

THE VILLAGE

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Twenty years after Fidel triumphantly enters Havana, entrepreneurial Mama, domestic helper in tow, leaves Cuba to be reunited with Marita, her Miami-based daughter. The ensuing emotional, memory-laden interaction in Luis Santeiro's *The Lady From Havana* (INTAR) is couched in predictable dialogue and scenes, with the obligatory contrast between socialist reality and the American Dream's cold-hearted emptiness. I thought that by the second act, set 10 years later, Santeiro would go beyond this well-mined territory to new ground. Unfortunately, he doesn't. Instead, he substitutes three old Cuban friends of the now deceased mother for the first act's trio, but only to continue the same discussions. Santeiro opts for facile laughs, rendering much of the play a discrete packet of Simonized bits. The feel and grit of Miami, or Havana for that matter, and even intimations of a world now thumbing its nose at dogma, are nowhere to be glimpsed. The play confirms my belief that exile is one of the hardest subjects to write about and therefore one of the easiest to stumble over. —Luis H. Francia