



JULIANNE ARGYROS STAGE / DECEMBER 10 - 23, 2004

South Coast Repertory

David Emmes
PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Martin Benson
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

presents

LA POSADA MÁGICA

written and directed by **Octavio Solis**

music by **Marcos Loya**

SCENIC DESIGN
Christopher Acebo

COSTUME DESIGN
Shigeru Yaji

LIGHTING DESIGN
Lonnie Alcaraz

MUSICAL DIRECTOR
Marcos Loya

CHOREOGRAPHER
Linda Kostalik

PRODUCTION MANAGER
David Leavenworth

STAGE MANAGER
*Jamie A. Tucker

HONORARY PRODUCERS

Brian and Sadie Finnegan

The Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund has provided major support for the commissioning, workshop and production of La Posada Mágica through its New Works for Young Audiences Program.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

Horacio	*Miguel Najera
Eli, Bones, Lauro	*Kevin Sifuentes
Gracie	*Tiffany Ellen Solano
Mom, Mariluz	*Crissy Guerrero
Papi, Jose Cruz	*Mauricio Mendoza
Refugio, Buzzard	*Sol Castillo
Consuelo, Widow	*Denise Blasor
Caridad, Widow	*Carla Jimenez
Musicians, Ensemble	Marcos Loya, Lorenzo Martinez

SETTING

Christmas Eve. The present.

LENGTH

Approximately two hours, including one 15-minute intermission.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Casting Director	Joanne DeNaut
Dramaturg	Jennifer Kiger
Production Assistant	Jennifer Butler
Costume Design Assistant	Julie Keen
Assistant to the Lighting Designer	Tonya Moake
Stage Management Intern	Heidi Westrom
Additional Costume Staff	Catherine Esera
Deck Crew	Ellen Jublin

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Las Amigas de la Cultura, Sylvia Krenzien, Teri Rocco, and Alice Rumbaugh,
for the special exhibit in the Julianne Argyros lobby.*

*Cellular phones, beepers and watch alarms should be turned off or set to non-audible
mode during the performance. Please refrain from unwrapping candy or making
other noises that may disturb surrounding patrons.*

*The use of cameras and recorders in the theatre is prohibited.
Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the theatre.*

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



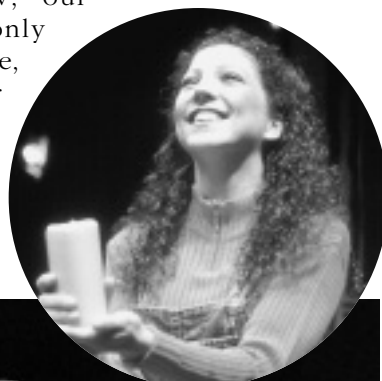
The Gift of Grace

When I was commissioned to write a family Christmas play for South Coast Repertory, I had no idea there would be deep synchronicities with my own life. I simply thought I would write another play for another theatre and that would be that. But while my talented collaborators (director José Cruz González and composer Marcos Loya) and I toiled away on our first draft of *Posada* at the Sundance Theatre Lab in Utah, I received a call from my wife Jeanne that she was pregnant with our daughter, and that changed everything.

The play suddenly revealed to me the essential universal sanctity of life, the glowing sense of hope and love that babies always suggest for the world. But the confluence of this play with my wife's news also transformed the holiday of Christmas for me. The adoration bestowed on the infant

cause I had just settled on that name for my protagonist. How could she have known? She hadn't read the play, nor had I spoken of it to her. And yet here now, our daughter was not only coming into our house, she was filling our play. It seemed fitting.

Gracie was born on September 24, 1994, and the



Jesus spoke more deeply and directly to my new status as a father. The Nativity became a metaphor for the profound responsibility we all

owe to the fragile innocent children we dare to bring into this brutal world.

Later that spring, as I continued to write *Posada* and Jeanne pored over all the books of baby names, she told me that she wanted to name our baby girl Graciela, or Gracie, for short. This stunned me be-

Gracie has been played by three actresses since its premiere in 1994: Ruth Livier (1994), left; Crissy Guerrero (1995-1998), top; and Tiffany Ellen Solano (1999-2004), with Mauricio Mendoza as Papi and Crissy Guerrero as Mom in 2002 and again this year.

play itself was delivered three months later. We brought her for one of the first performances, and to this day, I can't help but feel that the wide brown eyes of the infant Graciela have shone their grace on *La Posada Mágica*.

—Octavio Solís

The Historical Procession of Las Posadas

The familiar story of Joseph and Mary's long-ago search for lodgings is related every year at Christmastime in churches and homes the world over. But in many Latin countries, it actually comes to life again each December, reenacted for nine consecutive nights in the festive ritual of *Las Posadas*, which means inns, or lodgings.

The idea of commemorating the Holy Family's journey to Bethlehem can be traced

to St. Ignatius Loyola, in the 16th Century. He suggested a Christmas novena, special prayers to be said on nine successive days. In 1850, St. John of the Cross made a religious pageant out of the proceedings, and seven years later the nine-day remembrance was introduced to the Indians in Mexico by Spanish missionaries.

Solemn and deeply religious in feeling at first, the observances soon became imbued with a spirit of fun and, eventually, left the church and began to be celebrated in people's homes. The *posadas* have become community affairs with friends, relatives and neighbors sharing in the festivities and visiting a different house each evening.

