

GALA Hispanic Theatre presents FAME THE MUSICAL

Entertainment 2019-04-22 15:30:16

Washington, D.C. - GALA concludes its 43rd season with the U.S. premiere of a bilingual version of the unforgettable **FAME The Musical**. Conceived and developed by David De Silva, with book by Cuban writer José Fernández, music by Steve Margoshes and lyrics by Jacques Levy, FAME is directed and choreographed by **Luis Salgado**. Salgado returns to GALA with the creative team from the theater's hit production of *In The Heights*, which garnered nine 2018 Helen Hayes Awards. Foremost in that team is Music Director **Walter "Bobby" McCoy**, who will lead a nine piece band. The production will be performed in English and Spanish and will have surtitles in both languages.

FAME runs **May 9 through June 9, 2019** at GALA Theatre, 3333 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20010. Parking is available behind the theatre at the Giant Food garage on Park Road, NW for \$4.

Press Night is Saturday, May 11, 2019, under the gracious patronage of the His Excellency José Tomás Pérez, Ambassador of the Dominican Republic to the United States. The production is made possible in part with generous support from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, an agency for the National Endowment for the Arts, and Share Fund.

Fame The Musical is based on the 1980 musical film [of the same name](#), which premiered in 1988 in [Miami, Florida](#). The show follows the highs and lows of the final class of New York City's illustrious High School for the Performing Arts from their freshman year to their graduation. Touching on complex issues such as racial prejudice, drug abuse, and sexual exploitation, it tells the story of several of the students, depicting their struggles, triumphs and tempestuous relationships as they explore the realities of striving for a career in showbusiness. Salgado has added a nuance by incorporating the message of today's DREAMers, Latinx immigrant students facing uncertain legal status in the U.S., into the unfolding of the characters.

"When Hugo Medrano, GALA founder and artistic producing director, approached me to direct FAME," states director Salgado, "I knew it was a perfect project to follow our successful collaboration on *In The Heights* in 2016. The production honors José Fernández, a brave and daring Latino writer who lived under the radar and whose life sparks conversation about the Latin experience in musical theater. His life also mirrors the hopes and struggles of Dreamers today for a better future. So our adaptation questions what would happen if the FAME school was populated by a community of dreamers---not just because of their artistic pursuits, but because of their nationality and immigration status in the United States. We are thrilled to reimagine the possibilities raised by the question."

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

David De Silva (Concept and Development) is known as "Father Fame." He conceived, developed and produced the MGM motion picture "Fame", which received four Academy Award nominations. He was also Consulting Producer on the television series that ran for six years on network television and in syndication, received numerous Emmy Awards, and has been seen in 68 countries. Mr. De Silva believes that **FAME** will have its greatest success in the theatre. Its youth-oriented idealism and "live" performance energy will be an

inspiration to young people everywhere.

José Fernández (Book) began his theatrical career as an actor. On Broadway, he appeared in *The Me Nobody Knows*, for which he received The Variety Critic's Poll Nomination for Best Actor; *Hair*, *Truckload*; and *Two Gentleman of Verona*. As a writer his credits include the Off-Broadway musical, *El Bravo!* and co-authored several comedies. In 1984, with David De Silva, he began transforming **FAME** into a new and timeless musical. Born in Cuba and raised in New York City, he died of AIDS at 46 on January 8, 1994, but not before he saw **FAME** in Stockholm in 1993. Performed in Swedish it was this hit production that launched the global **FAME** phenomenon.

Luis Salgado (Director and Choreographer) is an international director, choreographer and educator from Puerto Rico currently based in New York City. He was the Assistant Latin Choreographer of *In the Heights* on Broadway, which won four Tony Awards. Most recently he was the associate director/choreographer of Cirque de Soliel's *Paramour* in Hamburg Germany. Among the productions he has directed/choreographed in the United States and abroad are the fantasy musical *Ella Es Colombia* in Bogota, Colombia with MISI Musicals, the Holland Production of *On Your Feet*, *RAGTIME*, *TO BE OR NOT TO BE... a Shakespearean Experience*, *Amigo Duende the Musical*, *In The Heights*, *Bountiful*, *Zuccotti Park*, *Song of Solomon*, *Speed the Plow*, and *Candela Fuerza y Pasión* in Lima Peru.

