



CELEBRANDO: 3 YEARS

Confidential draft



[DATE]

[COMPANY NAME]

[Company address]

First Speech

LETI

Good evening everyone and thank you for being here to celebrate with us. My name is Leticia Lopez. *It is my honor to welcome you to this celebration of three very full years of life for Cleveland's only Latino theatre group Teatro Publico de Cleveland.*

Four years ago, Raymond Bobgan from Cleveland Public Theatre invited me, Blanca Salva, Hector Castellanos, and several others to help lead an effort to engage the Latino community in making theatre. After a year of planning, workshops, and lots of time playing and working together, we formed Teatro Publico de Cleveland—the first Latino Theatre company in Northeast Ohio!

At first I thought I was just going to be an advisor, but after attending some acting workshops I began to realize that this could be something important for me. Being a part of Teatro Publico could help me in my commitment to celebrate our culture within our community and to share that culture with the wider public. Those early rehearsals were sometimes fun but also scary. Theatre pushed me to grow as a leader and as a person. Theatre awoke within me a confidence and a passion and helped me grow into a stronger leader.

Three years ago, Raymond Bobgan from Cleveland Public Theatre invited us to the stage and now it's my honor to invite him to the stage.

RAYMOND

Thank you Leti. And thank you all for being here. A few housekeeping items first. The show is about 90 minutes long, without an intermission. Please take a moment to celebrate live theatre by turning off your mobile phones—this is a way of showing respect for the actors on stage and to your fellow audience members—because it can be distracting. Also, no photographs or video during the performance. Teatro Publico is about sharing cultures and this action, turning off cell phones, is a ritual, of theatre culture. Thank you.

Teatro Publico de Cleveland is one of the most important developments in the Cleveland Theatre scene in the last decade. For years the stage of Cleveland has been dominated by white and African American artists. But our community is so much more and we needed a way to have more voices on our stages. *Teatro Publico came out of years of planning, and an important innovation program led by the Cleveland Foundation. Now, years later, we can see that this Teatro Publico represents not only a leap forward for Latino arts in Cleveland, but also is a leap forward for the theatre community. You, Teatro Publico, have opened your hearts to us. You welcomed us, you welcomed me. You teach us.* And you're right, Leti, it was pretty scary at times. But every time it got scary or stressful or I felt like I was losing my way, you pulled me back. Pablo reminded me that we were in this together. Leti stepped up to gather people together. So many people came with new ideas, and it was Alejandro Moreno who first said—hey, until you have been to a funeral you don't know Latin American Culture. And so we started to make scenes about funerals and that set us on our way to making our first play. The play was about a seminary student who, by a strange twist of fate, is forced to officiate at three funerals. The problem is that he has bad nerves, bad English and is afraid of dead bodies. From the premiere TPC show: Cuando Cierras Your Eyes.

BIG Funeral

JUAN enters. He is a bit happy to be here. He is sort of excited to do something real. Then he remembers about his fear of dead bodies. He slowly approaches the coffin.

JUAN

Tienes que ser fuerte. FUERTE

Funny business with “takes” ensues and culminates with JUAN bumping the coffin. He notices he has bumped the body. He looks and begins to mirror the expression on the dead face.

Chonchita, the nosy neighbor of the deceased enters. JUAN immediately composes himself and moves to the podium as if nothing happened.

CHONCHITA

Hello—look at you—are you a new priest here?

JUAN

Not really... I am just...

CHONCHITA

You look too good to be a priest.

JUAN

OH... well...

CHONCHITA

You remind me of the priest on the TV show The Thornbirds.

JUAN

Wonderful.

CHONCHITA

Well, I'm Chonchita. I was the next door neighbor of the dear deceased.

JUAN

Oh... (*trying to remember*) so sorry for your loss.

CHONCHITA

Where is Father Ortiz?

JUAN

Oh... he had a ... big ... hmmm... baptism.

CHONCHITA

Ohhhh. And what's your name?

JUAN

Juan

CHONCHITA

Juan what?

JUAN

Juan Juan.

CHONCHITA

Oh, how nice. Smile!

She takes a me-picture with her phone.

JUAN

Oh, please—no photographs...its disrespectful.

CHONCHITA

Oh, OK no problem. Do I sit here?

JUAN

No, that's for the family.

CHONCHITA

Where should I sit?

JUAN

In the corner.

CHONCHITA

Ooh! Such a bad boy. *(brief pause)* I'm going to pay my respects. *(She goes up to the body.)* Oh. You look like shit. I'm sorry to say it. I gotta take a picture of this. *(she snaps a few photos including a Me-Pic with her leaning into the body and waving.)*

JUAN

Please!

CHONCHITA

It's no problem. This is Instagram. It's different *(notices)* Where is everybody? Maybe nobody showed up... kinda sad... he was a good man and all, but he had little problem with the... *(makes a sign for drinking)* I don't wanna say nothing bad about the dead, but... it's true. I should know. I see it all the time—right through their window.

JUAN

Maybe you are a little early.

CHONCHITA

Well this is not very interesting for me, so I'm going out there.... Do you have any refreshments? Donuts?

JUAN

Maybe...

CHONCHITA

OK See you later Juan Juan.

She exits. JUAN goes to look at the body again. Hector, the best friend of the deceased enters. JUAN immediately composes himself and moves to the podium.

HECTOR

Hola.

JUAN

(English) Hello. *(Bowing a formally with hand shake. There is a pause there JUAN does not let go of hand. HECTOR looks quizzically. Eventually JUAN lets go of the hand.)* Sorry. My name is Juan I will be the funeral... *(can't find the right word)*... person. And you are...?

HECTOR

(English) My name is Hector and the deceased was my best friend.

JUAN

Oh. *(he goes over to his notes...reads... returns and speaks formally again reaching out to shake his hand.)* Sorry for your loss.

HECTOR

(English) Where is the priest.

JUAN

He had... uh... a big wedding. Yes... a big wedding.

*HECTOR extracts himself from JUAN and goes to pay his respects.
He notices something odd about the body.*

HECTOR

Uh, excuse me... did someone move the body.

JUAN

No.

HECTOR

Are you sure?

JUAN

Yes.

HECTOR

No. Somebody moved this body. I know this man. He was my friend for many years. And never in his entire life did he ever look like THIS. *(He makes a face.)*

JUAN

Are you sure?

HECTOR

How can you ask me this question? Yes, I am sure—somebody moved the body. Yes I am sure... never never never did he do this. *(He makes a face.)*

JUAN

Well I can't say.

HECTOR

My friend was a revolutionary.... Never, never, never would he ever look to the right. Only to the left.

JUAN

Well what do you think you will do then?

HECTOR

I'll tell you what we are going to do. WE are going to reposition the body.

JUAN

WE can't touch the body.

HECTOR

WE have to.

JUAN

Well maybe we can just move the coffin a little bit and the head will roll... *(he demonstrates)* this way.

HECTOR

We need to hurry. I don't want the family to see him this way.

They make a big effort to move the body. Enter WIFE and MOTHER of the deceased. JUAN and HECTOR immediately stop. JUAN tries to disappear.

MOTHER

Oh oh oh *(crying)*

WIFE

What is going on here?

MOTHER goes to coffin. Crying loudly. HECTOR goes to MOTHER. WIFE goes to JUAN. During the following dialogue HECTOR will lead MOTHER to sit.

