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Tlaloc Rivas

May 25 at 10:47am · Edited ·



It is not often a play written/directed by a Chicano about a Guaterican girl played by a Peruvian actress gets a 3 full page spread in a major newspaper. But here it is. Thanks to everyone who have worked so hard to bring it to life.

#JohannaCPT #NewPlay #CafeOnda #WorldPremiere — with Andrea Belser and 21 others at Gordon Square Arts District.



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If you missed the spread in *The Plain Dealer's* Sunday's arts section, check out the [full article online here!](#)



Johanna: Facing Forward

Written and Directed by Tlaloc Rivas

May 28th - June 13th

7:30pm, Gordon Square Theatre

Tickets are \$12 - \$28

Inspired by the true story of Johanna Orozco, a Cleveland teen who survived a gunshot wound to the face by her boyfriend in 2007 and whose story sparked a nation-wide movement against teen domestic violence. Based on the Pulitzer prize-winning series "[Facing Forward](#)" by *Plain*

Dealer journalist Rachel Dissell, [Johanna: Facing Forward](#) is a vivid recount of the young woman's extraordinary journey of courage and recovery. Produced in conjunction with [Teatro Publico de Cleveland](#). World Premiere.

Featuring Tania Benites, Becky Aviles, Andrea Belser, Courtney Brown, Arthur Chu, Jason Estremera, Stuart Hoffman, Leticia Lopez, Gilberto Peiza, Alejandro Rivera and Blanca Salva

Sarah Lynne Nicholas- Stage Manager

Megan Monaghan Rivas- Dramaturg

Aaron Benson- Scenic Designer

Inda Blatch-Geib- Costume Designer

T. Paul Lowry- Video Designer

Sam Fisher- Sound Designer

Michael Cunningham- Lighting Designer

Kevin Orozco- Board Operator

Sarah Lynne Nicholas- Stage Manager

An intimate and compelling peek into the creation of [Johanna: Facing Forward](#)



From left: Jason Estremera (as Juan Ruiz) and Tania Benites (as Johanna Orozco). Ruiz was sentenced to 27 years in prison in 2007 for shooting ex-girlfriend Orozco in the face after she accused him of rape. Her story of survival and courage is the subject of 'Johanna: Facing Forward,' the world-premiere play by Tlaloc Rivas. (Steve Wagner)

"Tania Benites, who plays **Johanna Orozco** in the new play that opens at Cleveland Public Theatre on Friday, May 29, sits in a hospital bed listening to voice-mail messages.

For those who don't know **Orozco's** story, one told in [a gripping series of newspaper articles by Plain Dealer reporter Rachel Dissell](#) , the calls are breadcrumbs, marking a curious trail.

An actor appearing in an alcove on an unfinished set in CPT's Gordon Square Theatre delivers each message.

The first is from a teacher at Lincoln West High School, asking the 18-year-old senior about some missing homework. She'll need to finish the assignments so she can graduate.

Another is from a bubbly girlfriend, calling about trying on dresses for prom. 'Are you still going?' she asks. 'Listen, don't worry about what everyone's saying - Michelle and I are gonna make you look bea-u-ti-ful!'

The last is a gently scolding call from **Dr. Michael Fritz**, **Johanna's surgeon**, who reconstructed her ruined face and jaw. She has to remember to turn in the proper paperwork for an upcoming dental surgery, one in a seemingly endless succession of operations to repair the skin and teeth and bone blown apart by a shotgun blast. **Juan Ruiz**, the boy she once loved, had pulled the trigger.

'Great,' says director and playwright **Tlaloc Rivas**. 'Let's do it again.'"

-excerpt from "How a shocking story of teen-dating abuse, first reported in The Plain Dealer, became the world-premiere play, 'Johanna: Facing Forward' at Cleveland Public Theatre"

[Click here to read the full article](#) by **Andrea Simakis**,
Plain Dealer journalist and theatre critic.

A local teacher uses **Johanna: Facing Forward** script as a teaching tool



Johanna Orozco dances with prom king Zlatko Zlatanov after the two were named prom king and queen at the Lincoln West prom. (Gus Chan/The Plain Dealer)

"For students at Lincoln West, Orozco's journey still has the same thought-provoking power as it did eight years ago, when many of them were in elementary school."

