

Laughs, and more, in Spanish



From left: Luz Lopez, Rebekah Rae Robles, and Daniel Rios Jr. Photo courtesy of Nile Scott Studios.

REV. IRENE MONROE
Contributing Writer

Each year, from September 15 to October 15, Latinx History Month is celebrated. The SpeakEasy Stage Company begins the month with "Laughs in Spanish" by playwright Alexis Scheer. It is a fast-paced 90-minute play with no intermission, part mystery and part telenovela-style comedy that keeps you laughing from beginning to end.

However, make no mistake that "Laughs in Spanish" is all belly-laughs.

Continued on page 4

Boston residents to participate in Boston Marathon® Jimmy Fund Walk presented by Hyundai

SUBMITTED BY
BOSTON MARATHON® JIMMY FUND
WALK PRESENTED BY HYUNDAI

Boston, Mass.—225 residents from Boston will participate in the Boston Marathon® Jimmy Fund Walk

presented by Hyundai on Sunday, October 6.

Kevin Egan, Nick Purol, Carol Bender, Mark Greenberg, Yogesh Gupta, Quintana Carter, Hadley Barr, Semira Haghayeghi, Caro-

line McHugh, Ian Ellmer, and 215 other Boston residents, along with thousands of other walkers, will participate in the iconic annual event

Continued on page 3

Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley attended the Sixteenth Annual Celebration of the Priesthood Dinner for the last time as Archbishop of Boston

SUBMITTED BY
ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON.

On Wednesday, September 18, 2024, Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley, OFM Cap, attended the Clergy Trust's sixteenth annual Celebration of the Priesthood dinner at the Omni Seaport Hotel in Boston for the last time as Archbishop of Boston. Archbishop-Designate Richard G. Henning, who is to be installed as Boston's new Archbishop in late



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Photo by Gregory L Tracy, via Wikimedia Commons.

Romeo and Juliet moves the body and heart

Romeo and Juliet, American Repertory Theatre, Loeb Drama Center, Cambridge, through October 6. 617-547-8300 or amrep.org.



Emilia Suárez (Juliet) and Rudy Pankow (Romeo) in A.R.T.'s production of "Romeo and Juliet." (Courtesy Nile Scott Studios and Maggie Hall)

BY JULES BECKER
Contributing Writer

In an age of spiraling polarization and hate crime violence, "Romeo and Juliet" proves as timely as ever. Not surprisingly, two important area companies have been taking

on Shakespeare's love tragedy this year—Actors' Shakespeare Project this past May-June and American Repertory Theatre now through October 6. Both productions feature relatively spare scenic design—Amy

Continued on page 6

South End Nonprofit Marks 25 Years of Impact with Anniversary Luncheon

SUBMITTED BY SSYP

St. Stephen's Youth Programs (SSYP) will host its 25th-anniversary luncheon on Thursday, September 26, 2024, from 11:00 AM to 2:30 PM at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in downtown Boston. The event,

hosted by a committee of staff, long-term volunteers, and community partners, will honor SSYP's 25 years of impactful work in the Greater Boston community, focusing on equity in education, employment,

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Annette Green

Jimmy

Continued from page 1

that unites the community to raise funds and support all forms of adult and pediatric care and research at the nation's premier cancer center, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. The Jimmy Fund Walk has raised more than \$176 million for Dana-Farber in its 35-year history, raising a record-breaking \$9.4 million in 2023.

Leilani Hood, age one, and Owen Noonan, age five, will participate as Walk Heroes for the Jimmy Fund Walk. Heroes are Dana-Farber patients, the heart of the event, who provide inspiration and motivation to walkers along the course. Heroes are matched with Jimmy Fund Walk teams who walk in their honor. Leilani was diagnosed with Neuroblastoma.

"Leilani is the world's happiest baby," her family writes. "She loves to laugh, dance, and play with her parents and grandparents. Her family is profoundly grateful for the incredible care and support of the entire team at Dana-Farber's Jimmy Fund Clinic."

Owen was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia. He is matched with Team Neuk The Leuk.

"Owen loves Star Wars and playing ninja turtles," his family writes. "He also enjoys playing mini hockey with his brother and twin sister!"

