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**ENSEMBLE STUDIO THEATRE/
THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION,
LATINX PLAYWRIGHTS CIRCLE,
BOUNDLESS THEATRE COMPANY
ANNOUNCE**

**CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR
WORLD PREMIERE OF
LAS BORINQUEÑAS
BY NELSON DIAZ-MARCANO
DIRECTED BY REBECCA APARICIO
APRIL 3-28**

(New York, NY – January XX, 2024) Ensemble Studio Theatre (EST), The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Latinx Playwrights Circle, and Boundless Theatre Company announced casting and creative team for the world premiere of *LAS BORINQUEÑAS* by **Nelson Diaz-Marcano** and directed by **Rebecca Aparicio**, running April 3 to April 28 at EST's long time home on West 52nd Street, with a press opening on April 11.

Tickets for *LAS BORINQUEÑAS* are \$30 for general admission, \$40 for reserved seating, and \$25 for students/seniors. \$20 early bird pricing is available through April 2. Ensemble Studio Theatre (EST) is located at 545 West 52nd Street. For more information, visit www.estnyc.org.

The cast features **Nicole Betancourt, Hanna Cheek, Helen Coxe, Guadalís Del Carmen, Maricelis Galanes, Maribel Martinez, Paul Niebanck, Ashley Marie Ortiz, and Mike Smith Rivera.**

It's the 1950's in Puerto Rico and Maria, Fernanda, Yolanda, Rosa, and Chavela are fighting to live full lives in a changing country with crushing societal rules for women. In the United States, Dr. Gregory Pincus is on the verge of perfecting a miracle that could give them freedom - if only he could find test subjects to participate in preliminary trials. This is the story of the birth control pill and the women who risked everything for the chance to live free.

The production features scenic design by **Gerardo Diaz Sánchez**; costume design by **Tina McCartney**; lighting design **María-Cristina Fusté**; projections design by **Milton M. Cordero**; sound design by **Daniela Hart, Bailey Trierweiler, Noel Nichols, and Uptown Works**; and props design by **Caitlyn Murphy**. **Alejandra Maldonado Morales** is the production stage manager.

“We’re delighted to partner with EST on the premiere of *LAS BORINQUEÑAS*.” said **Doron Weber**, vice president and program director of the Sloan Foundation. “Diaz-Marcano’s play dramatizes the human story behind the extraordinary development of the birth control pill, one of science’s great achievements in the 20th century. While highlighting the benefits of scientific research that led to the pill, including the freedom it has granted to women around the world, the play also examines the personal sacrifices and cultural pressures behind clinical trials that precede such breakthroughs.”

CREATIVE TEAM BIOS:

Nelson Diaz-Marcano (*Playwright*) is a Puerto Rican NYC-based theater maker, advocate, and community leader whose mission is to create work that challenges and builds community. He currently serves as the Literary Director for the Latinx Playwright Circle where he has helped develop over 100 plays in the past three years. His plays have been developed by the Ensemble Studio Theatre, The Road Theatre Company, Pipeline Theatre Company, Clubbed Thumb, The Lark, Vision Latino Theater Company, The Orchard Project, The William Inge Theatre Festival, Classical Theatre of Harlem, and The Parsnip Ship among others. Recent credits include: *World Classic*(Bishop Theatre Arts Center), *Y Tu Abuela, Where is She? Part 1* (CLATA), *When the Earth Moves, We Dance* (Clubbed Thumb, Teatro Vivo), *The Diplomats* (Random Acts Chicago), *Paper Towels* (INTAR), *Misfit, America*(Hunter Theatre Company), *I Saw Jesus in Toa Baja* (Conch Shell Productions), and *Revolt!* (Vision Latino Theatre Company).

