

CAP-A-PIE

by

MARIA IRENE FORNES

In collaboration with the Cap-a-Pie Company

Ivan Acosta

Jose Rafael Arango

Vicenta Aviles

Doris Castellanos

Vera Colorado

Iris Diaz

Ruben Rebasa

Johnny Robles

Music by

JOSE RAUL BERNARDO

Set by

JAMES JOINNER

First Produced at INTAR 420 W 42nd St. NYC 10036

© Maria Irene Fornes 212-yu 9 7216

The stage is dimly lit. As the PIANIST enters and through the Overture, the lights on the piano area become gradually brighter. At a given point, the ACTORS enter from the front of the house carrying their chairs. The stage becomes somewhat brighter as they enter. THEY place the chairs between the platform and the side walls, 4 on each side facing front. Their places are from front to back; to the right: IRIS, RUBEN, VICENTA, JOHNNY; to the left: DORIS, VERA, IVAN, JOSE RAFAEL. After placing his chair RUBEN goes to the upper platform left and sits. A soft light goes on Ruben. The REST sit on their chairs. The music fades.

ASI MIRANDO  
JUST LOOKING

RUBEN

Yo, cuando estoy en un lugar bello, es una cosa que me satisfice el espiritu. I can be in a place, just sitting. In a park. And I feel content and satisfied. Y me puedo estar horas que no tengo sentido del tiempo ni nada. I have been in the Cloisters and I have spent a whole Sunday sitting in the garden. Nada más que sentado. Just looking. Así, mirando.

(Cap-a-Pie theme as IRIS goes down-right. Light goes on Iris as it fades on RUBEN)

ETAPAS  
STAGES

IRIS

I left Cuba a los trece años to go to a nun's school in Key West. Then, para ir al college tuve que ir a Miami. When I finished college I had to leave again, because Miami is not a place where I could have lived. Y vine a Nueva York.

## IRIS (Continued)

Mi vida consiste en dejar cosas atrás y volver a empezar otra vez. And each time I look back, I see groups of people that I had to leave behind. Y cada etapa son como bloques. And those blocks keep mounting. And there is no connection. The only connection is in the memory. And there's no connection. And then, it's you here. Right now.

(Music)

Me here.

(Music)

You there.

(Music continues through)

And each time I look back.

I see groups of people

That I had to leave behind.

But I move forward.

Me here.

You there.

And then,

Here we are.

Here.

Right now.

(Turning to RUBEN)

Right?

(Turning front)

Right.

(While the music continues RUBEN joins IRIS. THEY both go to their chairs and VICENTA steps on the platform. There is more general light on stage)

CAER  
FALLING

VICENTA

When people fall they hurt themselves, because they don't know how to fall. I can fall without hurting myself. Like this.

(SHE falls)

## VICENTA (Continued)

You fall on the fleshy part of the leg below the knee. Then, the rest is so close to the floor you just go down. I learned how to fall with a friend who had to learn because she took a course in music composition at the New School. There doesn't seem to be a connection but her teacher had techniques to open people up to sounds so that they could compose, abstract composition. And her sound in that orchestra situation was the sound of falling, which was equivalent to a drum in a regular kind of orchestra or the cymbals. And all the sounds they had as instruments were made with their bodies. So Etta's sound was falling, and she had to practice, rehearse. So when she rehearsed (we worked together at the time) she showed me how to fall. And we fell all the time, in the office, everywhere. People thought we had fallen and we were hurt and we'd get up and walk away... when we visited people, in stores. At parties people requested a fall as a form of entertainment. And we'd comply.

(SHE takes a step upstage and falls. The REST make sounds with their bodies as SHE stands. SHE continues speaking as she walks up-left)

Now I'm going to tell you this thing that happened when I was three years old.

(SHE sits on the floor crosslegged facing left)

ALA DE ANGEL  
ANGEL'S WING

I was in a sofa-bed with my older brother and my younger sister. And I don't know why I woke up, but I did. The bed was in a room in a corner. And it was against the wall that divided the kitchen and the room we were in. And that wall had an opening like a window. It was a railroad flat. And I woke up and my brother and my sister were still asleep.

