GALA Hispanic Theatre presents Â¡Ay, Carmela!

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Washington, DC [CapitalWirePR] **–** GALA opens its 36th Season with the United States Premiere of *¡Ay, Carmela!* by José Sanchis Sinisterra, one of Spain's most acclaimed contemporary playwrights. Directed by José Luis Arellano-García from Madrid*, ¡Ay, Carmela!* runs September 15 to October 9, 2011 at GALA Theatre, 3333 14th Street NW, Washington, DC 20010. Parking is available at a discount in the Giant garage on Park Road, NW. Additional parking is available at the Target garage also on Park Road, between 14th and 16th Streets.

"I am thrilled that we are producing *¡Ay, Carmela!* as part of our binational cultural collaboration with Acción Sur from Madrid," states Hugo Medrano, GALA's Producing Artistic Director. "Last year, we initiated this multi-year program with Acción Sur with a classic of Spain's Golden Age, "*El caballero de Olmedo*" by Lope de Vega. This year we are working across the Atlantic to explore together one of Spain's most important contemporary playwrights, whose mournful plea against armed conflict has touched audiences throughout Europe and Latin America."

"We chose to stage *¡Ay, Carmela!*," adds director José Luis Arellano-García, "because it speaks to the tragedy of the Spanish people under the fascists' tyranny, which spread throughout Europe in the 1930s. This play is an endearing chronicle of remembrance, and an homage to the dignity of an artist and to human sensibility. Sinisterra reminds us, with great humor, of the importance of memory and the complexity of human behavior in compromising situations."

When Carmela and Paulino, a vaudeville comedy duo, accidentally fall into the hands of Franco's fascists troops during the Spanish Civil War, they witness an execution and then are forced to perform for other captives and soldiers. But as heels and castanets clatter, their own intriguing story unfolds in a riot of black humor and ghostly passion. In a world still riddled with conflict, this heartbreaking portrayal of love and loss is a poignant testimony to the inhumanity of war.

¡Ay, Carmela! premiered in Zaragoza, Spain in 1987 and became one of the Spanish-speaking world's most spectacular successes of the past 20 years. This award-winning play has been produced throughout Latin America and Europe, and translated into seven languages. In 1990, the acclaimed Spanish filmmaker Carlos Saura premiered his own film version of the play, and in the same year Sinisterra was awarded the National Theatre Prize.

*¡Ay, Carmela**!*** is performed in Spanish with English surtitles Thursdays through Saturdays at 8 pm, and Sundays at 3 pm. The Noche de GALA and Press opening is Saturday, September 17, 2011 at 8 pm, followed by a reception under the honorary patronage of the Ambassador of Spain Jorge Dezcallar.

Special student matinees for *¡Ay, Carmela!* are September 23, September 30, October 6 and October 7 at 10:30 am. For more information about the Student Matinee Program, please call 202-234-7174.

This co-production is the second international project between GALA and the dynamic Spanish company Acción Sur that involves artists from the United States and Spain. As part of the collaboration, one of the actors traveled to Madrid in August 2011 for rehearsals with the director and other cast member who are

from Spain. The co-production is made possible with support from the Embassy of Spain in Washington, DC, the

Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, INEAM, Asociación Cultural Mundos del Teatro, the Program for Cultural Cooperation between Spain's Ministry of Culture and U.S. Universities, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

José Sanchis Sinisterra is a theater director, educator and scholar. He has written numerous plays, including *Tú, no importa quién, La Edad Media va a empezar, La leyenda de Gilgamesh*, *Historias de tiempos revueltos, La noche de Molly Bloom*, *Ñaque o de piojos y actores*, *El gran teatro natural de Oklahoma*, *Bajo el signo de cáncer*, *Crímenes y locuras del traidor Lope de Aguirre*, *Los figurantes, Pervertimiento y otros gestos para nada, Bartle by el escribiente, Perdida en los Apalaches*, *Mísero Próspero, Bienvenidas, Dos tristes tigres*, *Marsal, Marsal*, and ¡*Ay, Carmela!*, which was made into an award-winning film by Carlos Saura. Among the theaters and theater organizations he has founded or co-founded are Aula de Teatro de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de Valencia, Seminario de Teatro, Teatro Fronterizo, Sala Beckett, and the Association of Independent Experimental Theaters. His awards include Premio Carlos Arniches (1968), Premio Federico García Lorca (Theater, 1991), and Premio Max for Best Playwright (1999 for *¡Ay, Carmela!* and 2004 for *El lector por horas*). He was also a finalist for the Premio Max in 2005 for *El cerco de Leningrad.*

