

Macario Gaxiola – A Personal Biography

Macario Gaxiola comes with over 35 years in the performing arts. He is the Artistic Director/Founder of The Theatre District, having formed the non-profit theatrical company 15 years ago, and having recently returned to Los Angeles in 2001, to take up residence in the former Cast Theatre, one of the oldest and most historic intimate theatrical venues in Hollywood. Macario received a California Teaching Credential through the Orange County School of Performing Arts, and was Former Artistic Director of Outside Productions, as well as West Coast Performing Arts Center, Southern California. An accomplished actor, writer and poet, Macario only recently reclaimed his name of origin, and was previously credited for the majority of his theatrical work as 'Mario Lescot'.

*It is my belief that "All of Theatre is Music and Dance" and that Maria Callas was speaking to all of Theatre when she said "A voice is **not** enough!" The perfect vocal range... being off-book, perfectly designed "blocking" (the very wording reveals the danger)... None of this is what assures good theatre... what most supports a good theatrical process is safety and trust in the group. Feeling safe provides an environment for taking the most risk... I ask that actors emotionally jump from the edge of the cliff and my job is upholding the promise to catch them... without that trust - there is no Art." - Macario Gaxiola*

Publicity Biography MACARIO URIAS GAXIOLA III (aka Mario Lescot) An Excerpt from Mr. Gaxiolas' own Theatrical autobiography;

My first Director/Mentor/Teacher, baked brilliantly colored Indian Corn over an open fire on the streets of Tijuana, Mexico. It was 1959. He would be forever known as "The Corn Man." Those streets were my home. I was nine years old. Although I had been born in the U.S. and held citizenship, fate had placed me in the dubious care of a Belgian Mother who'd been deported. I did not see her for one year. Although it appears to have been about basic survival, in fact, I was about to discover the world of theatre.

The Corn Man taught me the myths behind every distinct color in each kernel of corn, and as the fire burst them into Mayan fireworks, I learned to perform those ancient stories to an audience of late night and rather "tequilla'd" tourists. An unstable sun-bleached bench became my first stage, a coarse Indian Blanket held up in front of me, my first curtain, and the blazing fire my first spot light. It was magnificent. It was magic. It was the beginning.

I not only survived, by simply being able to eat at the end of our "show," but I discovered a passion to "live." I was fed far more than the obvious. I was fed dignity, and purpose. It was the Art, the Performance and the Process that kept my head held high. Seeing and feeling the audience allowed for visualizing far beyond the first hurdle that life had handed out. It was much like knowing how much more lies beyond that front row in the theatre, often made visible as the stage lights spill softly onto the first rows' chorus line of crossed legs. Yes it appeared dark and empty....But I knew there was more.

Harshly, but luckily my Mother sold me for 500 dollars to an American couple wanting a child. After all, I came fully papered. They changed their minds later. I missed my Corn Man, and that seemed to translate as "ungrateful." A string of what is called "Foster" parents followed. "Faux" parents would seem to describe them more accurately ...but...I was, in the end, better, for the wear, as they say! It was certain teachers who would light my way along the next seven years; Music Teachers....Art Teachers....English teachers, and even a couple of their mentors, another version of "Corn Men" if you will..., that would encourage and bolster my spirits and prepare me for a future I could only hope for. "Esperanza." "Hope".

One of those Music Teachers introduced me to Mr. Elmer Bernstein. He'd come to visit the school in what was then called simply an "assembly." My English was still... well... in the making... but, music is a universal language ...Is it not?! He spoke and I listened, to every word. I heard his passion. He had a presence that reminded me of my Grandfather; it was strength combined with a kindness and caring that spoke more clearly and distinctly than language. He went on to finish his presentation. I sat in the back and remained seated after all the other children had exited. He began to play "Walk on The Wild Side"...I listened with my eyes shut, even as he'd finished. I was transfixed and motionless until I felt a hand...his hand touching my shoulder. He was gesturing that I join him, the Music Teacher up front; and that I sit with him on the piano bench. I did. He continued to play and continued to encourage me at every visit with the music teacher. I soon learned English and our visits became more conversational. A new Foster home and new school would eventually stop those times together. I treasure them to this day and mourn his recent passing.