(Standing)

So, I stood up on the bed and I looked through the opening. And that morning, on the table was a baby. And there was a black woman like a nurse. And on the table was a baby who had just been born. And there were all kinds of water, alcohol, and all kinds of things, pads. And when I saw that, I knew my mother had had a baby. So I got out of bed

VICENTA (Continued)

(SHE walks downstage)

and I walked to two rooms away and I stood in the doorway. And in that room my mother was in bed, And my father was standing over her. And my aunt and my uncle were there. And the moment I reached the doorway and I saw them standing there, I just caught

(There is an arpeggio. Her hand goes up)

a glimpse of an angel's wing as it flew out of the window. And I stood there. And my mother said something to me like "How are you." and I said, "I just saw the wing of the angel through the window." And I was afraid to come into the room. And no one came to me but they were looking at me. And I saw the wing of that angel right out of the window.

(JOHNNY steps on the platform and falls. VICENTA turns to him)

... I did...

(SHE goes to her chair. HE sits on the step)

BLANQUEADOR  
BLEACH WATER

JOHNNY

When I was a kid I used to shine shoes, limpiando zapatos to help out in the house. Como el dinero estaba corto tenía que ayudar. Shoe-shinning was O.K. but then I got a job vendiendo bleach water and I liked that much better. I had to get up at five in the morning, but I didn't mind it. I'd get up, get dressed, and then go to the window to wait for Dominick to pass by in his truck to open up the shop. And I liked standing there. Everything was quiet and the air smelled good. We were way up on the 14th floor so it felt nice. Then, I'd go down and walk around the block to the shop.-- We bottled the bleach water, labelled it, put it in the truck, closed the shop and began the rout. We started with the private houses and then we went in the projects. We'd knock on the door and go...

(In a street vendor's voice)

Bleach water... until someone would come out with an empty and we gave them a full. At that time bleach was 35 cents a gallon.

## JOHNNY (Continued)

And I liked going..., "Bleach water.... Bleach water...." At the end of the day Dominick and I used to pitch nickels and dimes. He was good at it, but I was better.... I think sometimes he just let me win. -- The other night someone came to see the show. And after the show he told me that he too had worked with Dominick. He said he just couldn't believe his ears and that he cried. He said he felt silly but he cried. He was a good guy, Dominick... is... perhaps he's still delivering.

(Introduction to "Leche Pura" starts as ALL except IVAN sit on the step and the upper platform, the lights dim.

LECHE PURA  
RAW MILK

## IVAN

(From the up-left corner of the stage)

Si me pongo a recordar cosas de mi infancia, siempre me viene a la mente la mata del marañón. And the mango trees that grew wild en el pico de la Margarita.

(Taking his chair and JOSE-RAFAEL's to center stage)

And I also remember a time when my uncle used to take me to the sugar plantation where he worked, en el Central Algodonar. Me acuerdo de las mañanas when the boy who was about my age and I would go to milk the cow. Ibamos con una lata de chorizos vacía a ordeñar la vaca. Y cuando salíamos del bohío se veía el rocío en las hojitas del café y de los naranjos. And that was a beautiful sight, to see the dew on the coffee leaves and the leaves of the orange trees. Y se sentía el olor de la flor del naranjo which at that hour gave it's strongest smell, the orange blossom smell.

(HE sits on the left chair. A soft yellow light begins <sup>fade</sup> on hi

And as we walked y el sol iba saliendo se sentía como calentaba la mañana. And I could smell that special smell of the soil when it's damp y el olor del estiércol que olía bién, cows manure. Because in Cuba cows eat fresh grass instead of hay, and it's not a bad smell. And we milked the cow, and the milk came out warm, y era muy rica. Y la tomabamos ahí,

("Leche Pura" introduction starts)

acabada de ordeñar. Y cuando llegabamos al bohío con la leche se sentía el olor a café tostado que hacían los campesinos.

(HE puts his feet up on the other chair and leans his head back on the back of the chair)

And the smell of the coffee was good, and they made café con leche.

IVAN (Continued)  
 ... Y me acuerdo de todo eso.

LECHE PURA

Comienza a salir el sol  
 Calentando la alborada.  
 Y alumbra su suave luz  
 El rocío de la mañana.

Ay, que dulce bienestar  
 Oler la tierra mojada  
 Y tomar la leche pura  
 Acabada de ordenar.

