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DECEMBER 2012

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SPOTLIGHTS IN OUR
PULL-OUT SECTION
OF EVENTS!**

MUSIC

Floozy Nation

PERFORMING ARTS

The NHCC & Company

ARTFUL PAIRINGS

Forque at the
Hyatt Regency

GOOD DEEDS

Get a glow on

PROFILES

Local artists,
worldwide stages

GALLERIES

Wright's moves forward



Holiday tale is one of family and community spirit in hard times



Paloma Rael plays Luz, a young girl who lights her family's way through hardship. Photo by Angelo Mitchell.

Valli Marie Rivera is charmed by the story of "Farolitos of Christmas" in a way that is almost palpable.

"As a director I feel, see and hear the plays I am drawn to," she says. "Farolitos of Christmas' by Rudolfo Anaya is the heart-warming story of a young New Mexican girl and her gift of love and personal commitment to her family and community in a changing world. I feel that spirit which reflects my own family Christmas memories. I see the visual imagery of lights and colors of the Anaya aesthetic: a simple northern New Mexican village, with its coloring and adobe houses, the church, with the backdrop of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

"I hear the lively community overcoming obstacles and coming together as they sing the traditional Las Posadas songs, and rehearse the play within the play, 'La Pastorela,' as farolitos sparkle. I am drawn to the message of faith, hope, and unity in the community spirit, facing hard and changing times. I visualize a New Mexican Christmas fiesta, wrapped in a story that will warm our heart and spirit, giving us hope and joy. A Christmas gift for 'la gente,' as Mr. Anaya would say."

An entire New Mexican village comes to life in this play being produced by The Vortex Theatre in partnership with the National Hispanic Cultural Center. Its theme, says Rivera, is "the old tradition making way for the new," played out with gusto by "a big, high-spirited and brave cast" representing "a slice of the New Mexican community."

Rivera recently directed a dramatic version of Anaya's "Bless Me, Ultima" at the KiMo Theatre last October, another partnership forged by The Vortex, this time with ABQ-Bernalillo Libraries as part of The Big Read, their annual event.

"I am very lucky because I do talk and work with Mr. Anaya since I directed the theatrical adaptation of 'Bless Me, Ultima,'" Rivera says. "'Farolitos of Christmas' is an adaptation from his children's book, and I feel it has a special place in the heart of Mr. Anaya. His childhood memories of the changing ways his community was confronting, and the celebratory Christmas spirit with the traditional Posadas songs and Pastores play, come to life through the imagination of Luz, the protagonist. We talk about Christmas traditions here and from my home, Puerto Rico, and about our common traditions and shared values."

Luz is played by Paloma Rael. Her father (Joseph A. Wasson Jr.) is fighting in World War II; her hardworking, lonely mother, María, is played by Monica Rodriguez; Luz's grandfather Don Vicente is portrayed by Rick Edwards.

The director feels that this collaboration between The Vortex and the NHCC is beneficial to both.

"We use the great NHCC facilities to meet and rehearse, which is a service that can be very expensive for other productions. We feel very comfortable and welcome at NHCC. We have direct and open communication with NHCC producers Joseph Wasson and Reeve Love as well as The Vortex producers David Richard Jones and Michelle Allred," she says. "Other services include the box office, ushers, and p.r. All these elements will come together on the beautiful Journal Theatre stage to present a magical Christmas story." —SVH

December 14-16

Fri 7:30 pm; Sat 2 pm and 7:30 pm; Sun 2 pm

**Farolitos of Christmas
National Hispanic Cultural Center**

Tickets \$12-22; discount for seniors, students, NHCC members; nationalhispanic-center.org; for box office, call 724.4771.

The NHCC extends its embrace

Collaborations include professional groups and community partners



Ti-Coca & Wanga-Nègès from Haiti played at ¡Globalquerque! this year and are representative of musical acts from all over the world who perform during that festival. Photo by Dan Monaghan, New Mexico Tourism Department.

At the National Hispanic Cultural Center, the Performing Arts Department has devised a way to fulfill their mission to bring Latino and Hispanic music, theater and dance to New Mexico while dealing with the present-day funding cuts that hobble most arts organizations. They partner up.

"Our Latin Diva series is probably the only presentation on which we are not partnering," said Program and Production Manager Joseph A. Wasson, Jr. "I would say our main partners are the National Institute of Flamenco, Teatro Nuevo México, The Vortex Theatre, AMP Concerts, Avokado Artists, Ballet Pro Musica, Tricklock Theatre Company, Camino Real Productions, and Pimentel Music."

In truth the NHCC has a long list of alliances, making up a creative cartel that serves mutual missions.

"For example, we've created a whole series around the Pimentel family called the Pimentel Concert Series, a fit that was so perfect," said Wasson. "We always wanted to create a guitar series and we just kept thinking working with a family like the Pimentels, who are world-renowned luthiers, would be really exciting. In the past they had a concert series for several years, and they just got really excited about this new opportunity."

Performing Arts Director Reeve Love, Ph.D., estimates the collaborative productions now playing at the NHCC at around 90% of all shows. She also points out that the very first NHCC productions were partnerships, too – the other way around.

"Our first Latin Diva concert was presented at the KiMo Theatre, and one of our first world music presentations was presented at South Broadway Cultural Center," she said. "We started partnering [at the present location in Barelás] the year the Disney Center opened and we were given to understand that we had a big budget for programming. During that [first] year we paid for our own programming but then we found out that basically we had no budget – for instance, we lost the major funding for our Zarzuela series – so we went back to the drawing board."

The emerging picture was a vision of collaboration and co-productions that would, in Love's words, "give Albuquerque audiences a chance to see performances that they would not necessarily see in New Mexico if we didn't have them here."

World music right here at home

A case in point is the NHCC's many and varied partnerships with Neal Copperman and AMP Concerts. AMP brings in musical and dance groups, like Cimarrón from Columbia (coming in March) and Ballet Folklórico de México, that the NHCC would not be able to recruit on their own. Cop-