-excerpt from "How students at Lincoln West High school used alumna Johanna Orozco's

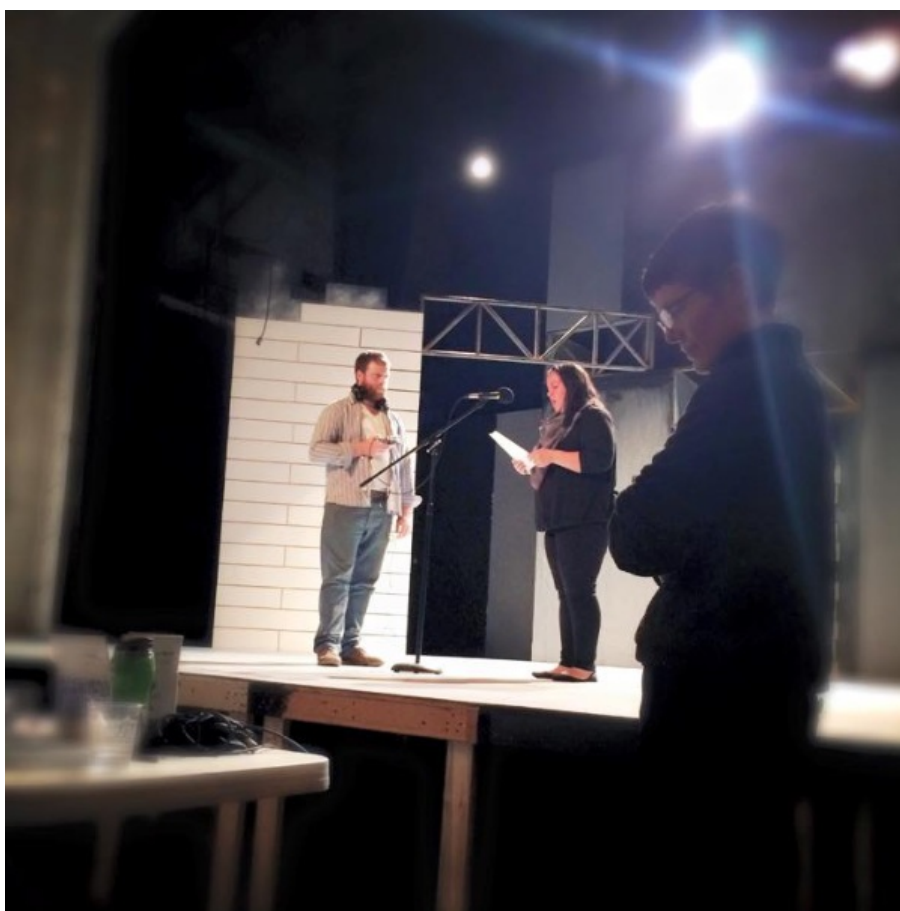
[Click here to read the full article](#) by Rachel Dissell,
journalist, *The Plain Dealer* reporter and Pulitzer Prize-winning author
of a 9-part series "Facing Forward".

Photos from the **rehearsal room...**

Photos by Jason Estremera, member of Teatro Publico de Cleveland and cast member of *Johanna: Facing Forward*



Becky Aviles, Blanca Salva and Alejandro Rivera



Sam Fisher (Sound Designer), Letitia Lopez and Megan Monaghan Rivas (Dramaturg)



Tlaloc Rivas (Playwright and Director)

Thank you to our **Johanna: Facing Forward**

partner...



Lutheran Hospital

a Cleveland Clinic hospital



Show and ticket info:

All performances take place at [Cleveland Public Theatre](#) , Gordon Square Theatre
6415 Detroit Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44102.

[Johanna: Facing Forward](#) runs May 28 - June 13. Tickets are \$12-\$28 .

Shows are Thur/Fri/Sat/Mon at 7:30pm. Thursday and Monday shows are just \$12!

For tickets and show information, call the CPT Box Office at [216-631-2727 x501](tel:216-631-2727) or visit
www.cptonline.org .

FREE BEER FRIDAY is every Friday at CPT. Audience members are invited to mingle with artists
after the show and enjoy a drink on CPT!

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upcoming productions!

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