

BYU THEATRE AND MEDIA ARTS presents

LUNA



NELKE THEATRE
OCTOBER 6-16

LUNA written by Ramon Esquivel
Directed by Kris Peterson

Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois.

BYUarts
BYUARTS.COM



This show has been a long time coming.

When the world came to a standstill in March 2020, I was in the midst of directing two productions for BYU. One, *Wendy and Peter Pan*, was nine days from opening. The second, a Latinx TYA show called *Luna*, was in pre-production. *Wendy and Peter Pan* was never fully realized and never seen by an audience, despite being nearly ready for performances. Miraculously, *Luna*, like our Soledad, has persevered. It has come to fruition in spite of the very real challenges of doing theatre in a global pandemic. I find great hope that this show has survived. Its survival means that we continue telling diverse stories with the same pioneering spirit of our ancestors.

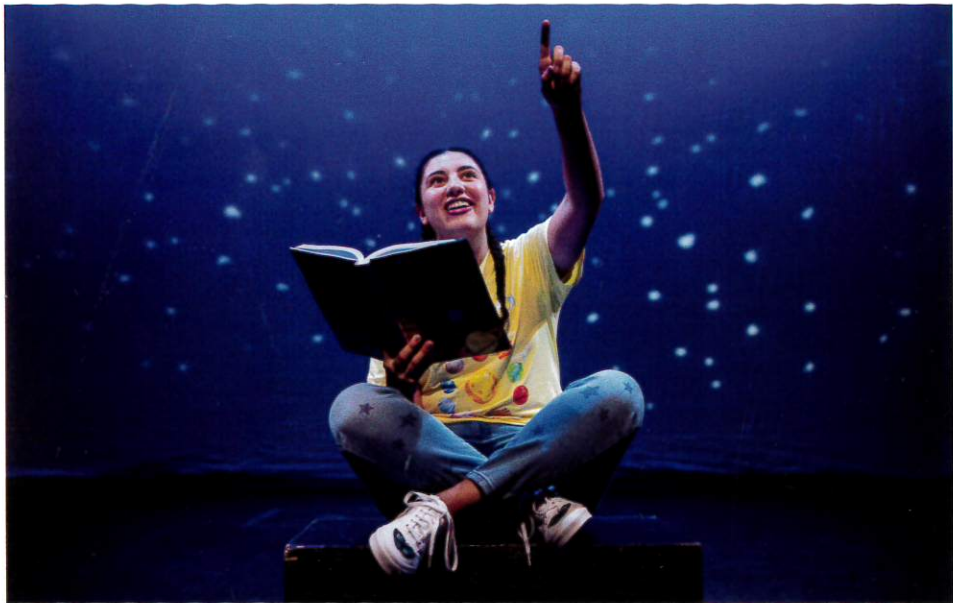
Perhaps that is why *Luna* is the perfect show to begin our first live season back. Soledad, whose name is defined as "solitude," brings with her a desire to connect to family, friends, and the success of her own dreams. She is the manifestation of not just survival but of what it means to truly thrive. The largess of her imagination dares to dream of a world in which connection is not only hopeful, but indeed is vital to survival.

My Costa Rican ancestors must have known this. The sacrifices my own family have made are great. However, we are a joyfully resilient bunch. Our resilience is passed down in both our DNA and in our stories. As you watch *Luna* tonight, you might hear the echoes of some of our experiences. You will see the beauty of the relationships that allow us to keep moving forward to *otro dias y otro lugares*. Our dreams are woven into the very fabric of who we are. Tonight, we ask you to find a place here with us. Tonight, *amigos*, after such a long journey, we get to share it with you.

We remind ourselves, that in spite of the pain and loneliness and difficulty we have seen in the last eighteen months, finding our places again is accessible. We take the risks necessary because we know it is the only way we build our courage. We have begun the process of knitting our hearts together in artistry and humanity.

I think our ancestors would be proud.

