



NEWS RELEASE

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245 ACTS OF UNSPEAKABLE EVIL BY PAULA ZELAYA CERVANTES AND ANA GONZÁLEZ BELLO WINS ATC'S 2018 NATIONAL LATINO PLAYWRITING AWARD

TUCSON, Ariz. (Dec. 28, 2018): *245 Acts of Unspeakable Evil*, a play by award-winning playwrights Paula Zelaya Cervantes and Ana González Bello born out of their curiosity and anger as Mexicans and women who are powerless to change things in America's current social and political situation, has won Arizona Theatre Company's 2018 National Latino Playwriting Award. With a unique, uproarious style, *245 Acts of Unspeakable Evil* is a spunky one-woman play about the powerless daughter of a powerful superhero.

Bello, whose radio play *Diablo and Romina* won the 2014 Georgi Markov Award for the BBC's International Radio Playwriting Competition, and Cervantes, whose play, *The Orbweaver*, won the 2016 Vancouver Fringe Critic's Choice Award for Best Play and recently was awarded Efiteatro, Mexico's Institute of Fine Arts' most prestigious grant, will share the \$1,000 top prize.

"We have reached a point in our careers where we've started to feel confident and comfortable as theatre makers within our community, and we wanted a challenge, a play that would demand a lot from us emotionally and creatively," Cervantes said. "*245 Acts* has been just that, a deeply personal and terrifying venture through which we have dealt with some of our country's most saddening aspects: the degree of corruption our government has been responsible for and our postcolonial feelings of "smallness", which prevent us from demanding justice.

Using comic book language and superhero movie conventions in a theatrical format specifically for young adult and teen audiences, *245 Acts of Unspeakable Evil* tells the story of Andrea, a "normal" teen who has a remarkable legacy of superheroes in her family. The only drawback is that the "superhero

gene” skips three generations or so, a fact that she discovered after jumping from a second floor without getting the expected results.

“It is heartbreaking that we often choose to ignore the horrors that go in our city and our country and our world because we are powerless,” Bello said. “As playwrights who usually shy away from overly sentimental or ‘cheesy’ topics, this play was also a way for us to relearn that ‘sentimentality,’ our ability to not shut down our feelings and to care deeply to make ourselves vulnerable, is crucial. Only deeply caring and empathetic individuals can make up a society capable of enacting change. So, this play was born mostly out of our need to find reasons to believe that our individual choices do matter and that power can be found where we least expect it, even if you’re young, Mexican and a girl.”

Developed over 20 months, the play was selected as part of the 2017 United Solo Festival in New York where it was presented, nonprofessionally, as a work in progress directed by Cervantes and starring Bello.

“*245 Acts of Unspeakable Evil* addresses critically important issues in a tone, style and approach that will appeal to, engage and inspire young people of every culture to be the catalyst for change,” said ATC Playwright in Residence Elaine Romero.

ATC Artistic Director David Ivers said that “plays like *245 Acts of Unspeakable Evil* leverage the power of live theater to deliver critical messages that explore issues, situations and unfairness in a context that is compelling, entertaining and inspiring. We are proud to be part of that effort through this remarkable work.”

Previous winners of the National Latino Playwriting Award, which have recognized many notable playwrights early in their careers, have been finalists for the Pulitzer Prize, featured at the Humana Festival and at regional theaters across the country.

Other past recipients include Matthew Paul Olmos, Kristoffer Diaz, Carlos Murillo, Luis Alfaro, Octavio Solis, Raul Garza and Karen Zacarías and Charise Castro Smith. Felix Pire's winning play *The Origins of Happiness in Latin* was previously produced by ATC and recent winner, *The River Bride* by Marisela Treviño Orta, was produced as part of ATC's 51st season.

The 2018 National Latino Playwriting Award is supported by an Art Works grant from the National Endowment of the Arts as part of the Voices of a New America company-wide initiative.

For more information about Arizona Theatre Company, visit www.arizonatheatre.org.

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About Arizona Theatre Company:

Arizona Theatre Company (ATC) is the preeminent fully professional theatre in the state of Arizona committed to inspiring, engaging, and entertaining - one moment, one production, and one audience at a time. Boasting the largest seasonal subscriber base in the performing arts in Arizona, ATC is the only resident company in the U.S. that is fully based in two cities providing its wide array of programming and community outreach across the region. As the Official State Theatre of Arizona, ATC is now in its 52nd season, more than 130,000 people a year attend our performances at the historic Temple of Music and Art in Tucson, and the elegant Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix. Each season of home-grown productions reflects the rich variety of world drama—from classics to contemporary plays, from musicals to new works—along with a wide array of community outreach programs, educational

opportunities, access initiatives and new play programs. Designated The State Theatre of Arizona, ATC is led by Artistic Director David Ivers, Managing Director Billy Russo, and a dedicated Board of Trustees.

Contact: Steve Carr, The Kur Carr Group, Inc., (602) 317-3040; scarr51@gmail.com