

The Ford Theatre Foundation presents

CANTINFLAS FEST

Film & Theatre Cine y Teatro

September/Septiembre 1-4, 2004, Ford Amphitheatre

Wednesday/Miercoles, September/Septiembre 1 at 8:30 p.m.

AHÍ ESTA EL DETALLE (1940)

Thursday/Jueves, September/Septiembre 2 at 8:30 p.m.

EL PADRECITO (1964)

Friday/Viernes, September/Septiembre 3 at 8:30 p.m.

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS (1956)

Saturday/Sabado, September/Septiembre 4 at 8:30 p.m.

HERBERT SIGÜENZA'S ¡CANTINFLAS!

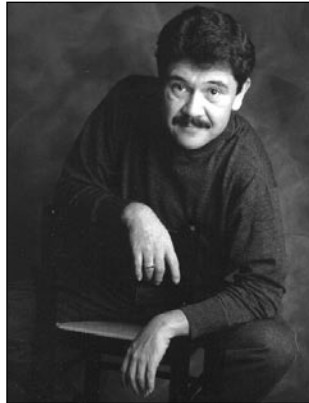
Cantinflas Fest is one of the components of the Ford Theatre Foundation's Latino Arts Initiative supported by California Community Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and The Capital Group Companies.

Special thanks to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for their continuing support of the Ford Amphitheatre season, a program of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission.

Bienvenidos! Welcome!

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe that we're into our third year of the Ford Theatre Foundation's Latino Arts/Audience Initiative. As we aspire to create the best and most exciting programming possible, we are always adjusting and tweaking our schedule in the hopes of better serving you, our most valued audience. In 2004, we have opted to spread out the Foundation's programming throughout the entire Ford season. We hope that by doing so, we will be able to better market and publicize the tremendous talents that we have assembled for your viewing and listening pleasure. Last year's month long festival has evolved into this year's "Latino Arts Series."



In June we hosted Barcelona dancer/choreographer Marta Carrasco for the third year with her passionate U.S. premiere presentation of *Blanc D'Ombra/White in the Shadow*. We just completed our Latino Playreading series in the Ford's 87-seat indoor theatre, [Inside] the Ford. The series expanded to twelve weeks from last year's five, running from June 5 through August 21. This week we welcome you to the Cantinflas Fest, a film-theatre celebration of the Mexican comedian, Mario Moreno, known as "Cantinflas." The series ends in the latter part of October with visits from two of Latin America's leading theatre companies: Yuyachkani from Peru and Malayerba from Ecuador. (For a full Ford season schedule, see page 12 of this program.)

All in all, our Latino programming for 2004 has more than tripled from 2002, our first year, offering you 31 Latino-themed events representing the best local, national and international artists working today.

It is with tremendous gratitude that we acknowledge the support of our independent producers, the unending support of the L.A. County Arts Commission, the continued guidance of the Ford Theatre Foundation Board, the Latino Arts/Audience Initiative Advisory Committee, and the generous support of the James Irvine Foundation, The Keck Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, our media sponsor Telefutera, and all of our other funders and corporate sponsors.

Most importantly - thanks to you, our audience, for so enthusiastically supporting this initiative for the past two seasons.

Nos vemos pronto (See you soon),

Ralph Flores
Program Manager
Latino Arts/Audience Initiative Program Manager

John Anson Ford Theatre Foundation

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The three films chosen by the Ford Amphitheatre depict three important moments in the career of Mario Moreno “Cantinflas.”

Las 3 películas escogidas por el For Amphitheater muestran 3 momentos importantes en la carrera de MARIO MORENO “Cantinflas”.

AHÍ ESTA EL DETALLE (1940) September/Septiembre 1

Before starring in *THERE'S THE POINT*, Mario Moreno “Cantinflas” had already starred in six other films, but it is this film that launches him into stardom, creates the cinematographic Cantinflas image and, according to some critics, is his best performance in front of the cameras throughout his prolific career. Produced in 1940, this film is the result of an interesting investigative process by director Juan Bustillo Oro, who sought to fulfill the expectations of the movie’s producer.

Bustillo Oro based the memorable final scene of the trial on an actual event that occurred in 1925. The insane declarations of the criminal Álvaro Chapa inspired the creation of one of the most famous monologues in the history of Latin cinema. Ironically, few people credited the director for the unforgettable “cantinflada.”

THERE'S THE POINT has become increasingly popular with the general public and appreciated by critics as the years have gone by. It is now considered the best comedy in the Spanish language, and thus deserves the honor of being one of the ten best Mexican films of all time. This film was also graced by the participation of two other great actors of Mexican cinema: Sara Garcia and Joaquín Pardavé.

