TEATRO VISTA

PRESS RELEASE

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STAGE AND SCREEN LEGEND IVONNE COLL (*JANE THE VIRGIN*) JOINS CAST OF TEATRO VISTA'S WORLD PREMIERE *THE MADRES*, APRIL 21–MAY 27 AT VICTORY GARDENS



Click here for photos of Teatro Vista's cast for *The Madres*: (from left) Ivonne Coll, Lorena Diaz, Ramón Carmín, Felipe Carrasco and Ilse Zacharias. Stephanie Alison Walker is the playwright. Teatro Vista Executive Artistic Director Ricardo Gutiérrez will direct.

CHICAGO, January 18, 2018 – Chicago's Teatro Vista announced today that award-wining Latin film, TV and stage star Ivonne Coll, who plays matriarch Alba Villanueva on TV's *Jane The Virgin*, will lead the cast of the company's Spring world premiere, *The Madres*.

Set in the late 1970s during Argentina's notorious Guerra Sucia, or "Dirty War," *The Madres* by Stephanie Alison Walker tells the empowering story of three generations of women – a grandmother, a mother and a daughter – and their desperate attempt to keep their family intact in the face of state-sponsored intimidation, kidnappings and murder.

Teatro Vista Executive Artistic Director Ricardo Gutiérrez directs *The Madres*, which makes its debut in Chicago as a National New Play Network 2018 Rolling World Premiere.

In addition to Coll as Josefina, the grandmother, *The Madres* stars Lorena Diaz (Carolina, the mother), Ramón Carmín (Padre Juan), Felipe Carrasco (Diego) and Ilse Zacharias (Belén, the daughter). Designers are Jose Manuel Diaz (set), Uriel Gomez (costumes), Jessica Doyle (lights) and Eric Backus (sound). Jennifer Aparicio is production manager. Stage manager is Stephanie Hurowitz.

The Madres premieres April 21–May 27, 2018 at Victory Gardens, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago, in the Richard Christiansen Theater. Previews are Saturday, April 21 at 8 p.m., Sunday, April 22 at 3:30 p.m., and Thursday, April 26 at 8 p.m. **Press opening is Friday, April 27 at 8p.m.** Performances run through May 27: Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 3:30 p.m. Tickets are $20–$45, and go on sale March 5 at 10 a.m.

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For tickets and group discounts, visit **TeatroVista.org**, call the Victory Gardens box office, **(773) 871-3000**, or visit Victory Gardens (The Biograph) during box office hours. Metered, street and valet parking is available near the Biograph. The theater is easily accessed on the CTA Red, Purple and Brown lines via the Fullerton stop. The CTA 8 Halsted and 74 Fullerton buses also stop at Fullerton and Halsted, 1/2 block south of the theater. For more information, visit **VictoryGardens.org/PlanYourVisit**.

Más about *The Madres (The Mothers)*

It's 1979 in Buenos Aires, Argentina where people are disappearing right off the street. The so-called "Dirty War" waged by the military Junta against its own people is in full-swing. Carolina and her mother Josefina are searching for "Caro's" pregnant daughter Belén, who has been missing for twelve weeks. Then they receive a surprise visit from a priest who is now the chaplain to the military at ESMA, a known concentration camp. Next to drop by is Diego, a young soldier from the neighborhood, also stationed at ESMA. Their visits lead Josefina and Carolina to devise a plan to try to see Belén one last time. Will it work? Will they save her baby? Will they be able to save themselves?

The "Dirty War" was the name the Argentine military dictatorship used for a period of state terrorism in Argentina from roughly 1974 to 1983, who targeted anyone believed to be a subversive or in any way associated with socialism. This included students, artists, journalists, political activists, mothers looking for the disappeared, nuns and anyone who spoke out against the military's reign of terror. As estimated 30,000 Argentines disappeared and were never heard from again.