WIFE

Why were you on top of my husband.

JUAN

I am the new Hmmm pastor...

WIFE

You're a priest?

JUAN

Someday maybe... someday...

WIFE

You're not a priest?

JUAN

...IF I can make through. (*Spanish*) si sobrevivo este dia lo sere

WIFE

Where is the real priest.

JUAN

He ... he... he had very ...very big ... catechism... to teach...
Please! Sit here, I have a special chair for you here.

They go to a chair. She sits. JUAN goes to leave but WIFE grabs his arm.

WIFE

Don't mess this up!

MOTHER

Why don't you cry. What's wrong with you?

WIFE

(*Under breath.*) you're crying enough for the both of us.

MOTHER

You didn't love this man? You didn't love my son.

WIFE

Of course I ...

MOTHER

Then you should be crying. But no, you're a cold hearted woman who didn't deserve my son... and next thing you know you'll be kicking me out of the house...

WIFE

Have you been drinking?

MOTHER

(spansih) ¡Hijo! ¡Hijo! (see's living son) Hijo. (remembering dead son) ¡Hijo!

BROTHER of deceased and SON of deceased enter. JUAN goes to shake their hand but BROTHER moves past to immediately go to WIFE. SON has been drinking a little bit.

BROTHER

Hola mami.

WIFE

¡Hijo!

SON

Hi mom.

SON

(Shaking hand of JUAN.) Yo soy el hijo.

BROTHER

Yo, el hermano.

JUAN

So sorry for your loss.

WIFE comes down to him. MOTHER seizes opportunity to sit in WIFE chair.

WIFE

(Going to son.) Oh, so you've been drinking too.

SON

Solo un poquito, ¿era mi padre no?

WIFE

(Spanish.) Eres igual que tu abuela. *(Goes back to chair and notices...)* So now you're going to sit in my chair? Moving into my home wasn't enough for you?

BROTHER

My brother. Mi hermano. Como te voy a extrañar, al fin la suerte está de mi lado.

CHONCHITA enters.

CHONCHITA

Oooh, hello *Juanon Juanon*. HELLO every body! *(Takes a picture Goes down to grave. Speaks to corpse.)* Don't look now but wait til you see whose gonna be coming through that door any minute.

MOTHER

(To son.) Give me a shot. *(He hands her the flask.)*

ALONDRA, the mistress, enters. She is dressed a bit too elegantly for the occasion. HECTOR crosses to her directly and grabs her just as JUAN reaches out.

JUAN

So sorry for your...

HECTOR

(dragging her downstage.) What are you doing here.

ALONDRA

I have as much right to be here as she does.

HECTOR

No. You shouldn't be here.

SON crosses to ALONDRA

SON

Hey Alondra, what are you doing here. And looking so *bonita*.

ALONDRA

(crossing away from the me both.) Please.

SON

(Following her.) You always look so beautiful. Why won't you answer my calls? Why won't you go out with me? One date. Just one date.

ALONDRA

Miguel, leave me alone.

SON

Hey, what are you doing here, anyways?

ALONDRA

Miguel, just go.

He leaves dejected. WIFE is noticing. She comes down stage.

WIFE

Excuse me.

ALONDRA

Yes?

WIFE

Did you know my husband well.

ALONDRA

Yes. Yes I did.

WIFE

Did you work with him.

ALONDRA

No.

WIFE

Did you go to church with my husband?

Oh, no

ALONDRA

Are you old friends?

WIFE

Not old, but we're friends.

ALONDRA

What exactly are you doing here?

WIFE

¿Qué estoy haciendo aquí? ¿Qué haces tú aquí mejor dicho?

ALONDRA

¿Que, qué hago yo aquí? Yo soy la esposa, and who are YOU?

WIFE

¡Yo soy la amante!

ALONDRA

All gasp...

His mistress?!

WIFE

Explosion and chaos. Finally...

NO! NO! STOP STOP STOP!

JUAN

¡Tú eres una descarada!!

WIFE

Chaos and mayhem

Everyone shut the fuck up! (*mayhem stops*) Oh, sorry. You sit here. You over there. (*He crosses to podium. And switches to English.*) I may not be Father ORTIZ but I am supposed to conduct this funeral. My English is very bad, I hate the dead bodies, and you

are all crazy! But I will do this Fuerte! Fuerte! (*clams down a bit.*) And now for the sermon... “when you close your eyes...”

BROTHER

Wait wait! (*He pushes chairs aside and goes to WIFE*)

WIFE

What now?

BROTHER

Perdóname mi hermano. All these years you’ve been married to my brother, I’ve been waiting to say this to you. Mi querida, I love you

WIFE

¡Ay qué asco!!

BROTHER

(*Kneeling.*) will you marry me?

MARIACHI

Fiesta!

Enter mariachi band. All dance.

B

BECKY

Buenas Noches. Good Evening!

Wow! It's funny for me to be in that scene this time, because the last time this scene was played, I was sitting right where you are. My name is Becky Aviles and I have been at TPC for 2 years. It was 3 years ago when I heard that The Cleveland Public Theater was having a play with Hispanic performers and I did not want to miss it for the world.

I also thought it would be nice to see the play with my son. As we all know High School can be tough, especially for a Hispanic boy living in the burbs. Acceptance was his goal, and it broke my heart every time he made comments about how he didn't like "those Spanish things". I wanted him to see something that would make him proud of his heritage and connected to the community.

After asking him several times and being unable to convince him, I did what every Hispanic mother knows how to do well and that is... Take control of the situation with FOOD!

I said to my son, if you come to see the play with me, I promise to take you to El Rincon Criollo right before the show and you can order your favorite dish: Arroz blanco, Chuletas, y Chicharrones. He smiled and immediately agreed.

We had a great time, and I witnessed how theater could help bring us together. And it wasn't just fun and comedy. The TPC ensemble always finds the way to combine humorous situations with serious topics of identity and reconciling with the past.

This next scene is the second funeral the poor seminary student, JUAN, had to officiate. You will see him desperately trying to find out information about the deceased, JOSE RODRIGUEZ, so he can give a good *iulugi*... but things get **Really Complicated !!!**

José Rodríguez

JUAN excitedly arranges the room. He is repeating things to himself like “so sorry for your loss” and “may I ask you a question,” “pardon me but how are you related to the deceased?” Maybe he is sharpening his pencil or arranging notes.

JUAN

José Rodríguez, José Rodríguez...

Hello! Welcome...I mean... so sorry for your loss.

EVALISSE

Thank you. Um... is anyone here.

JUAN

You're the first.

She begins walking in, JUAN stops her.

Before you go in I need to ask you a few questions.

EVALISSE

(a bit taken aback) Um, ok.

JUAN

How did you know Mr. Jose Rodriguez? What was his job? Where was he from? Did he have any children? And when is the last time you saw him...

EVALISSE

What???

JUAN

So sorry... hmm... *(more calmly)* How did you know the deceased?

EVALISSE

Jose?

JUAN

Yes. Jose.

EVALISSE

He was our chauffeur, when I was a kid.

JUAN

OK (studiously writing it down)

EVALISSE

I haven't seen Jose for ten years probably.

JUAN

(Pause) And?

