

GALA Hispanic Theatre 44th Season Begins with a Gem of the Spanish Golden Age: Pedro Calderón de la Barca's LIFE IS A DREAM La Vida es Sueño

Culture 2019-08-24 16:00:13

Washington, DC – GALA Hispanic Theatre opens its 44th season, Great Writers, Great Stories, with a new adaptation by Nando López commissioned by GALA of *Life is a Dream* by Pedro Calderón de la Barca. Directed by GALA's Producing Director, Hugo Medrano, who was nominated for a 2000 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Direction for *La dama boba*, *Life is a Dream* is performed in Spanish with English surtitles from September 12 through October 13, 2019 at GALA Theatre. The theater is located at 3333 14th Street, NW, Washington, D.C., one block from the Columbia Heights metro station on the Green/Yellow lines. Discounted parking is available behind the theater at the Giant Food garage.

Set in Poland in the 17th century when its influence and power in Europe had waned, *Life is a Dream* explores tyranny, fate, and free will. Weaving together the stories of Segismundo, who was imprisoned at birth by his father King Basilio to prevent the fulfillment of a prophecy, and Rosaura, who acts to restore her honor and control her destiny, this famous Spanish Golden Age drama addresses the universal question: "Who is the master of one's fate? ."

"The questions with which Calderón grappled," states Mr. López, who adapted the play, "are as pertinent today as they were in the time the play was written. To what degree is our identity shaped by the environment in which we live and the world we inhabit? Do we choose who we are or are we merely marionettes in the hands of a higher power? Are we, like Segismundo, imprisoned in our own towers?" "Calderón," adds Mr. Medrano, "challenges us to find the chains that bind us so that we can finally break free."

Press Night and Noche de GALA with artist reception is Saturday, September 14, under the gracious patronage of the Ambassador of Spain Santiago Cabanas Ansorena. This production is made possible with generous support from the Embassy of Spain in Washington, DC, SPAIN arts & culture, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Student matinees are on September 26, 27, October 3, October 4, October 9 and October 10 at 10:30 am. For more information, email education@galatheatre.org.

ABOUT PEDRO CALDERÓN DE LA BARCA

Pedro Calderón de la Barca known as "Calderon", was a playwright, poet, soldier, and priest who was born in Madrid in 1600. Next to Lope de Vega, he was considered the greatest Spanish playwright of the Golden Age. Among his best-known secular works are *El médico de su honra* (The Surgeon of His Honor), *La vida es sueño* (Life is a Dream,) *El alcalde de Zalamea* (The Mayor of Zalamea), and *La hija del aire* (The Daughter of the Air), He also wrote operas and "autos", religious plays similar to the mystery plays of the Middle Ages.

Calderón's characters personified certain primitive passions and his plots dealt primarily with loyalty to the King, devotion to the church, and the protection or assertion of one's honor through revenge. His work influenced other forms, such as streamlining Comedia Nueva (New Comedy) by eliminating superfluous scenes and secondary characters, and bringing the individual and his conflicts to the fore. In his dramatic style, he emphasized the staging of the work, which he described as the "memory of appearances." He died in Madrid in 1681, bringing to a close the Spanish Golden Age.

ABOUT NANDO LÓPEZ

Nando López is a playwright, novelist, and educator who adapted for GALA Don Juan Tenorio and Yerma by Federico García Lorca, which received the 2016 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Play. His plays have premiered in Spain, Costa Rica, Chile, the United States, Venezuela, Panama, and Mexico, and include #Maliditos16, Nunca pasa nada, Los amores diversos, Cuando fuimos dos, De mutuo desacuerdo, Barro (cowritten with Guillem Clua), Federico hacia Lorca (co-written with Irma Correa), and La edad de la ira, based on his own novel. Other credits include Desengaños amorosos and Las harpias en Madrid, and the adaptation of Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus. A finalist for the 2010 Nadal Award, his other novels include "Cuando todo era fácil", "El sonidos de los cuerpos", "Las vidas que inventamos", and "La inmortalidad del cangrejo." His work is also included in anthologies such as "Lo que no se dice", and has authored several books for youth, including "Nadie nos oye", "En las redes del miedo", "Los nombres del fuego", "El reino de las Tres Lunas", and its sequel "El reino de los Tres Soles." He has a PhD in Hispanic Philology.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Life is a Dream is directed by GALA Producing Artistic Director and Co-founder, Hugo Medrano. The longest serving artistic director in the Washington region, he has directed and performed in classical and contemporary plays in Argentina, Spain, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Cuba, New York, Miami, and Washington for over 44 years. Among the more than 125 productions he has directed are Los empeños de una casa; Yerma; La casa de Bernarda Alba; Amor de Don Perlimplín con Belisa en su jardín; Valor, agravio y mujer; Cervantes: maestro del entremés; La verdad sospechosa, and El rufián Castrucho. Other credits include Doña Rosita la soltera, La zapatera prodigiosa; Bodas de sangre, Puro Tango, Canto al Perú Negro, El Bola-Cuba's King of Song, Caribeana Imperia; Candombe: Tango Negro; and Raíces cubanas. He was nominated for a 2000 Helen Hayes Award for his direction of La dama boba by Lope de Vega, received a Helen Hayes Award nomination for his performance in El protagonista, and received the 1994 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Lead Actor for his portrayal of Molina in El beso de la mujer araña.

Featured in the cast from Spain are Daniel Alonso de Santos as Segismundo; Mel Rocher as Clotaldo; and Soraya Padrao, who resides in New York and was last seen at GALA in Cervantes: El último Quijote. Mr. Alonso de Santos, who most recently worked with Teatro Círculo in New York is making his GALA debut and Mr. Rocher is performing in his sixth GALA production, having last appeared in El caballero de Olmedo.

Also appearing in Life is a Dream are GALA company members Delbis Cardona (Clarín) and Peter Pereyra (Astolfo), who appeared in Como agua para chocolate; Catherine Nunez (Estrella), who was seen in En el tiempo de las Mariposas; Camilo Linares (Soldado), who appeared in GALita's Picasso; and Timothy Andrés Pabon (Basilio), who last appeared in La Señorita de Tacna. Leo Delgado (Soldado) is making his first appearance at GALA.

Scenic design is by Milagros Ponce de León, who designed Elliot: A Soldier's Fugue at GALA, and Lighting and Sound Design is by Jesús Díaz Cortés, who designed lighting and sound for El viejo, el joven y el mar last season. Costume Designs are by Moyenda Kulemeka and Eric J. Davis. Projections Design is by Nitsan Scharf; and Composer is Mariano Vales, who composed original music for GALA's productions of Cervantes: El último Quijote and Las Polacas: The Jewish Girls of Buenos Aires, which was nominated for a 2016 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical. Properties are by Alicia Tessari, who designed for Crónica de una muerte anunciada and Los empeños de una casa. Eric Swartz is Stage Manager, Tony Koehler is Production Manager, and Devin Mahoney is Technical Director.

TICKET INFORMATION

Single tickets are \$45 on Thursday and Friday evenings, and \$48 on Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons. Senior tickets (65+), Student and Military tickets are \$30. Groups (10+) are \$30. To purchase tickets, call 202234-7174 or visit www.galatheatre.org. Tickets are also available on Goldstar.

WHAT : GALA Hispanic Theatre 44st Season Begins with a Gem of the Spanish Golden Age: Pedro Calderón de la Barca's LIFE IS A DREAM La Vida es Sueño

WHEN : 2019-08-24 16:00:13

WHERE :

CONTACT:

Dubraska Vale / 202-234-7174 / dubraska@galatheatre.org/