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SPECIAL THANKS TO

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TERRY TEITELBAUM

PHOTO CREDITS

FRONT IMAGE: OLD WOMAN AND GIRL BY PABLO PICASSO
OTHER IMAGES FROM THE BOOKS LORCA: A DREAM OF LIFE BY LESLIE STANTON AND FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA BY IAN GIBSON

THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA

BY FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA

TRANSLATED BY CARIDAD SVICH

MAY 20, 22, 23, 2005

FRIDAY, SUNDAY, & MONDAY AT 8 PM

LESTER MARTIN THEATER
Federico García Lorca was born just outside of Granada, Spain in 1898. He was a curious child whose first toy was a theatre. Lorca grew up in a family interested in the arts, which fueled his passion for music, theatre, painting and most importantly poetry. After studying at the prestigious Residencia de Estudiantes in Madrid, Lorca began publishing work. In Spain Lorca is most known for his work Romancero Gitano and his plays Bodas de Sangre (Blood Wedding), Yerma, and La Casa de Bernarda Alba. In America he is most known for his book Poet in New York; he is also celebrated for his dramatic work. Lorca wrote many things based on his dreams and imaginings, but also took ideas from his life and those around him to create the intricate characters in his work. He had an incredible way of writing Spanish women, capturing not only their oppression but also their strength. Lorca was an immense talent; although many only know his written work, he was also a painter, composed music with Manuel de Falla, and collaborated with surrealist artists Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel.

Lorca wrote for his people, which is why he was condemned in the end; the Fascists saw him as an enemy. The tense political environment in Spain peaked just before the Spanish Civil War in 1936, which prompted Lorca to seek refuge with the Rosales family. However, the Fascists found him. On August 19th, 1936, after being dragged through the street and detained for three days, Lorca was assassinated. His tragic death seemed appropriate somehow for a man who was fascinated with death as a character, a man who saw death's looming presence.

La Casa de Bernarda Alba was not produced until 1945, in Buenos Aires, and not produced in Lorca's Spain until 1964.

- Lucy Skeen

(Information taken from the prologue of Obras Completas de Federico García Lorca by Jorge Guillen)

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The Final Act of Love
Director's Notes on THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA
By Jean Randich

The contemporary poet Andrés Amorós observed of Lorca's poetry: "In these poems, death is in everything and everything participates in death, love above all... We have to start by understanding that, for Lorca, the final act of love is death." (i)

Federico Garcia Lorca evoked the spirit of Duende, the earth force, the life force, this "mysterious power that may feel and no philosophy can explain." You can hear it in flamenco singing, but it isn't in the throat—Duende comes from inside, from the soles of stamping feet. The cries of the bullring are calls to the presence of god, god alive in the bull, in the clapping hands, in the senses, in the blood. Duende brings surrender and belonging, to a force beyond yourself, to the mythic, the ancient, the ancestral.

We have sought to ask Lorca's Duende to charge our production. We play in a house that is a labyrinthian stage, on a stage that is a labyrinthian house. The choruses of mourners and reapers are the pulse and blood of this arid Andalusia, the eyes through the shutters and the ears behind the walls.

The House of Bernarda Alba begins and ends with death. As Lorca said, "In every country, death comes as a finality. It comes, and the curtain comes down. But not in Spain! In Spain the curtain goes up. Many people live out their lives between walls until the day they die and are brought out into the sun. In Spain, the dead are more alive than the dead of any other country of the world: their profile wounds like the edge of a barber's razor."

We have endeavored to be true to the actual roots of Lorca's stark black and white photo realism, as well as to the surreal leaps, the mythic heartbeat, and the inexorable battle between the unkillable instinct of bulls, stallions, men, and women, and the forces of honor and repression that seek to cripple that force. In the duel between honor and instinct, the final act is Death and Love.

This performance is dedicated to all those we love, and most especially the dead, who teach us how to live, how to love. You live in our hearts.


"Silence. Silence, I said. Silence!"

