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Filipino immigrant play 'Magno Rubio' to get L.A. revival

September 14, 2011 | 2:06 pm

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This post has been corrected. See note below for details.

A fresh bilingual approach to a kinetic and touching California immigrant tale, "The Romance of Magno Rubio," will open the coming season of the [Inside] the Ford series at the John Anson Ford Theatre.

The play, whose 2002 premiere by New York's Ma-Yi Theater Company won a special Obie Award, is [Lonnie Carter's](#) adaptation of a short story by Carlos Bulosan about the hard life and far-fetched romantic dreams of a Filipino immigrant farm laborer in 1930s California. The Los Angeles Times

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described the 2003 West Coast premiere of Ma-Yi's production at the Laguna Playhouse as a "rejuvenating jolt" whose "bighearted spirit is energizing."

Carter's script, already technically bilingual, tells the tale with liberal helpings of rhyming English verse and snippets of sung and spoken Tagalog; for its Nov. 4-Dec 11 run in L.A., director Bernardo Bernardo -- who acted in a 2004 production of "Magno Rubio" by Chicago's Victory Gardens Theatre -- has, in the spirit of bilingualism, in fact turned the show monolingual by translating it entirely into Tagalog. PAE Live! will stage five performances per week, with three in Carter's original version and two in Bernardo's translation. A different Tagalog translation has been performed in Manila.

The Furious Theatre Company's world premiere of "No Good Deed" (Jan. 21-Feb. 26), by its resident playwright Matt Pelfrey, aims to lend the feel of a graphic novel to the story of a teenage illustrator who becomes a superhero in his own right.

"Naked Before God" (March 24-April 28), staged by Circle X Theatre Co., is a new comedy by Leo Geter that imagines a collision (or collusion) between protagonists from the worlds of adult film and Christian talk radio.

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-- Mike Boehm

Photo: A scene from Ma-Yi Theatre's 2003 staging of "The Romance of Magno Rubio" at the Laguna Playhouse, with Jojo Gonzalez, left, and Art Acuna. Credit: Ed Krieger/Laguna Playhouse

[**Updated: Sept. 15, 6:48 a.m.**: An earlier version of this post misstated the last name of actor Jojo Gonzalez.]

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Mr. Boehm, kindly make a correction in the photo credit. My name is Jojo GONZALEZ...not RODRIGUEZ

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