

ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS** • MANAGING DIRECTOR **LINDA DIGABRIELE**

PROUDLY PRESENT

HAMLET, *Prince of Cuba*

by William Shakespeare
adapted by Michael Donald Edwards
Spanish translation by Nilo Cruz

Directed by **MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS**

Assistant Director JESSE ONTIVEROS	Set Design DANE LAFFREY	Costume Design CLINT RAMOS	Lighting Design ANTHONY PEARSON	Projection Design AARON RHYNE	Sound Design & Composer FABIAN OBISPO
Fight Director BRUCE LECURE	Voice, Text & Dialect Coach ANTONIO OCAMPO-GUZMAN	Resident Hair/Wig & Make-up Design MICHELLE HART	Resident Dramaturg LAURYN E. SASSO	Production Stage Manager KELLY A. BORGIA*	Associate Costume Designer CHRISTOPHER VERGARA
Associate Projection Designer CAITE HEVNER	Assistant Fight Director BENJAMIN BOUCVALT	Culture and Music Consultant JORGE HERNANDEZ	Stage Management Intern DANE M. URBAN	Assistant to the Director RYAN MCGOVERN	Student Lighting Assistant TIM REED

CAST

in order of appearance

FRANKIE J. ALVAREZ*.....Hamlet
MERCEDES HERRERO*.....Gertrude
EMILIO DELGADO*.....Claudius
ANDHY MENDEZ*.....Laertes
GISELA CHÍPE*.....Ophelia
DOUGLAS JONES*.....Polonius/Gravedigger
JAMES CLARKE*.....Santero/Player King/Captain/Priest
LUKE BARTHOLOMEW.....Horatio/Ensemble
GEOFF KNOX.....Marcellus/Lucianus/Doctor/Messenger/Ensemble
JAKE STALEY.....Rosencrantz/Ensemble
JON-MICHAEL MILLER.....Guildenstern/Ensemble
KATIE CUNNINGHAM+.....Player Queen/Lady/Ensemble
BENJAMIN BOUCVALT.....Player/Soldier/Osric/Ensemble
TONY STOPPERAN.....Fortinbras/Ensemble

SETTING

The action of the play takes place in Cuba, then and now. Time is linear, but not literal.

Hamlet, Prince of Cuba is performed with one intermission.

Contains some moderate violence.

CO-PRODUCERS

GERRI AARON PEGGY & KEN ABT DIANA & HOWARD ARMBRUST KAY DELANEY & MURRAY BRING SHARON & HERMAN FRANKEL NONA MACDONALD HEASLIP
CHARLIE HUISKING, REPRESENTING THE HUISKING FOUNDATION DIANA LAGER MARY ANN ROBINSON JENIFER SCHEMBRI, ESQ. BLALOCK WALTERS P.A.
STEPHANIE SHAW & DR. STAN PASTOR CAROL & MORT SIEGLER RENEE & MIKE SILVERSTEIN MARY LOU & EDWARD WINNICK SALLY YANOWITZ

Additional support for bilingual performances generously provided by **MARY ANN ROBINSON** and **RENEE & MIKE SILVERSTEIN**

*Members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

+Appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association.

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DIRECTOR INTERVIEW

MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS

What inspired you to create this production?

The impulse first sprang from people. When I moved to Florida, I was exposed to incredibly talented Cuban-American artists of all kinds – but actors in particular – and the idea of doing *Hamlet* came from those experiences. I'd work with them and start thinking, "you know, you really should do *Hamlet*." Meeting these Cuban artists also inspired my study of Cuba itself. I read a great deal about Cuban and Floridian history, and how they intertwine. I went to Cuba, and began a series of explorations with the intent of finding a unique Floridian-Cuban-American point of entry into this play. As I pursued the project, I realized most people tend to think of Spanish-speakers in the U.S. as simply the working class. But I was seeing the Latino educated elites, of which there are many, in the young artists I met. They were like princes – to me, the word prince really began to mean someone who has access to all kinds of educational and cultural opportunities. I began to think of the word that way rather than in literal terms of kingship, although that element is also present.

Shakespeare is the single most significant, complicated, and gorgeous gift that English-speaking culture has produced – and it belongs to the whole world. We're privileged to have Pulitzer Prize-winner Nilo Cruz creating this translation. I worked with Nilo on the world premiere of his play *Hurricane* and we developed a really strong connection, which made it much easier to decide to do *Hamlet* in both Spanish and English using a core group of bilingual actors. So the inspiration for the production really came about organically, like a plant being nurtured, from all of these sources. Also, Asolo Rep is one of the great cultural institutions of the state of Florida and the southeast – how can we not participate in building a cultural bridge between the Anglo and Latino communities?

Why has *Hamlet* remained such a potent, powerful story?

It's both a revenge play and, at the same time, a critique of revenge. Vengeance is more viscerally compelling and easier than justice – justice is one of our single greatest challenges, both individually and nationally. Vengeance is always destructive, always a dead end, and usually leads to innocent family members becoming collateral damage. It's almost never focused like a laser accurately hitting its target; it's more like a scatter-bomb with many unintended victims.

Those victims in turn pick up the virus of vengeance and it can only be stopped by an agreement to finally let go of the desire for revenge. As we see in the play, the violent death of a parent creates in the child the desire for vengeance. Vengeance has also played a particularly destructive role in Cuba and in Cuban-American relations. The play is always resonant, but that's why I think it has a particular charge right now.

