

Presents

ANNA IN THE TROPICS

by **Nilo Cruz**Directed by **Jon Lawrence Rivera**

Featuring

Christopher Cedeño • Presciliana Esparolini • Antonio Jaramillo*

Javi Mulero* • Byron Quiros* • Jill Remez*

Jade Santana • Steve Wilcox • Jennifer Zorbalas

Scenic Design
Christopher Scott Murillo

Sound Design
Tim Labor

Scenic Construction

Jan Munroe

Associate Producer **Beth Robbins**

Costume Design

Mylette Nora

Properties

Bruce Dickinson & Ina Shumaker

Rehearsal Stage Manager Therese Olson

Production Stage Manager **Benjamin Scuglia**

Lighting Design

Matt Richter

Dialect Coach
Tuffet Schmelzle

Assoc Lighting Design
Kaitlin Chana

Publicist **Lucy Pollak**

Produced by Martha Demson

Roger Berlind, Daryl Roth, Ray Larsen, in association with Robert Bartner presented the New York premiere of Anna in the Tropics at the Royale Theatre. Anna in the Tropics was originally commissioned and produced by New Theatre, Coral Gables, FL, Rafael de Acha, Artistic Director; Eileen Suarez, Managing Director, through a residency grant from Theatre Communications Group and the National Endowment for the Arts. It was subsequently produced by South Coast Repertory, Costa Mesa, CA, David Emmes, Producing Artistic Director; Paula Tomei, Managing Director, and at the McCarter Theatre Center, Princeton, NJ, Emily Mann, Artistic Director; Jeffrey Woodward, Managing Director. The McCarter Theatre Center production transferred to Broadway.



*Member, Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. This production is presented under the auspices of the Actors' Equity Los Angeles Membership Company Rule.





Anna in the Tropics is supported, in part, by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the LA County Arts Commission.



The Scenic Designer is a member of United Scenic Artists, a national theatrical labor union.

Ticketing and CRM Technology provided by PatronManager



Cast of Characters

Juan Julian	Byron Quiros*
Santiago	Steve Wilcox
Ofelia	Jill Remez*
Palomo	Javi Mulero*
Conchita	Presciliana Esparolini
Cheché	Antonio Jaramillo*
Marela	Jade Santana
Eliades	Christopher Cedeño
Factory Worker	Jennifer Zorbalas

Time and Place: 1929. Tampa, Florida. A small town called Ybor City.

There will be one ten-minute intermission

About the Play

Anna in the Tropics is a play about the power of language, about lost traditions, about cigars, and about impossible love -- "the kind of love that happens between the cracks" said playwright Nilo Cruz in an interview with NJN Public Television. "For instance, I am fascinated by these trees or plants that grow out of nowhere. If you look at a crack in cement, on a street, all of a sudden you see this grass growing. It's amazing! That life can grow out of this little bit of dirt somewhere. I'm interested in that kind of life. So that's what I want to document in my work. Something that seems like it's impossible, but it's there. It takes life on its own."

Cruz first intended to set his play *Anna* in the *Tropics* in the 1800s, a time when lectors (readers) played an important role in cigar factories. Cruz, however, reconsidered and decided that a historical account would be "too complicated" to render dramatically, so he chose instead to focus on the role the lector played in the factories during a time when personal and financial independence were inextricably linked. "I decided to write about possibly the last lector in Tampa," stated Cruz. "The lectors were the first to be fired when the Depression began, so I set the play in 1929." Lectors read novels and news to the workers, who paid the lector directly from their own wages. Cruz also wanted to tell the story of Cubans who fled to the United States prior to the 1959 revolution. "These were not immigrants. They were exiles who wanted Cuba's independence, and they would have been killed if they stayed there. I thought it was important to document this part of our culture," said Cruz.

It was considered something of a surprise when the relatively unknown *Anna* in the *Tropics* won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2003. But now, hearing its beautiful language and cadence, and watching its passionate tale of family and jealousy unfold, there can be little doubt why it won. Its themes seem even more poignant today as we watch our traditions and language continue to recede. We at the Open Fist Theatre Company are very excited to share this revival of *Anna* in the *Tropics* with you.

