



DEMAND PR

David Elzer Marketing AND Public Relations

Press Information: David Elzer, DEMAND PR (818) 508-1754 davidelzer@me.com
Karyl Lynn Burns. Rubicon Theatre (805) 667-2912, ext. 224 klburns@rubicontheatre.org

For Immediate Release: October 12, 2022

**Rubicon Theatre of Ventura Announces October 29 Opening for the
Centerpiece of the Company's 2022-2023 "Welcome Home" Season:
In the Heights by Lin-Manuel Miranda and Quiara Alegría Hudes
Directed and Choreographed by Luis Salgado**

October 12, 2022 (Ventura, CA) – Rehearsals are underway for the centerpiece of Rubicon Theatre Company's 2022-2023 "Welcome Home" Season – ***IN THE HEIGHTS*** by **LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA** (the creator of *Hamilton*) and **QUIARA ALEGRÍA HUDES**. Winner of Tony, Grammy and Olivier Awards, *IN THE HEIGHTS* is a heartfelt, hopeful, high-energy musical about community, neighborhood and finding where you belong. The story takes place over three days in a close-knit neighborhood in Washington Heights in Upper Manhattan, New York City – a place where the coffee from the corner bodega is light and sweet, the windows are always open, and the breeze carries the rhythms of three generations of music. In his review of the Broadway production, **CHARLES ISHERWOOD** of the *New York Times* called the show, "An exuberant, animated shrine to the importance of family ties and being faithful to where you come from."

Rubicon's production of *In the Heights* opens October 29 and closes November 13, with low-priced previews October 26-28. Performances are Wednesdays through Sundays at Rubicon's home, the newly named Karyn Jackson Theatre at 1006 E. Main in Ventura's Downtown Cultural District. Many performances of *IN THE HEIGHTS* are already sold-out and tickets are going fast. For reservations, call (805) 667-2900 or visit the company's website at www.rubicontheatre.org.

Director/Choreographer's Connection to the Show

Rubicon's production is helmed by international director and choreographer and Broadway veteran **LUIS SALGADO**. Salgado's long history with *IN THE HEIGHTS* began shortly after he arrived in New York from Puerto Rico, when he was invited to serve as Latin Assistant Choreographer and cast member for the original Tony Award-winning production. In 2017, Salgado directed and choreographed the U.S. Spanish-language premiere of *IN THE HEIGHTS* in Washington D.C., which received nine Helen Hayes Awards including Best Musical, Best Direction and Best Choreography. Other directorial credits

include a new adaptation of the musical *Fame* at Gala Theatre (Helen Hayes Award for Best Musical), the Puerto Rican company and U.S. National Tour of *On Your Feet*, and a wide range of comedies, dramas and musicals in Germany, Holland, Colombia, and Peru. As a performer, Salgado's remarkable career includes the roles of Kid Rizzo in *Rocky*, Malik in *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* and Kenny in *On Your Feet* on Broadway, as well as Pre-Broadway and Off- Broadway productions and film work.

According to Rubicon Co-Founder and Producing Artistic Director **KARYL LYNN BURNS**, "I couldn't be more excited about this production. Luis is one of the most brilliant and visionary directors I have ever encountered, and we are honored to have him lead this special production. Luis and the cast bring great emotional depth and connection to this simple, universal story to which everyone will relate."

"The choreography is astonishing," continues Burns. "The storytelling through movement is incredibly specific, and the athleticism will be thrilling in our intimate space. From the very first moment of the performance, audience members will feel like they are a part of the barrio."

Three Community Outreach Initiatives and School Partnerships Reach Thousands

Salgado is a founder and director of R.Evolución Latina, an outreach program of Actors' Equity Association, and Founder of Salgado Productions, an organization committed to creating "art with a purpose" that challenges the status quo and provides extensive training and development opportunities for artists. After a months-long courtship and a visit to Ventura, Salgado worked Rubicon into his busy schedule because the company's commitment to education and community engagement was so aligned with his own.

Rubicon and Salgado Productions first partnered in the summer by offering free dance and vocal workshops for area residents interested in auditioning for the show. Says Burns, "We didn't want to do a show about neighborhood without reaching out to our own, and it has been a joy. Each of the more than 85 people who participated threw themselves into the classes. Some had prior performing experience and were expanding their skills; others had never done anything like this before but had raw talent and a passion to perform. Others just thought it might be a fun way to learn something new and meet new people."

