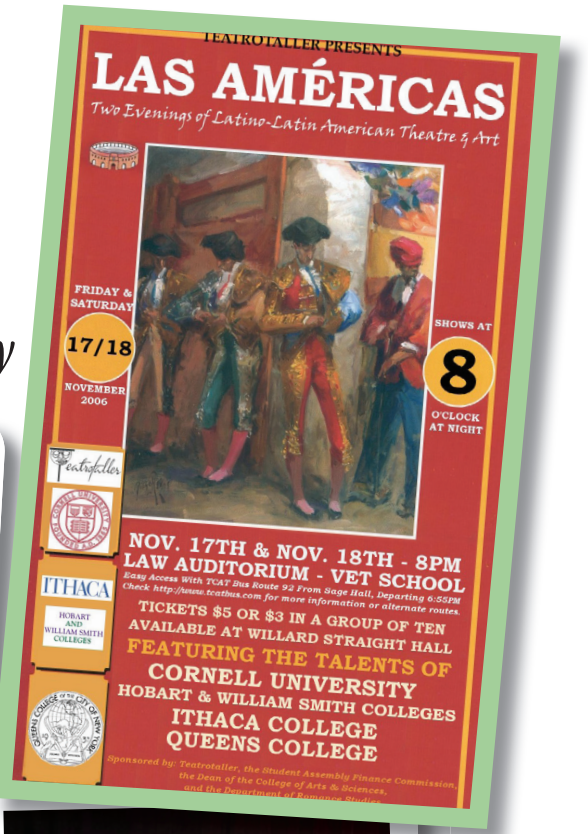
Directed by: *Carolina Osorio Gil*

Festival Las Américas

Obras De Un Acto: ***Fron/teras, Justicia, Voces y Estudio en Blanco y Negro***

11/17 &18/06 At: *James Law Auditorium*

Directed by: *Calvin Selth, Jimmy Noriega y Carolina Osorio Gil*



Festival Las Américas

Obras De Un Acto: ***Fron/teras, Justicia, Voces y Estudio en Blanco y Negro***

11/17 - 18/06 At: *James Law Auditorium*

Directed by: *Calvin Selth, Jimmy Noriega & Carolina Osorio Gil*

Dog Lady

By: *Milcha Sánchez Scott*

10/06 At: *Black Box Theater*

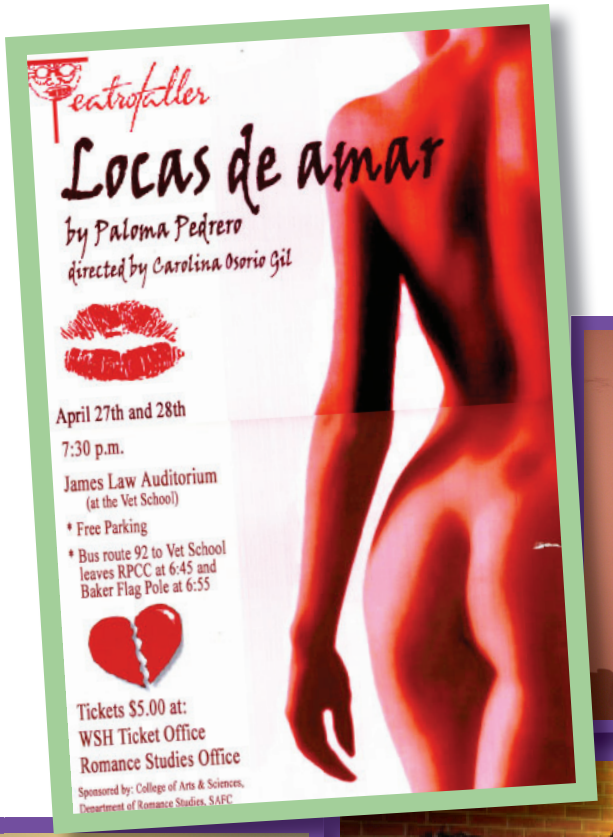
Directed by: *Jimmy Noriega*

Locas De Amar

By: *Paloma Pedrero*

4/27 - 28/07 At: *James Law Auditorium*

Directed by: *Carolina Osorio Gil*

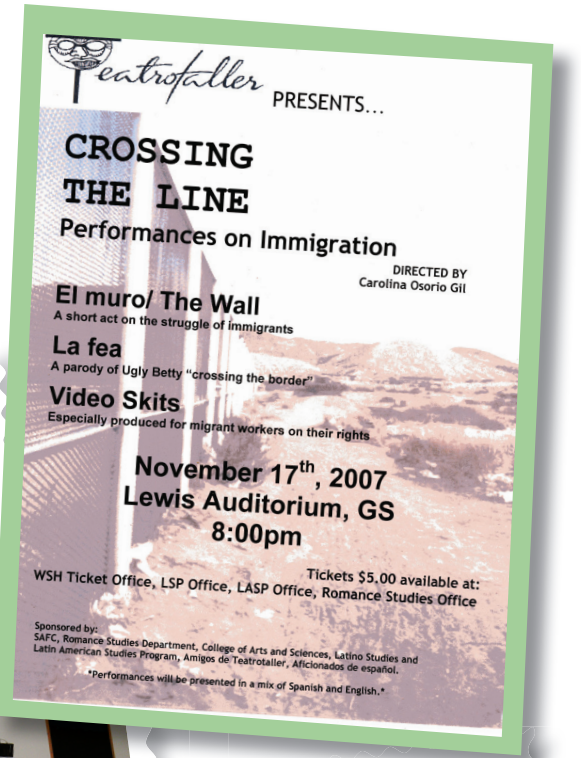


Crossing The Line, El Muro, La Fea, Video Skits

By: *Collective Creation*

11/17/07 At: Lewis Auditorium

Directed by: *Carolina Osorio Gil*

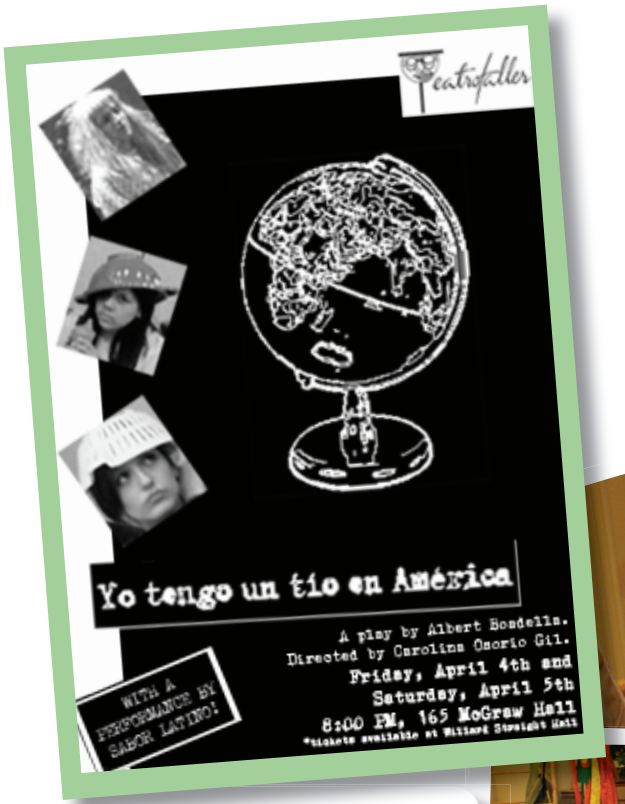


Yo Tengo Un Tío En América

By: *Albert Boadella*

4/4 & 5/08 At:*165 McGraw Hall*

Directed by: *Carolina Osorio Gil*



En Esta Esquina

By: *Rosina Conde*

08/01/2008 At: *Ithaca Commons*

Directed by: *Krystina Jackson, Carolina Osorio Gil, Luna Nájera, & Debra Castillo*

La Mujer Que Cayó Del Cielo

By: *Victor Hugo Rascón Banda*

11/19-20/08

At: *Robert Purcell Community Center*

Directed by: *Jimmy Noriega*

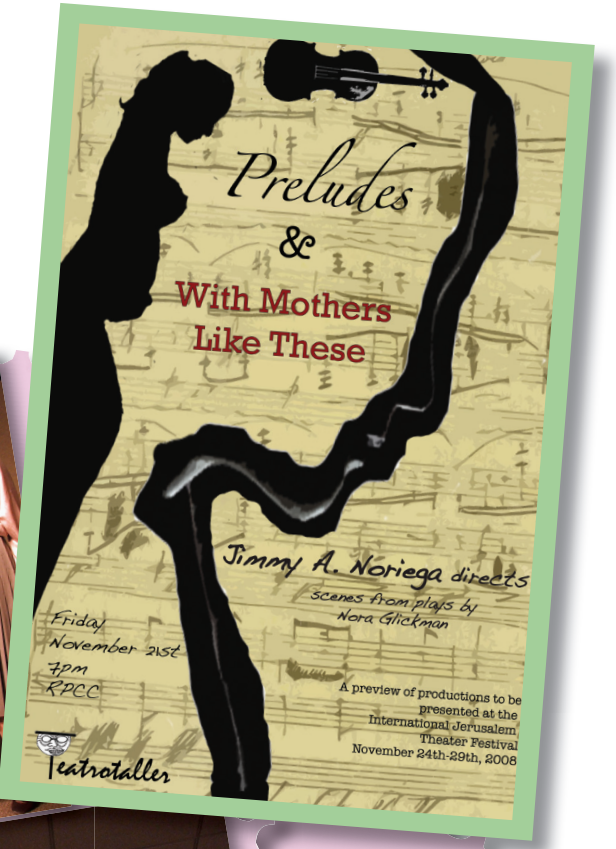
Preludes & With Mothers Like These

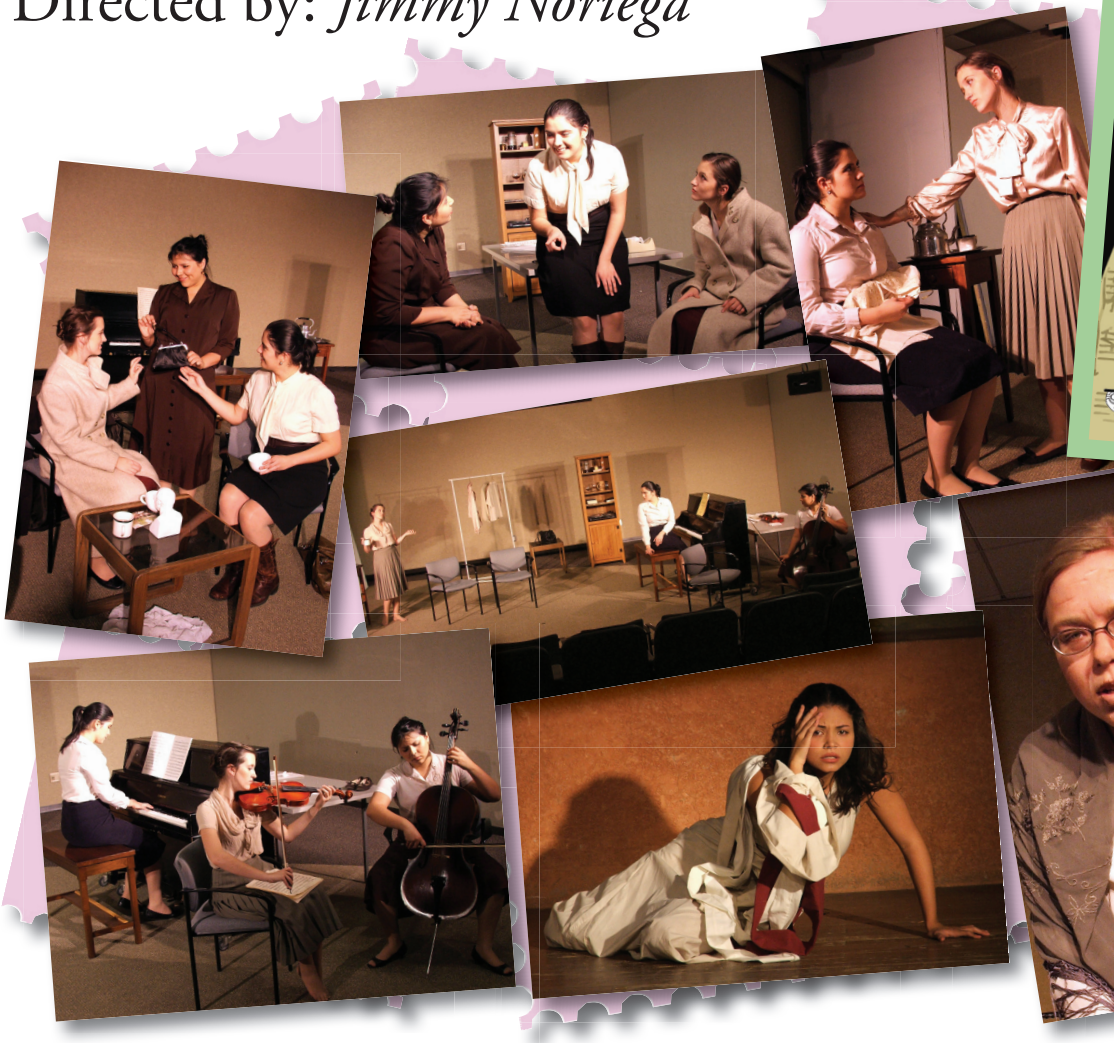
Short Plays By: *Nora Glickman*

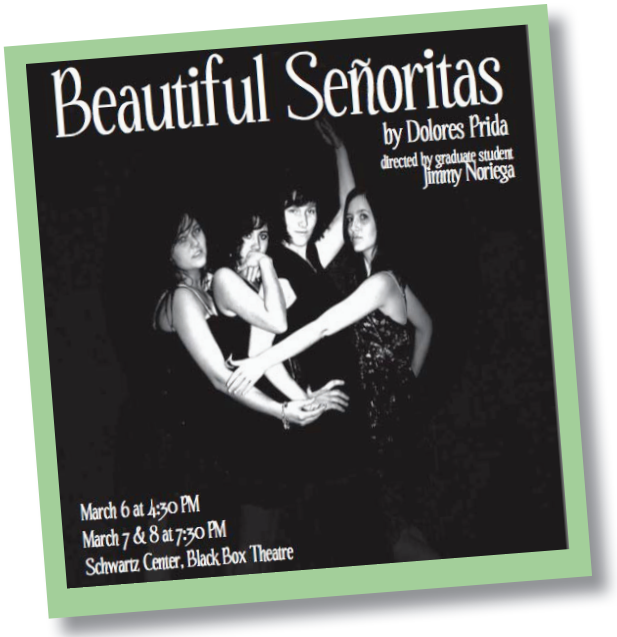
11/21/08

At: *Robert Purcell Community Center*

Directed by: *Jimmy Noriega*





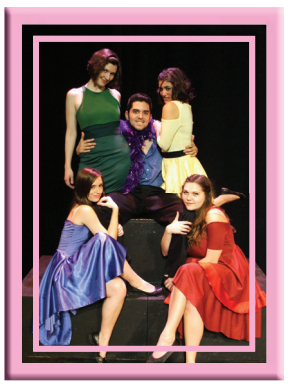


Beautiful Señoritas

By: *Dolores Prida*

03/6-7-8/09 At: *Black Box Theatre*

Directed by: *Jimmy Noriega*



Kan Balaam

By: *Collective Creation**

4/08-09/09 At: *Annabel Taylor Auditorium*

Directed by:

Carolina Osorio Gil

*Los autores de esta obra fueron estudiantes del curso TeatroTaller (Cornell University) bajo la coordinación y edición de la profesora Elvira Sánchez-Blake. Los creadores de las escenas fueron: Verónica Isabel Chavez, Jimmy Suárez, Tania Peñafort, Ximena Vallarino, Alejandra Ruiz, Ivy Torres y Sani Brosig. La edición del guión fue asesorada por el dramaturgo, Carlos Morton.

Kan Balaam

Elvira Sánchez-Blake

In my role as Teatrotaller faculty co-coordinator I share in this piece my experience of working in one of the most rewarding productions of my time with the group: Kan Balaam in the spring of 2009.

Kan Balaam was the opportunity to use theater to bring together experiential learning, creativity and performance into the classroom. Based on the concept of "devising theatre," where the script originates from collaborative work by a group of people, Teatrotaller conveyed field experience with artistic creation to elicit awareness in the Cornell community about cultural and social issues related to Chiapas, Mexico.

In January 2009 a group of Teatrotaller students traveled to Chiapas, Mexico with the course "Experience Latin America: Chiapas Edition" (Intag 6010). During this time abroad students and faculty experienced the Mayan culture and to live in today's Mayan world. The students learned about the problems faced by indigenous communities as big companies vie for natural resources and land. They also learned about the continuing magic of Mayan sacred rituals. Furthermore, they had an encounter with Zapatistas and learned about their political stand. As a whole, students and staff were so moved by this trip that they decided to enact their living experience impressions by performing a play, Kan Balaam.

I analyze the power of performance as an engine of cultural agency that connected community and academy by transforming cultural perceptions and attitudes; creating knowledge and raising social sensitivity toward a reality distant but close for students, faculty and the academic community. By means of the power of 'agency' invoked by the theatrical experience, the Kan Balaam experience condensed a clear example of cultural agency where students exposed to a cultural learning laboratory multiplied their experience by eliciting awareness, knowledge and understanding in the academia.

Awareness

The two weeks visit to Chiapas provided the opportunity to acquire awareness and knowledge about a distant world that encompasses many issues studied in theoretical terms at the academy. From visits to farms learning about land cultivation and economical challenges in face of globalization, to conversations with small famers and indigenous people to find out about their needs and challenges in the global society. For instance, learning about the importance of corn and the role it plays in Mexican lives from the ancient cosmovision provided by the Popol Vuh to the current diet and economic value was one of the most significant lessons.

Students and faculty also visited Mayan ruins such as the spectacular Palenque and Toniná archeological sites, where they discovered the magic of the ancient Mayans heritage. A particular impressive visit was the one to the town of San Juan Chamula where Tzotzil indigenous people keep their sacred beliefs in rituals that represent the epitome of syncretism of Christian and Mayan creeds, past and present, tradition and modernity. The trip also included a special meeting with the Zapatistas organization at the Oventic Caracol, where the concept of "Good Government" (Buen gobierno) is applied as a model of indigenous regional-autonomy and resistance towards the federal government perceived as the "bad government" (mal gobierno).

One particular visit to the village of Huitepec (Highlands of Chiapas) merit special consideration. Students were struck to find out by Don Antonio, the small farmer of one acre land, that the Coca Cola company was taking over the stream river that provided the main and only source of water and irrigation to the whole Huipetec region. They were even more confused to learn that the Mexican government supported the big corporation amid complaints and demands from the people affected by the decision. The Coca Cola invasion was one of the most impacting issues and source of debates through the rest of the academic discussions along the trip and later at the Spring semester course sessions.

Knowledge

Upon returning to Cornell, students and faculty wanted to convey a way to express and disseminate the knowledge and awareness acquired in the trip.

Teatrotaller students and faculty decided to create a play that would reenact the main challenges facing Chiapanecans by connecting past and present.

The script writing underwent an extensive process of research writing, editing, rewriting and composing assisted by the Mexican-American playwright Carlos Morton . After a difficult and complex writing process, Kan Balaam integrated Mayan myths and cosmology from the Popol Vuh with contemporary conflicts in indigenous communities, especially as the so-called "modernization" invades their culture, traditions and territories. The Popol Vuh segment was also the pivotal piece that linked the present man to their ancient beliefs. Kan Balaam (serpiente-jaguar) refers to the Mayan belief of opposite forces: Serpent associated to Kukulkan (Mayan god of Creation) and Quetzalcoatl (Aztec God of Creation) and its meanings: sun, fertility, life in opposition to Balaam: Jaguar and its representations of night, death and darkness.

Storyline

The story line of Kan Balaam focuses on an indigenous couple (Carlos and Felicita) who cannot bear children. The couple's infertility problem is topped by a drought caused by the lack of rain and access to their communal river, for it has been taken by the Coca Cola corporation. As a result the corn harvest is ruined and the community faces starvation. Carlos becomes a drunkard and an unfriendly constantly blaming his wife for not being able to procreate. In the mean time a delegate from the Coca Cola visits Carlos offering him a job with the company in exchange for getting the village support for the construction of a new bottling plant near town. The delegate turns out to be and old neighbor from their town Chamula, who has become a city person (ladino) changing his name, language and appearance. He tries to convince Carlos to do the same thing by diminishing their town's uses and traditions. Felicita, who has heard the conversation and is afraid of the reaction of her inebriated husband, runs to the Chamula church to meet with the healer who will perform a ritual intended to make her fertile. The ritual at the Church of San Juan Chamula transports Felicita (and the audience) to the past where she is reminded of her Mayan roots. The creation scene where the world, animals and plants are created is completed with the emergence of the Man of corn, the one who is powerful enough to resist water and fire, but humble enough to worship his creators. After this, Felicita sees herself in a past life as a young maiden call "Sparrow" (Golondrina) who is chosen by the Mayan king of this kingdom to be offered to the Gods in a sacred cenote (well). In this scene she also discovers that the source of her infertility is associated to an act of rebellion toward the God of rain when she refused to give the message ordered by the Mayan priest before she was thrown in the Cenote. By opposing his mandate, a curse fell on the Mayan people bringing the horrors of bearded white men and white gods who conquered, slaved and destroyed their civilization. When Felicita returns to the present day, the healer gives her the key to break the curse. She has to convince her husband to understand the gods' message and turn back to their people's needs and roots. When Felicita tries to make Carlos aware of this message, he is totally drunk and she falls on desperation. Meanwhile, Carlos has a dream in which Kukulkan and Cocoacoalt (the Coca Cola evil god) fight each other trying to gain control of his soul. While Kukulkan attempts to convince him of turning back to his people because they need him, Cocoacoalt invites him to follow his Compadre to join the Coca Cola's offer forgetting his people and their needs. When he wakes up, understand the message and makes up his mind. He searches for Felicita and finds her when she is about to throw herself in the sacred well. As they embrace in common understanding of their responsibility to their people, a thunder is heard in the back meaning Mayan gods complacence and the promise of rain and fertility. In the final act Carlos has become the leader for his community. He defeats the Coca Cola delegate by refusing his proposal and condemning the intrusion of the company in their land. Leaded by Carlos, the whole community decides to join forces with the Zapatistas to support the pledge for opposing the Coca Cola invasion. At the end Carlos and Felicita are blessed with the lo ng waited promise of a child.

In sum, Kan Balaam integrated Mayan myths and cosmology with contemporary issues happening in Chiapanecan indigenous communities interpreted by students who learned and shared their knowledge with a larger audience. The link to the script in English and Spanish, the video of the performance and excerpts of students responses to the process are available at this link: https://courses.cit.cornell.edu/iard4010/topic13/index.html

The performance

The process of Kan Balaam production involved a series of steps. Several

committees were in charge of different aspects of the play. Given that only a small portion of students were part of the Chiapas field trip, the class devoted several sessions to inform and illustrate the rest about the knowledge acquired in the trip. Complementary material such as lectures, movies and readings were used to foster the interest in connection with the subject of the play. Other committees were in charge of costumes, set, proms and advertising. Resources for the performance, based were created based on in depth research and creativity. The set was one of the most challenging aspects of the process. Two sets were needed, one for the Mayan past and one for the present. The result was a San Juan Chamula Church façade that turned into a Mayan pyramid on the other side. The Man of corn creation act was one of the most visual and artistic stages ever created by Teatrotaller. Each animal costume was designed in a way that replicated the original. And the Man of corn sublime emergence was done with a series of effects mixing sound and visuals that produced the effect of a man emerging towards the sun. The church ritual replicated the one performed at the San Juan Chamula's church, a non- easy task, undertaken by two of the students who thoroughly investigated the Chamula's tradition. All costumes, proms and sets were created from scratch and based on true components. We had the fortune of having the visit from an archeologist and anthropologist from the University of Yucatan, Dra. Lily Fernández, who assisted the group in the last stages of designing costumes and set. She advised the group about the type of feathers, gowns, masks and make up used by ancient Mayans. Also, she was pivotal in orienting the choreography of the "ball game" performed in the ancient Mayan legend scene. Needless is to say that the whole theater company worked in an environment of commandership inspired by the spur of creativity and exploration of this exciting endeavor.

At this point in the preparation of the play, everybody integrated their skills, even the ones they did not know they possessed. Students from the Experience Latin American Course who went to the field trip, but who weren't part of Teatrotaller, became part of the troupe and offered to help in every aspect of it. They collaborated with the set, the proms and the decorations. Others, who were part of Teatrotaller, but did not go to the trip, became experts in Chiapas and Mayan civilization by learning from the others and by exploring on their own about each aspect of the play. People who did not participate in either course but were friends or peers became part of the organization providing their input and helping with sets decoration, music, art and other elements. In tech week, we had such an amazing group of people working together for the upcoming play that the whole cast felt motivated and eager to perform their best.

Two days of performance was too short to deliver the magnificence of the play that students created with such level of energy and motivation. The first day, the performance was a huge success reflected in the second night attendance. More that three hundred people showed that night. The emotion, the passion, the satisfaction was visible in each one of the students, faculty and community members who participated in the play. The response from the audience was remarkable. Our only sorrow was that we did not plan more performances and we had to let it go.

The reaction

Students who participated in the play and performance wrote a reflection about their experience with Kan Balaam. Following are some excerpts that reflect the success of this engaging collaborative cultural performance initiative.

Highlights for Kan Balaam —Serpiente Jaguar (Jaguar Serpent)— Learning Module

Excerpts from reflection papers by Teatrotaller students, Spring 2009

"Teatrotaller created a space to reflect, expand, and engage the knowledge and cultural familiarity with Chiapas that was nurtured on the Experience Latin America course trip. It was also a break from the routine structure and learning environment of other classes. A space for inventive creation, it brought to fruition a work of art that spoke to the culture, history, and political dynamic of the place and people we met in Chiapas. "Tied to this is my personal development in self-esteem, language, and consciousness. My experience with Experience Latin America supported my identity-forming journey and recharged my aspirations."

—Tania Peñafort (2009)

"Watching Kan Balaam be born from nothing was an enlightening experience. Not only was the play provocative, but I felt part of the team because I saw everything being put together from scraps, and helped put it together myself. Overall, Kan Balaam was one of the most rewarding and enlightening experiences of my college career."

—Marina Boushra (2011)

"I had not only walked into a masterpiece, but a time of cultural exploration and creative flow. Teatrotaller allowed me the opportunity to practice my Spanish, explore the culture of the Mayan civilization and theater production, while embracing my creative talents through costume design. Before the first class I did not have friends of Latin descent, had been uncomfortable speaking Spanish, and little experience with Mayan culture. "As a team we built, ground-up, a production that captured a civilization and a culture very different from the modern day. We developed a script, created characters, became those characters, re-created the set and costumes of the time. The question remains, what did I learn? My answer: the essence of collaboration, the power of passion, and the ability when ambitious people come together to achieve a common purpose."

—Diana Capous (2010)

It was amazing to see how it all came together through hard work and support from everyone in the class. I am so happy and proud to have been a part of it... Teatrotaller this semester was amazing, spectacular and history making. Many people don't see the significance of this course and how important it is to keeping the Latino culture alive."

—Anthony López (2009)

"One of the things I enjoyed most is that I could practice Spanish in a academic but fun environment. I had taken Spanish for bilinguals first semester my freshman year, and I thought my Spanish career would end. I decided to see what Teatrotaller offered me. I entered the class, about a week and a half after school started, and was immediately sold."

—Michael Zamora (2011)

"Of all the Teatrotaller productions I have been involved with, Kan Balaam was particularly meaningful. Not only did I practice Spanish and learn Mayan history, but I met and bonded with amazing people."

—Katheleen García (2010)

"This experience has been one of the best at Cornell. The creative process of Kan Balaam was an incredible experience, from writing the script, to rehearsals under the direction of Carolina. I enjoyed every minute of it. I feel like I have regained the spirit and desire to pursue my creative talents in any way possible. This experience helped me recognize the joys that have always brought me joy.

It has made me a better person, more open to the creative energy of life with an increased sense of humanity."

—Verónica Chávez (2009)

The entire process for the creation of Kan Balaam was really an experience and a collective group effort. From its very beginnings of being just an idea during our trip in Chiapas, to the script writing, the set making, the masks, the costume design, the lights, the stage –everything was able to come together because there was a communal group

goal. It can be argued that the same group effort that was put into the creation of Kan Balaam is parallel to the community effort of the people of San Juan Chamula in the play when they are trying to get rid of the Coca-Cola company... As I watched the play I felt like I watched my Latin American Experience course condensed into one play with all

the issues I learned and with my classmates whom I learned them with acting them out on stage.

—Alejandra Ruiz (2009)

I was one of the students that traveled to Chiapas during winter break and as a result I was able to contribute to the script. Being a member of script group was a learning experience… I had never done anything like this before and I really enjoyed being a part of this creative work… Being a part of Teatrotaller this semester was a great experience. I really enjoyed working with other students in order to create an original production. I learned a lot about theater and the work that goes into putting on a successful play. I hope that in the future Teatrotaller continues to put on productions similar to Kan Balaam.

—Ivy Torres (2009)

This semester with Teatrotaller has been the most memorable. My experience began in winter when I, along with a few other students, visited Chiapas. While we were there, we learned a lot about its rich traditions and culture. We also learned about the struggle people face in modern times. While we were there, a few people got together and decided to create a theatrical representation of what was seen… In my three semester working with Teatrotaller, it has been definitely been the best. Many people congratulated me and I suggest I should keep doing it. This night became one of the most memorable moments at Cornell.

—Jimmy Suarez (2009)

Excerpts in Spanish:

"Kan Balaam pasó como un huracán, poco previ su llegada y cuando me di cuenta ya me había dejado alborotado. Esta es una reflexión de cómo la producción teatral de Kan Balaam me absorbió y cautivó. De cómo todo empezó tranquilamente, y de cómo, de repente, todo a mi alrededor era Kan Balaam. Directoras, actores, escenógrafos, todos teníamos que ver unos con otros. Hablando en Spanglish nos habíamos convertido en un verdadero team. Finalmente, después de las arduas semanas de esfuerzo, llego la obra, dos noches de presentación, un clímax que todavía me saboreo entre dientes"...

—Daniel Quesada (2010)

A partir de cero una producción, y escribir el guión, hacer todas las disfraces y la escenario, y atraer un público tan diverso, Teatrotaller como grupo ha superado todas las expectativas. Este semestre fue la primera vez que Teatrotaller logró todas estas cosas, y me alegro tanto por ser una parte de este capítulo de la historia de este grupo... Teatrotaller es en grupo que sirve como puente entre el inglés y el español. Es una cosa

tomar una clase de español, y de sentirse a gusto de comunicar en una situación académica, pero es otra cosa sentirse a gusto de comunicar en cualquier idioma afuera de la clase.

—Sean Cretella (2010)

He actuado en "Kan Balaam" porque quería estudiar español en otro contexto, y desarrollar mis habilidades en actuación. No tenía experiencia con un papel con más de dos líneas en una obra, y por eso las primeras semanas memorizando las líneas fueron difíciles para mí...Para el futuro, creo que Teatrotaller es una buena opción para estudiantes que están planeando estudiar en un país hispanohablante, y después del

regreso de estudios extranjeros.

—Lisa Cao (2009)

El ímpetuo de cuestionar y argumentar en lo que puede ser teatro viviente, me llevo a comenzar en este curso, y aun creo que solo me ha dejado con muchas más ganas de continuar profundizando en el tema. Después de entender que temas como el de la relación de indígenas y grandes corporaciones como la Coca-Cola, pueden ser interpretado como teatro que es vivido y reproducido cada día en la vida real , quede fascinada con continuar esta investigación. Para concluir, lo más importante del curso fue la participación y ganas que mucha gente puso. Creo que el trabajo colectivo logró hacer de Teatrotaller un verdadero taller, en donde todas las personas envueltas cooperan por un interés publico sin individualizar ningún triunfo o logro.

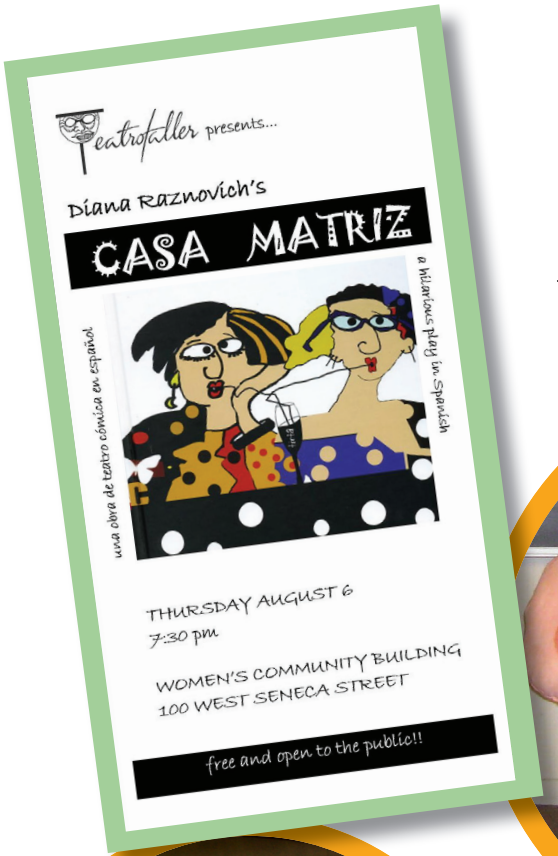
—Elizabeth Suárez

Este semestre me matriculé por primera vez en la clase de Teatro Taller. En mis estudios sobre América Latina, uno de los temas recurrentes es el conflicto entre la asimilación y el progreso, y el desarrollo intelectual y la implicación que la modernización tiene sobre el aspecto cultural.... Mucha de la trama de Kan Balaam gira en torno a la resistencia a la pérdida de las tradiciones frente la supervivencia económica. La obra de Teatrotaller ha identificado estos temas y los ha divulgado al público de Cornell.