Ay, campo, campo, oh campo  
 Que sabroso recordar  
 Que rica la leche pura  
 Acabada de ordenar.

ALL

(IVAN's eyes are now closed)

Ay, campo, campo, oh campo  
 Que sabroso recordar  
 Que rica la leche pura  
 Acabada de ordenar.

(The music ends and IVAN doesn't move)

JOSE RAFAEL

Oye Iván. Te dormiste?

(IVAN turns to JOSE RAFAEL, then to the audience)

Uds. conocen la cañandonga?

(HE waits a moment for an answer)

Es una vaina negra redonda. A pod. And it has a fruit inside.  
 Black too. Sweet like honey. And it doesn't smell very good.  
 Huele a sudor de pie. It smells like dirty feet. And it's not  
 so delicious. But we ate it. Los muchachos la comían.

## JOSE RAFAEL

Ivan.

(IVAN looks at him. JOSE RAFAEL signals him to get off the stage. IVAN joins the others. There is more general light)

PESEBRE  
NATIVITY

My mother set up a nativity scene every year.

(As HE speaks HE walks to Johnny's and Vicenta's chairs, takes them to center stage and lays them down on their side)

Donde estuviera mamá había que hacer pesebre. And it occupied a whole room in the house.

(As HE speaks HE walks to Ruben's and IRIS' chairs and adds them to the pile)

We started building it December 8th. Y del 8 al 16 toda la actividad en la casa era construyendo el pesebre.

(As HE speaks HE walks to Doris and Vera's chairs and adds them to the pile)

Se sacaban los muebles de un cuarto, and we left only the furniture that could be used to support the paper construction that would be the landscape.

(Someone has reached for the plastic and hands it to him as HE approaches them. As he unfolds it)

Y se cubrían mesas y sillas con papel fuerte de envolver.

(HE throws the plastic over the chairs and begins to give it shape. A white light illuminates the construction. The rest of the lights fade slowly)  
Y se le daba forma de colinas, cuevas, caminos, meadows, hills, roads.

(HE kneels or sits to the right of the construction)



## JOSE RAFAEL (Continued)

We covered the paper with moss. Y se cubría todo el terreno con musgo que se compraba en la calle o se cogía en el bosque and the moss was different shades of green, que le daba un aspecto muy real al paisaje. We would place mirrors to make lakes. Y habían cascadas de papel celofán, and waterfalls made with aluminum paper. And on the roads we put sawdust, caminitos de acerrín. And we built the whole town of Bethlehem. Todo Belén, con casitas con luces dentro. Entonces íbamos colocando las figuritas. La sagrada familia eran tallas de madera bellísimas. Y se ponían ovejitas, vacas, mulas, sheperds, sheep, pastores, palomitas, And the pigeons and the sheep were bought from the nuns who made them out of cotton. And everything had to be ready for the 16th, que era cuando empezaba la novena. Los Reyes Magos se ponían al principio del camino. The three Kings were placed at the start of the road, and each day they were moved a little hasta que llegaban al pesebre.

(HE continues speaking as he walks downstage and sits on the edge of the platform where it is dim. The construction is brightly lit behind him)

La novena era como una fiesta todos los días. Drinks were served and also food. And each night we went from house to house celebrating. Y se rezaban oraciones muy lindas como,

Oh raíz sagrada de Jesé  
 Que en lo alto presentas al orbe  
 Tu fragante nardo.  
 Dulcísimo niño  
 Que has sido llamado  
 Lirio de los valles,  
 Bella flor del campo.  
 Ved a nuestras almas.  
 Ven, no tardes tanto.

Y los villancicos eran muy lindos también.

A la nanita nana  
 Nanita nana  
 Nanita ena,  
 Mi Jesus tiene sueño  
 Bendito sea.  
 Bendito sea.

My Jesus is sleepy. Blessed be he.

(The piano plays Nanita Nana during the following speech)

And the nativity in my house was famous, y de verdad que lo hacíamos bello. Then, on January 6, the celebrations were over.

JOSE RAFAEL (Continued)

Y había que poner cada figurita en papel fino de envolver and put them all in boxes. And then, it was waiting for December to come again. And the year seemed incredibly long. Tu sabes como se le hace largo el tiempo a un niño. Y un año es mucho esperar.