-KRIS W. PETERSON



LUNA

Written by
Ramón Esquivel

Directed by
Kris W. Peterson

Scenic Design
Elise Lacanienta

Sound Designer
Katie Black

Dramaturgy
Darci Ramirez
Shelley Graham

Production Stage Management
Ellie Kuoppala

Costume, Makeup & Hair
Kyrra Lundberg

October 6-8 and 13-15, 7:00 p.m.
October 9 and 16, 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.
Nelke Theatre

Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois

CHARACTER/CAST LIST

SETTING:
Current day in the farmlands of Utah.

CHARACTER AND CAST LIST:
(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

- GUITARIST
Caleb Plewe

LUNA
Temple Nguyen

SOLEDAD
Ellie Ostvig

PAPÁ/ HE-CLOWN
Valerie Howell
- MAMÁ/ SHE-CLOWN
Joy Pizorno

FRIDA/GIRL
Alexa Sandberg

EMILIO/ BOY
Ray Nielson



TMA STAFF

THEATRE STEERING COMMITTEE

- Producer Meghan Sanborn Jones
Artistic Director Stephanie Breinholt
Design and Technology Area Head Dennis Wright
Theatre Production Manager Jennifer Reed

- Assistant Director Kelsey Baile
Design Faculty Mentor Michael Kraczek

- Costume and Makeup Operations Manager Jessica Cowden
Wardrobe Supervisor Ryver Mecham
Costume Faculty Mentor Dennis Wright
Lighting Lab Manager Marianne Ohran
Lighting Faculty Mentor Michael S. Kraczek
Light Board Operator Jacob Anderson
Technical Director Travis Coyne
Scene Shop Manager Ward Wright
Scenic Faculty Mentor Rory Scanlon
Prop Shop Manager Jennifer Reed
Property Master Sariah Roberts
Makeup and Hair Coordinator Emile Rohnhaar
Makeup and Hair Faculty Mentor Jennine Hollingshaus
Dramaturgy Faculty Mentor Shelley Graham
Stage Management Faculty Mentor Jennifer Reed
Marketing Services Manager Rex Kocherhans
Program Designer Dylan Smith

MEET THE CAST

Valerie Elena Howell
Papá/ He-Clown

Valerie is a junior studying Physiology and Developmental Biology, and Portuguese. She played the part of Scum in *The Skim, The Scam, and The Scum*. Hailing from San Antonio, Texas, Valerie comes from a family of eight and enjoys swimming, reading, and crocheting in her free time. She wants to give a special thank you to her mom, dad, and *abuelitos*, all of whom inspired her character.

Ray Nielson
Emilio/Boy

Ray is a Theatre Arts Studies major nearing the end of their time at BYU. They grew up in Magna, Utah and found their love of theatre on the stage of Cyprus High School. They are also working toward a minor in Creative Writing and hope to one day bring new stories of diversity and inclusion to the stage and/or screen.

Temple Nguyen
Luna

This is Temple Nguyen's first production at BYU. They grew up in Mason, Ohio with three sisters, their parents, a cat, and a dog. They are working towards a bachelor's in Biology and hoping to go to graduate school for veterinary practice.

Ellie Ostvig
Soledad

Ellie is delighted to return to the stage and participate in her first production at BYU. A senior from Minnesota, Ellie is a Latin American Studies major with minors in International Development and Nonprofit Management. Some of her favorite past roles include Hodel in *Fiddler on the Roof* (Orono Community Theatre), Mrs. Potts in *Beauty and the Beast* and Aunt Abby in *Arsenic and Old Lace* (Orono High School). She would like to thank her incredible *familia* for always supporting her and inspiring her to reach for the stars.

Caleb Plewe
Guitarist

Caleb Plewe is from Spanish Fork, Utah. He is a Physics Education major and loves to teach. His last production was an 8th grade drama performance and he doesn't remember what it was. He and his wife became parents in September 2021 and have a beautiful baby girl.

Joy Pizorno
Mamá/She-Clown

Joy is thrilled to be making her BYU main stage debut! An Arizona native, Joy is a senior studying Family Life: Family Studies and Spanish. Some of her previous roles include Señora Tortuga in *Señora Tortuga*, Ida in *Honk!*, and Hope Harcourt in *Anything Goes*. She enjoys tap dancing, singing with her BYU acapella group, Secret Chord, and she plans to attend law school in the Fall of 2022. She is grateful for her family's continued support in both her academic and performing pursuits.

