WORLD PREMIERE
AUG 14 - SEPT 19

NIMI MADRE

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY ARTURO LUÍS SORIA
DIRECTED BY DANILO GAMBINI
NI MI MADRE

Inspirited with the tradition of Umbanda ritual, the music of Gloria Estefan, Cher, and Maria Bethânia, NI MI MADRE invites the audience into the tumultuous relationship between Bete (a larger-than-life Brazilian woman who swears that if it weren’t for Madonna, Meryl Streep, and Angelina Jolie she would have been the “It” thing) and her queer son. As she grapples with the secrets that tear her and her son apart, the unbidden memories of her estranged mother, and the lineage that binds them all together she unveils to us, her confidants, her audience, the downfalls of American parenting. NI MI MADRE delves deep into the makings of an immigrant family. It explores the intersection between queerness and Latinidad; examines gender, sexuality, family, citizenship, transculturation, identity; and lays bare the secrets, memories, fears, and celebrations of being an immigrant and first-generation American.

Performed in 2017 at Yale Cabaret and in 2019 at the NYC Rave Festival, Rattlestick’s production will be Ni Mi Madre’s world premiere for accomplished actor and first-time writer Arturo Luís Soria and the first major production in the United States for Rattlestick Directing fellow Danilo Gambini. Community partners include Sol Project and Group.BR.
NI MI MADRE

CREATIVE TEAM
WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY: Arturo Luís Soria
DIRECTED BY: Danilo Gambini
DRAMATURG: Nahuel Telleria
SET DESIGN: Stephanie Osin Cohen
COSTUME DESIGN: Haydee Zelideth
LIGHTING DESIGN: Krista Smith
SOUND DESIGN: Kathy Ruvuna
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER: Katie Young
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Rodrigo Fischer
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER: José Noel
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Stephanie Machado
ASSISTANT SET DESIGNER: Anna Grigo
ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER: Hayley Kuhlmann
SHORT-TERM ASM: Jenn Elyse Jacobs
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR: Carl Whipple
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR ASSOCIATE/SET PAINTER: Patricia Marjorie
CREATIVE TEAM Continued

ASSISTANT TO TECHNICAL DIRECTOR: Pablo Solano
MASTER ELECTRICIAN: Jeremy Stein
AUDIO ENGINEER (SOUND BOARD OPERATOR): Daniel Miele
SOUND DESIGNER (FOR MIAMI RECORDING): Chris Gabo
COSTUME ALTERATIONS: Keama Garrett (draper), Marie Stair, Audrey Pallmeyer
SET BUILDER/CARPENTER: Daniel Quinn
ELECTRICIAN: Robin Ediger-Seto
PRESS REP: The Chamber Group
COMMUNITY PARTNERS: The SOL Project, Groupdot.BR, Drama Club
FRONT COVER ARTWORK: Andrew Soria (Photo), Neo Avila (Design)
VOICE PROVIDED BY: Elizabeth Cristina Pizzoli Frias
PLAYWRIGHT’S NOTE

I must first and foremost thank my mother, Elizabeth Cristina Alencar Pizzoli Gobler Soria Frias, for not only living the life that I have bastardized on this stage, but for also enduring my retelling of it over and over again for the past decade and a half. All of this would not have been possible without her. Você é minha inspiração.

Then, I must thank the other characters in the play who have only minor mentions in the story but have had huge impacts on my life: the Ecuadorian Commie, George Soria, who has gifted me resilience; the Gay Dominican, Juan Frias, who has gifted me flare; the Inebriated Jew, Bob Gobler, who gifted me my brother; Dustyn Gobler, the Apple of my mother’s eye, who has gifted me the power of the pen; Kristyn Soria, the Appendix, who has gifted me generosity of heart; Alexander Frias, the Puerto Rican Lesbian, who has gifted me camaraderie; and Daniella Frias, the—shhhh!—Haitian Adoption, who has gifted me insatiable humor.

There is also family that was spared the sharpness of my tongue but was no less present: my Nonno, Mario Pizzoli, who taught me grace; my Abuelita, Yolanda Cantos Soria, who blessed me on every occasion; my primo-hermano, Andrew Soria, who has been taking pictures of me in dresses since as long as we’ve been alive; my Tia Nene & Tialina, who were second mothers; las familias Calderon & Murcia, with whom I shared a childhood; mi familia Soria, who always lift me up; mi familia Frias, who gave me sazón; Aldo Pizzoli, who holds the memory of my grandmother; Leda Figueiredo, Monica Gavrielides & Helena Hubold, for being the custodians of my mother’s youth; Raquel Gutierrez, who shrouds me in the feeling of home; Debra Vargas, for running my fan club; and Dacia Fusaro, Cora & Sebastian, who brighten my day, even in the darkest of hours, and remind me to stay grounded and present.