The *posada* begins with a procession that sets



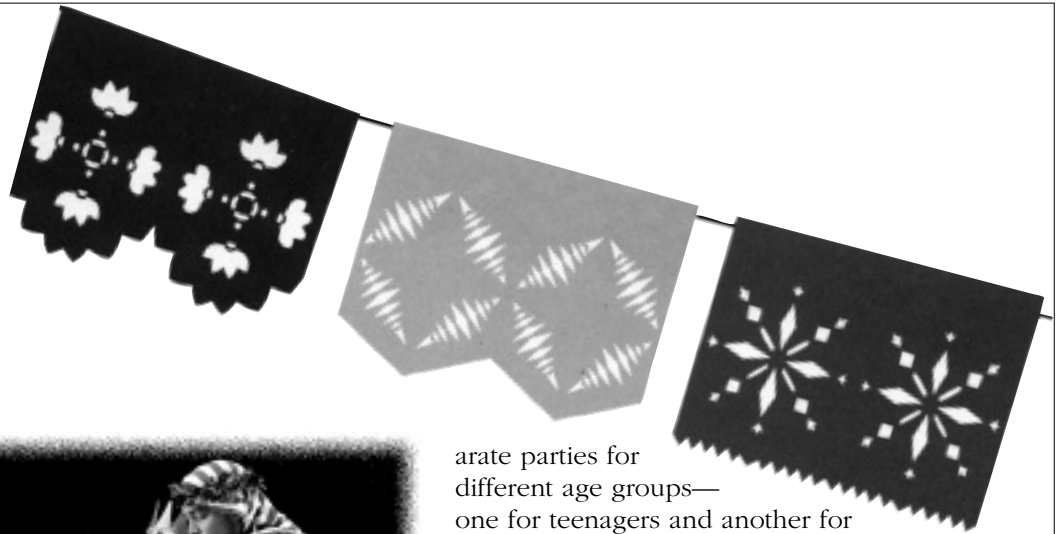
A MUSICAL FAMILY PORTRAIT. The 2003 cast of 'La Posada Mágica' featured from left: Kevin Sifuentes, Lorenzo Martinez, Carla Jimenez, Elsa Martinez, Miguel Najera, Tiffany Ellen Solano, Mauricio Mendoza, Denise Blasor, Marcos Loya and Sol Castillo.

off as soon as it gets dark. Often a child dressed as an angel goes first, followed by two more children carrying figures of Mary and Joseph on a small litter adorned with twigs. After more boys and girls come the lead figures, then come the grown-ups and last of all the musicians. Singing or chanting special *posada* songs, they all walk slowly along, each person carrying a lighted candle.

When the procession reaches the house chosen for that evening, it divides into two groups, one representing the holy pilgrims, the other the innkeepers.

The pilgrims line up behind the angel and the children bearing the figures of the Holy Family, and they file through the house until they arrive at a closed door, behind which the innkeepers have stationed themselves. The pilgrims knock on the door and call out in song, asking for shelter. A chorus of voices on the other side asks: "Who knocks at my door so late in the night?"

The pilgrims respond. "In the name of Heaven I beg you for lodging—my beloved wife can no longer travel, and she is weary." But the response is a stony, hardhearted refusal. "This is no inn. Go

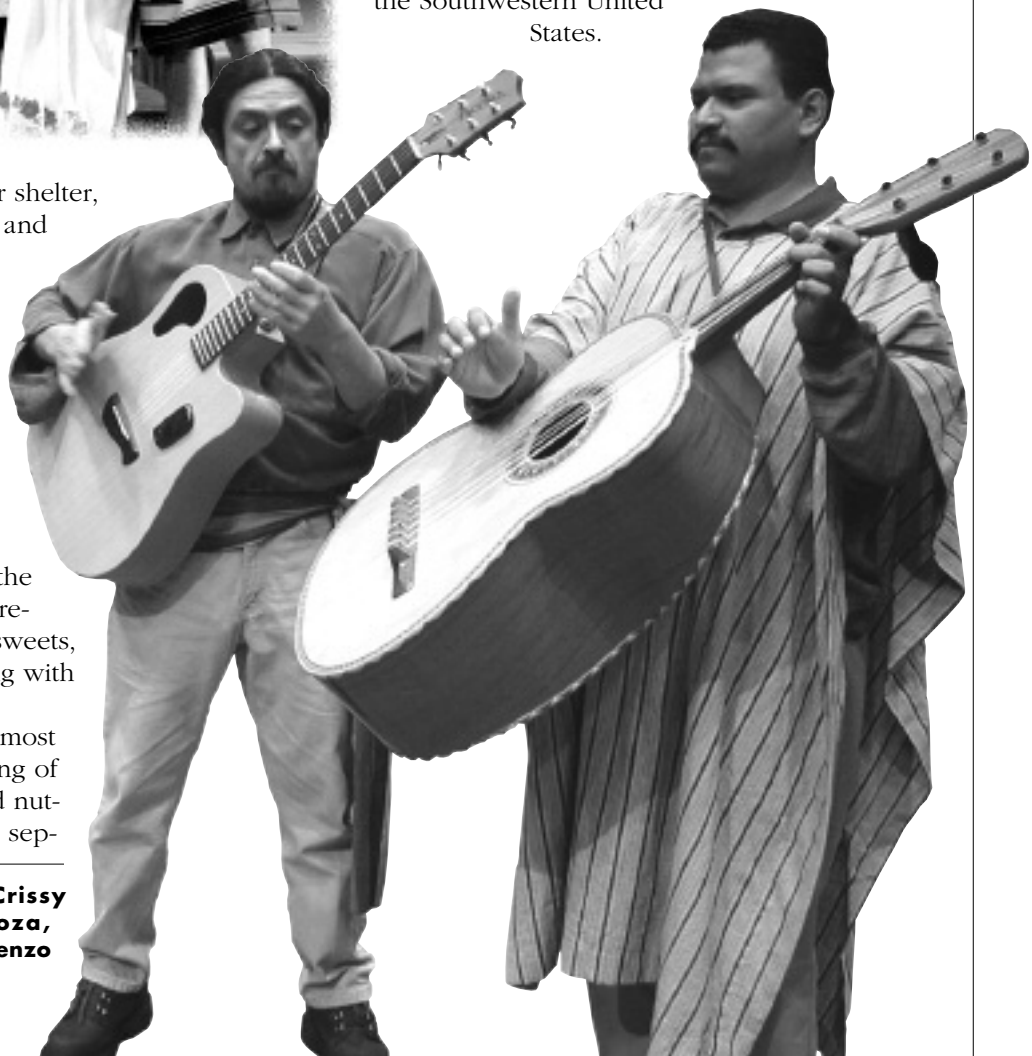


arate parties for different age groups—one for teenagers and another for the younger children. In Mexico City, especially, so many posadas are held that active partygoers can manage to attend four or five in one evening... and the festivities often go on until dawn.

