

Mermaid Arts Centre and Once Off Productions present

LOOKING FOR AMÉRICA

By Federico Julián González and Janet Moran



arts
council
contemporary
theatre

funding
theatre



mermaid
COUNTY WICKLOW ARTS CENTRE

Spring 2022 Tour



Following his father's arrest by a Military Junta, at the age of five, Fede and his family were forced to flee the Salvadoran Civil war. There followed years of continuous moving throughout Latin America with his mother and brother as they sought sanctuary.

In 2019, Fede and his 74-year-old mother set off on a quest through Havana to look for América. Shared memories, conflicting recollections and offline maps led them through their past. A past peopled with ghosts scattered among grand avenues, dark lanes and unnerving dead ends in the city that had taken them in, more than 30 years before. They spoke to shop-keepers, taxi drivers, old ladies and more importantly to each other. When they were about to give up, they found her.

Looking for América charts two journeys. The journey of that night in Havana looking for a Salvadoran ex-Guerilla fighter called América, and the journey of escaping the catastrophe that had engulfed his country decades before. A catastrophe whose after effects still resonate today.

After the 2020 premiere in the Dublin Theatre Festival was halted by lockdown, and a digital run at Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2021, *Looking For América* returns in-person a nine-venue tour across Ireland.

A Note from the Writers

Looking for América has always been a labour of love from the moment I started nagging Fede to write and perform in it! It is a story that we both firmly believe should be told. When we started working on this piece together, the crisis at the Mexican/US border was in the news with horrific images and stories of children being separated from their families and in some cases, sent on to the US alone. We heard of parents so determined to give their children a chance at life that they were willing to give up their own chance at happiness. Imagine how desperate and courageous you would need to be to do that?

And now, Ukraine is in the news. A short while ago, the horrors of an abandoned Afghanistan - and not so prominent in the media - Yemen, Syria and countless other countries where people are being forced to abandon their homes, their families, everything. How did we get so lucky? Who promised us safe passage? Maybe we won't always be so lucky.

Looking for América is a story that, regretfully will not lose its relevance any time soon

People move; sometimes because they want to but often because they have to.

We would love you to consider contributing to some of these charities linked here. They are doing essential work with people who need help. If you can't spare money, have a look at their information, see if there is something else you can do.

See if you can amplify.

The war in Ukraine has shocked us all because it feels so very close. Let us be galvanized now to do something and to do more for all displaced people.

Irish Red Cross
Nasc Ireland

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
Let's Match Mums

MASI - the Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland

Created By

Written by **Federico Julián González** and **Janet Moran**

Directed by **Janet Moran**

Performed by **Federico Julián González**

Lighting Design by **Colin Doran**

AV Design by **Neil O'Driscoll**

Sound Design by **Mark Jackson**

Production Managed by **Veronica Foo**

Deputy Production Manager **Gavin McEntee**

Stage Managed by **Mark Jackson**

Chief Lx **Síofra Nic Liam**

PR Consultant **Jenny Sharif**

Line Produced by **Cally Shine**



photos by Ste Murray

Biographies

Federico Julián González

Federico Julián González studied psychology in Cuba and his native El Salvador and works in mental health services in Dublin. *Looking for América* marks his debut as a writer and performer.

Janet Moran

Janet Moran is an actor, playwright and director based in Dublin. Selected Theatre work includes *Ulysses*, *The Plough & The Stars*, *Juno and the Paycock* (National Theatre, London/Abbey Theatre co-production), *Shibari*, *Translations*, *No Romance*, *The Recruiting Officer*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Communion*, *The Barbaric Comedies*, *The Well of the Saints* and *The Hostage* all at the Abbey Theatre, *Car Show*, *Dublin by Lamplight*, *Everyday*, *Freefall* and *Desire under The Elms* for Corn Exchange, and *Spinning*, *Swing* (co-writer) and *Rathmines Road* for Fishamble.

Film and television work includes *The Dry*, *Trivia*, *Love/Hate*, *Love is the Drug*, *T* (RTE), *Dublin Oldschool*, *The Bailout* (TV3), *The Butcher Boy*, *Breakfast on Pluto*, *Milo*, *Minim Rest*, *Bono and My Ex*, *Moll Flanders*, *Nothing Personal*, *Volkswagen Joe* and *Quirke* (BBC). She co-wrote the hit play *Swing* and wrote and directed *A Holy Show* which sold out at the Dublin and Edinburgh fringe festivals as well as it's national tour in Spring 2020.

She also recently directed *My Romantic History*, *Virtual Verse* (Verdant Productions), *Looking for América* (Dublin Theatre Festival and Edinburgh Fringe) and *Pure Mental* (National Tour).

Biographies continued

Colin Doran

Colin Doran is a Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Musician and Technician from Wexford, with a BA in English with Drama from UCD and a Masters of Fine Arts in Stage Design (Lighting and Dramaturgy) from The Lir Academy.