And, of course, I must thank the woman behind the woman behind the scenes, the one pulling the strings, and sometimes driving the boat, my Vovó, Maria Socorro Alencar. Though we never met in the land of the living, we have often convened in the liminal space between dreams.

However, this isn’t everyone. This play would not be here today without the support of many who left their mark on it over the years:

Eric Hoff, who first directed this play; Jaxin Jackson, who has workshopped it with me since the days we did it in our living room; Hannah Tuber, who receives my teary late-night phone calls; Shannon Matesky, my solo partner in crime; Samantha C. Jones, my big sister; Rania Salem Mangano, my #1 on Broadway; Nyle Fisher; Joshua Torrez; Ari Fulton; Gregory Haney & Zuleyma Guevara, for lending their voices; Maria Chaves; Edgar Sanchez; Christina Nieves; Tanya Saracho; Osiris Khepera; Wilberto Morales, my hermanito; Jessie David Perez, my brother for life; Frannie (Rashmi) Cunningham; Ariel Rodriguez, for summoning the spirits; Chris Gabo, for always having my back; Madeline Charne; Cole McCarty; Nic Vincent; Fabiola Feliciano-Batista; Jaime Totti; Mika Eubanks; Yaara Bar; Brianna Kim; Megumi Katayama; Leandro Zaneti; Gerardo Diaz Sánchez; Avi Lipski; Michael Gagliardo; Madison Kendrick; Neo Ávila, for his vision and patience; Elidia Gambini, for birthing brilliance; Matthew López, Stephen Daldry, Justin Martin & the cast of The Inheritance; Liz Diamond, Chantal Rodriguez, Tarell Alvin McCraney & James Bundy, who have been huge champions of this work; Anne Erbe, who saw the writer in me and took me under her wing; Chay Yew & Luis Alfaro, mis madrinas del teatro; Carlos Murillo & my solo performance cohort, especially Annie Calhoun; Stephen Waldrup & George Warren; MPAACT Theater Company for giving a crazy 20-year-old space and time to develop their artistic voice; About Face Theatre; Sankofa
Theatre; The Sol Project; Group.BR; Drama Club NYC; my teachers at The Theatre School at DePaul University; my teachers at Yale School of Drama; the team of Yale Cab 50, Francesca Fernandez McKenzie, Josh Wilder, Rory Pelsue & Rachel Shuey; the Barrow Street Theatre & Scott Morfee; DisQuiet International & Katherine Vaz; Templo Guaracy do Brasil; The Fab 5, The Peking Tres & The Caboose, with whom I have walked through the fire; and Hayward Leach, the man who teaches me everyday the true meaning of unconditional love.

Now, spare me your patience a little longer so I can dote on this team for a minute.

This play would not be what it is today without: Danilo Gambini, who with compassion, love, and the knowing eye of a shaman elevated this play to the realm of the magical; Nahuel Telleria, who with the gentle touch of an abuelita yet the precision of a surgeon, excavated this play for all of its poetic meaning; Stephanie Machado, who fearlessly stepped into my mother’s shoes and walked around a bit in order to better help me understand her path; Stephanie Osin Cohen, who literally pushed me into the sands of my past; Krista Smith, who finally put Bete, in all her glory, under the lights she so craved; Kathy Ruvuna, who played messenger to all the deusas and the whispers of the forgotten; Haydee Zelideth, who accentuated Bete’s every curve and let her mamita breathe; Henry, Katie, José & Jen, for holding the space; Natalie Alaby, for keeping us safe; and Daniella Topol, Yue Liu, Rodrigo Fischer & the Rattlestick family for finally bringing me home.

And, last but never least, Meryl Streep, who taught Bete everything she knows about how to be a mother. Like Spanish.
DRAMATURG’S NOTE

On Belief

During rituals, participants come together to celebrate their beliefs: they sing, they dance, they make offerings. Yet by doing these celebrations—that is, by performing agreed-upon sequences of ritual action—communal participants simultaneously enact their beliefs. In other words, they make them come true. Thus, ritual communities confirm their cosmologies and world views as well as project new ones into existence. For example, every New Year’s Day, in Rio de Janeiro, umbandistas dress in white and approach the beach to send out flowers to the goddess Iemanjá. Standing in the ocean waters, they ask for safe passage, abundance, and fertility; they give thanks to their beloved orixá and honor the ancestral practices of their Afro-Brazilian religion. At all times, rituals like the Festival of Iemanjá emerge in the present, buoyed by the strength of the past, and are carried forward in the currents of repeated behavior toward a desired and desirable future.

