



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

La Lengua Teatro en Español presents:

'EL BESO DE LA MUJER ARAÑA' by Manuel Puig

**Friday, October 1st
7 PM (PDT)/ 10 PM (EDT)
until Sunday, October 31st, 2021**

AUDIO DRAMA available ON-DEMAND during OCTOBER.

Premiere: Friday, October 1st at 7 pm PST

Closing: Sunday, October 31st at 11.59 pm PST.

Running time: 90 minutes, audio drama in Spanish with English subtitles.

TICKETS: We accept donations through Brava Theater, as well as purchasing La Lengua merchandise and donating on our website <http://www.lalengua.org>. Proceeds from ticket sales go to the artists behind the work as well as to Brava!, making it possible for this, and other works, to have a future now that theaters reopen. If you plan to listen to our work with two or more people, please consider donating an appropriate amount when reserving your tickets.

Tickets scale: \$10- \$15- \$25- Other

DONATIONS:

Most of our first works have been made during the pandemic. While we were fortunate to be awarded a CA\$H Performs grant from TBA Theater Bay Area at the beginning of 2020, much of our productions have been supported by donations. Support us with a contribution and/ or by spreading our fundraiser to help us continue producing theater in Spanish in our next season 21-22.

To make a donation: 1) Enter <https://www.brava.org/>; 2) click the DONATE button to the upper right corner; 3) choose La Lengua Teatro en Español from the dropdown menu. Donations of all sizes are welcome

LOCATION: ONLINE available on-demand.

To listen to our production, all you have to do is enter <https://www.brava.org/> and click on 'Brava Presents' to find our show listed. Then register there to get your tickets and receive the access link.

La Lengua Teatro en Español is fiscally sponsored by Brava! for Women in the Arts.

La Lengua Teatro en Español is a resident theater company at BRAVA! for Women in the Arts.

ABOUT THE PLAY

'The most singular and successful story by Puig.'

La Nación

'Between desire and revolution.'

Espectáculos de Acá

'Love is what keep these characters going – love to different things, but ultimately love.'

Es la Cuarta Pared

The Kiss of the Spider Woman tells the story of Molina and Valentín, two incarcerated men who share a cell in an Argentinian prison during the last military dictatorship suffered by the country during the 70s. Molina is a gay window-dresser being held on a "morals" charge, who recounts his favorite 1930s and 1940s movies as a means of passing time. Valentín, a radical leftist militant imprisoned for political reasons. Through convivence, their differences and their vulnerabilities, they build a deep and transcendent relationship, which takes shape in contrast to the blurred pass of time in prison. And in counterpoint to an oppressive social and political context.

Based on the novel of the same name, and adapted to the theater by the same author -Manuel Puig-, El beso ... premiered at the Escalante theater in Valencia, on 1981. The novel was written during the author's exile in Mexico, in the 70's. It was originally published by Seix Barral in 1976 but in Argentina it was only published in 1993. It was translated into more than 20 languages and over the decades it became a classic adapted also as a musical and for cinema.

Cast: Per Sia, Noe Flores, Roberto Varea

Narrator: Deborah Cortez

Director: Roberto Varea

Sound Design, Music, Edition and Mix: Rony Keselman

Artistic Direction: Virginia Blanco

Production: Virginia Blanco, Paul S. Flores

Stage Management: Deborah Cortez, Virginia Blanco

Art & Graphic Design: Chriss 'L7' Cuadrado

Subtitles: Benoît Monin

Marketing and ticketing: Brava Theater

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Manuel Puig is an Argentine novelist and motion-picture scriptwriter who achieved international acclaim with his novel El beso de la mujer araña (1976; Kiss of the Spider Woman, filmed 1985). He was born in 1932 in General Villegas, a small town on the Argentine pampas, and began studying English at the age of ten in order to better understand the American movies he saw every afternoon with his mother. In 1946 he went to Buenos Aires to an American boarding school and then to the

University of Buenos Aires, where his interests expanded to include literature, psychology, and philosophy. But his primary ambition was to direct films. In 1955 he went to film school in Italy on a scholarship, which proved to be a disappointment. He left to Paris and then London, working on screenplays and supporting himself as a language teacher and dishwasher. Puig then returned to the Americas, going first to Buenos Aires and later to New York, and began writing fiction. His first novel, *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth* -an autobiographical account of his provincial childhood- was published in Buenos Aires in 1968.

In 1973, when the publisher Sudamericana published his novel *Buenos Aires Affair*, Puig received a threat from Triple A (the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance) and decided to go live in Mexico. Even though he has lived very little of his adult life in Argentina, all of his novels, with the exception of *Blood of Required Love*, are about Argentina or Argentines coping with exile.

Puig crossed over twice: first from Latin American and then from gay male literature into the mainstream. His passion for the movies is evident both in his narrative style -which relies heavily on dialogue-, and in the lives of his characters -where the glamorous and idealized world of films serves as a counterpoint to their own disappointments. His readers expect certain constants from his high versatility: innovative narrative techniques, dark comedy, and a preoccupation with the effects of popular culture, particularly film, on the human spirit.

