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STRAWBERRY THEATRE | WORKSHOP

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"LYDIA" LISTENS THROUGH WALLS AT THE MEXICAN BORDER

**Strawberry Theatre Workshop
presents a play of magical realism
June 1-24 at 12th Ave Arts**

Octavio Solis says the literal border between El Paso and Juarez has a presence in his Pulitzer-nominated play, *Lydia*, but the border is also a metaphor he explores in all his work. "That's so much a part of my fabric now, the way I see things," he says. "There's always a threshold one crosses, between dark and light, life and death, between one country and another, between one consciousness and another."

Opening **Thursday, June 1**, Strawberry Theatre Workshop presents **Solis'** breakthrough success, *Lydia*. Directed by **Sheila Daniels**, *Lydia* centers on two young women who move across borders—one between nations, and one across metaphysical borders between unknown, unseen worlds. Although technically hired as a maid, Lydia's primary responsibility is caring for the family's near-vegetative teenage daughter named Ceci, who was left in a coma after a mysterious accident that occurred right before her *quinceanera*, or 15th birthday. Unlike the family that surrounds her, Lydia is able to translate Ceci's thoughts—an adolescent stew of childhood memories, criticism and carnality.

Like Strawshop's critically acclaimed *9 Circles* that occupied the Spring slot last year, the play features a cast that is entirely new to the company and performs in the intimate Studio Theatre at 12th Ave Arts. *Lydia* includes five emerging artists playing characters aged 16-22, who developed a chemistry with each other (and with Daniels' directing style) as students at Cornish College of the Arts. **Pablo López** plays Alvaro, with **Rafael Molina** and **Andrew Pryor-Ramírez** performing as the brothers, Rene and Misha. **Sofía Raquel Sánchez** appears as the stricken sister Ceci, while **Yadira Duarte** plays the title character, Lydia. The adults are performed by **Ray González** and **Carolyn Marie Monroe**.

Lydia has enjoyed critically successful runs across the country—at the Denver Theater Center, where it had its world premiere in 2009; at Yale Repertory Theatre; at the Marin Theatre Company in Mill Valley CA and at Los Angeles' Mark Taper Forum. Juliette Carrillo, who directed *Lydia* at DTC says one of the things that distinguishes Solis' work is what she calls his "in-your-face emotional rawness... He's provocative to the point that some producers are scared off by his work and by his darkly hilarious subversive streak."

John Moore at the Denver Post wrote, "Octavio Solis' 1970s immigrant epic is very much the Latino cousin of *Death of a Salesman*, down to its mangled car and searing exposure of the lie that is, for so

many, the American Dream. Only [Solis] doesn't just serve up one Willy Loman. It serves up seven, each trapped in shockingly disparate ways—in body, time, alcohol, and anger.

"Solis, like Arthur Miller, has an extraordinary ability to look with compassion into the hearts of his ordinary, flawed characters. But his storytelling, so rich in imagery, is uniquely infused with poetry, sexual desire, childlike wonder and violence at once."

Daniels is the most critically accomplished director in Seattle, and has done many of her signature pieces at Strawshop, including *The Normal Heart*, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, and *Breaking the Code*. Her design team includes collaborators from those productions and others: **Reed Nakayama** (lights), **Rob Witmer** (sound), and **Greg Carter** (scenery).

About Strawberry Theatre Workshop

Founded in 2004 by Greg Carter, Strawberry Theatre Workshop is a professional theatre company dedicated to socially engaged work of the highest caliber. Strawshop is a **Stranger Genius Award** winner, a six-time **Seattle Times Footlight Award** winner, and the only company to be nominated for a **TPS Gregory Award** for Outstanding Production four years in a row (2009-12). Known for its critically acclaimed productions of *Our Town*, *The Normal Heart*, *Breaking the Code*, *The Elephant Man*, *Proof*, and *The Laramie Project*, Strawshop is anchored in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood. Strawshop is one of three resident companies in the new 12th Ave Arts building, which opened on Capitol Hill in 2015.

Mission Statement

Strawberry Theatre Workshop is committed to the idea that the theatre is the people's place of *aspiration*, and that any voice from the stage is translated exponentially into conversations at coffee shops, bus stops, classrooms, and play fields. Strawshop is dedicated to the idea of *ensemble*, in the broadest sense of the word. Our ensemble does not only mean a resident company of workers, but a collective that includes our work, our audience, and our neighborhood. This is an *activist* stance. To be a good neighbor is to be a relevant neighbor, a responsible neighbor, and a vocal neighbor.

Listing Information

Title: *Lydia*

Opens: **Thursday, June 1, 2017**

Plays: **Thu-Fri-Sat and Mon, 7:30 pm**

NO PERFORMANCE MONDAY JUNE 5

Venue: **Studio Theatre at 12th Ave Arts**

Address: **1620 12th Ave, Capitol Hill, Seattle**

Ticket Prices: **\$36 General, \$27 Seniors and Students**

Phone Sales: **1-800-838-3006**

Online Sales: **strawshop.brownpapertickets.com**

READ MORE AT: **www.strawshop.org**