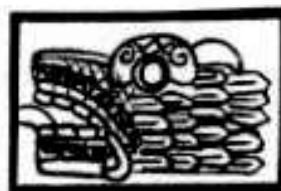




BUSCANDO

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Chicano & U.S. Latino Theatre/Multicultural Theatre in S. California

(c) May 1992

Editor: Kat Avila
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- N "They're kicking our ass everyday, and I'm radical?"
- O "The system doesn't give up anything, unless you take it."
- T "Violence in this country is due to silence. Violence is expression."
- S "If you have the ingredients for a bomb, it's going to explode sooner or later."



These were just a few of the comments I heard at a plática to discuss the future of the Chicano student movement. The plática was held coincidentally only a couple days after the first outbreak of violence in L.A. after the Rodney King verdict. The frustration was evident. It took me back to Sushi's final symposium (April 10) by Black Choreographers Moving (BCM), where a black therapist tearfully asked the panelists what she could do to help the children she worked with. Earlier, she had opined that the "metaphysicalness" of black children wasn't appreciated. This was most evident in the colonialization of black children in the classroom. Now, at this moment, she was tired, very tired, of watching children fall apart.

Several panelists and audience members came to her aid. John Pickett, artistic director of the Spotted Leopard Dance Company, spoke to the group about not dismissing what is important for the child, that we need to have a positive emphasis on differences, and to seek audiences that will appreciate what one does and the beauty of one's work.

The role of teatro in creating alternative visions for the community that do not diminish us cannot be overlooked. Teatro has been used to reach troubled black and Latino youth. It has foregrounded issues important to us that have been marginalized by dominant American culture.

Teatros and the community's playwrights deserve more support. This became evident to me as I interviewed Josefina López following a production of her play Real Women Have Curves by El Teatro de la Esperanza. López had once briefly attended the University of California, San Diego. When I asked her why she was now studying at a L.A. community college, she replied that she didn't have the money to go anywhere else. And this is one of the community's most promising new playwrights!

Still, the teatros survive, in large part due to people like Louis Olivos, Jr., who stubbornly hold on to their vision of bringing teatro to the people and who create opportunities in such unlikely places as a sports bar and grill (see TIME OUT: FOR TEATRO in the calendario). I tip my hat to them.

(NOTE: This is an edited report of a symposium which was held two years ago on April 21, 1990, at Cal State Fullerton. It is being reprinted here because of its continued relevance.)

LATINOS AND MAINSTREAM THEATRE

Latino theatre is mainstream, said keynote speaker Carmen Zapata, and should not be patronized by being called "ethnic" or "minority" theater. She suggested three ways "all theater for all people" could be developed:

1. EQUAL DOLLARS & SUPPORT FOR LATINO THEATRE FROM THE COMMUNITY-AT-LARGE.
2. EVERYTHING SHOULD BE DONE TO DESTROY STEREOTYPES.
3. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN MAINSTREAM THEATRE FOR LATINO ACTORS.

Zapata also criticized evaluations of Latino work coming mainly from outside the site of production, people who judge not the work but the culture.

A panel discussion ended the symposium. The panelists were New York actor/playwright Leo Garcia, director José Cruz Gonzalez, and Latins Anonymous members Diane Rodriguez and Rick Najera. Six questions were posed by moderator Isaac Cardenas:

1. WHAT HAVE BEEN THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF LATINOS TO THE THEATER ARTS?

It was noted that the voice of the community is unique, spanning two languages--Spanish & English--and two cultures--Latino & Euro-American. Latinos have brought to the stage and screen their border version of the American experience.

2. WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES FOR LATINOS TOWARD ACHIEVING THEIR CREATIVE POTENTIAL?

Cultural stereotypes are major obstacles, but the panel cautioned that it was important for Latinos not to think of themselves as victims, to be pro-active as opposed to reactive.

Lack of great financial resources to draw upon is another obstacle, though this is not unique to Latino artists.

Also, Latino work is a vibrant, needs-based theatre at a time when much mainstream theatre is becoming archaic--"museums".

3. HOW HAVE LATINOS BEEN HISTORICALLY PORTRAYED?

Latinos have played roles disfranchised culturally and economically from American society--the Latin lover, banditos, wetbacks, maids, to name a few.

4. CAN LATINO PRODUCTIONS BE MAINSTREAM, AND AT WHAT COST?

"Mainstream" is a misnomer since theatre in general is not mainstream since it draws its audience from the educated upper middle-class, said one panelist. Another panelist said it's not cost but benefits we're talking about.

5. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO FACILITATE LATINOS TRANSITION?

Cultivate own audiences. Art in schools.

6. WHAT ARE THE FUTURE TRENDS OF HISPANIC-AMERICAN THEATRE?

To be produced and producing.

CALENDARIO

BILINGUAL FOUNDATION OF THE ARTS
421 North Avenue 19
Los Angeles, CA 90031
Box office: (213) 225-4044

May 19-June 7, 1992
My Visits With MGM
(My Grandmother Marta) /
Encuentros Con Mi Abuela Marta
By Edit Villareal
Directed by José Cruz Gonzalez
Spanish trans. by Lina Montalvo



In English: May 19-24, June 2-7
In español: May 26-31
Performance times: Tues.-Sat.
8 p.m.; Sat. & Sun., 3 p.m.;
Sun. 7:30 p.m.
Ticket price: Varies, \$18-\$8

(Due to strong ticket sales, MGM
will be performed at the Los
Angeles Theatre Center, 514 S.
Spring St., in downtown L.A.)

Sept. 22-Dec. 6, 1992
La Celestina / The Spanish Bowd
By Fernando de Rojas
Directed by María Elena Rivera

CENTRO CULTURAL DE LA BAJA
2130-1 Pan American Plaza #1
San Diego, CA 92101
For info.: (619) 235-6135

May 14-16, 1992
The Word and Downtown
Poet Marisela Norte and
performance artist Luis Alfaro.
Performance time: 8 p.m.
Ticket price: \$6

May 18, 1992 (play reading)
Money
By Arthur Giron
Directed by Jorge Buerta
Performance time: 7 p.m.
Ticket price: \$4



EAST WEST PLAYERS
4424 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90029
Info.: (213) 660-0366



July 6-August 16, 1992
Summer workshop program for
Asian American actors.

EL TEATRO ALTO
San Diego State MBChA



EL TEATRO CAMPESINO
P.O. Box 1240
311 Third St.
San Juan Bautista, CA 95045
Info./tickets: (408) 623-2444



March 3-June 7, 1992 (tour)
Simply Maria
By Josefina López
Directed by Socorro Valdéz

El Teatro Campesino has
a store that sells T-shirts,
folk art, posters, videos, etc.

EL TEATRO COMETA
514 W. Amerige #B (mailing add.)
116-1/2 Amerige Ave. (playhouse)
Fullerton, CA 92632
Info./tickets: (714) 680-3691



EL TEATRO DE LA ESPERANZA
P.O. Box 40578
San Francisco, CA 94140-0578
Info./tours: (415) 255-2320,
ask for Eve Donovan

Spring 1990-Fall 1992 (tour)
Real Women Have Curves
By Josefina López
Directed by Rodrigo Duarte-Clark

July 13-Aug. 23, 1992
5th Annual Isadora Acuirre
Playwriting Lab with readings.



EL TEATRO DE LA GENTE
Cal State Northridge

GUADALUPE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER
1300 Guadalupe St.
San Antonio, TX 78207-5519

TEMAI Festival, Nov. 10-15, 1992

JAPAN AMERICAN THEATRE
244 South San Pedro St., Ste. 505
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Box office: (213) 680-3700



MÁSCARA MÁGICA
Southwestern College

NOSOTROS theater
1314 N. Wilton
Hollywood, CA 90028
For info.: (213) 465-4167



SOUTH COAST REPERTORY
655 Town Center Dr.
P.O. Box 2197
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-2197
Box office: (714) 957-4033

June 18-July 5, 1992
Latinos Anonymous



August 9 & 10, 1992
Public readings from SCR's
Hispanic Playwrights Project.

TIME OUT: FOR TEATRO
(Time Out Sports Bar & Grill)
1652 W. Lincoln
Anaheim, CA

May 17, 1992
Chicano Secret Service
Performance time: 3 p.m.
Ticket price: \$8
Ticket orders: (714) 991-7710



IN CASE YOU
MISSED IT

Mission San Juan Capistrano is open all year. It's located at Camino Capistrano at Ortega Hwy.

March 19, 1992
(St. Joseph's Day)

Counterclockwise, from right to left: Ballet folklórico; a woman making tortillas by hand for hungry tourists in the mission's "living history" kitchen; former St. Joseph's Day queen Carmen Dague Etcheberris comforts a very tired mission swallow.



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BFA's My Visits With MGM (My Grandmother Marta) opens with English-language previews on May 19 and 20 at the Los Angeles Theatre Center, Spanish-language previews on May 26 and 27.