

OSF Play “Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles” to Open at The Armory

Retelling of ancient Greek play through the lens of Mexican immigrants; lead actress Sabina Zuniga Varela interviewed

By *Melanie Sevckenko*
Of *The Skanner News*

After a six-months run at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, “Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles,” officially opens on Nov. 10 for a limited-engagement run.

Written by Chicago playwright Luis Alfaro and directed by Juliette Carrillo, the play is an interpretation of the ancient Greek tragedy “Medea” – a story of love, vengeance and transformation.

Alfaro’s version, however, is set in modern-day Los Angeles, where Medea and her immigrant family struggle with new life in America. The three-week run at The Armory features the same cast as the Oregon Shakespeare Festival production.

Los Angeles-based actor Sabina Zuniga Varela was awarded the best lead performance award for her portrayal of Medea by the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle. The Skanner spoke with Varela about the connection between people and their land from her native New Mexico.



Oregon Shakespeare Festival production of “Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles.”

This interview has been edited for space and clarity.

Previews of “Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles” begin on Nov. 4 and performances run until Nov. 26. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit: www.pcs.org/mojada

The Skanner News: The original ancient Greek play “Medea” is a story of love, betrayal and revenge. Luis Alfaro’s “Medea” interprets that play through the

lens of Mexican immigrants coming to the United States. How does the original text lend itself to the modern retelling?

Sabina Zuniga Varela: I feel like the tragedy of Medea, in terms of the Greek literature, is actually one of the most misunderstood. Folks like to zero in on Medea’s revenge – a woman’s revenge. But what it’s actually about – the root of it – is a woman who is removed from her land. And when a people is re-

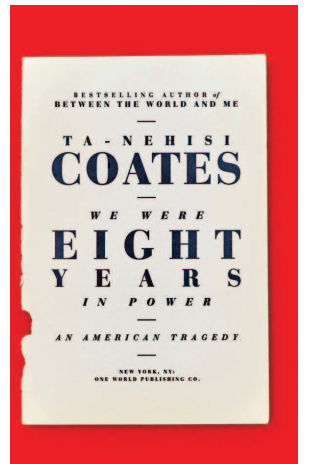
moved from their land or loses the connection to their land, there’s a lot

See **MOJADA** on page 11

Book cont’d from pg 6

transpired last November when the nation elected the candidate running on the slogan “Make America great again!” The author cites how, in the wake of the Civil War, the ex-slaves were bitterly disappointed when the egalitarian Reconstruction plan for the South was dismantled by the former Confederate states and replaced by the Jim Crow system of segregation.

That devastating development inspired black South Carolina Congressman Thomas Miller (1849-1938) to lament, “We were eight years in power” in reference to the brief period of African American optimism in terms of securing equality under the law. The quote serves a dual purpose, here, as it talks about a dream rudely deferred while simultaneously issuing a dire warning that history might very



well repeat itself. Thus, “We Were Eight Years in Power” serves as a clarion call for vigilance about the possible erosion of African American advances presumed sacrosanct. Consider these riveting, well-reasoned ruminations of the most-prodigious Black visionary around a must-read indeed.

To order a copy of We Were Eight Years in Power, visit: TheSkanner.com.

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- Undergraduate student or high school student transitioning to college
- Minimum grade point average of 2.5
- Attending a post secondary, accredited institution or planning to attend
- Plans to attend for entire academic year, beginning in fall, 12 credits per quarter
- 20 hours of active community service within past 12-months
- Leadership involvement

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