Rites make things happen when they work. Consequently, to achieve a specific transformation or outcome, they require distinct language, objects, gestures, and actions. Most of all, they require unwavering faith and commitment to tradition and clearly stipulated end-goals. As a theatrical rite, Ni Mi Madre invokes strength to acknowledge painful family memories. It is a rite of independence as well as a celebration of historical and social interdependence. It is a coming of age and a coming into responsibility and self-awareness. Through its fabulous trajectory, then, Ni Mi Madre produces an offering, the final requisite of a rite. Because like the rite of parenthood, of raising a family successfully, one must be willing to pay the cost, a tiny sacrifice to enact and confirm the felicitous outcome. For Bete, the price of never looking back is leaving the country of her birth. For Arturo, the price of claiming his inheritance, is this play. And for Cher, the price of an iconic dance album in the wake of heartbreak at Sonny Bono’s passing, was taking a chance on auto-tune at the brink of a new millennium. The div(a)ine mother’s lesson’s clear: to make rites work, we must believe.
Production

Arturo Luís Soria (Writer/Actor)
he/él/they or lo que sea

Arturo Luís Soria is an actor and writer with roots in Brazil, Italy, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic. He made his Broadway debut in The Inheritance by Matthew Lopez and directed by Stephen Daldry. He played Tano in the World Premiere production of Hit the Wall by Ike Holter at the Steppenwolf Garage Theatre, reviving the role off-Broadway at Barrow Street Theatre. TV credits include THE BLACKLIST and INSATIABLE. He is a graduate from Yale School of Drama and The Theatre School at DePaul University. He is currently a TV writing mentee in Lena’s Waithe’s mentorship program at Hillman Grad Productions.

IG: @arturoluissoria  Twitter: @arturosoria
arturoluissoria.com

Danilo Gambini (Director)
he/him/his

Danilo Gambini is a New York-based director, originally from São Paulo, Brazil. Directing credits include the musicals Fun Home and The Who’s TOMMY, Shakespeare’s The Tempest, Denis O’Hare and Lisa Peterson’s An Iliad, and Noah Diaz’s Rock Egg Spoon. As the Co-Artistic Director of the Yale Summer Cabaret, he directed Euripides’s Bakkhai, and adapted and directed the musical The Swallow and the Tomcat from the Brazilian children’s book by Jorge Amado. Other credits include Agreste (Drylands), Ni Mi Madre, Truck (Yale Cabaret); Opera: Don Giovanni, Ariadne Auf Naxos, Eugene Onegin (Theatro São Pedro). He has assisted directors including Robert Woodruff, Scott Ellis, Laurie Woolery, Fernando Meirelles, Iacov Hillel, and Candace Evans. He is currently the Directing Fellow at Rattlestick Playwrights Theater and part of the 20-22 Roundabout Director’s Group. Danilo holds an M.F.A. in Directing from Yale School of Drama, a B.F.A. in Film and Television (Curso Superior do Audiovisual) and an artist diploma as an actor from the School of Dramatic Art (Escola de Arte Dramática - EAD) both from the University of São Paulo.

danilogambini.com
Nahuel Telleria (Dramaturg)
he/him/él

Nahuel Telleria is Assistant Professor of Dramaturgy at the University of Oklahoma Helmerich School of Drama. He is an educator, dramaturg, translator, and writer. In 2016, he co-dramaturged Yale Repertory Theatre’s production of Happy Days, which saw remounts at Theatre for a New Audience (2017) and Mark Taper Forum (2019); his translation of Lorca’s Blood Wedding premiered at the Wilma Theater in 2017. Other credits include: Seph by Tori Keenan-Zelt (Araca Project) and Novios: Part One by Arturo Luís Soria (Yale Cabaret). Nahuel is a 2019 Fulbright research grant recipient and an MFA/DFA graduate from Yale School of Drama.