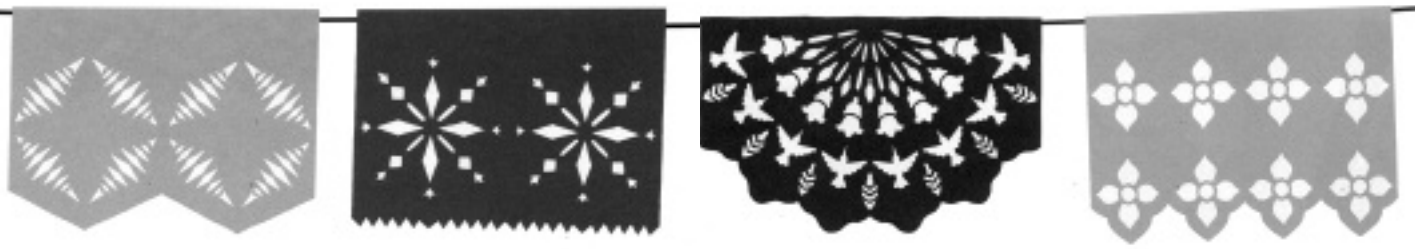
Over time, posadas have been tailored by their respective communities, so that a remarkable variety of posada styles can be found throughout Mexico and the Southwestern United States.

away!” After repeated requests for shelter, the pilgrims explain who they are and that Mary will soon give birth to the Son of God. The innkeepers relent and welcome the exhausted travelers: “Enter, Holy pilgrims. Come into our humble dwelling and into our hearts. The night is one of joy, for here beneath our roof we shelter the Mother of God.”

Everyone enters the room and kneels in prayer, after which the party moves out to the patio for fireworks and fun. Small baskets of sweets, called *colaciones*, are offered along with sandwiches, cookies and a fruited punch. And then it’s time for the most exciting moment of all, the breaking of the fancifully decorated candy and nut-filled piñata. Sometimes there are sep-



Denise Blasor, Carla Jimenez, Crissy Guerrero and Mauricio Mendoza, above and Marcos Loya and Lorenzo Martinez, at right.



The Magic of the Celebration

The Christmas Candle

“It begins with one simple candle—
so full of golden light”

— *La Posada Mágica*

After Gracie reluctantly joins her church’s posada, she sets about trying to extinguish not only the candle that has been lit in her honor, but all those that represent the other members of her group. With each flame she blows out, another character disappears until Gracie is left lost and alone.

The tradition of candles at Christmastime began in medieval Europe, where a very large Christmas candle was burned until the Twelfth Night in remembrance of the arrival of the Wise Men to Bethlehem. In Victorian times, candles represented good will toward those less fortunate. They were placed in windows from December 25 to January 6 to welcome any passersby needing shelter and food.

Some people believe that flames from burning candles frighten away evil spirits during the darkest days of the year.



In Norway, candles that burn out on Christmas Eve are thought to bring bad luck for the family. Another ancient tradition suggests that placing a candle in the window symbolically lights the way of the Holy Family as it provides a welcome for friends, neighbors and holiday guests.

Poinsettias

A favorite flower for the posada celebration is the poinsettia, with its beautiful red star shape. The legend of the poinsettia relates the story of a girl named Maria and her little brother Pablo. They were very poor but always looked forward to the Christmas festival each year, when a large Nativity scene was set up in the village church and the days leading up to Christmas were filled with *posadas*. But the two children were saddened because they had no money to buy presents. They especially wished to give something to the church, but they had nothing.

One Christmas Eve, Maria and Pablo set out for church to attend Midnight Mass. On their way they picked some weeds growing along the roadside to present as their gift to the church. They were mercilessly teased by the other children when they arrived with their humble offering, but Maria and Pablo knew they had given everything they had. As they began to place the weeds around the Nativity scene, the green top leaves turned into bright red petals.

Soon the manger was surrounded by the bright red, star-shaped flowers and everyone in the church believed they were witnessing a true Christmas miracle. Since that day, these beautiful flowers that bloom during the Christmas season have been known as *Flores de Noche Buena* or “Flowers of the Holy Night.”

Nochebuena, the Mexican name of the flower

English-speakers call poinsettia, was discovered in Taxco and the valleys surrounding Cuernavaca. Known by the Aztecs in their native Nahuatl language as *cuetlaxochitl*, it is believed that they brought the plant from the tropical climate of Cuernavaca to their Aztec highlands for cultivation in special nurseries. Prized for the curative properties of the milk that dripped from the leaves, stems and flowers when cut, the plant also produced pigment from the red leaves used to dye cotton fibers.

The poinsettia plant was brought from Mexico to America by Dr. Joel Roberto Poinsett (1770-1851), who served as U.S. ambassador to Mexico following that country's independence from Spain. Poinsett fell in love with the *nochebuena* plant when he first saw it adorning the churches of Taxco in 1823. He sent specimens back to the States to decorate his mansion in South Carolina one Christmas, and upon his return home several years later, he was astonished to find the entire town of Charleston growing the festive red flower.

Papel Picado

Paper cutting has been a folk art ever since paper was invented in 105 A.D. by Ts'ai Lun, an official in the court of Ho Ti, emperor of Cathay. The humble nature of its origins and the anonymity of its practice has caused paper cutting to be ignored as an art form, though artists, artisans and collectors are becoming increasingly aware of this valuable folk heritage.

In Mexico, the technique is called *papel picado*, which means "pierced paper." After the Spanish Conquest of Mexico, *papel de China* (tissue paper) was introduced and became the material of choice for Christian holiday decorations. Paperwork was apparently among the imports that poured in from the Orient via the annual Pacific treasure fleet that traveled between the Far East and Acapulco, laden with such exotic goods as silver, ivory, spices and porcelain. Once the craft arrived in Mexico, it became the basis for many important and widespread folk art forms.

