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Boricua Béisbol at the Long Center

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By Nancy Flores
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

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Nothing brings family, cultural pride and a love of sports together in Puerto Rico like baseball. This holiday season, Austinites will get a peek into Puerto Rico's rich heritage and history with the bilingual musical comedy, Boricua Béisbol.

Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance presents the one-day only show that tells the story of Emilio, a young man who knew exactly what he wanted to do with his life until a game-winning home run sends his small-town baseball team into the playoffs. Surprising mentors from Puerto Rico's history, like the spirit of baseball legend Roberto Clemente, help Emilio with his choices. The performance brings together dance, theater and live music. To suit a diverse musical palette, the performance showcases everything from salsa to the more traditional music of the Puerto Rican mountains.

Ana María Tekina-eirú Maynard, who wrote and directed the production, made sure that there's enough context around the Spanish phrases spoken that non-Spanish speaking audience members will still easily understand.

"(Boricua Béisbol) brings to light the joys and struggles Latinos had breaking into the major leagues," Maynard said. "I've taken the stories that are in my heart and put them down on paper." Maynard credits her mentor Rupert Reyes, who is director of Teatro Vivo, for helping her achieve that. Maynard produced the performance in collaboration with Reyes, as well as baseball aficionado Edwin Baez, and sports author Jeff Katz who provided research direction.

Each year, the Puerto Rican Folkloric Dance presents original musicals as part of a series called Sembrando Herencia or planting heritage that brings to the forefront often-forgotten parts of Puerto Rico's history. "It's important for us to share our traditions with all of Central Texans, but also to hand it down to younger generations," Maynard said.

Sembrando Herencia 2011—Boricua Béisbol

Sunday, December 4 at 3pm

Long Center for the Performing Arts, Rollins Studio Theatre

General admission \$12 adults (advance)/\$14 (door), \$7 children (12 & under), free for children 2 and under

For more information, visit prfdance.org

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