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# La Razón Blindada: Reason for Theatre

Adam Leipzig · Sunday, February 20th, 2011

If windmills can be knights in battle, then chairs with wheels can be windmills.

Standing on the shoulders of Cervantes, Kafka and Beckett, the play *La Razón Blindada (Armored Reason)* is a work of theatre that's simple and complicated at the same time. The play is simple because it is made out of poverty – two actors, no set, a few chairs and tables on wheels. Complicated because the actors represent political prisoners who tell each other stories for the one hour each week they are not in solitary confinement. In that hour, they invent theatre to keep themselves sane. They become Cervantes's Quixote and Sancho Panza, Kafka's K and Gregor Samsa, Beckett's Vladimir and Estragon.

The rules of the prison are simple. The prisoners must stay seated in their chairs for that one hour. If they stand, they will be shot.

So the chairs become windmills.

Written and directed by Argentine-born Aristides Vargas, *La Razón Blindada* is a world-class production. The play is perfectly written and, as performed by Jesus Castaños-Chima and Tony Duran, it is funny, moving and existential. This US premiere at the 24th Street Theatre is easily the best theatre in Los Angeles right now. It is performed in Spanish with English supertitles that capture some but not all of the nuance and cultural references.

Here's my recommendation. If you love theatre, buy your tickets now. Even if you understand no Spanish, you will be mesmerized. The show's in its fifth extension and closes March 19, and the 24th Street Theatre is so generous that there are free tamales and drinks in the lobby.

If you run a mid-size theatre (that's you, Michael Ritchie, Mark Murphy, Marc Masterson, and Jose-Luis Valenzuela) move this show to a larger house. Offer free tamales, too.

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