In Mexico, the art of paper-cutting goes back to

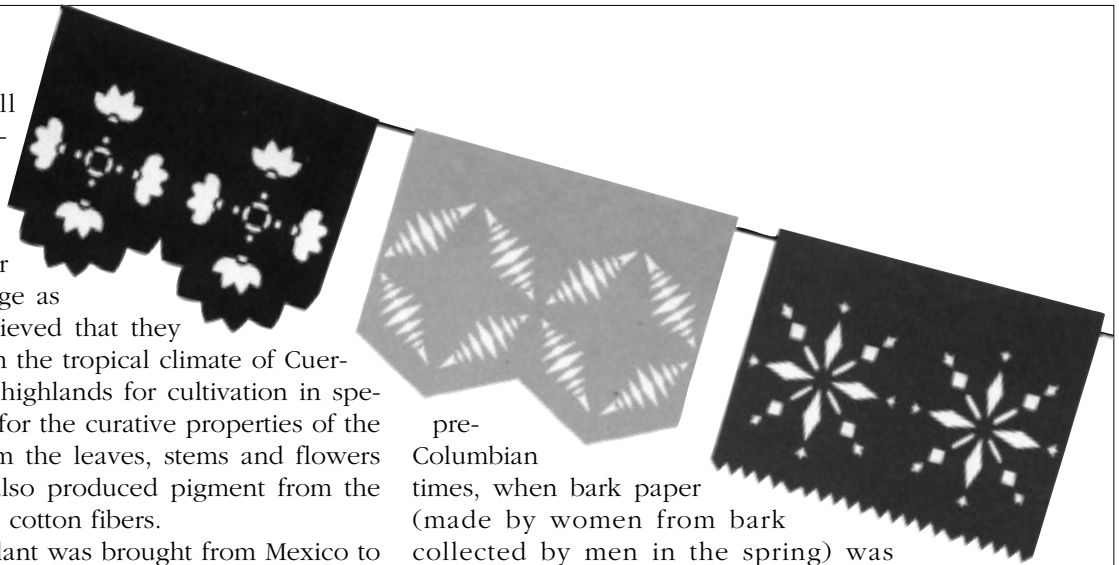
pre-Columbian times, when bark paper (made by women from bark collected by men in the spring) was used as an offering to the gods and a tribute to the Aztec emperor, Moctezuma II. On certain holidays, it decorated the idols in temples and palaces, and priests embodying the gods and the cosmos wore elaborate costumes of colored paper. Cutouts of dark paper were made to represent evil spirits, while white paper represented good spirits and was used by healers and witches in their rituals.

Color schemes selected for *papel picado* are frequently linked with specific festivities. Sky blue or pink and white are commonly chosen for celebrations in honor of the Virgin Mary, yellow and white for patron saints. Vibrant pink, orange and purple are the key tones employed for *ofrendas* (offerings) associated with *El Día de los Muertos*, or the Day of the Dead.

Shades of purple are also widely used at Easter. The colors of the Mexican flag—red, white and green—are set aside for venerating the nation's patroness, *La Virgen de Guadalupe*, as well as for commemorating Independence Day, September 16. Rainbow hues are appropriate for Christmas and non-religious festivities.

Cut from colored tissue paper (or plastic) to simulate lace, *papel picado* can be seen today hanging from Day of the Dead altars and decorating graves during November. Also during Christmas, *papel picado* decorates indoor and outdoor festivities in Mexico.

Visit the online *Playgoer's Guide to La Posada Mágica* at www.scr.org to read more about these and other Mexican holiday traditions.



Sing Along with the Posada

'Vamos A Pie'

Vamos a pie caminando
Caminando, caminando
Una posada Buscando
Buscando para El.

Velas prendidas alumbran
La noche más santa de Dios
Este camino termina
En oración.

Vamos con fe caminando
Caminando, caminando
Los angeles saben cuando
Saben cuando llegará.

A la posada más linda
Llena de luz y amor
En esta noche veremos
Al Redentor.

Vamos a pie caminando
Caminando, caminando
Una posada buscando
Buscando buscando.

'Este Canto Mio'

Este canto mío canto con pasión
Por el Niño Dios quien es mi salvación
Si mi voz al cielo no alcanza
Es porque le falta esperanza

Gloria gloria gloria al Señor
Escuchame y hazme el favor
Quiero ver el Rey de la humanidad
En la Noche Buena de la Navidad.

Mucho gusto siento en mi corazón
Cada vez que canto, santa es mi canción
Ya se acerca el momento de
El Nacimiento de la Nueva Fe.

Gloria gloria gloria al Señor
Escuchame y hazme el favor
Quiero ver el Rey de la humanidad
En la Noche Buena de la Navidad.

'We go on foot'

We go on foot
Walking, walking
Searching for a posada
Searching for Him

Burning candles shine on
God's holiest night
This path ends
With a prayer

We walk along in faith
Walking, walking
The angels know when
They know when He will arrive

To the most beautiful posada
Filled with light and love
On this night we will see
The savior

We go on foot
Walking, walking
Searching for a posada
Searching, searching

'My Song'

I sing my song with passion
For baby Jesus, my salvation
If my voice won't reach heaven
It is because it lacks hope

Glory, glory, glory to the Lord
Listen to me, do me a favor
I want to see the King of humanity
On Christmas' holy night

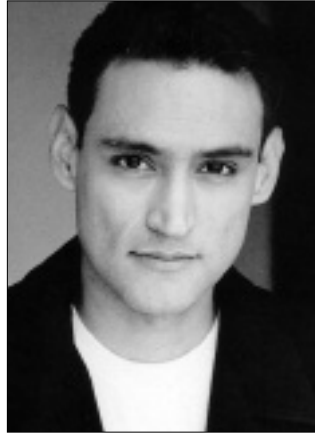
I feel pleasure in my heart
Every time I sing, holy is my song
The moment is near
The birth of a new faith

Glory, glory, glory to the Lord
Listen to me, do me a favor
I want to see the King of humanity
On Christmas' holy night