Las Madres, also known as the Mothers of the Disappeared or Madres de los Desaparecidos, are a group of brave women who, when public protest was outlawed by the military dictatorship, marched in front of the Casa Rosada (Pink House) demanding the truth about the whereabouts of their missing children and later, grandchildren. Three of the original founding members ended up among the "disappeared." They began marching every Thursday in 1977 and continue marching today.

Behind-The-Scenes of Teatro Vista's *The Madres*

"It may have taken nearly 15 years for Teatro Vista to find the perfect project for Ivonne," said Ricardo Gutiérrez, Artistic Director and director of *The Madres*, "but we are beyond excited to welcome her back to Chicago to star in an ambitious new drama about how a government with no checks and balances can tear families apart, which sadly remains a lesson to all citizens, all leaders, all nations still today."

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Teatro Vista trivia fans may recall Ivonne Coll is an ensemble member with Chicago's leading Latinx theater company. In 2004, she came to Chicago to star in the Goodman's production of Luis Alfaro's *Electricidad*, directed by then Teatro Vista co-artistic director Henry Godinez, and featuring a cast stocked with young Teatro Vista ensemble members including Charín Álvarez, Max Arciniega, Sandra Delgado, Sandra Márquez and Eddie Torres. "We learned so much from Ivonne, her spirit, her dedication to her craft," recalled Álvarez. "One night at the Goodman, we gathered and asked her to join Teatro Vista and were thrilled when she agreed."

Ivonne Coll (Josefina) is an award-winning theater, television, and film actress from Fajardo, Puerto Rico. Her film debut as redheaded Yolanda in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather II* helped her discover her passion for acting, becoming one of the first Latin actresses to cross over and work consistently in Hollywood. Her award-winning variety show in Puerto Rico, *Una Chica Llamada Ivonne Coll* (*A Girl Called Ivonne Coll*) (1972-74) provided the perfect opportunity to showcase her many talents which included singing, dancing and acting. She represented Puerto Rico in the Miss Universe Pageant in 1967. In 1972 she was the star of the USO Tour Puerto Rico Sings for the troops stationed in Vietnam. In 1988 Coll had the lead role in *Cuqui a Woman Like You* produced by WAPA TV. Coll had the fortune of training in drama among others with Lee Strasberg, comedy with Lucille Ball and musical theater with David Craig. Broadway credits include Tony Award Nominated *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, Joseph Papp's Shakespeare on Broadway: *Macbeth*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *As You Like It*, and *Goodbye Fidel*. Regional theater performances include playing the title role in *Mother Courage* at Berkley Repertory Theater and La Jolla Playhouse and the 2004 production of *Electricidad* at Chicago's Goodman Theater. Other regional work include Princeton's McCarter Theater, Mark Taper Forum, San Diego Rep, Arizona Theater Company and San Jose Rep Theater. Awards received include the People's Choice Award, (*Jane The Virgin*), TCA's Outstanding Achievement in Youth Programming (*Switched at Birth*), The National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP) Lifetime Achievement Award, Eternity Award Los Angeles Women's Theater Festival, ACE Award NY Hispanic Media (*Orinoco*), Puerto Rico International Short Film Festival Best Actress (*De Pura Cepa*), Craig Noel Award for Outstanding Performance San Diego Critics Circle (*Adoration of the Old Woman*), Agueybana de Oro Best Supporting Actress (*Coralito*.) Award nominations include: Golden Globe (*Jane The Virgin*/Ensemble), Jefferson Award as Best Supporting Actress (*Electricidad*), Actor's Equity Association and Best Actress (*Mother Courage*) by the San Francisco Bay Area Critics Circle.

