

Dear Ricky,

I am writing in enthusiastic support of New Theatre. New Theatre is a small theatre company that never shirks away from the big ideas. I love the risks New Theatre has taken in presenting my work and the work of my contemporaries. Every time I receive an email blast from New Theatre, I find myself wanting to see the play. I am writing particularly with gratitude for the production of my play, BARRIO HOLLYWOOD, and the development of my plays SECRET THINGS and CATALINA DE ERAUSO, both formerly and informally. New Theatre has been, for me, as a home away from a home, a place where I've learned I can trust the artists at the helm and bask in the luxury of being a playwright. It takes a safe place for a writer to do her best work, and New Theatre has created that kind of place.

When BARRIO HOLLYWOOD received a full main stage production at the New Theatre, I felt that New Theatre had the ability to bring the production level of the work to an even higher level than many small companies. It wasn't one of those situations where I had to say good actors, but crappy set, or good sound design but crappy actors. New Theatre, instead, brought all the elements together in a smooth professional manner. The theatre hosted me (no questions asked) during the rehearsal process and invited me to take part of every step of my World Premiere. New Theatre, with its huge heart, was able to extend to me many of the perks I receive when I work at large, regional theatre companies with their large staffs and budgets. Instead, New Theatre made it happen with their lean staff and open arms.

Since its production at New Theatre, BARRIO HOLLYWOOD has now been published by Samuel French in both English and in Spanish translation. It is the first play that Samuel French has published in the Spanish language. Artistic Director, Ricky J. Martinez, partnered with me and the Orlando Shakespeare Festival to present the first Spanish translation of the piece, which was used as a first step toward coming up with a final translation. It was no accident that I returned to New Theatre to find the artists who had helped me in the beginning as I found new opportunities for the play. Martinez was able to attract many of the artists who were involved with the initial production in this further step for the play. It meant a lot to me to have artists, who knew my work, to join me in Orlando and to have them generously support me as a playwright. Their honest feedback led me to do deeper work on the translation.

SECRET THINGS received a public reading at New Theatre and was recently published by Playscripts. CATALINA DE ERAUSO, which received a reading in New Theatre Literary Manager's living room, has grown so much since that reading. I have recently revised the play based on the notes I received during our mini-workshop. The play was presented last spring by Borderlands Theater.

It's easy to say that a theatre is "new" or does new work, but the truth is that New Theatre lives up to its name. The artistic risks that the company has taken over the years have ensured New Theatre's role as one of the leading theatres in the U.S. that will bravely take on the task of a World Premiere. In a world where it's easy to pick up a play because it's been successful, New Theatre has learned to trust its own taste and artists. It takes true brilliance to spot a play in the rough and shine it up and find the diamond underneath. Without New Theatre, many of theatre's diamonds in the rough would never get a chance to sparkle. So, without question, New Theatre has earned its place on the national stage. I look forward to returning again and again to my Coral Gables home that has a special eye for knowing what is good and trusting its better instincts. That, in itself, is its own diamond in the rough.

Warmly,

Elaine Romero