

SEATTLE
REP



LAUGHS IN SPANISH

BY ALEXIS
SCHEER

Youth Guide

Welcome to Seattle Rep!

We are so excited to have you join us for our production of Alexis Scheer's *Laughs in Spanish*. This play invites us into the colorful and unpredictable art scene of Miami, where family, love, and ambition collide in ways that are both heartfelt and wildly entertaining. *Laughs in Spanish* explores the intersections of identity and creativity, reminding us of the ways we express ourselves and the stories we choose to tell. But beyond the humor and fast-paced dialogue, there's an intricate structure that helps shape the way we experience the story.

As you watch the performance, pay close attention to the transitions—the moments between the scenes. These transitions create rhythm, tone, and meaning, influencing how we connect with the characters and their journeys. How does one flow into the next? What choices do the playwright, director, and designers make to guide us through the story? How does structure impact the artistic work as a whole?

If you're feeling inspired to step onto the stage yourself, join us for our new Spring Studio Series of youth acting classes on Saturdays in May. For more information, visit seattlerep.org/Studios (and be sure to register by May 4).

We hope this experience sparks your curiosity and deepens your appreciation for storytelling in all its forms. Enjoy the show, and whether you laugh in Spanish (jajaja) or English (lol), have a great time!



Deanna Martinez
Education & Community
Programs Director

¡BIENVENIDOS A MIAMI!

Welcome to Miami!

As you immerse yourself in the world of Alexis Scheer's *Laughs in Spanish*, here are some places, people, and things you will hear mentioned in the play:

ART BASEL: an international art fair held annually in Basel, Switzerland, as well as Miami, Hong Kong, and Paris.

BANKSY: a British street artist and political activist whose real name and identity are unknown.

GUERRILLA GIRLS: an anonymous group of feminist female artists devoted to fighting sexism and racism within the art world.

LAS MENINAS: Spanish for "The Ladies-in-Waiting," a 1656 painting by Diego Velázquez that depicts the *Infanta* (Princess) Margarita and members of her court.

"MIAMI VICE": a 1980s TV show about two police detectives investigating drugs, murder, and other crimes in Miami.

"SPRING BREAKERS": a 2012 film about four college women who rob a diner to fund a wild spring break trip to Florida.

WYNWOOD: A neighborhood in Miami known for its colorful murals, outdoor art installations, and hip galleries.

Many of the Spanish words or phrases you hear today will be recognizable through their context or surrounding dialogue, but here are a few to keep in mind:

AY DIOS MIO: oh my God

BRUJERÍA / TU ERES

UNA BRUJA: witchcraft / You are a witch

CÁLLATE: shut up

CÁLMATE: calm yourself

CARAJÓ: In the context of the play, this word is used as an interjection to express anger or irritation. It can also be used to mean "to hell with" or "to go to hell."

COQUITO: a coconut-based alcoholic beverage similar to eggnog. It originated in Puerto Rico and is traditionally consumed around Christmas.

MIJA: my daughter

OYE: listen

PAISA: someone or something from the northwest region of Colombia

PASTELITOS: little cakes

PENDEJO: idiot or coward

PICADILLO: a traditional dish in many Latin American countries made with ground meat and tomatoes, as well as raisins, olives, and other ingredients that vary from country to country.

QUIÉN HARÍA ALGO COMO

ESTO?! The opening line of the play, meaning "Who would do something like this?"

QUINCE: short for quinceañera, a celebration of a girl's 15th birthday that traditionally marks her transition from girlhood to adulthood.

SÍ, SEÑORA: yes, ma'am

TELENOVELA: a Spanish-language soap opera

VAMOS: let's go



Murals in Miami's Wynwood neighborhood, known for its colorful street art.

An Interview with Playwright Alexis Scheer



Seattle Rep: Both you and our production's director Dámaso Rodríguez have roots in Miami. What makes that city a prime place to set this story? Where did your initial inspiration for this play begin?

Alexis Scheer: I was really inspired by the art-ification of the Wynwood neighborhood in Miami. Formerly the garment district, where my family had deep roots, Wynwood turned into a hotspot for art, food, and nightlife seemingly overnight. This play was a way for me to imagine who would populate the space that was once my parents' button company or grandparents' dress shop, and it's a love letter to the city and community of artists who raised me.

And while the mother character in the play is nothing like my own mother, I do have to shout her out as a source of inspiration. My mom is a Colombian immigrant who I watched code switch between her personal and professional life every day, and is the kind of woman who models for me what it looks like to be successful both with work and family.

SR: You have described *Laughs in Spanish* as "a play about Latinas with agency." Could you expand on what that means to you?

AS: This is a story centered on an ambitious mother and daughter who both start the play from places

of professional success. I was really interested in writing something, particularly about Latinas, where the narrative wasn't about the struggle to become successful but rather what it costs to be successful.