Audiences will recognize Lorena Diaz (Carolina) from her performances with the Goodman Theatre's New Works and at The Second City, iO Chicago and the Playground Theatre. She is best known for her work as Nurse Doris on NBC-TV's *Chicago Med*, *Chicago Fire* and *Chicago PD*, and is one half of the critically acclaimed comedy duo Dominizuelan. Ramón Carmín (Padres Juan) is a Teatro Vista ensemble member, recently

seen at the Goodman in *The Matchmaker* and Teatro Vista's *A View from the Bridge*. Ilse Zacharias (Belén) played the title role Anna in Lifeline Theatre's *Anna Karenina*. She also performed in *Into the Beautiful North* at 16th Street Theater and understudied Teatro Vista's *The Wolf at the End of the Block*. Felipe Carrasco (Diego) is making his Teatro Vista debut in *The Madres*. Previous Chicago credits include *Harbur Gate* (16th Street Theater), *Othello: The Moor of Venice* (Invictus Theatre Company Chicago) and *Waiting for Godot* (Tympanic Theatre Company).

About Stephanie Alison Walker, playwright, *The Madres*

"I was five years old the first time I visited Argentina to see my dad who was living and working in Buenos Aires at the time. It was 1980, during the dictatorship, and the military men in the airport with their big guns was an image that frightened and stayed with me," recalls playwright Stephanie Alison Walker. "It wasn't until 1998 when I was living and working in Buenos Aires that I really became aware of the Mothers of the Disappeared. An American friend was doing a documentary on the Mothers and invited me to march with them one Thursday in the Plaza de Mayo where they have been marching since 1977. Seeing them march still years later, demanding justice for their disappeared children and grandchildren, was incredibly powerful. When I returned to the States, I found that most people had no idea about this period in Argentina's history and I knew I wanted to find a way to write about it."

Walker was raised in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. She is now an L.A.-based award-winning playwright. Her full-length plays include *The Madres, The Abuelas, Friends With Guns, The Art of Disappearing, American Home, The Sister House, Three Fittings* and *The Box Jumper.* Her work has been produced and/or developed at 16th Street Theater, American Blues Theater and Chicago Dramatists in Chicago, and Los Angeles' Skylight Theatre, Moving Arts, Antaeus Theatre Company, The Road Theatre, The Blank Theatre, San Diego Rep, Boulder Ensemble Theater Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville and more. Awards include: Finalist for the 2016 Saroyan/Paul Playwriting Prize for Human Rights, Winner of the Ashland New Plays Festival, Blue Ink Award, the Generations Prize, Jane Chambers Award Runner-Up, finalist for the O'Neill Playwrights Conference and the CTG/Humanitas Playwriting Prize, four-time Finalist for the Heideman Award. Stephanie's short plays are anthologized by Smith & Kraus and have been produced all over the world. Stephanie is also the author of the book and blog, *Love in the Time of Foreclosure*, which has been called "A heartbreaking work of staggering acceptance" and was featured by the *Los Angeles Times*, *NPR*, *Business Week Magazine*, *Chicago Magazine*, *Huffington Post Live* and *ABC World News Tonight with Diane Sawyer*. She is a member of the Playwrights Union and Antaeus Playwrights Lab. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband Bob and their spirited sons, Malcolm (7) and Graham (4.) Follow Stephanie on Twitter @littof and read her plays on the New Play Exchange.

About Teatro Vista's Ricardo Gutiérrez, director of *The Madres*

Teatro Vista Executive Artistic Director Ricardo Gutiérrez (director) most recently staged the company's 2016-17 productions of Ike Holter's *The Wolf at the End of the Block* and Mando Alvarado's *Parachute Men*. Other Teatro Vista directing credits include *In The Time of the Butterflies*, *Between You, Me & The Lampshade*, *A View From The Bridge, Momma's Boyz, i put the fear of mexico in 'em* and *La Mágica Posada.* He is co-founder of the Alliance of Latinx Theatre Artists of Chicago (ALTA), a service organization dedicated to promoting and fostering Latinx theatre artists in Chicago. As an actor, his credits include *Destiny of Desire* at Goodman Theatre and South Coast Repertory, *In The Heights* at Paramount and the world premieres of *Song For The Disappeared* and *Fish Men* at Goodman. He has also performed at Actors Theatre in Louisville, Denver Center Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Victory Gardens and Lookingglass Theatre. TV credits include *Chicago PD, Sirens* and *Boss*. Before joining Teatro Vista, Gutiérrez served as the artistic director of Nosotros in Los Angeles and The Canterbury Theatre in Indiana.

