U.S. PREMIERE

QUIXOTE: ON THE CONQUEST OF SELF

AFTER DON QUIXOTE BY MIGUEL DE CERVANTES
WRITTEN BY MÓNICA HOTH AND CLAUDIO VALDÉS KURI
ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY GEORGINA ESCOBAR
DIRECTED BY CLAUDIO VALDÉS KURI

Begins September 27th
Performed in the Gillian Theatre
Dear Friends,

Welcome to our first production in the Gillian Theatre this season—an exciting new take on Miguel de Cervantes’ masterpiece *Don Quixote*, featuring Chicago favorite Henry Godinez in the title role.

*Quixote: On the Conquest of Self* was created by internationally acclaimed artist Claudio Valdés Kuri (written by Mónica Hoth and Valdés Kuri, with an English Translation by Georgina Escobar) and we’re thrilled to welcome him and his team to Glencoe for our first international production.

In this issue of *The Brief Chronicle*, you’ll hear from Valdés Kuri about his passion for this project, as well as how he got his start in theatre, some background on his theatre company, Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes, and the nature of Mexican theatre today. You’ll also get insight into the events that led to this exciting production!

We’ll explore the history of the novel on which this production is based—one of the best-known novels in modern history (and the most-published novel of all time), and examine its influence on a wide variety of artistic work in the centuries since its creation.

In the back half of this magazine, you’ll get to know the man who will play Quixote at Writers Theatre, Chicago-based actor and director Henry Godinez, and hear about his theatrical journey and his connection to the play.

Finally, we’ll check in with our Education Department, offering you a glimpse at the wide variety of programming that our team offers to Chicago-area students—reaching more than 11,500 students each year. This vibrant programming is a core component of the Theatre’s mission, and bringing the arts to young people continues to be one of the driving forces of the company.

We’re thrilled to have you with us for this, the first (hopefully of many) international production in WT history. And as always, we deeply appreciate your support, your trust and your feedback. Watch your email inbox for a survey about your experiences with this production—your comments are invaluable to us as we assess how best to be in conversation with our community.

With sincerest thanks and gratitude,

Michael Halberstam
Artistic Director
Kathryn M. Lipuma
Executive Director
STATE OF THE ART
by Michael Halberstam, Artistic Director

Writers Theatre is lucky enough to be members of a national trade and advocacy organization for the nation’s theatre companies called the Theatre Communications Group (TCG). In fact our Executive Director Kate Lipuma is on the board! About three years ago, I attended the TCG annual conference in San Diego, during which I enjoyed an organized trip to Tijuana to meet Theatre Directors working in Mexico. Henry Godinez (an Artistic Associate at Goodman Theatre and a friend and colleague since my earliest days in Chicago) was on the same trip and was very keen to introduce me to Claudio Valdés Kuri—an artist he had collaborated with a number of times. Claudio and I spent some quality time talking about his work and he showed me video of some of his productions. He mentioned to me that he was working on a production of Calderon’s Life is a Dream that he would be staging in Mexico City for his theatre company Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes. On its website his company is described as “a landmark of Latin America’s avant-garde theatre. Its creations have been co-produced, presented and received with enormous success in the most important festivals of the five continents. The projects are created through long periods of development through a process of risk taking and questioning. Each work explores new language as a result of the constant search for innovation of form and content.”

The following March I was fortunate enough to be able to travel to Mexico City to see the production. I speak little to no Spanish, and yet I was able to follow this complex, classical text with only the help of a short synopsis in English, because of the clarity of the actors’ intentions and the ingenious staging. I loved it so much that I came back to see it a second time the next night. Alas, attempts to bring it to Glencoe were thwarted because of the scale of the piece, and so when Henry came to me again and mentioned to me that he had seen Claudio’s adaptation of Don Quixote and what did I think of inviting him to stage the show in Glencoe with Henry in the title role, I jumped at the opportunity.
Claudio has a gift for innovative staging and for telling classic stories in a fresh, contemporary fashion. His *Don Quixote* is no exception. He imagines his hero existing in today’s world, having survived the intervening centuries and now in conversation with a new generation of literature and artistic expression. Like Cervantes’ hero, Quixote becomes a principal player in his own downfall and, as in the novel, the play has the potential to create a profound and stirring experience for the audience. Performed minimally with no set, no sound, and relying only on light, great acting and a fantastical text, the play offers a thrilling manifestation of our mission statement.

We commissioned Georgina Escobar to write our translation. Georgina Escobar, according to her website, “is the maker of hyper-sensical, ridiculous, and sometimes impossible narratives that run current systems of thinking through different filters of visual, musical, and interpretative logic. Through illustration, playing, painting, and music she finds the words for the creation of worlds that seek to empower women, youth, and the positive evolution of the human spirit. Her writing takes us through speculative evolution biblical comedies, to the reimagined frontiers of sci-fi feminism, and into huge, hyper-realistic, modern playgrounds for the stage.” In other words, she is an ideal collaborator, not only for the Cervantes but for the director himself and for the project.