(Music ends)

Y entre todas esas figuritas biblicas había un automovil. There was a small car. And no one realized it was out of place.

(The stage becomes brighter. Cap-a-Pie theme. JOSE RAFAEL takes the plastic off and lets it drop down the back. IVAN takes his and JOSE RAFAEL's chair, VERA takes her's and DORIS' chair and put them in place. IVAN, RAFAEL and VERA stand up-stage left; IRIS, RUBEN, VICENTA and JOHNNY up-stage right. DORIS has remained seated on the center of the platform. SHE starts speaking from there)

CUADRO  
TABLEAU

DORIS

At school one day yo puse a mis compañeras ha hacer una imagen que yo tenía dentro de mi.

(As SHE speaks she walks downstage)

I wanted the girls to do this image that I had inside of me. And it was difficult because they did not understand what I wanted to do. Yo estaba en busqueda de hacer esa imagen y entonces al crearla I thought I would discover once it was finished why I wanted to do it, el porque yo quería hacerla. Y me atreví a decirselo a las muchachas. I dared.

(THE rest walk slowly toward center)

Then, I put them in different positions. Como un cuadro plastico en el portal de la escuela.

(SHE turns to the rest and starts placing them. SHE places their heads <sup>and</sup> hands. Sometimes she demonstrates the position. She ad libs to explain to them the details of the position. SHE does all these with urgency as if she must finish very quickly. Lights dim except on tableau)

(SHE hurries downstage and speaks to the audience)

They were all like this... con las manos así.

(SHE hurries back to them)

Unas de rodillas... some standing... otras sentadas.

(SHE ad libs as she continues placing them in the correct position. SHE returns downstage to speak to the audience with even more urgency)

Me costaba mucho trabajo explicarlo porque no me entendían.

(Going to them again)

Las fuí poniendo así in different levels to form a picture.

(SHE continues refining their position)

Unas con las manos así. All in different positions.

(SHE turns quickly to the audience)

Then, when I was almost finished I began to feel a very strong emotion. Una emoción increíble de lo que estaba haciendo.

(SHE turns to them again)

Porque era un deseo que yo tenía tan grande que lo estaba llevando a cabo.

(Turning to the audience)

I was fulfilling this great desire!

(SHE takes a step to them)

And when I was almost finished...

IRIS

(Starting to move)

Hay no, a mí esto no me gusta.

OTHERS

(Moving to the space behind the platform through the up-left corner)

A mí tampoco. A mí esto no me gusta.

(THEY murmur discontent as they exit. THEIR movement should be rapid but subtle. The attention should be on DORIS)

DORIS

(As they exit)

And they left. And I was left with that question. What was it I was looking for? Que iba a pasar después que aquello se completara....

(After all movement and sound has subsided)

...Se fueron...

(Cap-a-Pie theme, RUBEN enters with a black cape and a cloth 8x5 feet, made of a flower print cotton with a gold satin border, about 5 " wide. HE puts the black cape around DORIS' shoulder)

CORONACION  
CORONATION

RUBEN

(To Doris)

I too made up games... fantasies.

(Walking downstage and speaking to the audience)

In my fantasies I was always the king.

(WALKING up the aisle)

Mis amigos eran los súbditos, la corte.

(HE reaches the place where he will stand. There is light on him. Putting the cloth over his shoulders)

Mi vestuario era suntuoso. Silk, brocades, fur, encajes, joyas, rubíes, esmeraldas. Diamantes, safiros. Yo, el rey. Se abren las puertas de la catedral.

(Music plays. HE speaks to the audience)

Uds. tienen que decir "Ahhh". You have to say "Ahhh".

(HE conducts)

ACTORS

Ahhh.

RUBEN

Once more ... very softly.

(HE conducts them again. THEY all say "Ahhh")  
Music starts again. He walks down the aisle with a blissful expression. As HE reaches the stage the other actors stand center stage forming a tableau. HE reaches the center of the tableau and turns)

RUBEN (Continued)

Llego al trono.

(HIS head rotates from left to right)

My eyes were sheer splendor.--Terminaba trágico para que lo sepan. It has a tragic end.--Ahora es el momento de la coronación.

PIANIST

Ahora?

