

THEATER REVIEW | LOS INTERESES CREADOS

Smart treatment for comedy of buffoons

■ **Miami's Prometeo Theatre adapts a century-old satirical play and makes it relevant to a modern audience.**

BY ANTONIO O. RODRIGUEZ
Special to The Miami Herald

Just over a century ago, Jacinto Benavente surprised audiences in Madrid with the premiere of *Los intereses creados* (*The Bonds of Interest*), a "comedy of buffoons" that pays homage to Italian Commedia dell'Arte and playwrights such as Carlo Goldoni, as a mocking satire of society at the time.

Convinced of the text's continuing capacity to entertain and provoke today's audiences, director Joann María Yarrow has intelligently adapted the work for Miami's Prometeo Theatre, making it the company's offering at the ongoing XXIII International Hispanic Theatre Festival.

The most difficult task Yarrow had was to avoid imbalance in a cast that included a well-known actor and students with different levels of experience, but she did just that. Though some actors did shine more than others, the company achieved an energetic balance.

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The costume designs and backdrops by Jorge Noa and Pedro Balmaceda were creatively inspired by Commedia dell'Arte. A rotating stage reminiscent of puppet theaters or figurines from wind-up music boxes allowed easy scene changes.

Jorge Hernández, the indisputable heart of the production, played a pair of archetypal roles, Arlequín and Polichinela. Entering with an accordion and singing a crazy melody, the veteran actor offered a lesson in entertainingly holding the stage. His performance was both a compass for and inspiration to his fellow actors.

Ariel Polo, in his roles as Capitán and Doctor, made brilliant use of comic style and effective naturalness. With an outlandish Marge Simpson-style wig, Yudelka Heyer played the pragmatic Sirena, enriching the character with Caribbean touches. Pablo Becerra's Leandro was slow to get going but quickly gained confidence, soon finding the perfect tone for a timid man in love. Alejandra Ochoa played both the archetypal Colombina and Silvia, a character whose twisted legs allowed

lots of physical comedy. Maylen Delgado achieved truly comic moments as the Hostelero.

However, the great surprise was the performance of the radiant Rocío Carmona as the picaresque Crispín, the most complex and demanding character in the play. Her expressive body language, voice and interpretation of the text left no doubt that this is an actress with a future.

The success of this Commedia dell'Arte-style production also owed a great deal to the consulting work of Orlando Arias, who designed the attractive masks and made sure the character types were authentic. Applause for Yarrow and her team. They demonstrated that, with proper guidance, actors still learning their craft can achieve an impressive artistic product.



PEDRO PORTAL/EL NUEVO HERALD

THE PLAYERS: Jorge Hernández, left, and Yudelka Heyer perform in *Los Intereses Creados*.

IF YOU GO

What: XXIII International Hispanic Theatre Festival

Where: Carnival Studio Theater at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, 1300 Biscayne Blvd., Miami; and Prometeo Theatre, Miami Dade College's Wolfson Campus, 300 NE Second Ave., Miami, through July 26

When: *Amar y ser amado, o la divina Filotea* by Compañía de Pedro María Sánchez of Madrid, 8:30 p.m. Thursday-Friday (Carnival, Spanish); *Ay, Carmela* by Ljubljana City Theatre of Ljubljana, Slovenia, 8:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday (Prometeo, Slovenian with Spanish supertitles); *Naque o de piojos y actores* by Metamorfosis Producciones Teatrales of Madrid, 8:30 p.m. Saturday, 5 p.m. Sunday (Carnival, Spanish); *La importancia del abrazo* by Komilfo Teatro of Lima, Peru, 8:30 p.m. July 25-26 (Prometeo, Spanish); *La Celestina* by Teatro Avante of Miami, 8:30 p.m. July 24-26 (Carnival, Spanish with English supertitles).

Cost: \$25 each production (\$20 for seniors, students and physically challenged patrons)

Info: 305-445-8877 or www.teatroavante.com

SEASON OF THE ARTS GUIDE

The Miami Herald is compiling its annual Season of the Arts guide. If you'd like your arts or entertainment event listed in this Sept. 14 section, e-mail complete information (full name of group/institution; show

titles, days and times; venue; costs; phone number for tickets and info) to season@miamiherald.com by Aug. 1. You can also submit a photo for your event in .jpeg or .gif format. Other file formats, such as a PDF, cannot be accepted.