Rebecca Aparicio (*Director*) is a Cuban American, New York-based, bilingual director and writer. Recent directing: *Jardin Salvaje* by Karen Zacarias (GALA Hispanic Theatre, Helen Hayes recommended), *Beastgirl*, based on the chapbook by Elizabeth Acevedo, book by C. Quintana and music by Janelle Lawrence (Kennedy Center, Helen Hayes nominated); *The House on the Lagoon* by Caridad Svich (Gala Hispanic Theatre, Winner Best Direction Broadway World-DC), *Sarita* by Maria Irene Fornes (Roundabout Theatre Refocus Series), and *Siluetas*, book by Erlina Ortiz and music by Robi Hager (Powerstreet Theatre Company). As a director, she’s developed new work with American Repertory Theatre, Philadelphia Theatre Company, McCarter Theatre, O’Neill Theatre Center, Playwrights Center, Powerstreet Theatre Company, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Musical Theatre Factory, The Flea Theatre, Classical Theatre of Harlem, National Black Theatre, and more. Past Fellowships include: Roundabout Theatre’s Inaugural Directing Group, MTC Jonathan Alper Directing Fellow, The COOP’s Clusterf**k Writing Cohort, and a two-time SDCF Observership Award recipient. As a writer, her work includes the award-winning musical *Pedro Pan* (New York Musical Festival,

Musical Theatre Factory, Rhinebeck Writers Retreat, FringeNYC), *Tree Tales* (Prospect Theatre), *Hindsight 2020* (Live & In Color, *Legacy* (Prospect Theatre), and *The Garcia Sisters* (Red Mountain Theatre). Rebecca is a CRNY artist-in-residence with the Latinx Playwrights Circle, a steering committee member of the Latinx Theatre Commons, and is a founding member of Magic Forest Theatre (dedicated to creating new musicals for young audiences). She also serves as a board member at The Flea and Rhinebeck Writers Retreat.

CAST BIOS: [headshots](#)

Nicole Betancourt (*Chavela/Julia*) is a versatile bilingual actress and VO artist who has developed characters for film, theater and web series. NY theatre: *Zoetrope* (Abrons Arts Center), Witkacy's *Mad Man and the Nun* (PREGONES), *Storage Locker* (IATI), *UBU ROI* (IRT & INTAR), *Red* (HERE Arts Center), *Waters of Friendship* (La Tea), *A Taste Of Honey* (dir. Susan Batson). Winner of Outstanding Performance in a Leading Role (FuerzaFest). Film/TV: *She Said* (dir. Maria Schrader), Melty Face on "Orange is the New Black", Officer Spanos on "StartUp". Rep: Karen Riposo at KPA Talent.

Hanna Cheek (*Edris Rice-Wray*) NYC: *GOODBAR* (The Public), *The Blueprint Specials* (USS Intrepid), *Widowers' Houses*, *Happy Birthday* (with TACT at The Beckett), *The Persians...a comedy about war* (Perry Street), *Marco Millions* (Theatre Row), *The|King|Operetta* (Barrow Street), #9 (59E59), *Junta High* (PS122), *Hostage Song* (Kraine), *Sovereign* (Judson Gym), *Universal Robots* (Sheen Center). REGIONAL: *Other Desert Cities*, *Proof*, *Grounded*, *Heisenberg*. FILM/TV: "Gypsy" (Netflix), "Madame Secretary" (CBS), "Ugly Americans" (Comedy Central), *The Outside Story*, *All Roads Lead*.

Helen Coxe (*Lizzie*). She was last seen as Tracy Jones in *Tracy Jones* by Stephen Kaplan at Arthouse. MFA from A.C.T. Proud member of EST.

Guadalís Del Carmen (*Yolanda*) is an Ars Nova PlayGroup Alum, a founding member of the Dominican Artist Collective, and a Hermitage Residency Artist. Guadalís received a Steinberg Playwriting Award in 2020, a Helen Merrill Playwriting Award in 2023, and the HOLA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Playwriting in 2023. Her acting credits include *La Egoísta* (Actors Theatre of Louisville), *Mojada: A Medea In Los Angeles* (The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis), *Julia de Burgos: Child of Water* (UrbanTheatre Company), *Antígona* (Aguijón Theater).

Maricelis Galanes (*Rosa/Peggy Blake*) is an actress/singer from Puerto Rico and an MFA graduate from the Actors Studio Drama School. Credits include *La Traición en La Amistad* (Repertorio Español), *The Oxcart* (Roundabout Theatre Company, PRTT/Pregones), *¡GÁRGOLA!* (MCC Theater). TV/Film: "Miranda's Victim", "Fantasy Island", "The Baker and the Beauty". She is a proud member of AEA. Honored to be a voice for the women of PR in the world premiere of *Las Borinqueñas*.