I want to acknowledge the support of my good friends Marilynn and Carl Thoma, Bill and Molly Mahoney and Mary Pat and Andy Studdert! All three couples made incredibly generous gifts at crucial moments during the planning of this production.

Finally, I could not be more pleased to bring you this piece of world theatre, tailor-made for Glencoe and hopefully able to enjoy a long life following.
Bobby Kennedy: How did you first become interested in theatre? Was there a lot of interaction with the arts in your childhood?

Claudio Valdés Kuri: My father died when I was not even a year old. He was an architect and painter and left us a house full of art, books, and a lot of drawing material. My mother is also a painter. I grew up with all of these things around me. My first memories are of making theatre. When I was two years old, I remember being onstage and crying because I was too shy to be there. I’ve been told I used to direct theatre with my cousins and my friends when I was very young. I wanted to study piano but we didn’t have the means to have one at home. A neighbor, a great Austrian musician who had a music academy knew about that. She taught me and let me use the pianos at the school to study. Later on, the music academy created a theatre group to help educate children through theatre. I was a part of that group from the age of 10 until I was 27 years old. At the same time I was making theatre, I was also making music. At the age of 19, I founded a vocal ensemble dedicated to reviving early Mexican Baroque music. I obtained my degree in cinema. I started making documentary films, but I realized that my imagination goes to the stage. After being an actor, musician and film director, I decided just to direct theatre. My approach to the theatre has changed throughout my life. First it was simply a tool for growing up, then it was the medium through which I could get in contact with others, and then it was a way for me to find a place within my community. I think that initially...
artists turn to their work as a first step to be accepted. But ideally, the artist could overcome this need in order to work for other wider means that benefit a larger range of people other than himself.

BK: What is the theatre scene like in Mexico?

CVK: Very large, really active, and with a lot of different approaches. In the second half of the twentieth century we had great support from the government. They provided almost 80% of the funding. This was a very positive condition for the development of laboratory and experimental theatre because one wasn’t dependent on ticket sales. In the last decade this has changed completely because there is less support from the government. In these new circumstances I have had to find new ways to continue producing. I have told myself, “just trust, something has to happen” and it has been! This experience with Writers Theatre is a part of this opening towards new ways of creating art and it signals a different condition in which I have to direct in other countries instead of going with my company from Mexico to those places.

BK: Can you tell me about the founding of your theatre company Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes?

CVK: We started with a project, not as a company. The play was Becket or The Honor of God by Jean Anouilh. I read it and was completely absorbed. It was in my mind for thirteen years; I first encountered it when I was 19 and I was 33 when I directed it. I staged it in a staircase in an old convent. We were rehearsing for one year, my actors and myself, without any support. Unexpectedly, this staging became very successful and it marked the beginning of our international career with presentations of our works throughout the most important venues in five continents.

We have done just ten plays in twenty years because our way of producing requires long periods for reflection and research before each play. I make the actors be a part of the research. I call them co-creators because I am not just telling them what to do. They are searching with me. At first, I don’t give them a text. Usually, I don’t let them know where we are going in order to avoid preconceptions. I often look to expand the rehearsal studio into other places. Sometimes I let the actors take their character to a park, or a bowling alley, or a pool. The basis of my technique is to create experiences with the interpreters through which they can find answers to my open questions. This allows us to discover many more solutions than the ones I could have found on my own. I write all of the findings down and put them in a certain order. From there the staging takes shape.

BK: How did you first bring your work to Chicago and meet Henry Godinez?

CVK: I met Henry for the first time at Goodman Theatre when he brought our show, The Grey Automobile, to the Latino Theatre Festival in 2003. I saw him again when I came back to Chicago to present Monsters and Prodigies in 2009 and El Gallo in 2011 at the Museum of Contemporary Art. In 2014, we found each other again in Tijuana for the Theatre Communications Group event where I also met Michael Halberstam. I invited Michael to Mexico City but I
wasn’t sure he would come. He told me he didn’t have a theatre that programs international work, so the last person I thought would come to Mexico was Michael. But surprisingly he came. He saw one performance of our play Life is a Dream, and I think it moved him because he came back the next day to the theatre to see it again. From here we had the ideal conditions to bring into fruition the years long desire that Henry and I had to work together on a project. I found the perfect character for Henry to showcase his great inner strength and enormous artistic ability in Don Quixote. In addition, we had a man with great vision, Michael, willing to be a part of our adventure and making our yearnings a reality at Writers Theatre.

BK: What was your history with the original book and how did you decide to adapt it into a play?