Words by Octavio Solis; music by Marcos Loya
Translation by Santiago Uceda



DENISE BLASOR
Consuelo/Widow



SOL CASTILLO
Refugio/Buzzard



CRISSY GUERRERO
Mom/Mariluz

Artist Biographies

***DENISE BLASOR** (*Consuelo/Widow*) returns to SCR for her ninth appearance in *La Posada Mágica*. She appeared in *Ten Tiny Love Stories* directed by Luis Alfaro and written by Rodrigo Garcia. She performed and directed *The Wide, Wide Sea* at Bilingual Foundation of the Arts and NoHo Festival and co-directed *Cooking* at the A Theatre. She appeared at the Los Angeles Theatre Center as the Bride in *Blood Wedding*, directed by Margarita Galban, as Yerma in *Yerma* and as Martirio in *House of Bernarda Alba* with Carmen Zapata. She played Jenny in *The Threepenny Opera* directed by Angelina Reaux and was part of Ron Sossi's Odyssey Theatre adaptation of *Faust*. She was Artistic Director of Los Angeles Diversified Theater Company, where she performed and adapted *The Three Sisters*; appeared in the Ovation Award-nominated production of *He Who Gets Slapped* with Bud Cort, directed by Dan Shor; and

performed and produced the original musical production of *Caderas*. Other stage credits include leading roles in the world premieres of *House of the Spirits* at LATC; *Cervantes' Interludes* at Stages, directed by Florinel Fatulescu; *Made in Lanus* directed by Lillian Garrett at Old Globe Theatre; and *Accelerando* by Lisa Loomer. She played Juana in *The False Chronicle of Juana La Loca* at the Festival Cervantino in Mexico. Film credits include *The Disappearance of Garcia Lorca* with Andy Garcia; *Univers'1* directed by Ana Nicholas; *Noriega, God's Favorite* with Bob Hoskins, directed by Roger Spottiswoode; *Team America: World Police* and the soon-to-be-released *Happy Feet* with Robin Williams. Ms. Blasor is a proud member of Actor's Equity.

***SOL CASTILLO** (*Refugio/Buzzard*) returns to SCR for his fifth season in *La Posada Mágica*. He was also seen in the world premiere of *The*

Hollow Lands and the Pacific Playwrights Festival workshops of *Sea of Tranquility* and *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot*. At San Diego Repertory he appeared in *Zoot Suit*, *The Imaginary Invalid* and *Barrio Hollywood*. Other theatre credits include the national tour of *Veteranos: A Tribute*, *West Side Story*, *Bye Bye Birdie* and *Talking to Yellow Roses*. Mr. Castillo was seen in Showtime's "Resurrection Blvd." and Valor Production's *Who's James Cagney?* Mr. Castillo dedicates his performance to the terrific audience and his family for their love and support. Mr. Castillo is a proud member of Actors' Equity.

***CRISSY GUERRERO** (*Mom/Mariluz*) is happy to be returning home to *La Posada Mágica* once more. This is her second season as Mariluz. She was previously seen at SCR in the role of Gracie for four seasons. She has spent seven years touring the world singing and danc-



CARLA JIMENEZ
Caridad/Widow



MARCOS LOYA
Musician/Ensemble



LORENZO MARTINEZ
Musician/Ensemble

ing as Priscillita with *El Vez*, the Mexican Elvis. She has also been seen on “Late Night with Conan O’Brien,” HBO’s U.S. Comedy Arts Festival, The Toyota Comedy Festival, and at Largo and the Roxy starring in the critically acclaimed musical *White Trash Wins Lotto*. Ms. Guerrero appeared as Jasmine in *Black Butterfly*, *Jaguar Girl*, *Piñata Woman and Other Superhero Girls Like Me* at the Mark Taper Forum. Concurrently, she worked as First Assistant Editor and Producer of bonus materials on the Kids in the Hall documentary *Same Guys, New Dresses* and as Associate Producer and co-star of “Dave Foley’s The True Meaning of Christmas” Specials which air annually in Canada and soon in the U.S. Her proudest and most recent accomplishment is her far-too-adorable daughter Alina, who first appeared on this stage in her mother’s belly. Ms. Guerrero is a proud member of Actor’s Equity

***CARLA JIMENEZ** (*Caridad/ Widow*) returns for her fifth season in *La Posada Mágica*. She just performed for the Pasadena Playhouse Sondheim gala appearing on stage with Deborah Gibson, Richard Kind, Sharon Lawrence and Teri Ralston, to name a few. She also

appeared here in last season’s Theatre for Young Audiences production of *The Emperor’s New Clothes*. Her theatre credits include The Lalo Project (Mark Taper Forum presentation, directed and written by Diane Rodriguez); *Godspell* at the Knightsbridge Theatre; *Black Butterfly*, *Jaguar Girl*, *Piñata Woman and Other Super Hero Girls Like Me* (Mark Taper Forum at Actor’s Gang); and the national tour of *The Mikado*, among others. She has appeared on “The District” and has had recurring roles on “Strong Medicine” and “E.R.” She can also be seen in commercials. Ms. Jimenez thanks her cat Peaches for believing in her!..no, I get it...it’s a cat. She is a proud member of Actor’s Equity.

MARCOS LOYA (*Composer/Musical Director/Ensemble*) is an accomplished musician and composer and a master of acoustic guitar. He is also adept on *requinto*, *jarrana*, *cuatro*, 12-string, mandolin, electric guitar and various indigenous folk instruments. His debut CD, *Love is the Reason*, garnered an Independent Contemporary Jazz Album of the Year nomination. In 1996 he composed the score for the “American Playhouse” film adaptation of