EVALISSE

I'm not sure how well I knew him, but he was my friend. See, my parents ran a big business together. They came to the US when they were kids and really made a name for themselves. They built their company and I guess I'm lucky. Went to the best schools. Always got what I wanted for Christmas. Except for what I really wanted... a mom and dad. They were always gone. Jose became my friend. He would really listen to me. He taught me how to listen too. He didn't speak great English and I didn't really speak Spanish—I could understand it, but I didn't really speak it... I didn't want to. My mom would nag me “how come you don't speak Spanish, Evalisse?” And I was like, “because none of my friends do, duh.”

Jose heard that. One day, while driving me home, after listening to all the stupid things of my day—which boy pulled my hair, why veronica was mad at sam, and how Mrs. Tanner still couldn't say my name right so we decided she would call me Lisa, one day, after listing to all that. He pulled over and turned around in his seat. He looked at me with those deep brown eyes. He spoke in his best English. Miss Evalisse, where are you going? I drive you all over... but soon you will drive yourself. Then what? Where will you go? Where will you go with your life?” Then he turned back and drove the rest of the way home. And then it was back to normal, him telling me funny stories growing up in Puerto Rico.

JUAN

Excuse me. Puerto Rico? Puerto Rico.

EVALISSE

Well a few weeks later, I was crying in the back seat. Can't remember why. And once again he pulled over and turned. “Miss Evalisse, how can you know where you are going if you don't know where you've been?” “What?” “Your mother's right.” “What?” “You need to learn Spanish, not for your mother or for me, but for yourself. You are your mother tongue. Then he chuckled—“Hey if you don't then you gonna be Lisa for the rest of your life.” That was a long time ago. We moved. I learned to drive... I never said ... I

never said... *Gracias. Gracias por ser mi amigo. Gracias por enseñarme a encontrar mi camino. Gracias por compartir el tiempo conmigo. Gracias por darme mi idioma. Yo no me llamo Lisa ... nadie mas va a llamarme Lisa. Mi nombre es Evalisse.*

JUAN

OK! Puerto Rico. Chauffeur and child counselor. You can sit down now...

He sees Emilio enter.

EVALISSE

Can't I go to the...?

JUAN

No. Go sit down. Hello!

JUAN

Did you know the deceased, Jose Rodriguez?

EMILIO

Why else would I be here? Father Rodriguez was my priest in Uruguay. I heard he came to the states. I heard he moved to Cleveland. Small world. Then I saw his name in the obituary. José Rodríguez. I came. Excuse me, but why is the lid closed?

JUAN

Ummm. Not sure about that... maybe he was decapitated? I mean... ummm... maybe he didn't want an open casket... it happens.

EMILIO

Too bad. I really wanted to see his face. I won't lie to you. Él no fue un gran hombre.

JUAN

Oh, not sure if I want to hear this.

EMILIO

Well I'm, here to tell someone, and it might as well be you. I was in high school. I was in love. Embelesar di lllamos. Top of our class, the brightest, the most beautiful. But I figured, I was too unpopular, too ugly, I thought we could never be together... but I was wrong... we start holding hands. Fuimos a dar un paseo y nos besamos. We are kissing and touching, and I am thinking this is a miracle from god, from heaven, mientras nos besábamos, yo agradecía a Dios por el milagro.

Suddenly Father Rodriguez grabs me by the shoulder. I look at him and think yes, he is here to witness this miracle. But no. He hits me hard. And turns to Bernardo, my love, and tells him. "Go home Bernardo, this never happened." And I say, "Bernardo, I love you."

Father kicks me in the gut and Bernardo is crying and crying. He doesn't know what to do. He says "Perdóname" and runs.

Father Rodriguez turns to me and says, don't you know who that kid is? Don't you know his family? Never show your face at my school again.

I was expelled, for love. For a miracle.

JUAN

OK well thank you, so sorry.

EMILIO

Can you open this?

JUAN

NO!

Hello, welcome, how were you related to the deceased?

EVA MARIE

Era un amigo. Era un amigo muy cercano. I haven't seen him for a long time. Too long.

JUAN

Tell me about him, he was from ...Uruguay-Rico?

EVA MARIE

No, no, no, José no era de Puerto Rico. He was from Mexico.

JUAN

I don't think so...

EVA MARIE

¿Cómo que no? Are you crazy... el era Mexicano. Yo soy Puertorriqueña. If he was Puertorican, maybe... maybe... it would have been different. We could have...

JUAN

¿Qué?

EVA MARIE

We were young... I was young and so afraid. I didn't know what to do. You wouldn't understand.

JUAN

You can tell me. He has passed. Now is a time for healing....

EVA MARIE

Its been so long... we were kids. We had a connection, una coneccion bien especial. But my parents.... You have to understand, they were muy tradicional, he was from a poor family, and el era "Mexicano".

JUAN

¿Qué tiene que ver eso?

EVA MARIE

Todo! My parents wouldn't let us be together. And I could never, never cross my parents. I grew up in a very strict home.

JUAN

So... you haven't seen him recently.

EVA MARIE

No. Hace un tiempo me casé, tengo niños.

JUAN

Oh... did your husband know...?

EVA MARIE

No... and now it doesn't matter. Nos divorciamos. My husband ...no era mi amor verdadero. For five years, I am alone. I heard Jose had come back to town to take care of his father. Almost everyday, I thought about going to him... I dreamed about it... I wanted to tell him... I wanted to see him... but I was too afraid. Now its too late. What was I afraid of? If he were here, right now... I would tell him... the truth "toda mi vida tuvistes mi corazón.

JUAN

(Long pause...) So sorry for your loss.

ARMANDO

Maybe I shouldn't be here.....dicen que es mejor perdonar..... It's done.

JUAN

Tell me about Jose.

ARMANDO

You mean, Sergeant Rodriguez?

JUAN

Yes—he was from Mexico, right?

ARMANDO

What are you talking about—he was from Puerto Rico! Are you stupid? He was Puerto Rican just like me...

I came here for a reason..... ¡Yo vine para hacer algo!!

But now that I am here.....am I doing wrong? Should I do this? Esta gente aquí..... Who are they and how do they know Sgt. Rodriguez? They probably think he's some war hero. ¡Pero no lo conocen! There were no heroes in Vietnam..... I mean, yes there were heroes, but we weren't wanted.

I went there with all those emotions...images... Manhood... Machismo... Heroism... para hacer Hombre, but they didn't want heroes from America. When I finally realized this--- -- it was downhill from there for me. Quería regresa a casa.

¡Tú! Sgt Rodríguez, you ordered us. Do this. Haz eso.....para América,.....and I did. I followed your orders. I followed your orders Sgt Rodríguez. ¿Qué más podía hacer? I acted, not out of my own will, but at your command.... a false command. Me estaban usando, pero seguí las órdenes.

(sp) Remember that night.....we followed your orders. We did what you said.....hold that line..... Hold that line.....we held it as long as we could, you were supposed to cover for us. But when we fell back.... You were gone. Te fuiste. ¡Corriste como un conejo! ¡Cobarde!

We didn't make it.....Jackson.....O'Brian caeron muertos.....I survived.....

but I was the only one

You left us behind. I promised.... that day when you came to my hospital bed, con tus disculpas de mierda. Prometí, I will spit on your grave.

Here I am sgt. Aquí estoy después de tantos años.

JUAN

Excuse me... but ... no spitting ... please...