CVK: My relationship with Don Quixote of La Mancha is the same as for almost all Mexicans. You know him very well without having read the book. I read some parts of the book for school. Quixote in Mexico is everywhere: there are statues, toys, cartoons, everything. It is the same as in Spain and the rest of Latin America. We wrote in the play that there is not a house or a library or school that does not have a copy of Quixote, and that’s true. As a matter of fact, the most important festival in Latin America is devoted to his author, Miguel de Cervantes: the Festival Internacional Cervantino in Guanajuato, Mexico. 2016 was the 400th anniversary of Cervantes’ death, so they made a big celebration. The director of the festival commissioned me to do this play, and I read the book in its entirety for the first time. I thanked him for making me read this masterpiece that is more than a book; it’s really a touch of life. It is an extremely entertaining book, but it is much more than that. It changed me. It’s my companion. He’s near me all the time. To create this new script, I decided to work with Mónica Hoth, a renowned Mexican playwright who is an expert on theatre for young audiences. I placed a challenge upon her: to write a Quixote that was directed towards all audiences.

BK: Where does Quixote fit in your evolution as a theatre artist?

CVK: After many years in this profession, theatre is now, for me, a way of being of service to others. With the last few projects I have taken on, my main goal has been to find ways of being useful for the spectators. My previous projects were capricious because my only concern was if I liked them. Now I am looking for ways to position myself so that I can be useful to my environment and the audience that comes to see the plays. I’m not thinking about a specific community because my productions are geared towards global audiences. In this way, Quixote is the character to embody my intentions. Don Quixote is the greatest example, and an inspiring model to follow, of a human being in the service of humankind. I don’t know if I would have done a Quixote before or not, but now it fits perfectly because he is that challenging inspiration.
In Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra’s *Don Quixote*, widely acknowledged to be the first modern novel, Sancho Panza says to Don Quixote, “Before long, there won’t be a winehouse, a tavern, or a barbershop where there’ll not be paintings commemorating the history of our exploits.” Indeed, the duo and their adventures have become so universally known that artists have rendered their...
“Before long, there won’t be a winehouse, a tavern, or a barbershop where there’ll not be paintings commemorating the history of our exploits.”

likenesses again and again since the characters made their debut in 1605. Their author is one of the most renowned writers of all time.

Cervantes was born in 1547 as the fourth of seven children. Little is known of Cervantes’ formal education, although he did know Latin and read avidly. In his early life, Cervantes was a man of action and adventure. He joined the Spanish military at the age of 23, where he lost the use of his left hand fighting in the Battle of Lepanto. In 1575, Cervantes and his brother were kidnapped by pirates on their return voyage to Spain and sold into slavery in Algiers. Cervantes returned to Spain five years later after his family paid his ransom with the help of the nuns at the Convent of the Barefoot Trinitarians. To make ends meet in Spain, Cervantes worked as a commissary collecting taxes from rural communities. Frequent failures to correctly perform his duties resulted in charges of mismanagement, and Cervantes found himself in prison. There he began writing what would become Don Quixote.

El Ingenioso Hidalgo don Quixote de la Mancha (The Ingenious Nobleman Don Quixote of La Mancha, as it is known in English) tells the tale of Alonso Quixano, a gentleman who has read too many books and fancies himself a knight errant. Quixano renames himself Don Quixote and aspires to restore the world of chivalry. After suiting himself in armor and fashioning a helmet from found wood and a metal hat, Quixote and his horse, Rocinante, set out for adventures where they fight (imaginary) giants, dragons, and wizards. Along the way, Quixote collects Sancho Panza, a simple peasant who agrees to be Quixote’s squire out of a growing curiosity and a desire for riches. Sancho blends the world of Quixote’s fantasy with reality and often acts as Quixote’s foil.

Cervantes uses Quixote to parody and reference the popular Golden Age chivalric romances and picaresque novels that often paraded themselves as true history. Immediate widespread success of Quixote followed its publication in 1605. By August of that year, there had been two editions published in Madrid, two in Lisbon and one in Valencia, with additional publications in Brussels (1607), Madrid (1608), Milan (1610) and again in Brussels (1611). Even William Shakespeare was inspired by Cervantes to write the play Cardenio, which regrettably has not survived. Despite all of the success, authors at that time received no royalties for their creations and there were no copyright laws; consequently, Cervantes enjoyed little financial compensation for his masterpiece.

In the years following Don Quixote, Cervantes dedicated himself and his writings to a few different members of the Spanish nobility and increased his involvement in the religious and literary
life of Madrid. This patronage allowed Cervantes to publish many of his other well-known writings including *Journey to Parnassus*, *The Deceitful Marriage* and an anthology of eight plays. He had already begun writing a second part to *Don Quixote* when another author, Fernandez de Avellaneda, published an unauthorized sequel of his own in 1614. It is said that the insulting publication of the *False Quixote* finally spurred Cervantes to finish the true second half. Less than a year later, Cervantes published the official conclusion to *Don Quixote* and cemented Avellaneda’s (otherwise unremarkable) fake in history.

