

CENTRAL WORKS 2016 SEASON CONCLUDES  
Central Works Joins The National New Play Network  
With The Rolling World Premiere Of “Into the Beautiful North”

## ***Into the Beautiful North***

Written by Karen Zacarías

Based on the book by Luis Alberto Urrea

Inspired by the classic western *The Magnificent Seven*

A National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere

Directed by Gary Graves

(Previews Oct 13 & 14)

**Oct 15–Nov 13**

The **Central Works 2016 Season** closes with ***Into the Beautiful North***, a new play by Karen Zacarías opening Saturday October 15 in the historic Berkeley City Club. This production marks CW’s first partnership with the National New Play Network for this Rolling World Premiere. ***Into the Beautiful North*** is based on the novel by Pulitzer Prize finalist Luis Alberto Urrea and inspired by the classic Hollywood western *The Magnificent Seven*.

With ***Into the Beautiful North***, Central Works celebrates its continuing commitment to new work that draws from history, literature and events in our contemporary world that affect life as we live it. Karen Zacarías is one of the most produced Latina playwrights in the country. This National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere is produced in partnership with Milagro Theatre Portland (OR), San Diego Repertory Theatre (CA), and 16th Street Theater (IL). It represents Central Works’ 53rd world premiere production.

In ***Into the Beautiful North*** young Nayeli leaves her home in a sleepy little seaside town in Sinaloa, Mexico, with her two best friends. They are determined to go North, on a bold quest, across the border, to bring back seven “Magnificent Mexican Men” to defend their town from drug dealers and corrupt policemen. The epic journey takes the small band of intrepid adventurers from Mexico, north to San Diego, and finally, of all places, to Kankakee, Illinois. The cast for ***Into the Beautiful North*** features Carlos Barrera, Caleb Cabrera, Samantha Cubias, Leticia Duarte, Rudy Guerrero\*, Ben Ortega, Richard Talavera and Kitty Torres (\*member AEA).

Karen Zacarías (playwright) is one of the most produced Latina playwrights in the nation in addition to being one of the inaugural Resident Playwrights at Arena Stage in Washington, DC. She was recently named in American Theater magazine as one of the top 20 most produced playwrights in the 2016-17 season. Zacarías is a core founder of the LATINO THEATRE COMMONS as well as the founder of Young Playwrights’ Theater, an award-winning theater company teaching playwriting in local public schools in Washington, DC. Ms. Zacarías’ plays have been produced across the country at the Kennedy Center, Arena Stage, Goodman, Denver Center, South Coast Rep, La Jolla Playhouse, Aurora Theatre, and many more. Her awards include: New Voices Award, 2010 Steinberg Citation-

**Best New Play, Paul Aneillo Award, National Francesca Primus Prize, New Voices Award, National Latino Play Award, Finalist Susan Blackburn, Helen Hayes for Outstanding New Play.**

Luis Alberto Urrea (novelist) has been hailed by NPR as a "literary badass" and a "master storyteller with a rock and roll heart." He is a prolific and acclaimed writer who uses his dual-culture life experiences to explore greater themes of love, loss and triumph. Urrea is a critically acclaimed and best-selling author of 16 books, a finalist for 2005 Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction, the 2015 PEN-Faulkner Award, and winner of the Kiriyama Prize and the Lannan Literary Award, among many awards and accolades. In 2000 he was voted into the Latino Literature Hall of Fame. Born in Tijuana to a Mexican father and American mother, Urrea is most recognized as a border writer, though he says, "I am more interested in bridges, not borders." He currently lives with his family in Naperville, IL, where he is a distinguished professor of creative writing at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

Gary Graves (director) has been a resident playwright and company co-director at Central Works since 1998. He has been a part of developing 53 world premiere productions with the company, many of which he has either written and/or directed. Some of the other productions he has directed for the company include *Hearts of Palm*, *Enemies: Foreign and Domestic*, *Machiavelli's The Prince*, *Reduction in Force*, *Lola Montez*, *Enemy Combatant*, *The Mysterious Mr. Looney*, *Misanthrope*, *Mata Hari*, and *Pyrate Story*. He directed the company's first collaboratively developed script, *Roux*, at the City Club in 1997. Since 2002, he has taught playwriting year-round at the Berkeley Rep School of Theater. Currently, he leads the Central Works Writers Workshop, an ongoing commissioning program that develops new works and offers a variety of playwriting classes.

Cast: (\*AEA)

Carlos Barrera (ensemble) Originally from Colombia, he has performed in numerous shows around the Bay, and some of his favorite plays include: *Marat/Sade* with the Thrillpeddlers, *SexRev* with Theatre Rhinoceros, *Homofile* with EyeZen Productions, and *Life is a Dream* at Cal Shakes.

Caleb Cabrera (ensemble) returns to Central Works for a second time this season. Past credits include; *Totem and Taboo* (Central Works), *My Mañana Comes* (Marin Theatre Company), *Water by the Spoonful* (Dirty Hands), *A Maze* (Theatre Battery), and *Year of the Rooster* (Impact Theatre). He is also part of the ensemble in Shotgun Player's 25th anniversary season, returning to their repertory schedule of *Grand Concourse* and *Hamlet* after Sinaloa has been saved. He received a B.A. from SFSU in Theatre Arts.

Samanta Yunuen Cubias (ensemble) is a graduate of UC Berkeley, where she consistently performed in main stage productions for the Department of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies. After graduating in 2012, she continued performing with local up-and-coming theatre companies, including Overcast Theatre Company (*The Proposal* by Antov Chekhov, *The Garden Party* by Vaclav Havel) and Faultline Theater (*Dead Dog's Bone* by Veronica Tjioe). Samanta currently works on staff at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre

**Leticia Duarte (ensemble)** is elated to be a part of Central Works' production of *Into the Beautiful North*. Some of her favorite Bay Area productions include *Real Women Have Curves*, *Measure for Measure*, *Tartuffe*, *March*, *The Secretaries*, *Happy End*, *Dog Lady/Evening Star*, and *The Kentucky Cycle*. She has appeared in numerous commercial spots, industrials, and has provided voice-over talent on multiple projects. The highlight of Leticia's career, thus far, was performing at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2014. Leticia attended UCLA for her BA and the UCSC for her Masters, Shakespeare and Company's Winter Conservatory, and ACT's Summer Training Congress.

Rudy Guerrero\* (ensemble) has performed with 42<sup>nd</sup> St. Moon, Alcazar Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Connecticut Repertory Theater, Foothill Music Theater (winner of the Bay Area Theater Critics Circle Award for his Principal Performance as the "Leading Player" in *Pippin*), Honolulu Theatre for Youth, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Magic Theatre, Marin Shakespeare Company, Marin Theatre Company, Pacific Alliance Stage Company, Playwrights Foundation, SF Playhouse, TheatreWorks, Willows Theater Company, and Word for Word. Television credits include the principal role in the Emmy

Award Winning Tele-Play, *Secrets*. Rudy has a BFA in Musical Theater from the Boston Conservatory and a MFA in Acting from the American Conservatory Theater.

Ben Ortega (ensemble) was last seen as *Cheche* in Ross Valley Players' production of Nilo Cruz's *Anna in the Tropics*. Some of his favorite roles include Johnny in *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*, Felix Ungar in *The Odd Couple*, George Hay in *Moon Over Buffalo*, Picasso in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, Yvan in *Art*, Daniel Kaffee in *A Few Good Men*, Verdecchia/Wideload in the one-man show *Fronteras Americanas*, Molina in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, Allan Felix in *Play It Again, Sam*, and George in *Same Time, Next Year*. Ben studied acting at UCLA and privately with Lisa Chess.

Richard Talavera (actor) has produced plays including, *The Trail of Los Siete*, *Chac*, *Macairo Meets La Muete*, *Poeta Pan*(co authored), *Popol Vuh*, and more recently, *Before The Dream* a celebration of Richard Wright and the black expats in Europe. His original idea plays include *Rampage*, *The Last Taboo*, *Land*, and in the open air, *Truly Needed Travlin' Show*. Richard enjoyed company membership in Teatro Latino and Teatro de La Esperanza, touring for many years as an actor in the US, with some shows in Mexico and even Chile. This summer to finish his play, *The Entertaining Journey*, in the Central Work's Playwright Workshop. He is the owner of The Mexican Bus.

Kitty Torres (ensemble) is a resident of San Francisco and has been performing in the theatre community as an actress, musician and within productions as a costume designer. This story lies close to her heart and she is so grateful to share this story through her role as Vampi.

**National New Play Network** (producing partner) NNPN is the country's alliance of non-profit professional theaters dedicated to the development, production, and continued life of new plays. Since its founding in 1998, NNPN has supported more than 200 productions nationwide through its innovative National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere program, which provides playwright and production support for new works at its Member theaters. NNPN also strives to pioneer, implement, and disseminate ideas and programs that revolutionize the way theaters collaborate to support new plays and playwrights. Its most recent project, the New Play Exchange ([www.newplayexchange.org](http://www.newplayexchange.org)) is changing the way playwrights share their work and others discover it. NNPN's 30 Core and more than 75 Associate Members - along with the more than 250 affiliated artists who are its alumni, the thousands of artists and artisans employed annually by its member theaters, and the hundreds of thousands of audience members who see its supported works each year - are creating the new American theater.

For over 25 years Central Works has filled a special niche for theater artists in the San Francisco Bay Area, producing more new plays by local playwrights than any other company in the region. "The New Play Theater" utilizes three basic strategies: some are products of the Central Works Method, some are developed in the Central Works Writers Workshop, and some come to the company fully developed.

Central Works Method plays bring together writer, actors and director at the very outset of the playwriting process. In a supportive workshop environment, group research and collective brainstorming contribute to the entire development of the script. The Central Works Writers Workshop is an ongoing commissioning program established in 2012. Twice a year, in 12-week sessions, 8 local playwrights are selected to develop projects through informal readings and carefully directed discussions. For more information, visit our website: [www.centralworks.org](http://www.centralworks.org)