Recent design credits include *The Laramie Project* with TU Dublin, *Autistic License* by Ian Lynam (Dublin Fringe 2021), *Finding Joseph* (Dean Crowe Theatre) & *Pheromone* (The New Theatre) both with LipZinc Theatre, *Looking for América* by Federico Juilian Gonzalez & Janet Moran, presented as part of Dublin Theatre Festival 2020 (Mermaid Arts Centre) and Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2021, *The Curious Case of Albert Cashier: Lincoln's Lady Soldier* with Quintessence Theatre, and *Hamlet* with UCD.

Neil O'Driscoll

Neil is a multidisciplinary artist who has worked between film, theatre and visual art for the past ten years. He has written and directed several short films (*Girls, Never Worn*) and a web series (*Waking The Witch*). His personal work is largely rooted in the history and lived experience of Ireland and its people.

As a freelance creative, recent work has included projection design for the Lyric Theatre, Belfast (*Gulliver's Travels, The Fire Below*), The Peacock Stage at the Abbey, Dublin (*A Holy Show, Double Cross*) and Coiscéim's *Uncle Ray* (the Pavilion, Dun Laoghaire). His current personal work includes A graphic novel based on the life of Roger Casement.

Biographies continued

Mark Jackson

After graduating with a First Class Honours BA in Stage Management and Technical Theatre at the Lir Academy in Dublin, Mark has worked locally in a variety of roles in professional theatres. He is thrilled to be back working with Once Off Productions for this very special production

Theatre credits include: Landmark Productions (*Gabriel Byrne's Walking With Ghosts 2022*), Rough Magic Theatre Company (*All The Angels 2021*), THISISPOPBABY (*Conversations After Sex 2021*), The Gate Theatre (*In Middletown 2021*), Druid Theatre Company (*The Beacon 2019*), TU Dublin (*Love and Information 2021*), Mermaid Arts Centre (*A Holy Show 2017*, *Looking for América 2020*), The Lir Academy (*The Merchant of Venice*, *Anatomy of a Suicide, X, Bronte*), and The Civic Tallaght (*Snow White 2019*).

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All at the Arts Council of Ireland and Culture Ireland; Sara Cregan, Maura O'Keefe and all at Once Off Productions; Eoin Fagan; Margarita González; Rolando Julián González; Trebecca Henderson; Oscar Guzman Julián and the Julián Family; Julie Kelleher and all at Mermaid Arts Centre; Gavin Kostick and all at Fishamble: The New Play Company; Rolando Julián Luna; Emer McGowan and all at Draíocht Blanchardstown; the Moran Family; Hugh Murray and all at the Pavilion Theatre; Ste Murray; Mark O'Brien; Niamh O'Donnell; Jenny Sharif; Nathan Snow; all at THISISPOPBABY; and Ian Whelan.



Mermaid Arts Centre is County Wicklow's creative powerhouse. Since 2002, our building has been a celebratory stage for artists and communities locally. Our work connects artists and communities across County Wicklow in exchanging artistic experiences that spark curiosity, delight and debate, while fostering pride, pleasure and well-being. Our purpose is driven by a fundamental belief in the power of shared experience and connection in combatting loneliness and isolation among people, and in the right to freedom of artistic expression and creation for all.

About Once Off Productions

Once Off Productions is the trading name of independent producer **Maura O'Keeffe** established in 2004 to provide a structured, supportive and creative producing platform for independent performing artists making ambitious, innovative and collaborative work. Working nationally and internationally at all scales, OOP is committed to bringing performance to audiences in traditional and nontraditional locations.

Once Off Productions facilitates artists to make work outside of traditional company structures while at the same time offering all of the advantages of producing and administrative support; from financial & budget management to promotion and marketing services and all aspects of production supervision.

Recently, under a new 'Creative Production Supports' initiative funded by the Arts Council, O'Keeffe has partnered with producer **Sara Cregan**, Marketing Consultant **Annette Nugent** and Production Managers **Rob Furey & Peter Jordan** to extend the remit of Once Off Productions to a wider range of independent artists and to provide consolidated and resourced creative production supports to the independent performing arts sector.

Once Off Productions supports and collaborates with a wide range of artists and organisations across theatre, dance, opera and music including: Philip Connaughton, Janet Moran, Dylan Coburn Gray, Laura Murphy, Eoghan Carrick, Michael Gallen/Straymaker, Colin Dunne, Rory Nolan, Kwaku Fortune, Christian O'Reilly, Medb Lambert & Donal Gallagher/Asylum Productions, Peter Power, Manchán Magan, Tom Lane, Gill Buckle, Conor Hanratty, Tom Creed, Mel Mercier and others.

For more info, please visit onceoffproductions.com