In Part II, Don Quixote finds himself the subject of chivalric stories instead of the reader of them. His newfound fame leads to more misadventures and makes him the target of several cruel pranks. Cervantes even slips in references to and jabs at Avellaneda’s *False Quixote*. Quixote learns of the book and is wholly offended by it. Later, he meets a character from the *False Quixote* and insists he sign an affidavit asserting that the two have never met. The publication of Part II was equally well received and widely published. It is often considered the more rich and profound of the two parts.

Cervantes died in 1616 from adult onset diabetes and was buried in an unmarked grave at the Convent of the Barefoot Trinitarians, where the nuns had previously raised money to pay his ransom and where he had prayed upon his return.

In the 400 years since his death, Cervantes has lived on through his characters and through countless authors who credit him as inspiration. William Faulkner said that he read *Don Quixote* once a year, as many others read the Bible. Mexican author Carlos Fuentes has called Cervantes the “founding father” of Latin American literature, a community
in which Cervantes is often compared to Shakespeare. Though history distances us from Cervantes’ language, his characters and stories are universally known. The adventures of Don Quixote and his squire have been translated into more than 140 languages and are studied in classrooms worldwide. To this day, Don Quixote is the most published novel of all time, with over 500 million copies sold.

Contemporary language is now peppered with phrases and -isms first coined in Quixote. For example, de cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme (which translates to “whose name I do not want to remember”) is a commonly used Spanish expression. The word “quixotic” is used to described something exceedingly idealistic. The novel also popularized the idiom “The proof is in the pudding,” which was introduced by translator Pierre Antoine Motteux from Cervantes’ original: al freír de los huevos lo verá or “you will see when the eggs are fried.”

Before the debut of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, heroic teams were often equal in their bravery and talent. By contrast, Cervantes presented a contrasting duo—aspirational and grounded, tall and short, lean and stout.

Cervantes’ characters have inspired many imitators and his impact on literature is global. French author Gustave Flaubert’s leading character Emma Bovary goes mad from imitating novels and Dostoyevsky’s Prince Myshkin is modeled after Don Quixote. Before the debut of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, heroic teams were often equal in their bravery and talent.
Cervantes instead presented a contrasting duo—aspirational and grounded, tall and short, lean and stout, thereby providing the template for a popular trope in literature and film. Since then, comedic duos have come in contrasting pairs like Abbott and Costello, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, Gene Wilder and Richard Pryor, David Spade and Chris Farley and Sheriff Woody and Buzz Lightyear.

Quixote consistently finds himself incorporated into pieces of modern art. In the fall of 2016, a film festival in Washington D.C. featured international film projects inspired by *Quixote*, which included one film in English, one in Chinese, two in Spanish and one in Russian. There are currently seven different *Don Quixote* ballets. Perhaps the most famous adaptation of all is the musical *Man of La Mancha* which opened on Broadway on November 22, 1965 and ran for 2,328 performances. The production won for Best Musical, Best Composer and Lyricist (Mitch Leigh and Joe Darion respectively), Best Actor (Richard Kiley as Quixote), Best Direction of a Musical (Albert Marre) and Best Scenic Design (Howard Bay) at the 1966 Tony Awards. In 1972, the musical was adapted into a film starring Peter O’Toole in the titular role, which earned him a Golden Globe nomination for best actor.

After reading the book, seeing one of the ballets and listening to the musical, fans of *Don Quixote* may want to attend the Cervantino International Festival in Guanajuato, Mexico, where artists all over the world come to create art inspired by the life and works of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. There, at the bottom of a rock cliff, the iconic figures of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza stand as testament to the enduring spirit of Quixotic delirium and the legacy of an internationally influential author.
**Adaptations at Writers Theatre**

_Quixote: On the Conquest of Self_ is the 16th new adaptation to have its world or U.S. premiere at Writers Theatre.

At a theatre where the word on the page is the primary focus, creating new theatrical works out of the world’s greatest existing theatrical and literary material is essential to our mission. Adaptations have been a core component of programming at Writers Theatre since the very beginning. Some of the most successful ones to play Writers Theatre include:

- _Love & Lunacy_, a compilation of three short stories by Anton Chekhov and one by Nikolai Gogol, that marked the inaugural production of WT in 1993.

- Marilyn Campbell and Curt Columbus’s adaptation of _Crime & Punishment_ by Fyodor Dostoevsky. After its world premiere at WT in 2003 and a 2007 New York engagement that WT produced, the 3-actor version has gone on to enjoy dozens more productions around the country.
Conor McPherson’s riveting adaptation of *The Dance of Death* by August Strindberg received its American Premiere at WT in 2014, after debuting the year before at London’s Donmar Warehouse. Several subsequent American productions have occurred in the years since.

Most recently, Michael Halberstam and Scott Parkinson’s radical adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* (envisioned for 9 actors and with a running time of 90 minutes) enjoyed its world premiere at WT in fall 2016, during the lead up to the presidential election.

