

Cambridge University Press  
0521771196 - Chicano Drama: Performance, Society and Myth  
Jorge Huerta  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

*Chicano Drama*  
*Performance, Society and Myth*

This is the first book since Jorge Huerta's ground-breaking earlier study, *Chicano Theater: Themes and Forms* (1982), to explore the diversity and energy of Chicano theatre. Huerta takes as his starting point 1979, the year Luis Valdez's play, *Zoot Suit*, was produced on Broadway. Huerta looks at plays by and about Chicanas and Chicanos, as they explore, through performance, the community and its identity caught between the United States and Mexico. Through informative biographies of each playwright and analyses of their plays, Huerta offers an accessible introduction to this important aspect of American theatre and culture.

Overall, Huerta establishes a pattern of theatrical activity that is closely linked with both Western European traditions of realism and an indigenous philosophy seen in contemporary Chicano culture. Further, Huerta examines how the playwrights challenge the Roman Catholic Church and its priests, while demonstrating an abiding faith. The final chapter explores plays that challenge the tradition of the patriarchy by openly discussing the issues of homosexuality. The book contains photographs from key productions and will be invaluable to students, scholars and general theatregoers.

JORGE HUERTA is a leading authority on contemporary Chicano and Latino theatre, a professional director, and Chancellor's Associates Professor of Theatre at the University of California, San Diego. Huerta founded El Teatro de la Esperanza in Santa Barbara, in 1971, and was also co-founder of Teatro Máscara Mágica, in San Diego, in 1989. He has published numerous articles and reviews, three anthologies of plays, and a major study, *Chicano Theater: Themes and Forms* (1982).

Cambridge University Press  
 0521771196 - Chicano Drama: Performance, Society and Myth  
 Jorge Huerta  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

## CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN AMERICAN THEATRE AND DRAMA

## General editor

Don B. Wilmeth, *Brown University*

## Advisory board

C. W. E. Bigsby, *University of East Anglia*  
 Errol Hill, *Dartmouth College*

C. Lee Jenner, *Independent critic and dramaturge*  
 Bruce A. McConachie, *University of Pittsburgh*  
 Brenda Murphy, *University of Connecticut*  
 Laurence Senelick, *Tufts University*

The American theatre and its literature are attracting, after long neglect, the crucial attention of historians, theoreticians and critics of the arts. Long a field for isolated research yet too frequently marginalized in the academy, the American theatre has always been a sensitive gauge of social pressures and public issues. Investigations into its myriad of shapes and manifestations are relevant to students of drama, theatre, literature, cultural experience and political development.

The primary intent of this series is to set up a forum of important and original scholarship in and criticism of American theatre and drama in a cultural and social context. Inclusive by design, the series accommodates leading work in areas ranging from the study of drama as literature to theatre histories, theoretical explorations, production histories and readings of more popular or para-theatrical forms. While maintaining a specific emphasis on theatre in the United States, the series welcomes work grounded broadly in cultural studies and narratives with interdisciplinary reach. Cambridge Studies in American Theatre and Drama thus provides a crossroads where historical, theoretical, literary and biographical approaches meet and combine, promoting imaginative research in theatre and drama from a variety of new perspectives.

## BOOKS IN THE SERIES

1. Samuel Hay, *African American Theatre*
2. Marc Robinson, *The Other American Drama*
3. Amy Green, *The Revisionist Stage: American Directors Re-Invent the Classics*
4. Jared Brown, *The Theatre in America during the Revolution*
5. Susan Harris Smith, *American Drama: The Bastard Art*
6. Mark Fearnow, *The American Stage and the Great Depression*
7. Rosemarie K. Bank, *Theatre Culture in America, 1825–1860*
8. Dale Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World*
9. Stephen J. Bottoms, *The Theatre of Sam Shepard*
10. Michael A. Morrison, *John Barrymore, Shakespearean Actor*
11. Brenda Murphy, *Congressional Theatre: Dramatizing McCarthyism on Stage, Film, and Television*
12. Jorge Huerta, *Chicano Drama: Performance, Society and Myth*

Cambridge University Press  
0521771196 - Chicano Drama: Performance, Society and Myth  
Jorge Huerta  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

*Chicano Drama*  
*Performance, Society and Myth*

---

JORGE HUERTA

University of California, San Diego



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
 0521771196 - Chicano Drama: Performance, Society and Myth  
 Jorge Huerta  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press  
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
 Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521771191](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521771191)

© Jorge Huerta 2000

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
 no reproduction of any part may take place without  
 the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2000

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Huerta, Jorge A.

Chicano drama : performance, society, and myth / Jorge Huerta.

p. cm. – (Cambridge studies in American theatre and drama : 12)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 77119 6 (hardback) – ISBN 0 521 77817 4 (paperback)

1. American drama – Mexican American authors – History and criticism. 2. Literature  
 and society – United States – History. 3. Mexican Americans in literature. 4. Myth in  
 literature. I. Title. II. Series.

