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THE LATINX THEATRE COMMONS PRESENTS
***CARNAVAL 2018: ConeXion!* PAIRING LATINX ARTISTS TO EXPAND**
DEFINITION OF AMERICAN PLAY

Six New Latinx Play Readings Presented at Theater School at DePaul University 19-21 July

CHICAGO - The Latinx Theatre Commons (LTC) proudly presents the 2018 LTC Carnival of New Latinx Work (*Carnaval 2018: ConeXion!*) featuring readings of six new Latinx plays paired with Latinx directors, actors, designers and dramaturgs at The Theatre School at DePaul University, 2350 N. Racine, Chicago, 19-21 July 2018. *Carnaval 2018: ConeXion!* is dynamic event celebrating the abundance of Latinx talent in the U.S. theatre field. Additionally, Carnival participants are able to experience Chicago's rich Latinx theatre community through events created by local Latinx theatre companies [Urban Theater Company](#), [Aguijón Theater](#), [Teatro Vista](#), and the [Chicago Latino Theater Alliance](#). Readings are free and open to the public, and tickets can be requested at www.LatinxTheatreCommons.com.

“In the midst of the current administration’s virulent hostility towards the Latinx community, promoting new Latinx stories and the artists who create them has become all the more urgent,” said Lisa Portes, LTC Carnival Champion and Head of Directing at The Theatre School at DePaul University. “Carnaval 2018 aims to seed the American Theatre with new Latinx stories and raise visibility of the vibrant local and national Latinx theatre community by bringing theatre decision-makers from across the country to attend readings of new Latinx plays, meet Latinx writers, directors, dramaturgs, designers, critics, and actors, and engage with the Chicago Latinx theatre community in one festive and celebratory weekend.”

Carnaval 2018: ConeXion! focuses on the readings of six new Latinx plays (detailed below) with each play serving as a nexus through which to connect with six Latinx writers, six Latinx directors, six Latinx dramaturgs, twelve Latinx designers, and one of the strongest Latinx acting pools in the nation. The event has two goals: to introduce national theatre decision-makers to new Latinx plays and talent, and to connect the local and national Latinx theatremaking communities. The featured plays were selected by a fifteen-person committee from a nationwide call which received approximately 130 plays, and will receive development with a Latinx

dramaturg and director. All readings are performed during Carnival 2018 weekend by Chicago actors. Additionally, each play is assigned a team of Latinx theatrical designers whose work will be showcased during the weekend via design presentations developed during the rehearsal period and a design showcase of past work.

The plays selected range in subject matter from epic worlds that lead to tragic consequences to polyamorous relationships alongside an ominous slug; from family secrets kept to protect the ones we love to the biting realities faced by millennial young women; between changing minds and changing ways of speaking to online relationships and deferred dreams. The selected plays, playwrights, and directors are: *My Father's Keeper* by **Guadalís del Carmen** directed by **David Mendizábal**, *Richard & Jane & Dick & Sally* by **Noah Diaz** directed by **Denise Yvette Serna**, *Killing of a Gentleman Defender* by **Carlos Murillo** directed by **Michael John Garcés**, *Shoe* by **Marisela Treviño Orta** directed by Ricardo Gutierrez, *Milton, MI* by **Paz Pardo** directed by **Diane Rodriguez**, and *Our Dear Dead Drug Lord* by **Alexis Scheer** directed by **Rebecca Martínez**.

Dramaturgs include **Dr. Liza Ana Acosta** (scholar and dramaturg based in Chicago, IL), **Rinska Carrasco** (director, actor, and dramaturg based in Chicago, IL), **Lucas Garcia** (dramaturg and playwright based in Chicago, IL), **Lydia Garcia** (dramaturg and equity, diversity, and inclusion facilitator based in Ashland, OR), **Hannah Greenspan** (dramaturg based in Chicago, IL) and **Olga Sanchez Saltveit** (director, scholar, and dramaturg based in Portland, OR).

Designers include **Mextly Almeda** (lighting designer based in San Diego, CA), **Raquel Barreto** (costume designer based in Los Angeles, CA), **Corinne Carrillo** (sound designer based in Los Angeles, CA), **Efren Delgadillo, Jr.** (scenic designer based in Los Angeles, CA), **Courtney Flores** (costume designer based in San Francisco, CA), **Luis Guerra** (composer and sound designer based in Los Angeles, CA), **Tara A. Houston** (scenic designer based in Baton Rouge, LA), **Carolyn Mazuca** (costume designer based in Los Angeles, CA), **David R. Molina** (sound artist/designer based in San Francisco, CA), **Tom Ontiveros** (projection and lighting designer based in Los Angeles, CA), **Mariana Sanchez** (scenic designer based based in New York, NY), and **Pablo Santiago** (lighting designer based in Los Angeles, CA).

For more information on these featured playwrights, designers, directors, and dramaturgs, see the [Carnaval Featured Artist Biographies](http://www.latinxtheatrecommons.com) on the LTC website (www.latinxtheatrecommons.com).