Tomas Rivera’s *and the earth did not swallow him* (*y no selo trago la tierra*). His film music is featured in director Robert Rodriguez’ *Once Upon a Time in Mexico* as well as *Deep Cover*, *The Waterdance*, *A Million to Juan*, *Old Gringo*, *Vibes*, *Stand and Deliver*, *Born in East LA*, *Hold Me*, *Kiss Me*, *Thrill Me* and *Kiss Me a Killer* (for which he received a nomination for the Independent Spirit Award). He scored and/or composed music for several plays, including the Los Angeles Theater Center productions of *La Victima*, *August 29* (*Drama-Logue Award*, Best Original Music), *Stone Wedding* (Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award nomination), and most recently the southwestern tour of *Veteranos* (*A Legacy of Valor*). His television work includes the musical scores for the PBS productions “Dreams of Flying,” “Elders,” “Between Friends” and “Los Pinateros.” His music can be heard in the “Mangas” episode of the PBS series “Foto Novela” for which he also composed the theme. He served as musical director for Univision’s long-running “El Show de Paul Rodriguez,” the Buenavista/Disney “Navidad en las Americas” special, the ABC special “Latin Nights” and NBC’s “Vida Awards.” Mr. Loya has



MAURICIO MENDOZA
Papi/Jose Cruz



MIGUEL NAJERA
Horacio



KEVIN SIFUENTES
Eli/Bones/Lauro

performed and/or toured with a variety of performers including Plácido Domingo, Linda Ronstadt (with the Houston Symphony Orchestra), Celia Cruz, Tito Puente, Lalo Guerrero, Chick Corea, Chaka Khan, Gerald Albright, Hugh Masekela, Keiko Matsui, Phillip Bailey, Stephen Stills, Vicki Carr, Luis Enrique and Jose Feliciano. With Madonna, he recorded “La Isla Bonita” and appeared in the video. Mr. Loya’s most recent project is the acoustic group Trio Los 5, which offers a fascinating look at the political/folk music of the Americas. The group, which includes current *La Posada Mágica* ensemble member Lorenzo Martínez and past member Mundo Armijo, looks for ways to express their Chicano heritage to contemporary audiences. He dedicates his performance to his mother Bertha Loya and the memory of his father, Arthur Loya, whose courage and love remain a constant source of inspiration. Mr. Loya would like to extend his thanks to Jack for the accordion and to recognize the generous sponsorship of Tacoma Guitars, whose fine instruments are featured in this production.

LORENZO MARTINEZ (*Musician/Ensemble*) was raised with the rich,

culturally diverse music of Los Angeles and has traveled and performed throughout the Southwest. He represented Chicano music in Paris with Lalo Guerrero and Flaco Jiménez. His education includes Music Theory and Instrumental Studies at Cerritos College and UCLA’s Ethno Musicology program with emphasis in Mariachi music. His vast musical experience includes Tex-Mex, conjuntos, orquesta styles, mariachi, zydeco, jump blues, jazz, jarocho, huasteco, nueva canción, trio romántico, early California and Chicano movimiento music. Other groups Mr. Martínez has performed with include Hermanos Baca and Lil Joe y La Familia. He was part of the Mariachi concert *Las Tres Voces de Oro*, backing Lucha Villa, Lola Beltrán and Miguel Aceves Mejía. He performed with the UCLA Mariachi under the direction of Nati Cano of Los Comperos, and in the Universal film *Who Will Sing the Songs* starring Freddie Fender and Vicki Carr. He performed and recorded with Los Perros del Pueblo Nuevo and Trio Los Cinco with Marcos Loya, Mundo Armijo and Ray Islas. The group performed *Día de Los Muertos* and *La Virgen del Tepeyac* by Luis Valdez at the Japan Theatre,

the opening ceremony of Luis Valdez’ *Bandido* at the Mark Taper Forum and with Culture Clash in *La Carpa* at the Mark Taper Forum. Most recently he toured with The Four Brown Hats theatre production of *Veteranos, A Legacy of Valor*.

***MAURICIO MENDOZA** (*Papi/Jose Cruz*) returns for his third season of *La Posada Mágica*. Theatre credits include *Much Ado about Nothing* at the John Anson Ford Amphitheater; *Castro and the Pitcher* at the Hollywood Court Theatre; *Zorro, Live* at Theatrical Arts International; *The Imaginary Invalid*, *Zoot Suit* and *A Christmas Carol* at San Diego Repertory; *Three Sisters* at LATC; *House of the Spirits* at BFA Theatre; *He Who Gets Slapped* at Hudson Backstage; and *Ballad of the Blacksmith*, *Twelfth Night*, *King Lear*, *Arms and the Man*, *Taming of the Shrew* and *As You Like It* at The Old Globe. Film credits include *Blow*, *Rhapsody on Rails*, *Malasangre*, *Un Tiempo Atras*, *Wing Commander IV*, *Under Covers* and *Never Trust a Serial Killer*. Television credits include series regular roles on “Resurrection Blvd.” as Miguel Santiago and “Angeles;” and co-starring roles on “King of Queens,” “Days of Our



TIFFANY ELLEN SOLANO
Gracie

Lives,” “Babylon 5” and “Judging Amy.” He is co-producer of the new musical revue *Latin Gems*.

***MIGUEL NAJERA** (*Horacio*) is happy to be back for his third year as Horacio at SCR. A multi-talented artist, Miguel has just finished his second documentary and is getting ready to produce his first feature film in February. Founder of an independent film company, he wrote and directed Ce Acatl’s award-winning short film *Libertad*, which screened to critical acclaim on WGBH Boston as part of its Latino film series. Mr. Najera is also poised to direct his first feature film *Spiritual Runner* in 2005, which he co-wrote with Carolyn Pistone. His acting career has spanned 25 years in film, television and theatre. Miguel has an MFA in Film, Theatre, and Television Directing from the California Institute of the Arts, received his BA in Drama from San Francisco State University and attended the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco.

***KEVIN SIFUENTES** (*Eli/Bones/Lauro*) returns to SCR for his third season of *La Posada Mágica*. He has just wrapped up the 2004 National Tour of the critically ac-

claimed *By The Hand Of The Father*, which has aired on PBS’ “Austin City Limits.” Theatre credits include *The Yellow Boat* and *Bocon!* with the Mark Taper Forum; *The Grapevine* at the Los Angeles Theatre Center; *Burning Patience* at San Jose Repertory; *Token-Alien* with Cornerstone Theatre Co.; and *Leonce and Lena* at Stages Theatre. He currently performs in the one man show *Wheels* produced by NCCJ. Film credits include *29 Palms*, *Native Aspect Ratio*, *Independence Day*, *Steel*, *Street Corner Justice*, ... and *the earth did not swallow him* and *Hearts of Stone*. His numerous television credits include “ER” and recurring roles on “Resurrection Blvd.” and “The New Rockford Files.” Mr. Sifuentes gives special thanks to his family and friends for their love, support, insight and funny stories. He is a proud member of Actors’ Equity.