PS153.M4 H84 2001 812.009'86872–DC21 00-036300

ISBN-13 978-0-521-77119-1 hardback  
 ISBN-10 0-521-77119-6 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-77817-6 paperback  
 ISBN-10 0-521-77817-4 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2005

Cambridge University Press

0521771196 - Chicano Drama: Performance, Society and Myth

Jorge Huerta

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

*To the memory of my dear friends, colleagues and collaborators*

*Miguel Delgado*

*Estela Portillo-Trambley*

*José Guadalupe Saucedo*

*Ruben Sierra*

*Que en paz descansen siempre*

## Contents

	<i>List of illustrations</i>	page ix
	<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
	Introduction	i
1	Mythos or <i>mitos</i> : the roots of a Chicano mythology	15
	Unseen spirits of the Southwest	20
	Re-claiming Aztec and Maya mythology	26
2	Mystery or miracle: bodiless heads and conversations with the dead	56
	Challenging notions of reality: bodiless heads	56
	Conversations with the dead	71
3	Redemption: looking for miracles in a man's church	100
	Irreverent visions of God, the Devil, Heaven and Hell	102
	Reinscribing the miracle play	107
	Priests and nuns in a restrictive church	118
4	Rebelling against damnation: out of the closet, slowly	140
	The discussion of homosexuality in Chicano literature and theatre	140
	Early representations of (homo)sexual characters	142
	Plays with secondary gay Chicano characters	146
	Plays with gay/lesbian central characters	159
	<i>Afterword</i>	183
	<i>Bibliography</i>	193
	<i>Index</i>	203

## *Illustrations*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1 <i>Heroes and Saints</i>, by Cherríe Moraga. Brava! For Women in the Arts, San Francisco, California. Directed by Albert Takazauckas. L. to R. Hector Correa and Jaime Lujan. Photo: © David. M. Allen Photography, 1992, San Francisco, California</p>  | <p style="text-align: right;"><i>page</i> 65</p> |
| <p>2 <i>Heroes and Saints</i>, by Cherríe Moraga. Brava! For Women in the Arts, San Francisco, California, 1992. Directed by Albert Takazauckas. L. to R. Juanita Estrada, Jennifer Proctor, Viola Lucero. Photo: David M. Allen Photography, San Francisco, California</p>                           | <p style="text-align: right;">66</p>             |
| <p>3 <i>My Visits With MGM (My Grandmother Marta)</i>, by Edit Villareal. Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, 1993. Directed by Norma Saldívar. L. to R. Maricela Ochoa, Renee Victor, Feiga M. Martinez. Photo: Avery Photography, Milwaukee</p>  | <p style="text-align: right;">75</p>             |
| <p>4 <i>My Visits With MGM (My Grandmother Marta)</i>, by Edit Villareal. Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, 1993. Directed by Norma Saldívar. L. to R. Feiga M. Martinez, Thaddeus Valdez, Maricela Ochoa and Renee Victor. Photo: Avery Photography, Milwaukee</p>  | <p style="text-align: right;">76</p>             |
| <p>5 <i>Santos &amp; Santos</i>, by Octavio Solis. Campo Santo in Association with Thick Description, San Francisco, California, 1996. Directed by Tony Kelley. L. to R. Deena Martinez, Michael Torres, Luis Saguar, Maria Candelaria and Sean San José Blackman. Photo: © 1996 Stephen Mitchell</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">91</p>             |
| <p>6 <i>Santos &amp; Santos</i>, by Octavio Solis. Dallas Theatre Center, Dallas, Texas, 1995. Directed by Richard Hamburger. L. to R. Jennifer Griffith, Richard Chaves, Rene Moreno, Vilma Silva, Al Espinosa, Dolores Godinez, Bob Burrus, Toni Allen, Jimmie Ray Weeks. Photo: Carl Davis</p>     | <p style="text-align: right;">92</p>             |

- 7 *Real Women Have Curves*, by Josefina López. Chingona Productions and Rasquachi Rep, Los Angeles, California, 1998. Directed by Corky Dominguez. L. to R. Julia Vera, Rosalinda Morales, Teresa-Michelle Ruiz, Tina Taylor, Miriam Peniche. Photo: Josefina López 126
- 8 *La Guadalupe Que Camina*, by Beverly Sanchez-Padilla. Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, San Antonio, Texas, 1990. Directed by Ruby Nelda Perez. L. to R. Beverly Sanchez-Padilla, Ruby Nelda Perez, Sonia Salazar, Nancy López. Photo: San Antonio Express News 133
- 9 *Blade to the Heat*, by Oliver Mayer. New York Shakespeare Festival, 1994. Directed by George C. Wolfe. L. to R. Maricela Ochoa, Paul Calderon. Photo: Michal Daniel 169
- 10 *Deporting the Divas*, by Guillermo Reyes. Miracle Theatre Company, Portland, Oregon, 1998. Directed by Michael Menger. L. to R. Andrés Alcalá, Jason Maniccia, Dan Palma, Rob Harrison, Jack Lozano. Photo: Autumn Simon Photography, Oxford, Massachusetts 174



## *Acknowledgements*

I want to thank all of the theatre artists who have been my collaborators and my inspiration. Also, thanks to my student research assistants: Kat Avila, Ken Cerniglia, Ricardo Chavira, Laura Esparza, Gregg Huerta, Ron Huerta, David Lugo-Beauchamp, Juan Pazos, Tatiana Piccone, Analola Santana, Liberty Smith and Michael Stegen. A very special thanks to Maria Figueroa, Michal Kobialka, Adam Versenyi and John Clum for their invaluable feedback. Without the support, guidance and patience of Victoria Cooper and Don Wilmeth, I could not have completed this book. Thanks also to the staff of the Department of Theatre and Dance at UCSD: Sondra Buffett, Robin Doane, Paulette Gregg, Linn Fridy, Hedayat Jafari and Barbara Vilbrandt. To the University of California, UC-Mexus, Program and the staff at UCSD-TV: Vice Chancellor Mary L. Walshok, Lynn Burnstan, John Menier, Matt Alioto, Marci Bretts, Suzanne Cedevic, David Cain and Patricia Taylor, thanks for making our video series, "Necessary Theatre," a reality. I could not have completed this book without the financial support of my Chancellor's Associates Endowed Chair III. Finally, a great big *gracias* to my wife, Ginger, whose love, wisdom, encouragement and support make it all possible.