



## MARGA GOMEZ

WORDS DAVID TIANGA

*Los Big Names* directed by David Schweizer and produced by Tony Award-winning producer Jonathan Reinis and co-produced by The Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre/Miriam Colon Valle in association with Jamie Cesa.

**M**arga Gomez's one woman show, *Los Big Names*, is something very rarely seen in theater these days; it's original and timely. Like a chameleon, Gomez weaves in and out of multiple characters, telling us what it was like to grow up with overindulgent show-biz parents, as well as trying to make it as a lesbian Latina actress in Hollywood. This combination makes for a fun and interesting ride through her experiences in New York and L.A.

To open the show, Gomez comes out dressed as her father with a tuxedo top and boxers. Thus, we are informed that there will be some major exposing going on. Gomez's reluctance to give in to sympathy and nostalgia when looking back on her life is what makes this a strong piece. She lets no one off the hook as she transforms herself into Kathleen Turner, Queen Latifah, her old Puerto Rican nanny, and most of all, her father and mother.

Her father, a debonair, pompous and sometimes sweet Cuban comic, Willie Chevalier, is the central figure in the piece and by far the most interesting. The choice to change his name from Gomez to

Chevalier in order to sound more "European" speaks volumes of the identity struggles of Latin Americans in this country, especially those trying to make it in Hollywood. For Gomez, it was just one of the many eccentricities that she encountered sharing a home with two people known in their uptown neighborhood as "Los Vampiros."

To her credit, Ms. Gomez stays away from indulging too much her Hispanic heritage and brings us a show about a talented young girl who grew up neglected and confused, first by her parents, then by Hollywood. In one of the more brilliant and poignant moments of the show, she hands out an assortment of her old head shots to the crowd, each one having her in a different "look" alluding to the conflict the Latino Actor constantly faces — being asked to morph into something they are not in order to abide by the guidelines that Hollywood has deemed safe and appropriate.

Like a willful child, we can see the joy oozing out of Gomez as she gets the last laugh on Hollywood and her parents for ignoring her all those years. She breaks down the walls that show business put in front of her and created her own ticket. This is definitely a train anyone should hop on if they ever felt that they were in some way stifled or held back from achieving their authentic goals.





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