"For 35 years, the Jimmy Fund Walk has continuously supported lifesaving research and cancer care at Dana-Farber. Our goal is to build off of the momentum we've established throughout that history, and in 2024, aim

to surpass our total from last year by raising \$9.5 million," said Caitlin Fink, assistant vice president of event fundraising. "Fighting cancer is what we do. The Walk unites our community under a common goal—to defy cancer together."

One Walk, Four Distances, For All Cancers

The Jimmy Fund Walk is the only organized walk permitted to use the famed Boston Marathon course, and participants have the flexibility to choose from four distance options: 5K walk (from Dana-Farber's Longwood Medical Campus); 10K walk (from Newton); Half Marathon walk (from Wellesley); and Marathon walk (from Hopkinton). Walkers can participate virtually as well.

Whatever route participants choose, they will be supported by hundreds of volunteers and treated to refueling stations with refreshments throughout the course. All routes will conclude at the Jimmy Fund Walk Finish Line Powered by Schneider Electric at Boston Common, by the corner of Charles and Beacon Street. Finish line activities will include a celebration with food, entertainment, and more.

To register for the Walk (#JimmyFundWalk) or to support a walker, visit www.JimmyFundWalk.org or call (866) 531-9255. Registrants can enter the promo code NEWS for \$5 off the registration fee. All registered walkers will receive a bib, medal, and Jimmy Fund Walk T-shirt.



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SEP
26

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This is a Public Meeting for the proposed Boston Water and Sewer Commission Parking Lots Phase 1 proposal, located in the South End neighborhood of Boston. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Small Project Review Application. The meeting will include a presentation followed by questions and comments from the public. This meeting will also include a notification of a minor modification to the South End Urban Renewal Plan Project No. Mass R-56 for Parcel 35. The minor modification is required for the Proposed Project to comply with the South End Urban Renewal Plan.

La información de esta reunión es fundamental para usted como residente de Boston y parte interesada. Dispone de servicios de idiomas de forma gratuita. Si los requiere, comuníquese con (ebony.darosa@boston.gov) antes de la siguiente fecha: 9/19/2024.

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Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary



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Monroe

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While the play keeps you in hysterics, its message is profound and provocative, shedding light on debunking stereotypes, the complications of mother/daughter relationships, and the politics of code-switching.

"Laughs in Spanish" is a snapshot of the Cuban and Colombian-American culture of Miami's Wynwood arts district. The play opens on the eve of Mariana's, a gallerist, career-defining show at Art Basel, and she discovers the entire collection of paintings from her star artist has vanished.

To further complicate matters, her mostly-absent, once-famous movie star mother, Estella, arrives in town with an agenda to solicit her daughter's assistance. However, learning of her daughter's crisis, the mother's well-meaning attempts to save the exhibit are hilarious.

Mothers and daughters

The mother-daughter relationship between Mariana and Estella is at the heart of the story. Their relationship is fraught with complications—anger, guilt, hurt, and there's a need for reconciliation.

Estella is charismatic, regal, and an attention-grabber. She is a self-absorbed mother who sent Mariana to boarding school rather than raising her. Scheer depicts Estella as a nontraditional mother as another example of debunking stereotypes.

"I think what's unique here, at least in terms of the kinds of Latine stories that populate our stages and screens, is that, instead of a story about a mother sacrificing everything to support her daughter's wild ambitions, this is a story about a mother who went after her own dreams and sacrificed her relationship with her daughter. But their unconditional love for each other, I think, is what makes it feel classic."

The universal theme of forgiveness between

mothers and daughters begins to mend their relationship.

Code-switching

"Laughs in Spanish" demonstrates the art of code-switching. "Laughs in Spanish" was written to be performed in English with brief portions in Spanish. Code-switching comes naturally to Scheer. Scheer, who now resides in Boston, is also Spanish-speaking and grew up in a multicultural and multilingual household in Miami. Her father is a white Floridian, and her mother is Colombian.

Scheer highlights that code-switching is not only related to race but also occurs in multiple Spanish-speaking cultures within the U.S. The largest and oldest Spanish-speaking community in Miami is made up of Cuban Americans. Now, the Spanish-speaking communities comprise Nicaraguan Americans, Venezuelan Americans, Mexican Americans, Dominican Americans, and Colombian Americans, to name a few.

