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Juntos Project brings Latinx voices to the MCC virtual mainstage in July

4-5 minutes : 6/17/2021

Mesa Community College and Arizona theatre company Teatro Bravo partner in the Juntos Project to present the world premiere of “Three’s A Party,” written by Justin Santory and directed by Alejandra Luna.

Details and a link to watch the free performance streaming July 9-17 are found at mesacc.edu/arts or teatrobravo.org, according to a release.

“We at MCC are dedicated to celebrating Latinx stories through theatre. What better way than to partner with Teatro Bravo and collaborate with renowned Latinx artists to introduce new stories to our students and our community through a mainstage production,” Adriana Diaz, MCC Theatre and Film Arts faculty, said in the release.

Playwright Santory said he was inspired to write “Three’s A Party” because as a queer Latinx actor, he was constantly being called to play the “feisty, spicy” side character that is there for comic relief.

“I want the audience to walk away knowing that queerness and Latinidad is not a monolith. It’s not a single experience,” he explained.

Director Alejandra added, “I love the fact that this story is not about a traumatic tragedy that can’t be undone, because I feel that it is a common theme in Latinx and Queer stories in the theatre canon. Those stories should still be told because they come from real life events but it’s important to also tell the stories that have to do with everyday human experiences as well.”

The play is one of many creations and activities of the Juntos Project, which brought together a project team of approximately 20 professional Latinx artists engaging more than 100 students from MCC, additional community colleges and the community. During this past year, the Juntos team has read dozens of plays by new Latinx playwrights, held round table conversations about producing classical works during a pandemic and hosted workshops on playwriting, mask making and theatrical intimacy.

Students, faculty and Teatro Bravo Core Ensemble met over several weeks to read, discuss and ultimately choose “Three’s A Party” based on its universal story of friendship, chosen family, intimacy and human flaws. Four semi-finalists were invited to attend a roundtable discussion open to the community.

“We are very proud of the collaborative process we developed to select ‘Three’s A Party,’” Susanna Velarde Covarrubias, ensemble member of Teatro and the Juntos Project, said in the release. “Attendees even had a vote in the final play selection. This is true collaboration.”

“The Juntos Project creates opportunities for Latinx and Chicanx theater artists to have their lived experiences centered and reflected in a way not often seen here in Arizona,” Ricky Araiza, artistic director of Teatro Bravo, said in the release.

MCC is an ideal partner because Santory and Luna started in community college theatre, Santory at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY, and Luna at Chandler-Gilbert Community College.

Luna said, “It feels like a full circle moment. When I began community college, I had absolutely no idea how to even start a career in theatre. I enrolled in community college because I didn’t have the resources to know that going to a four-year university was even an option for someone like me. And thanks to a last minute FAFSA application, I was able to attend and it changed my life path. I will always be an advocate for community college because it is an accessible door opener for those who don’t have many resources growing up. And the environment is so nurturing for someone who doesn’t know where to start. And, now I get to take part in other people’s journeys, and encourage them that it is possible to do anything and never too late to do it.”