—Stephanie Brossig (2011)

Eso de escribir una obra entre más de dos cabezas aún me asombra. Creo que todos los que participamos en esta producción podemos recordar este detalle y agradecerles la fuerza mental… Tener paciencia y los oídos abiertos es lo más personal que me llevo de haber trabajado en Teatro Taller. Estoy muy orgullosa de la labor ejercida por todos los que participaron y estoy muy agradecida de la lección en trabajo en equipo que me estoy llevando. Teatrotaller es una organización muy sacrificada... “NO es fácil” desarrollar y montar una presentación de tal tamaño con todas las restricciones y límites impuestos en solo tres meses.

—Zahira Crespo (2009)



Casa Matriz

By: *Diana Raznovich*

8/6/09

At: *Women's Community Building (Commons)*

Directed by: *Loredana Camparone*

Teatrotaller presents... Casa Matriz S.A. Satisfacción garantizada

Loredana Camparone

Two women: a daughter and a mother "for hire." But what if the substitute mother you hired as a birthday gift for yourself mistakenly makes the entrance contracted by another client? So it is that the array of impersonations the mother gives in the attempt to please the frustrated daughter, while revealing a great deal about human desires and insecurities in this consumeristic society of ours, undoubtedly helps us to take ourselves less seriously. This is, in short, my reading of Casa Matriz, the one-act comedy by Diana Raznovich presented by Teatrotaller in the summer of 2009 at the Women's Community Building in downtown Ithaca.

I had been among the audience at the Teatrotaller's performances ever since I arrived at Cornell, on a few occasions invited by one of my students who was performing in the play. This time too I was there, watching a play I helped put on stage. I knew what Teatrotaller meant for many of the students who over the years had been involved in its productions: an opportunity for creative expression, for learning the language and the culture in a fun way, for exploring one's talents and one's ideas in a non teacher-centered environment, for finding gratification in creating something, in some cases for feeling that they were making a difference in the community by dealing with sensitive topics, but also a chance for cooperating and bonding in an otherwise extremely competitive environment. In many ways, Teatrotaller also connected the campus on the hill to the downtown, a bridge between the university and the local community.

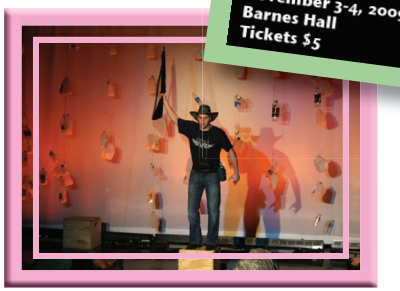
For me, Teatrotaller meant discovering the deep pleasure in the invisible work that goes into staging a play, and it meant getting a little taste of that incredible ludic experience that is the theater. But it also meant creating dear and sometimes hilarious memories with Briseida, Carolina, Cecilia, and Debbie: from the apparition of a suspiciously large rat (?) that scared everyone out of the Goldwin Smith auditorium, to the triumphal entrance of the gigantic fake breasts handmade by Cecilia for the final scene of Casa Matriz (you'll have to watch the video), to the hilariously contagious laughter of two kids who the night of the performance seemed to be having the time of their life.

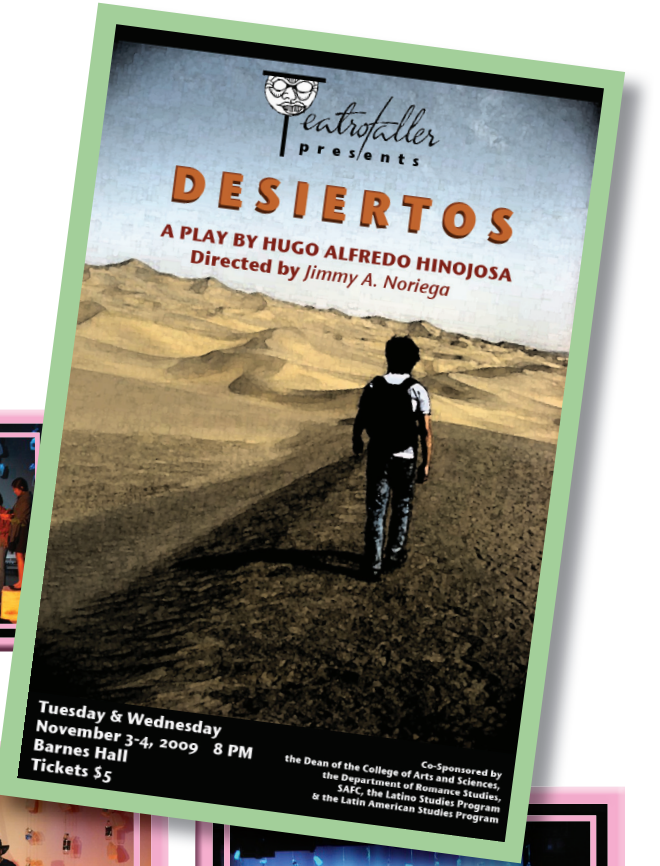
Desiertos

By: *Hugo Alfredo Hinojosa*

1103-04/2009 At: *Barnes Hall*

Directed by: *Jimmy Noriega*





California's Most Wanted

By: *Phoenix Paz*

4/8-10/10 At: *Risley Theatre*

Directed by: *Phoenix Paz*

Reflections on "California's Most wanted."

Jose Luis Gonzalez *April 8, 2010*

This evening, I had the pleasure of attending the opening night of "California's Most Wanted," presented by Cornell University's Teatrotaller, a theatre group dedicated to the production of Spanish and Spanglish plays. A few things surprised and impressed me about this production.

I was surprised that a portion of the script was original material. Teatrotaller used popular texts written by Luis Valdez and Pablo Neruda to carry the bulk of the action, yet had some members re-write Tiburcio Vasquez's ever-written tale. In the words of director Phoenix Paz, "'California's Most Wanted' combines the serious, humorous and burlesque in a multilingual novella style presentation of the life of Tiburcio Vasquez." Additionally, she states, "exploring Californio history and what happened to the Mexican population after the United States annexed Mexican land in the Mexican-American war is a novel way of looking at the first presence of Latinos in the United States."

I thought that Teatrotaller did a very nice job of incorporating original material with pre-existing text. The plot moved fluidly from where it began, a whorehouse, to other settings such as Tiburcio's jail cell. It also represented an interesting take on Valdez's play, "Bandido." In "Bandido" several storylines exist and layer melodrama upon melodrama, and in"California's Most Wanted," a similar concept is presented.

Since I did not know what to expect, I was shocked that the play was performed by only six actresses. They were truly talented because they managed to pull off female and male roles without breaking a sweat. Two of the women sang at various moments throughout the play without the use of instrumental accompaniment—a testament to their abilities. This added drama, culture, and musical history to the play.

I feel really happy to have attended tonight's performance and encourage others to do the same. Even though I sat in Risley Theatre's black-box, I was taken on a historical journey to California during such a critical time in Latino and U.S. history. I did not know about Tiburcio Vasquez prior to taking this course, but I will certainly remember—as the working girls in the play do—that he was a real man and outlaw who should not be forgotten.

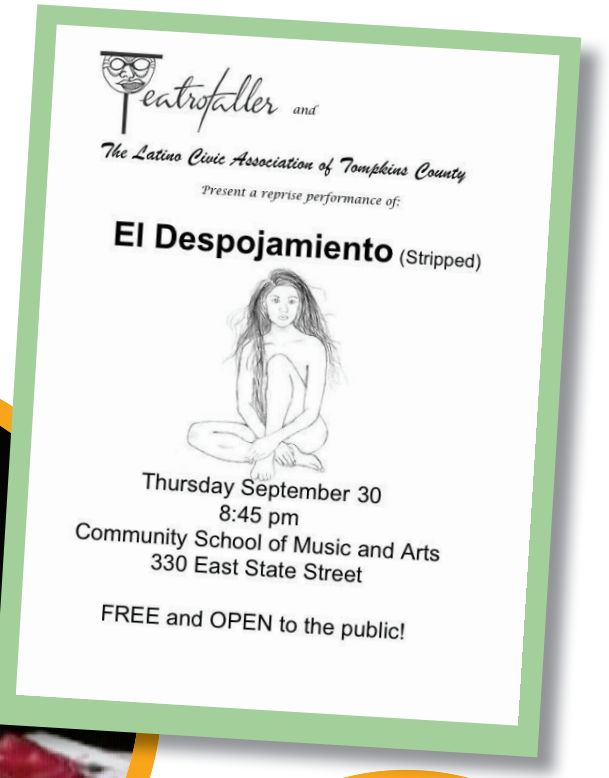
El Despojamiento

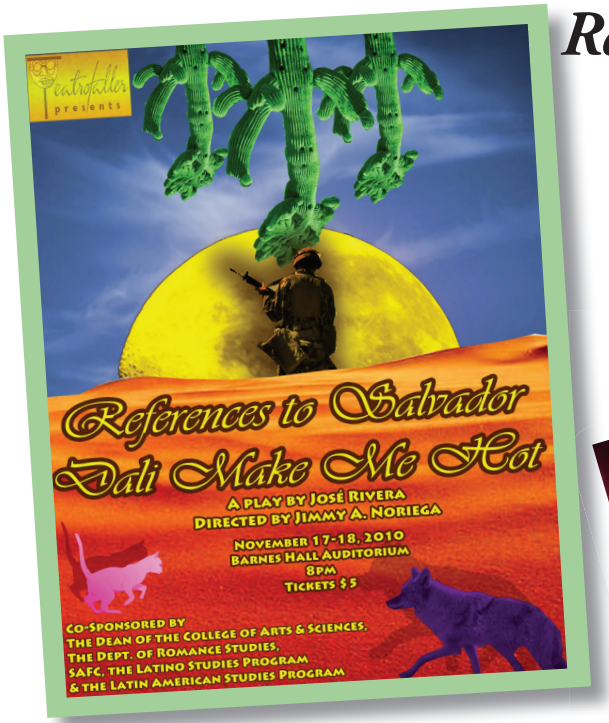
By: *Griselda Gambaro*

9/30/10

At: *Community School of Music and Arts*

Directed by: *Debra Castillo*





References To Salvador Dalí Make Me Hot

By: *José Rivera*

11/17-18/10 At: *Barnes Hall Auditorium*

Directed by: *Jimmy Noriega*

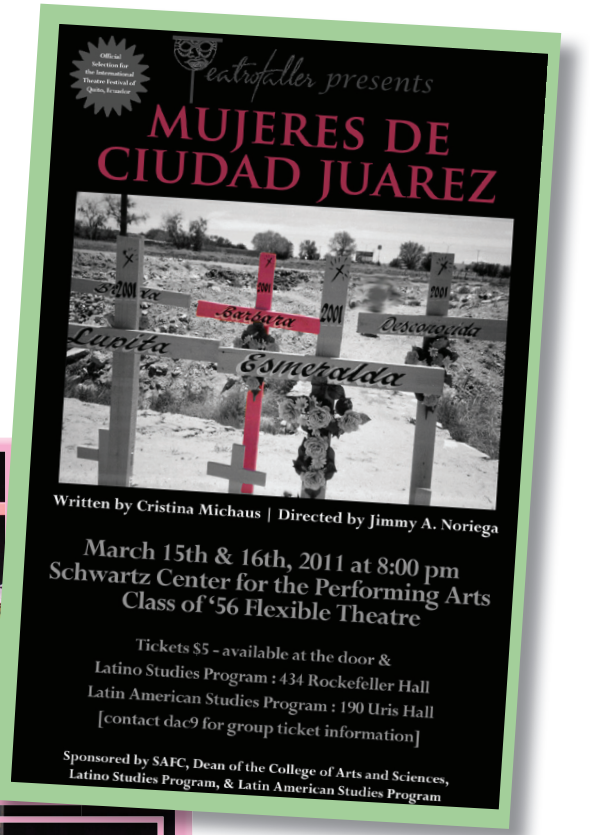
Las Mujeres De Ciudad Juárez

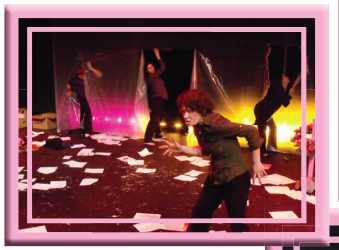
By: *Cristina Michaux*

3/15-16/11

At: *Schwartz Center Flexible Theater*

Directed by: *Jimmy Noriega*





For the Sake of Learning [Mujeres de Ciudad Juárez]

Ana Florencia López Ulloa *April 8, 2011*

I had the incredible fortune of taking a two-week Spring Break (Dear Administration, you should instate that. Two weeks are far better than one. I'd rather get out of classes a week later). After feeling incredibly refreshed, I came back to this horrible weather. But that's beside the point.

I went to Quito, Ecuador, for two weeks, to present the play I talked about last time, Mujeres de Ciudad Juarez. We performed it in the Fifth Annual International Encounter for Theatre Teachers and Students in Ecuador's Central University (wow, that's a mouthful). It was a.ma.zing. Play after play, workshop after workshop, the experience was mesmerizing. One of the most fulfilling, diverse, soul-defining events Cornell has provided me so far.

I could mostly talk about the trip. I could write novels about it (and I could say I kind of intend to. Once I graduate, goddammit). But I wanted to talk about the things around the trip itself, rather, especially since there's no reason why you would care about how cool it is that you lose your balance over the Equator line (yes, you do. Look it up).

First off: huge shout-out to Teatrotaller, the troupe responsible for the play. Have you ever heard about it? It's a Spanish theatre troupe that puts on between one to two plays per semester and works on a community one during the summer, usually. You can take it for credit, and you can do lights or staging or makeup or sound or publicity or anything involved in the theatre production apart from acting, if that's not your thing. It's run by students (advised by the stellar Debbie Castillo, who has led the group for 18 years) and has put on some awesome shows. The troupe has made it to international festivals quite often, and the experiences have been referred to as nothing short of what I just came back from: mind-opening parentheses that create the possibility of thinking way beyond the walls and boxes we can easily snuggle in.

Why is Teatrotaller important? … Well, given the quite dismal portrayal of everything in the University lately, of everyone taking a stand and talking about how terrible life is, the economy, the budget cuts, the lack of sponsorship for the sciences, for the arts, the bad government, the bad prospects for people after graduation, the lack of community in the University, the horrible weather … this troupe is actually one of the optimistic stories to look at. Teatrotaller thrives. But it thrives because it works for it. Because people get together and find interesting ways to spend as little as possible and use the fewest resources possible to make a high quality production, because everyone asks for extra funding from everywhere they can to make it work, and the ticket sales go straight back to the funds that will be used for the next play ... it's enthralling to see the group at work. To see how a few people can make something so big. I see Teatrotaller as an example of how resourceful thinking can overcome anything. Learning under them has truly been an honor.

It was an honor to also share the experience of Ecuador with the Teatrotaller troupe. We just came back from a festival at a university that asks $35 from its students to study at it. Where the median income is less than $400 per month, the theatre department there fundraises for two years to bring 10 international delegations to present their work and pays for their hotel stays and meals while we're there. Their hospitality was dumbfounding. And people bonded; I am sure I was not the only one that came out with her world changed. And this was done by a small handful of people with nearly no resources who got those resources slowly and took great care of what they had.

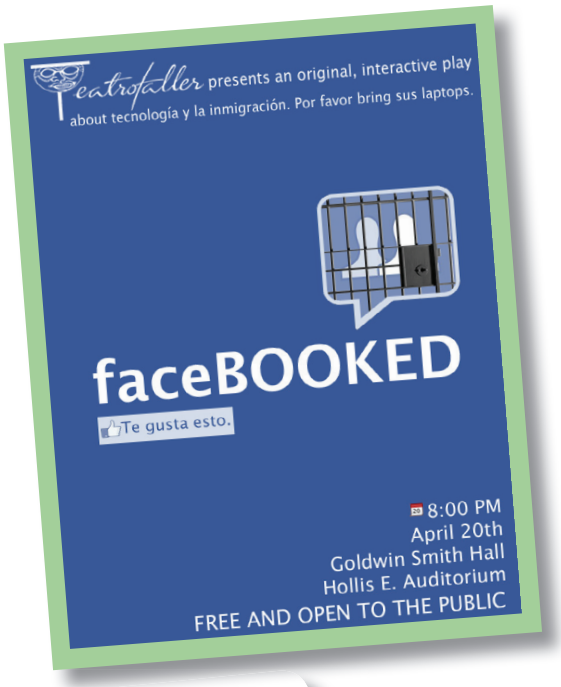
Seeing all these people together in one place for the sake of theatre and the creation that evolved there reminded me that art will exist as long as there are artists. A lot of the most incredible work I've seen — here, in Ecuador or elsewhere — is created "out of thin air:" with minimal materials that portray geniality. Novels and essays that blow your mind, plays with no props that show just how much more creativity is left in the world. What is evident there is the hard work of the artist, the playwright, the author, the actor. Time and hard work are invaluable.

And it makes me think: We at Cornell are undoubtedly privileged. No amount of complaining can bring that fact down. Problems? Sure. And we shouldn't be blind to them! Perspective? Needed. A fellow columnist argues that Cornell is a vocational school just like any other in pragmatic terms. I'm not sure how I take that. If it is, it is because we let it be. For those who want

to learn for learning's sake, think outside the box, yadayada ... Cornell IS here for you, with its double perspectives everywhere (look outside department #1. There's always deparment #2 that says the contrary. It's delicious), its insanely diverse community, its myriad of events. Learning for learning's sake is here for anyone who cares enough to go and look for it. That will still mean more for you and your life than the GPA you're trying to keep. Grades are not everything (spoiler alert: they DO mean something. Just not everything). The sooner we learn that, the faster we can get to the learning part.

Students really need to use what is here for us. A session of office hours with a professor lands you research questions that can be made into thesis projects. Lunches from Career Services can land you jobs (early sign ups are encouraged!). International Students and Scholars Office and Financial Aid advising can save you days of frustration and fear. Mental health initiatives to reduce stress really reduce stress, if you take the time to go to them. You can actually reach out for help when help is needed. And I'm not making these up. I've lived them first hand. These resources, the ones that make Cornell more livable, are the most valuable things Cornell has. Because without them, all the academic excellence the University thrives on would not get out; the people would be too broken to do that. (And kudos for all you staff members, for making my life at Cornell livable. Thank you!)

Ecuador and this festival reminded me of how beautiful it is to learn just because. And gave me the possibility of winding down and realizing, "Hey, it's OK. Life is not a curved grade test." So take what you want out of it. What YOU want. It's your life, after all. Not that having a stable economic life is a bad thing, but we have to believe a little more in the possibility of risk, of stepping out of the norm, of being ok if things are not going exactly within the step-by-step processes we are supposed to follow. Why learn about how diverse the world is and then go back into our boxes? What's the point?

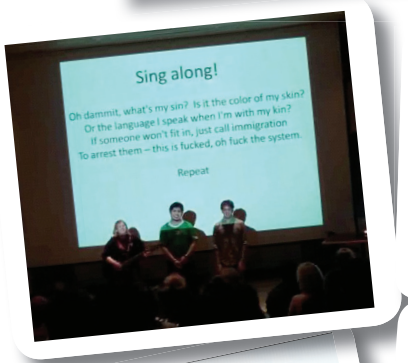


faceBOOKED

By: *Collective Creation*

4/20/11 At: *Hollis E. Cornell Auditorium*

Directed by: *Chrissa McFarlane, Pedro Pedroza, Jen Weidman, Casey Minella, & Noemie Zysermann*



Commentaries on faceBOOKED

— Florence Williams

I joined Teatrotaller not knowing that it would offer me the opportunity to get back into prop management, graphic design, photography, and videography, four things I haven't been able to do much of since high school. As a senior, it felt really great to finally be a part of something so creative and free – it made my usually otherwise reading heavy courseload much livelier. I couldn't reflect on the course without commenting on how much I enjoyed meeting all these truly zesty and passionate people. Teatrotaller seems to attract an equally eclectic and awesome bunch. Moreover, I really enjoyed the bottom up feel of the organization – the fact that anybody could be a director, writer, actor, or backstage. It was always refreshing to know that my input was important, especially for Facebooked. The opportunity to be of that production was especially formative for me. Upon hearing that we were writing and producing our own play, I questioned whether we could actually do it. But by performance time, I was so proud of all that we had accomplished, and the best part is that the audience loved it, and even better than that, thought it was funny. Success!

— Cheryline Pezzullo

My participation in the Hispanic Theatre Production class this semester allowed me to develop a lot of skills that have been otherwise dormant within me for a good number of years. The structure of the class, itself, is extremely conducive for collaboration and discussion, something that I've found to be a rare entity in most of my other classes. Upon signing up for the course, I thought that I would be well prepared for whatever was thrown my way due to my extensive acting experience in high school. I've learned that theater truly is a multi-dimensional art form, one that depends heavily on all the various pieces and contributions fitting together well.

The first day of Teatro "threw me for a loop," to say the least. It had been a while since I had participated in theatrical prep exercises, so when Jimmy asked us to get on all fours and act like an animal, I wondered if I had made a mistake signing up for the course. However, once I saw how willing the veteran members of Teatro were to just give their whole self to the exercises, I felt a desire to let go of my inhibitions so that I could grow as an actress in the class. While it took me a while to fully commit to the movements and sounds required by the exercises, I've come to appreciate that they are extremely purposeful for both theatrical development and group collaboration. It was helpful when directors would explain the intention behind the exercises as it caused to focus and really strive to gain something tangible from them.

The FaceBooked project will by far be one of the fondest memories I have of my time at Cornell. In the early developmental stages of the project, I was extremely drawn to the idea of being able to collaborate on every aspect of the show: writing, tech, acting, costumes, etc. It seemed like a great way for everyone to develop individual skills without being bound by the constraints of the script of an outside producer.

I think the choice of creating a marriage between technology and immigration was extremely relevant to issues apparent in society today. It allowed for creativity and the opportunity to research a topic that I feel very strongly about. Deep down, I knew I would enjoy devoting myself to the role of Mrs. Goodman the most. Mrs. Goodman was one of the most challenging roles I've played because I had to create a marriage between doing justice to the ignorant nature of the character, and not completely offending the audience. While I feel that I would have done a sufficient job in my role without hearing Jimmy's notes during one rehearsal, I know that hearing his constructive criticism that night is what took me to the next level. He challenged me to give the role everything I had and involve the audience, and being the competitive person that I am by nature, I ran with it. I appreciate that Jimmy took the time to really look at the intricacies of Mrs. Goodman because he believed that I could take role the farther than I thought was possible.

I had forgotten what it was like to form a "family-like bond"

with a group of people that you work closely with for long hours at a time. I don't think I would have ever interacted with many of the members of Teatro if I hadn't joined the class just because of the nature of a large college campus. I can honestly say that being a part of this group was like no other experience I've had in college, thus far. There was no competitive atmosphere or desire to leave at a designated time, rather it was a time every week where everyone could let their creative juices flow rather than stifle them for the sake of a grade. I appreciate the existence of Teatro on this campus, and only wish that I had found out about it sooner because it put me more in touch with my culture, my creativity, and the joy of I get from working with people from all different walks of life.

—Pedro Pedroza

FaceBOOKED was an even more comprehensive exercise in collaboration. It required coordination with other directors and several actors, sharing meeting times during rehearsal period. The play was created in a short amount of time and yet it had many triumphs during its one-day run. We were fortunate to have such a packed house on opening night. We nearly had to turn people away.

Working with tech and the actors during the cue-to-cue phase was exhilarating. The bricks and mortar of every element had to coalesce during that process and I am grateful for the opportunity to develop my ability to develop my director skills. Where else but TT could I receive such a valuable theatre experience with the opportunity to take on leadership positions and learn from talented, veteran TT members?

I got to see a play built from the ground up and I dove in and was involved in many of the components of theatre. TT was taught me that there are many surprises in every aspect of theatre. It takes a lot of trust. It takes in your actors to memorize the line, in the tech to take the time to create the right environment, etc. My previous experience with improv was somewhat helpful in the sense that I had to put on many different theatre production hats (writing, directing, sound, publicity, translations, acting) on any given day. It was wonderful to have a Facebook group in which to discuss the play, which would become FaceBOOKED. It was crucial especially early on to get immediate feedback on what people thought might work, what might not work. At one point, I thought it was a great idea to require people to come up with one comment or idea and to post it.

TT is constantly giving members an opportunity to get involved while covering pertinent and compelling topics in the Latino community. This is why I love TT and am glad I had the opportunity to make time in my schedule for it this semester because I have always wanted to try it. There is nothing like having a deportation (order of removal) order reversed to make one appreciate the richness that Cornell has. I'm glad I was able to learn from others and contribute in so many different aspects because this has been creatively and professionally very rewarding.

— Tenisha McDonald

I think Facebooked brought a comedic twist to the topic of immigration that made the play more interesting and fun to be involved in. I absolutely loved the heavy use of technology and the audience involvement. The challenges of this play from a tech perspective, was figuring out how to combine the use of different types of communication technologies with the whole immigration aspect of the play. Overall, I think the two fell hand in hand with one another, and I think this is reflective in the audience participation and their comments on the back-channel and on Facebook. I also liked the fact that there was lots of singing, dancing, and comedic aspects of this play.

Although this is my last semester being a part of Teatrotaller, I can say that this is one of the few activities on campus that I will truly miss. When I think back to my freshman year, and the struggle that I had in learning the Spanish language in taking the introductory courses, I would have never thought that I would progress as far as being involved in putting on productions in the Spanish language, as well as getting the opportunity to act. I can definitely say that this class has been nothing but a growing experience for me because it has challenged me to work on my weaknesses and make them better. Suggestions that I have for the future of Teatrotaller is to really reach out to freshmen and sophomores in the introductory Spanish courses, because I am sure

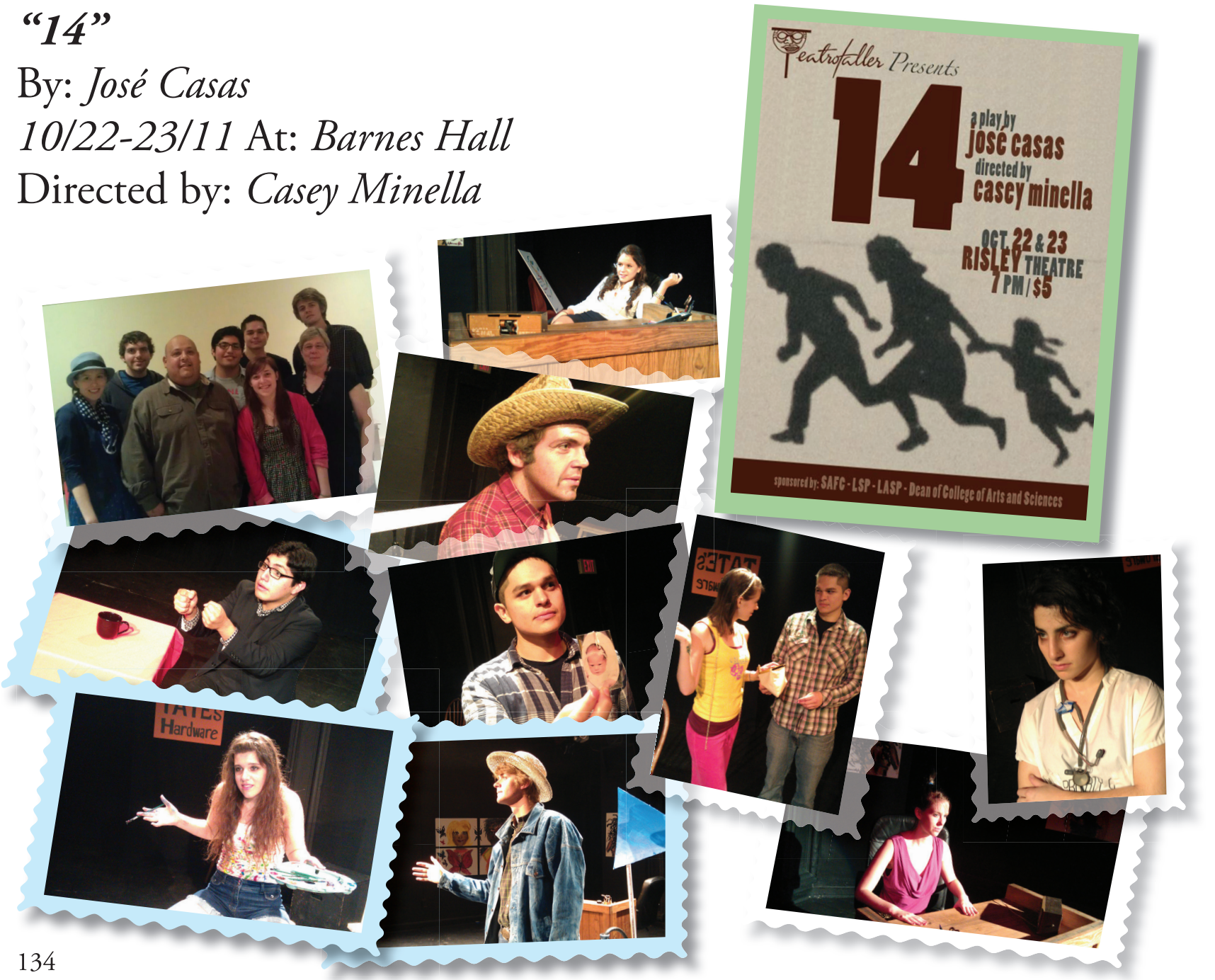
there are students there who may be hesitant to join because they are not fluent in the language, but I think these students are the most important to reach out to because once they join and see progress, they will most likely be the long-lasting members of the club. I know this because I was one of these students, and the reason why I joined Teatrotaller is because my Spanish professor at the time suggested that it would be great practice for me. I'm sad to leave but I wish all the members good luck in future productions.

"14"

By: *José Casas*

10/22-23/11 At: *Barnes Hall*

Directed by: *Casey Minella*



Reflection: 14 in Retrospect

Casey Minella

Overall, my experiences this semester was extremely fruitful and educational. While it was a challenge to take on treasury and directorial duties for Teatrotaller, it was also welcomed. I was more than excited to start work on Jose Casas' 14. My approach to the play was to think of it as a conversation piece; I wanted people to come out of the play and discuss the conflicting stories and feelings that they were having, which would serve as some sort of catalyst.

As with any play, there were a few obstacles that stood in our way. However, in the spirit of theatre, we used these problems as an advantage and an opportunity for growth. Initially, I was thinking of setting the play in the round in an attempt to mimic the visceral and communal feeling that one feels around a fire. It makes one feel participatory in the events that unfold in front of them, similar to what I felt during Pedro's performance at the Latino conference. I saw aspects of this in the play because the structure of the interview makes the stories very personal because the actor is talking to the audience directly and turns the act of theatre into a literal, one-on-one discussion. Although we could not do the play in the round, I found Risley Theatre to be a personable enough space to get across the same qualities that a round would have accomplished, which I viewed as essential components of the play's structure. This premise entices them into the world of the play, making the spectators then realize that they are not truly spectators at all. The issues brought up by the characters of the play are as real and tangible as the seats the audience sits in.

Some components of the play that I would like to discuss center on the projections, the mural piece, and the objects. One part of the play that interested me particularly was the projections. What is shown on the stage is the title of the monologues, the character's name, their occupation, and their location, which immediately adds labels to each of the characters before we even meet them. The audience is unconsciously creating an assumption of the person's identity before any lines have been said, any personalities unfold, and any of their personal stories or emotions have been heard. Thereby, the resulting projection is quite literal. I believe this is a way to push people to question how they might judge other people based on their occupation, name, and location while also demonstrating that labels are not always what they seem. More specifically, this aspect of the play shakes stereotypes, and the projection of labels enables the audience to potentially evaluate how this might be problematic should they do the same for, say, skin color or accent.

I tried to integrate qualities of tangibility into the play. This is why I chose to not project the mural. I wanted there to be a physical presence of the judgment that happens. In between the first four monologues, I had an actor take up a mural piece and place it in a window formation. As the physical parts of the mural are put up the audience is wondering who that boy and girl are and already starting to actively identify who they may be based solely on features. As a physical presence in our everyday life, I wanted to include both the projection and the tangible side in the play.

Another aspect of the play I wanted to explore was the connections between each character on a human level. The play is named 14, which is significant because the number system is a universal language among all peoples of the world. Human emotions also cross cultures and this was an important message to bring to the execution of the play. A way I chose to demonstrate this was by using physical objects that are either revealed on stage or taken up by characters. For example, the desk, a permanent fixture of the stage, as a symbol of power, similar to how the magazine editor takes up the desk. The distinctions we are supposed to make are how they use that power even though, on some level, one may still associate them in a way (elements of their 'selling out'). Similarly, the cigarettes used by the storeowner and the secretary shows how, on a human level, they can relate. These levels of connection that we have from human to human, I think, are sometimes overlooked when we have these predetermined judgments on look or place or origin. Thus, in exploiting this through the multiple uses of props, it creates a space that allows the audience to see similar relations between each other.