The play also highlights the various nuances in Miami's Spanish-speaking languages—different dialects, accents, language combinations, and mannerisms—to project a particular identity. It is done to celebrate and accept what makes Miami a culturally rich and exciting place.

"It's interesting and fun to discover in the play how much can be presented on stage while still being accessible to English-speaking audiences," Scheer shared in her *Speakeasy* interview. "It was equally enjoyable to incorporate Spanish to inform the characters without excluding those who don't speak Spanish. I found it crucial to bring this aspect of Miami's flavor and texture to the stage, as it authentically reflects the city's

linguistic diversity."

Representation Matters

There is a dearth of Latinx representation in both film and theater. The depiction of their real lives is invisible and hidden. "When I was in graduate school in Boston, my professors encouraged me 'to go home' with my writing, to introduce audiences to the people and the culture I grew up with," Scheer shared.

Lin-Manuel Miranda's Broadway hit musicals *In The Heights* (2005) and *Hamilton* (2015) should not be the only plays, at present, that come to mind to American theater-going audiences. The stereotypes of Latinx portrayed in both film and theater as violent immigrants, fruit pickers, cooks, maids, or sex objects are demeaning and dehumanizing. And the hackneyed excuse for not financially supporting Latinx projects that there's no market and they don't make money is a myth.

"Representation is an act of affirmation," Scheer told Bay State Banner. "I like to write Latine stories that expand on the stereotypes the media presents and show audiences how diverse the Latino experience in our country is. And that includes joyful, light-hearted experiences!"

Seeing that "Laughs in Spanish" debunked these prevailing stereotypes and myths was refreshing. You'll laugh and enjoy the vibrant, funny, messy exploration of family and identity. Rush out to see it!

"Laughs in Spanish" runs five weeks, from September 13 – October 12, 2023, in the Roberts Studio Theatre in the Stanford Calderwood Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts, 527 Tremont Street, Boston. <https://www.bostontheatrescene.com/shows-and-events/laughs-in-spanish/>

**THE UNIVERSAL
THEME OF
FORGIVENESS
BETWEEN
MOTHERS AND
DAUGHTERS
BEGINS TO
MEND THEIR
RELATIONSHIP.**

O'Malley

Continued from page 1

October, also be attended the dinner as a guest of Cardinal Seán.

This annual event honors the nearly 500 active and senior priests in good standing who work tirelessly to strengthen our communities across Greater Boston. Proceeds from this event go directly to the Clergy Trust – an independently-managed trust with a majority lay board of trustees which oversees funds used for the sole benefit of the health, well-being, and retirement needs of all priests in good standing who are incardinated in the Archdiocese of Boston.

Cardinal Seán commented, "During my years as Archbishop this annual celebration has always been a very special occasion as we acknowledge

the good works of our priests. We are grateful for the significant presence and very generous support of benefactors who make it possible for the Archdiocese to provide the needed care for our senior priests. It has

been a privilege to work with my fellow priests in serving as witnesses of God's love for our Catholic community and all people of good will, and I am confident they will continue that mission under the leadership of Archbishop-designate Henning."

Early this year, Jack Connors, Jr., philanthropist, business leader, and enthusiastic supporter of the clergy, volunteered to chair this year's dinner along with Joseph R. Nolan, Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer

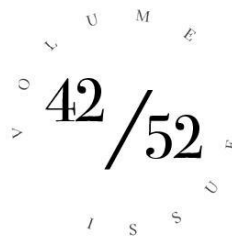
of Eversource Energy. Before his death on July 23, 2024, Connors challenged this year's fundraising committee to raise \$2.5 million,

a milestone which Nolan ensured would be surpassed.

"Joe Nolan and Jack Connors co-chaired the upcoming event with exuberance and great anticipation, along with the commitment to make this year's dinner the most successful celebration in the sixteen-year history of the event," said Cardinal Seán. "Even as his health declined, Jack was committed to collaborating with Joe to meet and exceed their goals for the 2024 dinner. We remember the blessing of Jack's life for so many people and organizations, and we thank Joe for his dedication in support of the priests who have meant so much to our parishes, schools and ministries."

Mike Scannell, Executive Director of the Clergy Trust, said, "We are very grateful for the incredible support of so many: our Board of Trustees, led by chair Mark Vachon; the outstanding Dinner and Priest Committees co-chaired by Joe Nolan and Jack Connors; the Clergy Trust staff; and all those who have given so much of their time and treasure to the success of this event. Most important is our deep appreciation for the priests of the Archdiocese of Boston who serve the people of God with great joy, compassion, and care."