He wrote several novels, and some were made into successful movies: *Heartbreak Tango* (1969); *The Buenos Aires Affair*(1973); *The Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1976); *Pubis Angelical* (1979); *Eternal Curse on the Reader of These Pages* (1980); *Blood of Requited Love* (1982); and *Tropical Night Falling* (1988).

ABOUT LA LENGUA THEATER

Founded in 2019 by Virginia Blanco, La Lengua Teatro en Español/La Lengua Theater is an emerging company that creates spaces for theater in Spanish, sharing its immense diversity and wealth, in order to empower the Spanish-speaking community in the San Francisco Bay Area. Its previous productions are performed readings of *Anna in the Tropics* by Nilo Cruz, and -during the pandemic- two virtual live streamings (*Death and the Maiden* by Ariel Dorfman, and *Beben* by Guillermo Calderón) and a radio play (*Adiós Robinson* by Julio Cotázar).

La Lengua has launched a segment of curatorship called 'La Lengua Te Muestra' (*La Lengua Shows You*) where they invite other companies and independent artists to perform as guests. It has also started its Clases & Seminarios education branch to promote theatre training in Spanish in the Bay Area. Our 2021-2022 season is out: we are happy to announce the upcoming premiere of our first commissioned play, and our very first collaboration, among other great news. Learn more at www.lalengua.org.

ABOUT ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE AT BRAVA!

BRAVA! fosters the artistic expression of women, people of color, LGBTQIA community, and other underrepresented artists. Through its residency program, BRAVA! supports the professional development and creative work of directors, actors, dancers, musicians, visual artists, and designers, providing space for creation, assistance with grant writing and fiscal sponsorship, and the support of BRAVA!'s marketing and technical staff. In return, these artists continue to generate excellent art, mentor youth in BRAVA!'s education programs and contribute to the artistic life of the 24th Street corridor in San Francisco.

CAST & CREW BIOS

PER SIA (MOLINA) With a pedigree from weekly performances at the late and iconic *Esta Noche*, her trajectory has gone on to include art curation, stand-up, television, and maybe a quinceañera or two in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and México. Currently, she is a regular performer in the nationally acclaimed *Drag Queen Story Hour* as well as an educator in residence at the Children's After School Arts (CASA) program in the San Francisco Unified School District profiled on KQED Arts and National Public Radio.

NOE FLORES (VALENTIN) Noe is a dedicated, cheerful actor with a flair for improv and comedy. He's regularly working in plays or films in humorous roles. He's humbled and grateful to work with La Lengua Teatro and bring such a touching story to life. He's especially eager to be working in the language of his childhood and is making his immigrant parents proud. Noe's debut role was Paul Bratter in Neil Simon's *Barefoot in the Park* in high school. Professionally, he's starred in theater roles such as Jesus in *Ghosts of Bogota*, Paul in *Brilliant Lies*, and Harmon in *Mercy Killings*, and has had the privilege of working with companies like AlterTheater, Firescape Theater, and Awesome Theatre. He'll soon be found performing with San Francisco's cornerstone sketch comedy troupe Killing My Lobster. He is currently training with ZA studio in San Francisco.

DEBORAH CORTEZ (NARRATOR/Co-Stage Manager) was born in Argentina but spent most of her youth in Peru. Deborah emigrated to the US in late 1998. Her theatre work goes back to 1996 with her debut on the Stage in *Peter Pan*, playing Captain Hook's ship keeper. Deborah is a Bay Area actress, singer, producer, and director. She's worked in many plays as well as films and commercials. Some of her recent works are Josefa (*Convoy 31000*), Lucy (*Strange Ladies*), Theseus (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Olivia (*Twelfth Night*), Jean (*Dead Man Cell Phone*), and many more. Film credits include *No Quiero Verte*, *One Long Day*, *Drops of Sunshine*, Drunk Theatre, among others. She was also the official voice and narrator in our first radio play (*Adiós Robinson*). Deborah's Producing credits are *Drunk Theatre -Bread and Butter* and *Titus Andronicus* with Theatre Lunatico, in which she is a Core Member. She is also a company member of La Lengua Teatro en Español and MACT (Mexican American Conservatory Theatre). Deborah is currently training at The Meisner Technique Studio in SF with Jim Jarrett. More info: deborahcortez.com

ROBERTO VAREA (PRISON'S GUARD/DIRECTOR- Director) He directed most of La Lengua's shows: *Ana en el Trópico*, *La Muerte y la Doncella*, and *Adiós Robinson*. His creative work includes directing world premieres of works by Migdalia Cruz, José Rivera, and Cherríe Moraga, as well as founding community-based companies such as El Teatro Jornalero! and Secos & Mojados. His research work focuses on live performance as a means of resistance and peacebuilding in the context of social conflict and state violence. His writing includes the two-volume anthology *Acting Together-Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict*, and publications in numerous journals in the US, Cuba, and the UK among others. He teaches at the University of San Francisco, where he is founding faculty of the Performing Arts & Social Justice and Critical Diversity Studies Programs, and he directs the Latin American Studies Program and the Center for Latinx Studies in the Americas (CELASA).

