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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Milagro presents the World Premiere of *¡Alebrijes! a Día de Muerto Tale*



Milagro kicks off Season 35 with the world premier of *¡Alebrijes!* - our 23rd Día de Muertos celebration, opening tonight at Milagro Theatre. We've added a fantastic collection of photos to this email, and we wanted to send them your way. Please see the link below for production photos for *¡Alebrijes!*

**Opening Night: October 19, 2018 | Closing Performance : November 11, 2018**

October 19, 2018 – (Portland, OR) - It is for death that life is all the brighter. Season 35 begins with Milagro's beloved annual Día de Muertos production. This year, we take inspiration from an imaginary creature unique to Mexican art. [\*Alebríjes! A Día de Muertos Tale\*](#) is a dream come to life, born out of one man's dying vision.

When a young bride and groom-to-be discover the largest Día de Muertos altar they've ever seen, they suddenly notice something's run amuck, literally. A little creature, known as an alebrije, sweeps into the room and takes the bride's imagination, forcing past and present to meld together in this playful homage to Pedro Linares, the creator of the alebrije. Set in present day San Luis Potosí, in Xochimilco in 1936, and in an afterlife that looks too much like a psychedelic Oaxacan jungle, young Pedro realizes his artistic potential through his relationship to his pets as totems, his love for painting, and a close encounter with death.

As part of our Community Artes programming, Milagro invited the local community to join us for a papier-mâché alebrije making workshop. Free and open to the public, participants joined us for an artistic adventure, taking on the challenge of crafting a unique alebrije of their own. Finalized creations will be used abundantly throughout the actual production as properties and set-design pieces, inviting audience members to be active artistic collaborators on this one-of-a-kind show.

Furthermore, community members are invited to visit our traditional Día de Muertos altar in El Zocaló, on display one hour before curtain and during intermission. This year, the altar is designed by [Pepe Moscoso](#), a Portland-based cultural arts producer, and longtime friend of Milagro. Altars, or ofrendas are an essential part of Día de Muertos celebrations, with many symbolic components that each hold a special purpose. Like the holiday itself and many other aspects of Mexican culture, the altar is a fusion of preHispanic and Spanish components, seen in elements like the copal incense and the cross on some altars. They can also vary from region to region, reflecting the diversity in celebrations and aspects of the holiday that are emphasized more or less in various regions. Inspired by the show, the altar this year features the alebrijes of [Armando Olveda](#) a local Latino artist who works with paper maché, making incredible, fantastical creatures for all to enjoy.

## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT/DIRECTOR

### **Georgina H.L. Escobar**

Ciudad Juárez native and New York-based artist Georgina H.L. Escobar's plays include *Then They Forgot About The Rest* (Brooklyn Generator 2018), *Bi-* (Teatro Milagro Tour 2018), *Penny Pinball Presents The Beacons* (INTAR NewLab Workshop), *Sweep* (Aurora Theatre 2017), *El Muerto Vagabundo* (Milagro 2016), *The Unbearable Likeness of Jones...* (Dixon Place, Readings: The Flea, The Movement Theatre Company), *Ash Tree* (Duke City Repertory 2012), and collaborations on *A Ribbon About A Bomb* (Exquisite Corpse Company), *Quixote: On the Conquest of Self*, (Writers Theatre), among others. She's written and directed for and with Milagro, New York Children's Theatre, the Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab, Clubbed Thumb Emerging Writers Group, and at Marfa Live Arts, the MacDowell Colony and the Fornés Writing Workshop. She's proud recipient of a Kennedy Center National Theatre for

Young Audiences Award, and an Outstanding Service to Women on the Border Award from the sister cities, Juárez and El Paso.

## FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT/DIRECTOR

“Edward O. Wilson, the world’s preeminent biologist and naturalist — and an often source of inspiration — states, “The evolution of the arts parallels organic evolution in the manner they both work. Originality and style are everything, measured by the degree to which the innovations attract imitation.” I am a firm believer that the arts can only evolve from the delicate balance of innovation and imitation.

Pedro Linares, a cartonero from Ciudad de México (or as it was known in his time, Mexico Distrito Federal) is one of those emblematic artists, and one who many often imitate. Stemming from a line of traditional paper-making and a proponent of using cat’s hair as paintbrush bristles, Pedro was economic about what he made and how he made it. From *Juditas* to *Calaveras*, Pedro evolved his art form to result in the vibrant alebrijes we know and see today. The story of Pedro is one that is surrounded by mystery. A plethora of legends and myths surround the inception of his fantastical creatures, and though the form was ‘refined’ by turning papier-mâché to wood carving—a craftsmanship spun out of the Oaxacan jungles— it is unquestionable that Pedro Linares was the curious creator behind a movement that is now an emblematic art form for Mexican artisans.