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SSYP

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and opportunity.

The luncheon will feature presentations from staff, alumni, and partners, along with a photographic journey showcasing memorable moments from SSYP's history. Proceeds from the event will benefit SSYP's Teen Mentoring Program, which pairs teens with adult mentors to enhance support and improve high school and post-secondary outcomes. Tickets are priced at \$75 and are available through SSYP's website along with opportunities to sponsor the event.

SSYP's Executive Director Inés Palmarin will also share her vision for the future of the organization. "I am thrilled to build from the

SSYP legacy as we build a new path forward. The Church is an anchor in our community and the programs SSYP delivers on a daily basis continue to leave imprints in those we serve and Boston at large."

Since launching its signature B-SAFE program in 1999, SSYP has been a leader in youth development in the South End and Lower Roxbury. Over the past 25 years, SSYP has expanded its services to include a teen employment and college and career program, a family organizing team, and a Parent Mentor Program, reaching over 500 youth annually.

For more information, please visit our website at www.ssyphoston.org or contact Tyler Cavanagh, Associate Director of Development and Communications, at Tyler@ssyphoston.org.



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BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

D/B/A BOSTON PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT AGENCY PROPOSED MINOR MODIFICATION TO SOUTH END URBAN RENEWAL PLAN

PROJECT NO. MASS R-56 FOR PARCEL 35.

Public Notice is hereby given that the Boston Redevelopment Authority ("BRA") d/b/a Boston Planning & Development Agency will consider at its scheduled meeting on Thursday, October 10, 2024, starting at 3:30 P.M., via Zoom, which meeting can be viewable at this link: <https://bit.ly/Oct10BPDABoardMeeting> a proposed modification to the South End Urban Renewal Plan regarding Parcel 35, located between Newcomb Street, Reed Street, and Thorndike Street in the Roxbury Neighborhood.

This Public Notice is being provided in accordance with a certain "Conciliation Agreement" by and among the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the BRA and others, dated as of January 16, 2001.

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Theater

Continued from page 1

Rubin's elegant wood constructs at A.R.T.—that smartly puts the focus on the play's depiction of romance confronting family opposition and the lethal consequences of hate and intolerance.

If actress-director Marianna Bassham's ASP staging at the Calderwood Pavilion seemed tighter in its approach to the tragic elements, artistic director Diane Paulus' A.R.T. effort at the Loeb Drama Center sometimes comes across as eager to end on a more hopeful note. Shakespeare buffs may suggest that Paulus eventually tackle the 2019 "what if" musical "& Juliet" that finds the heroine still alive.

Overly optimistic at its end or not, the A.R.T. production does feature several strong performances in key roles and generally faithful attention to both the serious and humorous scenes and exchanges in the play. As always Montague and Capulet men vividly exchange insults and foreshadowing menace. Here Capulet kinsman Tybalt—properly unrelenting as played by Alex Ross—even briefly roughs up Romeo's peace-seeking cousin

Benvolio—given both caring and character by Brandon Dial. Romeo's best friend Mercutio joins them for properly playful movement and suggestive wit.

Designer Emilio Sosa dresses the three and others in expressive casual modern dress. Clay Singer has all of Mercutio's flamboyance and touchy-feely flair—particularly during the lyrical Queen Mab speech. Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui sharply directs movement during both conflict and capering, though the choreography for the dancing at the Capulet ball ought to be more exuberant.

Rudy Pankow finds Romeo's reflective nature early on so that his quick attention to Juliet at her father Capulet's ball is easily established. Emilia Suarez is so captivating as Juliet that Romeo's love at first sight feelings are instantly convincing. Pankow has all of Romeo's agility and energy as he

climbs towards Juliet and later descends from her. Throughout the play Suarez powerfully moves from dreamy youthfulness to growing vulnerability—especially after Romeo is banished for killing Tybalt, who has killed Mercutio.

This gifted actress—who does full justice to Shakespeare's imagery about the stars and the lark—makes conflicted Juliet as dominant in the later going as her speeches and evolving emotions demand. Pankow and Suarez have persuasive chemistry as the challenged lovers.