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Featured in the cast are guest artist Mona Martínez from Spain as Carmela**,** and Diego Mariani from Argentina as Paulino. Among the productions in Spain in which Ms. Martínez has appeared are *El burlador de Sevilla* and *El perro del Hortelano* at Teatro Respira, *Alicia* at Teatro Réplika, and *Avaricia, lujuria y muerte* at Centro Dramático Nacional. Mr. Mariani last appeared at GALA in *Momia en el closet-The Return of Eva Perón*. He also has appeared in *Cabaret* at Teatro Castral, *Sueño de una noche de verano* at Teatro San Martín, *El informe del Dr. Krupp* at Teatro Nacional Cervantes, and *El Zorro* at Teatro Opera. Mr. Mariani was nominated for the 1999 Premio Trinidad Guevara for his performance in *El magnífico Cornudo*.

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José Luis Arellano-García is a theater, opera and television director from Spain, and is the director of the Drama School of the City of Parla in Spain. He directed *Fuente Ovejuna* at the 2009 International Festival of Classic Theatre of Almagro, featuring youth from Parla. This production was presented at the Shakespeare Theatre and GALA in April 2009. Last season, he directed *El caballero de Olmedo* for GALA's 35th Anniversary Season, as well as an adaptation of Cervantes's *Numancia*, performed by the

Youth Theater of Parla at GALA. Other directing credits include *La bruja Azafrán* for Teatro Real, and *Cinderella*, an opera by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, which toured throughout Spain. In addition, he was

Assistant Director at Teatro Real Ignacio García for operas such as *El pequeño deshollinador* by Benjamin Britten, and *El tutor burlado* by Martín and Soler. He also was Assistant Director to Josep María Mestres for *El Barbero de Sevilla/Bohemios* at the Teatro de la Zarzuela; for *Silencio Vivimos* at Teatro Adolfo Marsillach; as well as for *Algo más inesperado que la muerte* at the Lara Theatre. Currently, he is Assistant Director to Gerardo Vera, who directed *Platónov* by Anton Chekov and *Mother Courage* by Bertolt Brecht at the María Guerrero National Theater.

Set design is by **Giorgos Tsappas**, who designed sets for *Bodas de sangre* at GALA and *Pop!* at Studio Theatre Second Stage. Light and Sound design are by **Antonio Serrano,** and Costumes are by **Rosa Andújar**. Properties are by **Tessa Grippaudo**, who designed for *Beauty of the Father*. **Andrés Holder** is Production Manager in Washington, **Olga Reguilón** serves as Production Manager in Spain, and **Andrés Luque** is Technical Director. For this binational collaboration, **Mr. Peralto** is the Producer in Spain and **Hugo Medrano** is Producer in Washington, DC.

ABOUT THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

The Spanish Civil War began with an attempted military *coup d'état* against the Republican government in July of 1936. In response, Spain's leading trade union called for a nation-wide strike, and working class revolutions rose across the country against Primo de Rivera, the de facto leader of the fascist movement. The 30,000 workers-turned-revolutionaries were known as the Red Army and fought against the Spanish military, which was led by future dictator Francisco Franco. Franco was an extreme nationalist who encouraged ruthless military operations that included torture and murder. During the three year war, over 500,000 people lost their lives, many of whom were civilians. Volunteers from approximately 54 countries supported both sides of the war. Hitler and Mussolini, the fascist leaders of Germany and Italy, provided incredible amounts of military aid, including weapons and advisors. The war ended on March 31, 1939 when Franco declared the Nationalists' victory, marking the beginning of his 36 years of dictatorship.

TICKET INFORMATION

Single tickets are $34 on Thursdays and Sundays, and $38 Fridays and Saturdays. Tickets for students, senior citizens (60+) and military are $20. Additional discounts are available for groups of 10 or more. Tickets for **Noche de GALA and Reception** are $50 per individual, $90 per couple, $15 per subscriber.

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WHEN : 2011-09-04 14:00:58
WHERE :

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