Carnaval 2018: ConeXion! marks the eleventh convening produced by the LTC since its founding in 2012, when a group of eight Latinx theatremakers, led by Karen Zacarías, gathered at Arena Stage in Washington, DC under the auspices of what is now HowlRound to reimagine the American Theatre as a space that welcomes and champions the work of Latinx

theatremakers. That group partnered with Latinx theatre communities from across the country to create a dedicated steering committee of over thirty practitioners who worked together with HowlRound to produce the first LTC National Convening, held in October 2013 at Emerson College in Boston. The 2013 LTC National Convening was an historic event, bringing together nearly eighty practitioners in the largest gathering of Latinx theatremakers in over twenty-five years. After the convening, the Steering Committee self-determined to continue working, expanded membership, and began looking to future projects. The LTC has now grown into a national volunteer-driven movement of Latinx and allied theatremakers working to establish a strong, visible, equitable, and inclusive network of over 3,400 constituents, championed by sixty-one active Steering Committee members and twenty-five Advisory Committee members in thirty-six cities across the country. In June 2017, the LTC was awarded the Peter Zeisler Memorial Award by Theatre Communications Group (TCG), which recognizes an individual or organization whose work reflects and promotes ingenuity and artistic integrity, exemplifies pioneering practices in theatre, are dedicated to the freedom of expression, and are unafraid of taking risks for the advancement of the art form. The LTC is committed to producing events and dialogue through a commons-based approach to ensure their methods are intersectional and diverse, and that their impact on the field, and on the lives of practitioners, is lasting.

The 2018 LTC Carnival of New Latinx Work Selection Committee included: Dr. Patrice Amon, Dr. Trevor Boffone, Regina Garcia, Adriana Gaviria, Isaac Gomez, Dr. Brian Herrera, Alex Meda, David Mendizábal, Daniel Penilla, Richard Perez, Lisa Portes, Mario Ramirez, Jelisa Robinson and Daphnie Sicre. The director cohort was curated by Lisa Portes, the dramaturg cohort was curated by Isaac Gomez, and the designer cohort was curated by Christopher Acebo.

SELECTED PLAYS:

My Father's Keeper by [Guadalís del Carmen](#)

My Father's Keeper is about family and the secrets we keep to protect our loved ones. Tirsio Armando Gonzalez and his wife Juana are the pillars of their community in the Dominican Republic and in their new home in Chicago, but Tirsio's sudden death causes family secrets to come to light. Dealing with their father's truth and double life, Mondo and Sofía must learn to lean on each other like never before while figuring out how to best honor him. The Gonzalez family must define what secrets are worth keeping and which ones aren't worth the trouble.

Richard & Jane & Dick & Sally by [Noah Diaz](#)

The classic "Dick & Jane" characters from the ubiquitous 1950s children's books are grown-up and struggling to stay afloat in a home fractured by grief. Newly widowed Dick (now going by Richard) is raising his two children, Dick Jr. and Sally, who is deaf, while trying to manage a terminal illness that will inevitably leave them orphans. When he calls his estranged sister, Jane, the family must reconcile and make peace with their shared and misunderstood histories before

it's time for him to go. A recipient of the Kennedy Center's Jean Kennedy Smith Playwriting Award, *Richard & Jane & Dick & Sally* is a dramatic comedy about brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers, with sign language, talking dogs, picnic tables, and Snickers bars.

Killing of a Gentleman Defender by [Carlos Murillo](#)

In some rooms Martin, in others he's Martín. Hired by a well-funded arts institution on Chicago's Northside to create a show about youth violence on the Southside, Martín finds himself torn not only by the conflicting needs of the institution and the young people they believe they're "serving," but by a city in a death struggle with its own divided self. Does he make an exploitative docudrama? Or does he find a metaphor? Reaching into his own history, he unearths the story of the 1994 murder of soccer star Andres Escobar in Medellín, hoping long ago violence in a deeply divided, faraway city will illuminate violence in the divided Chicago of now. When a real act of violence hits home, what story will Martin and his youth ensemble tell?

Shoe by [Marisela Treviño Orta](#)

In the sixteen years since her father left, Marta has felt trapped in her family's double-wide in Texas. She gave up college and stayed home to take care of her siblings and mother. Just as a secret online relationship reignites Marta's dreams and curiosity about the world outside, her siblings each decide they will do anything it takes to escape their home lives—even if it means leaving Marta behind.

Milton, MI by [Paz Pardo](#)

Leah's got writer's block, Amber's got Ambition, Jake's got it all (including your regular fear of slugs). Jake and Leah were hot-shot young poets when they left New York City for Jake's professorship at Milton Tech, but now Leah's working admin as Jake's career skyrockets. So when fresh-faced Amber shows up, it's only a matter of time before things get sticky. A play about threesomes, poetry, and slugs.

Our Dear Dead Drug Lord by [Alexis Scheer](#)

Our Dear Dead Drug Lord follows a gang of girls who do normal teenage things: fall in love, experiment with drugs, worship Pablo Escobar...okay, maybe not so normal. Suspended high above reality in a treehouse, the girls try to resurrect the spirit of Pablo. But are they just messing with each other, or could they actually be messing with a higher spirit?

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at DePaul University, the Alliance of Latinx Theater Artists, Chicago (ALTA), Urban Theatre Company, Aguijon Theatre, Teatro Vista, and the Chicago Latino Theatre Alliance (CLATA).

About the Latinx Theatre Commons

The Latinx Theatre Commons (LTC) is a national movement that uses a commons-based approach to transform the narrative of the American theatre, to amplify the visibility of Latinx performance making, and to champion equity through advocacy, art making, convening, and scholarship. The LTC is a flagship program of HowlRound. The LTC creates nationally recognized in-person convenings of Latinx and allied theatremakers, sustains an online platform, and creates opportunities for Latinx artists to be both promoted and memorialized, all while celebrating aesthetic diversity.

About HowlRound

HowlRound, located in the Office of the Arts at Emerson College, is a free and open platform for theatremakers worldwide that amplifies progressive, disruptive ideas about the art form and facilitates connection between diverse practitioners. For more information, visit www.HowlRound.com.

Top: Alexis Scheer, Marisela Treviño Orta, Noah Diaz (L to R)
Bottom: Paz Pardo, Carlos Murillo, Guadalís del Carmen (L to R)