THE ENSEMBLE



CHRISTOPHER CEDEÑO (Eliades) is from San Juan, Puerto Rico. Christopher Cedeño's recent roles include HBO's Westworld, TBS' Rake and Lifetime's America's Most Wanted. He's trained diligently at The Stella Adler Conservatory - LA, Anthony Meindl's Actor Workshop and at Lesly Kahn. He previously appeared on

previously appeared on stage in "Under Milk Wood," "The Zoo Story," and in "The Blue Room" at the Hollywood Fringe Festival. He is excited to be part of this brilliant play and it's cast. Thank you Nilo Cruz for this amazing play. Thank you for coming and supporting!! Represented by Kat Seigworth - Bohemia Group. Instagram: ccedeno923



PRESCILIANA ESPAROLINI (Conchita) hails from San Francisco's Mission District, Presciliana is a Film, TV and Theatre actress having starred in several shows including The Rookie, 9-1-1, Goliath, Thirteen Reasons Why, and Game of Silence just to name a few. Presciliana has studied with master teachers Larry Moss, Howard Fine, Deb Aquila,

Jeanie Hackett, and Patsy Rodenburg. She received her MFA from the American Conservatory of Theatre (ACT). Her Theatre credits include the Manhattan Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, The Odyssey, Boston Court and many more. She is a proud member of The Road Theatre Company. Presciliana's most recent work can be seen in the upcoming film, 'No No No Yes' directed by Drake Doremus. Recent releases include; 'Old Flames' directed by Stephan Brand, 'Miss Virginia' with Uzo Aduba and YouTube Red's, 'The Thinning: New World Order.' Presciliana Esparolini's greatest achievement yet is being the mom to her 6 year old daughter, Angelina-James Keller.



ANTONIO JARAMILLO (Cheche) At Antaeus, Three Days In The Country, The Seagull, ClassicFest in 2011 and other workshops, Oedipus The King, The Rover, Camino Real. West Coast Premiere of Our Lady Of 121st Street (The Matrix), Take Me Out (The Geffen Playhouse, U/S), Bambino (New Village Arts Theatre). Other shows: A

Streetcar Named Desire, Golden Boy, Six

Tarantulas On Angel Foodcake. Film/TV: currently on FX's Mayans MC, Shades Of Blue opposite Jennifer Lopez and Ray Liotta, Seal Team, Lucifer, The Rookie, Notorious, Rosewood, Dallas, Devious Maids, The Mentalist, CSI Miami, Gang Related, Burn Notice, and others. Oliver Stone's Savages, The Line, The Da Vinci Treasure. Special thanks to Richard Seyd, Jeanie Hackett and Jack Stehlin. Represented by Mckeon & Myones and SMS Talent .



JAVI MULERO (Palomo) is no stranger to this play, and thrilled to play 'Palomo' here for the first time. Stage: Two Humana Festivals at Actors Theatre of Louisville ("CLOUD TECTONICS" and "NATURAL SELECTION"); played 'Cheché" in "ANNA IN THE TROPICS" in Dallas, Tucson, Phoenix, Pasadena Playhouse. Sonora's Sierra

Rep, and Gainesville, Florida's The Hippodrome. Has played in Theaters like Mark Taper Forum, and Playwrights Horizons (NYC), Arizona Theatre Co., and Dallas Theater Center, and San Diego Rep. He played in Nilo Cruz' play "TWO SISTERS AND A PlANO" at SCR in Costa Mesa. Many other plays in Regional Theater houses. Film & TV: NCIS, IRONSIDE, THE GHOST WHISPERER, CANE, NYPD BLUE, TREMORS 3, RESURRECTION BLVD., RAW JUSTICE, E.R., etc. His recent short, "FROM NOW ON," based on a short play of his, has played in 6 Festivals since last year & still counting! Email: mujavier2000@yahoo.com



BYRON QUIROS Julian) is an actor, director, dancer, choreographer. excited to be performing with the OFTC for the first time as the Lector in ANNA IN THE TROPICS. Stage credits include: TAKE ME OUT at the Geffen Playhouse, Edgar Lee Masters' SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY (Los Angeles

Drama Critics' Circle Best Actor Award), SHORT EYES (Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Best Actor Honorable Mention), and A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. Film/TV credits include JANE LOVE (IFS Film Festival Best Horror Short Film), HOT SEAT (Sundance Film Festival Official Selection), CORONADO, YES, AND..., SET IT OFF, HARD PILL, JAG, MEDIUM, and CSI:MIAMI. As a dancer and choreographer, Byron has worked with Usher and Ana Barbara, Sheila E., and Craig David, and continues to teach classes and workshops in Los Angeles. Byron thanks Jon and Martha, the production designers and his devoted castmates for this opportunity.