RONY KESELMAN (Sound Design, Music, Edition and Mix) Musician, composer, musical arranger, and sound designer specialized in audiovisual media. He was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and began his musical studies at the age of eight both in institutions and with private teachers, focusing on classical music and jazz. Over time he specialized in the composition of originals scores for theater shows, musicals, dance, and audiovisual media. His music has been part of shows in all the theater circuits (national, independent, and commercial) such as the Complejo Teatral de Buenos Aires (Teatro San Martín, De la Ribera, Regio) and the Nacional Cervantes Theater, among others. His latest works include *The Soviets of San Antonio*, *Copenhagen*, *The Tempest*, *Nina*, *The stumble (the ostrich dance)*, *As if life was a peaceful and stable moment*, *Black Lips*, *The Miser*, *Carmencita*, *The Walker*, *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria*, *The Archimedes's Principle*, *Jury Member*, *Cachafaz*, *Love Syndrome*, and *Oxymoron*. He has obtained numerous awards, nominations, and mentions: Getea Award 2002, Hugo Award for the Musical 2012, distinguished by the Theater Award del Mundo, XV edition, Outstanding Work of the Year 2012, ACE Award 2014, and Award Trinidad Guevara 2015.

VIRGINIA BLANCO (Co-Stage Manager/ Producer/ Artistic Director) Actor and theater-maker. Originally from Argentina, she was a founding member of Drakma Grupo Teatral. Back in her country, she has performed in both classic and contemporary plays. Regional credits include Orinda Starlight Village Players, (Ex Ubuntu) Oakland Theater Project, Shelton Theatre, TheatreFirst, Theatre of Yugen, and The Cutting Ball Theater, along with several staged readings with Brava Studio Sessions and 3 Girls Theatre. She was Paulina in the live performed reading of *La Muerte y la Doncella (Death and the Maiden)*, and Nora St. John in the radio play *Adiós Robinson* at La Lengua. Her local acting training is from Studio ACT, BerkREP Theatre School, and Shakespeare & Company. Virginia was nominated by BroadwayWorld SF for Best Leading Actress in a Play for the role of Young Woman in *Knives in Hens* at Anton's Well Theater Company (2019). She studied Communications at Universidad de Buenos Aires and has worked as a journalist and editor for several written media platforms. Virginia is the founder of La Lengua and an Artist in Residence at BRAVA! for Women in the Arts. virginiablanca.com

CHRIS "L7" CUADRADO (Art & Graphic Design) is a culture worker & propagandist from Inglewood, CA. L7 uses words, sights, and sounds to further radical and critical thought. L7 draws from the aesthetic and political traditions of revolutionaries, agitators, and poor peoples movements from across the globe. L7 is committed to creating work that reflects the struggle of colonized and oppressed people while aligning with their movements for liberation, self-determination, and decolonization.

BENOÎT MONIN (Subtitles) is an actor and improviser who co-founded improv duo Chatterbox as well as La Compagnie Carmina, which performs French theater with English supertitles. A company member with Oakland Theater Project and RagTag Improv, Benoît has also performed with Stanford Rep, Theater Rhinoceros, Half Moon Bay Shakespeare, Ragged Wing Ensemble, Shelton Theater, Inferno Theatre, Generation Theater, and Coastal Rep. He was nominated for Outstanding Performance in a Featured Role (TBA Awards, 2018) and Best Featured Actor in a Play (Broadway World SF, 2019), Benoît trained with BATS Improv, American Conservatory Theater, and Shakespeare & Company. www.benoitmonin.com

PAUL S. FLORES (Co-producer) Writer and Producer. He started making spoken word as a Youth Speaks y Los Delicados founding member in 1996. In 2001 he debuted in Cuba, while he was working at Centro Cultural La Peña, and since then he has been performing frequently in La Habana, México, and El Salvador. His work approaches immigrant stories with all their complexity, from violence -forced migration, gang life, the war, incarceration, divided families- to cross-generational relationships and the struggle to preserve cultural values. His most recent shows were On the Hill: I Am Alex Nieto (which gathered San Franciscan communities that had been divided by gentrification and police violence), and Tenemos Iré/We Have Iré, premiered in 2019 at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco. Flores is an associated Theater Professor at the University of San Francisco. <http://paulsflores.art/>

LA LENGUA ONLINE: CONNECT, FOLLOW, AND SUPPORT US!

Website: www.lalengua.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lalenguatheater/>

Instagram: @lalenguatheater

Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4F-VukNCntrur_fv4gQllg

Twitter: @lalenguatheater