Junior has entered.

ARMANDO

Forget you and this coward.

JUNIOR

Woah, what's your problem.

ARMANDO

Sgt. Rodríguez ruined my life!

JUNIOR

(Looks around...) Who are you? What are you all doing here?

JUAN

What are YOU doing here?

JUNIOR

This is my father's funeral! Where's Father Ortiz? And what are you all doing here? Did you all know my father?

EMILIO

Father Rodríguez ruined my life...

EVALISSE

No, he was my chauffeur!

ARMANDO

No! He was a cobarde!

JUNIOR

No no no, my father wasn't any of that. He was my father, he grew up in a poor family in Mexico. Se equivocan, él no es el José que ustedes conocen.

JUAN

¿Otro José Rodríguez?

JUNIOR

Exactamente.

Realization creeps through the crowd.

EMILIO

¿Otro Rodríguez?

EVALISSE

¿Otro?

ARMANDO

¿Otro Rodríguez?

EVA MARIE

Jose? You're not dead?

JUNIOR

Eva Marie?

EVA MARIE

When I read the obituary I thought... Jose.

JUNIOR

What are you doing here.

EVA MARIE

José. Toda mi vida tuvistes mi corazón.

*Everyone is quiet... what will happen?
Blackout*

BLANCA

BLANCA

Hi everyone, I'm Blanca Salva and like Leti, I am a founding member of Teatro Publico. And like Becky I was also able to be in our production of Johanna: Facing Forward by Tlaloc Rivas. A powerful play about Johanna Orozco's personal journey to healing and advocacy.

This play also facilitated us working with other professional actors from Cleveland Public Theatre and we learned so much.

Throughout Teatro Publico we all also shared our personal stories and stories from our families and from our heritage. In our first play, I got to perform a story very special for me. The story of my mother. And when I performed this monologue she was sitting in the front row, so proud. She felt honored and empowered by hearing her story being told to the whole community.

BLANCA MONOLOGUE

I want my daughters and all women to never lose faith. When my mother was 17 years old her parents made her go to convent because she wanted to go to college but in her days girls were to get married and start a family but since there were no suitors that were acceptable to her parents they decided to send her to a convent. Unfortunately that convent was in Cuba, world renowned and highly respected, an unbeknownst to the world, it was also Battista's private torture castle. That meant that she would have to leave her family, her isla bonita and friends behind and go to new country where there was no one there that she knew but because she was a faithful child to her parents and faithful to her church she listened and left unfortunately she was sent to convent that had very questionable things going on while she was at the convent all of her letters to and from her family were taken she was told that she had to obey your every command that her mother Superior made to her.

Everyday she would say her prayers in Spanish the Our Father and the Hail Marys. Everyday she would be punished whipped with sticks or olive branches. Every day that she didn't eat the three pound loaf of bread with the large bowl of soup she would be whipped and punished and starved and not given food for the entire day. Every time she questioned why a soldier would walk in with these young women some very young some small children some pregnant and she would hear their screams and question why are these children screaming and crying and why don't we ever see them? she would be punished. There were many a night that she spent on a cold cement slab floor with nothing on, no blanket, no lights, nothing to keep her warm but the memories of her home and her family. There were many times where she was made to scrub the floors with just a small toothbrush until her knuckles bled and many many times she had to kneel on grains of rice with her hands above her head up to the sky asking God for forgiveness for hours on end until her knees bled and the rice beneath her knees turn red from her blood. This continues for years and for years she felt she was losing herself getting weaker and weaker by the moment but she kept on praying she kept on believing that God has a purpose for her and she would not allow these individuals to take her love of God away. She felt very sick and asked the mother Superior if she could be seen by a doctor but because she was a female and a nun she was not allowed to be examined by any man for any reason so she was punished because they said if she had enough faith she would be cured they made her work with leprosy outcasts, with the poorest of the poor and she enjoyed it because she knew what it felt like to be punished to feel alone hungry cold and unwanted. And there amongst these people, she felt God's love and her faith strength.

She never gave up believing in God or her faith. One day her brother who'd been away at war came home and asked his parents about his sister, they told him how they sent her to the convent but hadn't heard or seen or received any news of her since she left. He petitioned the Cuban government to visit his sister but he was only allowed to see her from outside the convent gates. He didn't recognize the frail woman walking towards the

gate, his eyes welled up with tears when he realized it was his baby sister, how she aged, how thin and frail she looked almost like a skeleton, he fought back tears but the tears burned his cheeks as she revealed the torturous life she has endured, how she had been sick for over a year and was not allowed to see a doctor. Her brother got her out of the convent and as they left she told him how she still kept herself obedient and true to her faith, she forgave her torturers because it gave her poder/strength, y una fe eterna and someday if she ever married and had children she will tell them her story if they ever doubted what it means to have Faith

D

ALEX

Q-vole, que onda? Como estan? My name is Alex Corona. Proud Member of Teatro Publico for 2 years now! If someone would have told me 3 years ago that I was going to be part of an all Latino Theatre group I would have told them they were absolutely crazy. First of all, in order to be part of any theatre group you have to get up on stage...and act...in front of people...in public. Uh, no thank you, not for me! 2nd of all, an all Latino theatre group? I probably would've laughed in their face. I mean, I was born and raised in Cleveland, right here in Ohio City in fact, before it was "nice", and I knew enough to know that theatre just wasn't a place for Latinos, at least here in Cleveland it wasn't. 3 years ago, all of that changed.

I was actually working here at CPT as a graphic designer at that time. I remember feeling happy to be coming back and actually working in my old neighborhood.

One day at work I was given an assignment. Workshops were being announced for an all Latino theatre group. "Come share your stories" it said! CPT was looking to create an all Latino ensemble to put on a play with all Latino actors. I instantly became so happy and excited about it. I would hear talk about it around the office and I thought to myself. Wow, this is really happening. As the graphic designer here at CPT I got to design the very first Poster for the very first play by Teatro Publico, Cunado Cierras, Your Eyes."

I remember opening night for that first play. The theatre was filled with music, there was food and a bunch of Latinos in the building. It was incredible. Then we took our seats and the stage lights came on. It actually happened. The first, to my knowledge, all Latino cast in a play about us, right here in Cleveland, in my old neighborhood, where I worked! The only way I could describe it was pure happiness. To see the actors on stage acting so passionately. I thought to my self I have to be part of this. Here I am 2 years later, in love with theatre and part of the Teatro Publico familia. I'm so proud of the founding cast member, including my brother-in-law, Alejandro Moreno, for having the courage to be the first to pave the way for us and hopefully for many generations to come.

Felicidad Pura. Teatro Publico is about community. It's about telling stories, writing, laughing and eating together. During a rehearsal, on a break we started talking about food. Everyone was getting animated and the conversation became part of the rehearsal and we all learned about food form eachother's cultures and we shared our stories of how food connected us to our past. This is a story written by Aida Rivera for our second big creation, Recipe para la Vida. Tonight its performed by Lucia Stone.

Recipe Monologues

LUCIA

December 2011, my whole family made plans to go home to visit our grandmother for Christmas. We were so happy because we were going home to Puerto Rico! And we looked forward to sharing special time with Abuelita and eating her specialties: pasteles, morcillas, empanadillas. Hmmmm. And Abuelita was soo happy that all of her five kids, grand kids and one great grandson were coming to see her, coming from Virginia, New York, California. My cousin Fernando who was in the navy in Germany was coming too!

