

Cuartoymidad Teatro *presents*

A
UNIVERSE
(ALONE)

cuartoymidad
teatro



www.cuartoymidadteatro.com

SUPPORTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF MADRID
CONTEMPORARY CREATION FUND



MADRID

A UNIVERSE (ALONE)

«To consider is to think among the stars.»

Given the limitations we each have on our time, and the level of pollution within our cities, we now see fewer and fewer starry nights, without stopping to think about where we really live. In *A Universe (Alone)* we dance with and among the stars, and play with what it means to look together at both our universe and The Universe at the same time, to look towards our place in the cosmos. Fernando de Retes, actor and physics educator, opens up a window to the mysteries of space, dissolving the borders between theatre and science, to show us how we are no more and no less than 'stardust'.

A Universe (Alone) is the third play by Cuartoymitad Teatro, and was devised following a theatre research and acting lab supported by the 2017 City

Council of Madrid Literary Creation Fund, and selected for the first technical residency at the Centro Conde Duque de Madrid.

As a unique form of exploration in which we reconcile different levels of the Universe – the astronomic and the quotidian, the individual and the collective, memory and the imagination – through a series of games with the audience, scenic space in the play is broken down and built back up again allowing the audience to look through its cracks. It is a monologue interwoven with video projections and live action audio recordings, audiovisual documentation, video-mapping, fusing an intricate soundscape including jazz music with the poetry of autofictionalised text.



Synopsis

Can the universe fit in a theatre?

A Universe (Alone) is a leap into the void. It is that sense of estrangement we feel when we find ourselves reflected in the space beyond –

as much in a quotidian setting, as in the theatre. It is a dialogue between the actor and physicist Fernando de Retes and the audience – through a series of memories, and the power of the imagination, we are led on a journey through universes at once intimate and cosmic.

Fiction and reality intersect

in an exciting game in which Fernando uses everyday objects, jazz, video projections, and live audio to shake his (and our) certainties – both the everyday and the cosmic – and to locate himself (and us) in the unknown.

Reviews

«Cuartoymitad Teatro has once again surprised us with this gem.»

Todos al Teatro

«From the question of how to fit the universe into a theatre, childhood games, memories, our most elementary feelings, love, to the question of our existence, these and other questions unfold before the spectator with perfect execution.»

Art is a powerfull weapon

«Those who live, rather than just observe this play will laugh and even cry as they discover that the actor's experience is their own experience, too. And perhaps, after leaving this universe created on stage, they will change their way of seeing and feeling. [...] a theatre that hurts, that opens wounds and relives memories, without anaesthesia, but shaped by Cuartoymitad Teatro into the most beautiful form imaginable.»

Proyecto Duas

«Delicious, surprising, poetic, universal and intimate, and from start to finish captures the audience with a growing interest and excitement [...] An emotional tour of that immense and black mass, as unknown as it is beguiling, that we know as the cosmos. But at the same time, it is an intimate journey into what it is to be human, what it is to be every one of us»

Diario Crítico

«When a company gives everything on stage to create a journey like this, one can only give thanks.»

Travesías Culturales,
Cuaderno de Bitácora

«Just the right amount of science, education, poetics, irony, philosophy, sincerity, etc. [...] This play has it all.»

A Golpe de Efecto

«An entertaining and informative way to understand our place in the cosmos.»

El País

The company



Since its inception in 2013, Cuartoymitad Teatro has worked tirelessly to create works that ask urgent questions about today's society. We are interested in developing transdisciplinary lines of enquiry that forge links with other arts, sciences, philosophy, feminism, and political activism, by developing workshops and holding meetings following performances of our previous projects.

We live in challenging times, but in spite of the precariousness that characterises our present moment, we push ourselves to maintain decent working conditions and to ensure that our creations achieve the longest lifespan possible. To do this, we looked beyond our own borders to share our work on national and international tours.

We have performed many cultural activities, site-specifics (like "*Lo que (no) se ve*", at

Matadero Center in Madrid), and teach at acting and drama labs in different countries.

With *Escriba su nombre Aquí* [Please, fill in Your Name] (2013), and *(Des) de los escombros* [On/From Debris] (2015), we got the second prize at the Certamen de Jóvenes Creadores in Madrid, and we have performed in many Theater Festivals, in Spain and abroad.