Developing and producing new adaptations are one of the many endeavors of WT’s new work program, the Literary Development Initiative. For more information on New Work at Writers Theatre, visit writerstheatre.org/literary-development-initiative.
AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Join us for these exciting engagement events, tailored to enhance your WT experience! For more information and to RSVP visit writerstheatre.org/events.

SUNDAY SPOTLIGHT
Are you curious about the world that surrounds your favorite plays? Our Sunday Spotlight series offers you access to the finest speakers, scholars and cultural leaders. Medardo Gabriel Rosario, a doctoral candidate at the University of Chicago, will talk with Director of New Work and Dramaturgy Bobby Kennedy about the legacy of Cervantes in the New World and Don Quixote’s influence on Latin American literature.

Save the date for the Sunday Spotlight for Quixote: On the Conquest of Self on November 12th following the matinee performance.

THE MAKING OF …
Have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes? The Making of… series offers you an insider view of what goes into creating each production at WT. Acrobatic Advisor Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi will talk about her work on the show, collaborating with an international director, and creating a physical vocabulary for Don Quixote and his adventures.

Save the date for The Making of… Quixote: On the Conquest of Self on December 4th at 6:30pm.

FROM PAGE TO STAGE
Writers Theatre and select North Shore libraries and community partners are proud to present this series of special events, lectures and workshops designed to enhance your appreciation of the art. From Page to Stage is generously sponsored by Randy L. and Melvin R. Berlin. Save the date for an in-depth analysis of Don Quixote at the Glencoe Public Library on Thursday, October 12th at 7:30pm.

For an up-to-date list of new events, and to RSVP visit writerstheatre.org/fpts.
WT FILM SERIES
Join us at The Wilmette Theatre for a special screening of Man of La Mancha. Tickets are available for purchase at wilmettetheatre.com/writers-theatre. This event is held at the Wilmette Theatre: 1122 Central Ave, Wilmette IL, 60091.

Save the date for Man of La Mancha on October 15th at 2:00pm.

POST-SHOW CONVERSATION: THE WORD
Join us after every Tuesday evening performance (excluding First Week and any extension weeks) of every production in our 17/18 Season for a 15-minute discussion of the play facilitated by a member of the WT Artistic Team.

POST-SHOW CONVERSATION: THE ARTIST
Join us after every Wednesday evening performance (excluding First Week and any extension weeks) of every production in our 17/18 Season for a 15-minute discussion with actors from the production facilitated by a member of the WT Artistic Team.

SOCIAL HOUR AT WT
Remember that our Concessions Center is open for an hour before and after our performances. You are welcome to enjoy a snack or beverage and discuss the play in the Litowitz Atrium, on our Grand Gallery Walk or on the Stephanie and Bill Sick Rooftop Terrace.
Proudly part of your supporting cast.

BMO Harris Bank is proud to be Season Sponsor of Writers Theatre.
HENRY GODINEZ: AN IMPACT ON CHICAGO THEATRE

By Director of New Work and Dramaturgy Bobby Kennedy

Henry Godinez was born in Cuba, one of ten children in an upper middle-class family. Afraid that their children would be conscripted into Castro’s military, Godinez’s parents moved the family to the United States when he was three, eventually settling in Dallas.

A high school drama class piqued the young man’s interest in the stage, and he went on to study theatre first as an undergrad at the University of Dallas before moving on to the graduate program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. All the while, Godinez wondered about the direction he was taking. “I always thought there would be something else that seemed to click more in terms of doing something,” he admits. “Maybe that comes from being a Cuban refugee or something. But I always kept doing theatre.”

After grad school, a classmate of Godinez’s, who already had an agent in Chicago, invited him down to audition for a film role. More auditions came and soon he was cast in a production of Kabuki Medea at Wisdom Bridge Theatre in 1983. Godinez remembers, “I kept working and thinking ‘next year, I’ll move to New York or LA.’ And then we started Teatro Vista.”

While performing in a play at Goodman Theatre, Godinez and two other Latino actors, Ramiro Carrillo and Edward Torres, would talk about all the great plays by Latino playwrights that no theatres were producing. “So we just said, ‘What if we did them?’” Godinez explains. Thus, Teatro Vista, Theatre with a View, was
born in 1990 with an inaugural production at a Pilsen arts center that is now the National Museum of Mexican Art. Godinez led the company as Artistic Director for its first five years. “We wanted to attract both Latino and non-Latino audiences,” says Godinez. “We wanted to cross over and bridge the gap between the Latino community and the non-Latino community. We felt we should be in the community but also part of the mainstream. We should be in conversation with the big theatres. Our work should be in those theatres instead of being marginalized. That’s who we are as Americans.”

For me, anyway, it isn’t just to get rich or just survive. It seems like there is something we’re supposed to do, and Quixote really speaks to that for me.