Over eight weeks (eight hours a week), everyone who participated grew and made new friends. Twenty community members ended up auditioning for the show and three talented locals were cast in the production (**XIMENA VALENTINA ALVEAR** of Oxnard, as well as **RAEGAN DELGADO** and **DREAMER RAE WILSON** of Ventura).

The second part of the *IN THE HEIGHTS* educational initiative took place over the past two weeks in a groundbreaking new program combining assemblies and classroom workshops. The beautifully diverse 21-member cast (primarily Latine, with some Black and Native American artists) traveled to schools in Ventura and Oxnard Unified School Districts,

reaching nearly 5,000 students. In VUSD, 55% of students identify as Hispanic/Latino; 93.2% in Oxnard.

Following the first assembly, **DEIDRE MONARRES**, Principal of Pacific High School wrote, “This was probably the best assembly PHS has had in my 9 years at PHS! There were many positive comments from students but these two moved me the most,

‘This changed my mind completely about what musical theatre is about - my mind has shifted.’

‘I don’t even know what to do or say, I have never seen people who look like me on stage telling stories like mine.’

Monarres added, “Of course this opportunity supports and celebrates Hispanic heritage and the arts, but the individual impact this had on our PHS students was powerful and personal. Representation matters and our students could see themselves and their stories in today’s performance and performers. The actors were engaging, funny, inspiring, and ‘real’ with students during the interactive discussions.”

The third component of the *IN THE HEIGHTS* outreach continues in October and November, when high school students will attend daytime student matinees of the show at the theatre. The student matinees will include talkbacks with the artists after the show as well as study guides with background and suggested classroom exercises.

Diverse Cast Includes International Artists, Broadway Veterans and Local Latine Artists Making Professional Debuts

IN THE HEIGHTS features the largest Rubicon cast since the company’s hugely successful production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. The international group includes artists from the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Spain and Italy; Broadway veterans from New York; beloved L.A.-based artists; regional performers from Orlando, St. Louis, and Northern California; as well as three local artists from Oxnard and Ventura making their professional debuts with *IN THE HEIGHTS*.

The cast is led by **RYAN REYES** as bodega-owner Usnavi (originally played by Lin Manuel-Miranda), who introduces audiences to the characters and is our guide through the story. Reyes recently made his Off-Broadway debut at New World Stages in *American: The Musical* as Fro Valdivinos. Other credits include work with Florida Repertory Theatre, North Shore Music Theatre and Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival. When not on stage, Reyes is a horse trainer and a stuntman in Western independent films.

LUIS PABLO GARCIA, a 20-year-old first-generation Cuban-American and Miami Native, plays Usnavi’s young cousin Sonny, who helps him at the bodega. Garcia graduated from New World School of the Arts High School in 2020 and was recently seen in the World Premiere and pre-Broadway tryout of *The Karate Kid: The Musical* at Stages St. Louis.

The role of Graffiti Pete, Sonny's partner in crime, usually played by a male, has been reconceived by Salgado and is played by **MARIANA HERRERA JURI** (she/her). An award-winning National Dance Champion based in Colombia, at the age of 18 Herrera has already amassed impressive professional credits in New York, New Jersey and Northern California. She also serves as Associate Choreographer.

Vanessa, who works at the neighborhood salon and dreams of getting out of the barrio, is played by **LAURA LEBRÓN**, an actress, singer and acrobat born and raised in the Dominican Republic, where she was twice nominated for Best Actress at the Dominican Soberano Awards. Laura is a Helen Hayes Award winner for *IN THE HEIGHTS* in Washington, D.C.

New York-native **SUSAN OLIVERAS** makes her West Coast debut as salon owner Daniela in this production, having recently played trailblazing Hispanic suffragist Nina Otero in the acclaimed Off-Broadway run of *Suffs* at The Public Theatre. **YAN CARLOS DIAZ** (he/she) blazes a new trail in the show as the first LGBTQIA+ Gender-Queer stage artist to play the role of Daniela's confidante Carla. Diaz' credits include Blessica Williams in *Gorgeous a new musical*, the title role in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* and the Broadway Easter Bonnet Competition at The Minskoff.