RUBEN

Ahora:

(Coronation music starts. Using a wedding step JOHNNY performs the coronation. IRIS is holding an imaginary cushion with an imaginary crown. JOHNNY takes a step toward Rubén, turns to IRIS, holds the crown between both hands, turns to Rubén, marches till he is behind Rubén, stops. lifts his hands over Rubén's head,, lowers his hands slowly till they reach the side of Rubén's head)

Y en ese momento..

(The music becomes tragic in a silent movie style. DORIS performs an elaborate and sinister murder. With an imaginary dagger, she stabs Rubén. The rest gasp)

Y la gente se desesperaba de tanto que me adoraba.

(HE falls slowly as he looks all around him)

And my pleasure was to see how the people adored me. Y me encantaba mirar a todo el mundo asi moribundo y hacer asi.

(HE collapses. THEY all surround him wailing)

Now pick me up.

(RUBEN lies rigid. The REST pick him up horizontally and carry him on their shoulders except JOSE RAFAEL who stands on the side and performs the sign of the cross repeatedly. THEIR crying has subsided)

RUBEN (Continued)

And keep crying.

(THEY wail loudly. THEY take a few more steps as RUBEN lifts his head to look at the audience and waves. The music ends. THEY lower him. HE takes a playful series of quick bows while JOHNNY gets the table and the red flower. VICENTA places a chair to the right of the table, another upstage of the table. VERA stands on the platform by her chair. JOHNNY stands to the right of the piano. The REST go to their places)

YOUNG MAN  
EL JOVEN

(VERA goes to the table and takes the flower)

VERA

My mother used to have a boarding house. Una casa de huéspedes. Y los huéspedes eran jóvenes que venían de México a trabajar. And they would stay as long as they could, until immigration came for them, that is. And when immigration would knock at the door, my mother would say, "Viene la migra. Viene la migra. Escondanse, debajo de la cama, en los altos en el basement. Y a veces se escondían or they got out of the house. But most of the time they were caught. A veces cuando llegaba a la casa I found out that someone was gone, o estaba en la cárcel, o lo habían mandado para México. And I felt very sorry for these men, porque estaban aquí tratando de trabajar and earning some money for their families. Me acuerdo cuando tenía 11 años estaba pasando por una etapa where I was neither a child, nor a woman. And I guess I had just discovered men. And I liked them. Y cada vez que llegaba un grupo nuevo de huéspedes me enamoraba de todos. But of course, they never gave me a second look. There was one in particular. He really knocked me out.

(SHE walks down left putting the flower behind her ear)

VERA (Continued)

Era alto and handsome.

(JOHNNY walks to the table)

And he had a moustache. And I remember he used to dress very neat. Y usaba una colonia especial. Y cuando entraba en el cuarto, I always knew it was him because I could smell the scent of his cologne. And I would pretend I didn't know he was there and just wait for him to notice me.

(SHE waits a moment with her back to him. Then sneaks a look at him. HE is lighting a cigarette and looking at her. SHE looks away with a slight shy scream. Looks at him again, laughs excitedly. Music is heard. SHE starts dancing. HE plays solitaire)

I wanted him to notice me so badly. I would dance to attract his attention. At first I'd be shy...

(Dancing wildly)

But then...

HE

Baila, linda, baila. Qué bien bailas.

(The music ends and she hurries to kneal by the table. HE continues playing and doesn't look at her. SHE looks at his face entranced)

VERA

I could not take my eyes off him.

(HE shows her a card. SHE looks at it hardly registering it. SHE looks at him again. A moment passes)

Gosh, he was so beautiful.

(HE turns to her. THEY look at each other till the music ends. "Divino Manjar" music starts. RUBEN takes the table behind the stage while the others place the chairs in a perfect semicircle on stage. THEY sit from right to left: IRIS, VICENTA, RUBEN, VERA, DORIS, JOHNNY, JOSE RAFAEL, IVAN)

DIVINO MANJAR  
SUBLIME SUPPER

(Music stops)

VICENTA

Tostones, and yellow rice with black beans, and pernil asado.

DORIS

Lechón asado, but with mojo. Avocado salad. Plátanos maduros, and green too.

IRIS

Carne asada. Tostones y yuca.

JOHNNY

Harina de maíz with beans. And boiled viandas con ensalada de bacalao.