IG: @nothing2bdone

Stephanie Osin Cohen (Set Designer)
she/her/hers

This American Wife (Fake Friends + FourthWall), Circle Jerk (Fake Friends + Mitu580); Men on Boats, Richard & Jane & Dick & Sally (Baltimore Center Stage); This American Wife (Next Door @ NYTW); Good Faith (Yale Repertory Theater); LOVE (Marin Theatre Company); Ni Mi Madre (Teatro Sea); Mrs. Stern Wanders the Prussian State Library (Luna Stage); Winter’s Tale, Coriolanus (Shakespeare Academy @ Stratford); Pentecost, Much Ado About Nothing (Yale School of Drama); Sweeney Todd (Yale DRAMAT); Stephanie is based in NYC, received her MFA from Yale School of Drama, is a Fulbright Scholar, and the recipient of the 2019 Burry Fredrik Design Fellowship.

www.stephanieosincohen.com

Assistant Set Designer: Anna Grigo

Haydee Zelideth (Costume Designer)
She/her/hers

Haydee Zelideth - is a costume designer that believes that clothes are a powerful tool of one’s own personal statement. In their own way they carry on public conversations with others and they tell stories about who we are, who we are not, and who we wish to be. They are a means of exploring how to manipulate our perception of the human body and mind, which is the kind of work that Haydee pursues. She is a Mexican American that grew up on both sides of the border. These experiences inform her point of view and how she approach her work as a storyteller, giving depth, dimension and color to the specificities of someone’s life. For a more in depth look at her work, visit her website at haydeezelideth.com.
Krista Smith (Lighting Design)  
*she/her/hers*

Krista Smith is a Lighting Designer and Interdisciplinary Artist. NYC credits include: Zoetrope (Exquisite Corpse Company), Coop (Paradise Factory), At Black Lake (The Tank), Good Person of Setzuan (Atlantic Theater Company), Twin Size Beds (Public Theater’s Under the Radar Festival & Joe’s Pub), Machinal (Lee Strasberg Institute), This American Wife (New York Theater Workshop Next Door), Doll’s House Pt3 (Ars Nova). Regional work: Two River Theater Little Shakes, Triad Stage, Yale Repertory Theater, California Shakespeare Theater, Cinnabar Theater, Custom Made Theatre, Aurora Theatre, and Theatre FIRST.

www.KristaSmithLD.com

Kathy Ruvuna (Sound Design)

Pipeline, Cry It Out, Radio Golf (Everyman Theatre), Circle Jerk, This American Wife (Fake Friends), Good Faith (Yale Repertory Theatre), Twelfth Night (Two River Theatre), Read to Me (Portland Stage). B.F.A. in Sound Design - The Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University, M.F.A. in Sound Design - Yale School of Drama.

Assistant Sound Designer: Chris Gabo

Katie Young (Production Stage Manger)  
*She/her/hers*

Broadway/Tour: The King and I, Hamilton, Something Rotten, Once; Off-Broadway/Regional: Terra Firma (The Coop), In The Green (LCT3), Norma Jeane Baker of Troy (The Shed), Lewiston/Clarkston, The Few (Rattlestick), What We’re Up Against (WP Theater), Vanity Fair, Stupid F*cking Bird (Pearl), June Rites!!., The Courtroom, Blueprint Specials (Waterwell), Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, Playwrights Horizons, School of Rock, RENT, Women of Will, The Best of Everything. As Director: Paradise Lost and Found (Isle of Shoals Productions), Loyalty (Without A Net Productions), Julius Caesar (Pocket Universe). Member of the 2019 Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab. Thanks TLCCGGx5 & Henry.

www.KatieYoungTheater.com
José Noel (Assistant Stage Manager)
he/him/his

José Noel is a Director, Creator, and Stage Manager. He graduated with a BA in Theatre from CUNY Hunter College. As an undergraduate, he produced and directed Cock, Every Brilliant Thing, as well as a virtual performance of The Last Five Years. He is also a member of Emit Theatre’s Artist Ensemble which brings immersive educational experiences to learners of all kinds. José won the Arts Administration and Management award for Region 1 of the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival in 2017. He would like to thank his mother and friends for always supporting his journey!

Stephanie Machado (Assistant Director)
she/her/hers

Stephanie Machado is a Brazilian-American actress, director, and educator. Recent directing credits: Inside the Wild Heart (Assistant Director to Linda Wise, Group.BR.). The Meal: Dramatic Essays on Cannibalism (Yale Cabaret). Recent acting credits: Measure for Measure (Fiasco Theater/Actors Theater), All’s Well That Ends Well and Much Ado About Nothing (Play On Shakespeare Festival/Classic Stage Company), An Enemy of the People, Indecent and Assassins (Yale Repertory Theatre); She is a recipient of the Oliver Thorndike Acting Award, the Greer Garson Acting Award and the Jerome L. Greene Fellowship. She is a proud member of Actors Equity Association. MFA Acting Yale School of Drama, BFA Acting SMU.