To me, the Linares folktales (however varied) represent the ever-changing innovative instincts of the Mexican people. As a Mexican artist, I wanted to embrace our classic Día de los Muertos and infuse it with the fantastical. I took his story and ran away with it so as to lift his voice and bring forward his art form. Indeed, every element you see in the play was made in the same way Pedro would have made them. Though I did not paint the masks with cat-hair, (I wish I had) I paid close attention to his rough seams, the shaky pulse of his later years that made his lines uneven at times, and the overall aesthetic of his original fantastical beasts. Like with *El Muerto Vagabundo*, I took care to infuse the soundscape of this world with elements that remind me of childhood (Cri-Cri) while also honoring the classic music of the Oaxaca region (Susana Harp.) We also had original compositions specifically made for this show, embracing its playful nature and fantastical approach. The overall effect is a fantasized Coyoacan, Oaxaca, and Mexico City, and a heartfelt story about loss, love, and the journey of an artist through his life and in the beyond. Innovation attracts imitation, and in this humble homage to one of Mexico’s greatest, I also honor our most important ritual which is all about immortality through remembrance. In this way, I hope to resurrect the memory of Pedro Linares by imitating his artwork and fantasizing his tale. The play is inevitably also influenced by the recent loss of a family member and her love for our country. Tia Maria Elena Escobar, this is for you, and to all the artists who should be remembered on a day like today: La Luz.”

## WHEN

October 18, 2018 – November 11, 2018

Thursday – Saturday at 7:30 PM, Sunday at 2 PM

Friday, October 19, 2018 – Opening night, followed by a reception catered by La Bonita

## WHERE

Milagro Theatre, 525 SE Stark Street, Portland, OR, 97214

## ADMISSION

Adult tickets are \$27 in advance, \$32 at the door.

Discount for students, seniors, veterans, groups 15+, and with the Oregon Trail card through the Arts for All program.

Senior tickets are \$25 in Advance, \$30 at the door.

Student/ Veteran tickets are \$20 in Advance, \$25 at the door.

Tickets available at [milagro.org](https://milagro.org) or 503-236-7253.

## MORE INFORMATION

[milagro.org](https://milagro.org) | <https://milagro.org/event/alebrijes/>

## PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHY

<https://www.flickr.com/gp/miracletheatregroup/195469>

Photo credit: Russell J. Young

## MEDIA CONTACTS / MEDIA PASSES

Laurel Daniel, Marketing & Communications Director at [laurel@milagro.org](mailto:laurel@milagro.org), 503-236-7253 x117.

## ARTIST INTERVIEWS

For artist interviews contact Laurel Daniel, Marketing & Communications Director at [laurel@milagro.org](mailto:laurel@milagro.org), 503-236-7253 x117.

## ENSEMBLE

Robi Arce | PEDRO

Yesenia Lopez | ALEJANDRA/LILLIAN

Patricia Alvitez | MS. OBREGON/LA MUERTE

Giovanni Alvitez | ANTONIO/FELIPE

Matthew Sepeda | MANUEL/BARTOLOME

Tara Hershberger | FLORINDA

## CREATIVE TEAM

Georgina Escobar | *Playwright/Director*

Luis Guerra | *Composer*

Emily Wilken | *Scenic Designer*

Trevor Sargent | *Lighting Designer*

Jessica Bobillot | *Costume Designer*

Sarah Andrews | *Props Master*  
John Epperson | *Sound Designer*  
Mindy Escobar-Leanse | *Puppet Maker*  
Lindsey Bruno | *Assistant Director*  
Sam Levi | *Stage Manager*  
Catherine Miller | *Board Operator*  
Nelda Reyes | *Dialect Coach*  
One Blue Cat Productions | *Mask and Puppet Design*

## **SEASON 35 SPONSORS**

The Collins Foundation, James F & Marion L Miller Foundation, M J Murdock Charitable Trust, Meyer Memorial Trust, Ronni Lacroute, The Shubert Foundation, The Kinsman Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission, Regional Arts & Culture Council, Work For Art, Juan Young Trust, US Bank, EC Brown Foundation, The Jackson Foundation, The Oregonian, El Hispanic News, A to Z Wineworks, Portland Roasting Company, Poster Garden.

## **ABOUT MILAGRO**

As the premiere Latino arts and culture center of the Pacific Northwest since 1985, Milagro provides extraordinary Latino theatre, culture, and arts education for the enrichment of all communities. Milagro MainStage produces a full season of regional or world premieres, including one Spanish language play each year, as well as our long-running Día de Muertos signature production. Teatro Milagro, Milagro's touring and arts education program, presents its original bilingual plays and educational residencies to diverse and underserved communities across the nation. Milagro provides a home for Latino arts and culture at El Centro Milagro, where it enriches the local community with a variety of community engagement projects and educational programs designed to share the diversity of Latino culture. We entertain our audiences; we give them pause to think, feel and imagine; and, through the cultural lens of Latinidad, we reflect the full spectrum of humanity. For more information about Milagro, visit [milagro.org](http://milagro.org) or call 503-236-7253.