I was also specific in picking the monologues for the discussion with Jose Casas. My first choice was the very first scene for the audience because

it sets up how we are supposed to view the stories. I found it interesting that, through the narrative (splicing of the single monologues together) and the physical space, the audience is forced to juxtapose these two stories right off the bat. It is intended to set up the way we are supposed to view the play. The reason why I picked Pedro's scene to perform was because I thought his presence was the most interactive with the audience. Not only did he have the ability to create another character, the interviewer, but this also allowed the audience to feel like the interviewer. The monologue's was active in creating this physical space that the other monologues did not have.

Overall, I just wanted to thank you for giving me the opportunity to direct for Teatrotaller this semester. Since the beginning of my freshman year, I have worked on different parts of the crew and every occasion has been an amazing experience. I used the working knowledge that I had built up stage-managing under Jimmy Noriega and my previous theatre work to hit the ground running and put my all into it. I am really pleased with the work of my actors, tech, and executive members. Looking towards the next semester in the Schwartz, I am pleased with the work we have ahead of us, and know that we have the ability to create something great.

Final

Pedro Pedroza

This Fall has been a fruitful semester with several opportunities for involvement in stage production related to Latino issues. I grew as a contributing member of Cornell's community both artistically and intellectually with my work as assistant director and actor in Teatrotaller's (TT) production of José Casas' "14", reprising said performance during said playwright's visit to Cornell, creating and performing an original and personal monologue for a Latino Ivy League Conference (LILC) workshop, and performing in a staged reading at a photography exhibition.

TT's "14" demonstrates a breakthrough for me as a performer and artist. TT's culture of collaboration and calculated risk-taking within a pedagogical environment is refreshing. When I volunteered to fill the void of an actor who dropped out of TT, I had to trust the director to help me prepare for the role. I took the job of portraying the characters seriously in order to do the subject matter justice and it paid off in the end. The director encouraged me during my first read-through and told me she could picture anyone else for the role after hearing my interpretation of the material. Even though she was the director and I respected her notes and the experience that informed her comments, I always felt as though she was my peer and that speaks to TT's student involvement and environment of collaboration.

I grew as an actor through careful encouragement and engagement with the serious subject matter of immigration. It was an invaluable experience for me to be able to portray a day laborer in Spanish who traveled to the U.S. from Mexico to be able to provide for his family. My father is self-employed in similar work and I feel privileged to be able to give these characters a voice, characters that are part of a larger issue. Being able to bring that to a Cornell audience during my undergrad career is rare and was a joy. It was also interesting to portray the marine with political ideas in English who was afraid of death after the loss of his undocumented friend and fellow soldier. Jimmy Noriega and José Casas gave me insight into the craft of both theatre as a whole, and specifically acting. The notes I received were always justified. I had not acted since high school, yet, at the risk of sounding arrogant, literally dozens of people went out of their way to tell me they either really enjoyed my performance or that I was their favorite.

To me, my performance is just a matter of relating to the material. After having lived as an undocumented person in the U.S. for over twenty years, I felt I had an advantage, or, rather, a duty to portray these characters in an honest light. I was able to get out of my comfort zone, despite the material being so close to home for me. I had to portray a father and really consider what the beats were. When preparing to memorize, I found Debbie's comments the most helpful as I concentrated on the emotions and motives behind the character's words. To this day, I can still simply recite and perform both monologues by heart as long as I remember the first line. From there, the rest just flows because I memorized and performed them with the characters in mind so I don't worry about the words.

My involvement with "14" has proved very helpful in my other intellectual pursuits. Memorizing and acting out a well-written script has made me a better writer because it is a reminder. For a creative writing class, I opted to write a ten-minute or so one-act play that, I think, could have easily been added to a production that's similar to "14". Repeatedly, people in my creative writing course kept telling me they enjoyed the dialogue in my stories. They said they would read the words aloud and that they would sound natural. I owe a great debt to José Casas and TT for this newfound ability. To be clear, I recognize that I have a long way to go before I am a skilled writer or a serious performer. However, I am grateful for TT because I was able to cultivate new skills.

As part of the workshop committee for LILC, I worked closely with the president of TT to essentially go through a workshop of my own and develop a personal monologue in the style of Latinos Anonymous to present before the LILC delegates. In one week, I was able to develop story techniques and reflect on my own experiences as a student, brother, son, Latino and other identities. Our workshop was valuable because it emphasized the importance of self-expression in all its forms and how that expression can be an effective

leadership tool. It was an interesting next project to take on because I was able to apply the performance lessons I learned from TT and essentially produce and perform an original monologue that spoke to my experience as an undocumented student and the challenges that presents in light of my life goals.

The LILC workshop was very intense and personal but we received some positive feedback and much participation from people; especially during the last workshop, which ran longer than the others. So, despite squeezing a lot of material and time for individual storytelling, the LILC delegates felt they had gained something from the workshop they could take away with them as they considered the role of identity in their own live and communities. The event sparked thoughtful discussion and served to communicate common struggles and differences between LILC delegates. As Latinos at prestigious universities, it was great to be able to have theatre showcased as a form of expression. "14" is a play that delves into immigration issues and we were able to demonstrate how theatre can be a vehicle for not just self-expression but for communication as a living art form that cannot be replicated. The highlight of the event for me was when an undocumented Latino from Harvard asked how long I had been acting. I told him I began acting this year; and he replied that he would look into acting opportunities at his Harvard campus for himself.

The staged reading of Ariel Barchilón's "Filigramas sobre papel" at the photography exhibition in Tjaden was an interesting exercise. It was bizarre to see the transformative power of theatre and acting because I played a very disturbing character with scar makeup across my face and a bandaged head. The stark subject matter was puzzling because I did not fully understand its connection to the exhibition, but I was determined to accommodate the piece as faithfully as possible for the sake of the project. I trusted the artwork in the exhibition to convey the significance of the staged reading and it goes to show how theatre is an experience where the setting and witnessing it first-hand changes the experience. It was not exactly invisible theatre but it showed how theatre can be incorporated into and shares many elements with other art forms- all of which can work together to achieve a compelling intellectual exercise.

This semester was eye opening and I am grateful for the opportunity to grow as a writer, student, actor and Cornell community member as I prepare to graduate in January. As I leave as a Cornell graduate, I know I am privileged and have that much more to give back. I am pursuing a career in education. I will most likely teach for a year or two in the inner city of Chicago until I have enough experience to apply to a Master's in Education program, such as Harvard's, for example. I will be able to take the life lessons learned from my experience with theatre with me beyond Cornell as I continue to write and teach as a person in the service of others. I would not be where I am were it not for others who have instilled valuable trust and confidence in me so I feel I am ready for the next step. TT is a tremendous part of that.

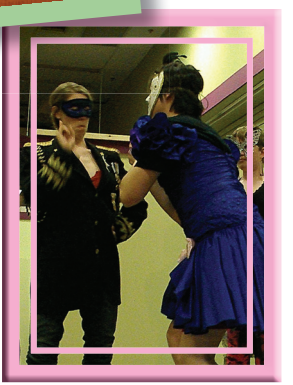
Iphigenia Crash Fall Lands On The Neon Shell That Was Once Her Heart

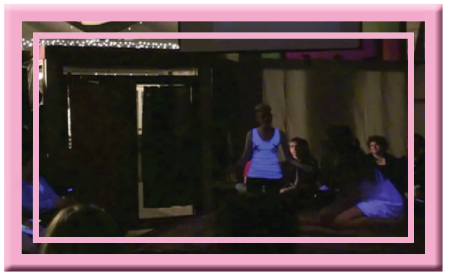
By: Caridad Svich

3/12 At:

Directed by: *Ross Haarstadt*

(Theater Incognita collaboration)





Iphigenia, A Rave Fable Set in Mexico

Luke Z. Fenchel *March 14, 2012*

Theatre Incognita, the inventive and off beat theater company, returns in March with a contemporary update of a Greek tragedy by Euripides that will be mounted in a vacant storefront on The Commons. Iphigenia Crash Land Falls on the Neon Shell That Was Once Her Heart is subtitled "a rave fable," and by all accounts the staging will be quite a production.

American-born Cuban / Argentine / Spanish / Croatian Caridad Svich has relocated the story of Agamemnon's Trojan War sacrifice just south of the U.S. and Mexican border. Absent from this story is a stranded fleet of soldiers, but instead we find a military figure and political office holder desperately grasping at his dwindling power. Would he sacrifice his daughter in order to maintain power? What if that daughter yearns simply to dance? The play hurls one of Greek tragedy's most compelling sagas into a sleek netherworld of sex, drugs and trance music, and Iphigenia is a celeb who embraces sensual excess with a transgendered glam rock star named Achilles.

Aritistic director Ross Haarstad calls the work "brilliant, ecstatic, and gorgeously written," and as a special treat Svich will speak on the third floor of the Community School of Music and Art at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 14, while the company will present a half-hour of the play in progress; admission to this special treat is free.

"I asked one of my favorite actors and activists, Carolina Osorio Gil for Latino/a scripts to look at producing this season, as I hadn't yet gotten to these rich cultures onstage," Haarstad wrote by email. "I had heard of Svich, but not read her. I immediately fell in love with the first script Carolina handed me, decided she should be the lead, and here we are. Oddly enough, I will be directing a staged reading of another Svich play at the end of April at Cornell."

He continued: "With Carolina came the opportunity to collaborate with Cornell's Teatrotaller, whose work I've long admired. It's been a blessing to have Professor Debra Castillo and her students aboard."

In the spirit of the piece, actors and designers are transforming a vacant storefront in Center Ithaca on The Commons into a decadent rave – mixing politicos, street people, the ghosts of the dead girls of Juarez (played in drag), and emo-trance vibes.

"A vacant storefront fit the energy and requirements of the play," Haarstad wrote. "Actually Vicki Taylor Brous at Downtown Ithaca Alliance and I have been talking about getting more storefront theater going downtown since I did Kit Wainer's queermonsterfreaks in a storefront two years ago. I was lucky that a space in Center Ithaca was open, and am indebted to Frost Travis for his enthusiastic support of new art."

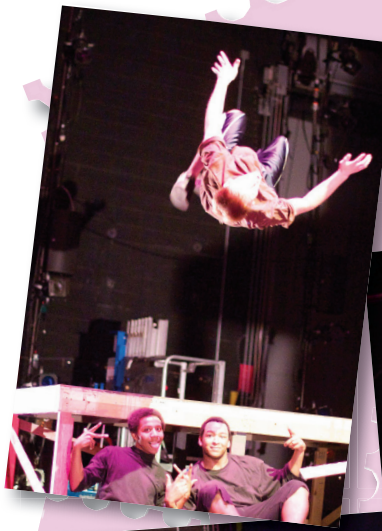
When I asked Haarstad whether the lack of a permanent Theatre Incognita stage an asset or a liability, he wrote that it was both: "Lack of a permanent rehearsal space is a greater liability. Of course space generally costs money. I do love finding unique ways of using various performance spaces however, and hope it will be somewhat a feature of Incognita's future."

Asked about the company generally, Haarstad noted "Artistically, I'm happy. But we're still very shoestring. I decided, perhaps foolishly, to get shows up rather than try to build a board, and committee work, etc. Now I have to back up and apply lessons hard learned to building a real foundation for growth for this company. I hope our audiences will show extra support as we do that."

The production itself is promisingly multi-media. Three area teens will play the "fresa girls," who represent the ghosts of the murdered girls of Juarez: Adrian Bauchner from LACS (Incognita's Dream), Felix Fernandez-Perry from IHS (Edna in Hairspray for Running To Places), and Kai Haskins from New Roots (another R2P regular). Also making his debut with Incognita is Keir Neuringer, who composed original music for this production (lyrics by Svich), while video artist Nils Hoover will be responsible for the media spectacle. Costuming is by Cornell student Caterina Gutierrez of Teatrotaller.

Adult Roy's Badland

By: *Jorge Silva, Sam Tannert, and Alex Symes*
3/29/12
At: *Kiplinger Theater, Schwartz Center*
Directed by: *Casey Minella*



All Rave, All Play

Tom Moore

April 2, 2012

At 6:05 p.m. last Thursday, I received a short voicemail message from a close friend: "Hey Tom, I reserved you a seat on stage for the Rave Play tonight, 'cause I just assumed that you'd be going, so whatever, bye!" I put my phone back in my pocket and asked myself the same question that was on everyone's mind that night: What the hell is a Rave Play? No one really knows, in part because Adult Roy's Badland, the Rave Play performed Thursday by the Latino theatre troupe Teatrotaller, was, to the best of my knowledge, the first of its kind. The playwright, Jorge Silva '12, conceived the idea of a Rave Play a little over a year ago, and since then has been working together with a host of talents from Cornell and the broader Ithaca community, essentially constructing the medium from scratch.The results? Groundbreaking doesn't begin to cover it. By the time Badland was done with me, bits of my mind were splattered all over the stage like broken glow sticks and my conception of what theatre could be and do had been raved into a sweaty oblivion.

Amara James '13, gave a powerful performance as Roy, a gun-toting nomad wandering through the hedonistic savagery of Badland. Dan Bartholomew '12, stirred the crowd into a frenzy with his antics as "Da Trak," an androgynous personification of all that is wild and trippy. Bartholomew's mania played especially well in contrast to James' characteristic gravitas. Lacie Buckwalter '11 and Adam Romero '14 also performed well as Badland's heroine and villain, respectively, although the script gave them little chance to flesh out their characters.

What really made Badland an epic Rave Play was not its characters or its plot, but rather the dynamic ways in which the audiences interacted with the performers. I say "audiences" because Badland really had two distinct audiences: one on stage, raving with the actors, and one in the house seats, watching the play unfold. Thus, Badland wasn't just a rave-inspired play, or a rave-themed play. It was something completely new: a Rave Play. Fully rave. Fully play.

From the onstage audience, I have heard nothing but stellar reviews. Speaking for myself, raving in Badland was a theatrical experience unlike any I've had in my life. Every scene coursed with a maniacal, cathartic energy. Thick beats from Sound Designer Samuel Tannert, mesmerizing projections from Video Designer Lanny Huang '14 and an appearance by the IC Breakers, an Ithaca College-based breakdancing group, kept the audience raving well past the point of exhaustion.

The feedback from the seated audience, however, has been mixed. I've heard everything from, "Badland was visually stunning," to "I left the theater five minutes in because watching you guys dance was boring."

Over the weekend, I sat down with the production crew and tried to get their take on the divided reactions from the audience. Director Casey Minella '14 gave her interpretation: "As a director, I knew that there were going to be two different audiences, that there were going to be two different plays that people were going to be watching. The people [seated] in the house are not being active, and I think they noticed that. Watching art, not actively engaging with it, is something completely different from being onstage in the production, completely submersed in the story."

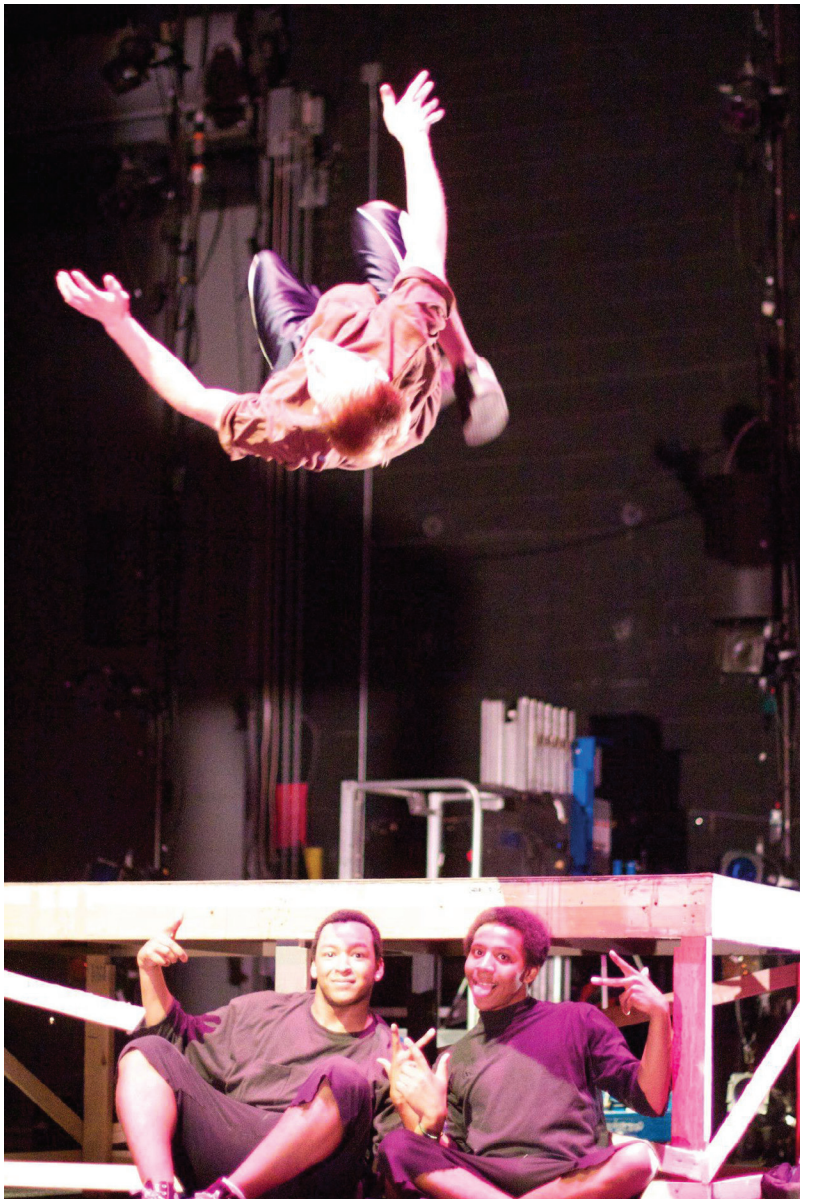
Silva describes this dichotomy as the difference between the "spectacle of rave" and the "experience of rave." As a member of the onstage audience, interacting point blank with the actors, I experienced Badland, on a raw, emotional level, but I can't exactly say that I saw Badland. I can try to tell you about some of the places this production took me (and believe me, it took me some places), but I can't give you the dispassionate thematic analysis that is usually the bread and butter of theater reviews.

There's a tension, then, between Badland the rave and Badland the play. The more critical members of the seated audience would argue that the Rave Play succeeded as a rave but failed, to some extent, as a play. There may be some merit to this criticism. Badland included sometimes lengthy dance breaks which, while powerfully cathartic for those dancing, might have gotten dull for a seated audience. The play also refused to follow some conventions of theater which a seated audience might expect. I discussed that tension over the weekend with Tannert:

"We had one comment that the play needs more of an arc, that it needs to

go up, and then down. And I thought it was great that we didn't do that. We really followed a DJ set, where you have many climaxes and then releases. I think we were very successful in that."

While I can empathize with the frustration seated audience members may have felt towards the unconventional aspects of Badland I remain in awe of the production. Silva, Minella and their cast and crew have created something completely new and immensely innovative. A promising new medium was born on Thursday night. Badland was the first of the Rave Plays, but I seriously doubt that it will be the last.

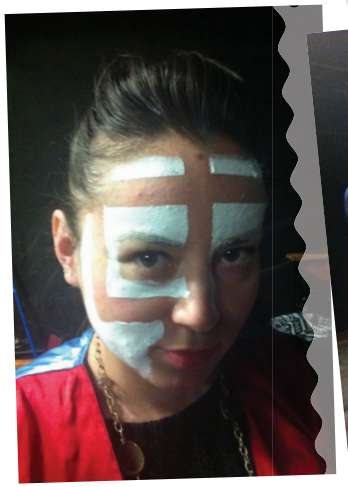


Dos Amores y Bicho

By: *Gustavo Ott*

11/16-17/12 At: *Risley Theatre*

Directed by: *Casey Minella & Lacie Buckwalter*

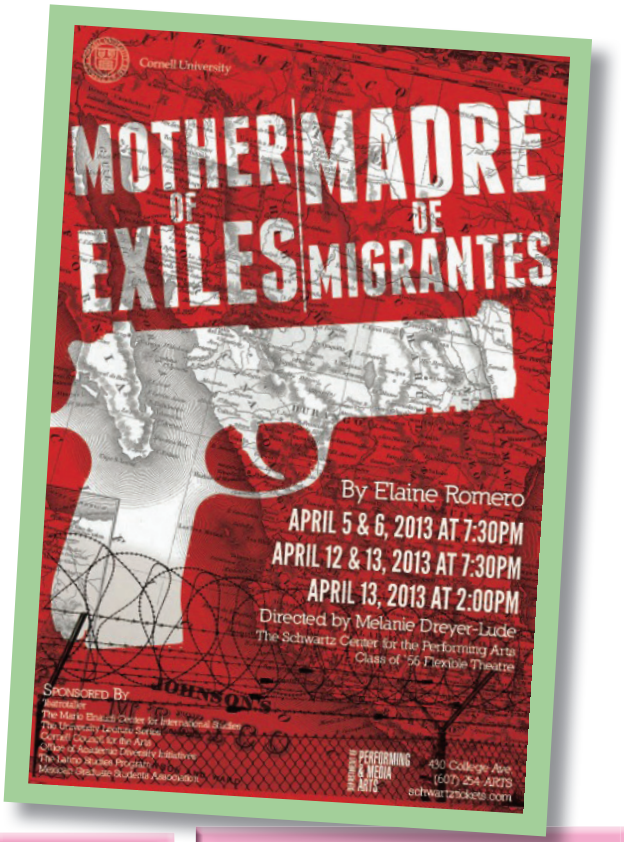


Mother Of Exiles

By: *Elaine Romero*

4/05-06 & 12-13/13 At: *Black Box, CTA*

Directed by: *Melanie Dreyer-Lude*



Play examines immigration, violence, civil rights

Kathy Hovis *April 4, 2013*

The Department of Performing and Media Arts will present Elaine Romero's immigration-themed play "Mother of Exiles/Madre de Migrantes," April 5-6 and April 12-13 in the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts Flex Theatre.

The play, the second installment of Romero's border trilogy, was commissioned by the department and is set in Ivy League-educated teacher Madga Andrews' troubled classroom on the Arizona/Mexico border. Armed by the state and under pressure, Andrews uses a gun to teach her students about American civics.

"Our play is both a celebration of Latino culture and a cultural look at national identity and civil rights," said director Melanie Dreyer-Lude, assistant professor of acting and directing. "Should we arm our teachers to keep our students safe? Is it ever acceptable to engage in racial profiling? Can we fix our broken education and immigration systems? These are some of the questions our story will engage."

Romero has taught at Northwestern University, the University of Arizona and Linfield College, and is a resident playwright at Chicago Dramatists. An award-winning playwright, her work has been presented at the Kennedy Center, Alley Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and across the United States and abroad.

"The play stems from my reflection of the power of the gun in a landscape where racial harmony has given way to racial disharmony," Romero said. "Arizona once was a bastion of racial harmony. The collisions of conservative politics, border strife and economic stress have shifted the tone of the region."

Jimmy Noriega, Ph.D. '11, assistant professor of theater at the College of Wooster, collaborated on the project.

"Together, we created a show that is not about immigration, but instead is about living in a zone where politics, history and democracy intersect in violent ways, and often at the expense of those who are most vulnerable," said Noriega, who grew up along the border and addresses border issues in his work and teaching.

The play features interactive experiences for audience members, with elements of the U.S.-Mexico border patrol experience. An installation by graphic artist Alma Hoffman will be on view in the Schwartz Center lobby.

The cast includes Ithaca College alumnus Deanalis Resto '11 as Madga Andrews; Cornell students Juan Antonio Bustamante '14, Liliana Aguirre Esparza '14, Sonia Gregor '14, Millicent Kastenbaum '16, Julie Locker '16 and Zachary Wright '13; with IC student Xavier Reyes '14 and IC assistant professor Gustavo Licón.

Romero will speak in the University Lectures series on "Sources of Inspiration: A Latina Playwright's Journey," April 5 at 4:30 p.m. in the Schwartz Center Film Forum. Free and open to the public.

Hoffman, whose work explores issues of equality, diversity and cross-cultural communication, also gives a free public lecture, "The City of Ethnos," Friday, April 12, at 4:30 p.m. in the Film Forum.

The play's sponsors include Teatrotaller, the Latino Studies Program, Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, University Lectures, Cornell Council for the Arts, the Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives and the Mexican Graduate Students Association.

Producciones De Enlace Con La Comunidad

Con La Participación Especial De Miembros De La Comunidad

Cuéntame Un Cuento

By: *María Elena Walsh*

8/17/96

At: *Greater Ithaca Activities Center*

Directed by: *Isabel Ramos*

Health Care Provider

Fall 1998

Video Collaboration With Cornell Extension Services

Día De Las Madres

Variety Show

Summer 99 At: *B J Martin Elementary School*

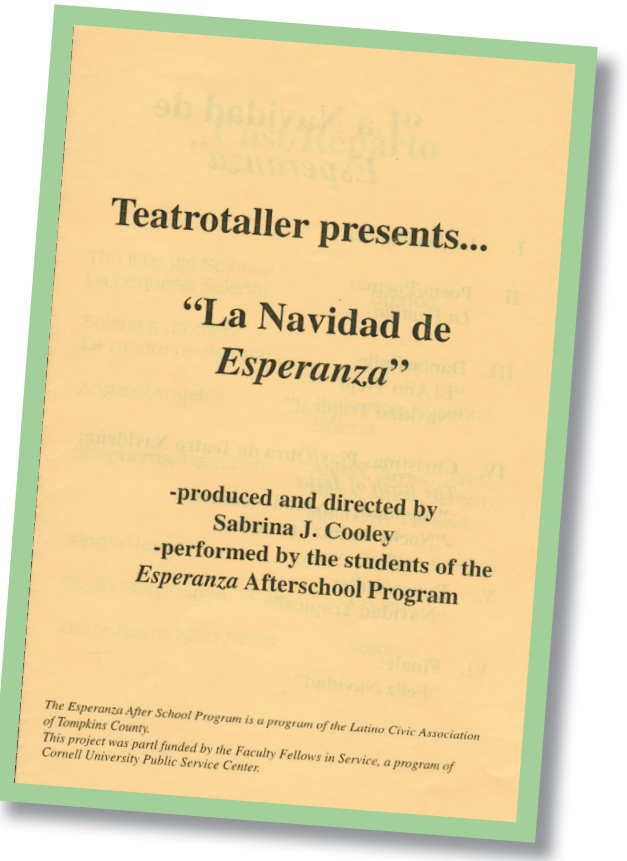
Directed by: *Sabrina Cooley*

La Navidad de Esperanza

Variety Show

5/5/12 At: *B J Martin Elementary School*

Directed by: *Sabrina Cooley*



María González

By: *Alejandra Molina*

11/09/02

At: *Schwartz Center of Performing Arts*

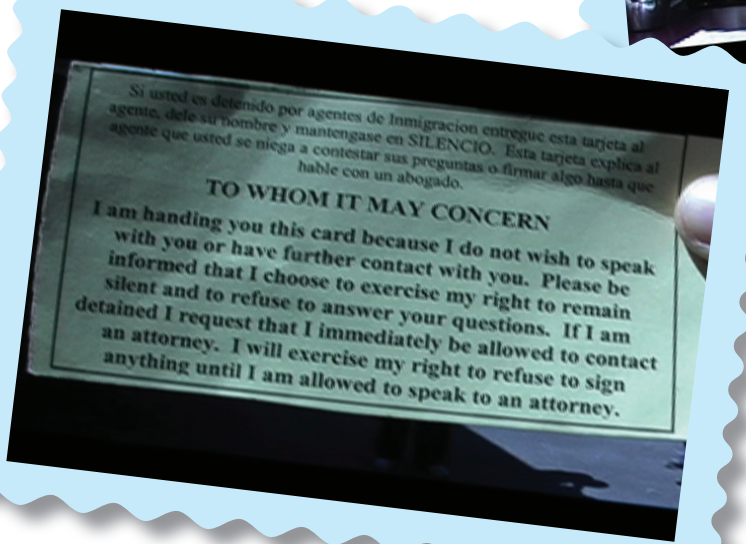
Directed by: *Tony Zúñiga y Katia Yurguis*

Derechos De Los Inmigrantes

By: *Maryam Sajed*

5/04

Video Collaboration with Farm Workers Program



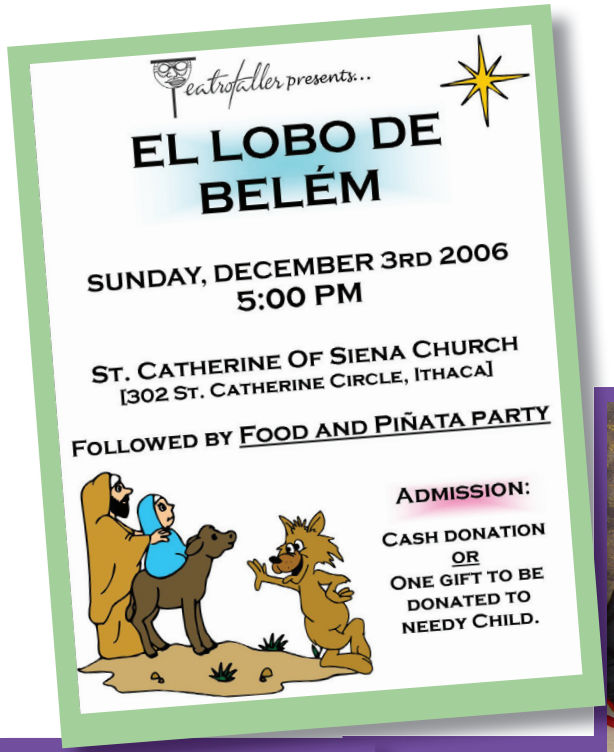
El Lobo de Belém

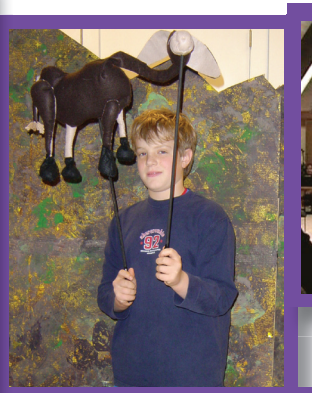
By: *E. Peralta*

12/03/06

At: *Saint Catherine of Siena Church*

Directed by: *Carolina Osorio Gil*





Nativity play goes Mexican

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier *April 4, 2013*

A wolf generally isn't the first animal that leaps to mind when one thinks about the Nativity. Yet in "La Pastorela 2006," that creature took a prominent place right alongside the sheep and donkeys.

The wolf character was one indication of slight adaptations to the Christmas story as presented Dec. 3 at Ithaca's St. Catherine of Siena Church. La Pastorela featured child and adult actors, puppets and traditional Christmas songs in Spanish. Lasting 40 minutes, it was performed entirely in Spanish except for introductions made in both English and Spanish.

La Pastorela is a traditional Mexican account of performed throughout Mexico and the American southwest. A few wrinkles were added to the performance at St. Catherine, thanks to the creative influence of its organizer, Teatroller (Spanish for theater-workshop), a theatrical coalition of student and community participants at Cornell University that preserves and promotes Spanish, Latin American and Latino cultures.

The Dec. 3 rendition depicted two shepherds -- in this case, shepherdesses -- journeying toward Bethlehem to see the newborn Lamb of God. Along the way the shepherdesses and their sheep are followed by a wolf, El Lobo, who is told by the devil, El Diablo, that the lamb of God is a real live lamb that should be eaten by the wolf. Yet upon arriving at the manger, the wolf discovers that the lamb is actually the baby Jesus.

"He realizes it's the son of God, and of course he's not going to eat him," explained Carolina Osorio Gil, La Pastorela's creative director.

Despite the scary creatures, Osorio Gil said the story was presented in a light-hearted fashion and had a cheery ending, with good triumphing over evil and the cast singing Jose Feliciano's "Feliz Navidad" to close out the show.

"It was very powerful in a humorous way. It made a good impact on the kids," remarked Lauren Cowen, who along with her husband, Todd, assisted with La Pastorela by helping prepare the sets and costumes. Their daughter Lily, 7, played two roles -- a newspaper hawker near the beginning who announces that the Lamb of God is going to be born, and an angel at the end who battles the devil. In addition, the Cowens' son Archie, 10, was a first-time puppeteer for the donkey character.

"The devil comes, trying to figure out more information about where baby Jesus is being born, but I'm really stupid," Archie said in describing his role as the donkey. "I keep talking, but I'm not giving him very much information."

Archie said his participation in La Pastorela inspired deeper reflection about the actual Nativity story. "I didn't really ever think about the journey of Mary and Joseph, and all the kings and shepherds and stuff. It made the picture a little bigger to me," he said.

"Overall, I think (La Pastorela) came out great," remarked Victoria Blake, 14, who portrayed one of the shepherdesses. She gave special commendation to the many small children for their self-discipline while portraying the sheep.

Victoria is a veteran of the stage in school and community productions, whereas participating in La Pastorela was a first-time venture for Archie. "It was really fun -- all that practice kind of paid off," he said. "Everyone was complimenting my sister and I about our performance; that felt really good."

A reception took place following the Dec. 3 performance with "food, pinata, the works," Victoria said. It included culinary items donated by a Mexican-American student group from Cornell, as well as dishes to pass. The pinatas, meanwhile, provided kids with a fun dessert of candies, peanuts and such when they were broken open. Osorio Gil added that a collection was taken up that night to benefit local Hispanic migrant workers.

Osorio Gil said workshops were held throughout the fall in preparation for La Pastorela. "It was a big project to organize. We started organizing in August," she said, estimating that the event involved approximately 17 families and 50 people overall.