JILL REMEZ (Ofelia) is an actor, writer and storyteller. She is thrilled to return to Open Fist where she performed in the 2018 pop up, ONE YEAR LATER. She has appeared on stages throughout Southern California including, The Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Repertory Laguna Playhouse. recently played Kate in Neil

Simon's BROADWAY BOUND at the Miles Memorial Plalyhouse.TV credits include THIS IS US, CURB YOUR ENTHUSIASM, THE GOOD PLACE, GREY'S ANATOMY, CRIMINAL MINDS & HOW TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER. Film credits include the independent films DUSTWUN, RENTAL, STEVIE D. HELICOPTER MOM, DEAD DROP and SHADOWBOXING. She also teaches voiceover at Kalmenson & Kalmenson.



JADE SANTANA (Marela) is excited to return to the Open Fist stage now as an official member of the Company! Previously seen here in last summer's UNDER MILK WOOD, her other stage credits include RADICALS (winner of a Hollywood Fringe 2019 scholarship) and **TRANSMISSIONS** IN ADVANCE OF THE SECOND

GREAT DYING, a new play. Jade is very happy and grateful for the opportunity to be part of such a beautiful and powerful piece.



STEVE WILCOX (Santiago) We are still in a place and time in the creative world where more often than not, a Latino is supposed to look a certain way. John Lawrence Rivera is very fortunate not to suffer from this color blindness. I am very grateful to him for giving me the opportunity to work on this play. I would also like to thank my

beautiful wife and daughter for supporting me in my endeavors.

JENNIFER ZORBALAS (Factory Worker, Running Crew) has appeared in a number of stage productions including Four Dogs and a Bone (Shanley), Shakespeare's Richard III, The Nerd (Shue) Come Back Little Horry (a premiere with Second Story Theater). On Television, she played the versatile and unassuming member of

renowned magician R. Paul Wilson's con-team in *The Takedown*. Additionally she is Co-writer/producer/star of an award-winning web series, *The Mop and Lucky Files*, currently streaming on the new indie platform, www.seedandspark.com.

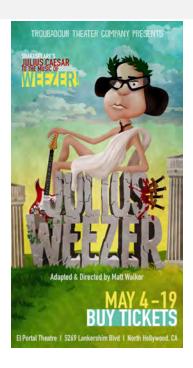
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The Production would like to thank:

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THE CREATIVES

NILO CRUZ (Playwright) is a Cuban-American playwright whose work has been produced widely around the United States and Europe. His plays have been seen at McCarter Theatre. New York's Shakespeare Festival's Public Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, Arena Stage, Victory Gardens, Repertorio Español, South Coast Rep., Arena Stage, Mark Taper Forum, Victory Gardens, New York Theatre Workshop, Magic Theatre, Minneapolis Children's Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Florida Stage and many others. Internationally, his plays have been produced in Canada, England, France, Australia, Germany, Belarus, Costa Rica, Colombia, Panama, Japan, Russia, and in many cities throughout Spain. In 2003 he won the Pulitzer Prize and the Steinberg Award for Drama for his play Anna in the Tropics and was nominated for a Tony award. In 2009 he won The Helen Merrill and The Laura Pels Mid-career Playwriting Award as well as the Fontanals-Cisneros USA Fellowship in literature. Cruz is a frequent collaborator with noted composer Gabriela Lena Frank. He recently wrote a set of orchestral sonas. "La Centinela v la paloma" (The Keeper and the Dove), for Dawn Upshaw and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, which was conducted by Joana Carneiro. His monologue Farhad and the Secret of Being, composed by Jim Bauer, was performed as part of the New Voices Musical Festival. He taught playwriting at University of Iowa, Brown University, NYU Gallatin School and Yale University.