***TIFFANY ELLEN SOLANO** (*Gracie*) is thrilled to be returning to SCR for this year’s production of *La Posada Mágica*. This show is very dear to her heart and it means a great deal to her to be rejoining a talented cast and crew who are more like a family she looks forward to reuniting with every holiday season. Ms. Solano has spent more than half her life on stage, beginning in musical theatre, and later performing in straight plays and Shakespeare. She portrayed Ginya in *Nine Armenians* at the Mark Taper Forum and Denver Center Theatre, played Miranda in *The Tempest* at the Los Angeles Theatre Center and received critical acclaim for her depiction of Anne in *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Other performances include lead roles in *David and Lisa*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *West Side Story*, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Under the Gaslight*. The Young Artists Organization awarded her the prestigious honor of “Most Outstanding Young Performer in Live Theatre”

for her portrayal of Gracie in previous productions of *La Posada Mágica*. Though her heart is truly in the theatre, she also enjoys film and music work. She is a proud member of Actors’ Equity, SAG and AFTRA. Film credits include commercials, television guest spots, industrials, interactive videos and independent films. She sends her love to all of her family and friends (particularly Mom, Dad, Luke, Turbo & Bella) and hopes that Gracie’s spirit touches your heart half as deeply as it has hers.

PLAYWRIGHT, DIRECTOR & DESIGNERS

OCTAVIO SOLIS (*Playwright/Director*) is a playwright and director living in San Francisco. His works *Man of the Flesh*, *Prospect*, *El Paso Blue*, *Santos & Santos*, *La Posada Mágica*, *El Otro*, *Dreamlandia* and *Bethlehem* have been mounted at theatres nationwide. *Burning Dreams*, co-written with Julie Hebert and Gina Leishman, was produced by San Diego Repertory; and his collaborative project with Erik Ehn, *Shiner*, was mounted by Undermain Theatre in Dallas. His most recent project was *The Seven Visions of Encarnacion*, a shadow puppet work written for Shadowlight Theatre Company and performed in San Francisco. Solis has received an NEA Playwriting Fellowship, two playwriting grants from The Kennedy Center, the Will Glickman Playwright Award, the 1998 TCG/NEA Theatre Artists in Residence Grant, the 1998 McKnight Fellowship grant from the Playwrights Center in Minneapolis and the 2000-2001 National Theatre Artists Residency Grant from TCG. He is the recipient of a grant from the Pew Charitable Trust for *Gibraltar*, a new play with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. His DV feature film *Prospect* has just been completed. Solis is a member of

the Dramatists Guild and New Dramatists.

MARCOS LOYA (*Composer/Musical Director*) See biography on page P-10.

CHRISTOPHER ACEBO (*Scenic Design*) designed *Habeas Corpus* earlier this season; the world premieres of *The Beard of Avon*, *Hold Please* and *California Scenarios* and the West Coast premiere of *The Countess* at SCR. Recent productions include the world premieres of *The Clean House* at Yale Repertory, *Electricidad* at the Goodman Theatre and *Living Out* and *Chavez Ravine* at the Mark Taper Forum. Other regional design work includes productions for the Guthrie Theater, Portland Center Stage, La Jolla Playhouse, Pasadena Playhouse, the Goodman Theatre, Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis, Cornerstone Theater Company, Missouri Repertory, Great Lakes Theatre Festival, The Kennedy Center, San Diego Repertory Theatre, The Magic Theatre and Sledgehammer Theatre, among others. Mr. Acebo is an ensemble member of Cornerstone Theater Company in Los Angeles. He received his MFA in design at the University of California, San Diego and is a past recipient of the NEA/TCG fellowship for designers. He is a member of the faculty at Cal State University, Los Angeles.

SHIGERU YAJI (*Costume Design*) has designed costumes for over 50 SCR productions including most recently *Habeas Corpus*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Lovers and Executioners* and *Major Barbara*. His other recent work has been seen at Yale Repertory Theatre, Cornerstone Theatre Company, San Jose Repertory Theatre and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, as well as the current Broadway-bound, national touring production of Cathy Rigby's

Peter Pan, for which he previously received an Emmy Award nomination. He is the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions including six Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Awards and a Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award. Mr. Yaji is a member of the United Scenic Artists Local 829 and the UC Irvine Drama Department faculty.

LONNIE ALCARAZ (*Lighting Design*) is an Assistant Professor at UC Irvine and a professional Lighting Designer. He has designed at various regional theatre houses, such as SCR, Berkeley Repertory, Sierra Repertory, The Arena Stage in Washington DC and the Utah Shakespearean Festival. In addition to his ten seasons with *La Posada Mágica*, shows at SCR include *The Hoboken Chicken Emergency*, *Play Strindberg*, *Dimly Perceived Threats to the System*, *Sidney Bechet Killed a Man* (for which he received a *Drama-Logue* Award), *BAFO*, *Later Life* and *Three Viewings*. He designed Culture Clash's *The Birds* at both SCR and Berkeley Repertory, along with their national touring show, *Radio Mambo*, which has been seen in Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Arizona, New York, Seattle and Washington DC. Recent design experience includes *The Philosophy of the World - The Shaggs*, a new musical at the Ford Anson Theatre in Los Angeles; the Utah Shakespearean Festival's 2004 summer and 2003 fall seasons of shows; *My Fair Lady*, *Forever Plaid*, *Morning's at Seven*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Comedy of Errors* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. He also was a designer for Universal Studios, Japan, where he designed the live shows Terminator 2 in 3D, and Monster Makeup, the attractions Jurassic Park the Ride and Snoopy Studios, along with exterior architectural facades throughout the park. He is a member of the Unit-

ed Scenic Artist/ IATSE - Local 829.

LINDA KOSTALIK (*Choreographer*) is a Professor in the Theatre Arts and Dance Department at California State University Los Angeles and works for the award-winning Los Angeles County High School of the Arts as choreographer for their Musical Theatre Ensemble. Her career as dancer, choreographer and educator has spanned 39 years. She has choreographed numerous productions for professional theatres such as SCR, Playwrights Horizons, the Goodman Theatre, the International City Theatre and others. "Professor K" has directed Grammy nominee *Bobby Rodriguez: A Latin Jazz Christmas Show* for the past three years and continues work in videography and design. As always, it is a pleasure to be back with the SCR family. The happiest holidays to everyone!

***JAMIE A. TUCKER** (*Stage Manager*) completed his MFA in Dance, specializing in Stage Management, at UCI in 1994. He stage managed *The Retreat from Moscow* this season and *Anna in the Tropics*, *Lovers and Executioners*, *Intimate Exchanges* and *Mr. Marmalade* last season. He previously stage managed the world premiere of Richard Greenberg's *The Violet Hour*, the West Coast premiere of Horton Foote's *The Carpetbagger's Children*, *Relatively Speaking* and the world premiere of Rolin Jones' *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow*. He worked as SCR's stage manager for the Second Stage productions of *The Dazzle*, *True West*, *Play Strindberg*, the world premiere of *But Not for Me* and the Pacific Playwrights Festival workshop production of *Landlocked*. He also was stage manager of *La Posada Mágica* for two seasons and SCR's Festival Latino '97 production of Rick Najera's *Latinologues*. He has

worked as assistant stage manager on the Mainstage productions of *New England*, *Our Town* and *Arcadia*, and the Second Stage productions of *BAFO* and *Three Days of Rain*. Mr. Tucker has worked at the Long Beach Civic Light Opera on *No, No, Nanette*, *Can Can*, *A Chorus Line*, *The King and I* and *Man of La Mancha*. If you can't find him in the theatre, he is likely to be on the diamond.

DAVID EMMES (*Producing Artistic Director*) is co-founder of SCR. He has received numerous awards for productions he has directed during SCR's 40-year history, including a Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for the direction of George Bernard Shaw's *The Philanderer*. He directed the world premieres of Amy Freed's *Safe in Hell*, *The Beard of Avon* and *Freedomland*, Thomas Babe's *Great Day in the Morning*, Keith Reddin's *Rum and Coke* and *But Not for Me* and Neal Bell's *Cold Sweat*; the American premiere of Terry Johnson's *Un1suitable for Adults*; the West Coast premieres of C.P. Taylor's *Good* and Harry Kondoleon's *Christmas on Mars*; and the Southland premiere of *Top Girls* (at SCR and the Westwood Playhouse). Other productions include the West Coast premieres of *Three Viewings* by Jeffrey Hatcher, *The Secret Rapture* by David Hare and *New England* by Richard Nelson; and *Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard, *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde, Ayckbourn's *Woman in Mind* and *You Never Can Tell* by George Bernard Shaw, which he restaged for the Singapore Festival of Arts. His producing responsibilities involve the overall coordination of SCR's programs and projects. He has served as a theatre panelist and onsite evaluator for the National En-

dowment for the Arts, on the Executive Committee of 7th League of Resident Theatres, and as a panelist for the California Arts Council. After attending Orange Coast College, he received his BA and MA from California State University, San Francisco, and his PhD in theatre and film from USC.

MARTIN BENSON (*Artistic Director*), co-founder of SCR with his colleague David Emmes, has directed nearly one third of the plays produced here. He has distinguished himself in the staging of contemporary work, including Horton Foote's *The Carpetbagger's Children* and the world premiere of *Getting Frankie Married—and Afterwards*, the critically acclaimed California premiere of William Nicholson's *Shadowlands*, the Southern California premiere of Michael Healey's *The Drawer Boy*; and the West Coast premieres of Peter Hedges' *Good As New* and Martin McDonagh's *The Lonesome West*. He has won accolades for his direction of five major works by George Bernard Shaw, including the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle (LADCC) Award-winners *Major Barbara*, *Misalliance* and *Heartbreak House*. Among the numerous world premieres he has directed are Tom Strelch's *BAFO* and Margaret Edson's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Wit*, which he also directed at Seattle Repertory Theatre and the Alley Theatre in Houston. He has directed American classics including *Ah, Wilderness!*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *A Delicate Balance* and *All My Sons*. Mr. Benson has been honored with the *Drama-Logue* Award for his direction of 21 productions and received LADCC Distinguished Achievement in Directing awards an unparalleled seven times for the

three Shaw productions, John Millington Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, Sally Nemeth's *Holy Days* and *Wit*. He also directed the film version of *Holy Days* using the original SCR cast. Along with Emmes, he accepted SCR's 1988 Tony Award for Outstanding Resident Professional Theatre and won the 1995 Theatre LA Ovation Award for Lifetime Achievement. Mr. Benson received his BA in Theatre from California State University, San Francisco.

PAULA TOMEI (*Managing Director*) is responsible for the overall administration of South Coast Repertory and has been Managing Director since 1994. A member of the SCR staff since 1979, she has served in a number of administrative capacities including Subscriptions Manager, Business Manager and General Manager. She currently serves as President of the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for the professional not-for-profit theatre. In addition, she has served as Treasurer of TCG, Vice President of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and has been a member of the LORT Negotiating Committee for industry-wide union agreements. She represents SCR at national conferences of TCG and LORT; is a theatre panelist and site visitor for the National Endowment for the Arts and the California Arts Council; served on the Advisory Committee for the Arts Administration Certificate Program at the University of California, Irvine; and has been a guest lecturer in the graduate school of business at Stanford. She graduated from the University of California, Irvine with a degree in Economics and pursued an additional course of study in theatre and dance.



The Actors and Stage Managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



The Scenic, Costume, Lighting and Sound Designers in LORT theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists Local USA-829, IATSE.



The Director is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.