Halstead McCormack would be the next lantern, lighting the way. As the Artistic Director of the, then, California Choral Society, he recognized my love of music. In an era of The Beatles and Beach Boys..., Mr. "Mac," unknowingly picked up the lost role of my Grandfather. Praising in me what my presently appointed parents failed to even note, he opened the doors of Opera Houses and Concert Halls, rescuing me from a cultural coma. His is the quote I often share with actors. "All theatre is music and dance." A group home came next. I never saw Mr. Mac again.

My new "digs" proved to be fascinating; Americana, Gospel, Country, Blues....! The language surrounding me was altered. Texarkana! Patsy Cline became my new Maria Callas. Both voices were beautiful and filled with emotion. The TV was rarely watched, as it was a "sin/" This "sin" was kept safely hidden in the corner of a room under quilts, blankets and ironically....dirty laundry. Well, of course, if you're told not to touch something, the first thing you do when given the chance is what?!....I touched it...and discovered Playhouse 90.

Miraculously, I survived and even managed to age my way out of societies system for unclaimed kids. It was the era of Viet Nam. There was a new system...., or systems. Mine was the Air Force. I'd managed to meet a Cuban refugee who happened to share some of my same languages and cultural interests. We and that friendship survived the war. We both shared lost parents, lost culture, and somewhat lost "selves," but with a passion for the performing arts, we both managed to find our places in theatre, performing and learning from extraordinary artists. I did one tour of The Nutcracker performing Heir Drosselmeir and left dance entirely for the Dramatic Arts. My cultural comrade went on with dance. His last performance in the Nutcracker as well...however this last time with Nuryev.

Mr. William Hudnut at Paramount Studios would be the next theatrical chapter. He headed the last casting workshop on the lot of Paramount. His background was associated with John Asher, and days of I Love Lucy and the origins of "three cameras." We worked scenes and producers would pull from the group, often actually casting directly and in the moment. He was a kind and considerate man, yet clear on the demands of the Industry. There was a level of expectation simply upon being invited into the group, but what I was about to learn was profound. The skills and variations of mediums were studies unto themselves, but, the great chasm between Theatre and Film. Well....no amount of study or observation seemed to bring clarity.

My constant involvement with the stage, no matter how quiet I kept it, proved "silly" to my colleagues. Mr. Hudnut too, proved impatient with my career choices. His talks with me however, were not based in judgment or artistic rift, his were based in his hopes that I simply succeed. I was young. He wanted to make sure I was clear on the importance of availability for roles in film etc....His final scolding was lovingly veiled in respect and dignity...."You must make a choice!" I did. It was theatre. It was a choice I felt and still feel need not have to be made.... certainly not with any regret. Both can exist in one career in full harmony.

Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Herrmann and I met as a result of conversations with mere mutual acquaintances. They would prove my adult source of strength, especially Mrs. Herrmann.... "Lucy." As gruff as Benny was, Lucy was gentle. That gentleness allowed me to listen and learn far more intently. My relationship with her became that of a Son and Mother and would last through and beyond her death. She never had children of her own with Benny. I never had what I thought to be my "own parents"...certainly not a Mother...until then – and now. Benny and Lucy separated. It was after that, we became even closer. I, along with my wonderful wife, shared much of life together; regular weekly visits, all of the Holidays.

Lucy would often speak to my students, and I would recount the lessons taught to me of filmmaking, the business and the art. She was there when Hitch asked her to chose "the" song.-.She chose "Quo sera sera." She was there when Hitch said to Benny, "You have to write a hit song for this film....The studio wants hit songs now, not just scores!" Lucy taught me what relationships are often based on, as opposed to what they can be. She taught me about compromise, without loss of dignity. That was a big one. Ironically I was about to make Charlie Chaplain's theatre in Hollywood my theatrical base when Lucy became very ill. The irony was the theatre's location; across the street from Paramount Studios. She told me it was time; I was ready....the theatres' location was not an accident. Both could live, quite literally in this case, side by side. She told me this only days before she died. Full circle to wind up back in Los Angeles, and yet another entirely new beginning. The beginning of The Theatre District in Hollywood, and the next chapter in my theatrical journey and the "Corn Men" of my future.

This biography is lovingly dedicated to my Grandfather; Macario (Urias) Gaxiola (I)..., known as "El General." Then Governor of Sinaloa, Mexico. Later senator, and loved by the masses since his military leadership during, and against, Pancho Villa.