Maribel Martinez (*Fernanda*) is a multi-hyphenate artist, proudly Black-Latina, with Dominican and Puerto Rican roots. Theater credits include the recent Off-Broadway premiere of *Bees & Honey* (MCC Theater - HOLA Awards nomination); *Will You Come With Me?* (PlayCo); *Julius Cesar* (New York Shakespeare in the Park); and regionally she has worked at People's Light, Shakespeare Theatre Company, American Conservatory Theater, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Folger, among others. Film/Television: "Evil" (CBS), "New Amsterdam" (ABC), "The Watcher" (Netflix), "Sacrifice" (BET+), "Dr. Death" (Peacock).

Paul Niebanck (*Gregory Pincus*). New York: *Richard III* (NYSF), *Barbecue, Plenty* (Public), *Blood and Gifts, In the Next Room...* (LCT); *A Walk in the Woods, BOY* (Keen); *The Changeling* (Redbull); *RX* (Primary Stages); *American Clock* (Signature); *A Picture of Autumn* (Mint); *Much Ado About Nothing* (TFANA); *The Seagull*, (Pearl); *Leaving Queens* (Women's Project); TV/Film: *West Side Story*, "Manhattan Romance", "Madam Secretary", "Good Fight", "The Blacklist," "Person of Interest," "Burn Notice."

Ashley Marie Ortiz (*Maria*). NYC based actor and applied theatre facilitator. Recent credits: *the beautiful land i seek (la linda tierra que busco yo)* (Faultline Theatre); *Prospect Avenue, or The Miseducation of Juni Rodríguez* (Ensemble Studio Theatre); *Foul Shots* (INTAR MICROTEATRO Festival); *FUR* (Next Door at NYTW); *Scissoring* (INTAR); *Nervous/System* (BAM); *After* (The Public Theatre); The Fire this Time Festival Season 9; *Meet me at the Fountain* (Lincoln Center Education); *Malefactions* (Chinatown Soup); *Patience, Fortitude, and other Antidepressants* (INTAR/LATC). TV: "FBI"; "Law and Order: SVU". PPE TQM

Mike Smith Rivera (*Broadcaster/Pablo*) is a Mexican-American actor, comedian, and voice-over artist from Brooklyn. He's a(n EST) member artist, UCB house sketch comedy team actor, and runs Burning Clown Productions, Inc. NY theatre credits: *34th & 35th Marathon, Sh*tloads of Money, Sisters in Blizzard* (EST), *No Dogs Allowed* (Atlantic). TV: "Only Murders in the Building", "Billions", "The Blacklist", "The Green Veil", "Brooklyn Animal Control". VO: Dora the Explorer's Papi (& more) on "¡Dora!", HBO's "Burning Rubber", "Yu-Gi-Oh" (GTA V), Tatiana Maslany's "Power Trip", and "These Were Humans" (Tribeca 2023)

INSTITUTIONAL BIOS:

The Latinx Playwrights Circle (LPC) is an artist-led development and production organization for Latinx(é) playwrights. Founded in 2018 by playwrights Guadalís Del Carmen and Oscar Cabrera with the mission to build a network of Latinx(é) and Caribbean playwrights nationwide in order to promote, develop and elevate their work while making their plays accessible to theater makers looking to find the next generation of American Storytellers. Its programs include Sunday Service, Fresh Draft Series, Greater Good Commission and Festival, Intensive Mentorship Program, LPC Community Nights, LPC Summer Jam and Page-to-Stage, whose inaugural production was *Sancocho* by Christin Eve Cato. *Las Borinqueñas* will be our second Page-to-Stage production. In 2020, LPC received a residency at Kabayitos Theater, located in the Clemente Soto Velez Center where it produces a portion of their programming. In 2022, LPC was awarded a Creatives Rebuild New York Grant (CRNY) as well as the HOLA Award for Excellence in Theater. For more information on Latinx Playwright Circle and its many programs, please visit <http://www.latinxplaywrights.com> LPC embraces the ever evolving landscape of Latinidad and the names used to describe this community, including Latiné, Latinx, Hispanic, and the next generation of names to come. Like language itself, this is an ever-evolving name.

Boundless Theatre Company is a designer-led organization seeking to investigate, push and redefine the boundaries of theatrical storytelling. Spearheaded by women, Latinx theatre-makers and other theatre-makers of color, Boundless is committed to creating inquisitive and socially relevant theatre that prioritizes the designer's vision. The company was founded in 2006 and operates simultaneously in New York City and Puerto Rico. Past projects have included the Puerto Rico premiere of *The Good Body* by Eve Ensler, the NYC premiere of *Prospect* by Octavio Solis, and the NYC premiere of *Fur* by Migdalia Cruz. Boundless also offers theatre classes for children, community arts programs for older adults, and

mentorship opportunities for early-career theatre designers of color. The company produces both Spanish-language and English-language theatre, and all community programs are offered bilingually.

The EST/Sloan Project (*Linsay Firman, Program Director*), a pioneering collaboration between the Ensemble Studio Theatre and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, is designed to stimulate artists to create credible and compelling new theatrical works that explore the worlds of science, technology, and economics and to challenge existing stereotypes of scientists and engineers in popular culture. Since its inception in 1998, the EST/Sloan Project has commissioned, developed, and produced over 300 staged plays involving over 1,000 playwrights, actors, choreographers, composers, and theatre companies nationwide. Recent notable plays include *Smart* by Mary Elizabeth Hamilton, *what you are now* by Sam Chanse, *Behind the Sheet* by Charly Evon Simpson, *Isaac's Eye* by Lucas Hnath, *Fast Company* by Carla Ching, and *Photograph 51* by Anna Ziegler.

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation is a New York-based, philanthropic, not-for-profit institution that makes grants research in science, technology, and economics; quality and diversity of scientific institutions; and public engagement with science. Sloan's program in Public Understanding of Science and Technology, directed by Doron Weber, supports books, radio, film, television, theater and new media to reach a wide, non-specialized audience and to bridge the two cultures of science and the humanities.

The Foundation has an active theater program and commissions about 20 science plays each year from the Ensemble Studio Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, and the National Theatre in London, while supporting select productions across the country and abroad. The Foundation's pioneering theater program began with a 1997 grant to Ensemble Studio Theatre for Arthur Giron's play about the Wright Brothers, *Flight*, and has helped usher in the science play as a regular part of the theater canon, making Sloan a coveted commission for any playwright engaging with a science and technology theme or character. Beginning with such renowned science plays as David Auburn's *Proof*, Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen*, and Alan Alda's *QED*, recent grants from Sloan's Theater Program have supported Mary Elizabeth Hamilton's *Smart*, Mark Rylance's *Dr. Semmelweis*, Anchuli Felicia King's *Golden Shield*, Sam Chanse's *what you are now*, Charly Evon Simpson's *Behind the Sheet*, Lucy Kirkwood's *Mosquitoes*, Chiara Atik's *Bump*, Nick Payne's *Constellations*, Lucas Hnath's *Isaac's Eye*, Anna Ziegler's *Photograph 51*, Leigh Fondakowski's *Spill*, and Bess Wohl's *Continuity*. The Foundation has also supported a 32-play radio series through L.A. Theatre Works. For more information about the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, please visit www.sloan.org or follow the Foundation at @SloanPublic on Twitter and Facebook.

Ensemble Studio Theatre (*Estefanía Fadul and Graeme Gillis, Co-Artistic Directors*) is a Hell's Kitchen-based, Off-Broadway theatre focused on the development of new work and voices since its founding by Curt Dempster in 1968. In those 55 years, EST has developed thousands of new American plays and has grown into a company of over 600 actors, directors, playwrights, designers, and stage managers. EST's mission is to develop and produce original, provocative, and authentic new work. A dynamic community committed to a collaborative process, EST is dedicated to inclusion across all aspects of identity and perspective, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexuality, physical or mental ability, physical or mental health, and recovery, while acknowledging and working to end systemic marginalization and oppression at all levels of its organization. EST discovers

and nurtures new voices and supports artists throughout their creative lives. This extraordinary support and commitment to inclusivity are essential to yield extraordinary work.

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