In 2017 Mr. Salgado directed and choreographed the U.S premiere of the Spanish version of *In The Heights* at GALA, which received nine 2018 Helen Hayes Awards including Best Musical, Best Direction and Best Choreography. He has appeared on Broadway in *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, *ROCKY*, *In The Heights*, *On Your Feet*, as well as Off-Broadway shows and Broadway tryouts 'The Mambo Kings (Frankie Suarez), *Fame* on 42nd Street (Joe Vegas, understudy) and *Aida*, among others. Film credits include: "American Gangster"; "Dirty Dancing 2, Havana Nights", the television remake of "Dirty Dancing", "Enchanted" and "Step Up 2, The Streets" (Alejandro), for which he also was assistant choreographer. He is the founder/director of R.Evolución Latina, an affiliate of the non-profit organization Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

Walter "Bobby" McCoy (Music Director), a Nicaraguan-American, returns to GALA after having been part of the creative team for the award-winning *In The Heights*, for which he won a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical Direction. Other local credits as music director include Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida* (Constellation TheatBlues in the Night, *Ruthless! The Musical*, *Caroline, or Change*, and *Once on This Island* at (Creative Cauldron); *Bat Boy: The Musical*, *Altar Boyz*, *Old Wicked Songs* at 1st Stage (2016 Helen Hayes Award – Outstanding Musical Direction). He has also been assistant musical director for *Cabaret* and *National Pastime* at Keegan Theatre.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Featured in the cast are **Paula Calvo** (Carmen Díaz) and **Carlos Salazar** (Nick Piazza) from Colombia, who recently completed a tour of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, and New York actors **Rafael Beato** (Joe Vegas), **Juan Luis Espinal** (Schlomo), and **Amaya Perea** (Iris), all of whom appeared in *In The Heights En Español* at GALA; **Tanya DeLeon** (Serena Katz); **Paloma De Vega** (Lambchops); **Romainson Romain** (Tyrone Jackson); **Alana Thomas** (Mabel Washington); and **Jon Yopez** (Goody).

Also appearing in the cast are **Teresa Dansky** (Ms. Sherman); **Imanol Fuentes Garcia** (Mr. Meyers); **Susan Oliveras** (Ms. Sherman); and **Brendon Schaefer** (Mr. Sheinkopf).

Ensemble members are **Julia Klavens**, **Kramer Kwalik**, **Bryan Menjivar**, **Pranjaal Pizarro**, **Susan Ramirez**, **Rodolfo Santamarina**, **Megumi Shimoda**, and **Patrick Ward**.

Scenic design is by **Clifton Chadick**, who is working on his first production at GALA.. Light design is by **Christopher Annas-Lee**, who designed GALA's *In the Heights* and *Yerma* (2018 and 2016 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Light Design, respectively); and Costumes are by **Robert Croghan**, who designed for *In The Heights*.

Sound Design is by **Roc Lee**, who designed for *In The Heights* at GALA and *Mother Courage and Her Children* at Arena Stage (2014 Helen Hayes Award - Outstanding Sound Design nomination). Projections are by **Patrick J. Ward**, and Properties are by **Matt Carlin**.

Brennan T. Jones is Stage Manager. **Heather Hogan** is Creative Consultant. **Tony Koehler** is Production Manager, **Devin Mahoney** is Technical Director, and **Hugo Medrano** is Producer.

TICKET INFORMATION

Single tickets are \$65. Tickets for Senior Citizens (65+), Military, and Students are \$40. Discounts are available for groups of 10 or more. Tickets for **Noche de GALA and Artist Reception** are \$80 per individual, \$150 per couple.