Working together with the Spanish Agency AECID, and the Spanish Ministry of Culture, we have performed in USA, Nicaragua, Cuba, Colombia, Ecuador, México...

In 2019 our artistic Directors, María Prado y Fernando de Retes, have developed the play *Impulsos(bpm)* within the program "written from the Stage" promoted by the National Drama Center of Spain.

Cuartoymitad festivals and prizes 2013—2018

- V International Solo Festival of Xalapa (Veracruz, México)
- Rapid production of *On/From debris* in Cervantes Theatre (London, UK)
- XV International Theatre Festival Tiempos de Mujer (Quito, Ecuador)
- XXVI International Theatre Festival Mujeres en Escena por la Paz. (Women for Peace) (Bogotá, Colombia)
- II International Theatre Festival FITeatro Riviera Maya (Playa del Carmen, México)
- VI International Theatre Festival Escena Mazatlán (Mazatlán, México)
- XXX International Hispanic Theatre Festival (Miami, EE.UU.)
- XVIII International Theatre Festival (Managua, Nicaragua)
- Fábrica de Arte Cubano. (La Habana, Cuba)
- III International Theatre Festival in Mairena del Alcor (Sevilla, España)
- V Cicle Companies en Xarxa de Teatre Tantarantana, Barcelona.
- XXXI National Festival "Espiga de Oro" de Azuqueca de Henares. (Spain)
- Theatre campaign for the Junior Red Cross: "Diversity, Our Best Option".
- Second prize at the XXII Certamen de Jóvenes Creadores de Madrid (Youth Creative contest of Madrid)

National and international tours supported by:



fundación **sgae**

A UNIVERSE (ALONE)



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Artistic team

María Prado

WRITER
DIRECTOR

María is a playwright, director, actor, and educator. She has a degree in Dramatic Art (Textual Interpretation) from the Royal School of Dramatic Arts of Madrid, a Masters in Theory and Cultural Criticism, and a Masters in Theatre Creation (with distinction), led by Juan Mayorga, from UC3M. She further developed her training with Will Keen, Declan Donnellan, Joanne Howarth (Shakespeare's Globe), among others, and at the Teatro de la Abadía and with Michael Chekhov Association in Canada. As a playwright, her training includes workshops with Mark Ravenhill, Martin Crimp (2016 Venice Biennale), Rafael Spregelburd, among others. In 2009,

she was selected as an actor for the second Joven Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico. Since 2013, she has combined her work as an actor with that of a playwright, director and producer at Cuartoymitad Teatro. In 2015, she wrote and directed (Des)de los escombros [On/From Debris], published in Spanish by Ediciones Antígona, and in English in the International Theatre Forum Journal.

She was awarded a grant by the Centro Dramático Nacional (CDN) for the L'Obrador d'estiu international playwrighting laboratory with Simon Stephens at the Sala Beckett in Barcelona and her playwrighting project La ciudad rota was selected for the VI Programa de Dramaturgias Actuales of the Spanish National Institute of Scenic Arts and Music. María co-writes and directs Un universo (solo) [A Universe (Alone)] with Fernando de Retes and in 2019, she has written and directed Impulsos (bpm) [Impulses, bpm] as part of the Escritos en la Escena programme of the CDN, performed at the Teatro María Guerrero in Madrid.

www.mariaprado.net

Fernando de Retes

ACTOR
WRITER
DIRECTOR

Fernando is an actor, director, playwright, physics educator, and co-director of Cuartoymitad Teatro.

He has a degree in Physics from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and trained at the Guindalera Escena Abierta with Juan Pastor. He further developed his actor training with Frans Winther and Tage Larsen del Odín Teatret, Macarena Pombo, Arnold Taraborrelli, Will Keen, Lidia Otón, J. Howarth (Globe Theatre), and Acciones Imaginarias, among others. As a playwright, he has worked with Rafael Spregelburd, Antonio Rojano, and Sanchis Sinisterra (and currently forms part of his permanent collaboration at the Nuevo Teatro Fronterizo).

