

Comments on Aye, No, by Byrd Bonner, August 30, 2026

A Byrd's Eye View: AYE NO!, A MODERN GAY FAIRYTALE @ Teatro Audaz

From the first glimpse of Ray D. Seams parading in peach chiffon to Cindy Rodriguez-Martinez' heavily green-shadowed über-expressive eyes, the opening scenes of AYE NO! drew me into its grip of guffaws and giggles galore. Once this adroitly drawn tale of chosen and inherited family cleverly played against one another takes off with basically three abuela-type figures, all hilariously and lovingly drawn by Jai Gonzalez-Quintero, Angie Flores and Rodriguez-Martinez, and three fairy godmother figures, all hilariously and not-always-so-lovingly drawn by supreme dancing queens EB Mota, Marshall Jarreau and Seams, you will never want the laughs to stop...and they won't.

In fact I do not think the casting could be better...to a person. Director Laura T. Garza proves a wizard of carefully positioning these two families of the protagonist Alicia (Maryann Valerio) and her white girlfriend Cathy (Emily Huber), often in the same stage space, as the instigators of Alicia's transformation. Valerio and Huber both make sympathetic and poignant scene partners, particularly in a ribald series of exchanges minute-by-minute in Act 2. Phillip Lopez makes the absolute most of his scenery chewing curandero also in Act 2 in a charade of conversion therapy for Alicia as prescribed by her elders. The charade of course backfires and the denouement of resolved conflicts in all directions didn't entirely fly for me.

The playwright Liz Coronado-Castillo gives us brilliant and biting bilingual dialogue, especially for both family triumvirates, throughout and her Act 1 is as tight as a....well I'll leave that to your imagination. But to me she never quite ties up all the strings. But the proceedings end with a very fun curtain call of a drag show with the abuela and tias joining the audience. Think Las Nuevas Tamaleras meets The Prom meets a drag Mamma Mia!? Scenic design by Max Estudillo-Cantù and lighting by Brandon Rosen contribute handsomely. But it does resolve and all presumably live happily ever after in this fairytale for our times. As I left the theatre at 1310 S. Brazos St. in the shadow of Lanier HS, I turned on my phone to a NY Times

email of Trump's first missile strikes on Iran in a month. I think I literally said "Aye NO!". All of a sudden I was even more thankful to have spent the last 2+ hours with these familias and friends and so will you.

Only 5 more chances: Th, Fr, Sa @ 7:30, Sa @ 2, Su @ 2:30. If you love to laugh, you won't find a better antidote to our times