She observed that a Catholic church made a natural setting for this inaugural production because La Pastorela is a Mexican Catholic tradition. In addition, the parish's pastor, Father Michael Mahler, served for many years as chaplain and director of campus ministry at Cornell.

St. Catherine also offers several Spanish Masses per year. Latino/Hispanic heritage is "a very large subpopulation of people in Ithaca," said Osorio Gil,

who was born in Colombia. Victoria noted that Spanish "was my first language growing up" and that her mother, Elvira Sanchez-Blake, who served as La Pastorela's music director, is a native of Colombia as well. Meanwhile, Lauren Cowen said her family spent a sabbatical year in Spain two years ago.

La Pastorela was a first-time effort, and Osorio Gil hopes it will become an annual affair based on the great turnout Dec. 3.

"It was fantastic. I was really just happily surprised at the large amount of people that came," she said, adding that the church setting was ideal: "Oh, it was beautiful, it was very beautiful."

Photo by Glenn Gaston

Carolina Osorio Gil (left), who directed "La Pastorela 2006," sits with her flock of sheep during the Dec. 3 performance at Ithaca's St. Catherine of Siena Church.

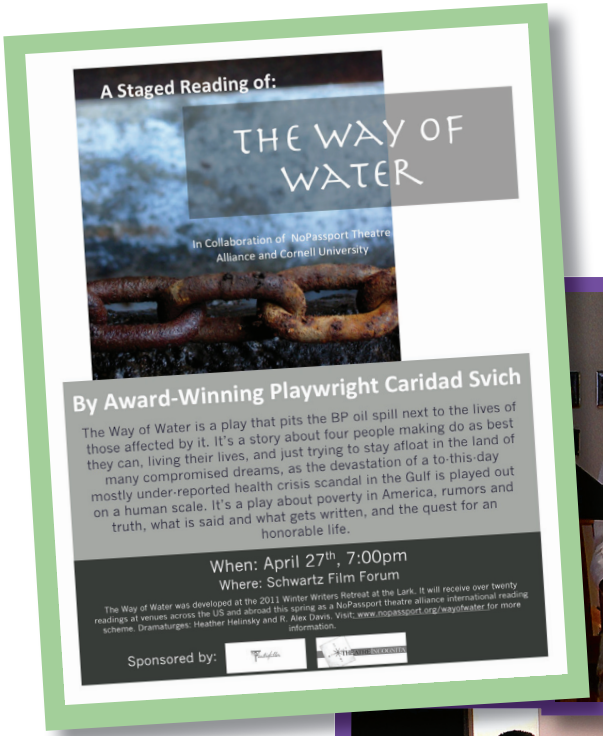
Dailán Kifki and 4 de Masliah

By: *María Elena Walsh & Leo Masliah*

Summer 10

At: *Greater Ithaca Activities Center*

Directed by:*Carolina Osorio Gil & Debra Castillo*



The Way of Water

By: *Caridad Svich*

4/27/12 At: *Schwartz Film Forum*

Directed by: *Ross Haarstadt*

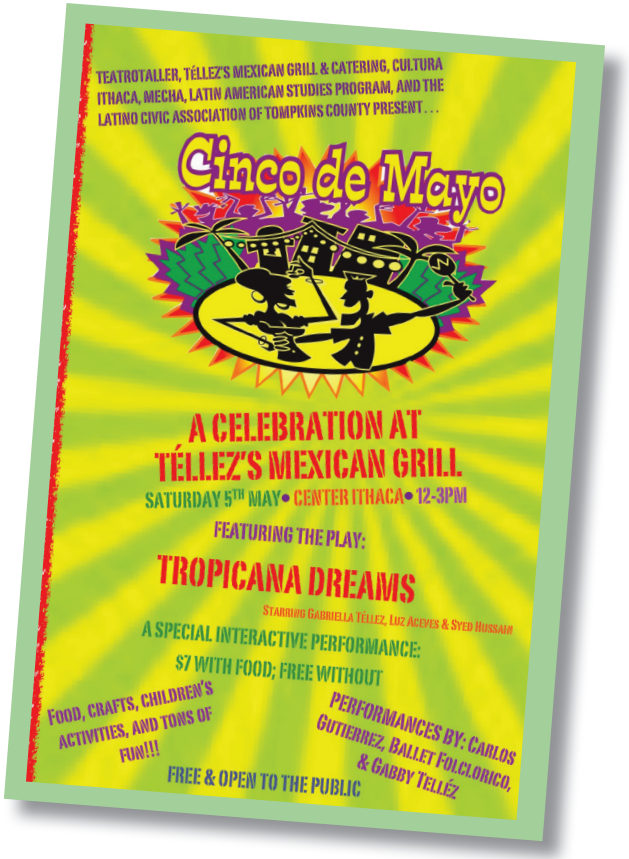
(Theater Incognita collaboration)

Tropicana Dreams

By: *Melissa Castillo Garsow & Others*

5/5/12 At: *Ithaca Center*

Directed by: *Carolina Osorio Gil*



El Rey Frack

By: *Derek Segebarth*

7/27/13

At: *The Boricua Afro-American Festival*

Directed by: *Carolina Osorio Gil*

DESDE LOS OJOS DEL ACTOR

El "nacimiento" de Gabriela Lesur

February 1995

Nana Puig

En la obra de Emilio Carballido que presentó Teatrotaller este semestre, Rosa de dos Aromas, yo interpreté el personaje de Gabriela Lesur. Como sugiere el titulo de este ensayo Gabriela tuvo que nacer, o mejor, tuve que "parirla" para esta obra. Es decir, cuando empezaron los ensayos, yo no tenía la más mínima idea de quién era mi personaje. No podía imaginarme sus reacciones, sus conflictos y debilidades. Por eso, con la ayuda de varias personas que me daban sus opiniones sobre la personalidad de Gabriela, fui creando la imágen de una mujer única y real en la cual me podría "convertir" en la obra. Así, después de conocerla, poco a poco muy lentamente - fui convirtiéndome en Gabriela Lesur. Estábamos todavía en vacaciones de Navidad cuando recibí la llamada de Isabel, nuestra directora, diciéndome que teníamos sitio y fecha para la próxima obra de Teatrotaller, pero que no teníamos obra escogida ni, por consiguiente, elenco. Ahí empezó la búsqueda de libreto a la cual siguió otra llamada de Isabel con varias opciones para la obra, entre las cuales figuraba Rosa de dos Aromas, de Emilio

Carballido. Aunque ya yo conocía una parte de la obra de dicho autor, no había leído Rosa de dos Aromas. Ahora mismo no recuerdo las otras opciones que teníamos, pero sí recuerdo que tenían que ser de pocos actores por el factor limitado de tiempo. También recuerdo que, de las obras que leí durante este proceso de elección del libreto, la más que me gustó fue Rosa de dos Aromas. Ambos personajes de la obra son interesantes, y finalmente me enamoré del personaje de Gabriela aunque, a decir verdad, el primero que me interesó fue el de Marlene.

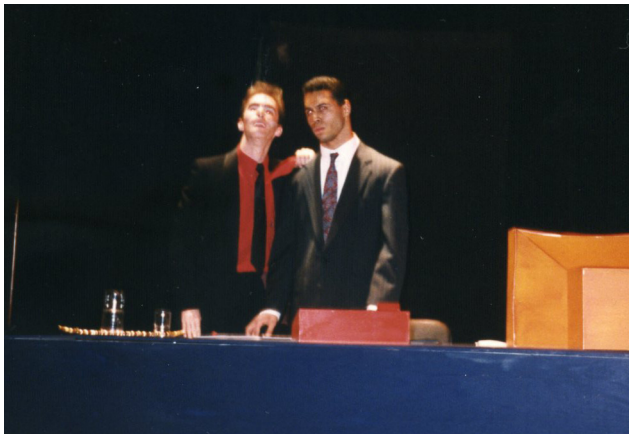
Luego de haber "repartido" los papeles, empezamos a leer la obra varias veces y a interiorizar cada nuestros personajes. Lo primero de Gabriela que me vino en mente fue su fuerza. Gabriela está convencida de que ella es la esposa, la mujer con derecho sobre Maco; y que Marlene es simplemente "la otra." Además, Gabriela es muy culta y un poco arrogante. Estas cosas parecen obvias de solo leer el libreto, pero más allá de eso - con esa información, el personaje sería solo una caricatura, un esbozo - es difícil determinar quién es Gabriela Lesur. En esta obra es de vital importancia desarrollar los personajes al máximo porque de la interacción de estas mujeres, y de su crecimiento, es que surge la trama. Es decir, no se puede recostar de una trama independiente de los personajes ni de escenografía ni nada para capturar la atención del público y darle vida a la obra. Por eso, tenía que darme prisa en descubrir quién era Gabriela para desarrollarla y asimilarla -convertirme en ella. Las primeras descripciones que tuve de Gabriela fueron "granola" y "crunchy." Hasta el día de hoy no tengo idea de qué significan estas palabras en un contexto que obviamente no es el convencional. Lo único que me venía en mente con los esfuerzos frustrados de Isabel y Vera de explicarme las palabras granola y crunchy, eran las palabras "el look discretamente humanidades," del ensayo Esperando a Loló de Ana Lydia Vega. (Cuando le mencioné esto a Isabel y Vera, ambas pensaron que había entendido por fin. Claro, ni siquiera las palabras de Ana Lydia Vega estaban claras para mí;

solamente me vinieron en mente, pero no les veía la conección.) Luego de haberle preguntado a todos mis amigos y conocidos si entendían esas palabras ninguno me supo explicar, - se me hizo evidente que tendría que buscar otra manera de definir a Gabriela. No sabría decir cuándo encontré otra manera de definirla, o si la definí en alguna palabra siquiera, pero ya la había empezado a conocer. Desde la primera escena de la obra, se hacen evidentes las diferencias tan fundamentales entre las dos mujeres. Se crea un contrapunto, una oposición, donde cada cual busca afirmarse como la mujer de Marco Antonio Lesur. Hasta el final de esta escena, cada mujer vive firmemente en el rol que desempeña, se siente segura de ser la mujer del hombre, y así vive cómoda y contenta. Ya al final de la escena, ambas se dan cuenta de que su nicho se ha roto. Ahora son mujeres antes que esposas o amantes. Ahí es que tienen que aprender a pararse en sus propios pies, sin la "muleta" que era para ellas su hombre. De todas las escenas de la obra, probablemente la más difícil para mí fue la tercera, donde Gabriela está sola en su estudio y decide llamar a Marlene. En esta escena, Gabriela siente la fuerza de su conflicto: se siente sola y extraña al hombre que la acompañaba siempre en su cama; se siente ofendida, la infidelidad de su marido la deja perpleja; siente coraje y rabia de pensar que ha sido engañada y que no se imaginaba lo que Marco hacía; siente miedo porque ahora debe valerse por sí misma, completamente sola, como Gabriela Lesur y no como "la esposa de Marco Antonio Lesur." Por otro lado, siente lástima de sí misma, y terror por lo que reconoce como asomos de compasión por Marlene quien, después de todo, fue víctima de un engaño también. Gabriela es una mujer consumida por celos que no se ha dado cuenta de su fuerza e independencia. Es una mujer inteligente que se ha subyugado voluntariamente a un hombre mentiroso e infiel. Ahora, cuando se enter a del engaño, se ve forzada a asumir la libertad y responsabilidad de ser mujer. Luego de aceptar la proposición de Marlene para sacar a Marco de la cárcel, y con el prolongado contacto con Marlene, cambia y aprende a ser más impulsiva y coqueta: aprende a ser un poco más como Marlene. Obviamente, Gabriela es un personaje dinámico: cambia mucho como persona y como mujer a lo largo de la obra. Por eso tenía que conocerla bien. Poco a poco, fuimos escogiendo el vestuario de Gabriela, su peinado y sus accesorios. Esto me ayudó mucho a identificarme con ella. Luego de familiarizarme con su ropa, podía decidir qué se pondría, o no, Gabriela. Después de modular mi voz e incorporar ciertos movimientos y gestos, me empecé a sentir como Gabriela. Ya esta mujer "real" no era un misterio total para mí, sino que era tan real como yo misma, aunque dentro de otro mundo. Así pasé por el proceso que he descrito para llegar a ser Gabriela Lesur - al menos por dos horas diarias cada día. Nunca había interpretado un personaje tan difícil de identificar: casi siempre puedo definir al personaje . rápidamente, con solo leer la obra. Claro, que aún así toma tiempo descubrir todo lo que nos dice el texto - si posible - de cada personaje, pero al menos se puede "conocer" al personaje. Gabriela se define poco a poco - es una mujer única y verosímil, si se llega a entender bien. Por eso me tomó tanto tiempo "parirla," entenderla, definirla y conocerla. No podía dejar su desarrollo en un plano superficial, pues de su verosimilitud dependía totalmente el éxito de la obra. Gracias a Dios, pudo nacer a tiempo para la presentación.

The Journey of Ricardo Jordan

Steven Graciano

May 1996



Because of my minimal acting experience this production proved to be the most rewarding experience of my acting career to date. I had no idea of the complexities of the character upon taking the role and there was no way to tell the challenge that I was going to be put through during the spring of my junior year. Declaring the Spanish major this same semester, it was only suiting that I try out for a play presented by Teatrotaller. I was in no way prepared to take the role of the lead character being that I had only acted in two plays prior to this spring. After the auditions, my heart was set on the role of the Caballero de Negro. I enjoyed his suaveness and the humor that I would be able to bring into the character. When Isabel told me that she was calling to offer me a part in her play I quickly asked if was the part of the Caballero and to my dismay she said that Gad had gotten that part. She kept trying to tell me that I had landed the part of Ricardo Jordan but didn't know who Ricardo Jordan was in the play so I kept on complaining about not getting the part that I wanted.

"You got the lead!" she finally screamed at me. I had no idea how to react. There was no way I was ready for the lead in a play that was in Spanish and I did not have the confidence in myself to take this role. My acting skills were mediocre and I had one of the toughest semesters ahead of me in terms of school work being that I had just switched majors. For a week I spoke to Isabel and to my faculty advisor regarding my taking the part in the play or sticking to the nineteen credits that I was registered for. After much debate I decided to go against the advise of my faculty advisor and took the part. It did not matter that I was on academic probation the semester before. This was the opportunity of a lifetime and there was no way that I could pass this up.

With a lack of confidence I went into the first read through comparing my accent with the rest of the cast and the veterans that had worked in Teatrotaller. I was stuttering my lines because I was reciting them as quickly as I could try to prove that I too was a native speaker. The Spanish that I had learned was from the upper west side in New York City. This area was known as Washington Heights and it was predominantly Dominican. Dominicans are said to drop the "s" and the "d" in all of their words. They are said to speak a dialect of the "real" Spanish from Spain. This is the broken Spanish that I brought to this production and in order to make my part believable, I had to force myself to change the way I spoke Spanish. This was a harder task than I thought.

"You need a lot of text work," Isabel said one night after rehearsals. By this statement I knew that she was worried about my progress in the play. I did not feel comfortable around the cast after that first critique especially around the actor that was up for the role of Ricardo Jordan. I kept on thinking if doing the play was worth it and whether I had made a bad decision or simply taken a task that I knew I wouldn't be able to fulfill. My instincts told me to quit the play or drop down from the part before it was too late but my heart told me to stay with it and see the whole play through.

All this was taking place around the time of spring break when we were supposed to have all our lines memorized. This proved to be the hardest memorizing of my life. This entailed my undevoted attention for about four hours a day. It was by far harder than any math formulas or any chemical function that I had ever memorized and there seemed to be no outcome. There seemed to be no reward. When I got back from break, I would get reprimanded for ten minutes a day for the first four days by Isabel. She had no idea about the work that I had put into the play. This, of course, did not help my ego and

when asked if I wanted to quit the play on April second, I really had to think about my reply.

Luckily, I chose not to drop the role once again and this provided the incentive to continue on and work harder to make the role at least believable to the public on April thirteenth. I had twelve days to make sure this mission was carried out. Throughout this period I completely neglected my schoolwork and fell behind in all my classes. It was now a question of pride and there was no way I was going to look like a fool in front of four hundred people on opening night. That week went smoothly as I trusted Isabel more and more each day. I stopped trying to be the cool collective actor and let myself go into the stress-ridden crooked businessman that was asked of me by the role in the first act.

The second act called for a complete transformation of my character and for as much as I wanted to play this role the way it should have been played, there was too much of a contrast between the two acts in my character to make this play believable to the public. The second act entailed a completely different man in Ricardo Jordan, It was a period after his deal with the devil and he had changed as a person. He was not the man that he used to be. Guilt had driven this man to the Caribbean and while there, guilt had changed his whole take on life. I had to figure out whether I wanted to make him completely transformed by the beginning of the second act or if I wanted to put a gradual transition in the change of his character. I decided to make the transformation gradual for fear that the latter would not be bought by the public.

Also affecting my decision was the fact that the second act had a very slow tempo as compared to the first act. The first act was full of yelling and screaming by my character and there was no way he would just get accustomed to the land and become one of the natives. The incredible guilt he felt regarding the whole situation was too great for him to be at ease as soon as he stepped into Pedro Alvarez's house. The attraction he had for Estela embedded more guilt in him and it became impossible for him to be at ease with the situation as a whole. These factors tore my character apart inside and it was not until late in the second act that he found a way to resolve his dilemma and in fact see the complete turn around that he himself had taken part in.

This complete turn around was made possible by the love he felt for Estela. This love was so strong that it did away with the guilt that he felt for being attracted to this woman in the first place. When he finds out that he did not kill Pedro Alvarez and that it was in fact Christian that killed him, his love for her was completely uncontested by the guilt and he realized that she was the woman he should have. When compared to the type of woman that he was used to dating, using Rachel as a prime example, we realize that Estela was probably the first woman that Ricardo had really cared about. We can speculate that all the other woman were after his money and he didn't really care about them either.

He was a man that was only interested in business. He had been born a poor boy and was driven by the hunger of success, which he defined as how much money he had. All the wrong doings that he had been a part of, as pointed out to him by the Caballero, were all for money and he viewed everything else as secondary.

This journey of Ricardo Jordan was one that intrigued me. How could a man be so driven by the love of money, to do all sorts of crooked business deals and make lives miserable and yet be susceptible by the love of a woman to change all his evil ways. When the series of actions is taken into account like his rise and his fall and the scream of Estela in the first act, we see that this play is very well written. The plot may sound absurd to some but when reading the script we notice that this play is in fact beautifully written.

We experimented with the play itself and switched some parts to English. Though this move was criticized by many, I felt this enhanced the play and showed a sharper contrast between the first and second acts which was one of the most important objectives Isabel wanted to bring out.

The knowledge that I gained about acting and basically about the Spanish language was immense. I can't believe I was about to pass up this opportunity twice. I have always loved acting and though this was only my third play, I believe there Is no classroom and no acting teacher good enough to teach me what I learned in this play. From my insecurities about my character and about the Spanish language itself to the feeling of accomplishment I felt after Estela blew out the candle in the end of the second act on April thirteenth, I couldn't have written a better experience for me to have partaken in.

Farsa de Amor Compradito

María del Rocío Galarza

May 1997

No sé como terminé audicionando para la obra cuando mi plan era ser parte del grupo de publicidad de Teatrotaller. Sólo sé que un día leí en el e-mail que me habían escogido como Madame. Mi reacción fue, "¿La audición era de verdad?". Luego de olvidar mi paranoia temporeramente y aceptar el reto de ser parte del "cast" de la Farsa de un Amor Compradito pude aprender de una manera diferente, aplicar lo aprendido y ver los frutos de mi esfuerzo dentro del ambiente teatral. Mi colaboración en Teatrotaller me brindó la oportunidad de poner mis esfuerzos en transformar los sueños de participar en teatro en algo posible. Más allá de satisfacer mi deseo personal de ser parte del teatro, compartí ideas con otros que tenían mis mismos intereses. Además, el participar en Teatrotaller me brindó una más amplia perspectiva de lo que significa ser latina en Cornell.

Desde el comienzo, una de mis propósitos primordiales fue el usar lo que he aprendido en mis clases de teatro en desarrollo de mi personaje. Así podría ver como estas técnicas ayudan a ser más efectiva la representación. Luego de leer el libreto por primera vez decidí volverlo a leer ya que no tenía ni más mínima idea de que hacer con él. Tenía que lograr convertirme en una prostituta que se creía educada, que "hablaba" francés y que aparecía en escena hablando con gestos más que con palabras, esto sin contar que la prostituta tenía como amiga y compañera fiel a un hombre actuando de mujer apasionada. Me acuerdo decir, "Rocío, Uri sabe lo que hace. Tu puedes." Al pensar por un tiempo en como atacar la encomienda, la mente se iluminó con la imagen de una vulgar provinciana vestida con típicos vestidos de comedia clásica moviendo sus anchas caderas de lado a lado conjunto con su melena riza negra y un pañuelo en frente.

Uri mencionó que buscaraos un animal que representara el personaje. La provinciana, desde entonces, comenzó a caminar como una gallina tratando de destacar su "curvatura" distocionando su cuerpo. Cuando esta imagen comenzaba a surgir efecto en la manera en que decía mis líneas y me proyectaba en las prácticas, la gente de vestuario me dijo que estaría vestida con ropas elegantes del siglo veinte. No era una mala idea, pero ¿que iba yo hacer ahora con la provinciana? Como dice refrán "la mona aunque se vista de seda mona

se queda". Los vestidos que la provinciana iba a tener no le quitaban su profesión de prostituta y su vulgaridad. Mi gran suerte fue que la vulgaridad de la comedía clásica es la misma vulgaridad siglo 20, a lo mejor menos exagerada. Mi idea general sobre personaje ya estaba creada.

Los pormenores del asunto serían refinados al practicar .

Mientras yo trabajaba por mi parte en mi personaje, la escena tomaba forma unir las reacciones de los otros actores y el "blocking" de los caprichos. La colaboración de mi amiga Quintana fue la más importante para darle vida a Madame. Por estar la mayoría del tiempo juntas, Quintina y Madame tenían que lograr tener señales para comunicarse. En la pelea del capricho dos, mi actuación debía estar basada en reacciones a la tranquilidad de Quintina. De igual manera, mis histerias al hablar con Colombina en la primera parte surgieron como reacción la alegría que Colombina tenía al casarse con el General. Las restricciones del espacio para actuar fueron críticas para tomar decisiones de como decir las líneas efectivamente. Por ejemplo, en el tercer capricho, donde yo intento seducir a Pierrot, mi primera idea fue el de estar parada cerca de él /ella. Contrario a este impulso, el blocking requería estar sentada. Por lo tanto mi mejor manera de expresar lo que personaje quería decir era con los ojos; mi mirada debía ser estilo Iris Chacón.

Además de haber aprendido como mejorar mi actuación, mediante teatrotallerpude analizar la obra de Luis Rafael Sánchez, conocerle y hasta hacerle una pregunta. Como mismo dijo, su obra es una representación de lo puertorriqueño en un plan con la mezcla de personajes de comedia clásica y Don Goyito. El vocabulario y frases son típicos puertorriqueño hasta el punto de incluir unas líneas en inglés en una obra que está escrita en español. Esto sólo demuestra lo que él discernió durante su conferencia en Cornell, el espanglish del puertorriqueño es una característica más de

nuestra cultura. El tema del encuentro de la idiosincracia puertorriqueña me motivó a preguntarle como lograba encontrar esa realidad isleña en la ciudad de Nueva York. De una manera chispeante, Luis Rafael Sánchez dijo que Nueva York es Puerto Rico. Aunque no concordé del todo con su contestación a mí pregunta, esta me ayudó a ver de donde había nacido Madame y que prototipos podría usar para interpretar el personaje. Como Uri descubrió en una de las prácticas, Madame era la "puta madre" americana a quienes los franceses le regalaron la estatua de la libertad. El segundo plano de Madame se convirtió en ser crítica de aquellos que tratan de asimilar erróneamente otra cultura para subir de "clase" social.

Después de la visita de Luis Rafael Sánchez continuaron las prácticas normalmente hasta llegar los ensayos con vestuario. Mi mayor prioridad durante el primer ensayo con vestuario fue convencer a Uri de usar el traje que yo quería para el personaje aunque fuera corto. Luego de poder usar el traje que yo quería, fue fácil adaptarme a él. Lo más que me dificultad fue adaptarme a ver a Abraham en sus vestimentas. Nunca me imaginé que él lograra verse tan mujer (admiré la confianza de Abraham en la directora con la demostración de valentía de ponerse el traje rojo pegado). Tanto Abe como el resto del elenco nos mostrabamos más seguros de nuestra actuación después del dress rehearsal. Al parecer, quien comenzaba a perder seguridad era Uri cuando notaba lo mucho que nos faltaba por practicar sobretodo para poder decir la líneas sin titubear (entre otras cosas).

Mi trabajo en las prácticas sólo demostró parte de todos los talentos que Teatrotaller resaltó en mi persona. ¡Cómo olvidar la tremenda obra de arte en tiza qu se dibujada en una extraña "f" eduardina y en un borrón, completamente planeado, en la firma de Miguel. No cabe duda que lo más impresionante eran los corazones hechos por esta servidora. Desgraciadamente, no tomamos en cuenta que el prognóstico del tiempo anunciaba lluvia y que, como pudimos aprender en Mary Poppins, tiza se borra con el agua. El arte de la pintura sólo fue el comienzo para el desarrollo de mi talento como decoradora. Los arreglos florales que causaron gritos- no exactamente de admiración- me sitiaron como una persona de gustos únicos.

De anécdota en anécdota llegamos al día de obra. La preparación de Madame comenzó a las diez de la mañana cuando Tara logró milagrosamente que mi pelo se alisara. Continué sufriendo la metamorfosis poniéndome rolos para lograr rizos "postizos". maquillaje exagerado de prostíbulo y el traje negro corto dieron los toques finales a creación de la imagen de Madame. Lo próximo era darle movimiento a esta imagen de mujer exótica, que en mi mente seguía siendo provinciana. Mientras las prácticas continuaban su curso, Madame se iba volviendo más natural en escena; imagen se convirtió en persona. Fue por esto que tomé doble porción de pizza, una para mí y otra para Madame. Sin darme cuenta del tiempo, llegó la hora de comenzar.

Para mi sorpresa, tenía una tranquilidad que nunca tengo normalmente.

No creo haber captado que era obra como tal y no una práctica más. Empecé a caer en cuenta cuando escuché las carcajadas causadas por la aparición de Abraham. Después de esto recuerdo olvidadar pasar por alfrente con Colombina cuando le ofrecí agua General. El problema técnico descontroló levemente mis nervios, pero al mismo tiempo me ayudó a hablar más despacio y claramente en el tercer capricho. Al terminar la obra, sentí un orgullo inmenso por el trabajo realizado. Nunca hubiese imaginado decir con una sonrisa en mi cara que yo era prostituta de la obra. Esta sonrisa tiene doble significado, alegría por un trabajo terminado satisfactoriamente y tristeza por la

terminación de un semestre de buenas experiencias con personas talentosas. Una vez más, que nos causa alegría tiene un tiempo limitado.

El corto tiempo que uno disfruta en escena es probablemente lo que hace a la experiencia tan preciada. Junto con el cariño al teatro que resalta la participación en la obra, hay muchos otros aspectos que hacen a Teatrotaller especial. Teatrotaller es un grupo de teatro manejado mayormente por estudiantes en español. El hecho de tener la participación activa de estudiantes demuestra el increíble talento e iniciativa que tiene los jóvenes en Cornell. Más aún, que esta iniciativa tenga sus raices en jóvenes latinos ayuda a la comunidad a tener una visión de nuestra cultura más positiva.

Me enfurezen las huelgas semestrales para conseguir mejor trato a las minorías. Las conferencias de algunas de las organizaciones latinas en Cornell sólo predican una victimización de los hispanos que no lleva a nada. La solución para tener una comunidad más activa no radica en impedir el tránsito en semáforos, sino en tomar la iniciativa de empezar

organizaciones como Teatrotaller cuyos esfuerzos es mostrar la cultura hispana. El que personas que no son latinas participen en Teatrotaller también demuestra la importancia de compartir nuestro talento con comunidad de Cornell en general. Este esfuerzo trasciende diferencias en lenguajes cuando fin es resaltar deseo común de ser mejores. Mediante Teatrotaller pude ser parte de una comunidad hispana que no está formada por hispanos que se creen víctimas pero por gente que aprecia la calidad de la cultura latina.

El éxito que Teatrotaller logró este semestre fue un producto de un trabajo colectivo donde la motivación manaba de nosotros mismos. Poder brindar a otros un fruto que no te pertenece a tí sino a todos da más valor a nuestros esfuerzos.

The Continuous Cycle of a Play: La Vida es sueño

Pilar Alvarez-Palazio

May 1998

The clapping of the crowd was endless. Whistles were heard, cheers, and a feeling of both accomplishment and triumph filled the souls of everyone who partook in the play. As for the actors, we all joined hands and took our final bow. A mixture of feelings overtook us, relief, excitement, sadness, exhaustion, and most importantly, self-satisfaction. While looking out onto the crowd, we knew that to them the play was just a two and a half hour interpretation of Calderón de la Barca's, La Vida Es Sueño. To us, and those directly involved with the production, the play was the result of a semester ful of frustrations, achievements, and gratification.

Little do people realize how much effort is put into the play from the moment the idea is captured by the author until it is finally brought to life by individuals such as those in Teatrotaller. Pedro Calderón de la Barca, a Spanish dramatist and poet, was born in Madrid in1600. He was the last prominent figure of the Golden Age of Spanish literature. Calderón la Barca wrote one hundred and forty plays and sketches for the secular stage, most of which were devoted to the Church and the glorification of the Castilian code of honor which required husbands, fathers, or brothers to punish the sins of unfaithful women. His philosophical drama La vida es sueño is regarded as his masterpiece and is considered as one of the greatest European dramas.

It is the transition that occurs when an idea is put on paper that is the true first step in the production of a play. This step can also be considered the most difficult since the author must invent and develop the fives of each character in such a way that they interrelate to one another. Each one must have their own feelings and emotions, which are revealed through the author's words and later made obvious through the actions of the actors portraying the roles. The written text is what brings important factors such as history, background, and social norms into light. It is the basis for the entire performance.

In following the cycle of a play production, the second step is to visualize how the words will be carried out to the audience. With La vida es sueño one of the most significant decisions made was whether we were to perform a modern day interpretation of Calderón de la Barca's work or if we were going to keep it as it was written. There was a consensus to transform the original piece into a more modern version, therefore facilitating the audience's understanding of the work. By recognizing familiar elements, the public could then relate to the events taking place. The kingdom of Poland was replaced by a large corporation where power within the company was hereditary. Even though the play was interpreted in a modern day setting, the words of Calderón de la Barca were kept intact except where it was crucial to the comprehension of the scene, For example, throughout the play, swords were replaced by guns. Rosaura carried a gold pistol instead of a gold sword that was handed down to her. Also, in the Third Act, Astolfo offers King Basilio the use his car as a way to flee Segismundo's wrath. In the

original text however, a horse was offered.

The third step in production is a simultaneous combination of components such as scenery, costumes, and sound. Even though stage props are important in all plays, in La vida es sueño they were not our primary concern. Care was taken to make sure that the significant details were included such as diplomas, paintings, tables, and chairs, but the stage props were not greatly elaborated. The reason for this being that in this specific piece the words and acting

carried more weight than the scenery and costumes. In order to enhance the modernization of the play, we decided to dress the actors based on the fashions of today's society. By seeing Clarín in baggy pants and a jersey the audience can relate, because it is quite often that the same baggy pants and jersey motif is seen throughout campus. The suits worn by members of the corporation are a mirror image of what is seen in business companies throughout the world, Even the guards and soldiers throughout the play were dressed in a popular fad. Most members of the audience could assimilate these characters with the movie, Men In Black. All costumes were chosen as a representation of what is seen and recognized today by the audience, consisting mostly of college students. Sound and visual effects used in the play also aided in its comprehension. The motorcycle heard as Rosaura enters the stage adds to her character's rebellious nature. Also, the video that is shown while King Basilio is speaking to the court about his son's existence and destiny not only helped the audience understand the difficult soliloquy but also added to the entertainment value of the play.

Within the workings of group dynamics, unity and friendships developed. We were all working towards the same goal and the perfecting of this goal which was bringing our interpretation of Calderón de la Barca's work to others. With this unity came the formation of relationships that occurred both on and offstage. Rehearsals were not only a time to practice lines but also a time to meet with friends that shared the same interests. What began as a class, where students participated because they were obligated to became a period of enjoyment.

La vida es sueño is a very difficult piece to act out and make interesting, but with the contributing factors such as unity and people working together-costumes, sound, scenery, and acting-we managed to overcome the obstacles encountered in adapting this

play to the audience. Together, we managed to take this play to the utmost limit of enjoyment, both for the audience as well as the participants of Teatrotaller.

As I walked onto the stage to take my bow, in my head I was thinking let me finish without making a fool of myself and tripping over a stage prop, but the entire time I felt proud. I was proud not only because of the few words I said, but proud of the other

actors, of the directors, of the costume designers, of the stage designers, and yes, even of the person in charge of sound. Out of those who became involved, everyone worked equally in what they could to make this play a reality. It was so much more than de la Barca's La vida es sueño: it became an experience of great meaning and learning, at least to the people who took part. In a production, the cycle is to figure out how to take the written text and combine it with other elements, such as actors, scenery, sound, and costumes, to form a final product that will capture the public's interest and be remembered as a true work of art.