Group.BR. (Community Partner)

Group.BR’s mission is to present Brazilian culture through the performing arts. It serves enthusiasts of multicultural arts, contemporary, physical and avant-garde theatre. Group .BR’s productions always incorporate the Portuguese language somehow (with English subtitles when present) offering the audience the opportunity to connect with the sound and musicality of the Brazilian language.

https://www.group.br.com/
The SOL Project (Community Partner)

Launched in 2016, The Sol Project is a national theater initiative dedicated to producing the work of Latinx playwrights in New York City and beyond. Guided by the values of joy, rigor and generosity, The Sol Project works in partnership with leading theaters around the country to amplify Latinx voices and build artistic homes for artists of color. Through the writers we champion, The Sol Project aspires to create a bold, powerful, and kaleidoscopic body of work for the new American theater.

http://www.solproject.org/

Drama Club (Community Partner)

Drama Club is an innovative non-profit organization that provides theatre programming and positive mentorship to young people who are incarcerated or court-involved in New York City. Founded in 2013, Drama Club offers year-round programming at Crossroads and Horizon Juvenile Centers, Rikers Island, and in the community, in partnership with the Door. Drama Club is committed to providing New York City's most vulnerable youth the opportunity to laugh, play, and cultivate life skills through improvisational theatre.

https://www.dramaclubnyc.org/
IN THE SOUTHERN BREEZE
by Mansa Ra (Jiréh Breon Holder), Directed by Christopher Betts
(November 3 to December 12, 2021 - presented both in-person and virtually)
Centering the black male experience across centuries of American history, this Absurdist drama follows five men who meet in the afterlife following their murders. Rattlestick first presented a reading of this play during their new plays festival in 2018, and presented a virtual workshop in August 2020 directed by Christopher Betts, followed by a community conversation facilitated by Robert Pollock.

ADDRESSLESS
Conceived and directed by Martin Boross,
Written by Jonathan Payne
(January/February 2022 - presented virtually)
An interactive theatrical game in which audiences encounter first-hand the complex challenges of homelessness. Audiences are asked to follow a character and make a series of decisions: Will their character sleep on the street or sleep in a hostel? Will they ask people for money or try to find work? While some decisions might earn the character money, they may also take a toll on their life expectancy and physical wellbeing. Rattlestick has been working with Boross since 2019 to develop this piece for New York audiences and now for an online format. The pandemic has been particularly devastating for New York’s homeless population, and Boross’s play speaks to this growing issue in ways that actively engage audiences while questioning prevailing stereotypes and fostering empathy.

For information about the benefits of becoming a Stick with Us Patron
Visit Rattlestick.org/membership-patron-program
ISOLATED INCIDENTS follows five essential workers and their families as they grapple with anxiety and the need for honesty—and how race impacts every interaction and decision they make. This majority-BIPOC majority-queer collective of writers capture stories that center the invisible front line—workers who are essential inside of the pandemic, and the lives they lead behind the job. The stories that don’t make the headlines but are just as important.

“ISOLATED INCIDENTS is an in-depth journey into the ways people grapple with racist micro-aggressions in the midst of the pandemic. It reflects and refracts the complex humanity of so many lives during this emotionally charged time. Anyone who cares about better understanding the ways in which racism impacts our everyday lives needs to listen to these stories.”

- Rattlestick Artistic Director, Daniella Topol

Listen Now at:

https://broadwaypodcastnetwork.com/podcast/isolated-incidents/
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We are grateful to the following individual for their steadfast support of *Ni Mi Madre*:
Nina and Moreson Adams, Sonja Berggren and Patrick Seaver, Lee Stump and Abby Roth, Bennett Pudlin and Ann Judd, and Bill and Sharon Reynolds.

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John McDermott
Molly McEneny
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Jasper McEneny
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Matthew McIver
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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:
We are hosted by Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, whose physical space stands on the unceded lands of the Lenape People. As both an in-person and an online event that addresses Global Issues, we recognize that in countless places in the world Native Peoples were abused, murdered and forcefully removed from their lands by ideals and actions of “land discovery” and settler colonization. We recognize and respect all the Native Peoples all over the World, and invite every individual in this event to investigate the history of the land on which they stand and their Native Peoples.
Colonization is an ongoing process that still harms and destroys lives and cultures. Let us honor, respect and hold the open space for all Native Peoples, past, present and future. This acknowledgment demonstrates a commitment to dismantle the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism.