

Zoot Suit: A Bilingual Edition

By Luis Valdez

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Zoot Suit: A Bilingual Edition By Luis Valdez

This bilingual edition combines the original English-language version with the first-ever Spanish translation of the critically acclaimed play by Luis Valdez, a work that cracked open the depiction of Chicanos on the stage, challenging viewers to revisit a troubled moment in our nation's history. From the moment the myth-infused character El Pachuco burst onto the stage, literally cutting his way through the drop curtain with a switchblade, Valdez spurred a revolution in Chicano theater.

Focusing on the events surrounding the Sleepy Lagoon Murder Trial of 1942 and the ensuing Zoot Suit Riots that turned Los Angeles into a bloody war zone, this is a gritty and vivid depiction of the horrifying violence and racism suffered by young Mexican Americans on the home front during World War II. Valdez's cadre of young urban characters struggle with the stereotypes and generalizations of America's dominant culture, the questions of assimilation and patriotism, and a desire to rebel against the mainstream pressures that threaten to wipe them out.

Experimenting with brash forms of narration, pop culture of the war era, and complex characterizations, this quintessential exploration of the Mexican-American experience in the United States during the 1940s was the first, and only, Chicano play to open on Broadway.

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