Love in Times of Teatrotaller

Jake Reeder

May 2003

Teatrotaller began auspiciously, as things are wont to do: came into that historic room 142 in Goldwyn Smith Hall with a pocket full of a mysterious bag of smelly green material. Some people thought the class before had spilt beer, some people thought that a skunk had lifted its tail outside, and me, well, I just sat nervously and twitched. I did not talk much in the early days, maybe because it was that late time in the day when you decide: I no longer need to be sober. How many different intoxications was I under when rehearsing? Who really knows? Yet, this is not altogether a display of immature behavior; for, I must admit that my need to be a leper came under the heaviest of hazes Enough of these things.

Teatrotaller was fun. I went to Teatrotaller every day for four weeks. My parents were very happy that I was doing it. At night, I slept easily because I knew I was part of something special, something that would really bring me closer to God. More than anything I liked laughing during Teatrotaller, Nobody would really know why I was laughing, but I would do it anyway. Brenna told me that she loved to watch Alex and I laugh, that it made her happy to watch us laugh together. That is something very special. Overall, I think that I made many discoveries about myself during my days wit my fellow actors.

I had always been a hermit; I never associated much with people. In many ways my days in Goldwyn Smith were the days I was forced to deal with people on the most consistent basis. Somehow, before then, I always found a way to lock myself up inside my bathroom and disappear to strange abstract lands of floating waves of color and sheets of tickling sound. My initial rejection of Teatrotaller was perhaps a desire to remain in these lands, to not allow some foreign folk to encumber my travels. Yet, I think that by being forced to pay attention and accept everyone, and accept the necessity of concentrating on my lines, I was able to find a new way of being - a very happy way indeed. I learned to bring all the silliness in my head out to the people around me, so thatI became my own circus show.

I remember Alex asking me, “Jake, how do you cope with the fact that everyone just thinks you’re some silly clown.” Whereupon I slapped him in his feminine face. Actually, I think that Alex never asked me this question, but if he had, I would only laugh it away. In general, I found that by being silly it was the best way for me to pass the time, and I think that everyone in the group benefited from such open absurdity.

Let us now discuss the group itself. There were many interesting people

in the group and one of the reasons that we worked so well, and blew the world away during our performances, was because our camaraderie. There was Wilson: a genuinely cheerful French man, with a very secret side of unabashed romance. There was the beautiful Gaby: a calm, yet wise yoga girl. There was a giant beam of spunk and fun, though I do not condone her cigarette smoking. There was Brenna: who was always on time, and always open-minded. There was little gay Alex, who makes me think about honeymoons and the Seine riverbahks. There was Charles: a nice guy, though sort of a poser, who fit beautifully with our silly fun, fun group. And then there was that whole nonsense with Greg, who just was not a nice nor intelligent nor mature person, who was then replaced by solid old Ronald. And then, how could I have forgotten: there was you: beautiful Isabel, who both a friend and a teacher, and put up with all of my bologna.

I think that you were the Phil Jackson of the Teatrotaller world, as you handled a lot of big egos. One of the biggest problems for me was that my Spanish was not perfect, and thus, instead of concentrating on the creative aspects of the play, I really needed tostruggle to understand what was being said. This is not something that I regret, as my Spanish listening skills improved greatly, especially when having to understand the fast talking Rocio. Beyond simply the language there was a different culture and atmosphere to the group that was something very new and exciting to me. I think one of the main reasons that we all ended up being so close to each other was because of the nature of the culture that we were both a part of and presenting. Everyone seemed very open to giving hugs and being loving and it was demonstrated well after the performance by all the wonderful get togethers that took place. I now have developed a very deep respect for the Hispanic world, and believe that Teatrotaller was only the beginning of a lifelong love affair with my southern neighbors especially, note, my love affair with little gay Alex.

The play itself was very interesting and creative: it incorporated just the right dose of surrealism and seriousness, which is my favorite flavor and style. I learned a lot from each play about the way that Hispanic thinkers treat the toil of humanity, both in its silliness and in its gravity. Mr Panchito was one of the works that most bitingly attacked this juxtaposition by absurdifying the ridiculous nature of prejudice. El Flemon was a more serious piece that commented on the poor nature of most doctors. And El Hombre que se Convertio en Perro was a beautifully funny portrayal of the woes of the working man. By playing out these absurd realities, they actually began to gain truth and affect my own feelings about work and doctors and prejudice.

I remember driving you home in the evenings. I remember when you thought that I hated you--I didn't. I remember the soggy ice cream sandwiches that we threw across the room. I remember when we got into Kaufman and played with the chalkboard and the speakers and the lights and I climbed all around the room growling like a cat. I remember when you got tired of the guitar because it was making you sad. I remember when we came late one Sunday and you threatened to lower our grades, which I know was hard for you because you really can't help but be nice. I remember playing the piano in the dressing room. I remember giving you a hug one evening because it felt like the right thing to do. I remember smoking cigarettes with Rocio outside; I remember the many times that we dove into Charles shouting, "Esta Noche nos Comemos Al Flaco."

All this and more is caught up in my noggin, and I know that you said that Art lasts forever, and I guess it will last just until I die, unless of course I tell my children all about it and make sure they tell their children, and then right before the sun bursts the earth into oblivion, my descendants send word by satellite or maybe some new futuristic invention of the funny tales of Teatrotaller which will then be reverberated throughout the stars and the galaxies and the entire universe, and every single molecule will giggle with satisfaction knowing that life and living and being could have created something as pure and as right as Teatrotaller.

Día de Campo

Andrés Orta Castro

November 2003

Yo estaba en Colgate University de visita cuando me llegó el e-mail acerca de las audiciones para la obra. El e-mail indicaba que las audiciones eran ese mismo día, y yo, yo estaba de día de campo lejos de Ithaca. Algunos podrían decir que esto fue una coincidencia, pero yo no, yo pienso que ya era mi destino. Al regresar a la universidad respondí al e-mail diciendo que no había podido ir a las audiciones pero que quería ver si podía ayudar con la obra en cualquier forma. Yo no sabia nada acerca de este grupo de teatro; había hecho un poco de teatro antes y siempre me había gustado mucho. Cuando me contestaron el e-mail diciendo que podría a la segunda ronda de audiciones esa semana, yo me encontré feliz de sobremanera.

Llegue a las dichas audiciones un poco nervioso, pero con muchas ganas de quedarme en la obra y estuve todo el fin de semana revisando mi e-mail hasta que me llego el mensaje diciendo que tenía la parte de Zapo. En realidad yo no tenía la mas remota idea de en lo que me estaba metiendo, nunca había escuchado nada sobre el grupo y apenas llevaba poco mas de un mes en la universidad. Llegue a la primera reunión del grupo y fue un pequeño shock ver que casi todos ya se conocían y primero pensé que solo era un grupo de amigos que ponían la obra. Pero me di cuenta de la seriedad de esta organización en cuanto Debbie comenzó a delegar a todos los que estaban ahí a algún trabajo dentro de la obra. Había gente encargada de escenografía, vestuario, luces, sonido, publicidad, comida y actores. La verdad es que si me sentí un poco intimidado pero muy feliz de pertenecer al grupo. La próxima reunión fue para la lectura sobre la mesa del texto, la cual fue una muy buena oportunidad para comenzar a conocer al elenco, bueno, con la excepción de Iván quien no asistió a esa cita.

El texto me gusto desde el principio, pero fue tomando una forma bastamente diferente con cada ensayo. La obra que comencé a leer en la audición es una obra muy diferente a la que presentamos el pasado 20 de Noviembre. Eso no es simplemente por las adiciones que le hicimos al texto original de Arrabal, sino por que con cada ensayo iba entendiendo mas y mas a los personajes. En cierto modo, las escenas que le añadimos me ayudaron mucho a crear, en mi mente, el propósito de la obra. Al añadir esas escenas creamos una obra más completa, una obra con la que todos los actores, y la audiencia en especial, nos podíamos identificar. La hicimos contemporánea y significativa.

El tema de la guerra, tan controversial y sonado, se ha vuelto algo común

e inevitable en nuestra sociedad. Algo sobre lo que podemos estar muy en contra y al mismo tiempo muy incapaces de combatir. Viendo imágenes y escuchando reportes del campo de batalla todas las noches en el televisor, perdimos la sensibilidad al tema. Una sensibilidad que se a perdido en el día con día. Todos tenemos tantas preocupaciones propias y tanto que hacer que la guerra se convirtió en un conflicto lejano, ajeno e incluso trivial. Por eso es que esos primeros diez minutos de la obra son tan importantes. La obra no comienza con una cortina que se levanta y unas luces de colores que alumbran a un actor que recrea una realidad falsa. Esta obra, siendo ficticia, habla de una realidad humana. La obra comienza en el momento que el publico llega, compra su boleto, se da cuenta que ya es hora de que comience el show y no le dejan entrar al teatro a buscar su asiento. Después el publico entra al teatro y no le dejan sentarse. Todo esta ocurriendo totalmente al contrario de cómo debería de ocurrir en una noche normal de teatro. Eso era exactamente lo que necesitábamos en esta obra, sacar al publico de su rutina, moverles el tapete un poco, trasladarlos a otro plano. Necesitábamos sacarlos de su rutina de no pensar en la guerra.

Esto funciona de igual manera con los actores, para nosotros también todo es diferente. Todo esto es reforzado por el discurso del general y con la acción de los actores en las butacas al emerger de entre el publico. La interacción con el publico fue esencial para el propósito de la obra. Necesitábamos que el publico se sintiera parte de la obra, y en si parte de la realidad de la guerra. Esa es la magia del teatro, que puede absorber al publico en la obra y realmente hacerlos sentir parte de la obra que presencian. Los actores salimos de entre la gente y somos reclutados para la guerra. Somos reclutados fuera de personaje, en este momento todavía no estamos en la obra. Actuamos como cualquier persona del publico. Asentimos a ir a la guerra por que en realidad no sabemos lo que es, como eh dicho, en nuestro día con día se ah vuelto tan minúscula que nos enlistamos sin saber en realidad que es la guerra. Por eso es que todos recibimos nuestro papeles de reclutación con sonrisas y chistes. Cuando el general dice guerra, todos nos volteamos a ver preguntándonos que es la guerra. Esto hace énfasis a como en la mentalidad americana del tiempo contemporáneo la guerra es vista como un hecho ajeno y lejano con el que no se tiene que lidear ya que la guerra se hace en un lugar lejano.

Esta obra es absurda [did someone say abs? Absí Abs!], pero emana a la absurdes humana, y en ello a lo absurdo de la guerra. La obra es un juego entre lo real y lo absurdo. Lo absurdo termina siendo un conducto a lo real. Mediante lo absurdo de la visita de los Tepanes al campo de batalla es que llegamos a la realidad de la falta de sensibilidad que hemos llegado a tener acerca de la guerra. Lo absurdo de la entrada de las camilleras nos muestra la realidad de todo el trabajo, industrias, y personas que hay detrás de la guerra; de cuantas personas que tienen un trabajo en la guerra no por que quieran hacer la guerra, si no por que necesitan el trabajo. A las camilleras no les importa quien este herido o muerto, ellas solo quieren hacer su trabajo bien. Lo absurdo de la visita de Zepo nos muestra la realidad de que en los dos lados de la guerra hay personas; vidas humanas que pelean entre si, siendo iguales. La música el baile, las risas, y la eventual muerte de la familia Tepan y de Zepo, lo absurdo de la ultima escena, nos muestra la realidad de la muerte en la guerra. Lo real de que en la guerra mueren personas reales, personas como cualquiera del publico. Estos actores salieron de entre el publico unos escasos cincuenta minutos antes y ahora se encuentran muertos en el escenario. El hecho de que la obra esta escrita como una obra del absurdo es esencial para poder llevar nuestro propósito al publico. Siendo parte del absurdo hace que la presentación de la obra sea muy ligera y muy fácil de absorber para el publico. El tema es tan serio y pesado que la presentación del mismo tiene que ser ligera para poder impactar a la audiencia sin que ellos lo sientan tanto. Al transcurrir de la obra las emociones y sentimientos del publico son afectados en diferentes y contradictorias formas. Comienzan un poco confundidos al sentarse en sus asientos, después son impactados con ruidos y luces de guerra, inmediatamente después sonríen con un soldado que no sabe que esta haciendo y con sus padres que han venido a pasar un día de campo, dos segundos después están a punto de lagrima recordando su primer corazón roto al ver Rosa salir del escenario, y segundos después están riendo nuevamente con la cómica entrada de Zepo al escenario. Esto es para impactar al publico sin hacerles pensar que les estamos sermoneando. Pero al mismo tiempo, este cambio radical de emociones los afecta mucho mas que si les hubiéramos transmitido solo una emoción durante toda la obra, ya que el contraste hace resaltar las imágenes macabras de la guerra.

Como estaba diciendo, cada personaje fue creciendo y adaptándose conforme pasaban los ensayos y conforme cada actor iba conociendo mejor la obra y a su personaje. Yo empecé con un personaje totalmente diferente, un personaje

mucho mas inmaduro y mucho menos real. Al final, mi personaje era un chico normal de 17 a 19 años que se ha encontrado en la guerra, que como muchos, no tiene ningún interés en ella y esta ahí por que tiene que estarlo. Sus cualidades de muchacho normal son resaltadas con sus interacciones con sus padres. quiere demostrarles que sabe lo que

esta haciendo y que se puede valer de sí mismo. Él quiere que sus papas lo vean como esa estatua que le harían si se muriera. Pero al mismo tiempo, tiene ese miedo inescondible a la muerte. También quiere que sus papas lo dejen de tratar como a un niño chiquito, pero aun le asustan sobremanera las bombas. A su papa no le asustan, el representa a la sociedad que a crecido indiferente a la guerra y a sus peligros ya que los ve lejanos eh inalcanzables, "¿bombitas a mi?".

Por la otra parte, Zapo es la realidad del soldado que teme por su vida ya que esa guerra ya no es algo que ve en la televisión, sino algo con lo que tiene que vivir y tratar de sobrevivir. Lo que mas me ayudo a mí como actor para entender mas a mi personaje fueron las biografías y escribir el propósito de cada una de mis líneas. Las biografías, no solo la mía sino también el escuchar la de los otros personajes con quien interactúo en escena, me ayudo a crear en mi mente un Zapo mas redondo y real. Un personaje con quien me podía identificar a cierto nivel, y cuando no me podía identificar con el personaje lo podía entender mucho mejor. Las bios te ayudan a entender cada personaje, conocerlo mejor, saber como reaccionar y poder proyectar esto en escena. Cada línea dicha en escena debe de tener un propósito, las biografías nos ayudaban a darle a cadalínea un propósito el cual era necesario compartir con el publico. Usamos dos ensayos simplemente para compartir el propósito de cada una de nuestras líneas con el grupo. El compartir nuestro propósito de línea con el resto del elenco, aparte de ser un tanto tedioso y aburrido, si ayudaba mucho. Ya que el propósito de una línea cambia dependiendo de cual es el propósito de la línea que se dijo antes. Esto hace que la obra fluya mucho mejor y ayuda a que los diálogos sean mas creíbles.

Siento que la obra podría ser un poco mas efectiva si durara mas tiempo. Esto le daría la oportunidad a los personajes de mostrarse mas como son y desenvolverse mas hacia el publico, quien podría entender a los personajes mejor. Mucha de la simbología y de las características de los personajes se pierde ya que la obra es tan corta y la acción se mueve muy rápido. La acción debe moverse rápido para poder jugar con las emociones del publico, pero hay momentos en que los diálogos podrían ser un poco mas largos y mas lentos para hacer énfasis en las características que motivan a cada personaje. Tal vez el añadir un par de líneas a estos diálogos que le bajan la velocidad a la obra un poco podría ayudar a desenvolver cada personaje un poco mas. Yo siento que el personaje de Zepo podría ser alargado un poco mas para que fueran obvias sus similitudes con Zapo. Sus líneas de cuando habla de las flores de trapo son muy significativas, y siento que pierden un poco de seriedad al ser dichas frente a los Tepanes. Talvez un aparte de Zepo, donde le pueda decir al publico directamente sus miedos acerca de la muerte podría ayudar. Pero al mismo tiempo no queremos que sea muy "cheesy" y que se repita el monologo de Zapo. Es una escena con la que podemos trabajar ya que es muy importante.

La obra fue una experiencia extraordinaria para mí. Estoy sumamente feliz de haber tenido la oportunidad de conocer a un grupo de gente tan profesional y tan feliz de hacer la obra. Cada ensayo era una oportunidad para reír como niño y olvidar los exámenes por algunas horas. Aprecio mucho a todos los que están involucrados en esta producción y no puedo esperar al próximo semestre para volver a verlos a todos mas seguido en los ensayos. La oportunidad de ir a Francia yo se que también va a ser memorable.

Behind the Scenes; Overcoming the Moments of Self-Doubt

April 2005

Christina Jarymowycz

On January 31 of 2005, I walked out of my government seminar, uninspired by over two hours of round-table foreign policy discussion and dreading an evening of math homework. My major is government. Why had I decided to take the math class? I suppose it was because I needed the, math class to take the next physics class, Why did I want to take a physics class? Well, I suppose it was because at times I enjoy working with equations, or at least, at the beginning of some semesters I have the illusion that I might enjoy working with equations, an illusion that quickly fades in the first couple of weeks of classes. The appeal of the math class had died on the first day.

Upon leaving my seminar, I stopped before a bulletin board filled with announcements. My gaze dropped to the bottommost flyer bearing a familiar logo; it was an advertisement for Teatrotaller auditions to be held on the next day, I thought for a second. My Spanish was far from fluent and I had never acted in a play before, but the semester ahead looked bleak, and I desperately needed some sort of activity for emotional release, "La muerte y la doncella." I pronounced the words slowly to myself and wondered what "doncella" could possibly mean. Taking out a pen and paper, I wrote down the contact info.

That evening, I contacted the man from the flyer, a "tal Alfredo." I had many questions, Was the meeting the next day audition? Did I need to bring a script? Was I supposed to choose a character to act out? I apologized for my "cluelessness." Barely had I finished the lines when the door opened and Carlos entered. He looked over my shoulder to see what I was writing. "Teatrotaller... La muerte y la doncella… hmmm I'm going to try out, too," he said. I was somewhat disappointed. The play was supposed to be my project for the semester and anyways he had a much better chance of getting the part since he actually spoke Spainish. Maybe he'll at least give me some confidences during the auditions, I thought to myself

It was almost seven as I walked towards Goldwin Smith Hall on February 1st. I was very nervous, Trying to calm myself down, I thought of past compliments that had been given to me during some small acting projects. "You're good," I said to myself. "People have told you that you're good, so you've got to be good." I entered Goldwin Smith and walked into Kaufman Auditiorium. Carlos was at the front of the room preparing his audition. After saying hello to him, I waited for some words of encouragement. "The play only has three parts. Two male roles and a female role," he laughed, I laughed back. One female role. The fact that my chances at getting a part in the production were minute strangely lessened the nervousness that I was feeling.

A man I recognized from the previous Teatrotaller performance approached me, "Hi. Are you here for the auditions? Grab a script," he said, I was relieved. He was speaking English. At least I didn't have to converse in my broken Spanish, that is, at least until the audition started. I picked up a script and looked to the man who had spoken for further direction. He introduced himself as Calvin; he was directing the play. "We're doing the audition in pairs," he said, looked to Carlos, but he already had a partner,

Looking around the room, I saw another familiar face. His name was Andres,

he had acted in a bunch of Teatrotaller plays before, and now he was my partner for the auditions. We left Kaufmann for a room downstairs to practice. First we read over our lines to ourselves. I was relieved to discover that at least I understood the content of the scenes (hooray for Cornell Spanish courses!) although there were those stray incomprehensible words: gata, neumatico, panne, even Andres didn't know the meaning of this last one. And then we rehearsed our lines together. Pushing my nervousness and vanity aside, I worked hard to pronounce everything correctly and present my character as well as I could. After about half an hour of rehearsing, Andres and I left for Kaufman once more.

At the front of the auditorium I gave my first shot at portraying Paulina Salas, "la doncella," which meant "the maiden." Calvin's advice echoed in my head as the audition began: "Improvise." I was still nervous, but the adrenalin from those nerves transmitted into energy for my character. As I walked out of the audition with Carlos, the adrenalin was still flowing. I felt excited and slightly anxious for the parts to be announced. Acting the part of Paulina had felt great and I hadn't stumbled over too many words. Maybe the director actually was fooled into thinking that I could speak Spanish. Carlos and I laughed again over the scarcity of characters in the play; we had to wait until the end of the week to find out if we got to act as one of them.

Friday, February 4th had come. The news I had received about the auditions during the course of the week was not encouraging. Calvin had told Carlos that more girls came to try out for the part on Wednesday and Thursday, although not too many other guys auditioned on these days. I lowered my hopes so as not to be disappointed, but continued to check my email frequently for some sort of update on the play. Ten o'clock and still no news of the outcome of the auditions. As I opened the door to my room, still intent on checking my email one more time, the "Can Can" began to blast from my cell phone. It was Carlos and I knew the timing of the call was not a coincidence. "I got the part," he said. I felt subdued excitement in his voice. He wouldn't tell me he got the part over the phone, unless.... "So did you!" he added. "I'm Gerardo and you're Paulina!" We laughed together in joy and disbelief. It was a night of celebration, as the realization of the amount of work to come had not yet settled in.

The following Wednesday, Carlos and I walked out of the first rehearsal. We were both disappointed how it had gone. So, as usual, I became sad and he became angry. The combination led to an argument. "I thought you could speak Spanish better than that," he said coldly. "Well, I've only been speaking in the classroom. How am I supposed to speak any better," I retorted. "And anyways, I didn't think we would be reading over the play out loud on the first rehearsal. I thought we were just going to talk about it, or something. So, I didn't go over my lines very carefully." "Are you sure you can do this Christina?" He told me that he felt nervous every time I had to say a line and that Calvin, and the advisor for Teatrotaller, Debra, had been giving each other looks while I was speaking. Needless to say, this conversation was not a confidence booster, soI wrote an email to Calvin. I myself wasn't sure that I could pull off the play, but I wanted him to know that I could do better than that first rehearsal.

Friday, April 1st 7:45 p.m., opening night, was the final moment of doubt to be overcome. There had been so many: the night of the auditions, that first rehearsal, reciting those difficult parts over and over and still stumbling over the words (for example: "verdaderamente lo necesitaba" or "que tener que tirarselo" and "dar el orgasmo"), when Carlos told me that I sounded like I was reciting my lines and not acting them (I do appreciate his honesty, but it it didn't help me become fore confident) the first time I had to present my part before an "audience" (even if it was only Ashley), when I first saw myself on video (I only watched it once because it was so terrible), and many more smaller moments of doubt. But there were also moments that boosted my confidence, and by focusing on them, I was able to move forward and improve my acting and speaking abilities. When I stepped on the stage on opening night, I no longer doubted myself, for when the lights flashed across the set for the first time, I was no longer Christina, but Paulina, and I had much more important things to think about.

La mujer que cayó del cielo

November 2008

Jimmy Suarez

Little did I know what a great experience Teatrotaller was going to be for me. I remember duringmy freshman year having dinner with a friend at RPCC and meeting Diana [Castillo] for the first time. Diana asked me to go to call backs because Teatrotaller was in need of more guys. Since I had an interest in theatre I decided to go. It was my first time doing a call back and I was very excited. I remember trying out for multiple roles but really liking one particular role, JoJo. The following week in class I discovered that I would be playing the role of JoJo in Watsonville, and was very excited. This became my first exprience with Teatrotaller.

After reflecting on my experiences from Watsonville: Someplace Not Here I decided to give it another go. This year the play was titled La mujer que cayó del cielo This play was similar to Watsonville in that it was spanglish, but it had a third language as well, Tarahumara. When I found this out, I took a special interest in the play. After reading the play the first time, I felt the need to read it a second time because I felt like I missed some details in between the readings. Every time I went over the script though, I realized how upset I was at the fact this actually happened in real life.

I learned many things in our classes with Jimmy Noriega. One of our assignments was to read the play and create a blocking book. This by far, has been one of my favorite homework assignments at Cornell. Since I had prior experience with this assignment, I was able to share knowledge with the class and teach them how to put the prompt book together. The main actors had a special class times to attend to as well, for the most part they were rehearsals. In these special classes we learned several acting techniques. My favorite activity was when we chose a pose to represent our overall character mentality. Once we started memorizing our lines, we began blocking the play and rehearsing as a group. I really like working together with everyone, it reminded me of how much I liked theatre.

Our cast was fair size, not too many or small, so it was easy to get to know each other. There

were a few people who obviously already knew each other and were close, I was among them. Then there were others, who didn't know anyone and it was their first time in the group. Week after week we would randomly meet and rehearse. It was not as often as previous plays I have been a part of, but sufficient enough for us to become familiar with the play and each other. Before we realized it, everyone was having fun at rehearsals talking each other and having fun. We were like a family, and like in every family, we had that annoying individual who would spoil the fun for everyone else. Even so, the overall experience was well worth it.

Once rehearsals started at RPCC, I got more and more thrilled. We were getting closer to the big day. My lines were all memorized, as well as my blocking, but there was still more to be done. The stage needed to be created and a cage had to be built. I felt ready to perform, and the time came. Our first dress rehearsal turned out to be one of our worst run-throughs, but that only meant the actual show would be a huge success. During our first performance

I felt nervous before coming on stage, I thought that was weird, especially since I am used to performing in front of large groups of people. Once my first line came though, I lost all fear and felt confident in my performance. All of my friends and brothers were there to see me and I wanted to show them how hard we worked on this play. Although there were a few errors, since we trusted in each other as a cast, we were able to correct each other's mistakes and let the show go on.

When it was over I was really sad, all good things come to an end, The play would never be acted again the way it was. I had a lot of fun working with everyone though, and might just have to do it one more time before I graduate. I believe Jimmy to be a great director. He worked with people who don't major in theatre, who just do it for fun, and the show came out amazing.

Journey through the Desert

November 2009

Nicole Bryant

First of all, I am so grateful for this amazing opportunity which has been placed before me. Ever since the curtains closed on my very (very) small role in Hello Dolly in 7th grade thought would never again have the chance to participate in the theater. This semester, having put some former extracurriculars aside, auditioned for Teatrotaller, I was hoping that there would be some small English role that I could land, one that wouldn't expose all my self-doubts about my skill, or lack thereof, in Spanish, Instead, after the callback, I received a copy of the 97% Spanish and 3%Eng!ish play Desiertos. Imagine my defeat when I realized I probably wouldn't be cast as the English-speaking francotirador. It took me a while to absorb the text. I understood some of the more dramatic scenes, (Sean and Anthony's first immigrant scene, for example) but had difficulty grasping the intricate nuances of Hinojosa's vision. Though I was elated to be cast (and believe me, was), I was worried that wouldn't be able to portray the Intensity and pain which my character experiences and relives In her monologue.

Luckily, working one-on-one with Jimmy allowed me to better understand my character, to visualize each of the unfortunate experiences which colored her life and marinate in them, From then on it was just a matter of learning the lines. I truly believe that everyone on West campus must think I'm crazy, muttering to myself in Spanish on my way back to the apartment but I was trying my best to sear the script into my brain. That being said, I just hope I don't blurt out my Desiertos monologue instead of my wedding vows years from now.

I enjoyed coming to (nearly) every one of the rehearsal (especially before the 3-week countdown). Teatrotaller has become a space where can step outside of myself and push to be the most imaginative, creative version of myself, I loved getting to know (most of) the members of the cast and feeding of their various levels of energy. Marcela's interpretive dances were always a highlight of our rehearsals, as well as Anthony's struggle to pronounce the letters "r" and "s". My favorite rehearsals was the class where Jimmy's theater teacher [Beth Miles]came in and had us do exercises emphasizing body language and voice, and the workshop with the women from Mestiza Power. I felt great energy from the entire cast (and crew) on those days.

Once we got into real gut and gusto of the play (and by that I mean the actual performances of the play themselves) I think everyone really Invested themselves from stage entrance to curtain call. Do wish the process had run more smoothly? But of course, Were there certainly individuals who contributed to these bumps on the road more substantially? Unfortunately, yes. Did I love the experience from lthaca to Kansas to NYC? Absolutely, and wouldn't trade it for the world.

Acting in Desiertos

Emily Hernández

December 2009

It's hard to describe the difference between what I expected to take out of taking a class like Teatrotaller and what I really ended up getting, I remember the first day of class, I expected to get in, get out and get my easy A, boy was I wrong? My first surprise was hearing Jimmy [Noriega] say "so guys, after Debbie's done I'm going to be holding the auditions." Someone asked, "right now?" and he responded, "yep, after Debbie's done with the bureaucratic stuff for the class."

The hairs on the back of my neck rose. What have I gotten myself into?, I Thought. Well I'm already here, I might as well. I took a deep breath, and went for it….after the second audition I was in, I was ecstatic called my parents, my best friend in Miami….told everyone in Ithaca. I took teatrotaller because I wanted to do something different, I have never been one to have many friends or be very sociable. My main purpose was to have something cool to do Monday and Wednesday nights. Well… I got that and then some.

Although for a lot of people, this semester in teatrotaller was a rather bittersweet experience. I will admit I still loved it and I still wouldn't change it for the anything, To be sincere, the drama kept my life interesting, of course, because it rarely ever involved me haha. I mean, I won't lie, I didn't have aspirations of being an actress, I just wanted to go to class have a good rehearsal, get to know my new classmates (as that was also one of the reasons I took the class... to be obligated to meet new people, lol) and go home feeling like I got something done.

But on with the great things I got from teatrotaller. Although it was an incredible amount of work and it reminded me why I usually don't do many group things, I got more than just a new experience, I realized many things about myself. That if I set myself to do something right, I do it well. I absolutely loved being la niña, it was like Jimmy got into my head and gave me the role I wanted. I loved the chemistry I felt in the scenes with the other women. I appreciated the hard work jimmy put into making the play look not just right but aesthetically pleasing.

Regardless of all the drama, I loved every second of it. I loved it when we had a good rehearsal, I liked it on those rare times when we all worked as team, I even liked it when I got criticized and when me and the girls would gossip about how horrible the guy scenes were in comparison to ours. Even though it was one of the most difficult semesters for teatrotaller, it was still so incredible that I want to join the club next semester.

Prefiero Pierre

Pierre Chwang

May 2011

Jang Ho Kim and I are much alike. When I first heard about the role, I was overcome with an incredible sense of dread that someone had written the role with me in mind. I never asked Phoenix if this was the case, as it did not really bother me that much. It is one thing for an actor to portray and "become" the character that he is to act as, and another thing for an actor to simply be himself—save for an accent and a few improvised stunts. Facebooked, as a result, was not simply a play to me, but an opportunity to step into the shoes of someone who lived a similar life. It was not difficult for me to relate to Jang Ho, as our stories were probably not so different. What was difficult, however, was to attempt to create the person Juan who I was supposed to emulate, not because the act itself was difficult, but because I did not want to. In thinking about how the character came to become what he was, I was looking at an uncanny duplicate of myself.

Jang Ho asks his mother at the beginning of his pseudo-monologue with the phone to stop calling him by his Korean name, and by his preferred Hispanic moniker, "Juan." What is the significance of a name? What did Juan's attempts to identify with a non-Asian name mean? Was it simply an attempt to convey to the audience that Juan was not Korean, but rather, very Latin American? Or did it symbolize something deeper? Why choose to identify yourself with a name that has nothing to do with the ethnic group you hail from? These are questions that were never answered for me—as the actor, I had to find the answers to them myself. To be honest, I did not always want to spell out the exact answers, as it is not always comfortable and easy to think about one's place in the world and how fragile it can be. This was the greatest challenge for me when it came to playing the character—a challenge that did not even have to affect my on-stage performance. And that challenge came down to the significance of a name.

Once upon a time, I was asked by my piano teacher what my "English" name was. I told her, "Pierre." Ironically, it happens to be French, which is as un-"English" as English names come. She could not figure out how to pronounce the "erre" and after having me write it down, stared at the word for some time, before looking at me and announcing, "PIER!" Eventually, we settled on "Peter." The list of mispronunciations and misidentifications continues—Pear, Pierce, and "PIE-Arrr" are a few. Though I do not publically advertise the fact, Pierre is not my original given name. Despite the fact that some might consider it fairly obvious that I might have a "more Asian" name, most do not comment for the sake of being respectful. Despite the smiles, nods and acknowledgments, I often find myself out of place. I fondly remember one of the times when this illusion melted away, during a frat party at Lambda Chi, where a girl asked me what my name was, and responded, "What the *expletive*, no way!" after I told her, "Pierre." Incredulous, she thought I was trying to pull a fast one and walked away.

I never met her in person on campus again, and I have a feeling that if she didn't down those shots of vodka before heading to party, she would have never reacted the way she did. I was not sure how to react after what happened—it was one of those moments in life when you simply were left with words to comprehend what had happened, and more importantly, why it had happened. I was not disappointed, depressed, or sad, but rather, I felt

perturbed, because in one sentence, the world that I knew had shifted and changed. In that instant, I was terrified—not of some abstract boogeyman drifting through dancing partygoers in a basement, but rather, of the uncertainty of my own identity. I was not sure what I was, having been sheltered by the polite social norms that governed the behavior of so many of my peers and those I had been in contact with. But the reality was, and is, clear to me: I am a black sheep in more respects than one.