SR: *Laughs in Spanish* is being staged all across the country this year. Why do you think it is particularly connecting with audiences right now?

AS: I think audiences need joy. But not simply for escapism. I personally believe joy is the most sustainable resource we have when it comes to resistance. And in these terribly divisive times, especially with so much hateful rhetoric being spewed towards immigrants, I'm very proud to be all over the country telling a story that puts the heart and humor of the Latiné community in the spotlight.

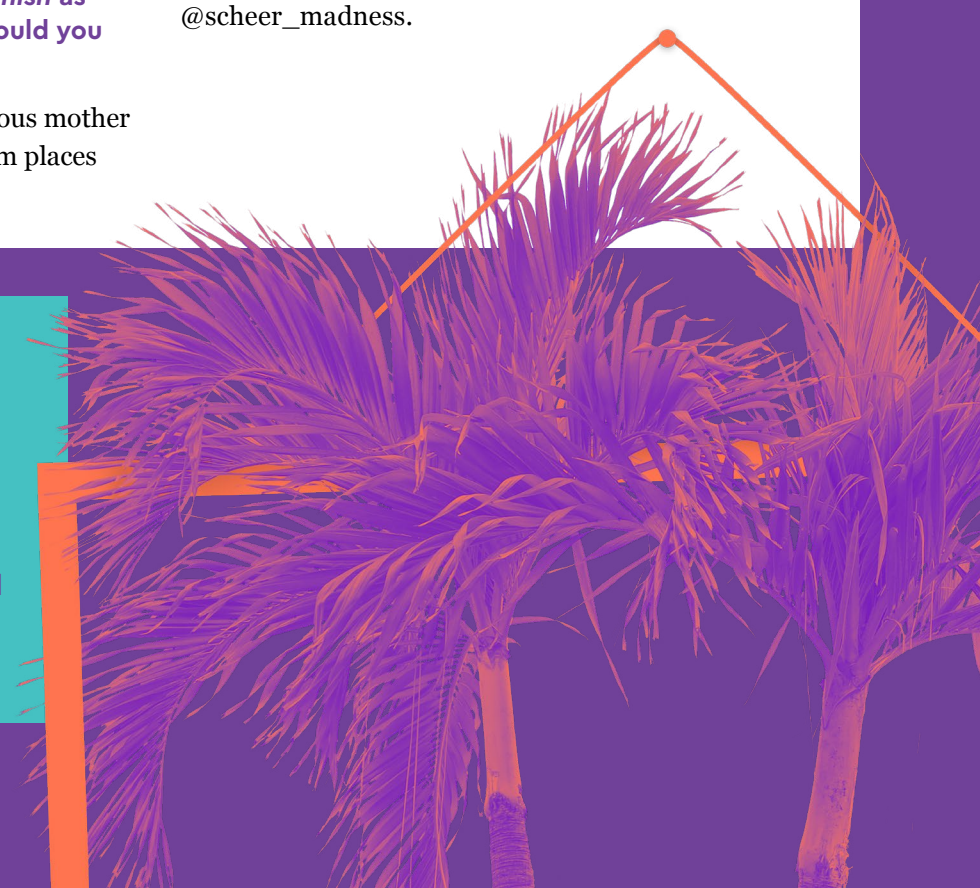
SR: What do you hope people take away from this show?

AS: Hopefully a curiosity to engage with more Latiné culture—go dancing, go eat (we have GREAT food)! And, as always, I hope you leave with a desire to keep seeing and supporting new plays! Also, if you like what you see and want to keep up with the work I'm doing, you can follow me on Instagram @scheer_madness.



Go Beyond
the Show

Scan here for other resources to enhance your experience of *Laughs in Spanish*, including a show-inspired media list curated by librarians at Seattle Public Library!



LESSON

Analyzing Transitions in *Laughs in Spanish*

Today, you'll explore how transitions shape a play's structure, meaning, and overall impact. As you watch *Laughs in Spanish*, pay close attention to the moments between scenes—how they begin, end, and flow into each other.

Before the Show

- Think about what "transitions" mean in storytelling. How do movies, books, and plays shift between scenes?
- Discuss different ways theater productions transition (e.g., blackouts, lighting, sound, movement).

After the Show

- Consider these questions:
 - How did one scene end and the next begin?
 - What techniques were used to shift between scenes?
 - How did these choices affect the pacing, mood, or meaning of the play?
 - How did the transitions shape your experience as an audience member?
 - How did they contribute to the play's humor and energy?
 - What if the transitions were different, how would that change the play?

Creative Challenge

- Imagine an alternate way a transition could happen in the play. Would it be smoother, more dramatic, funnier?
- How does your version change the impact of the scene?