Fernando has performed in numerous theatre productions with companies such as UR Teatro, Teatro del Filo, Teatro en Serie, Teatro de Poniente, Sudhum Teatro, Stroke114, and the CDN, and his television credits include: Hernamos y detectives, Gran Hotel, Hernán Cortés: Un hombre entre Dios y el Diablo, Malintzin, Historia de un enigma, among others.

Since 2014 he has also worked as a planetarium astronomy educator, and since 2018 with the immersive astronomy experience Lo que (no) se ve [What you can('t) see] performed by Cuartoymitad Teatro at the Matadero de Madrid.

www.fernandoderetes.com

Artistic team

Irene Maquieira

SOUND DESIGN

Trained at the Cristina Rota School of Acting from 2008 to 2012, Irene has completed courses led by Claudio Tolcachir, Fernanda Orazi,

Carla Hool, Benito Zambrano, David Serrano... She completed her Masters in Theatre Creation at UC3M, directed by Juan Mayorga and led by tutors including Miguel del Arco, Enzo Cormann, Álvaro Tato, among others. As an actor, she has performed in numerous productions.

She is a professionally qualified viola player and is trained in classical, Spanish, contemporary, jazz, and afro dance (tutors included Carmen Roche, Antonio Najarro, Rubén Olmo, Eva Yerbabuena, among others.). In 2015 she further developed her sound design training for the theatre with tutors including Álvaro Tato and Nick Powell and worked with Cuartoymitad Teatro creating sound design for (Des)de los escombros [On/From Debris].

In 2019 she worked with the CDN to create a soundscape for the play Impulsos (bpm) [Impulses, bpm] by María Prado.

Rubén Vejabalbán

LIGHTING AND VIDEO DESIGN

Rubén is an artist, researcher, entrepreneur and innovator, working in the field of artistic creativity. Since 2001, together with Eva Ejido, he has promoted Acciones Imaginarias, a theatre company in which he acts as artistic director and with which he has created and premiered more than a dozen plays and garnering numerous awards. As a theatre professional he specialises in scenic technology, photography, and lighting and video-art, and has worked with a number of companies, creating audiovisual installations and carrying out various technical and artistic roles, including his work for the Spain-Mexico-Colombia coproduction

¿De qué estamos hablando? [What Are We Talking About?] and the opera Leviatán [Leviathan], performed at the Teatros del Canal in Madrid in 2015.

Lucía de Retes

SCENIC AND COSTUME DESIGN

Trained at the Superior Technical School of Architecture of Madrid, Lucía has completed numerous courses relating to her many interests: landscapes, sustainable architecture, ecological urbanism or systems of representation. Her work has seen her develop projects across various distinct areas, from the urban and landscape-related, to artistic interventions of a smaller scale, and temporary architectures. In 2015 she worked for the first time with Cuartoymitad Teatro, heading up scenic design for (Des)de los escombros [On/From Debris].

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UN
UNIVERSO
(SOLO)



ILUSTRACIÓN DE LUCÍA DE RETES

Escrita y dirigida por
Fernando de Retes y María Prado

www.cuartoymitadteatro.com

Production poster. Original illustration by Lucía de Retes

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Technical information

Company

Cuartoymitad Teatro

In collaboration with

Fundación Aisge

Supported by

City Council of Madrid

Contemporary Creation Fund.

Photography

David Sagasta

Design

Diego Areso

Title

A Universe (Alone)

Duration

75 minutes

Minimum stage dimensions

7m (width) x 7m (depth)

**Minimum setup/
dismantling time**

8 hours setup, 2 hours
dismantling

Minimum lighting:

24 channel dimmer

DMX cable from dimmer to stage

18 - PLANO-CONVEX WITH VISORS

3 - 14-35° ZOOM ELLIPSOIDAL

6 - PAR 64

5 - QUARTZ LAMPS WITH FLOOR
SUPPORT

Power: 30 KW

Minimum sound:

Sound desk (4 channels).

Canon (XLR) cable from desk to
stage



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From this distant vantage point, the Earth might not seem of any particular interest. But for us, it's different. Consider again that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us.

On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives.

The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every 'superstar,' every 'supreme leader,' every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there — on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.

Carl Sagan — Pale Blue Dot — 1990



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