

GALA Hispanic Theatre presents the Washington, DC premiere of LOS EMPEÑOS DE UNA CASA House of Desires by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz a 17th century Golden Age writer and nun from Mexico, known as “The Tenth Muse”

Entertainment 2015-01-08 07:13:03

Washington, D.C. - GALA proudly continues its 39th season with the Washington, DC premiere of **Los empeños de una casa**/House of Desires, a comedy of errors by **Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz**, the first published feminist writer of the Americas. Directed by GALA Co-founder and Producing Artistic Director **Hugo Medrano**, the production will run from February 5 through March 1, 2015. GALA is located at 3333 14th Street NW, Washington, DC 20010. Discounted parking is available at the Giant Food garage on Park Road, NW.

Don Pedro loves Doña Leonor who loves Don Carlos, who is desired by Doña Ana. **Los empeños de una casa** is a romantic Spanish Golden Age comedy of intrigue that mixes lyrical poetry, puns, songs, cross-dressing, and mistaken identities. Written in the 17th century, but staged by director Hugo Medrano in 1940s Mexico with its machismo and sounds of mariachi, this farce examines the idea of free will for women at a time when they were still subject to a strict moral code.

“Within the confines of New Spain’s colonial culture and society,” states Mr. Medrano, “Sor Juana occupied a quixotic literary position against racism, machismo, hypocrisy and censorship. In **Los empeños de una casa**, she addresses and subverts these attitudes, and serious themes such as love and honor are dealt in such a manner that a traditional *capa y espada* (cloak and sword) play is transformed into a comedy of errors.

“To remind ourselves that many of the characters and situations still resonate, and also just for fun, I have set the play in a Mexican *hacienda* in the 1940s and staged it in that boisterous and musical style of the *ranchera* movies, where the hyper masculine charro disrupted the bucolic pastoral life. I am confident that Sor Juana’s agitated pen would have protested even in this period.”

Los empeños de una casa will be presented in **Spanish with English surtitles** on Thursday and Friday evenings at 8 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 8 pm, and Sunday afternoons at 2 pm. There will no matinee on Saturday, February 7, 2015.

Student or Group Matinees for **Los empeños de una casa** will be held on February 6, February 13, February 19, February 20, February 26 and February 27 at 10:30 am. For more information on GALA’s Student Matinee programs, please call 202-234-7174 or e-mail education@galatheatre.org.

The **Noche de GALA and Press Night** will be **Saturday, February 7, 2015 at 8 pm**, under the generous patronage of the Ambassador of Mexico to the United States, His Excellency Eduardo Medina Mora. A reception with the artists follows the performance.

This production is possible with the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts and the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities. The Noche de GALA reception is made possible by The Mexican Cultural Institute and Edible Arrangements.

ABOUT PLAYWRIGHT SOR JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ

Born in Mexico in 1648, Sor Juana was an illegitimate child whose desire to learn was so strong she dressed as a boy in an attempt to study in school. The Viceregal court of New Spain heard about her and at 15 she became a lady-in-waiting as the Vicereine’s favorite. She wrote and read voraciously, and her scholarship and intelligence provoked admiration and envy. Then suddenly at age 20 she entered a convent, where she continued writing poetry that expressed a

feminism centuries ahead of her time, and she became known as La Decima Musa (the tenth muse) of poetry and was acclaimed for her *Repuesta a Sor Filotea*, which defends women's rights to educational access.

Sor Juana mastered the range of poetic forms and themes of the Spanish Golden Age, and her writings display great originality and wit. Unrestricted by genre, she wrote dramatic, comedic and scholarly works and her most important plays include brave and clever women.

Two years before her death in 1695 she gave up writing as demanded by the church – writing her final defiant words in blood. Since then, Sor Juana has become a symbol for the education and emancipation of women across the world. Her poems are read by Mexican children in schools to this day and her famous poem "Foolish Men" is one many Latin Americans can quote from memory.

She is an icon of Mexican identity and her image appears on Mexican currency. The National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago holds an annual festival in her honor and celebrates women of Mexican descent with an award for achievement in the arts and culture, and the Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Prize is awarded by the Guadalajara International Book Fair to recognize the literary work of women in Spanish.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Featured in the cast are guest artists from New York **Natalia Miranda-Guzmán**, who appeared previously at GALA in *Cabaret Barroco* and *El desdén con el desdén*, and **Mauricio Pita**, who is making his GALA debut. Ms. Miranda-Guzmán has performed at Classic Stage Company, PS 122 and Mabou Mines in New York, and Casa Ocupa Teatro in Chile. Mr. Pita has appeared at Theatre 167/New Ohio Theatre, Teatro SEA and Repertorio Español in New York. Also appearing in the cast are GALA company members **Carlos Castillo** and **Luz Nicolas**, who appeared in *Cancun* earlier this season; **Oscar Ceville**, who was seen last season in *La señorita de Tacna*; and Hector Diaz, who last appeared at GALA in *El mejor alcalde, el rey*.

Making their first appearance at GALA are **Alina Collins Maldonado**, who recently performed in *How We Get On* at Forum Theatre; **Erik Sotomayor**; and **Miguel Amaguaña** and **Roberto Colmenares**, who appeared in GALita's *Tum Tica: una historia de música y familia*.

Hugo Medrano has directed and performed in numerous classical and contemporary plays in Argentina, Spain, Costa Rica, Venezuela, El Salvador, New York, Miami, and Washington, DC. Among the classical plays he has directed at GALA are *El desdén con el desdén* by Agustín Moreto y Cabaña; *La vida es sueño* by Pedro Calderón de la Barca; *El rufian Castrucho*, *Caballero de milagro* and *El caballero de Olmedo* by Lope de Vega; *Valor, agravio y mujer* by Ana Caro; *Cervantes: maestro del entremes*; and *La verdad sospechosa* by Juan Ruiz de Alarcón. 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 role as Molina in *El beso de la mujer araña*. He received a BA in Theatre from Escuela de Teatro de La Plata in Buenos Aires. In Spain, Mr. Medrano studied at Madrid's Centro Dramático with José Monicón and William Layton and at Teatro Estudio Madrid (TEM) with Miguel Narros.

Scenic Designer is **Luciana Stecconi**, who designed *Puerto Ric...¡fua!* at GALA; **Christopher Annas-Lee**, who designed *How We Got On* at Forum Theatre, is Lighting Designer; **Ivania Stack**, who designed for *La señorita de Tacna* and *Living Out* last season at GALA is Costume Designer; **AJ Johnson** is Sound Designer, and **Alicia Tessari** is Properties Designer. **Cecilia Cackley** is Stage Manager and **Rueben Rosenthal** is Technical Director. **Abel López** is Producer.

TICKET INFORMATION

Individual tickets are \$38 on Thursday, Saturday Matinees, and Sundays; \$42 on Friday and Saturday

night. Senior tickets are \$26 and Students/Military are \$20. Additional discounts are available for groups of 10 or more.

Noche de GALA tickets (including reception) are \$50/person, \$90/couple, and

\$15 for subscribers.

WHAT : GALA Hispanic Theatre presents the Washington, DC premiere of LOS EMPEÑOS DE UNA CASA House of Desires by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz a 17th century Golden Age writer and nun from Mexico, known as "The Tenth Muse"

WHEN : 2015-01-08 07:13:03

WHERE :

CONTACT:

Sarah Barrie

Phone: 202 234 7174

Email: sarah@galatheatre.org