By December 21st, Grandma was ready for us: the pasteles were done, Christmas decorations were up and everything was ready!

On December 22 , my uncle Luis from Puerto Rico called everyone to let us know that grandma was very ill. Abuela passed away on the 24th and everyone was devastated.

On Christmas day, everyone went to Puerto Rico.

There was all the food she had made.
There were the decorations she prepared.
She made an incredible party for us, and we celebrated our amazing grandmother together.

ALEX

I have a picture of my Mom. She was holding me as a small child. Happy as can be. As any mother and child should be. For whatever reasons, we were pulled apart. 35 years later, Enchiladas de Mole brought her back to me. "M'hijo, ven a comer. Hice enchiladas de mole." Wherever I was, whatever I was doing, I drove as fast as I could to Mom's house. The mole was good but the conversations with Ma were even better. Although we could never make up for lost time, mmmm, our time together, just you and I, was delicious. I was't ready to let you go. Miss you Ma.

PABLO

This is the story I told in one of the workshops.

My grandma made the most delicious food dishes. She put that special ingredient on the plates that up to these dates I don't know what it was. That sazón and flavor was always there. One of my favorite dish from her was Guanimes con Bacalao (Cod Fish). She don't make it often. Pero cuando los hacía "Ay mi madre" the pot was empty. It was the favorite of many in our family.

I remembered how the smell of Bacalao was all over the house and how she tried to showed me how to do make the Guanimes. La harina, the flour, sticks in my fingers and covered allover my body trying to help mi abuelita (grandma). She looked at me covered in flour, todo blanco, and she laughed and joked about it.

It was at the hospital when I was right next to the bed that she told me "No te preocupes m'hijo que yo te hago los Guanimes cuando salga de aquí " Don't worry I will make you Guanimes when I am well again. It was the look on her face that struck me. I remember that I looked down, wipe my eyes and ask for la bendición, kissed her in the cheek and left. I knew she would not fulfill her promise. She would never make Guanimes con Bacalao again. But when I remember her, she's not in the hospital. She's at the stove, and I am covered in flour. I love you Grandma and wherever you are I know that your sazón and flavor is there.

Mi nombre es Ernesto Guevara Luna.

ERNESTO

Mi nombre es Ernesto Guevara Luna.

MÓNICA

My name is Ernesto Guevara Luna.

ERNESTO.

Yo recuerdo a mi padre haciendo un asado a las brazas en el patio de mi casa.

Padre enters and grills meat.

MÓNICA

I remember my father grilling steak in the back yard, **un asado a las brazas.**

ERNESTO

Y mi madre cantando un tango.

Madre enters.

MÓNICA

And my mother singing a tango.

ERNESTO

Yo adivino el parpadeo

ERNESTO AND MADRE

De las luces que a lo lejos

ERNESTO, MADRE, AND PADRE

Van marcando mi retorno.

Son las mismas que alumbraron
Con sus pálidos reflejos
Hondas horas de dolor.

ERNESTO

Y aunque no quise el regreso
Siempre se vuelve al primer amor.

ERNESTO

Nací en Montevideo, Uruguay en 1973

MÓNICA

I was born in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1973

ERNESTO

En ese año mi país y gran parte de Latino América caían en los años oscuros. Gente inocente desaparecía por pensar diferente. La palabra libertad así como también ciertos nombres considerados revolucionarios y subversivos eran prohibidos.

MÓNICA

During that year my country and greater part of Latin America was falling into dark years. Innocent people disappeared because of thinking differently. The word FREEDOM and certain names were considered revolutionary and subversive, **forbidden**.

ERNESTO

My father never did anything without a purpose. In a bet with my godfather El Gallego my dad made a statement by naming me Ernesto Guevara, just like Che Guevara. Do you know who Che Guevara is? CHE Guevara el gran revolucionario. This almost made me one of the so many disappeared babies. En la escuela las maestras tosían por miedo a decir mi nombre.

MÓNICA

At school the teachers would cough in fear of saying his name. He started breathing fear without understanding why. One night los milicos... came kicking doors open and searching without a warrant.

MILICO

¡Abran la puerta, documentos!!

MÓNICA

His mother's instinct made her hide him in the closet. His sister (pause) stayed with Mom holding hands and giving her more strength and courage. The guards entered the room and viciously search each corner. Before leaving one of them spat on the floor and on the wall.

MILICO

¡MIERDA. AQUÍ NO HAY NADA, LARGUEMONOS!!!

MÓNICA

He was just a baby

ERNESTO

Yo sólo era un bebé.

MÓNICA

He could have cried, but he didn't. An angel was in the house that night.

ERNESTO

Mi madre dijo que un ángel llegó esa noche a casa y le dio un consejo.

MÓNICA

The angel told her

MADRE AND ANGELS

“Do not say that you have a son whose name should not be named, make up a name but never say his name is Ernesto.”

MÓNICA

Ernesto.

MADRE

Yo recuerdo.

ERNESTO

Yo recuerdo. Ernesto.

Years later I remember my father, mi Viejo, at the grill, cooking up meat. El asado a las brazas.

MÓNICA

He was a master of the grill. He would always pour some beer on to the flames.

ERNESTO

Eso era como un ritual.

MÓNICA

And he would say:

PADRE

Para que los muertos sepan que hay un asado y que vengan a compartir con los vivos un día en familia.

Padre exits.

MÓNICA

“This is for the dead ones, so they will know that there is un asado and they will come and share with the living, a day with the family.”

ERNESTO

Since I was a kid I splash some of my drink, I still do it. I close my eyes and I can hear the whispers of time telling me a fragment of the past that will never be back. It is my “thank you,” my gratitude, that... (*small pause*).

I am here.

I am NOT one of the disappeared.

I am here now.

ERNESTO AND MADRE

Sentir.

Que es un soplo la vida

Que veinte años no es nada

Que febril la mirada

Errante en las sombras

Te busca y te nombra.

ERNESTO

Vivir.

Con el alma aferrada

A un dulce recuerdo

Que lloro otra vez.

My name is Ernesto Guevara Luna.

MONICA

Hola mi nombre es Monica Cerpa Zuniga y soy uno de los miembros de Teatro Publico de Cleveland. En el Otono del 2013, cuando se dio a luz a la primera produccion de TPC, tuve la suerte de venir al teatro con unos amigos. Dejenme decirles, no habian tickets, las taquillas estaban totalmente vendidas. Gracias al contacto de una de mis amigas en el grupo logramos entrar sentandonos muy pegadas a la pared, en donde habian aumentado sillas para evitar que mas que mas gente tuviese que irse sin ver la obra.

Quede enamorada con la presentacion, rei, llore y hasta cante En mi Viejo San Juan. Sin mucho que pensar al anio siguiente me uni al Proyecto. Empece con el taller en el Verano del 2014 y casi inmediatamente tuve la oportunidad de participar con el grupo en uno de los shows.

Empece con un pequeno rol en Pandemonium, que con el tiempo se tranformo en varias lineas mas. Creamos la segunda obra de TPC En Donde esta My Home. Raymond no dudo en lanzarme al agua cuando me dijo que cantaria en ella, y todo por que se me ocurrio sugerir la cancion para la obra. Nunca imagine que en algun momento yo estaria actuando y mucho menos cantando. Ese fue solo el comienzo. Despues de mas participaciones, los miembros de Teatro Publico decidimos que queriamos poner en escena una obra completamente en Espanol. Esta fue Mi Munequita, escrita por el Uruguayo Gabriel Calderon y dirigida por nuestro propio Dante Fernando Larzabal, tambien miembro de TPC. Para Dante esta fue su primera oportunidad de dirigir en los Estados Unidos. Para mi, la primera oportunidad de asistir con la direccion de una obra. Sin darme cuenta, estaba mas envuelta de lo que pensaba. Donde esta My Home, A Recipe Para la Vida, Station Hope, Pandemonium, Mi Munequita, y de repente Uz El Pueblo, nuevamente bajo la direccion de Dante y en donde tuve un papel principal. Para quienes vieron la obra, creanme fue todo un reto, a nivel profesional y a nivel personal, y me siento muy orgullosa de haberlo logrado, lo disfrute increiblemente. Hace solo unas semanas diriji mi primera obra Mariel's List, escrita por Natividad Uehara, quien fuera miembro de CPT hasta hace unos meses. Si alguien me hubiera dicho que estaria haciendo todo esto despues de casi tres anios en TPC no lo hubiera creido pero es una realidad. TPC esta abriendole muchas puertas a nuestra comunidad Hispana. Ahora, dejenme decirles, no todo es ensayos y actuaciones, compartimos aun mas. Para que tengan una idea, imaginen Puertoriquenos, Mexicanos, Guatemaltecos, Uruguayos, Nigaraguenses, Colombianos, Cubanos y Peruanos, todos juntos, esa mezcla de culturas, de costumbres, emociones, diferencias, similitudes, reunidas al mismo tiempo, para 3-4 horas de ensayo, es un ambiente unico, no digo fiesta porque estamos trabajando..... pero al final fiesta. Hemos formado una familia que tiene como meta dar a conocer lo nuestro y que asi como nosotros gozamos y estamos orgullosos de nuestra herencia

Hispana/Latina queremos compartirla con ustedes, que se lleven un poquito de nosotros. Estoy agradecida a mi familia por su constante e incondicional apoyo. Y especialmente quiero agradecerles a cada uno de ustedes, que han venido a apoyar a uno de mis companeros actores, o por curiosidad, o porque escucharon algo acerca de TPC, creo hablar por mis companeros cuando les digo, GRACIAS POR SU PRESENCIA ESTA NOCHE.

CAR SCENE

Doors slam. DAD begins driving, then turns radio off.

MOM

Pónganse su cinturón.

LUISA

I have a headache!

JULIO

You always have a headache. *(He pushes her into Alex)*

ANDRE

Stop pushing me!

Moment of mayhem in the back with lots of pushing and “MOM! He’s pushing me...”

MOM

¡Cállense por favor! Niños, cállense.

DAD

Kids! You all know, we’re going to your Tía Anita’s house.

KIDS

(whining) ¡Tía Anita!

DAD

I hope you behave. Please behave. She helped to raise me. I want you to be on your most respectful behavior and remember

KIDS

“Bendición.”

ANDRE

Let me see your hand real quick. Check this out. Keep it loose, keep it loose. Ready? More loose, its part of the trick. Wait till you see this. Good. Ready? Watch... 1-2-3*(He smashes Julio’s hand into Luisa’s face.)*

LUISA

Ow! Mom, Andre just hit me.

ANDRE

I didn't hit you—Julia did.

JULIO

I didn't do anything.

DAD

Guys, stop! Can you behave please? I'm telling you: you have to be on your best behavior. Tia is a wonderful woman! She's expecting you to behave over there. ¡Una maravillosa mujer!

Pause

ANDRE

Yeah, great woman...

Pause

LUISA

Yeah, except when she farts! (*everyone laughs*)

DAD

Kids, c'mon, ok? Respect your elders! She's a wonderful woman.

JULIO

Except when she's got the chancla!

DAD

Oh yeah,

MOM

Gotta watch out for that! Hasta a mi me dio el día de nuestra boda. Y tu papá. He probably got it worse when he was a kid.

DAD

But look how I turned out!

No comment... pause with faces.

Hopefully she won't be drinking.

ANDRE

She always gives me a sip.

JULIO

I hate going there because I always get stuck to the plastic on the couches.

DAD

Those are the only chairs she has. She has to protect them.

MOM

Y ella siempre hablando mal de tu Tio. Las mujeres deberían ser más cariñosas con sus esposos. No entiendo como el la aguanta.

DAD

That's love. That's the way it is.

JULIO

She bites the nails and spits them on her floor!

ANDRE

And how come she keeps leaving the room? She has to keep going to the bathroom!

MOM

¡Just like tu papá!

DAD

Eh, c'mon!

MOM

¡Es cierto! Hasta en nuestra noche de bodas. ¡Hey hey hey— pon atención en el camino!

DAD

I am watching the road! You want to drive

MOM

Always riding people's tails. Y muy agresivo frenando y no mirando el camino. You see that's your problem, you don't watch the road, in the car and in life. You never listen.

JULIO

Why are you farting?!

ANDRE

Uh, gross!

LUISA

I couldn't help it! We just had tacos!

JULIO

Do you need to change your pants?

Mayhem ensues among the kids. Julio starts biting his nails.

MOM

Eh, stop it! ¡Cállanse!

She turns and starts beating them with the chanclas.

LUISA

Not the chanclas!

Dad gets into the action too with the his shoe...

DAD

(Timing each hit with a word) SHOW... SOME...RES...SPECT.

JULIO

Dad—come on, the chanclas is one thing... but your shoe?

ANDRE

Dad! I gotta go to the bathroom!

Mayhem ends with a general groan... of "not again."

DAD

You have to hold it. We're almost here.

Slams on brakes. All respond. Pause.

DAD

Ok, we're here. Please behave, guys. Be nice.

Grumbling until the door opens

ALL

¡TÍA!!

Bendición...etc....

DAD

It's so good to be home again.

F

CHRISTINA

Buenas Noches, Familia:

Mi nombre es Christina. Soy nueva al conjunto...mas o menos.

Mi viaje con Teatro Publico de Cleveland empezo el ano pasado cuando asisti a mi primer taller (workshop). Inmediatamente el grupo me aceptaron como familia.

No pude participar en la obra pero trabaje de voluntaria en “Donde Esta Mi Hogar”. La vi muchas veces y cada vez comprendi cosas nuevas y facetas diferentes.

Con la ayuda del Teatro Publico de Cleveland aprendemos mucho de otros en nuestra comunidad. Como valores que nos unen y tambien elementos que nos hacen diferentes. Por ejemplo, nuestra idioma.

some words in one place can get you into trouble some where else...If you're in Mexico, and you would like to offer someone some cake, don't use the common Rican word for cake or pastry—that could lead to a BIIG misunderstanding.

The next scene represents one of those stories—a story many of you will know, but each of us has our own version.

Many thanks and may you enjoy the rest of the performance.

Scene LLORONA

Sounds of children laughing, playing in the streets, maybe an abuela calling a little girl home for dinner....

A red ball rolls out. She picks it up.

AIDA

Dáme la pelota

LIZ

Give me my ball

AIDA

Give me my ball nene

LIZ

Esta es mi pelota

AIDA

No, it's mine, Give me my ball!

LIZ

No, esta es mi pelota. ¡Dámela!

LLORONA – OFF STAGE

CÁLLATE oooooo mis hijos.....oooooo mis hijos

LIZ+AIDA

La llorona.... ¡LA LLORONA!

“Llorona” comes out

LLORONA

oooooo mis hijos. Ha, ha ha. That gets those kids every time. “La Llorona” ha ha ha.

LLORONA

¿Qué? You don't know who La Llorona is?

HAHHAHA You think you got it bad? You never heard the story of the Llorona? Let me tell you the story. Many years ago, right here, this very spot, there lived a young farm peasant girl, happy, full of life! She brought a smile to everyone's faces because she was so kind and generous to everyone in the village.

One day this priest came into town to teach the indigenous people about his religion. He came from Spain. A man of god, un hombre de dios. Wow!

MAGDA

Who are you?

PRIEST

I am the new priest.

MADGA

¿El nuevo cura del pueblo?

PRIEST

Yes! I am here to help people. The sick, the poor, the lonely.

MADGA

Yo soy la hija de panadero. I help people too! Every morning I bring bread to my neighbors!

LLORONA

He could tell she had a godly soul. She was giving and good.

PRIEST

Would you help me?

MAGDA

Yes!

PRIEST

First, we must find the church.

MAGDA

Yo te puedo llevar. ...I can take you there! Come with me!

PRIEST

Oh, My suitcase...

MAGDA

Oh, yes!

LLORONA

Everyday, they walked the village together, tending to the sick, giving blessings to the meek and spreading the word of the lord. Their desire to help others brought them closer and closer and closer together. Too close. And one day... they gave into those deep desires. Pasión carnal.

MAGDA

I love you

LLORONA

That was just the beginning of her tragedy.

PRIEST

What have we done! What have we done! Get out! ¡Lárgete! (*she touches his shoulder*)
Don't touch me!

LLORNA

And she showed up one day to the church, praying to her god and he praying to his god

PRIEST

You are a creature of the devil. You seduced me. That is not mine. I AM A MAN OF
GOD.

Magda transforms into being pregnant.

MAGDA

It's two babies. You have two children. Tus hijos.

PRIEST

¡Hijos de puta!

LLORONA

He threw her out on the street. He just left that woman alone, alone, alone with those children. And as they grew, that feeling got worse, the rejection, the pain and the hurt.

She becomes her.

And I tried! I tried to love them. I tried to love my two little hijos.

One day. I was on the bridge, over the river. Me and my two little ones. And by chance that man came to us. He looked at us, and he spat. PUTA DEL DIABLO.

PRIEST

Puta del diablo!

LLORONA

And there I did it! I gave those children back to their god. Yes, there, right there, I pushed and pushed until all the pain went away and they were no longer my suffering.

¡Ay dios! What have I done? ¡Ay, mis hijos! ...mis hijos...mis hijos...

G

DANTE

Hola, mi nombre es Dante, y si la memoria no me falla desde los 18 años en Uruguay ando en esto del teatro, me acuerdo de ese primer cosquilleo en el estómago cuando hice mi primer casting para una obra para niños, para probar si realmente me gustaba, "Nunca lo deje "aunque "nunca lo deje" es un poco mentiroso, en el 2003 en Uruguay la economía quebró y unos 200.000 Uruguayos emigraron a diferentes partes del mundo, entre ellos, yo

para despedirme fui a ver a la Comedia Nacional de Uruguay la obra "el ultimo Yanqui" de Arthur Miller a ver si podría llegar a entender algo de la sociedad americana antes de venir.

Sabía que hacer teatro aquí iba a ser muy difícil por muchas razones, idioma, contactos etc etc, pero había algo dentro de mí que me decía que iba a tener una oportunidad, pasaron 1, 2 ,3, 5, 8, 10 años y yo seguía pensando en esa oportunidad.

Un día como por arte de magia me llega un mail del CPT diciendo que querían formar un grupo de teatro formado por latinos, si yo estaba interesado, ¡Que si yo estaba interesado!!! Y cuando estrenamos la primera obra volví a sentir ese cosquilleo en el estómago de cuando tenía 18 años.

Tiger Lilies

*In a flower shop Grace is working behind the counter.
Santiago enters. He stands there for a moment. She notices him.*

GRACE

Oh, may I help you.

SANTIAGO

Yes, do you carry tiger lilies.

GRACE

Yes, would you like an arrangement with some tiger lilies.

SANTIAGO

No, I would like two dozen Tiger Lilies as a bouquet. Just the lilies.

GRACE

What?

SANTIAGO

Sorry, my English is not so good. This is my first time in the united states.

GRACE

No I think I understand, it's just a strange request.

SANTIAGO

It may seem like a strange request, but it's her favorite.

GRACE

Oh, ok, it was my mom's favorite too.
Is this a romantic gift?

SANTIAGO

Well, it's for a ... uh.. lost love.

GRACE

Oh, I'm so sorry. ...

SANTIAGO

No problem. It was a long time ago.

GRACE

Ohh, and you still send her flowers?

SANTIAGO

Yeah.

GRACE

Hmm, that's so nice. Maybe you'll get her back someday.

SANTIAGO

I don't think so, she passed. Last year.

GRACE

Oh... so sorry.

SANTIAGO

Yeah, I hadn't seen her in a long long time though. But I ... well...

GRACE

OH... so sorry.

SANTIAGO

This is my first chance to pay my respects. I always gave her Tiger Lilies.

GRACE

How sweet.

SANTIAGO

She looked a little bit like you actually. I mean when she was young. Same hair, and those eyes. Glasses. Cute.

GRACE

Thanks. *(Pause as she continues to prep the flowers.)*

Where did you say you're from?

SANTIAGO

Uruguay.

GRACE

Oh I hear its beautiful there. I always wanted to go there, because my mom used to talk about it all the time. She lived there for a while when she was young. She said it was some of the best times of her life.

SANTIAGO

Oh, do you know where she lived?

GRACE

Yes, La Paloma.

SANTIAGO

Oh, wow, that's where I'm from. *(Joking.)* Maybe I knew her. *(Laughs.)*

GRACE

She really wanted to go back but then she got sick. I wish I could go there for her. She raised me by herself and she was a great mom. I really should go... but ...

SANTIAGO

I'm so sorry.

GRACE

Um, do you want to write a card? I don't know if that's weird or...

SANTIAGO

Yes, can you write it for me?

GRACE

Sure.

SANTIAGO

My English spelling is not so good.
OK.
Maria...

GRACE

Did you say Maria?

SANTIAGO

Yes. Maria

GRACE

Uh, ok.

SANTIAGO

It's been so long but I have never forgotten.
I've never forgotten my love for you or our time together.

I've...

GRACE

Um, slow down.

SANTIAGO

Sorry.

GRACE

Ok, I'm caught up.

SANTIAGO

I remember the poem I wrote for you, when I first gave you these flowers. (It's the only poem I've ever written in english.)

Tiger Lilly Tiger Lilly
Strong, and fierce and free
Roaring in her Beauty

That's who you'll always be.

He doesn't see that she has stopped writing. She is staring at him.

Tiger Lily Tiger lily

All men see your lovely face,

Grace speaks the ending with him...

