

# EL RETRATO DE JUAN RANA

by SEBASTIÁN RODRÍGUEZ DE VILLAVICIOSA  
translated by DR. PETER E. THOMPSON  
directed by ELENA ARAOZ  
Innovations in Socially Distant Performance  
Resituating the Comedia, UCLA, 2021



from Peter E. Thompson's  
introduction to Villaviciosa's 1663  
work...

"The portrait noted in the title is the chief theatrical motif and motor of this *entremés* written by Sebastian de Villaviciosa. During this period the sitter, usually a person of great social and political stature, controlled what was to be painted and how. However, subject matter had already begun to change as seen in many of Velázquez's portraits of commoners. *El retrato de Juan Rana* exposes the selective and deceptive view of the subject and reality, while representing the evolution of the portrait as a genre. While surely an allusion to the existing Juan Rana portrait presently in the collection of the Real Academia Española, the plot of the *entremés* centres on the painterly ruse employed by his wife and cohorts that thwarts Mayor Juan Rana's misguided desire to leave his village for the royal court."



**Brad Fraizer (Juan Rana)** is ecstatic to be back making theatre with Elena Araoz since they last worked together Off-Broadway over 12 years ago! New York: *Three On A Couch*, SoHo Playhouse; *Expatriate*, Manhattan Theatre Source; *Behind the Sticks*, Cherry Lane Theatre; *The Contrast* among other plays, Metropolitan Playhouse; *The Winter's Tale*, New York Classical Theatre. Regional: *A Christmas Story*, Rep. Theatre of St. Louis; *The Matchmaker*, Ford's Theatre; *Alice*, Kennedy Center Nat'l Tour; *The History Boys* and *How the Other Half Loves*, Northern Stage; *Shear Madness*, Heritage Theater Fest., VA; *Twelfth Night*, Kentucky Shakes. Fest.; *Tartuffe*, Virginia Rep. Theatre. Television: Law & Order: SVU, Guiding Light, FBI, Shades of Blue, Madame Secretary, The Blacklist, Quantico, Luke Cage, Turn, Billions. MFA University of Virginia; BFA University of Michigan.

**James J Ruth (The Painter)** is an actor originally from the DMV (DC MD VA) area who is currently enjoying his vacation from acting as he pretends to be a Broadcast Engineer. James has worked with a number of companies including SITI, White Snake Projects, and FUSE Productions, as well as productions for numerous colleges and universities as he helps piece together their new definitions of theatre.

**Marlene Beltran (Casilda)** is an actor, director, singer, songwriter and teaching artist. She is an alumna of the California Institute of the Arts. Her most recent theatrical production was in August of 2020, where she performed in the virtual live streamed play: *a farm for meme*, written by Virginia Grise and directed by Elena Araoz. She can also be seen in the AdeRisa / Rebozo Boy Productions independent short film *La Serenata*; directed by Adelina Anthony, which won the "Best Short Film" Imagen Award in 2019 and is currently screening on all HBO platforms. She recently served as a director for the National Hispanic Media Coalition 2019 Latino Showcase, which took place in Los Angeles at the El Portal Theatre. Her musical collaborations are as a member of performance groups, In Lak Ech: a Chicana poetry and song circle; fused to the heartbeat of native drums, and Cuicani: a World Soul music collective that released their debut double album, Now & Then in 2016 and released three new singles in the Summer of 2020. She is currently a dedicated lead teaching artist with About Productions...Theater Company and The Unusual Suspects Theatre Company; working with underserved and incarcerated youth in Los Angeles and surrounding communities.

**Elena Araoz (Director)** directs theater, opera, and virtual performance. Upcoming, Elena will direct the interactive experience *Manic Monologues* (McCarter Theatre), *Anna in the Tropics* (Barrington Stage), Marisela Treviño's audio drama *Nightfall* (Audible). Past productions at BAM, Cherry Lane, New York City Opera, Prague Shakespeare, New York Theatre Workshop Next Door, Bucharest International Theatre, People's Light, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis, Glimmerglass Opera, Oregon Symphony, to large-scale performance events for PEN American, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Anna Deavere Smith's Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue. The *New York Times* dubbed Elena's virtual *a farm for meme* as "form-busting" for its unique combination of "box puppets, shadow play, live film and archival footage into a gorgeous mise-en-scène that feels theatrical in its purposefully homemade aesthetic." The *Wall Street Journal* raved, "A remarkable new environment for operatic experimentation," about her virtual CGI/motion-capture opera *Alice in the Pandemic* (White Snake). At Princeton University she leads Innovations in Socially Distant Performance.

**Innovations in Socially Distant Performance** is a project which studies the aesthetics, philosophies, tools, and artists who are transforming the fields of virtual live performance and socially distant productions. ISDP's continually updated website is a place to create community, share information, inspire invention, and document the expanding art form, with an emphasis on sharing the tools and techniques of a reimagined trade. The Library of Congress is archiving the entirety of ISDP's work for "The Coronavirus Web Archive" which contains select web-based evidence to document the effect of the coronavirus pandemic on every aspect of American life and the many communities within the United States." The research project is led by Elena Araoz and is housed at Princeton University where she is a faculty member.

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