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Theater

BY MELISSA BEARNS



Cuentame Coyote

Bilingual theater company brings Spanish/English play to Eugene.

The coyote is one of the trickiest, most mythic characters in Latino literature, mischievous, and often malevolent. May 6 and 7 the Portland-based bilingual theater company **Teatro Milagro** brings its charged performance of *Cuentame Coyote* to the Lord Leebrick Theatre.

Written by Teatro Milagro Artistic Director Dañel Malan, the story, presented so that both English and Spanish speakers will understand, follows two orphaned sisters as they try to sneak across the border into the U.S. They enlist the help of a "coyote," a person who helps people cross the border, and agree to smuggle drugs for him in exchange for his aid.

But the human coyote abandons them in the desert. Dangerously dehydrated and near death, the sisters meet another coyote, an animal, who shares stories with them. Translated, *Cuentame Coyote* means, "Tell me a story coyote."

The desert scene is surreal and creates a sense that the sisters are somewhere between worlds — between life and death, reality and fantasy. Latino authors, from Gabriel Garcia Marquez to Isabel Allende, frequently blur the lines between what is and is not real and the genre of magical realism originated with them. By employ-

ing this technique, Malan gives a nod to an important Latino literary tradition.

The use of the coyote in both his human and animal form also plays on the important character of the animal in Latino culture and highlights the good and bad in all of us. "It's really exploring the idea that we have the potential for both inside us," said Craig Willis, managing artistic director for Lord Leebrick. "And which side do we want to bring out?"

The bilingual aspect of the play is easier to pull off than you'd think. "One person will ask a question in Spanish and the other person will answer it in English," explained Malan. "Important points of the story are woven throughout and repeated in both languages so you don't lose the important points. But it's also not repetitive if you know both languages."

Whether you know Spanish or not, *Cuentame Coyote* should be an exciting, challenging, bi-cultural experience dealing with magic, real world issues and myth.

Cuentame Coyote shows at Lord Leebrick Theatre at 8 pm, May 6 and 7, \$10 / \$8 stu./snrs. Teatro Milagro is also hosting a bilingual workshop at 2 pm, Saturday. To sign up or for more information, call 465-1506. **ew**

C O L L E C T E



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