Antes de protagonizar *AHÍ ESTA EL DETALLE*, Mario Moreno “Cantinflas” ya había actuado en otras 6 películas, pero es ésta. la que lo lanza al estrellato, crea la imagen del Cantinflas cinematográficamente, y según algunos críticos, es la mejor de su larga carrera ante las cámaras. Producida en 1940, este filme, es el resultado de un interesante proceso de investigación por parte de su director Juan Bustillo Oro, para cumplir con las expectativas del productor.

Para la hoy memorable escena final del juicio, Bustillo Oro se basó en un caso de la vida real acontecido en 1925. Las alucinantes declaraciones del criminal Álvaro Chapa inspiraron la redacción de uno de los monólogos más famosos de la historia del cine latino. Irónicamente, pocas personas atribuyeron al director la autoría de esta célebre “cantinflada”.

Con el paso de los años, *AHÍ ESTA EL DETALLE* ha crecido en el gusto popular y en la apreciación de los críticos. Y es considerada la mejor comedia hablada en español, por eso merece el honor de ser una de las diez mejores películas mexicanas de todos los tiempos. En ella actúan otros dos grandes actores del cine mexicano: Sara Garcia y Joaquín Pardavé.

EL PADRECITO (1964) September/Septiembre 2

THE LITTLE PRIEST, released in 1964, was directed by Miguel M. Delgado, one of the great collaborators and director of many of Cantinflas' films throughout the years. It is the story of the arrival of a new and non-conventional parson to a small town, an arrival that elicits a reaction from the populace as they all love the priest whom they've had for many years. This movie parallels reality as it is released when the influence of the new "Euménico" Council of the Catholic Church begins to institute new changes.

Also starring Angel Garasa, *THE LITTLE PRIEST* was widely accepted by audiences and quickly became one of the greatest box office hits amongst Cantinflas' films.

En 1964, se estrena *EL PADRECITO*, dirigida por Miguel M. Delgado, quien fué por muchos años gran colaborador y director de muchas de las películas de Cantinflas. La historia es la llegada de un nuevo y poco convencional párroco a un pequeño pueblo, el cual crea la reacción de todos sus habitantes, quienes quieren mucho al sacerdote que han tenido por muchísimos años. Paralelamente, esta película llega cuando la influencia del nuevo Concilio Euménico de la Iglesia Católica comienza a refrescar lo que serían los nuevos cambios.

Protagonizada también por Angel Garasa, *EL PADRECITO* tuvo una gran aceptación del público y se convirtió rápidamente en uno de los mayores éxitos de taquilla entre la filmografía de Cantinflas.

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS (1956) September/Septiembre 3

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS, The Original won several awards. The film took the Oscar and the Golden Globe as the Year's Best Film for 1956, and also gave Cantinflas a Golden Globe as Best Comedic Actor.

This spectacular and extravagant adventure film was shot by Michael Anderson in the world's most stunning sets. David Niven co-stars as the millionaire who bets he can travel around the planet in 80 days. This film also boasts more than forty cameos by great stars, such as Shirley MacLaine, Marlene Dietrich, Charles Boyer, Jose Greco, Buster Keaton and Frank Sinatra, among others.

LA VUELTA AL MUNDO EN 80 DIAS, La Original, fue ganadora de muchísimos premios, entre ellos, el Oscar y el Golden Globe en 1957 como Mejor Pelicula del Año, y le dio a Cantinflas también, su Golden Globe como Mejor Actor de Comedias.

Esta gran extravaganza aventurera y espectacular filme, fue realizado por Michael Anderson en los más interesantes escenarios del mundo, y protagonizada también por David Niven, en el papel del millonario que apuesta poderle dar la vuelta al planeta en mas de 2 meses. Además este filme muestra más de 40 pequeñas actuaciones de grandes estrellas, como Shirley MacLaine, Marlene Dietrich, Charles Boyer, Jose Greco, Buster Keaton y Frank Sinatra entre otros.

Ford Theatre Foundation presents

¡CANTINFLAS!
September/Septiembre 4

Written by Herbert Sigüenza

with

Herbert Sigüenza
Alejandro Cardenas
Begonya Plaza
Ezequiel Guerra, Jr
VIVIS

Stage Manager
Francisco Hernandez

Conceived and Directed by
Herbert Sigüenza

Co-commissioned by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco and
the Alley Theatre of Houston, Texas.

ARTIST STATEMENT

The idea of writing a performance piece about Cantinflas came to me back in 1993.