Alexa Sandberg
Frida/Girl

Alexa is a Freshman and a Pre-Theatre Education major. She comes from Woodbury, Minnesota and from a loving family of five. This will be her first production here at BYU and she is thrilled to be here! Her previous roles include Scapino in *Scapino*, Tootles in *Wendy and Peter Pan* and Sandy in *Grease* (The Loft Stage). She would like to thank her sister Hannah for being the best friend a girl could ask for and inspiring her to be better each day.

LUNA

By Ramón Esquivel

A Study Guide

By Darci Ramirez
& Shelley Graham,
dramaturgs



About The Author: Ramón Esquivel +

Ramón Esquivel is a playwright-educator born and raised in Kirkland, Washington, and is of Mexican and Yaqui Indian heritage. He teaches playwriting and theatre education at Central Washington University in Ellensburg, and previously taught middle school in Washington DC, Brooklyn, and Seattle.

Esquivel's overall reason for writing content like *Luna* is stated in his article, "Latinx Theater for Young Audiences, Where We are and Where We Must Go:"

"WHILE WE MAY WANT TYA PLAYS THAT REFLECT THE GREAT DIVERSITY OF LATINX EXPERIENCES, OUR YOUNG AUDIENCES NEED THEM".

Luna tells a story that anyone can connect to, that of being an outsider, through a reality that speaks to many people who haven't had the chance to see their lives and perspectives on stage.



About the Director Kris W. Peterson *

Kris W. Peterson is an educator, director, and actor whose training includes work at Brigham Young University, the Utah Shakespeare Festival, and the University of Exeter. In this production, she explores what it means to find connection and your dreams at the same time – even if we struggle as we pursue them both.

Luna explores what it's like to feel isolated in an unfamiliar setting. Peterson chose to inform the cultural background of Soledad with one similar to her own, with her Costa Rican heritage seeping into the soul of Soledad and her family.

The world in which Soledad finds herself is informed by Mexican traditions and designs, and this difference highlights the loneliness that one might feel in an unfamiliar environment, as well as the connections that one can make to overcome it.

Friends and Dreams

Esquivel was inspired to write this story after hearing of Bonnie Dunbar, an astronaut born and raised in the farmlands of eastern Washington amid the strong migrant worker community, who dreamed of traveling among the stars. She achieved her dream and flew 5 missions with NASA, but what stuck with Esquivel was the story of a girl standing in a field, staring up at the stars. When he was commissioned to write *Luna*, he wanted to explore what it would be like to be a member of this community and dream of the stars.



Soledad means "solitude" or "loneliness" in Spanish – and sometimes it's easy to feel as if we're all alone just like her. But in the same way that Luna finds friends in stars, Soledad is able to find friends in other children. So, like a constellation, each of these separate stars can come together, through their connections, to make a beautiful whole.

What can make it hard to find and keep connections?

**What are some things that bring you and your constellation together?
Could it be books? A love of good food?
Or something else entirely?**

Making Connections

Connecting, or even trying to connect with others can come with risks. Believing in and pursuing our dreams also comes with risks. Luna asks, "Have you ever tried something new to find you couldn't do it? Have you ever worked hard to get better at something but it still doesn't work?" The scarier answers to these questions – yes – is why it can be so hard to find and build friendships and believe in ourselves.

Why is taking risks so important to making connections and pursuing our dreams?

