

# ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Artists Rep presents NW premiere

### *Exiles*

#### Cuban-born playwright tells rarely told story of Castro's Cuba circa 1980

**WHO:** Artists Repertory Theatre

**WHAT:** Mainstage production of *Exiles* by Carlos Lacámara

**WHEN:** September 30 – October 26, 2014, **Opening Night is Saturday, Oct. 4**

**WHERE:** Artists Repertory Theatre – Morrison Stage, 1515 Morrison St. Portland, OR 97205

**TICKETS:** \$25-\$55; Students, Under 25 tickets \$25

- Pay-What-You-Can preview performance on Tuesday, Sept. 30
- Wednesday through Sunday at 7:30pm; Sundays at 2pm; Wednesday, Oct. 15 @ 11am and Saturday, Oct. 25 @ 2pm
- 503.241.1278 or [www.artistsrep.org](http://www.artistsrep.org)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – September 9, 2014.** Artists Rep is pleased to present the NW premiere of *Exiles* by famed film, theatre and television actor Carlos Lacámara. Artists Rep's Artistic Director Dámaso Rodríguez, who is Cuban-American, will direct the first major production of *Exiles* since its critically acclaimed premiere in Los Angeles.

"While *Exiles* is a powerfully insightful view of the Cuban exile experience two decades into Castro's reign," said Dámaso Rodríguez at the first rehearsal, "I believe the play resonates with a myriad of countries and displaced cultural groups, across generations. Details of time and place aside, *Exiles* is a story about the consequences of leaving one's home and the endless yearning for a land and era that sadly, and ironically, ceases to exist the moment one leaves it behind."

#### **ABOUT THE PLAY:**

When a storm leaves their tiny vessel helplessly adrift at sea, tension escalates as six Cuban refugees find themselves in a desperate battle against the elements, each other and their past. Set during the 1980 Mariel Boatlift when Fidel Castro allowed Cuban-Americans to bring family members by boat to America, but only if they took "undesirables" with them, this new play from a Cuban-born playwright sheds light on a rarely told, but fascinating story in American history.

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"...draws us in—hook, line, and sinker." - Backstage.com

"...the play's emotions crackle ..." – LA Weekly

#### **ABOUT THE MARIEL BOATLIFT:**

In the Spring of 1980, Cubans faced a myriad of economic and political tensions. On April 1, Hector Sanyustiz and four others drove a bus through a fence at the Peruvian embassy under fire and were granted political asylum. The Peruvian government refused to return these five Cubans, and by April 6 some 10,000 Cubans had flooded the Peruvian embassy requesting asylum. Other embassies in Cuba, including those of Spain and Costa Rica, agreed to take a small number of people.

On April 20, 1980, two weeks later, the Mariel Boatlift begins when Castro announces that all Cubans wishing to emigrate to the U.S. are free to board boats at the port of Mariel, west of Havana, as long as they had someone to pick them up. Cuban exiles in the United States rushed to hire boats in Miami and Key West and rescue their relatives. By the next day, the first of the 125,000 Cuban refugees, in roughly 17,000 boats, reached Florida. It was later recognized that Castro had released "undesirables" from Cuban jails and mental health facilities to be forcibly included on these fleeing boats.

The Mariel Boatlift was ended by mutual agreement between the U.S. and Cuban governments in October 1980.

**Carlos Lacámara, playwright, provides these thoughts about *Exiles*:** "My parents brought my sister and me to the United States when I was 2 years old. I grew up listening to them praise their new country, while lamenting the life they left behind. It took me many years to appreciate how much their escape from Cuba had torn them in two. In *Exiles*, I explore a dilemma common to all displaced people: They might find sanctuary, but they will never find home. Exiles live their lives adrift between the world they fled and the country that's taken them in, not just because they can't fit into their new environment but because they cannot escape the demons of their past."

#### **ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT:**

Carlos Lacámara was born in Havana, Cuba on November 11, 1958. He and his parents left Cuba to escape the Cuban Revolution when Carlos was just 2 years old. From there he moved to Washington D.C., then to Puerto Rico, then to California, where he resides now. Carlos graduated from UCLA, and then started his acting career. A professional actor for 25 years, Carlos has appeared in over 100 television shows, including recent appearances in *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *Lie To Me* and *Desperate Housewives*. He played "Paco" on NBC's *Nurses* for three years and the father in Nickelodeon's *The Brothers Garcia* for four seasons. In April 2000, Carlos Lacámara returned to Cuba after an absence of 40 years. His observations and conversations with his family and other Cubans inspired him to write the play, *Becoming Cuban*, which The Los Angeles Times called "A rare, insightful new play," and the LA Weekly proclaimed the "Best Political Drama of 2002." Set in an advertising agency during Fidel Castro's revolution, Carlos Lacámara's next play, *Havana Bourgeois*, was presented at the 59E59th Theatre in New York City, The Hayworth Theatre in Los Angeles and The Miracle Theater in Miami. His play, *Nowhere On The Border*, won The MetLife and  
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Hola awards for Best New Play. It premiered at The Hayworth Theatre in 2006 where The Los Angeles Times described it as a work of “raw poignant power and insight.” The play also enjoyed productions at Repertorio Espanol in Manhattan and Stageworks Hudson in Hudson, New York. *Exiles* is the third play in his trilogy of Cuban plays.