JON LAWRENCE RIVERA (Director) is the recipient of the first Career Achievement Award from Stage Raw. Most recently, Rivera directed the following critically- acclaimed world premieres for Playwrights' Arena: SOUTHERNMOST by Mary Lyon Kamitaki, BABY EYES by Donald Jolly, I GO SOMEWHERE ELSE by Inda Craig-Galván, LITTLE WOMEN by Velina Hasu Houston, BILLY BOY by Nick Salamone, THE HOTEL PLAY (performed in an actual hotel), BLOODLETTING by Boni B. Alvarez (also at Kirk Douglas Theatre), @THESPEEDOFJAKE by Jennifer Maisel, CIRCUS UGLY by Gabe Rivas Gomez, PAINTING IN RED by Luis Alfaro, and THE ANATOMY OF GAZELLAS by Janine Salinas Schoenbera. Other recent works include: AMERICA ADJACENT by Boni B. Alvarez, BINGO HALL by Dillon Chitto, FAIRLY TRACEABLE by Mary Kathryn Nagle, OBAMA-OLOGY by Aurin Squire, CRIERS FOR HIRE by Giovanni Ortega, STAND-OFF AT HWY #37 by Vicky Ramirez, FLIPZOIDS by Ralph B. Peña (also in Manila). Recipient of a NY Fringe Festival Award, an LA Weekly Award, and a five-time Ovation Award nominee, Rivera is the founding artistic director of Playwrights' Arena.

MARTHA DEMSON (Producer & Artistic Director of the Open Fist Theatre) Highlights of Demson's award-winning career with the Open Fist Theatre include: As a producer: All Night Long (O'Keefe), Under Milk Wood (Thomas), The Gary Plays (Mednick) The Cosmonaut's Last Message to the Woman He Once Loved in the Former Soviet Union (Greig) LA Weekly Production of the Year, How to Explain the History of Communism to Mental Patients (Visniec) which was also presented in New York and Edinburgh. As a director: The Ovation Award-winning PAPA (deGroot) which was also presented in San Francisco and Istanbul, Casanova (Congden), Abingdon Square (Fornes), Escape from Happiness (Walker), Flight of the Earls (Humble), Dear John Mayer (Shoshana Bean / Eydie Faye). Education: Yale University and Sanford Meisner's 2-year master class.

CHRISTOPHER SCOTT MURILLO (Scenic Design) is a scenic designer, artist, and educator based in southern California. His is thrilled to be working with Open Fist Theatre Company! Most recently, his work has been seen at Skylight Theater Company, Native Voices at The Autry, International City Theatre, Performance Riverside, The Kirk Doualas Theater, and the Getty Villa (to name a few). Christopher is a member of United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829 and the Television Academy. He is a 2016 recipient of the Princess Grace Fellowship -Pierre Cardin Award. He holds an MFA from the UCSD Department of Theatre and Dance and a BA from the UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television. www.christopherscottmurillo.com

MYLETTE NORA (Costume Design) returns from an enjoyable run of King Hedley II. Winner of multiple NAACP Theatre Awards and nominations for best costumes, Ovation Awards nominee, listed in the honors edition of The Cambridge Registry of Who's Who Among Executive and Professional Women. Mylette's works world wide consists of television, film, and stage, and was seen nightly on "The Tonight Show" with Jay Leno and now weekly on "Jay Leno's Garage". The famed artist Synthia St. James noted Mylette as being the inspiration for her world renowned painting "Ensemble" which graced the cover of the best selling novel "Waiting To Exhale" by Terry McMillan. You can view Mylette's collection of designer doggie wear at www.FromTheHeartDoggieWear.com, and heirloom dolls, "My Mind's Eye."

MATT RICHTER (Lighting Design) is an award-winning designer based in Los Angeles. He is the resident designer for the LA LGBT Center, where he also works full time. Designs for the Center include Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe; Revisited (Ovation nomination), and Hit The Wall (Ovation Nomination, LADCC Award). Recent designs for Sacred Fools included Mr. Burns: A Post Electric Play (Ovation Nomination) and Too Heavy For Your Pocket. Other recent designs include Oppenheimer and Finks, both for Rogue Machine and I'm Not A Comedian, I'm Lenny Bruce Off Broadway. Matt also serves as half of

the experimental ambient folk duo Lanfair Field (lanfairfield.com) and creates his own audio strangeness as autodealer (autodlr.net). For more information, please visit mattrichter.net.