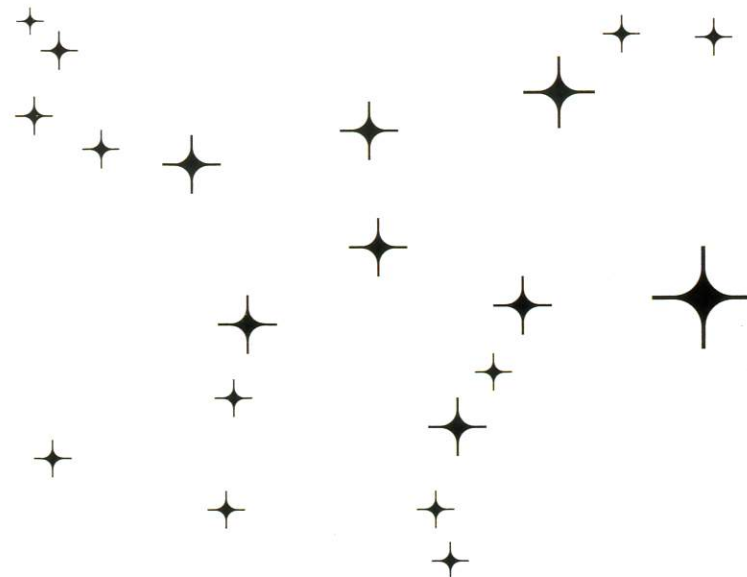
Sometimes, we leave the people we love. Sometimes, we hurt the people we love. But in the end, they are the support that we need in order to reach our dreams – whether it's traveling to the stars or simply making a new friend. Soledad's parents try to create a life for her that gives her friendship, and Luna comforts and guides her when she's unsure of her path.

What are some ways that you help others reach their dreams?

Who helps you build your dreams?

Make Connections! Make Constellations!

Name each of these stars with dreams that you have or important people in your life. Then create your own constellation when you connect the stars! As you do, think about how these dreams and these people are connected to each other.



Migrant Work

For much of the produce in the U.S., the best way to harvest is through manual labor. But because of the seasonal nature of different crops, it calls for a group of skilled workers to travel to each agricultural area to harvest them while in season. These people are migrant workers.

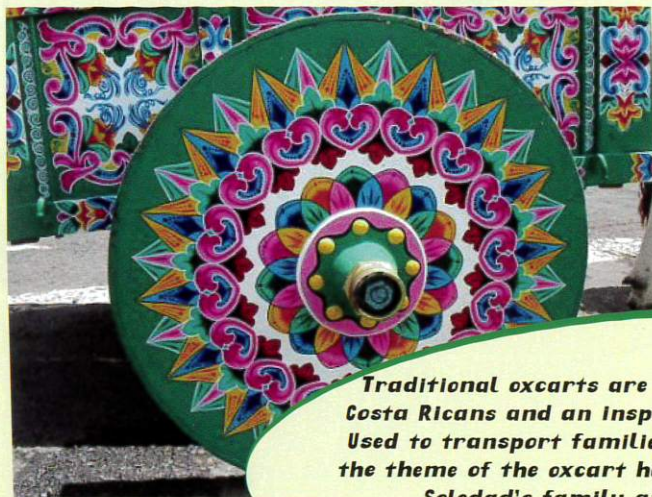
Migrant and seasonal work is vital to US agriculture. Historically, migrant workers have come from all over the United States and the world; but the majority have been Latinx workers from North, Central, and South America – especially Mexico. However, the seasonal and migrant workforce remains an industry that holds people of many different backgrounds and national origins.

Utah is one of the most food-vulnerable states in the US, and is particularly dependent on many local agricultural areas to supply it. In Utah, some of the most significant areas for both agricultural production and seasonal/migrant workers are in Payson, Santaquin, and Mona. We set our production of *Luna* in Utah, since Soledad's experience might be familiar to some of our own school children.



Costa Rica and Mexico

The background of each member of the production team shapes the world of the play. It's been influenced by various Latinx backgrounds, including Mexican and Costa Rican, and you may especially see this in the design of this production. These distinct and beautiful traditions serve as inspiration, but they don't belong to this production alone. We tell the story of one very brave girl finding friendship and inspiration. Her story, like this production, is informed by these cultures, but isn't a representation of the culture as a whole.



Traditional oxcarts are a source of pride for Costa Ricans and an inspiration for our design. Used to transport families, crops, and legacies, the theme of the oxcart helps to tell the story of Soledad's family and their travels.