**ABOUT THE DIRECTOR:**

Dámaso Rodriguez is in his second year as Artistic Director of Artists Rep. He is a Co-Founder of the Los Angeles-based Furious Theatre Company, where he served as Co-Artistic Director from 2001-2012. From 2007-2010 he served as Associate Artistic Director of the Pasadena Playhouse. His directing credits include work at Artists Rep, the Pasadena Playhouse, Intiman Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Laguna Playhouse, A Noise Within, The Theatre@Boston Court, Naked Angels and Furious Theatre. Dámaso is a recipient of the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award, the Back Stage Garland Award, the NAACP Theatre Award, and the Pasadena Arts Council's Gold Crown Award, and his productions have been nominated for multiple LA Weekly Theatre Awards and LA Stage Alliance Ovation Awards. In 2012, he was honored by the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation as a Finalist for the Zelda Fichandler Award. He is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC). Recent productions include the revival of J.M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*, the U.S. Premiere of Dawn King's *Foxfinder* and the West Coast premieres of Dan LeFranc's *The Big Meal* and Jeffrey Hatcher's *Ten Chimneys* at Artists Rep; Ruth & Augustus Goetz' *The Heiress* (starring Richard Chamberlain), Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes* (starring Kelly McGillis) and Austin Pendleton's *Orson's Shadow* (starring Sharon Lawrence) at the Pasadena Playhouse; the reading of Steven Drukman's *The Prince of Atlantis* for the Pacific Playwrights Festival at South Coast Repertory, Clifford Odets' *Paradise Lost* at Intiman Theatre; Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit*, Tennessee Williams' *The Eccentricities of a Nightingale*, Eugene O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms*, Bernard Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma* at A Noise Within. Furious Theatre credits include the Los Angeles premieres of Craig Wright's *Grace*, Peter Sinn Nachtrieb's *Boom* and *Hunter Gatherers*, Bruce Norris' *The Pain and the Itch*, Yussef El Guindi's *Back of the Throat*, Richard Bean's *The God Botherers*, Neil LaBute's *The Shape of Things*, and the world premieres of Alex Jones' *Canned Peaches in Syrup* and Matt Pelfrey's *An Impending Rupture of the Belly* and *No Good Deed*, among others.

**CAST:**

Bobby Bermea\* – The Lunatic  
John San Nicolas\*^ – Pepito  
Andrés Alcalá – Rolando Conesa  
Rafael Miguel\* – Roli  
Jason Glick+ – Joaquin Espinosa  
Sekai Edwards – Saadia

**CREATIVE TEAM:**

Dámaso Rodriguez – Director  
Megan Wilkerson – Scenic Designer, Projection/Video Designer  
Russel Terwelp – Costume Designer  
Peter West – Lighting Designer  
Rodolfo Ortega^ – Composer/Sound Designer  
Natalie Rae Heikkinen – Props Master  
Michelle Jazuk\* – Production Stage Manager

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\* *Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers*  
^ *Artists Rep Resident Artist*

**PHOTOS AVAILABLE** October 1, 2014

**ABOUT ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE:**

Portland's premiere mid-size regional theatre company is led by Artistic Director Dámaso Rodriguez and Managing Director Sarah Horton. Founded in 1982, Artists Repertory Theatre is the longest-running professional theatre company in Portland. For the 2014/15 season Artists Rep will offer eight bold and entertaining plays written by internationally acclaimed playwrights, and guided by esteemed directors. Artists Rep productions will feature the work of a core group of accomplished Resident Artists, each with a shared history and a shorthand for collaboration, working alongside guest artists from Portland and beyond.

Artists Rep's mission is to engage diverse audiences in fresh, thought-provoking and intimate theatre. We are committed to world-class acting, directing, design and stagecraft that support new playwriting and aspire to embody great literature, moving audiences to truly feel — to *experience* — storytelling in a way that only the best live theatre can.

The 2014/15 Artists Repertory Theatre season is presented by Ronni Lacroute/WillaKenzie Estate. Our season media sponsors are The Oregonian and KINK. Other season support comes from the Regional Arts Culture Council, The Oregon Community Foundation, the Collins Foundation, the Harold and Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, The James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation and Rafati's Catering.

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