At the time, Culture Clash was writing Carpa Clash and that April, United Farm Workers President César Chávez died unexpectedly at the age of 66. A few days earlier, the legendary Mario Moreno “Cantinflas” died in Mexico at the age of 81. We ended up performing and dedicating Carpa Clash to them both. César and Cantinflas embodied what Culture Clash, or Chicano theater for that matter, was all about: the merging of social politics and popular humor. I remember going to see Cantinflas movies with my parents at one of the theaters on Mission Street. I remember getting very frustrated because I didn’t understand a word Cantinflas said. Many years later, I realized that he wasn’t saying anything at all! He was Cantinfleando (an actual verb in the Real Academia Spanish Dictionary). He was a master of verbal calisthenics and manipulated the Spanish language like no other. Cantinflas was about language. The language of folklore, the language of the lower classes, the language of intellectual masturbation, all wrapped into one incoherent mess that somehow made sense. The majority of the monologues are in Spanish because they were written that way, and I wanted to reproduce the sound, rhythm and authenticity of these classic verbal routines. I was amazed how complicated and sophisticated some of his monologues were. I suspect Cantinflas never broke through English language films because the English language was a handicap for him, as it is not as flexible and pliable as Spanish. Cantinflas was also a physical comedic master. Trained as a dancer, he had an elegant yet almost vulgar way of dancing. With his amazing conditioning and body control,

he created hilarious routines with his trademark below-the-hip baggy pants. His extraordinary dance routine to Ravel's "Bolero" stands as one of the greatest comic dances captured on film. For many years, he also entertained audiences as an accomplished comedic bullfighter which took tremendous skill and courage. Like Chaplin and the Marx Brothers, Cantinflas was a sharp social satirist. He played el pelado, the poor Everyman, with dreams and hopes to succeed. However, if succeeding was achieved by chance, deception, or fast talking street smarts, all the better.

Cantinflas did not like to work hard in achieving his goals. Instead he would find the foibles and contradictions of the upper society and the people in power. Although his characters were poor and struggled to survive, they were never bitter or resentful. His charisma and wit allowed him to infiltrate high society and make chaos out of every situation, or at least create a sense of humanity and warmth. Subversively, he represented the disenfranchised people of Mexico ridiculing a corrupt power structure. His later films were laced with critical social observations that pointed out the ineptitude and indifference of the government (PRI) and upper society. His greatest battle was the war against ignorance. Although Cantinflas himself became immensely wealthy (milionario de la izquierda), he never forgot his humble roots and his beloved audience. He was a union leader and one of Mexico's largest philanthropists; his efforts included the creation and funding of La Casa del Actor, a retirement home for stage and movie actors. The image of Cantinflas is very prevalent in Chicano/Latino culture, much like the image of Ché and César. Personally, I never felt like Cantinflas was truly analyzed, researched, appreciated or fully understood. He was actually more of a hero during my parents' generation. For my generation, he was merely a icon of the old country. I have attempted to bring out an essence of his comedic genius, and have tried to share the important facts of his personal and artistic life, which were rich in triumph, sadness and controversy. Because of Mario Moreno's exceptional talent and legendary standing, attempting to interpret him has been the most challenging exercise I have ever had as an artist. I only hope that I will do him justice, and help expose his legacy to a new and younger generation that has heard the name, and has seen the image, but never the real man.

-Herbert Sigüenza
September, 2003

SYNOPSIS

Time and place: Mexico City D.F. 1993

Based on actual interviews Cantinflas conducted by the Spanish-language press over several years. The characters of Ramón and the American interviewer have been fictionalized.

Act One

An interview is conducted in Cantinflas' Mexico City mansion sometime in 1993, a few months before his death. He recounts his early years in the Carpas. He realizes that he has a gift for verbal comedy and improvisation when he fills in for another comic in Ciudad Juárez, 1933. His stage name and character are created. His early success came while sharing the stage with another comic named Manuel Medel. They had a famous routine where they played street drunks. Cantinflas and Medel become good friends and talk back stage about the interest the young Cantinflas is receiving from movie producers. Cantinflas also tells Medel about his marriage to fellow Russian dancer Valentina Zukova. They go on stage and perform a "know-it-all" genie routine.

The genie explains the difference between dynamite and atoms.

In 1937, Cantinflas films his first pictures, but his 1940 movie, *Ahí está el detalle* (That's The Detail or That's Exactly What I'm Talking About) makes him a movie star. The first scene takes place in the kitchen of an elegant mansion. Every night, Cantinflas visits his good-natured sweetheart who works for a very wealthy man. She wants Cantinflas to marry her and find a job, but he is more concerned about "mooching" from her and enjoying free food and drink. "Why work, when you are already working for both of us?" he says. In a later scene, he meets up with the suspicious wealthy man who believes he is having an affair with his wife.

Cantinflas talks himself out of another tight situation. Cantinflas was a skilled comic bullfighter and a shrewd businessman. Cantinflas explains the history of the castle of Chapultepec to a gringo tourist with very bad Spanish - a sketch from the movie *El bolero de Raquel* (double entendre: Raquel's Bolero or Raquel's Shoeshine Man). The next scene is the famous dance sequence from the same movie.