Goodman Theatre invited Godinez to join their Artistic Collective in 1997, after he directed the 1996 edition of the theatre’s annual *A Christmas Carol* production and a 1995 co-production with Teatro Vista of *Cloud Tectonics* by Jose Rivera. Godinez would helm Goodman’s annual holiday production six times, including the final Christmas in the old Goodman Theatre in 1999 and the first two Christmases in the new theatre on Dearborn. Another personal highlight for Godinez was directing a revival of Luis Valdez’s *Zoot Suit* in 2000 at Goodman. “Valdez, who I consider the godfather of Latin American theatre, worked with me closely on that production,” Godinez remembers fondly. “It’s such an iconic play. I was super proud of it. And, it was the largest Latino audience ever in the history of the Goodman [at the time].” Godinez has also been teaching theatre for years now, first at Columbia College, then at DePaul University and now at Northwestern University.

Coincidentally, the first Broadway show that Godinez ever saw was a 1977 revival of *Man of La Mancha*, also based on Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*. “It blew me away and affected me deeply,” he affirms. “I
think he just really meshed with some part of me that thinks there has to be some reason we are here on the planet. For me, anyway, it isn’t just to get rich or just survive. It seems like there is something we’re supposed to do, and Quixote really speaks to that for me. I never thought I’d be playing him.”

The journey towards playing Quixote at Writers Theatre began in 2003, when Godinez organized Goodman Theatre’s first annual Latino Theatre Festival. Inspired by what he had seen at the International Hispanic Theatre Festival in Miami, he paired two international productions with some pieces by Chicago-based Latino artists. One of the two international productions, which had been recommended to him by the Miami festival, was The Grey Automobile by a theatre company from Mexico City called Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes, led by Claudio Valdés Kuri. “I was blown away by the work,” Godinez says, “and fell in love with [Claudio] as a human being.”

Godinez and Valdés Kuri kept up over the years. At a Theatre Communications Group event in 2014, Godinez introduced WT Artistic Director Michael Halberstam to Valdés Kuri, hoping to eventually have him direct at a Chicago theatre. In 2016, Godinez went down to Mexico City to see the newest work by Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes, Quixote: vencedor de sí mismo. “I thought it was amazing,” he remembers. “It’s just an actor, words and movement.” Both Godinez and Valdés Kuri thought this was the perfect piece to bring to Chicago. “[Claudio] said, ‘it seems like this would be a great play for Michael’s theatre. Tell him that we will get it translated into English and you can be Quixote.’ Everything was good until that point. Because I don’t really pursue acting any more. It had been a long time,” jokes Godinez. “I was pleasantly surprised that Michael jumped on [the idea]. I had been hounding Michael to do some Latino programming. Starting with Cervantes isn’t all that bad!”
To get ready for the production, Valdés Kuri has his Quixote taking acrobatics classes at the Actors Gymnasium in Evanston, as well as some tap dancing lessons. Through all of the various moments of his daily life, Godinez is finding himself thinking about the knight-errant and what the world of 2017 can learn from him. “I think part of it, without getting too political, is that we live in a time where it is so easy to be disillusioned, jaded, and disengaged from the world and also from something greater than ourselves—a common good that is greater than us,” explains Godinez. “For me, Quixote is that standard bearer. He is that benchmark for what a human being can strive for. Yes, it is idealistic. Yes, it is excessive. I lament that in our world today, it seems ridiculous that you should strive to do good no matter what. Even if people call you crazy, even if it doesn’t make sense, even if you get beat up, even if it’s impossible. That’s what life’s all about for him. We live in a world that is so materialistic and jaded that we can’t see the forest for the trees. We can’t see the greater good for the day to day challenges of just surviving, existing, advancing, progressing. None of that mattered to Quixote.”
QUIXOTE, A TIMELINE.

How paths crossed to connect Artistic Director Michael Halberstam, Claudio Valdés Kuri and Henry Godinez.

1997—Claudio Valdés Kuri establishes Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes in Mexico City, Mexico. The group begins rehearsal for a production of Becket or the Honor of God by Jean Anouilh, which begins performances in 1998.

July 2003—The Grey Automobile is presented at Goodman Theatre as part of the inaugural Latino Theatre Festival, curated by Henry Godinez.

March 2009—Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes returns to Chicago to present their piece Monsters and Prodigies at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

April 2011—The MCA invites Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes to Chicago again, this time to present another work of theirs, El Gallo.
Pictured: Teatro de la Ciudad in Mexico City presents Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes' production of *Life Is A Dream*. Photo by Michael Halberstam.


Pictured: Michael Halberstam, Claudio Valdés Kuri and Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes company member Guillermo García Proal.

**July 2014**—At an event in Tijuana, Mexico sponsored by the Theatre Communications Group, Godinez introduces WT Artistic Director Michael Halberstam to Valdés Kuri.

**February 2015**—Halberstam visits Mexico City to see a production of Calderón’s *Life Is a Dream* at Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes, adapted and directed by Valdés Kuri.

**October 2016**—Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes premieres *Quixote: Vencedor de sí mismo*, a theatre piece adapted from Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, at the world-renowned Festival Internacional Cervantino in Guanajuato, Mexico.

