

## Trysts in Toledo: Hilarity Second to Nun!

By Rick A. Elina

Being a product of Catholic School, I have never met a Nun that had even the slightest sense of humor. Doesn't come with the territory. Laughter was a guaranteed fast track to a painful meeting with a swift ruler. For this reason alone, I would have traded a month of sundaes to have Sister Juana Ines de la Cruz as the overseer of my tutelage. Only problem is the Good Sister died over 300 years ago, but not before establishing herself as a prolific writer, poet and feminist. (Yes, she was a nun!)

Of her many contributions to society, one in particular is on display for your theatrical viewing pleasure. Theatre Three's production of *Trysts in Toledo*, showcases the comedic writing skill of a cloistered nun from three centuries past. Translated from the original play by Jac Alder, the story centers on a night of romantic complications and mistaken identities, along with all the other necessary ingredients for a night of convulsive laughter. In short, this show is hilarious.

The play opens as Dona Ana (Lydia Mackay) agrees to help her brother Don Pedro (Gregory Lush) with a far-fetched plan to win the heart of Dona Leonor (Ginneh J. Thomas). Yet Dona Leonor's heart belongs to Don Carlos (Thiago Martins). It just so happens that Dona Ana is also interested in Don Carlos and the love triangle quickly becomes a geometric oddity that defies description. Adding fuel to the fires of passion, is Don Juan (Ashley Wood) another nobleman who's totally devoted to Dona Ana. Celia (Aleisha Force) the servant of Dona Ana has secretly hidden Don Juan somewhere in the household and, by the way, she happens to feel quite passionately about Castano (Jeff Swearingen) the servant of Don Carlos. *Es muy complicado!* But don't dwell on it or you'll miss the fun. There is simplicity in spite of many complications. Therein lies the true beauty of this piece.

Notably among the standout performers, and there are many, Ms. Mackay seems to channel the great Lucille Ball (perhaps it's the red hair) in overly complicating these winsome matters of the heart. Mr. Lush plays well as the arrogant nobleman, with an ego so overinflated, that he's barely able to strut the stage. Bravo, Don Pedro! The sly subterfuge of those stealthy servants

played by Ms. Force and Mr. Swearingen garner some of the biggest laughs in a show filled with many big laughs.

The multi-tiered set designed by the director, Jeffrey Schmidt, made excellent use of the space and was superbly adapted to theatre in the round. It allowed the actors to move freely and quickly about the set, which kept the pace of the show in high gear throughout its two hour run time.

*Trysts in Toledo* runs December 11, 2008 through January 18, 2009 at Theatre Three. Contact the box office at (214) 871-3300, option 1 or visit [Theatre3Dallas.com](http://Theatre3Dallas.com) for more details.

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