I was born in Tianjin, China(no, not France, sorry), on August 8, 1990. My parents and I immigrated to the United States during an extremely hot June in 1996—I was six at the time, but because of the unremarkable constraint known as time, I was technically five years old. This voyage was not the first for a Chwang. My grandfather was educated abroad at Oxford and Harvard. My grandmother attended Cornell—a rare privilege for women at the time, especially women from a nation considered backwards. Despite their achievements, my parents and I were "fleeing" from China in a way—the motivation for doing so is another story for another time—and coming from a family with already strong ties to the Western world, my parents wanted me to have a similar experience as my grandparents. As a result, I did not take advantage of the United States' public school system, along with many of my Chinese peers. As soon as my parents could afford to do so, they sent me to Saint James, a school operated by Catholic nuns, and eventually, to Saint Ignatius Loyola School on the Upper East Side.

My French first name did not help me fit in with the mostly Anglo-Saxon crowd. If anything, it made things worse. If some of the jokes and jests my peers threw my way were motivated by the combination of the fact that I was indeed—a lanky Chinese boy with colored skin, a French name, and above average height—I never knew any better. I felt that I was accepted because most of the people I was in contact with were decent, good, kind-hearted people who had been raised to respect others in good families. I grew up being ignorant of the fact that I was different from most of the people I knew, but looking in the mirror never seemed to bother me. To me, the one thing that set me apart from my comrades at school was my name, which, when contrasted with theirs, was oddly foreign.

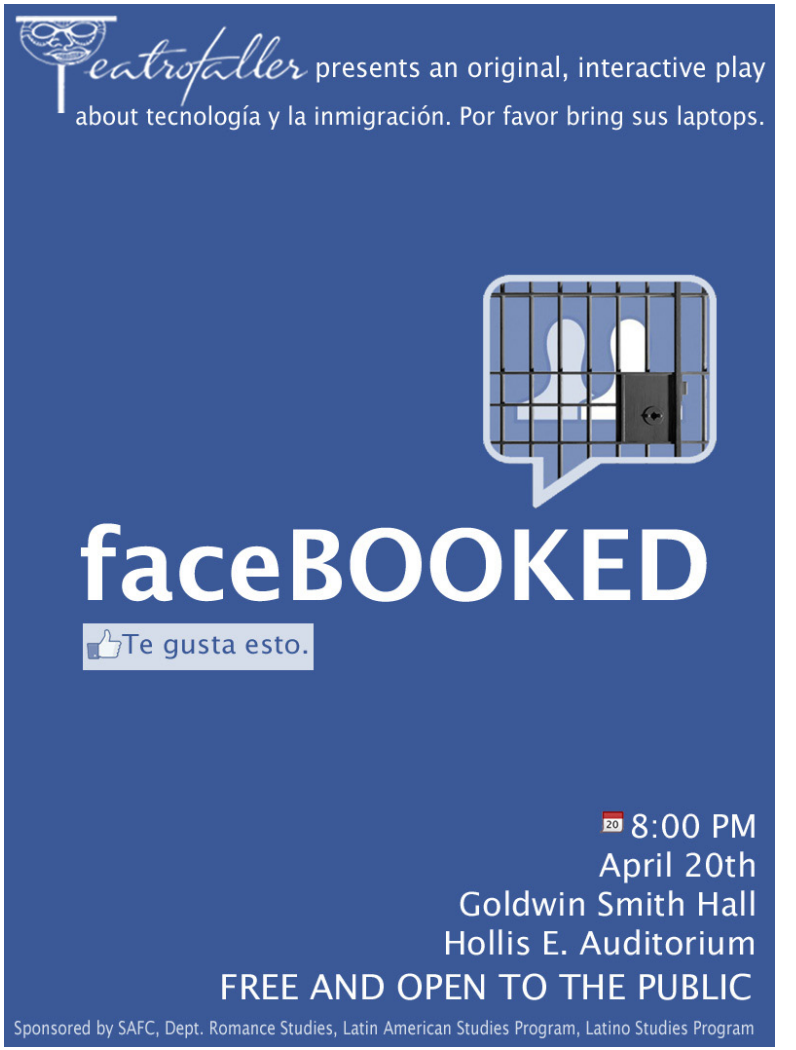
I'm not sure how Juan would have felt in his native Argentina. I'm sure he had friends similar to the ones I made in elementary school—at first, finding me a little odd because of the massive walking culture clash that I represented, and then eventually warming up to me and accepting me as the person I am. In the United States, however, Juan was perhaps a little more like me. Hearing a name like Juan in combination with Spanish coming from an Asian is a much different experience than hearing "Jang Ho" and Korean. Many of the people I meet do not expect me to be who I am—and perhaps, it's this defiance of the standard, the norm, that sets me apart in their minds. Many white Americans expect me to speak with a bit of a Chinese lisp and for me to have a name they can't pronounce correctly. Many Asians I meet expect me to "act Asian"—which, to this day, I do not comprehend—and have a full embrace of my culture. Instead, I am the exact opposite. I command above average English and I can speak Mandarin Chinese fluently enough to translate. I have a Western name that I identify with and respect—though it is still unpronounceable to many Westerners. I prefer Rotisserie Chicken to General Tso's.

I once described my dilemma to my mother, and I compared myself to a cat that had been removed from its litter and then raised by dogs from a young age. After I had grown up, I did dog things and saw myself as a dog, but the cold hard truth was that I was not really a dog, but not a cat either. The dogs could never fully accept me as another, but the cats rejected me because of the way I acted and the company I kept. At the end of the day, I, like said cat, found myself with few friends and fewer places I was truly at home. My mother tried to understand the parallels, but I'm not sure if she fully grasped my drift. I'm not sure if many people would understand, unless they had walked in similar shoes and had been raised in a similar fashion as I have.

So, when Jang Ho gets deported back to Korea, it was not just a callous, unjust action done by the American Government. To me, it was not unlike the times I had been accosted with incredulous looks after telling someone that my name was "Pierre." Playing and creating the character Juan Kim was not difficult for me, as the role had virtually been designed for me to play. It was, however, incredibly difficult to act accept the fact that I would need to look into myself to find the parts missing from Juan's story. Like how Juan felt lost in Korea, I still feel like an exile in the nation that I call home sometimes, despite being a citizen for the past 10 years. I cannot fully identify with my Chinese background, yet despite how I was raised, I will never really

be white. I've come to understand and accept this fact for quite some time, though, it was not until Juan Kim dropped onto my lap that I realized I actually needed to piece together all my thoughts into a cohesive whole. Like Juan, my name, Pierre, is more important than being a mere word. Instead, it represents the person who I have chosen to be, someone who is not entirely Chinese and definitely not a white American, but rather, somewhere in between.

The experience of playing a character who bore an uncanny similarity to me was one that resulted in a great deal of soul-searching for me. The role did not entail so much thought on my part—I only needed to memorize a few lines and speak them authentically and loudly(thanks, Jimmy). What resulted, however, was that my experience working with Teatro Taller and Facebooked forced me to take a step back from the life I was too busy living to consider who I was. Comparing myself to a fictional history of Jang Ho raised questions that I could only answer after several sleepless nights. TT, as a result, was more than a class for me, and more like a retreat into my own mind and identity.



NOTAS BREVES Y PRENSA

10 August 29, 1996 Cornell Chronicle

They're making waves

Charles Harrington/University Photography

Isabel Ramos '96, right, helps Charlene Santos portray ocean waves during the Latino Civic Association and Esperanza Mentorship Program's Summer '96 Theater Workshop performance of "Manuelita," Aug. 17 at the Greater Ithaca Activities Center gym. Ramos was a mentor for the theater program for local Latino children, designed under the direction of Cornell Professor Debra Castillo. It was the theater workshop's final summer performance.

Testimonios Breves

Though I was not a student of Cornell University, Teatrotaller reached out across the hill and gave this Ithaca College student a chance to be part of the family. In Teatrotaller I found a group of people that had true love for the theater, for the Spanish language, and one that created an atmosphere where anyone and everyone was safe to dream, and to bring to life characters that enriched our own. Thanks to the founders and the leadership of Teatrotaller! Happy 20th Anniversary!!

--Luis A. Maravi

"Teatrotaller's main goal is to combine the efforts of a diverse group of students--many who are not Spanish, Latin American, or Latino--in order to promote an awareness of the Spanish language and the issues, history, and traditions that affect and represent the communities that speak it. Some of our productions have been bilingual in order to demonstrate how code switching is a fundamental component of many Americans' lives, challenging English Only movements and other related racist projects. By raising awareness about linguistic civil rights, our work is deeply political; our message is not communicated through manifestations or protests, but rather through creating art--a process that requires a sustained commitment over a long period of time and also entails the sprit of openness and cooperation by all parties involved."

--Saúl Mercado 2001

"I'd like to put Teatrotaller and its vision in context. Teatrotaller seeks to represent diversity even among the Spanish-speaking community. There are a number of different accents and different skill levels in speaking Spanish in the group. And as the performance unfolds, one of the things we see are what are the horizons of Spanish theater on campus and we demonstrate how diverse the Spanish-speaking community is. Most of the people on stage have had very minimal experience with theater. It's their first time--or one of their few times-- acting, and I think they deserve that much more recognition in that they managed to put on a show and learn how to become actors and learn how to act in less than one semester."

--Ronald Avila 2002

"I knew very little about immigration or Hispanic culture. I was immersed in (these matters) and learned so much from my peers. This class showed me the two sides of one of the largest social issues of our time. I had no idea what so many people go through to make a better life for themselves. I could not have imagined. Now, I understand their hardships and empathize with their situation. Overall, I have gained more in this class than in any other class I have taken. The lessons learned were not academic ones. They were life lessons. I broadened my horizons, learned about issues surrounding our country's border, and learned what it meant to be an illegal immigrant…"

--Zach Carroll 2007

"Organizations like TT and the production of California's Most Wanted remind me of why I love Cornell so much; it is the fascinating diversity of interests, passions, and talent combined with the determination and hard work of students and faculty members that make for such a unique and amazing place and opportunities like acting in Teatrotaller this past semester."

--Sarah McClung 2010

"Opening night came around as we were forced to realize that dress rehearsals were nothing compared to the real thing. The anxious crowd added a new dimension to "Funeral Home." All of a sudden the actors had to be entertaining, for their voices were to be heard by a paying audience. Thus, from that point on, Teatrotaller became more than just a bunch of random Cornell students

taking a break from hitting the books. We became individuals united in promoting the awareness of and vibrantly celebrating la cultura hispana in the most wonderful, potent, and invigorating fashion: through artistic expression estilo latino."

--Giselle Muñoz 2002

"Last semester, I was a first-time actress in Teatrotaller. The play was Ana in the Tropics , by Nilo Cruz, and my character was Marela. I remember not being able to get a picture of the whole play the first couple of readings. It became much clearer once we started rehearsing it. We had our first collective reading of the play two weeks later. It was a special moment, we were all discovering the whole world hidden in that script, it felt like when you rescue something from oblivion (and I am not trying to be dramatic here ;). The play went from being a flat story to being a visual, interactive drama. The voices externalized, the characters took shape; they acquired their own personality. Every paragraph that I had read was now being said by a real person, in a context, with a mood."

--Ileana Sevilla, 2004

"My Spanish was far from fluent and I had never acted in a play before, but the semester ahead looked bleak, and I desperately needed some sort of activity for emotional release. "La muerte y la doncella." I pronounced the words slowly to myself and wondered what "doncella" could possibly mean. Taking out a pen and paper, I wrote down the contact info. ...Friday, April 1 st 7:45 p.m., opening night, was the final moment of doubt to be overcome. There had been so many: the night of the auditions, that first rehearsal, reciting those difficult parts over and over and still stumbling over the words .... But there were also moments that boosted my confidence, and by focusing on them, I was able to move forward and improve my acting and speaking abilities. When I stepped on the stage on opening night, I no longer doubted myself, for when the lights flashed across the set for the first time, I was no longer Christina, but Paulina, and I had much more important things to think about."

--Christina Jarymowycz, 2005

" Las primeras descripciones que tuve de Gabriela fueron "granola" y "crunchy." Hasta el día de hoy no tengo idea de qué significan estas palabras en un contexto que obviamente no es el convencional. Lo único que me venía en mente con los esfuerzos frustrados de Isabel y Vera de explicarme las palabras granola y crunchy, eran las palabras "el look discretamente humanidades," del ensayo Esperando a Loló de Ana Lydia Vega.

-- Nana Puig, 1995

"Sin duda alguna, diría que la pregunta que más me hace la gente que ve mis obras es, "¿Cómo te puedes aprender todas esas líneas?" Las primeras veces que oí la pregunta, me molesté un poco: aprenderse las líneas es verdaderamente fácil comparado con todo lo demás que hay que hacer en una obra.

-- Nana Puig, 1996

" Las conferencias de algunas de las organizaciones latinas en Cornell sólo predican una victimización de los hispanos que no lleva a nada. La solución para tener una comunidad más activa no radica en impedir el tránsito en los semáforos, sino en tomar la iniciativa de empezar organizaciones como Teatrotaller cuyos esfuerzos es mostrar la cultura hispana. El que personas que no son latinas participen en Teatrotaller también demuestra la importancia de compartir nuestro talento con la comunidad de Cornell en general. Este esfuerzo trasciende las diferencias en lenguajes cuando el fin es resaltar el deseo común de ser mejores. Mediante Teatrotaller pude ser parte de una comunidad hispana que no está formada por hispanos que se creen víctimas pero por gente que aprecia la calidad de la cultura latina."

-- María del Rocío Galarza, 1997

"Me hacía falta hacer algo diferente que me ayudara a salir de mi horrible y tedioso ciclo de estudiar Biología y Química y no hacer más nada con mi vida."

-- Michelle Marie Del Toro, 1996

"La escenografía es un campo que me apasiona. Desde que me uní a Teatrotaller a finales de 1993, he tenido la suerte de disenar y construir distintas piezas de escenografía, y en todo momento ha sido gratificante. En el momento estoy completando mi cuarto ano de arquitectura, siguiendo desde el comienzo un plan de estudios basado en el diseno de edifcios hipotéticos, que sólo existen en el papel y en la imaginación de los estudiantes. Ciertos companeros han comentado que mi actividad en Teatrotaller encierra un gran privilegio: el de poder construir algo palpable.

-- Julian Hoyos, 1995

"Creo que muchas de estas características que se le dieron al personaje fueron así debido a mi caracterización. Isabel me repitió veinte veces que tenía que actuar más vieja, pero yo nunca lo logré. Me decía "el brinco está muy de mujer de 21 anos; estás hablando muy rápido; acuerdate que eres una vieja; que te de más trabajo caminar. "Me dio trabajo envejecer. Al fin y al cabo lo que me hizo parecer mayor, fue el vesturario y el maquillaje. La vitalidad que yo le daba se quedó. Y el caminar se solucionó cuando Isabel me compró unas chinelas incomodísimas que me mataban los pies. O sea, que o caminabe como vieja adolorida y chancleteaba, o me salían ampollas en los pies. Así que el caminar me salió a fin y al cabo."

-- Vera Soltero

"Esta experiencia definitivamente tiene un lugar bien especial en mi corazón y, aún cuando no esté trabajando formalmente, Teatrotaller sabe que puede contar con mi ayuda en lo que sea necesario sin duda alguna."

-- Awymarie Riollano, 1997

"Como Latinos tenemos pocas oportunidades para hablar el español y esta es una de las mejores maneras. Me siente mucho más cómodo cuando actúo en español en vez de inglés y no sé a que se debe esto. Español es mi primera lengua pero sé hablar el inglés mucho más mejor. De toda manera Teatrotaller me ayudado bastante en hablar el español y estar alrededor de tantos diferentes dialectos. Trataré de volver el semestre que viene para ver la producción que ensenarán. Sé que Teatrotaller seguirá en su camino éxitoso. Le quiero dar las gracias a todos que tuvieron parte en ésta experiencia maravillosa para mí que nunca olvidaré."

-- Steven Graciano

"A través de esta nueva experiencia me he dado cuenta que aúnque los actores son generalmente los que recibímos los aplausos é elogios, el éxito de una obra es fruto exclusivo del trabajo colectivo de individuos dentro y fuera del escenario.

-- Nadia Huancahuari, 1997

"Lo cierto es que mientras Laura empezaba con su ya famoso "Hipógrafo violento que corrías parejas con el viento... como por arte de magia, me di cuenta por fin del propósito de esas palabras, y de la función que servían para establecer a Rosaura como personaje y a la trama de la obra."

--Calie Santana, 1998

"Teatrotaller definitivamente me ha ayudado a sentirme más cómoda en este lugar frío y desconocido. Me ha brindado la oportunidad de conocer gente nueva y de entrar en contacto con otras culturas similares a la mía, y eso es algo que es totalmente irremplazable en mi experiencia universitaria al igual que en mi vida como tal. Nunca pensé que el teatro formaría parte integral de mi educación universitaria, pero ha llegado a convertirse en algo más que una clase... es la cobija bajo la cual siempre encuentro sosiego, lejos de la tensión de las clases técnicas; en mi casa, mi hogar, lejos de mi familia en Puerto Rico."

-- Margarita G. Rodríguez

"Este semestre Teatrotaller fue la experiencia más intensa que he tenido en mi vida hasta este entonces. A la vez fue la experiencia más educativa que me ha enseñando cosas que recordaré para el resto de mi vida. No obstante algunos de los retos inmensurables y de las dificultades que encontré, fue el resultado más divino que he podido experimentar y el sueño más encantador que he gozado al poderlo hacer realidad. Espero que en el futuro se sigan haciendo producciones tan prestigiosas y deleitosas y que se puedan mejorar algunos de los aspectos y así se puedan llevar a cabo estos resultados con mucho más eficacia."

-- Colbert Valdez, 1999

"Lo que tenemos que hacer es encontrar maneras creativas de educar al público norteamericano sobre la cultura latina. Este proceso acabará como un entendimiento, un puente entre dos comunidades. Así llegaremos al entendimiento que la comunidad es un solo mosaíco de idiomas y culturas. Teatrotaller, para mi, es un ejemplo de un proyecto que celebra y educa sobre nuestra historia y arte. A la vez, la organización decude no solo latinos pero a la comunidad entera."

-- Saúl Mercado, 1999

"Trabajar con Teatrotaller fue una de mis mejores y más placenteras experiencias en Cornell. Si tuviera una condena más larga, sin duda alguna regresaría y regresaría hasta que me botaran."

-- Luis F. González-Silén

"Sin duda alguna, este grupo me hará falta una vez que me marche y me dejará vestigios melancólicos. Mas a la vez, me marcharé con un gran deleite y una combinación de experiencias inolvidables que han formado parte de quien soy hoy y que seguirán afectando mis intereses y mis decisiones en tal ámbito por el resto de mi vida. Muchas gracias a todos y le deseo la mayor de la suerte al grupo hoy, mañana y siempre."

-- Colbert Alembert (Valdéz), 2000

"Teatrotaller, ha sido más que escuela para mí, ha sido centro de inspiración y expresión. Yo he hecho mucho teatro en el corto tiempo que he vivido desde el teatro costumbrista puertorriqueno hasta el clásico español, desde el musical hasta la obra infantíl y en todas las obras he aprendido algo nuevo que he aplicado a mi vida diaria. Como estudiante del teatro no por profesión sino por vocación Teatrotaller, ha sido la mejor de mis experiencias por su estabilidad y su misión educativa como nucleo y último fin."

-- Alexander Santiago-Jirau

"The clapping of the crowd was endless. Whistles were heard, cheers, and a feeling of both accomplishment and triumph filled the souls of everyone who partook in the play. As for the actors, we all joined hands and took our final bow. A mixture of feelings overtook us, relief, excitement, sadness, exhaustion, and most importantly, self-satisfaction. While looking out onto the crowd, we knew that to them the play was just a two and a half hour interpretation of Calderon de la Barca's, La Vida Es Sueño. To us, and those directly involved with the production, the play was the result of a semester full of frustrations, achievements, and gratification."

-- Pilar Alvarez Palazio, 1998

"I have participated in Teatrotaller twice now and I keep leaving with the same feelings: togetherness, power and success. But in particular I love working downtown with the kids from GIAC. It is a feeling of family that has brought me back to GIAC and Teatrotaller again."

-- Angelo Paredes, 1998

"Finally the big day had come and even I had the jitters. Seeing our hard work on stage would be the most rewarding thing of all. We were all back stage. Actors and actresses were getting prepped. We were doing some last minute ironing. The stage crew was attending to their props. We could faintly here the whispering voices of the light crew over the intercom en el cuarto de "maquillaje." Everything was finally coming together. Joyce came over, handed me a

scarf, a couple of safety pins, and said, "Here, try to make this into a turban for the Moorish king." With 15 minutes to showtime, I doubted my talents. I managed to pull something off and most peple who passed by commented on how "cool" it looked. Hey, I was satisfied that it just stayed on okay."

-- Elisha A. Ramos

"Teatrotaller has been one of my most rewarding and unique experiences as a student at Cornell. Ultimately, it was a great learning experience. I learned that I really enjoy theater; almost every aspect from set construction and set crew to public relations. Most importantly, I met several people who I may have never encountered here at Cornell if I had never been a part of this group. I discovered how amazingly talented they were and I'm excited that I met these new people and hope to continue to be in contact with them."

-- Nikisha Carty, 1999

"As a house manager and box office assistant at Cornell's Center for Theatre Arts, I know about showtime jitters. The most stressing time can sometimes be right before the show. However, I have never had to go through hell week and I was never informed about all the work that went into a production during the rest of the weeks before hell week. My experience as a sound designer was eye-opening. Not only did I learn about theatre production, but I also learned about the Hispanic culture. Thanks to the group, I made many friendships that I will never forget."

-- Amy Liu, 1999

"The first meeting was like stepping into a whole new world. Some of the faces were familiar, the language familiar, yet something was different. Some students had been a part of Teatrotaller for years and it was clear that some people knew each other from outside as well. Being the socialite that I am it felt odd to know only a few people in passing. It was clear that this course would not only be a lesson in Latino culture but in making friends."

-- Quynda L. Henry, 1999

"I have completed another semester with the group and I'm just as excited to start on a third. As a theatre major, working with you guys gave me a chance to learn things in a non-threatening environment. Working on Una Tal Raquel, has truly been the highlight of my semester. The rush I get from working on a show, the sense of accomplishment, being a part of something. This has been a chance to further work on team building skills, and building my confidence."

--Athena Harris, 1999

My Reflection On TeatroTaller

Colbert Alembert (Valdéz)

I can honestly say that, albeit my current status as a struggling in actor in Los Angeles for the past nine years I have been here pursuing my career, I look back at my years in college that led to the discovery of my true passion in life and, amidst such euphoria, Teatrotaller was the haven that allowed my initial dreams to blossom and that served as the catalyst which solidified my love for the arts.

To this very day, one of my fondest memories in my artistic career remains Teatrotaller's very first all-around classical production of Las mocedades del Cid, an ambitious and monumental goal at the time that served as a milestone and the pinnacle of my theatrical experience with the challenges and rewards, the highs and lows, the obstacles and solutions, the simple and complex aspects, and the sheer joy and replica it offered of what a true theatrical experience is all about.

I will forever be grateful to this small yet significant theater organization for allowing and encouraging me to spread my wings and fly. I am especially thankful and indebted to Professor Debra Castillo for her outstanding guidance, support, understanding and pleasant disposition before my time, during my time, and after my time in a way that only she can manifest. May Teatroaller continue to soar and reach new heights, and may it always remember that what makes this group stand above the rest is that when some say "no," it always finds a way to turn it into a "yes."

Regards,

Teatrotaller
Stephanie Cajina

I joined Teatrotaller ("TT") in Fall 2003. As a freshman from California, I longed for the sense of family and community I left behind in San Francisco. My sister, Ana Patricia Cajina, was directing a production of "Día de Campo", and urged me to join TT. In high school, I had been in a few productions which included Ana Devere Smith's "Fires in the Mirror" and Anton Chekov's "A Wedding Proposal". Although I did have some stage experience, I never had the chance to truly delve into Latin American or Latino theatre. Through TT, I got the opportunity to do more than that. The lessons I learned through my productions with TT went beyond a lesson on Latin American culture—I was able to sense how it was to feel part of these cultures. I got to experience the pain and struggles of being an activist farm worker in Central California, the entrapment of being a female working professional in Barcelona, and the frustration of being an undiscovered talent confined to the gender norms of society in a small town in Argentina. The stories of the great characters and women I had the fortune to bring to life on the stage would not have been possible without Teatrotaller and the guidance of Debbie Castillo and Elvira-Sanchez Blake. Their trust and support for all our student productions were always unwavering. They entertained our sometimes wacky, over the top, and often times expensive ideas. I remember that for my role as Sonia in Nora Glickman's one-act play "Preludes", we had the crazy idea that I should learn how to play the cello. Even though my musical talents peaked in first grade with my rendition of "Hot Cross Buns" on the recorder, Debbie made it happen. That semester, in preparation for my performance in Israel, I received cello lessons and was given a cello to take home for further practice. These experiences make me a very proud member of TT, and feel blessed to have had the opportunity to work in over nine productions with some truly amazing and talented people.

Thank you TT for all the fond memories!

(Teatrotaller member since Fall 2003, President of Teatrotaller Fall 06 – Spring 07)

The cast of Sergi Belbel's "Después de la Lluvia."From left to right: Carlos Ruiz-Vargas, Christina Jarymowycz, Karin Shankar, Andres Orta Castro, Alfredo Sosa, Stephanie Cajina, Jimmy Noriega, Sofia Sotiropoulou, Carolina Osorio-Gil, Raquel Getzel. Photograph provided by Stephanie Cajina.

"Después de la Lluvia" was truly a labor of love. The first memory that jumps out when I think of this production is the stage. All hands were on deck when we put on this production. We worked every night like an assembly line of soon-to-be young professionals and academics, working in solidarity to build a large, multi-level stage that would ultimately only be used for three nights. It was amazing! In addition to this, amidst all the chaos, our fearless TA, Alfredo Sosa, stepped in a couple of weeks before our first show to fill in for one of the actors that could no longer continue working on the production. The actors were on overdrive. Amidst the insanity of prelims, papers, building the stage, re-rehearsals, costume fittings; we delivered a well-rehearsed, funny, emotion-filled performance. Thinking back on this production, and looking at this picture, I can't help but feel this great sense of pride and camaraderie. For the Fall Semester of 2005, the amazing people that were part of this production were my family in Ithaca, and I wouldn't have had it any other way.

Recortes de Periódico

The Ithaca Journal
Saturday, August 17, 1996

Hispanic theater blooms on GIAC stage

By LAUREN STANFORTH
Journal Staff

ITHACA — Imagine that you were a love-crazed turtle, gone for so long on a beauty trip to Paris that your face had wrinkled — would your boyfriend still accept you?

The Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County and the Greater Ithaca Activities Center's Esperanza program are presenting the Summer 1996 Theater Workshop's final performance titled "Cuéntame Un Cuento," ("Tell me a Story") in which kids involved learned the answer to that question.

The 12-week program focused on teaching children ages 4-11 about theater production and Latino culture, partially through the staging of a series of Hispanic children's songs. Cornell University professor Debra Castillo and three Cornell students served as mentors and teachers for the 15 children involved.

One of the most interesting challenges the mentors faced, besides coaxing kids to stand in place, was when to integrate use of the Spanish language. The performance music is sung in Spanish, but while many of the children might have an Hispanic background, some can speak only English.

"Some kids have a better knowledge of Spanish than others," said student mentor Isabel Ramos. "We translated and tried to give them visual aids in the story."

Today's performance is a pantomimed translation of Argentinean poet Maria Elena Walsh's children's songs. The first scene depicts the trials and tribulations of a Yam Queen, another tells the tale of a witch doctor casting a spell on village residents and the second is about the preening female turtle.

Last performance

The Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County and the Greater Ithaca Activities Center's Esperanza Summer '96 Theater Workshop present their final performance of "Cuéntame Un Cuento," at 7 p.m. today at GIAC at 318 S. Albany St.
A slide presentation showcasing the group's work and a reception will follow the performance. This event is free and open to the public.

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Spanish theater troupe hosts playwright at CU

By MELISSA CASTILLO-GARSOW
Special to The Journal

Teatrotaller, Ithaca's only theater troupe that performs Spanish, Latin American and U.S. Latino plays, will celebrate its 20th performance with the production of "Johnny Tenorio" at 8 p.m. Friday at Hollis E. Cornell auditorium in Goldwin Smith Hall on the Cornell University campus. The Chicano play, written in a mixture of Spanish, English and caló (Mexican slang) retells the story of an infamous seducer of women.

Carlos Morton, author of "Johnny Tenorio" will be in Ithaca for the performance of the play and participate in a "talk back" after Friday night's performance. He will also present a discussion of Chicano and Latino drama at 6:30 p.m. today in the Latino Living Center and give a public lecture at noon on Friday in Rockefeller Hall on Cornell campus.

Of his play he comments, "I wrote it for Latino audiences where the struggle against machismo is ongoing," and adds that the message is very catholic. "If you sin you pay."

"I like the fact that the play is very cultural and political," student director Guillermo Izabal said of the play. "It portrays many ideas about the Chicano culture ... a person who comes to see the show is going to get an understanding of the relations that work within the Chicano community. They can see how misogyny works, they can see how machismo works."

"Johnny Tenorio" was written by Morton in 1983 as his graduate dissertation and has since undergone several revisions. Based on José Zorilla's "Don Juan Tenorio" written in 1844, the story pays homage to the archetypal character of the misogynist philanderer, a character which is common in many Spanish and Latin American plays. Morton's version, however, has a contemporary resonance, with its setting in a Texas border town and the mixture of Spanish, slang and English.

"It's a mosaic in many ways," adds Izabal. "We have the different periods which are portrayed by the costumes like the indigenous, tejano and zoot-suite movement, and then you have all these different aspects of the Mexican culture. The machismo, Chicanos growing up in a different country, different generations, so forth."

Morton is a professor of theater at the University of California at Riverside. A grandson of Mexican immigrants, he has written for television and radio as well as theater and is one of the best known and honored Latino playwrights. "Johnny Tenorio," an audience favorite, has been successfully staged all over the world.

Teatrotaller was founded in 1993 by a student named Isabel Ramos who as an undergraduate disliked that the Cornell theater program only allowed plays performed in English. Since 1994, the group has turned into a class in the Spanish department and continues to strive for Ramos' original mission: the promotion of Latino culture and Spanish language in the Cornell and Ithaca community.

Since its inception, Teatrotaller has built a reputation for professional performances and has presented plays in downtown Ithaca, Penn State University, Barnard College, Belgium and Mexico.

Rocío de Félix-Dávila, who plays the part of Anna, Johnny's true love, and has been apart of Teatrotaller for two years says, "I love it. I can speak Spanish, I can act and I love acting and I can meet different people from different parts with different ideals. It has opened up my mind so much."

In addition to this Friday's performance, Teatrotaller will present "Johnny Tenorio" at 8 p.m. Friday, April 20, and Saturday, April 21 in Hollis E. Cornell Auditorium, Goldwin Smith Hall, Cornell University. Tickets are available at the Latino Studies Program 434 Rockefeller Hall, the Latin American Studies Program in 190 Uris Hallor at the door for $5. For more information e-mail sm115@cornell.edu, kcb7@cornell.edu or call 255-3345.

MELISSA CASTILLO-GARSOW/Special to The Journal

Johnny Tenorio (Armando Gutiérrez) ferociously works to seduce Ana Mejía (Laura Aquino), the 14-year-old sister of his best friend and one true love, in Teatrotaller's spring production of Carlos Morton's play 'Johnny Tenorio.'

Teatro en Español

A Spanish-language theater group puts on a pair of plays

By Audrey Wu
Red Letter Daze Staff Writer

Here's some good news for anyone who's ever whined that Cornell is devoid of both diversity and culture: Teatro Taller, a Spanish-language theatre group which has been struggling with little publicity through far too many performances, is putting on a new show.

On Saturday, Nov. 14th, the group will present its latest show, productions of the plays *La Eterna Eva y El Insoportable Adan* and *El Cepillo de Dientes* at the Statler Auditorium. The first play, which translates as "The Eternal Eve and the Unbearable Adam," written by Cuban-born Dominican playwright Carmen Quidiello de Bosch, explores the philosophical differences between men and women. Directed by Rocio Galarza, this play is sort of a Latin-American perspective on *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*; it provides new insight regarding why members of the opposite sex are such enigmas.

La Eterna Eva y El Insoportable Adan
and
El Cepillo de Dientes

AT THE STATLER AUDITORIUM
ON SATURDAY AT 7:30 P.M.

The following production, *El Cepillo de Dientes* ("The Toothbrush"), is a lighter, absurdist comedy which satirizes the role of men and women in present-day society. Written by Chilean author Jorge Diaz and directed by Colbert Valdez, *El Cepillo* seeks to bring humor into what seems to be an eternal, fixed battle of the sexes. Gathering from the title, *El Cepillo* will cover topics ranging from deep sexual dilemmas to, perhaps, personal dental hygiene.

Both plays are produced by Awymarie Riollano '99, who, along with both directors Galarza and Valdez, has been diligent in running group rehearsals, and together, they have served as a great inspiration to the cast and crew.

Teatro Taller is a student-run theater group which originated as the Spanish Literature 301 course and has since grown into a large-scale production. It is comprised of a group of closely-knit, hard-working students who study and seek to enhance the public perception of Latin American authors. Most of the actors have had little or no prior theatre experience and their acting abilities spring solely from their love for the dramas they have read.

I spoke with a few members of the production, and their devotion to Latin American theatre was more than readily apparent. It seems that it would have to be — these are, after all, students who loved their course work so much that they decided to take it to a wholly more realistic level. When was the last time you had so much fun with the reading in a class that you decided to put on a show?

Teatro Taller has previously held many successful performances, but it has unfortunately been poorly publicized. Nevertheless, the group looks forward to performing two stellar performances this Saturday. Maybe this time there will be bigger crowds to witness their dedication to Spanish literature.