-Bernarda Alba
THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA
by Federico Garcia Lorca
translated by Caridad Svich

Directed by Jean Randich
Set Design by Sue Rees
Costume Design and Construction by Fia Alvarez, Nicole Asselin, Emily Gilbert, Danny Michaelson (with assistance from the Costume Projects class)
Lighting Design by Michael Giannitti
Music & Music Direction: Jared Shapiro
Fight Choreography by Chris Edwards
Stage Managed by Colleen Jennings
Assistant Directors: Lorraine Brocker and Lucy Skeen
Musical Assistant: Yousuf Kerai
Assistant Stage Managers: Jennifer Funk, Catherine Hessing, and Malcolm Young
Make-up by Bill Patry, Flear Valknin

CAST
BERNARDA
MARIA, JOSEFA, Bernarda's Mother
ANGUSTIAS, Bernarda's Eldest Daughter
MAGDALENA, Bernarda's Daughter
AMELIA, Bernarda's Daughter
MARTIRIO, Bernarda's Daughter
ADELA, Bernarda's Youngest Daughter
SERVANT
PONCIA
PRUDENCIA
BEGGAR WOMAN with LITTLE GIRL

WOMEN MOURNERS
WOMAN 1
WOMAN 2
WOMAN 3
WOMAN 4
YOUNG GIRL
REAPERS
DANCER

NOTE: A gun shot will be fired during the performance.
There will be a 10 minute intermission.

Vergüenza: "It means shame, the possibility of being made to blush. It is a moral quality...Once lost it is not, generally speaking, recoverable...It is the essence of the personality and for this reason is regarded as something permanent...Vergüenza is the regard for the moral values of society...for the opinions which others have of one...True vergüenza is a mode of feeling which makes one sensitive to one's reputation and thereby causes one to accept the sanctions of public opinion."

-The People of the Sierra,
J.A. Pitt-Rivers, University of Chicago Press, 1961
Notes on the music:

The music in this performance is freely adapted and arranged from traditional flamenco and Andalusian melodies and rhythms. These include the forms of alegrias, bulerías, seguidillas, and a traditional reaper melody from Murcia. The "nana", which is sketched out on the piano in this performance, is based on a traditional lullaby which Federico García Lorca collected, transcribed, harmonized, and included in his collection of thirteen Old Spanish Songs. Lorca was an accomplished musician and musicologist who was profoundly interested in and enthusiastic about the legacy of flamenco, gypsy, and folk music from Southern Spain. He frequently accompanied on the piano his good friend, the flamenco singer "La Argentinita".

In an effort to preserve the purity and integrity of flamenco song, and to bring it to a wider audience, Lorca, along with Andrés Segovia and his close friend Manuel de Falla founded the first festival of "Cante Jondo" in Granada, Spain, in 1922, which included competitions, performances, and conferences. This event is thought to be the signal factor which reinvigorated flamenco and saved it from certain extinction.

Lorca gave conferences on nursery rhymes and gypsy songs and, according to him, "these songs contain the most infinite gradations of sorrow and pain at the service of the purest and most exact expression."  

García Lorca is considered to be very "flamenco" by practitioners and aficionados of the art form, and much of his poetry has become authentic lyrics for flamenco song. Some of his numerous great works of poetry are infused with a flamenco sensibility, such as "Poema del Cante Jondo" (1921), "Primeras canciones" (1922), "Canciones" (1921 - 1924), "Romancero Gitano" (1923 - 1927), and "Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías" (1934). This last poem was a eulogy to his close friend, the great bullfighter Ignacio Sánchez Mejías, who had quit bullfighting to become an author, and had returned to the ring over Lorca's strenuous protests to be gored to death during a bullfight in 1934.

The non-traditional music which is included in this production is also created from regional elements, in an attempt to maintain an authentic Andalusian flavor.

-FAREWELL

If I die,
leave the balcony open.

The little boy is eating oranges.
(From my balcony I can see him.)

The reaper is harvesting the wheat.
(From my balcony I can hear him.)

If I die,
leave the balcony open!

-Federico García Lorca
translated by W.S. Merwin

-Jared Shapiro