

# Theater

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## ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

What the title of Migdalia Cruz's "Another Part of the House" refers to is "The House of Bernarda Alba" by Federico Garcia Lorca. Focusing on Bernarda's mother, Maria Josefa, who is kept locked up as a madwoman in the Garcia Lorca play, Ms. Cruz tries to spell out the sexual frustrations and personal anxieties of all the women in Bernarda's household: sufferings muted to silence and left to the audience's imagination in the earlier play.

## FULL TEXT

Not the Sort of Household That Inspires Return Visitors  
'Another Part of the House'  
Classic Stage Company

What the title of Migdalia Cruz's "Another Part of the House" refers to is "The House of Bernarda Alba" by Federico Garcia Lorca. Focusing on Bernarda's mother, Maria Josefa, who is kept locked up as a madwoman in the Garcia Lorca play, Ms. Cruz tries to spell out the sexual frustrations and personal anxieties of all the women in Bernarda's household: sufferings muted to silence and left to the audience's imagination in the earlier play.

The ancient Maria Josefa, vividly realized here by Irma St. Paule, is a devastating force of subversion, exposing the emptiness of her daughter's repressive regime and enticing her granddaughters into shattering sexual fantasies. The jealousies, hatreds and desires these arouse, including a lesbian liaison between two sisters, are palpable, and passionately portrayed. Ms. Cruz borrows from other Garcia Lorca works for dialogue and for lyrics, some of them quite humorous. And deft direction by David Esbjornson of a generally strong cast, a stark white set by Chris Muller and Kenneth Posner's moody lighting combine for some spectacular moments.

But to succeed in this kind of exercise, one has to gut the original story and turn it into something entirely different. Ms. Cruz keeps much of the original and it overwhelms her, despite her addition of a singularly inappropriate comic coda. Garcia Lorca's play is a single great metaphor for the morbidity of a whole nation and culture; it cuts away detail until we see one terrible vision. "Another Part of the House" is mostly a heap of distractions; it is like staring at the rubble knocked off the other play, piece by piece.

Performances continue at the Classic Stage Company (136 East 13th Street, East Village) through April 6. D. J. R. BRUCKNER

## Photograph

Irma St. Paule in Migdalia Cruz's "Another Part of the House." (T. Charles Erickson/"Another Part of the House")