INTERMISSION

Act Two

Act Two opens with the red carpet Hollywood premiere of Mike Todd's 1955 film, *Around the World in 80 Days*. This was Cantinflas' first English-speaking movie and made him an international star. However, Cantinflas never had enduring crossover success and continued to produce Spanish-speaking movies in Mexico. Ramón enters and announces that dinner is served. Cantinflas invites the journalist to join him. In the late 50's and 60's he abandoned his peladito (tramp) character and took on more conventional roles such as a double-tongued politician and a well-meaning teacher in a corrupt small town. He also played a town scribe with the gift of writing incoherent letters and coaxing free milk from the gullible milkman. Cantinflas lost some popularity during these years but returned as the peladito in *El Analfabeto* (The Illiterate). The scene depicts Cantinflas as a carpenter who has just made a very bizarre coffin much to his boss' dislike.

His last movie filmed in 1982, was called *El Barrendero* (The Street Sweeper). The scene depicts Cantinflas and his sweetheart who is a maid. He confesses his love to her and promises her everything, even though they have very little material wealth. The play ends with the interviewer asking Cantinflas a series of personal and insightful questions.

SINOPSIS

Tiempo y Lugar: Ciudad de Mexico, 1993

La obra es basada en entrevistas realizadas por los medios de comunicación durante varios años. Los personajes de Ramón y la reportera Americana se han ficcionalizado.

Primer Acto

Una entrevista realizada en la mansión de Cantinflas en la ciudad de Mexico en algún mes del año 1993, poco antes de su muerte. El comico recuerda sus años bajo La Carpa. Se da cuenta de que tiene un don, el de utilizar la comedia verbal y la improvisación. Esto lo nota cuando tiene que reemplazar a un cómico en la Ciudad Juarez, en 1933. Su nombre artístico es creado en ese tiempo. Su éxito llegó cuando tuvo que compartir el escenario con otro cómico, Manuel Medel. Tuvieron una

rutina famosa, en la que hacían de borrachos callejeros. Se hicieron buenos amigos y hablaban sobre el interés que estaba recibiendo el joven Cantinflas por parte de productores de películas. Cantinflas también confesó a Medel sobre su matrimonio con la bailarina Rusa, Valentina Zukova. En el escenario, Cantinflas y Medel realizaron una rutina sobre un genio que lo sabía todo. El genio explicaba la diferencia entre dinamita y los átomos.

En 1937, Cantinflas hace sus primeras películas, pero fue la que hizo en 1940, Ahí está el detalle que le convierte en una estrella de cine. La primera escena se lleva a cabo en la cocina de una elegante mansión. Todas las noches, Cantinflas visita a su amada quien trabaja para un hombre rico. Ella quiere casarse con Cantinflas y que Cantinflas encuentre un trabajo, pero él está más preocupado de sacar lo que pueda sin pagar o sin tener que trabajar, “Porque trabajar, cuando tu ya estas trabajando para los dos?” Más tarde, se reúne con el sospechoso hombre rico, quien cree que está teniendo un romance con su esposa. Cantinflas se sale con otra de las suyas.

Cantinflas era un cómico y hábil torero, además, un buen hombre de negocios. Cantinflas explicó la historia del Castillo de Chapultepec a un gringo turista quien hablaba muy mal el Español (parte de la película El Bolero de Raquel). La siguiente escena es el famoso baile de la misma película.

INTERMEDIO

Segundo Acto

El Segundo Acto abre con la alfombra roja de Hollywood, en 1955, durante el estreno de la película de Mike Todd, La Vuelta al Mundo en 80 Días. Esta fue la primera película en Inglés de Cantinflas, y le convirtió en estrella internacional. Sin embargo, Cantinflas nunca cruzó completamente al mundo del cine Americano, así que continuó produciendo películas en Español en México. Ramón entra y anuncia que la cena está servida. Cantinflas le invita a la reportera a quedarse. En los años 50s y 60s, abandonó el personaje del “peladito”, y tomó papeles más convencionales como un político de armas de doble filo, y un profesor con buenas intenciones en un pueblo corrupto. También hizo de escritor (con el don de escribir cartas ilógicas) quien se aprovechaba del lechero, y siempre conseguía leche gratis. Cantinflas perdió algo de popularidad durante estos años pero regresó en El Analfabeto con su querido papel del “peladito”. La escena retrata a Cantinflas como carpintero quien acaba de hacer un extraño ataúd que le ofende a su jefe.

Su última película se hizo en 1982, y se llamaba El Barrendero. Aquí vemos a Cantinflas con su enamorada, una sirvienta. Cantinflas le declara su amor y le promete el mundo entero, aunque no tienen nada. La obra termina con la reportera preguntando a Cantinflas una serie de preguntas personales e introspectivas.