**December 2016**—Godinez visits Mexico City to see *Quixote*. He and Valdés Kuri discuss ideas for bringing the show to Chicago. Valdés Kuri suggests Godinez play the role.

**January 2017**—Godinez approaches Halberstam about producing *Quixote* at WT.

**March 2017**—Writers Theatre commits to produce an English translation of *Quixote* as part of its 2017/18 season. Playwright Georgina Escobar is commissioned to translate the play to English.

**May 2017**—Valdés Kuri visits Glencoe for the first time, conducts auditions and holds production meetings for the upcoming WT production.

**September 2017**—*Quixote: On the Conquest of Self* begins performances at WT.
Rewriting Our Future: Highlighting WT Education’s Robust Programming

Writers Theatre is renowned for our education programs in schools and communities throughout Chicago, and the opening of the new theatre center has allowed WT Education to reach new audiences. Mirroring Writers Theatre’s mission, the Education Department reflects our commitment to the written word and [young] artists. WT Education programs are aimed at exploring text, nurturing the creativity of young people, and instilling appreciation of the arts for future generations. Through comprehensive programming in-schools, on-site, and through community-based initiatives, WT Education’s curriculum is designed to emphasize collaboration, cultivate self-expression, encourage imaginative inquiry, and promote civic responsibility and social justice.

Students at Cleveland Elementary. Photo by Sergio Soltero.
From this mission, WT Education programs fall under four pillars: Residency Programs, Touring Outreach, Student Matinees, and On-Site Creative Learning. Each of these pillars reflect the distinct objectives of the department across multi-faceted programming.

**RESIDENCY PROGRAMS**

In the 2016-2017 School Year, the WT Education programs engaged with 2,025 young people across 77 classrooms and community organizations. These residency programs brought professional WT Teaching Artists directly into classrooms across Chicagoland working with young people to integrate literary and theatre arts, instill an appreciation of the arts, and promote civic responsibility.

In many ways, **THE NOVEL SERIES** is the flagship program of WT Education. This literacy-based, arts-integrated approach partners classroom teachers with a WT Teaching Artist for a 10-session residency program that seamlessly integrates theatre and literature to explore a chosen novel, engaging students in different modes of artistic expression as they make text-to-self connections.

For schools who also attend a Student Matinee performance, **ACTIVATE** is a wrap-around residency program that explores the work of art in depth. This pre and post residency option allows WT Teaching Artists to contextualize the performance through creative group work and theatre exercises that activate dialogue and discussion about the production and themes of the play!

Schools and classroom teachers with individual needs and interests can bring a customized project directly into their classroom with **WRITE ON!**. This residency is our customizable program that can be tailored to create a bespoke project for the needs of the students at the heart of each objective! WRITE ON! projects can take shape as one-day workshops to year-long residencies. The possibilities are endless and serve each school’s needs by creating transformative experiences that encourage young people to find their own creative voice!
TOURING OUTREACH

The 2018 tour of THE MLK PROJECT: THE FIGHT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS will be the 12th year that WT Education has taken the performance directly to young people across the city! To date, the show has reached over 63,000 young people across Chicago-land. Every school receives a comprehensive resource guide to enhance a connection to the performance. Through a post-show discussion after each performance facilitated by WT Education, THE MLK PROJECT promotes civic responsibility and social justice through dialogue and discussion.

THE MLK PROJECT: THE FIGHT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS by Yolanda Androzzo is a one-woman show that follows a Chicago student’s personal transformation through studying the Civil Rights Movement. Alaya uses her fists as an outlet for anger, but after interviewing local heroes of the Movement she discovers she can put “anger into action” and that her power is in her voice and her hip-hop, not violence. Weaving together real interviews, poetry, hip-hop, history and multimedia projections the performance features stories of both celebrated and unsung Chicago-based Civil Rights Activists.
STUDENT MATINEES

With the opening of the building, WT Education has been able to host a record number of students in the building to attend award-winning theatre! During its first full season in the new building, over 1,300 students attended a production of Julius Caesar and The Hunter and The Bear. Seeing a live performance activates students’ imagination, can increase critical thinking-skills, emotional literacy, and create connections to classic and new works of art. WT Education is excited to continue Student Matinee programming in the 2017/18 season with TREVOR the musical and The Importance of Being Earnest.

ON-SITE CREATIVE LEARNING

WT Education is excited to create an onsite community inviting young people to participate in Creative Learning programing and enrichment directly onsite at Writers Theatre’s new home. WT Education is thrilled to be piloting onsite afterschool classes for young artists to discover theatre! The creation of onsite afterschool classes will allow WT Education to invite young people to participate in high quality arts programming, learn more about what it means to be an artist, and instill an appreciation of the arts for future generations.