Current New York-based artists **DANNY BOLERO** and **LAURA CASTRILLÓN** play Kevin and Camilla Rosario, respectively, owners of the local taxi service and parents of college student Nina, played by **CORINNE MILLER** (a recent graduate of Hartt School). Bolero, reprises the role he played in the Broadway production of *IN THE HEIGHTS* and the First National Tour. *IN THE HEIGHTS* is his third show at Rubicon, and he recently closed in *Plaza Suite* on Broadway with Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew Broderick. Castrillón's recent credits include Spanish productions of *Ghost and Jovencito*, *Frankenstein*, *tick...tick...BOOM!* (Best Actress Award), and TV shows like "La que se Avecina" and "Centro Medico."

JEFFREY NUNEZ (Piragua Guy), who played various roles in the Second National Tour of *IN THE HEIGHTS*, also hails from New York, as do ensemble members and AMDA alums **BRYAN MENJIVAR** (*Rappucinni's Daughter* Off-Broadway) and **RACQUEL WILLIAMS** (*The Magnificent Seven*, a new Off-Broadway musical about 1996 Olympic gymnastics); and **PRANJAAL LUNA'RAI** (Ensemble/Yolanda), who recently appeared in Salgado's production of *Fame En Español* in D.C.

SUZANNA GUZMÁN, an Emmy Award-winning artist from Los Angeles, portrays Abuela Claudia, the woman who raised Usnavi and is the matriarch of the community. Guzmán is a mezzo-soprano, tv/radio host and principal soloist with orchestras and opera houses around the world. She is fresh from playing Mother Abbess in McCoy/Rigby's *The Sound of Music*. Guzmán is host of the long-running KCET weekly TV series "Open Call," a 2022-23 L.A. Opera Legacy Ambassador and recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the

Niederlander Organization for service to Arts and Community. **JALON MATTHEWS** (Benny), also from L.A., holds an MFA from UC Irvine and a BA from Pepperdine. His regional credits include *The Lehman Trilogy* (Center Theatre Group), and work with Utah Shakespeare Festival and Musical Theatre West. Ensemble member and featured dancer **MALACHI DURANT** (Cirque du Soleil and the soon-to-be-released streaming film "1660 Vine") is likewise based in L.A.

Current Orlando residents **JOVANY RAMIREZ**, whose many credits include Sacramento Music Circus and Stages St. Louis, and **JOSE CARLOS RIVERA** (Sonny in McCoy-Rigby's *IN THE HEIGHTS*) perform as ensemble members.

XIMENA VALENTINA ALVEAR of Oxnard, and **RAEGAN DELGADO** and **DREAMER WILSON** of Ventura make their professional debuts with *In the Heights*. Alvear graduated from Pacifica High School and Wilson from Rio Mesa. Both attended Ventura College. A 17-year resident of Ventura, Delgado holds a dual B.A. from UC, San Diego and an M.A. from Pepperdine.

BRENT CRAYON is Musical Director and **VALERIA COSSU** serves as Associate Director for the production. The design team includes **CHRISTOPHER SCOTT MURILLO** (Set Designer), **MIKE BILLINGS** (Lighting and Projection Designer), **DANNY FIANDACA** (Sound Designer), **KEVIN WILLIAMS** (Prop Designer) and **ABRA FLORES** (Costume Designer). The stage management team consists of **KOREY SANDERS** (PSM) and **JULIA DONLON** (an Oxnard native in her first Equity Associate Stage Manager position).

Sponsors

IN THE HEIGHTS is sponsored by **BARBARA MEISTER** and **THE KURTZ FAMILY (IN MEMORY OF NORMAND KURTZ)**. Co-sponsors are **EILEEN OGLE** and **JUDITH NELSON**. **JEANNE ADAMS** and **ANONYMOUS** are major Education Sponsors for the show, with additional support from **LIMONEIRA**. **JODY LEGENDRE (IN MEMORY OF KIM WEISKOPF)** and **ANNE TOWBES** are Artist Underwriters.

Performance Schedule, Times and Prices

IN THE HEIGHTS previews Wednesday, October 26 at 7 p.m., Thursday, October 27 at 7 p.m. and Friday, October 28 at 8 p.m. Opening night is Saturday, October 29 at 7:00 p.m. and includes the show, and complimentary margaritas, mojitos, or non-alcoholic beverages. Performances continue through November 13 - Wednesdays at 2 and 7 p.m., Thursdays at 7 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Additional performances with best availability have been added on Sunday evening October 30 at 7 p.m. and on Sunday, November 13 at 7 p.m. (the final performance). Ticket prices range from \$30 to \$79.50. Student, senior and military discounts are available.