About the National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere Initiative

Teatro Vista's production of *The Madres* is presented with support from the National New Play Network (NNPN) Rolling World Premiere initiative. With support from NNPN, *The Madres* will receive four consecutive productions in 2018, kicking off in Los Angeles with Skylight Theatre Company, then Chicago at Teatro Vista, followed by San Diego at Moxie Theatre and Austin with Shrewd Productions. NNPN's Rolling World Premiere program supports three or more theaters that choose to mount the same new play within a 12-month period, allowing the playwright to develop a new work with multiple creative teams in multiple communities. The playwright is part of the process, working on the script and making adjustments based on what is learned from each production. For more information, visit nnpn.org.

About Teatro Vista

Teatro Vista produces, develops and commissions plays that explore the wealth and variety of the human experience from a Latinx perspective. The company provides work and professional advancement opportunities for Latinx theatre artists, with special emphasis on the company's ensemble members, and seeks to enhance the curricular goals of Chicago students through theatre. Teatro Vista was recently celebrated as one of "Chicago's Cultural Leaders" by the Arts & Business Council of Chicago and received the League of Chicago Theatre's Artistic Leadership Award.

Teatro Vista's primary focus is producing new works by Latinx theatre artists and presenting classic plays featuring artists of color. Its artistic vision is shaped by the company's ensemble members, a group of multi-generational, multi-ethnic and multi-disciplinary artists. They inform Teatro Vista's artistic aesthetic by devising original works as well as by selecting plays with themes that are engaging and relevant to Chicago's diverse population.

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Teatro Vista was founded in 1990 by Edward Torres and Henry Godinez. As Teatro Vista's first Artistic Director, Godinez guided the company during the formative years. He helped stage successful productions and establish vital relationships with other theatre companies and artists. When Godinez stepped down, Torres was appointed Artistic Director. Under Torres' direction, Teatro Vista used the stage to engage, connect and challenge audience members using the company's mission as his guide.

In 2012, Torres moved to New York and the Board of Directors promoted Associate Artistic Director Ricardo Gutiérrez to the position of Executive Artistic Director. In 2017, Sylvia Hevia joined Teatro Vista as Managing and Development Director. Previously, Hevia was Director of Marketing and Development of the International Latino Cultural Center and had her own multicultural event production company.

In addition to Gutiérrez, Teatro Vista ensemble members include Charín Álvarez, Max Arciniega, Desmín Borges, Cheryl Lynn Bruce, Ramón Camín, Ivonne Coll, Laura Dahl, Sandra Delgado, Liza Fernández, Khanisha Foster, Cruz Gonzalez-Cadel, Issac Gomez, Erik Juárez, Jon Lyon, Sandra Márquez, Eddie Martinez, Salome Martinez, Joe Minoso, Ayssette Muñoz, Christina Nieves, Marvin Quijada, Tommy Rivera-Vega, Gabriel Ruíz, Nate Santana, Cecilia Suarez and co-founder Edward Torres.

Teatro Vista's Board of Directors includes Ezequiel "Zeek" Agosto, President; Rodrigo García and Rosanna Márquez, Vice Presidents; Joan Pantsios, Secretary; Tom Vega-Byrnes, Treasurer; and Bhuvana Badrinathan, Edgar Delgado, Ricardo Gutiérrez, Sylvia Hevia, Kareem C. Mohamednur and Angel Torres.

Teatro Vista is supported by The Joyce Foundation, Alphawood Foundation, Paul M. Angell Family Foundation, The MacArthur Fund for Arts & Culture at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events of the City of Chicago, The Shubert Foundation, The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelly Foundation, the Bayless Family Foundation and The Saints.

Purple Group is Teatro Vista's Headline Season Sponsor. Teatro Vista is a Victory Gardens Resident Theater. For more information, visit TeatroVista.org.

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