In Paulus' staging, pivotal Friar Laurence looms as large as the focal pair. Terrence Mann brings strong authority to the couple's quiet wedding. Mann has all of the paternal would-be peace maker's gravitas and self-criticism in failing to actually notify Romeo about his strategy to enable the lovers to find a safe haven in Mantua. Sharon Catherine Brown

catches also supportive Nurse's caring for Juliet but could do with more understatement during moments of earthiness.

Terence Archie catches Lord Capulet's seeming fairness in the early going and his emotionally abusive demands in speaking to Juliet about Paris. Jason Bowen has all of the Prince's unwavering if complicated fairness. Adi Dixit comes across as overly confident as Paris.

Strangely, Paulus' staging omits the fight at the Capulet vault during which Romeo kills Paris. Shakespeare is of course in eminent domain, and various productions do make diverse cuts. Still, eliminating this fight arguably diminishes the play's insight about hate and the loss of young lives.

Also strange is a seeming attempt at somewhat transcending the chilling ending by having actors engage in planting at the close as a kind of metaphor for a better future.

A.R.T.'s lively staging deserves to be seen for Rubin's clever design—which smoothly becomes the various scenes—and several arresting performances—especially Suarez' riveting Juliet. Even so, "Romeo and Juliet" remains a haunting tragedy—one that calls on theatergoers to do the planting of love and understanding after seeing it.

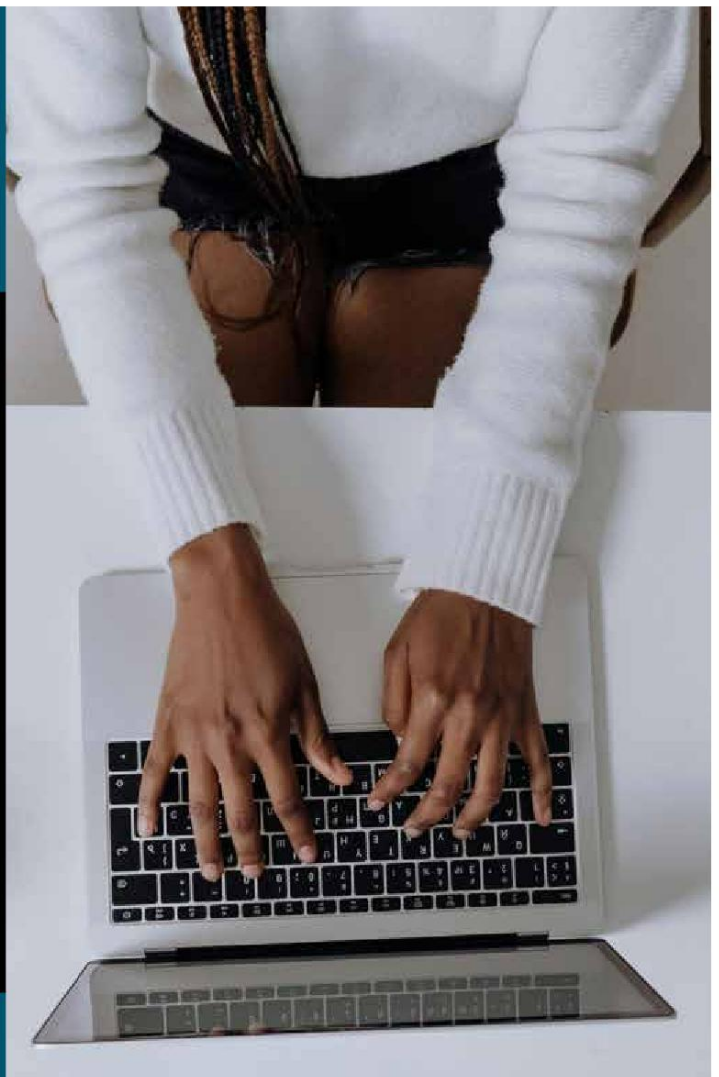
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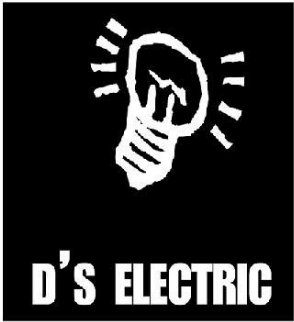
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