---###---

More about Rubicon Theatre Company

Rubicon Theatre Company has been described as, "the rising star of the Southern California cultural constellation." A not-for-profit professional regional theatre that has reached more than 450,000 attendees, Rubicon serves area residents and visitors with innovative productions of classic and contemporary plays, as well as a wide array of educational programs and events. Acclaimed by critics and industry professionals, the company has received the L.A. Drama Critics Margaret Harford Special Award for "Sustained Excellence," two Drama Desk Awards, and more than 20 Ovation Awards from the former L.A. Stage Alliance.

Prior to the pandemic, Rubicon transferred three shows to New York (*Wiesenthal* – Outer Critics Circle and Drama Desk Award nominations; *Lonesome Traveler* – Outer Critics Circle and Drama Desk Award nominations; and *Daddy Long Legs* (Drama Desk Award). Rubicon has welcomed a steady stream of high-profile actors and directors to the stage, including **BRUNO BIRCHIR, ODISEO BIRCHIR, SUSAN CLARK, DANA DELANY, CONCHATA FERRELL, HAROLD GOULD, JOEL GREY, LARRY HAGMAN, BILL IRWIN, JACK LEMMON, JUSTINA MACHADO, AMANDA McBROOM, TED NEELEY, PAUL PROVENZA, LINDA PURL, RONDI REED, JOHN RITTER, JOE SPANO, BRUCE WEITZ, LILLIAS WHITE** and others. Company members are **GEORGE BALL, JOSEPH FUQUA** and **JENNY SULLIVAN**.

Based in Ventura's Downtown Cultural District, just blocks from the Pacific Ocean, Rubicon resides in a 185-seat historic church built in the 1920s. In this renovated historic landmark, audience members are never further than 10 rows from the stage on the main floor. (The balcony, which seats twenty, is available for private parties or corporate groups.)

True to the company's name and the vision of artistic directors **KARYL LYNN BURNS** and **JAMES O'NEIL**, Rubicon has created an environment where commitment and risk are encouraged, and where artists are nurtured and respected. As a result, the company has gained a reputation for invigorating interpretations of the classics and for supporting the development of new works. Rubicon presents at least one World Premiere each season, as well as readings of works-in-progress.

Deeply rooted in the region it serves, Rubicon offers extensive outreach programs, including daytime matinees for high school students, after-school and weekend programs for at-risk youth, and summer musical theatre, drama and technical camps. More than 48,000 students have benefited.

A board of directors of prominent social and civic leaders governs Rubicon under the leadership of **DOUG HALTER**. The company is also supported by an advisory group of regional ambassadors and a volunteer auxiliary.

For more information about Rubicon Theatre Company, or to purchase tickets, call (805)667-2900 or go to www.rubicontheatre.org. The theatre is located at 1006 E. Main Street in Ventura's Downtown Cultural District.

---###---

NOTE TO EDITORS: Additional season photos are currently available under Media on the Rubicon Theatre website. To schedule interviews, please contact Publicist **DAVID ELZER** at (818) 508-1754 davidelzer@me.com or Karyl Lynn Burns at (805) 667-2900.

CALENDAR LISTING

WINNER OF THE TONY, GRAMMY AND OLIVIER AWARDS!

IN THE HEIGHTS

Concept, Music and Lyrics by **LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA**

Book by **QUIARA ALEGRÍA HUDES**

Directed and Choreographed by **LUIS SALGADO**

October 26 – November 13, 2022 (Press Opening; Saturday, October 29 at 7 pm)

Heartfelt, hopeful, bursting with songs with a beat and high-energy Latin dance numbers, *In the Heights* is a fresh, inspiring family musical about where we come from, who we are, and finding our true home. The story is set in a neighborhood in Washington Heights – a place where the coffee from the corner bodega is light and sweet, the windows are always open, and the breeze carries the rhythms of three generations of music. It's a community on the brink of change, where the biggest struggles can be deciding which traditions to take with you and which to leave behind. The production is directed by Luis Salgado from the Broadway production, who also directed the first Spanish-language production in Washington D.C., which won 9 Helen Hayes Awards.

Current Policy Regarding Masks and Vaccinations

Masks are required for the first 10 performances of each show's run. The remainder of the performances, masks will be optional. If you have any questions or would like to change your tickets to match your preference, please contact the Rubicon Box Office at 805-667-2900 between the hours of 12-noon and 6 pm Tuesday-Saturday.