While the shows are conducted in Spanish, fluency is probably not required. I suppose that the experience will be a bit like opera, or like watching a film with Marlon Brando — while you may not catch all the words, you get the general feeling, and usually a feeling is all you need.

THEATER

Innocents Aboard

BY CAISSA WILLMER

PHOTO/NICOLA KOUNTOUPES

MODERN PROBLEMS: THE INNOCENTS IN AN UPDATED VERSION OF A CLASSIC ARE UNDONE BY THE MACHINATIONS OF A FOOLISH PRIEST.

ROMEO AND JULIET, BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. DIRECTED BY RON WILSON, AT THE CORNELL CENTER FOR THEATRE ARTS THROUGH MAY 2.
LA VIDA ES SUENO (LIFE IS A DREAM), BY PEDRO CALDERÓN DE LA BARCA, DIRECTED BY JACKY BIBLIOWICZ AND CALIE SANTANA FOR TEATROTALLER, AT MARTHA VAN RENSSELAER AUDITORIUM ON SATURDAY, APRIL 25.

CORNELL was host last week to two great classics of the dramatic literature: Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* on the proscenium stage of the Calderón's *La Vida Es Sueno* on the stage of Martha Van Rensselaer Auditorium. The latter is to Spanish culture what *Hamlet* is to English culture, and its monumental soliloquies hold many passages that echo in the daily lives of Spanish-descended peoples. I must admit to an abysmal ignorance of Calderón, and to the profoundest gratitude to Cornell's Teatrotaller (Theater Workshop) for providing me with an opportunity to glimpse this master and his work. The directors of the production had modernized the piece, however, but they were, as they have been in and courtesy, and went to pains to secure an English translation of the original text for me to borrow.

A contemporary approach to *Romeo and Juliet* had been chosen by director Ron Wilson as well, who has set his production in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, in the Spring of 1922. The timeliness of that setting is clear, given our focus on the peace process going forward there at this very moment. But, apart from a few brief episodes, the unconventional time and place had only a very marginal impact on the play.

One illuminating episode came early in the play and made painfully vivid the macho brawling nature of the young male Montagues and Capulets, with their boasts consisting of a mixture of how each would beat up the males of the other side and violate the women. As Sampson, a swaggering young Capulet, maintains, "I will push Montague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids to the wall," and he proceeds to play out a number of variations on that theme. The sexual rapacity of the Montague-Capulet feud had never come across so horrifyingly to me before.

Designer E. D. Intemann has used the transplantation to create a dreary 20th-century industrial city built of dour, gray stone, and marked by piles of rubble and exposed brick and concrete bared, presumably, by some terrorist explosive device. Sound designer Chuck Hatcher weaves his characteristically telling effects with droning pipes and keening fiddles. Judith K. Johnson's costumes carry through the grayness — the swaggering young men wearing sporting plebeian caps. The more well-to-do, especially the men, are garbed in gray or black business suits and brimmed hats. Unfortunately, Capulet sports the black bowler typical of a minor clerk and not at all evocative of the well-off social pillar that he represents.

The underlying menace of simmering wrath and hatred is ominous and pervasive; Kevin Connell's Tybalt and Daryll Heysham's Mercutio are bundles of rabid testosterone thirsting for violence. In contrast, Matthew Joslyn is a sweet Benvolio, striving desperately to avert the inevitable clash. And amidst all the bluster and the crude boasting, Justin Yorio's lovesick Romeo struggles vainly to remain aloof from his family's quarrel. Jacquelyn Simone's Juliet is a charmingly gawky fourteen-year-old, starry-eyed and ripe for love. Two innocents, truly, and abetted by a third — Christopher Sorenson's Father Laurence is a good-hearted menace, bumbling and well-intentioned, yet oh-so-misguided. The lovers in this production appear undone, not so much by their crossed stars as by the ill-timed machinations of this foolish priest.

The thews and sinews of this production, however, are provided by Maggie McClellan's Nurse. Without her performance the effort would have been disjoint and scattered. She is robust and knowing, lusty and vibrant. A thoroughly rational and luxuriously bawdy manifestation of the conventional comic servant, without which chaos would reign.

tended to knit the parts of *La Vida Es Sueno*. But, alas, I cannot tell you the name of the actor; no cast/actor list was provided in the program. Co-directors Jacky Bibliowicz and Calie Santana had transported the action from Calderón's mythical monarchy of 17th-century Poland to the boardrooms of a highly industrialized 20th-century Poland. Basilio, the aging president of "Industrias Polonia," is anguishing about his successor. Since infancy, his only son, Segismundo, has been imprisoned in a research complex of the company, ignorant of his heritage, because the auguries at his birth warned that he would be a ruthless and bloody tyrant if allowed to preside.

I am not at all sure that board rooms and research complexes adequately replaced the palaces and a remote mountain caves. But the initially arrogant Segismundo came to realize his responsibilities to his workers, and reason and respect were restored. A meditation on dream and reality, on substance and shadow, *La Vida Es Sueno* speaks to the ages.

The actors of Teatrotaller spoke the lines with immense authority. Calderón's soliloquies are monumental, and as far as I could tell, they had been conned with accuracy. This was a tremendous undertaking, especially for just one performance, but the actors will carry the weight and wonder of their revered writer's words throughout their lives, which makes it more than worth

Cornell Chronicle April 20, 2000 9

Teatrotaller production triumphs in Belgium, heads to Mexico in July

By Linda Myers

Teatrotaller, which means theater workshop in Spanish, offers the members of Cornell's and Ithaca's sizeable Spanish-speaking communities, an estimated 2,500 on and off campus, a chance to see and take part in high quality Hispanic theater.

Founded in 1993, Teatrotaller has since performed 17 full-scale, professional quality productions and has 45 active members, nearly all of them students or recent graduates of Cornell. The plays, usually three a year, in November, April-May and July-August, are by Spanish, Latin-American and U.S. Latino and Latina playwrights. Some students who participate in Teatrotaller's Spanish-speaking productions get course credit for their involvement.

Last fall, the group was invited by Argentine playwright Nora Glickman to produce "Una tal Raquel" ("Someone Named Rachel") and give her new play its world premiere on Cornell's campus. The play is based on a true story about Raquel Liberman, a Jewish woman who immigrated to Argentina from Poland in the early part of the 20th century in search of a better life. She soon found herself at the mercy of a group of unscrupulous Jewish Argentinian gangsters, who preyed on immigrant women of that era and place. Widowed, penniless, with small children to support and without resources, she was lured into a sham marriage and forced by her "husband" and his gang into a life of prostitution but eventually found a way to turn her captors over to the police and obtain her freedom. Her story became something of a legend in Argentina, attracting Glickman, a prolific award-winning playwright and scholar who teaches Latin American and U.S. Latino drama at Queens College, to research and write a book and then the play.

Teatrotaller first presented Glickman's play in the

Jocelyne Slepyan

Teatrotaller members ham it up on campus, from left, top row: Yasmine Legendre, Guillermo Izabal, Rodrigo Lema, Oscar Gendrop, Leo Sánchez; bottom row: Tania Cornejo, Jacqueline Burke, Alex Santiago, Jacobo Bibliowicz, Eldar Noe, Rocio de Félix, Amy Liu and Benita González.

Statler Auditorium last November, then took it to Barnard College Feb. 26 of this year. Following that, the troupe accepted a special invitation to present the play at the Rencontre International de Theatre Universitaire (RITU) in Liège, Belgium, Feb. 28-March 5 and will take it to Mexico this summer.

"Representing a real person was an amazing challenge," said Maria Burgos-Ojeda, a Cornell master's degree candidate in communication from Puerto Rico who played Raquel in the Teatrotaller production. "What I wanted to get across was not a defeated person but someone you can sympathize with. How did she cope, how did she make this her daily life and keep believing that eventually she would get out?"

A challenge for all the actors was performing a play in Spanish that involved characters whose native language was Yiddish. "We had the characters who are immigrants speak Spanish with a Yiddish accent and incorporated Yiddish music by Cayuga Klezmer into the production," said director Jacobo Bibliowicz, a 1998 graduate of Cornell in applied and engineering physics from Colombia who has been active in Teatrotaller almost since its inception. Another challenge, a play within the play, was resolved by having the players in that sequence wear stark white masks, said Bibliowicz. The group also consulted with movement expert Kriszta Bodoni, who helped choreograph the actors' movements during the shifts from scene to scene. The Ithaca Tangueros also contributed music and dance. In the final production the actors move about the stage with the drama and intensity of a slow, somber Argentinian tango.

The weeklong festival in Belgium, where Teatrotaller performed this March, showcases dramatic university theater from around the world. Like the performers, the audience is international. Several plays in different languages are performed daily and discussed in workshops and symposiums. This year's festival repertoire included works by Chekhov and Racine as well as contemporary playwrights in German, Bulgarian, Arabic, Dutch, English and French, in addition to Spanish. Playwright Glickman, who accompanied Teatrotaller to Belgium, gave workshops at the festival on U.S. Latino theater.

'These are all accomplished students with demanding schedules and extracurricular activities in addition to their work with Teatrotaller.'

– Debra Castillo, professor of Spanish literature and adviser to Teatrotaller

"There was some fantastic theater, and they treated us royally," said Bibliowicz, who was surprised and pleased to discover a sizable Spanish-speaking audience in attendance. The troupe's photograph appeared in several Belgian newspapers alongside articles praising the festival.

Debra Castillo, Cornell professor of Spanish literature and a Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellow who has been the adviser to Teatrotaller since 1995, also traveled to Belgium with the Cornell theater troupe. She said it was particularly important to present Glickman's new play to international audiences so as to make them aware of the richness of the U.S. theater scene, "which is not limited to works in English." Glickman's work "crosses numerous boundaries," said Castillo, and "her choice of materials derives from her various cultural affinities: U.S. Latina, Jewish, Argentine."

The play's focus on border crossings and women in poverty at the fringes of Latin American society who are coerced into prostitution is also of interest to Castillo, whose research on Tijuana prostitutes touches on those topics too and was one of the reasons Glickman initially asked Castillo to help produce her play at Cornell.

Castillo praises Teatrotaller's members for taking on such a demanding production and taking it overseas in midsemester. "These are all accomplished students with demanding schedules and extracurricular activities in addition to their work with Teatrotaller," she said. The volunteers handle publicity, stage sets, costumes, lighting and sound as well as acting, producing and directing.

One reason for Burgos-Ojeda's commitment to the theater troupe, despite a demanding schedule, is the nature of Teatrotaller itself. "Theater is collective, communal," she said, and "I love the sense of community that Teatrotaller affords."

This July 3-7 Teatrotaller will perform "Una tal Raquel" at Jornadas Internacionales de Teatro Latinoamericano in Puebla, Mexico, and Jornadas Metropolitanas de Estudios Culturales in Mexico City. Both events are well known in Mexican and Latin American theater circles. In addition to performances, they feature wide-ranging discussions about theater and culture among authors, actors, directors and researchers.

Performers in "Una tal Raquel" include: Jacobo Bibliowicz, Jacqueline Burke, Sara Troyani, Rocío de Félix Davila, Maria Burgos-Ojeda, Guillermo Izabal, Jimmy Lou Nieves, Eldar Noe and Alexander Santiago Jirau. Amy Liu is the sound technician, and Nohemy Solórzano is the lighting technician.

The theater troupe and its members have been recognized for outstanding community service by such groups as the Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County and cited by Cornell President Emeritus Frank H.T. Rhodes for their contributions to campus cultural life. Funding for the trips have come from the Department of Romance Studies, the offices of the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the dean of undergraduate research, the dean of students, as well as the office of Vice Provost Mary Sansalone.

Funding for Teatrotaller, in general, comes from the campus community and, like most arts funding, can be "precarious" at times, said Castillo. Contributions and volunteer efforts are welcome. Contact Saul Mercado, Amigos de Teatro Taller, <sm115@cornell.edu>.

Teatrotaller's next production on campus is "Noche de los Asesinos," by Cuban playwright José Triana, May 5-6 at 8 p.m. in the Statler Auditorium and is open to the public. The suggested contribution is $5. For tickets contact the Latin American Studies Program, 190 Uris Hall, or the Department of Romance Studies, 283 Goldwin Smith Hall.

GAZETTE DE LIEGE

THÉÂTRE

RENCONTRES Du 28 février au 5 mars, Liège accueille le festival international de théâtre universitaire. Scène grande ouverte

Trois coups aux idées reçues

PHOTO BRUNO DEVOGHEL

Au programme, la troupe de la Cornell University de New York qui interprétera en espagnol "Una tal Raquel" de Nora Glickman.

Qui dit théâtre, dit bien souvent encore barrière culturelle. Si on lui accole "universitaire", cela devient une course d'obstacles. Mais vous n'êtes pas de ceux qui versent dans les clichés : le théâtre universitaire s'adresse à tout le monde. Pourvu d'être un peu curieux !

Message pour tous : du 28 février au 5 mars, Liège accueille la 17e Rencontre internationale du théâtre universitaire dite RITU. Et si 150 participants des cinq continents font le déplacement – découvrant parfois la Belgique, voire l'Europe, à travers notre ville –, c'est que cela vaut la peine d'être de la partie.

Pendant cette semaine, une bonne quinzaine de spectacles, quatre lieux de représentation (la salle du quai Roosevelt, celle du Sart Tilman, le foyer culturel des Chiroux et le centre culturel de Seraing), un budget serré de 2 millions : le RITU est aussi un événement à retombées économiques pour la ville qui héberge les participants.

EXPÉRIENCE LINGUISTIQUE

Théâtre amateur ? "*Dans certains pays, le théâtre universitaire est le seul valable*, note le Pr Robert Germay qui dirige le Théâtre universitaire liégeois (TULg). *Ces troupes, notamment les africaines, font partie intégrante de la vie culturelle de leur pays. Ici la concurrence est plus forte et l'on essuie aussi un peu le mépris des professionnels*".

Parmi les bonnes raisons de participer au RITU 17, notons-en une au hasard : c'est l'occasion quasi unique d'assister à Liège à des représentations (en français), en anglais et en espagnol. "*En la matière, il n'existe pas de barrière linguistique*, dément M. Germay. *Sans comprendre, on peut se laisser bercer par la musique de la langue. En outre, certaines personnes seront ravies d'assister à un spectacle dans une autre langue. Qu'il s'agisse d'étudiants ou d'étrangers résidants à Liège*".

Faire le déplacement suffit bien souvent à convaincre et, qui sait, à poursuivre la découverte d'auteurs méconnus ou de pièces oubliées, toute l'année avec la troupe universitaire liégeoise.

Em.B.

Infos et réservations à Infor-spectacles (tel. : 04-222.11.11) ou au TULg (tel. : 04-366.53.78). PAF : 300 FB par représentation (étudiants et séniors 150 FB)

TIMES

THEATER

Class Acts

BY CAISSA WILLMER

Suplicio del Placer (The Torment of Pleasure) by Sabina Berman. Directed by Uriyoán Colón, designed by José Manuel Garrido and Carolina Moscoso, for Teatrotaller, at Risley College Theatre, November 14-15.

Anyone bold enough to brave the snowy streets up to North Campus last weekend was given a rare treat — the production of *Suplicio del Placer* by contemporary Mexican playwright Sabina Berman, produced by the Hispanic student troupe Teatrotaller (Theatre Workshop). Active for five years, the group came to my attention last spring when fans filled the Statler Auditorium to enjoy the all-out color and roustabout action of a piece in the *commedia del arte* tradition.

In vivid contrast, last weekend's offering was a brittle and biting satire aimed at Mexico's affluent classes. The atmosphere of moneyed chic was immediately apparent in the black-and-white setting. The production was marked by taste and restraint, great flair and, of course, humor. Director Uriyoán Colón is talented and skillful; she moved her actors with deliberate and telling grace. "Telling" because the production was in Spanish, and my Spanish is minimal at best; although I caught only a word here and a phrase there, my attention was held by vivid characterizations and a fine, descriptive flow of movement.

Typical of the denizens of Risley College Theatre, every effort was made to make me feel comfortable, *and* a hand-written English translation of the script was leant me! I had been prepared to spend long hours with the original and my *University of Chicago Spanish Dictionary*, but I was saved that pleasurable torment.

Berman's piece — a set of three one-act variations — examines the narcissistic pursuit of sexual pleasure by the rich and idle. The couples in each play are designated merely "Ella" (she) and "El" (he).

In the first play, I saw a stunning woman, dressed in black and white, sitting at a breakfast table, coolly reading the morning paper. A man, with a rather large mustache, but otherwise as elegant as she, enters. He speaks at length, attempting but rarely succeeding in penetrating her abstraction. At one point, he peels the mustache off and slips it in his pocket. He is begging forgiveness; she curtly rebuffs him. At the end, they come together to dance, and he pastes the mustache on her face. An elegant absurdity prevails, and Awymarie Riollano was a magnet to one's attention, with hardly a movement away from that table or from behind the paper. And Colbert Valdez's desperation — to be forgiven? to claim some attention? — was expressively performed.

In the second play, the scene has changed to a luxurious boudoir, with the changes made swiftly by the standard black-clad crew. At a dressing table, in her dressing gown, Whendhy Saines as Ella is voluptuously stroking her face and putting on make-up. This actress can portray layers and layers of sensuality with the sweep of a make-up brush along her cheek and down her neck. Enter Rodrigo Bellott as El, impeccably dressed for the evening and impatient to go. He rants; she murmurs abstracted sweet syllables, refusing to be distracted from her great work. Finally, she is ready to go, magnificently clad in a clinging red dress, her hair elaborately coifed, and he attacks her, destroying her hairdo, stripping off her dress, and assaulting her on the couch as the lights go down.

In the third play, Sylvia Pabon's Ella is distraught and unhappy, while Luis Alberto Maravi's El tries soothing her between bouts of impatience; at one point he brings in a paper parcel and extracts a small pistol. She cringes. There is much going back and forth into kitchen and bedroom. He hides the gun behind books on a bookcase. She creeps into the living room during the night, finds the gun, hears an intruder, shoots repeatedly toward the window where she saw a face, and he staggers in from outside, wounded. This turns out to be a figment of her dreams, however, and everything ends on an uneasy note.

Teatrotaller, Risley Theatre's Hispanic troupe, aims a brittle and biting satire at Mexico's affluent classes.

Of the three plays, this was the least satisfying to me — both as acted and then as read. I was clearly missing something. It has to do with marital boredom and urban violence, and maybe Ella's desire to kill her husband, and yet... ?

The second play presents a highly successful businessman and his mistress, for whom he evinces only contempt, while she remains totally and maddeningly indifferent to his loathing. His obsession is the expensive Cartier watch he has given her and when he takes her on the couch, he warns her not to let it become damaged. His last words, however, are addressed to his "saintly wife," *and* I had a sneaking suspicion that this was not his mistress at all, but a game that he and his wife were playing to sharpen their sensual appetites.

The first play of the trio was the most intriguing and challenging. Ella is described as being irresistibly attractive with a touch of the masculine. In opposition, El is equally seductive, with an element of effeminacy. The mustache is hers. She wears it in public to discourage unwanted advances. He wears it occasionally to give him the confidence to approach the women he craves. But she picks out the women for him to proposition, then dwells the next day on his details of the encounters.

Berman's satire is biting. I wish I could understand the nuances of her actual dialogue. Nevertheless, Teatrotaller is a group to watch. They have a fine sense of theater and an impeccable focus on the craft of play production. ■

Play Addresses U.S. Immigration Issues

By MARIEL BRONEN
Sun Staff Writer

Spanish speakers and students congregated in Ithaca's Kitchen Theatre for a performance of *Fronteras/Borders*, a short play which focused on immigration and relations between the U.S. and Latin America. The play was put on by members of TeatroTallar, a Spanish theater workshop.

Written by TeatroTallar advisor Elvira Sanchez-Blake, romance studies, the story is a synthesis of ideas from members of TeatroTallar, a play written by Guillermo Verdecchia and a previous work by Sanchez-Blake. Sanchez-Blake worked with these three sources to create a piece which shines light on modern social conflict.

"I want the audience to think about the debate over borders and its origin," said Sanchez-Blake.

The cast included students as well as actors from the Ithaca community. Each cast member took on multiple role; most played more than one person from different sides of the border.

The diverse array of characters includes two border officials, Christopher Columbus and a spunky Spanish-speaker named Wideload, who finds it hard to place himself into a clear social group.

"One of the main elements of the play is to sort of make fun of, and break down barriers," said Ahley Puig Herz grad, who played Wideload. "My character was sort of the stereotype held by a lot of non-Latino/Hispanics etc. — however you want to label people — even if people wouldn't admit to it."

"It's a playful play," agreed cast member Malia Spofford grad.

Fronteras/Borders comically points out that pilgrims did not need visas or green cards to come to the US, and that you rarely see Mexicans enjoying a meal at Taco Bell. The work also draws from theater of the absurd. In the final scene, a confused Christopher Columbus is mistaken for a drug dealer and terrorist, and is taken to Guantanamo upon arrival to the New World.

This performance was sponsored by the Latino Civic Association as part of its celebration of Latino Heritage Month, held Sept. 15 through Oct. 15.

"The play is a story of immigrants, about all of the challenges they face here in the US," said Leonardo Vargas-Méndez, executive director of the Cornell University Public Service Center and president of the Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County.

"It is a way for us to bring the issue to a different level for people to understand the real life for people living in very unstable and unsafe conditions," he said.

The subject is relevant in light of recent debate over U.S. immigration law. The House of Representatives recently approved plans for a 700-mile fence along the US-Mexico border to help curb illegal immigration.

"This wall is going to be built on the blood of people whose only crime is to seek jobs," Vargas-Méndez said to the audience, provoking scattered applause.

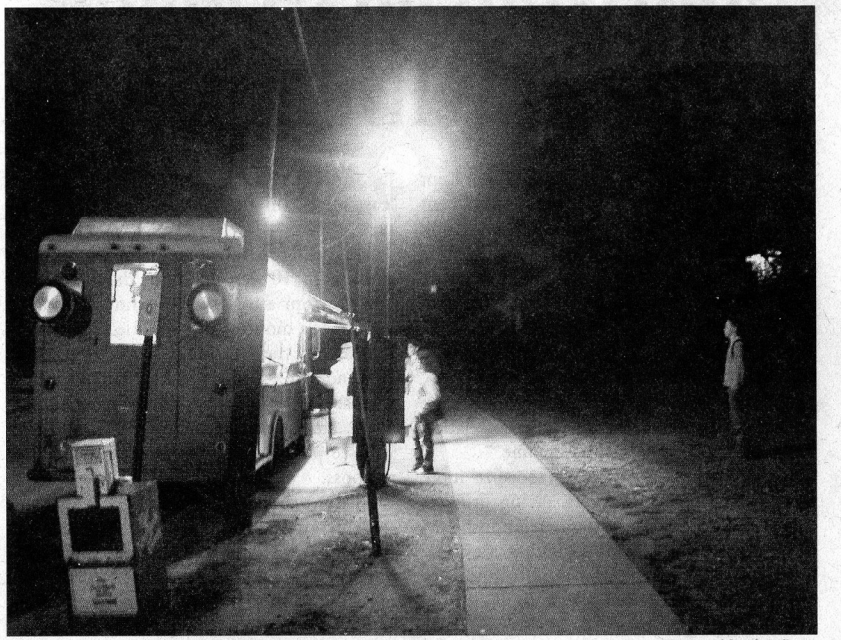
Spofford added, "The idea is to conflate the kind of words that get tossed around by politicians, that isn't anything clear. The perspectives on each side of the border are completely different and if that is not taken into account than you can't really pass a just law."

The Latino Civic Center will be holding several more cultural events this month, including a music and dance party to honor Latino professionals in Tompkins County, an evening of art, a poetry reading and a Latin-funk concert.

TeatroTallar has several more performances scheduled for this year.

The next play the group will present is *The Dog Lady*, at the Schwartz Performing Arts Center Sept. 29, 30 and Oct. 1.

Case of the munchies



Robert Ochshorn / Sun Contributor

Hungry students wait for toasted subs and sandwiches Sunday night outside Louie's Lunch Truck, located across from Risley Hall on North Campus.

Daze reviews Hispanic theatre troupe's performance

By RACHEL MATTES
Sun Contributor

On Wednesday and Thursday evening of this week, Teatrotaller performed *Watsonville: Some Place Not Here*, a play by Cherríe Moraga. The play was directed by Jimmy Noriega, a native of the Mexico-Arizona border and a first-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Theatre, Film and Dance.

Teatrotaller, Spanish for "theatre workshop," was founded in 1993 by a group of Cornell students interested in preserving and promoting Spanish, Latin American and Latino cultures through theatre. Since its inception, Teatrotaller has performed classical, contemporary and experimental plays in Spanish and "Spanglish" in cities throughout the United States and abroad. All students enrolled in Spanish Literature 301 (Teatrotaller) are involved in Teatrotaller performances; however, one need not be a member of either the class or the Cornell community to be in a Teatrotaller production.

In the words of Noriega, *Watsonville* "challenges inequality and prejudice, and speaks to the power of determination, faith, love and community." The imaginative play is based on three actual events which took place in the late eighties and early nineties in central California: the cannery strikes from 1985 to 1987, the earthquake of 1989 and the appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe on an oak tree in Pinto Lake County Park in 1992. The successful performance of Watsonville revealed a tremendous amount of hard work on the part of all those involved.

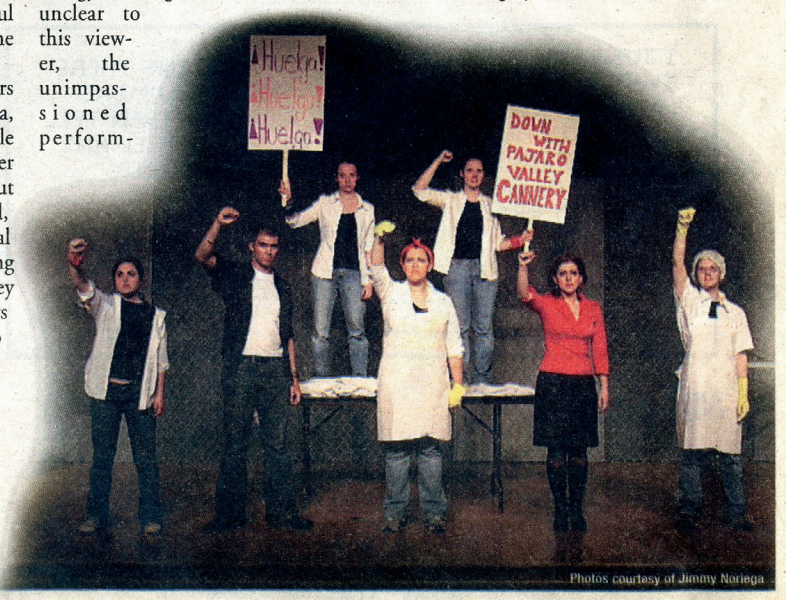
The central interest of the play is the fictitious strike of the workers at the Pajaro Valley Cannery. The mostly immigrant workers of the cannery strike with the hope of gaining greater benefits and rights. Throughout the play, the characters of a few of the Mexican-American strikers are introduced to the audience. Hardships faced by the strikers are addressed; these hardships include demanding marital-relations, financial difficulties, homophobia, etc. Of interest is the role that religion plays in the lives of the strikers. One of the main characters, Dolores Valle, played by Nathalie Nicod, is extremely religious. In the final scene of the play, Dolores inspires her fellow workers with religion in a successful attempt to further their support of the strike.

The tremendous devotion the strikers have to their cause is remarkable. Lucha, played by Sofia Sotiropoulou, a single mother whose family depends on her meager salary states: "I don't think about losing; I think about winning." Indeed, throughout the play, the characters reveal extraordinary determination to winning their battle against the Pajaro Valley Cannery. The strength of the characters in *Watsonville* serves as motivation to always hold fast to those ideas most highly valued.

Watsonville was performed by a diverse group of actors. Perhaps the strongest performances were given by Giselle Muñoz and Calvin Selth. Muñoz convincingly portrays Sonora, a lesbian physician's assistant at a community clinic and active supporter of the strike. Selth gives a strong performance of Chente, the shop steward at the cannery who fights passionately for the rights of the workers. Also of note was the acting of Andrés Orta Castro and Jimmy Suarez. Orta Castro played a committed ex-priest who becomes involved with the strike as a committed advisor and mentor. Suarez played Jojo, the fifteen-year-old son of Lucha. Both Lucha and Jojo encourage compassion among members of the audience by convincingly portraying a mother and son with serious financial and social problems. Stephanie Cajina plays the role of Amparo, a cannery worker and community organizer instilled with tremendous energy. Though unclear to this viewer, the unimpassioned performance of Nathalie Nicod may possibly be appropriate to her character.

The great fault of Teatrotaller's production of *Watsonville* was its length. The inclusion of too many sub-plots and dispensable scenes lengthened the play to an unnecessary three-hour performance.

The work of Teatrotaller both as a class and as a group of individuals dedicated to a common concern should be celebrated. *Watsonville* exposed a close and committed group with a love for both acting and Spanish, Latin American and Latino cultures. Taking away its excessive length, *Watsonville* was a well-executed performance, both entertaining and highly informative.



Photos courtesy of Jimmy Noriega

DIRECTORES

Isabel Ramos

Isabel Ramos is the founder of Teatrotaller and Founder, Artistic Director, and Executive Producer of Teatro Agora. She has an MFA in directing from Harvard's American RepertoryTheater/Moscow Art Institute. She has directed plays in Russia, Italy, and Spain, as well as New York and Puerto Rico. In New York City she directed Yukio Mishima's *Hanjo* for the 2002 American Living Room Series at HERE (Selected as Best of the Series) and Lope de Vega's *The Dog in the Manger* for Spanish Repertory Theatre (playing indefinitely as part of their repertory). Later, Isabel joined hands with fellow Cornell and Teatrotaller alum Resident Designer Awymarie Riollano to fulfill their dream of producing innovative work through Teatro Agora. She now works as an independent artist in Puerto Rico.

Cuentos sin ton ni son 2/10/94
Quíntuples 4/29/94
Botánica 10/18/94
Rosa de dos aromas 2/23-25/95
Violines y trompetas 11/17/95
Cuéntame un cuento 8/95
La barca sin pescador 4/13/96
Color de agosto 6/28-29/96
Hoy se comen al flaco 4/03

Tres sombreros de copa 11/16/96
Farsa de amor compradito 5/3/97
Suplicio de placer 11/14-15/97

After finishing her ScD in Nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health, Uri worked in the National Institutes of Health and United Nations University before joining the faculty at George Washington University. She is most interested in prevention research examining dietary behaviors and disease, and also in nutrition and culture. Her international experience includes working in the Instituto Nacional de Salud Publica (INSP) de Mexico and INCIENSA in Costa Rica. She researches aspects of nutrition and disease specifically in Puerto Rico.

Uriyoán Colón

Diatriba de amor contra un hombre sentado 7/04
Nosferatu 8/05
El despojamiento 9/10

Debra is Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellow and Emerson Hinchliff Professor. She has taught at Cornell, in the Departments of Romance Studies and Comparative Literature, since 1985, and teaches and researches on Latino/a and Latin American literature and culture.

Rocío is senior Director, Content Design and Outreach at Sesame Workshop, a not-for-profit educational organization that creates innovative and engaging content to help all children reach their highest potential. For more than 40 years, the Workshop has been a global pioneer in educating and entertaining children through multiple media, including its beloved TV program, Sesame Street.

La eterna Eva y el insoportable Adán 11/14/98

Colbert Alembert (Valdez)

Colbert has continued to work in the performing arts, both as an educator and an actor, in theater and film. His most recent films are the short "The luckiest man alive" and the feature film, "Celebrity Sex Tape." Check him out on imdb!

Cepillo de dientes 11/14/98
Coser y cantar 7/18/98
Las mocedades del Cid 4/30 & 5/2/99

La vida es sueño 4/25/98

Calie finished her medical degree at Harvard and an additional degree in public health from Yale. She works as a hospital administrator in the Bronx, New York.

Calie Santana

Diatriba de amor contra un hombre sentado 7/04
Nosferatu 8/05
El despojamiento 9/10

Jacobo ("Jacky") obtained his B.S. in Applied and Engineering Physics from Cornell University. After a four-year tour in industry at Autodesk, Inc., he returned to Cornell to obtain a M.S. degree in Architectural Science from the Program of Computer Graphics. He then continued to study for a PhD in the Dept. of Computer Science at the University of Toronto under the supervision of Prof. Karan Singh.

Jacobo Bibliowicz

Sabrina Cooley

Sabrina was a biology student at Cornell, working in neurobiology and microsurgery. She also trained as an EMT. Her particular commitment with Teatrotaller was to outreach activities for children in the public school system.

Día de las madres 5/00
Navidad de "Esperanza" 12/99

Noche de los asesinos 4/00

Alexander Santiago-Jirau is an educator, advocate and theatre artist committed to the use of theatre for youth and community development. He has been a Theatre of the Oppressed practitioner for ten years, studying and working with Augusto Boal and facilitating multiple workshops with queer youth, youth in foster care, and diverse immigrant communities. He has been a member of the Board of Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed, Inc. since 2007. After receiving a degree in Urban and Regional Studies from Cornell University, Alex has worked in neighborhood planning, environmental justice, teacher recruitment and arts education. Currently, he is the Associate Director of the Career Development Program at The Center for Arts Education, where he counsels youth pursuing arts careers and leads professional development workshops for New York City public school educators. Alex has an MA in Educational Theatre from New York University, focusing on Theatre of the Oppressed, applied theatre and drama in education.

