Visión Latino Theatre Company Presents
Karen Zacarías’s Just Like Us
Cast Announcement

(Chicago, IL) Visión Latino Theatre Company (VLTC) kicks off their Fifth Season with a remount of Karen Zacarías, Just Like Us. Performances of Just Like Us will be held at Jedlicka Performing Arts Center (3801 S Central Ave, Cicero, IL). Visión Latino Theatre Company, is a 501(c)3 Not for Profit Theatre Company in Chicago, who produce and perform stories that break down racial boundaries. VLTC’s mission is to open the minds of their audiences to Latinx struggles and perseverance through theatre.

Based on Helen Thorpe’s bestselling book, this documentary-style play follows four Latina teenage girls in Denver—two of whom are documented and two who are not—through young adulthood. Their close-knit friendships begin to unravel when immigration status dictates the girls’ opportunities, or lack thereof. When a political firestorm arises, each girl’s future becomes increasingly complicated. Just Like Us poses difficult, yet essential questions about what makes us American.

Playwright Karen Zacarias- interviewed in 2013 describes the importance of writing this piece:

“I am a Mexican immigrant myself, and I am a straight-A student like these girls,” says Zacarias. “And this is a story I don’t see on stage, the story of the good girls, the story of the hardworking families, the story of not the gangs and the barrio and all of that, but the story of millions and millions of people who are in this country just working and trying to get through every day.”

Artistic Director Xavier Custodio helms his fifth production at VLTC featuring Flavia Pallozzi (Helen Thorpe), Emily Morales-Cabrera (Marisela), Jocelyn Sanchez (Yadira), Daniela Martinez (Clara), Aisznah Maria Rangel (Elissa/Zulema), Johnny Garcia (Fabian, Tom Tancredo, Recruiter, Cezar Mesquita, Carlos, Federico Peña, and Cop), Ana Santos (Josefa, Mrs. Smith, Carol Vizzi, and Lisa Martinez), Yajaira Custodio (Yolanda, Ana, Cynthia Poundstone, Lucy, and Business Woman, and Dylan Cruz (Julio, Ramiro, and Mike McGarry)

The creative team for Just Like Us includes Xavier Custodio (Director), Nicholas Schwartz (Scenic Designer), Cristan Solis (Sound Designer), Conchita Avitia (Lighting Designer), Yajaira Custodio (Costume Designer, Associate Artistic Director), Flavia Pallozzi (Associate Artistic Director)

More on Playwright, Karen Zacarías
Karen Zacarías award-winning plays include the sold-out/extended comedy THE BOOK CLUB PLAY, the sold-out world premiere drama JUST LIKE US (adapted from the book by Helen Thorpe) at Denver Theater Center, the Steinberg –citation award play LEGACY OF LIGHT, the Francesca Primus Award winning play MARIELA IN THE DESERT, the Helen Hayes Award winning play THE SINS OF SOR JUANA, the adaptation of Julia Alvarez’s HOW THE GARCIA GIRLS LOST THEIR ACCENTS. Karen also has a piece in the Arena Stage premiere of OUR WAR. Her TYA musicals with composer Debbie Wicks la Puma include JANE OF THE JUNGLE, EINSTEIN IS A DUMMY, LOOKING FOR ROBERTO CLEMENTE, CINDERELLA EATS RICE AND BEANS, FERDINAND THE BULL, and FRIDA LIBRE. Her musical CHASING GEORGE WASHINGTON premiered at The Kennedy Center for Performing Arts and went on a National Tour. Her script was then adapted into a book by Scholastic with a foreword by First Lady Michelle Obama.

Her awards include: New Voices Award, 2010 Steinberg Citation-Best New Play, Paul Aneillo Award, National Francesca Primus Prize, New Voices Award, National Latino Play Award, Finalist Susan Blackburn, Helen Hayes for Outstanding New Play.

Karen is the first playwright-in-residence at Arena Stage in Washington, DC and has taught playwriting at Georgetown University. She is the founder of Young Playwrights’ Theater, an award-winning theater company that teaches playwriting in local public schools in Washington, DC. YPT won the 2010 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award from the White House as one of the most innovative arts programs in the nation. The YPT curriculum is currently being used in public schools in DC, VA, MD, New Orleans, Detroit, and Texas and is published on Amazon as “WRITE TO DREAM.”

More on Director, Xavier Custodio

Xavier Custodio (Artistic Director/Director) is one of the Co-Founders of Visión Latino Theatre Company. Currently, Xavier is the Fine and Performing Arts Department Chair at South Shore International College Prep. Xavier Custodio holds a Bachelor of Music Education from VanderCook College of Music and a Master of Arts in School Leadership from Concordia University of Chicago. He has been in the following productions: The Scarecrow (Minster Dodge), Rent (Benny), Godspell (John the Baptist), Man of La Mancha (Juan), Nine Lives: A Musical Web Series (BFPS Manger), Evita, Ragtime, and The Wiz. His directing credit includes: Fame, In The Heights, Yellow Eyes, Revolt, Just Like Us, and Parachute Man (Assistant Director). Xavier Custodio has trained with Randy Buescher (Your True Voice Studio) and Janet Louer (Acting). Xavier Custodio won the 2019 ALTA Awards’ Outstanding Director of a Production- Musical

WHEN
Friday, Saturday & Sunday March 20-22 and March 27-29

TICKETS:
Online at www.JPAC-JustLikeUs.Eventbrite.com and at the door on the night of performance.

Evenings
Friday - Saturday, 7:30PM

Matinees
Sundays, 2:00PM

Tickets - Adult $15, Senior $10, Morton College Students, Faculty & Staff - Free
More Information may be found at www.visionlatino.com

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