TIM LABOR (Composer & Sound Design) recent projects include "Under Milkwood," "All Night Long," and "What Matters Now" (Open Fist Theatre Company), "The Dig" (Latino Theatre Company), "American Book of the Dead: The Game Show," "Flu Season," and "Goonie" (Circle-X), "The Little Match Girl" for narrator and orchestra (UCR Symphony), and "Dred Scott Decision" (West Point Wind Quintet). Upcoming performances include sound design for "The Dig" (UCLA) and "Three Places in California" by the Kings Chorale in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Tim is a member of the Canadian League of Composers, an Associate with the Canadian Music Center and teaches in the Media and Cultural Studies Department at UC Riverside.

BRUCE DICKINSON & INA SHUMAKER (Properties)

began designing props and set pieces for the Open Fist Theatre Company over 15 years ago. Specializing in creating realistic fake foods and period set dressings, some favorite past shows include: James Joyce's The Dead, Under Milk Wood, B. Franklin, King Hedley II. Carpe diem.

JAN MUNROE (Scenic Construction) has appeared as an actor in TV, films, theatre and radio. With Open Fist, he appeared as an actor in GOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN (Mr. ShuFu) and MAD FOREST (Vampire) as well as directing John O'Keefe's Don't You Ever Call Me Anything But Mother with Tina Preston in 2017 and the production of John O'Keefe's All Night Long in fall of 2018.

KAITLIN CHANG (Associate Lighting Designer) is thrilled to be working on her first Open Fist production! Her previous credits include lighting The Receptionist and Detroit '67 at the Carrie Hamilton Theatre and scenic design for The Foreigner and Plaza Suite at Little Fish Theatre. A huge thank you to the entire Anna team for such a great experience& for all their hard work.

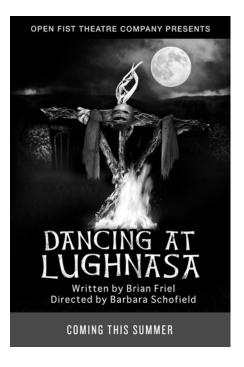
THERESE OLSON (Rehearsal Stage Manager) is an actor, singer, writer, editor, and teacher. She was raised in a family-run theatre, and has worked as a performing artist in North America, Western Europe, the UK, and Cuba. US Stage Credits include: Anna Karenina in Anna Karenina, James A. Little Theatre, Ariel in The Tempest, Powerhouse Theatre, Eurydice in Eurydice, Fusion Theatre Company; and Marta in Company, Santa Fe Rep. TV and Film work include: Crash on Starz TV, Sundance film The Dry Land, and Capitol Film's Love Ranch. Training: Vassar College-NY Stage & Film and The Actors' Gang. MA in Acting at Andrew Lloyd Webber's Arts Educational Schools London. She holds a second MA in Creative Writing from Dartmouth College, and currently has a short political piece, For Their Own Good, being

staged at Sacred Fools Theatre in Hollywood, where she is a Company Member. Therese has enjoyed a stage management role at LA venues like the Third Street Theatre, Odyssey Theatre Ensemble. Sacred Fools/ Broadwater.

BETH ROBBINS (Associate Producer) decided after associate producing with Martha and Amanda on *Under Milk Wood* that she couldn't say no to another opportunity. Be sure to ask her anything you want to know about cigars.

BENJAMIN SCUGLIA (Production Stage Manager) is an author and playwright, actor, producer and stage manager. He is a member of Theatre West, Force of Nature Productions and the Alliance of LA Playwrights. He has produced and SM'ed all around Los Angeles, including the last five Hollywood Fringe Festivals, the immersive Halloween theatrical event "Wicked Lit" with Unbound Productions and workshops of the new play "God Looked Away" with Judith Light and Al Pacino. He's happy to be back at Open Fist after SM'ing "Welcome to Your Alternative Reality" in 2017. As a playwright, Benjamin is a Samuel French Off-Off-Broadway Short Play Festival finalist and a three-time winner of the City of West Hollywood's Pride Play Reading series. His critically acclaimed play "The Man Who Saved Everything" had its world premiere at Theatre West last year. Twitter: @500Turtles

And coming in 2019...





Mission

The Open Fist Theatre Company is a community of actors, playwrights, designers and directors who believe that to realize the force and potential of a relevant, contemporary theatre it is necessary to establish a Company founded on the pursuit of artistic excellence. We seek through diverse styles and forms to illuminate the essential relationships that connect individuals and their societies, as we nurture empathy and forge identity through our work.

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