Fuschia 8/5-6/00

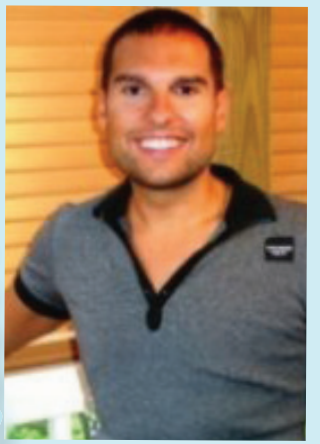
María completed her graduate degree in communications while participating in many Teatrotaller productions, as well as acting both in short films and the 2002 feature film set in Ithaca, "Green Lights."

Te juro Juana que tengo ganas 11/00

Saúl received his PhD in Anthropology from Berkeley and taught at Vassar before joining the State Department.

Saúl Mercado

Guillermo Izabal III



Brian Armstrong

• Guillermo is a senior associate at Pricewaterhouse Cooper in New York City.

• Brian completed an MBS at the University of Maryland, and is a sales development manager and assistant vice president at Wells Fargo.

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Johnny Tenorio 4/01

Kitchen Theater collaboration:

Cuentos infantiles for everyone
11/3-17/01

Delantal blanco 8/4-5/01

Melissa lives in San Juan, Puerto Rico where she is finishing her PhD in Chemistry at UMBC.

Casa matriz 8/09

Loredana finished her PhD in Spanish and is now a professor at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Her research specialization is theater and performance from Spain.

Rocío is a law student at the University of Puerto Rico.

Los cocorocos 4/02

Carolina Osorio Gil

After finishing her undergraduate degree in psychology, Carolina went to Columbia University for a Masters in early childhood education, before returning to Ithaca, where she teaches Spanish at the Waldorf School and remains very active in the local arts community (as well as with Teatrotaller) as an actor and director. She is also a leader in other community organizations, including in the Latino Civic Association, and she directs the arts program CULTURA!

Los cocorocos 4/02
Fron/teras 8/06
El lobo de Belém 12/06
Locas de amar 4/27-28/07
Crossing the Line 11/17/07
Yo tengo un tío en América 4/4-5/08
Dailán Kifki and 4 de Maslíah 8/10
Tropicana Dreams 5/12
En esta esquina 8/08
Kan Balaam 4/09
El Rey Frack 8/13

En esta esquina 8/08
Kan Balaam 4/09

•Krystina is studying in the Graduate School of Communications at the University of Miami.

• Luna has a PhD in Spanish from Cornell, and has taught at various universities in the United States and Europe. Her speciality is Golden Age/ colonial literature. She is currently working at Radboud Universiteit in Nijmegen, Netherlands.

Krystina Jackson

Luna Nájera

Casa de Bernarda Alba 11/16-17/01
A Night with Martha Divine 8/02
Lomo a lo pobre 8/4-5/01
María González 9/04

Tony finished his MBA at Anaheim University and now works in operations at the Interamerican Development Bank in Washington DC.

Katia studied anthropology at the New School, and is now a graduate student at Fordham University.

Casa de Bernarda Alba 11/16-17/01
A Night with Martha Divine 8/02
Entre Villa y una mujer desnuda 4/23-24/04

Ana Patricia Cajina (Vasudeo)

Ana Patricia did both her undergraduate and graduate degrees in the City and Regional Planning program. She is Senior Environmental Planning Consultant at The Green Science Academy in the San Francisco Bay area.

Día de campo 11/20-21/03
Funeral Home 11/02

Día de campo 11/20-21/03

After graduating from Cornell, Yubelky continued her studies in psychology at Columbia University. She now works at City College of New York. She is a popular slam poet, and among her arts-related activities, we highlight her work for Fluid Motion Theater and Film, which produced her spoken word play, "Pious Poetic Pie," adapted from "Medea" (Directed by Denyse Owens). "Pious Poetic Pie" uses the explosive nature of slam poetry to adapt Medea's timeless journey of love, loss, and revenge to the multicultural community of a rapidly gentrifying Brooklyn, recasting Medea as Melinda, a Dominican immigrant who finds power in words.

Yubelky Rodríguez

Derechos de los inmigrantes 5/04

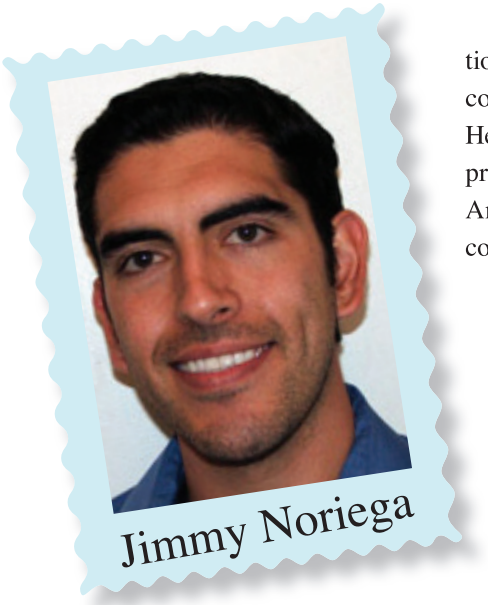
Maryam did this short film for a class project, as a collaboration with the Cornell Farmworkers Program and Teatrotaller. She is now a child and family therapist at the Children's Aid Society in Michigan.

Maryam Sajed

Manuel Fihman

Manuel continued his studies in the creative writing program in Spanish NYU. He is a poet, actor, and translator. Imdb lists his credits in various short films, and you can find some of his creative work (as well as that of other Spanish-language poets from New York City) in his book El tejedor en Nueva York, which is also the subject of a Youtube interview. Manuel blogs at http://tejedordepalabrasen.blogspot.com/2011/07/manuel-fihman.html

Ana en el trópico 11/04

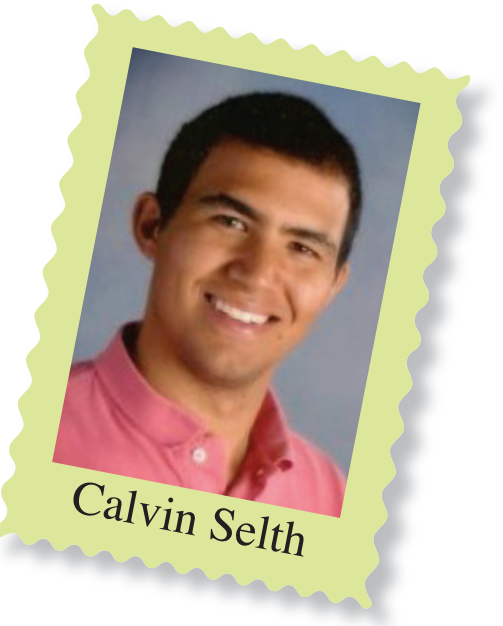


After completing his PhD in Theater, Jimmy accepted a position as professor of Theater in Wooster College. He continues to collaborate with Teatrotaller, albeit at a slightly longer distance. He has traveled extensively and worked with theater schools and professional groups throughout Latin America, especially in the Andean region. Among his recent projects is his summer program collaborating with theater groups in Peru.

Despúes de la lluvia 11/05
Watsonville: Some Place Not Here 4/06
Dog Lady 10/06
La mujer que cayó del cielo 11/08
Nora Glickman short plays 11/08
Beautiful Señoritas 3/09
Desiertos 11/09
References to Salvador Dalí make me hot 11/10
Las mujeres de Ciudad Juárez 3/11

La muerte y la doncella 4/1-2/05
Estudio en blanco y negro 11/17-18/06

After a stint in the classroom with Teach for America, Calvin has settled down as the Manager of Individual Giving for Teach for America.



California's Most Wanted 4/10

After graduating from Cornell, Phoenix went to Oxford University for a one-year Master's program in Migration Studies and the University of Aberdeen for their one-year Master's program in Ethnology and Folklore. She now lives in Israel where she is pursuing her dream of going to Circus School.

Phoenix Paz

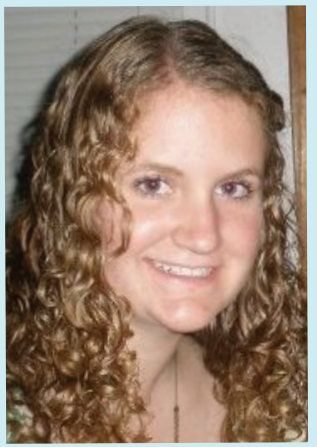
Casey Minella

Casey is a senior in Cornell, with an interest in film as well as theater. She is the current president of Teatrotaller, and has recently lead the group on their trip to the World Theater Institute and Festival in Romania, where Teatrotaller presented the rave play, "Adult Roy's Badland" by alum Jorge Silva, which she directed. She collaborated with Melanie Dreyer-Lude on the Spring 2013 production of "Mother of Exiles," for which Teatrotaller has an October 2013 invitation to Shanghai. She is now filming video segments and directing the Oct. 2013 production, *Somos Fuertes*.

FaceBOOKED 4/11
"14" 10/11
Adult Roy's Badland 3/12
Dos amores y bicho 11/12
Somos Fuertes 10/13

Chrissa McFarlane

Pedro Pedroza



Jen Weidman

Noemie Zysermann

FaceBOOKED 4/11

• Chrissa McFarlane currently a Graduate Consultant at Legacy Consultant Pharmacy and a candidate for the Master of Arts in Business Management at Wake Forest University Schools of Business with an expected graduation date of May 2013.

• Pedro Pedroza is a DREAMER whose story has been covered extensively in the national press. He is a community activist brought to the U.S. by his parents at the age of four. Immigration officials had been taking steps to deport him since 2008, but he now has his legal papers and works as an administrative coordinator at Enlace Chicago.

• Jen studies environmental engineering, and has been working in Rift Valley, Kenya as an intern at the office of the chief scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund.

• Noemie is using her degree in economics as a member of the Financial Management Program at GE Healthcare in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Dos amores y bicho 11/12

A current graduate student in Romance Studies, Lacie is working on her PhD in performance theory and practice. Her particular research interests include issues relating to non-human animals.

Ross is a graphics designer for the Department of Performance and Media Arts, and the founder and director of the independent theater group, Theatre Incognita.

Theater Incognita collaboration:

Iphigenia Crash Fall Lands on the Neon Shell that Was Once her Heart 3/12
The Way of Water 5/12

Melanie comes to Cornell from the University of Pittsburgh, where she was an assistant professor and Director of the MFA program in Performance Pedagogy. Directing credits include work with 59E59 St. Theaters, Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theater, Quantum Theater, Capitol Repertory Theater, barebones productions and ShatterMask Theatre. Fluent in German, she translates and directs contemporary German plays. She is currently Co-Artistic Director for International Culture Lab based in NYC (www.intlculturelab.org), a company specializing in international collaboration. Melanie teaches acting, voice and movement, and directing.

Schwartz Center collaboration:

Mother of Exiles 3/13

FINALMENTE / TEATROTALLER FACTS

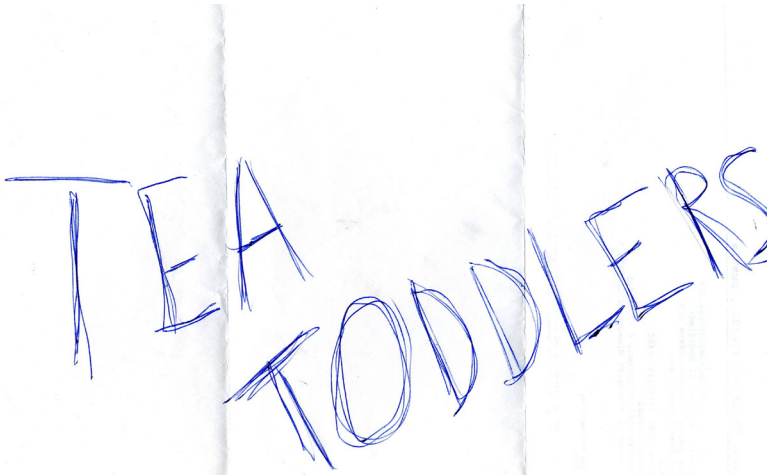
The founder is Isabel Ramos; she returned as a visiting professor to direct *Hoy se comen al flaco* in April 2003; and to teach a workshop in 2008.

The designer of Teatrotaller's logo is Jacobo (Jacky) Bibliowicz.

The person who has participated in the most plays is Carolina Osorio Gil.

The largest and most elaborate play was *Mocedades del Cid* in Spring 1999, followed by *Los cocorocos* (Spring 2002), and *Adult Roy's Badland* (Spring 2012).

People involved in Teatrotaller often call it "TT". For a number of years, based on long-time mispronunciation by former Dept. of Romance Studies staff members unable to say the group's name, it was jokingly called the "Tea Toddlers."



Original founding group:

Director: Isabel Ramos
Set designer: Julián Hoyos
Treasury: Taína Matos Rolón
Actors: Nana Puig, Víctor Múñiz

Advisors:

Debra A. Castillo: professor in comparative literature program.

John Kronik: professor of Latin American theater and literature from Spain, deceased.

Greg Medina: staff member at Public Service Center, left Cornell.

Elvira Sánchez-Blake: professor of Spanish at Michigan State University.

Producers & TAs:

Maximino Aybar: after finishing at Cornell, he continued at the Georgia Institute of Technology and now works as an engineer at GE.

Jacobo (Jacky) Bibliowicz: did two degrees at Cornell before working for Autodesk. He went on to a PhD in dynamic graphics, animation, medical imaging from the University of Toronto.

Stuart Day: PhD Spanish from Cornell. Professor of Latin American theater and editor of Latin American Theater Review at Kansas State University. He has a particular interest in Mexican political theater.

Ana Echevarría: After finishing her PhD in Comparative Literature, Ana taught at several different universities, including Salem College and the University of California at Irvine. She researches theater and performance by women.

Rebeca Franqui: PhD Spanish from Cornell, now works at the University of Puerto Rico, in Arecibo, where she teaches Spanish and Latin American literature.

Kevin-William Hughes: is now a lawyer in the Los Angeles area, working as a conflicts Manager at Munger Tolles & Olson LLP.

Saúl Mercado: PhD in Anthropology from Berkeley, taught at Vassar before joining the U.S. State Department.

Awymarie Riollano: After completing her architecture degree at Cornell, she studied theater design at NYU and has worked professionally in theater in New York City and in Puerto Rico, where she was co-founder of Teatro Agora.

Leo Sánchez: is a PeopleSoft application developer at Euro RSCG worldwide.

Nohemy Solórzano Thompson: PhD Spanish from Cornell. After several years as professor of Spanish at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, she moved to Westminter College where she is Associate Provost of Diversity and Global Learning. She is interested in performance in the broad sense; eg performative identities, Mexican and Latino masculinity.

Alfredo J. Sosa-Velasco: PhD Spanish from Cornell, has taught in several universities in the United States, and is now professor at Southern Connecticut State University. He publishes on Latino and Latin American theater as well as writers from Spain.

Sara Troyani: an aspiring Italian professor, she finished an MA degree in Berkeley and is now a University Presidential Fellow in the University of Notre Dame.

2013 - 2014 eboard

President: Casey Minella
Vice President: Michelle García
Treasury: William Celano
Secretary: Lacie Buckwalter

Former Teatrotaller members are successful lawyers, doctors, business professionals, scientists in various fields, as well as working in many other careers. Among them:

Professors include:

Bruno Bosteels
Loredana Comparone
Stuart Day
Ana Echevarría
Rebeca Franqui
Junyoung Kim
Euna Lee
Angélica Lozano Alonso
Ernesto Martínez
Danny Méndez
Saúl Mercado
Alicia Muñoz
Luna Nájera
Jimmy Noriega
Simone Pinet
Ashley Puig
Rachel Pulverman
Elvira Sánchez Blake
Nohemy Solórzano Thompson
Alberto Sosa Velasco
Malia Spofford
Sara Troyani
Christopher Westgate
Katia Yurguis

Performance and media professionals include:

Colbert Alembert Valdez
Manuel Fihman
Rocío Galarza
Steven Graciano
Julián Hoyos
Nancy Kleaver
Jupiter Luna
Carolina Osorio Gil
Isabel Ramos
Awymarie Riollano
Yubelky Rodríguez
Alex Santiago Jirau
Jorge Silva
Vera Soltero

LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES

NAME	NUMBER OF PARTICIPATIONS
Acevedo, Emiliano	**
Aceves, Luz	***
Adelman, Emily	***
Aguirre, Rosa	****
Akwuba Ii, Uche O	*
Alatorre, Maya	*
Albarrán, Ilyana	*
Alejandro, Leo	**
Alembert Valdez, Colbert	******
Alfonza, Mau	*
Alonso Arias, William David	**
Altobello, Katie	*
Alvarez, Wilmer	*
Álvarez Mas, David Andrés	****
Alvarez-Palazio, Pilar	*
Amador, Irma Judith	***
Ambriz, Evelyn	*
Amofa-Boachi, Kyeiwaa	**
Amporfro, Regina	*
Anyanwu, Ugochi N O	*
Aquart, Casssandra	*
Aquino, Laura	****
Aragón, María José	**
Arbona, Javier	*
Arce, Héctor	**
Arias, Mónica	*
Armstrong, Brian Richard	**
Arroyo, Andrés	*
Arroyo, Christina	*
Arsen, Patricia	*
Auerbach, Alissa	*
Ávila, Ronald Mauricio	*******
Ayala, Margaret	*
Aybar, Maximino	*****
Azad, Shaheen	**
Barboza, Katherine Cleomati	****
Bartholomew, Daniel	**
Bartlett, Emily	****
Bastille, Isle	*
Beaman, Whitney	*
Beaty, Sidney	*
Bebber, Kayley	****
Belayachi, Nadia	*
Bellott, Rodrigo	*
Bentley, Arcadya	*
Bermúdez, Claudia	*
Bertoche, Will	*
Bibliowicz, Jacobo	**********
Biukians, Adrine	*
Black, Kalina	*
Blackney, Kathryn	*
Blake, Victoria	****
Blasberg, Steven	*
Boilon Plaza, Alicia	*
Bollers, Samantha	**
Bolser, Delia	*
Booker, Hali	**
Bonet, Myrsa	*
Bolster, Delia	*
Boquin, Nila	**
Bosteels, Bruno	*
Botti, Bryan	**
Boushra, Marina	***
Bozzolo, Julia	***
Braunstein, Josh	*
Bravo, Carla	*
Bravo, Alberto	*
Brondfield, Ross	**
Brosig, Sani	***
Brueck, Amy	*
Bryant, Nicole	*
Buckwalter, Lacie	****
Burgos Ojeda, María	*******
Burke, Jacqueline Candace	**
Burra, Kevin	**
Cabello, Marcela	**
Camarillo, Leonardo	**
Cao, Lisa	**
Cajina, Ana Patricia	****
Cajina, Stephanie	*********
Calderón, I María	*
Calmann, Robyn	*
Camarillo, Leonardo	**
Campanaros, Amy	*
Capous, Diana	*
Cardona, Micaela	*
Carino, Richelle C.	*
Carrillo, Arturo	**
Carrol, Zach	*
Carter, Damani	**
Carty, Nikisha	**

NAME	NUMBER OF PARTICIPATIONS
Castellanos, Briseida	***
Castillo, Diana	*****
Castillo-Garsow, Carlos	*********
Castillo-Garsow, Melissa	****
Castro, Dorothy	**
Castro, Mark	*
Cervantes, Ana	*
Chader, Steve	******
Chang, Christine	*
Chao, Emily	*
Chapa Ochoa, Cecilia	***
Chávez, Veronica	**
Cherem, Siggi	*
Child, Lydia	*
Churrango, José Luis	**
Chwang, Pierre	**
Cohen, Ethan	*
Colberg, Eugene	**
Colón, Dan	*
Colón, Manuel Antonio	***
Colón, Uriyoán	******
Comparone, Loredana	**
Constantino, Mary	**
Contin, Juan	*
Cooley, Sabrina	*****
Cornejo, Tania	*
Corona, Raquel	*
Corral, Ezra	*
Correa, Joseph	*
Corsa, Gretel	**
Crespo, Zahira	*
Cretella, Sean	***
Cruz, José	*
Cruz, Leatha	*
Cubero, Junito	*
D'Alencon, Renato	**
Dalton, Sarah	*
Dangond, Miguel	*
Daoud, Nina	**
Dávila, Carlos	**
Dávila Morris, Melissa	*********
Davis, Josh	*
Day, Stuart	*
De Félix Dávila, Rocío	*******
De Freitas, Brisa	**
De la Cruz, Lizandra	*
De la Cruz Coggin, Diana	*
De Terra, Andrea	*
Del Valle Beltrán, Teresita	****
Delgado, Bonnie	*****
Delgado, José	*
Delgado, Teresa	**
Delikat, Jon	*
Del Toro, Michelle	******
Dera, Laura	*
Deyhim, Saba	*
Díaz, Adis J.	*
Díaz, Daisy	***
Dickinson, Joshua	*
Diserns, Kasey	*
Duval, Daniel	**
Echevarría, Ana	**
Elrington, Shaniquoa	*
Escobedo, Anne	*
Esquivel, Kety	**
Fang, Jennifer	*
Farella, Emily	*
Farrell, Sean	*
Favre, Wilson	*
Feldman, Paige	**
Fernandes, Danielle	*
Fernández, Biqui	*
Fernández Vargas, Marcela	**
Ferreira, Jenn	*
Ficek, Rosa	**
Figueroa, Natalia	*
Fihman, Manuel	*****
Flick, Sarah	*
Flynn, Carli	*
Flores, Alma	*
Fontes, Marlena	*
Foster, Camilla	*
Fountain, Catherine	*
Fournier, Teseo	*
Fragoso, Anthony	*
Franqui, Rebeca	*****
Fried, Lawrence	*
Friedman, Aaron	*
Fulton, Corey	*
Fung, Joyce	*
Gabrielson, Sonja	*
Galarza, María del Rocío	****
Gallo Lazo, Rebecca	**
Gannon, Eustacia	*
García, Graciela	**
García, Kathleen	****
García, Milagros Michelle	*
Garrido, José Manuel	*

NAME	NUMBER OF PARTICIPATIONS
Gendrop Espinosa, Oscar	*
Gerlach, Erik T.	*
Getzel, Raquel	*
Gingerish, Natalie	*
Goldsmith, Suzanne	*
Goldwyn, Mara	**
Gómez, Alejandro	**
Gómez, Jacqueline	*
Gómez, Ramón	*
González, Alfredo Lawrence	*
González, Benita	*******
González, Rafael	*
González, Jennifer	*
González, Miguel	*
González, Roslyn	*
González Silén, Luis Felipe	*
Goya Arce, Ana	**
Graciano, Steven	****
Gudesblatt, Meredith	*
Guerrero Bosagna, Carlos	*
Guevara, Marta	*
Guterman, Gad	**
Gutiérrez, Alexza	****
Gutiérrez, Armando José	**
Gutiérrez, Caterina	**
Guzmán, Juliana	*
Guzmán, Stephanie	**
Hanna, Jennifer	*
Hardy, Shane	**
Harris, Athena	**
Harris, Rachel	**
Herasme, Gendalys	*
Henderson, Kristen	*
Henry, Quynda	*
Hernández, Ben	*
Hernández, Emily	*
Hernández, Yasmín	*
Herrera, Mónica	*
Hetrick, Alicia	**
Hill, Oliver	*
Hirsch, Alessandra	**
Hoyos, Julián	**********
Huacuja, Isabel	*****
Huancahuari Navarro, Nadia	****
Huang, Lannie	*
Hughes, Kevin-William	***
Huguet, José Carlos	*****
Hurst, Gabriel-Josué	**
Hussain, Syed	**
Iberkleid, Cora	*
Isado, Javier	*
Islam, Shuva	**
Izabal, Guillermo	********
Jackson, Adrienne	*
Jackson, Krystina	****
Jacoby, Mazy	*
Jakse, Sonia	*
James, Amara	*
Jarrad, Daniela	*
Jarymowycz, Christina	***
Johnson, Shaninqua	***
Johnson III Montenegro	*
Donald Richard	***
Jordan, Errol	*
Joseph, Cassandre	**
Juárez Domínguez, Gabriela	*
Katimbang, Gloria	*
Kearney, Emily	*
Kerr, Kimberly	**
Kim, Junyoung	*
Kimberly, Charles	*
Kindermann, Dana Reed	*
Kinkaid, Eric	*
Kleaver, Nancy	*
Knackmuhs, Elizabeth	*****
Korahais, Alex	*
Krawec, Luke	*
Krohn-Friedson, Michelle	*
Kumar, Surya	*
Kuras, Eva	*
Kwan, Joanne	*
Kyrimi, Kleopatra Klelia	**
Lai, Miasarah	*
Lam, Tran	*
Lavin, Natasja	***
Lawrence, Tamar	*
Leal, Enrique	*
Leavens, Harrison	*
Lee, Euna	*
Lee, Rolland D	*
Legendre, Yasmine	**
Lema, Rodrigo	*
Lewis, Jessica	*
Liberman, Esther	*
Lin, Weichun	*
Lipton, Zach	*
Liskovich, Elana	*

NAME	NUMBER OF PARTICIPATIONS
Liu, Amy Hui-Chung	****
López, Angie	*
López, Anthony	**
López, Erika	*
López, Frank	****
López, Margarita María	*
López, Themys	*
López Ulloa, Ana Florencia	*
Losoncy, Barbara	*
Lozada, Jennifer	*
Lozano Alonso, Angélica	*
Lube, Juan	*
Luna, Jupiter	**
Lyon, Dean Grooms	*
Maass, Amanda	*
Maldonado, Tara	**
Mallén, Carlos	**
Manzer, Matt	*
Maraví, Luis Alberto	****
Marrero, Tyler	*
Martin, Melissa	*
Martínez, Ernesto	*
Matos-Rolón, Taina	******
McCann, Amanda	*
McClung, Sarah	*
McDonald, Tenisha	****
McEachern, Katherine	***
McFarlane, Chrissa	**
Meade, Mindy	*
Medrano, Pedro Adrián	*
Mehta, Mamta	*
Méndez, Danny	**
Mendoza, Angeles	*
Mendoza, Carlos	*
Meniktos-Nolting, Joelle	*
Mercado, Saúl	*******
Miles, Steve	*
Milgroom, Jessica	*
Minella, Casey	********
Minto, Melissa	*
Moore, Revina	**
Morales, Jillian Lanai	*
Moreira, Javier	*
Moreno, Eduardo	**
Moreno, Ezequiel	*
Moreno, Sarah	*
Moro, Joey	*
Moskin, Lisa	*
Moscoso, Carolina	***
Moskwa, Susan	****
Mull, Justin	**
Mulligan, Deirdre	**
Muñiz, Victor	*****
Muñoz, Alicia	*
Muñoz, Giselle	******
Nájera, Luna	**
Narvaez, Kali	*
Nelson, Kait	*
Nevarez, Jorge	*
Ng, Klara	*
Ng, Tiffany Yan-Tam	*
Nguyen, Duc	*
Nicod, Nathalie	***
Nieto, Victor	*
Nieves, Jimmy Lou	*********
Nieves Santiago, Marissa	*
Noe Dobrea, Eldar	**
Noginsky, Rashel	*
Nogueras, Lynette	**
Nolan, Jessica	*
Noriega, Jimmy	**********
Novak, Royce	**
Nuño, Roberto	***
Núñez, Judy	*
Obodoagha, Ijeamaka	*
Olivera, Ryan	*
Orellana, José	*
Orta Castro, Andrés	******
Ortiz, Jacklyn	*
Osorio Gil, Carolina	**********
	**********
Pábon, Silvia	**
Padilla, Luis Raúl	**
Pagán, Ada Nurie	***
Paredes, Alejandro	**
Paredes, Angelo	**
Park, Yooki	*
Parker, Abraham	****
Parsons, Lamarr	*
Paz, Phoeniz Storm	*****
Pedroza, Pedro	***
Peñafort, Tania	****
Pepyne, Emily	*
Pérez, Efraín	*
Petryniak, Olga	*
Petzold, Kathrin	*****
Pezzullo, Cheryline	**
Pichardo, Rosa	*

NAME	NUMBER OF PARTICIPATIONS
Pierre, Jennifer	*
Pinet, Simone	**
Pinho, Stephania	*
Plaza, Christian	*
Polanco, Jean Carlos	**
Pollack, Jessi	*
Ponce Valadez, Mónica	***
Portillo, Rafael	*
Posada, Mara	*
Posada, Suzette	*
Puig, Ashley	**
Puig Díaz, Nana	*********
Pulverman, Rachel	***
Quesada-Lombó, Daniel	*
Quiles Quintero, Omar	*
Quint, Lexi	*
Rabell, Tatiana Lamela	*
Rainbow, Hope	*
Ramírez, Cassandra	*
Ramírez, Edsel	***
Ramos, Elisha	***
Ramos, Isabel	**********
Ramos, Yanerys	***
Rapanot, Roland	*
Rasmussen, Sunny	**
Reeder, Jake	*
Requejo, Roberto	*
Reynolds, Abigail	**
Reynolds, Patrick	*
Richards, Chanelle	*
Richardson, Brittany	**
Ricketts, Latisha	*
Rippeteau, Maison	**
Rincón, Juan Felipe	*
Riollano, Awymarie	***
Rivas, Sean	****
Rivadeneyra, María Guadalupe	*
Rivera, José	*
Rodríguez, David	*
Rodríguez, Diane	***
Rodríguez, Jacob	*
Rodríguez, Jessica	***
Rodríguez, Margarita	******
Rodríguez, Samuel	**
Rodríguez, Valerie	*
Rodríguez, Yubelky	***
Rogers, Alison	**
Rogers, Leana	*
Rojas, María Patricia	**
Romero, Adam	*
Rosario, Tomás	*
Rosero, Iván	*
Rothschild, Whitney	*
Roudebush, Steve	*
Rovira, David Ignacio	*
Ruben, Laura	*
Ruíz, Alejandra	***
Ruíz, Mónica	**
Ruíz Vargas, Carlos	**
Russell, Regina	*
Saavedra, Carlos	**
Saboulard, Pedro	**
Saccoman, Rodolfo	***
Sacks, Josh	***
Sáez Díaz, Alberto	***
Saenz Badillo, Judith	*
Saines, Whendhy	*******
Sajed, Maryam	***
Salazar, Gabriela	*
Salgado, Cindy	*
Sánchez, Heber	*
Sánchez, Leo Milciades	***
Sánchez, Maritza	******
Sandler, Nathan	*
Santa, Pedro Javier	**
Santana, Calie	****
Santiago Jirau, Alexander	******
Santos, Bernardo	*
Santos, Massiel	**
Satyshur, Colleen	***
Saucedo, Mauricio	*
Schartup, Steven	*
Schlesinger, Jenny	*
Schmitt, Will	*
Seaney, June	*
Selden, Elizabeth	*
Selth, Calvin	********
Seto, Lily	*
Sevilla, Ileana	****
Shankar, Karin	*
Sheldon, Ariel	*
Shepherd, Katherine	*
Silva, Jorge A.	*******
Simpson, Robin	**
Simson, Natty	**********
Skvarla, Natalie	**

NAME	NUMBER OF PARTICIPATIONS
Slepyan, Jocelyne	*
Smith, Gabrielle	**
Soldanska, Magdalena	***
Solórzano Thompson, Nohemy	*****
Soltero, Vera	**
Sosa Velasco, Alfredo J.	****
Sotiropoulou, Sofia	***
Soto, Jermaine	*
Spinks, T. J.	*
Spofford, Malia	***
Spruill, Nyissia	*
Stalzer, Chad Michael	*
Steiner, Daniel	**
Suárez, Alexandra	*
Suárez, Elizabeth	*
Suárez, Jimmy	***
Suárez, Roberto	*
Suárez, Wally	*
Symes, Alexander	****
Tannert, Samuel	*
Tapia, Eduardo	*
Tavaris, Tanya-Danielle	**
Taxman, Bianca	*
Tellez, Ana Gabriela	**
Tenorio, Bryant	***
Terán, Claudia	*
Thomas, Andrew	*
Torres, Christy Maria	*
Torres, Juan	*
Torres, Ivy	**
Torres, Stephanie	*
Towolawi, Olumide	*
Trompa Barros, Juan	*
Troyani, Sara	*****
Trullinger, Eleanor	**
Turner, Melanie	*
Uang, Randy	*
Urbáez, Ronald	*
Untracht, Gravielle	*
Unzueta, Miguel A.	*
Valdivia, Martha	*
Valencia, Silvana	***
Valeriano, Vanessa	**
Vallarino, Ximena	*
Vallés, Jaime	****
Van Dyke, Gregory	*
Van Gundy, Erika	***
Veloz, Judy	**
Verdiales, Maribelle	**
Verni, Susan	**
Vicil, Bernice	**
Victoria, Adriana	*
Warner, Robin	*
Weidman, Jen	**
Weisenborn, Mark	*****
Weiss, Jessica Anne	**
Weiss, Rebecca	*
West, Kira	***
Westgate, Christopher	**
White, Jourdan	*
Williams, Florence	**
Witte, Elizabeth	*
Wolski, Nicole	*
Yasgur, Stuart	*
Yehl, David	*
Yen, Jennifer	**
Yurguis, Katia Elena Lagunas	********
Zabelle, Laura	**
Zamora, Michael	**
Zarrabi, Delara	*
Zarrabi, Yasaman	*
Zavala, Eligio	*
Zinunula, Giorgina	*
Zúñiga, Antonio	*******
Zysermann, Noemie	**