

Theater + Arts

International Hispanic Festival showcases plays from six countries



The cast of "Los Espejos de don Quijote" ("Mirrors of Don Quixote"), which replaces "El Greco and the Theban legion" at the festival. (Tonio Figueira/Courtesy)



By **Rod Stafford Hagwood** · Contact Reporter

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Navigating the restrictions and tightened security the United States has around visas and other travel documents has always been tricky for the International Hispanic Festival of Miami, which runs July 7-24 in various venues.

"It's crazy, because they sometimes deny visas for no reason at all" says Mario Ernesto Sanchez, the festival's director. "It's very, very difficult."

But that wasn't the reason for the last minute cancellation of the play "El Greco and the Theban Legion" from the theater troupe Panicoescenico Producciones in Madrid, Spain.

"Two actors got sick that could not be replaced," Sanchez explains. "Those are the times I wish I were the director of a film festival. All you need is a projectionist, that's it."

Instead, Panicoescenico will stage "Los Espejos de Don Quijote" (Mirrors of Don Quixote), a play that throws Shakespeare into the mix with "Don Quijote" author Cervantes as they both vie for Dorothea.

"This is the official play of the 400 year anniversary [of Cervantes' death] from Spain's Ministry of Culture,' says Sanchez, who is also the founder of the 37-year-old Teatro Avante theater company in Miami. "Basically, we changed for the better. One thing I am very sure of is that everything happens for a reason, most of the time for a positive reason."

The festival will include eight productions from six countries including Argentina, Mexico, Spain, Peru, Uruguay and the United States. The productions run Thursdays through Sundays and while most performances will be in Spanish, some will have English subtitles. For a complete list, go to TeatroAvante.org.

New this year, the festival has started spotlighting invited countries, starting with Uruguay.

"That means that the poster for this year's festival was created by a Uruguayan," he says. "The life achievement award...will go to a Uruguayan actress. The festival opens with a Uruguayan play ['No Dare Hijos, Dare Versos' or 'I Won't Bring Forth Children but Poems']."

The International Theatre Festival of Miami runs July 7-24 at:

Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, 1300 Biscayne Blvd., Miami.

Miami-Dade County Auditorium, 2901 W. Flagler St., Miami.

Miami Dade College Koubek Theatre, 2705 S.W. 3rd St., Miami.

Key Biscayne Community Center, 10 Village Green Way, Key Biscayne.

Most showtimes are 8:30 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays and 5 p.m. Sundays. Tickets range from \$29-\$34 depending on the venue (some events are free). For more information or to find links to order tickets, go to TeatroAvante.org.

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