SANTIAGO AND GRACE

But I know your inner secret,
Your greatest gift is grace.

They stare at eachother.

GRACE

My mom used to say that poem...

They stare at eachother.

She named me after it... Grace.

SANTIAGO

(Mystified) ¿Qué?...

GRACE

My name is Grace.

SANTIAGO

How old are you?

GRACE

23.

SANTIAGO

And your mother's name?

GRACE

There's a lot of Marías

SANTIAGO

Her last name?

Gonzalez. GRACE

She never told me. SANTIAGO

She never told me. GRACE

The same eyes... Tú tienes los ojos de tu madre. SANTIAGO

H

JASON

Three years ago a colleague, and soon to be close friend, suggested that I check out this new theatre group for Latinos in Cleveland. He thought that this opportunity would be a perfect fit for my personality. I was new to the Hispanic/Latino community in Cleveland and I was still trying to find my place as a recent “boomerang” millennial. Not to mention, I had a dire fear of public speaking... But I gave it a chance.

I did not expect to find a home, a new family. People who taught me so much about who I am not only as a Latino but as a leader and as a young professional. These were people who held onto a wealth of knowledge that they so desired to pass along. I would soon learn that to many of them, this group meant the preservation of tradition and culture. It meant passing these stories onto the next generation.

To others, this meant finding home. Immigrant audience members openly shared finally feeling back in touch with their culture, something they longed for ever since leaving their countries of origin. They cried over common struggles, laughed at cultural commonalities...and differences, shared stories of their own and connected to members of what would become their new extended families.

This company is cherished by so many who view it as a chance to connect. Teatro Publico has earned its place as a mainstay in the community as an engine for cultural exchange.

To me, this work has transformed the way I approach life as a professional, as a Latino and how I tell the narrative of Latinos in Cleveland. Life-changing. A community of new faces took a chance on welcoming me into their lives both on and off stage. I was asked to take on additional responsibilities, to help grow the group-including myself. Social media, college presentations and tours, out of town conferences, local Hispanic events, I was really given the opportunity to grow as an artist, a community member and challenge my leadership capabilities. Raymond approached me one day over coffee to join the CPT Board of Directors. His sincere desire for diversity and inclusion has always been motivational for me and I knew that if I were to join the board, I could represent our community in an authentic and genuine way. I knew that it was important to have a voice from Teatro on the board to help energize the conversation around the groups work. I was, and still am, amazed at the amount of interest the board members and stakeholders have in Teatro Publico. There isn't a meeting that goes by where the groups upcoming or past work is looked forward to or cherished. There has always been a genuine thirst for our stories and a deep appreciation of the beauty that exists in our culture.

Three years ago I walked on stage for the first time in my life scared and insecure. Three years later I feel empowered, embraced and engaged because I know that we are delivering incredible work that transforms conversations, perceptions and unifies communities.

VUELO

SINGER

It started with the birds

She sings.

DANTE

La historia comienza con los pájaros

LORNA

Birds, flying away from the beach, and heading inland.

DANTE

Yéndose de la playa lejos del océano.
La joven mujer está parada cerca del agua.

LORNA

She is there at the edge of the water.

Only 15 years old.

DANTE

Ella tiene solo 15 años.

LORNA

At the beach!

BEACH SCENE

NEIZA

¡EMPANADILLAS! ¡Empanadillas! Compres sus empanadillas.

NEYDA

¡Papá, papá! Vamos a jugar.

PABLO

No voy, ve con tu mamá.

JASON

I'm gonna build a sandcastle!

NEIZA

Empanadillas

NEYDA

Pero, ¿dónde está mamá???

PABLO

No sé, se fue.

JASON

Look at all the sea shells!

NEIZA

Compre sus empanadillas

ALEX

Pero ven mi amor, ven mi amor.

MONICA

Mi amor, this is like a paradise

ALEX

Pero no sería igual sin ti

MONICA

Escribamos nuestros nombres en la arena

SINGER bangs cane and begins to sing.

LORNA

Beyond the horizon
Where the sea and the sky united in an infinite line.
El aire, el brillo del sol,

the distance
A people united by destiny.
One girl watched as the
sea began to retreat
Revealing the ocean floor.

DANTE

Dejando al descubierto lo que antes cubría con su manto azul.

LORNA

She knows in her heart something big is going to happen

DANTE

En su corazón ella sabe que algo grande está pasando.

BACK INTO ACTION!

JASON

Icecream!

NEYDA

¡Mamá!

NEIZA

¡Empanadillas!

NEYDA

Caminando por la playa

ALEX

de pronto observé

NEYDA – ALEX - ERNESTP

Cómo el mar se escondía sin dejarse ver.

LIZ

The ocean is going out!

LORNA

Fue un momento de agonía

DANTE

sin precisar qué hacer.

NEYDA – LORNA

De repente, como alarma en el interior de mi ser;

ALEX – DANTE – ERNESTO

Una voz me decía: Corre y aléjate.

LIZ

She feels – something is wrong

GROUP

Salí como alma en pena, sin parar de correr,
Para alertar a mi gente y tratar de socorrer.

LIZ

She knows – she must – DO SOMETHING!

LINEY

Tengo un mal presentimiento.

Algo no está bien.

Creo que debemos irnos.

¡Mira! Look!

The ocean is gone!
Las aves no cantan.

There is an eerie feeling in the air.
I can't explain it, but we must leave now!
Warn the tourist! Warn the people!

PABLO

She says

PABLO+LINEY

Señor, you have to run to the hills

PABLO

She says

PABLO+LINEY

Señor, the sea has left us

PABLO

She says

PABLO+LINEY

Something bad is going to happen
Save your life.

PABLO

He replies:

PABLO

Niña, qué dices, estás loca. I'm not going anywhere.

LINEY

¡Salgan de la playa! ¡Salven los niños! ¡Corran! ¡Salgan del agua!

No se queden parados ahí. I'm not crazy! No estoy loca, deben creerme. Something is wrong! Please leave! Run, run, run! A wave is coming! ¡CORRAN!!!!

(SINGER sings)

LIZ

The unstoppable sound of the wave breaking over the land was no longer heard.

LORNA

Hubo silencio.

JASON

There is a clock in the town that stopped at the time of the tragedy.

EERNESTO

El reloj del pueblo se detuvo al momento de la tragedia.

PABLO

Ese fue el día que los muertos salieron de sus tumbas y sus espíritus volaron con las gaviotas del mar.

LORNA

The day the dead rose up out of their graves and their spirit flew away, with the seagulls of the ocean.

ALEX / OLGA

estas son las palabras de mi bisabuelita
bendita y bonita, me contaba de chiquita
Ay dolor mis ojos se cierran
al pensar de lo que le pasó en mi tierra

That is my great grandmother.
She saved many lives that day.

y mi gente tragados por el agua
corre corre les gritaba y lloraba,
el mar se escondió pero regresó con
fuerza
llevándose la pobreza y la riqueza

When my mom was 6 years old, my great
grandmother told her this story, but died soon
after.

hombre, mujer, anciano y niño

My mother told me this story, and I passed it
on to my daughter, and she will pass it on to
her daughter.

bisabuelita la salvavida en

Now we pass this story on to you

ALEX AND OLGA

Bisabuelita la salvavida

ALL

En nuestro bello Puerto Rico

NEW SCENE