What is the biggest challenge you're facing?

The biggest single challenge is ensuring that people who speak Spanish feel respected, and that we're doing this with absolute commitment and skill. The same applies when we perform it in English. That's the biggest challenge – getting people to feel that we know what we're doing in both languages.

What do you hope the production's impact will be?

I'm hoping our regular audience has its perceptions shifted – and that we all open our eyes to what it means to be American in Florida right now. I hope that the Spanish-speaking communities feel like the doors of this theatre are open. That they will come here and see themselves represented and have a wonderful time. Theatre asks everyone to walk in someone else's shoes, and this is a culturally difficult thing for most of us to do. As we've become increasingly connected through technology, there's been a corresponding segmentation, so it's become quite difficult for us all to have a shared cultural experience. That's what we hope to change with this *Hamlet*.

Special thanks to the following for their contributions to *Hamlet, Prince of Cuba*:

- Kelly and Kent Kirschner, Unidos Now, and Media Maquiladora for their generous assistance in connecting Asolo Rep to resources within the Latino community in Sarasota-Manatee
- Esperanza Gamboa for assistance in creating Spanish audio recordings as part of phonetic research
- Pamela Martin and Majel Reyes for coordinating and facilitating Michael Donald Edwards' travel to Cuba
- Mario Ernesto Sanchez for strengthening Asolo Rep's connections to the Latino theatrical community in Miami

TIMELINE

Turning points in Cuban History

1492

Navigator Christopher Columbus arrives during his first expedition and claims Cuba for Spain.

1526

Importing of African slaves begins.

1762

Havana is captured by a British force led by Admiral George Pocock and Lord Albemarle.

1763

The Treaty of Paris returns Havana to Spain's control, but forces Spain to cede Florida and the Mediterranean island of Minorca to Great Britain.

1868-78

Ten Years War for independence ends in a truce; Spain promises reforms and greater autonomy. These promises were largely ignored.

1886

Slavery is abolished.



1895-98

Jose Marti leads Cuba in second war of independence; Spain responds under the leadership of General Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau. The U.S. monitors the growing tensions, yet doesn't actively participate in the conflict.



1898

On February 15, the USS Maine sinks in Havana Harbor, due to a mysterious explosion. Over 260 sailors are killed.



On July 1, Theodore Roosevelt and his "Rough Riders," along with several other regiments, participate in the battles of El Caney and San Juan Hill. Though American forces win the battles, more than 200 U.S. soldiers are killed and almost 1,200 are wounded.

On August 12, hostilities end, and a Protocol of Peace between Spain and the U.S. is signed.

On December 10, a formal peace treaty is signed in Paris. The U.S. gains almost all of Spain's colonies, including the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico. Cuba falls under the jurisdiction of the United States Military Government (USMG).

1902

USMG control ends; Cuba becomes independent with Tomas Estrada Palma as its president.

1906-09

Estrada resigns; the U.S. occupies Cuba following a rebellion led by Jose Miguel Gomez.

1909

Jose Miguel Gomez becomes president following elections supervised by the U.S., but his regime is soon tainted by corruption.

1912

U.S. forces return to Cuba to help suppress black protests against discrimination.

1925

Gerardo Machado becomes president and institutes vigorous measures promoting mining, agriculture and public works, but subsequently establishes a brutal dictatorship.

Socialist Party is founded, laying the groundwork for the future Communist Party.

1933

Machado is overthrown in a coup led by Sergeant Fulgencio Batista.

1934

The U.S. abandons its right to intervene in Cuba's internal affairs.

1944

Batista retires and is succeeded by the civilian Ramon Gray San Martin.

1952

Batista seizes power again and presides over an oppressive and corrupt regime.

1953

Fidel Castro leads an unsuccessful revolt against Batista.

1956

Castro lands in eastern Cuba from Mexico, taking to the Sierra Maestra mountains where, aided by Ernesto "Che" Guevara, he wages guerrilla war.



1959

Castro leads a 9,000-strong guerrilla army into Havana, forcing Batista to flee. Castro becomes prime minister and his brother Raul becomes his deputy.

1960

All U.S. businesses in Cuba are nationalized without compensation.

1961

Washington breaks off all diplomatic relations with Havana.



SET DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATION BY DANE LAFFREY

“The set design for *Hamlet, Prince of Cuba* attempts to capture a highly detailed piece of iconography held in an existential, memory space. The wall is an expression of Cuba’s unique transience; architecture that exists across time periods and cultural influences and a ghost that haunts every moment of the play. It ideally embodies a quality of socio-political flux and uncertainty against which *Hamlet, Prince of Cuba* can vividly resonate.”

-SET DESIGNER DANE LAFFREY



“Taking the inspiration from photographs of the aristocrats of Cuba during and around the Spanish-American war, the designs for the clothes are based on various historical research. Although predominantly Fin de Siècle, I wanted it to feel more colloquial – so in addition to making the silhouettes more modern, we are mixing emotionally-charged visual elements from the island’s colonial past and prophetic vision of the future.”

-COSTUME DESIGNER CLINT RAMOS

COSTUME DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATION BY CLINT RAMOS