WT Education is thrilled to continue to offer comprehensive programming directly in schools and community groups across the city and introduce onsite creative learning programming at our state of the art new home. The multi-faceted pillars to the Education program allow us to make the arts accessible to all.
Writers Theatre is committed to making our Theatre accessible for everyone. We are proud to offer Access Subscriptions and the following services:

**For People with Mobility Difficulties**
- Accessible parking spaces outside each theatre venue.
- Accessible entrances to each theatre venue.
- Wheelchair accessible seating.

Depending on your preference, you may transfer into a theatre seat or request to have the theatre seat removed to remain in the wheelchair. When purchasing your tickets, let the Box Office know if you would like the theatre seat removed.

**For People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**
We are pleased to offer assistive listening devices in each of our performance spaces. Contact the Box Office with questions or for advance reservations. Assistive listening devices are offered free of charge.

In all performance venues in our new theatre center, we have t-coil induction loop technology. For anyone with a telecoil built into their hearing aid, by switching it on you will be able to hear our performances with additional amplification and clarity.

Box Office: **847-242-6000**
We are happy to connect you with scripts for our shows to read prior to your attendance. For details, review our Script Policy at writerstheatre.org/script-policy or contact the Box Office.

For People Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision
Large print programs are available by prior request. Contact the Box Office at least two weeks prior to your scheduled performance with this request.

Braille programs are available by prior request through the Box Office. Contact the Box Office at least two weeks prior to your scheduled performance with this request.

We can accommodate seating needs for guests with service animals. Contact the Box Office to request this accommodation.

Writers Theatre offers ASL-Interpreted and Open-Captioned performances on select dates for each production. A complete listing of dates for the current season can be viewed at writerstheatre.org/accessibility. For additional information on accessibility services and subscriptions, contact access@writerstheatre.org or 847-786-9334.

The Accessibility Fund is a gift of Doris Conant and the Conant Family Foundation.
CONCESSIONS CENTER

WINE

Red
Gainey Merlot .......................................................... $10
Girasole Pinot Noir ....................................................... $12
The Seventy Five Wines Cabernet Sauvignon .................. $14

White
Terre Gaie Claris Pinot Grigio ...................................... $8
Raymond Vineyards R Collection Chardonnay .................. $10
Yorkville Cellars Sauvignon Blanc ................................. $12

Sparkling
Charles de Fere Cuvée Jean Louis Blanc de Blancs
(187ml—single serving) ............................................... $12
L. Mawby Blanc de Blancs (375ml—half bottle) .............. $27
Joseph Perrier Cuvée Royale Brut (375ml—half bottle) .... $60

BEER
Half Acre Daisy Cutter ............................................... $6
Half Acre Seasonal IPA ............................................... $6
Two Brothers Ebel’s Weiss ............................................. $5
Two Brothers Domaine DuPage ..................................... $5
LIQUOR
A selection of Koval and other premium liquors

INTERGALACTIC cafes inc.

DESSERTS
Chocolate Chunk Cookie ................................................................. $4
Oatmeal Cherry Cookie ................................................................. $4
Peanut Butter Cookies ................................................................. $4
Brownies .................................................................................. $5
Coconut Macaroons ................................................................. $3
Croissant .................................................................................. $4

SNACKS
Charcuterie & Cheese ................................................................. $7
Nuts and Dried Fruit ................................................................. $6

ADDITIONAL CONCESSIONS
Coffee (Regular, Decaf) ................................................................. $3
Rishi Hot Tea (Chamomile, Earl Grey, Peppermint) ............... $2
Soda (Coke, Diet Coke, Sprite, Ginger Ale) .............................. $2
Water ........................................................................................ $2
CUSTOM COCKTAILS

Enjoy a custom cocktail from our Concessions Center—specially created for each of our productions by Mixed metaPours!

Quixote: On the Conquest of Self

The Windmill

KOVAL Millet Whiskey
Tart Cherry Juice
Apple Cider
Passionfruit Seltzer
Dark Morello Cherries

All of our signature cocktail creations are designed by WT Cocktail Consultant Cheryl Rich Heisler & Glencoe-based Mixed metaPours.

312-613-7499 | www.mixedmetapours.com
STAY IN TOUCH WITH WRITERS THEATRE
JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

Share your thoughts on the show!

Take this survey about Quixote: On the Conquest of Self: bit.ly/WTQuixote
Write a review of your experience on Yelp: bit.ly/WTonYelp

Find us on Facebook: facebook.com/writers-theatre
Follow us on Twitter: @WritersTheatre
Follow us on Instagram: @writers_theatre

Check in to Writers Theatre on Swarm
Sign up for our email list to receive news updates, backstage stories, photos, videos and more: writerstheatre.org/email

Follow our company on LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/writers-theatre
Join our circle on Google+

We look forward to hearing from you!
### QUIXOTE: ON THE CONQUEST OF SELF

#### SEPTEMBER

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- **Private Event**
- **D** Post-Show Conversation
- **M** The Making of...
- **S** Sunday Spotlight