VERA

I'll start with a margarita. And I'll have frijoles refritos con unas tostadas alrededor. A plate of guacamole. And a combination platter of enchiladas, tacos, and tamales. And then a side order of mole poblano con gallina. And a little plate of fried rice. And a very hot sauce. And another margarita.

IVAN

Arroz con pollo y ensalada de aguacate.

JOSE RAFAEL

Coliflor frita envuelta en huevo. Y habichuelas que son string beans en salsa blanca. Sopa de albóndigas. Y caldo de pajarilla which is sweetbreads in black sauce.

JOHNNY

Y para tomar mabí.

IVAN

Qué cosa es mabí?

VERA

A Puerto Rican drink.

IVAN

Like hard liquor?

DORIS

No.

VICENTA

Like a bottled drink.

IVAN

Like rum?



Como un refresco. IRIS

Like soda. JOHNNY

More like a cider. Isn't it? VICENTA

Yeah. JOHNNY

Yo. Un daiquirí. And then, quimbombó con bolas de plátano. RUBEN

Quimbombó? VERA

Okra. DORIS

Y arroz blanco con bisté. With raw onions chopped very fine. And avocado salad y berro que es watercress. Bread pudding. Panetela borracha. And I do not adore guava paste with cream cheese, but if they give it to me I'll take it. RUBEN

Y pasteles. VICENTA

I'll have some too. JOHNNY

De plátano. VICENTA

De plátano? IRIS

De plátano. You can make them with plátano with yautía or yuca. Or mixed, plátano y yautía, yautía y yuca, yuca y plátano. Y ensalada de aguacate. And wine... white. VICENTA

Tamal en cazuela. Picadillo with white rice and mas tostones. And rice pudding. Not the white rice pudding, but the dark. IRIS

How do they make it dark? IVAN

With brown sugar. RUBEN

Or melao. JOHNNY

Or vanilla. DORIS

VERA  
Sopa de arroz. Sopa de fideo. Y atole, very hot, with straw-  
berries. Y flan y buñuelos. A Montezuma beer and two more  
margaritas.

RUBEN  
I forgot two things. Asopao y tamales.

ALL  
DIVINO MANJAR

Chicharrones de pollo  
Con arroz blanco,  
Asopao y tamales,  
Lechón asado,  
Picadillo con tacos  
Y guacamole,  
Pasteles de yuca y plátano  
Y quimbombó,  
Pasteles de yuca y plátano  
Y quimbombó,

JOSE RAFAEL  
Y sopa borracha, bizcochuelo which is sponge cake, wine, honey  
y flores de azahar which is the orange blossom.

VICENTA  
Y pastelillos.

DORIS  
Empanadas.

VICENTA  
With a fork you go like this around the edge?

DORIS  
Empanadas.

JOSE RAFAEL  
Y dulce de brevas verdes que son en realidad candied figs con  
arequipa which is milk, sugar and rice flower.

VERA  
And alfafora. Coconut with a red stripe on each side.

DORIS  
Y majarete. Fresh corn, ground. Milk, sugar and cinnamon.

VICENTA  
Y tamarindo.

VERA  
During Christmas we boil tamarindo with raisins and drink it hot, with liquor.

JOSE RAFAEL  
Y gelatina de pata de vaca.

DORIS  
De pata de vaca?

RAFAEL  
That's how you make gelatine. You boil the cow's hoof. To give it flavor we boil panela with it which is black sugar, hard like a brick. If you bite it you can break your teeth.

RUBEN  
Rompequijada too can break your teeth.

VERA  
La quijada.

VICENTA  
What?

VERA  
The jaw.

IRIS  
Raspadura too. The older it gets, the harder it gets.

IVAN  
Los pirulis son duros pero son para chupar.

RUBEN  
Claro esta.

ALL  
Boniatillo y tembleque,  
Pudin de coco,  
Guayaba con queso crema,  
Natilla y flan.

DORIS  
Y mangos, mamey y guanabana.

Y corazon. VICENTA

Eso que es? RUBEN

Like a guanabana but smaller. VICENTA

Chirimoya. DORIS

Y el anon cual es? RUBEN

El anon es like the chirimoya but smaller. IRIS

It's very beautiful, con escamitas. IVAN

And apple pie. JOHNNY

(THEY ALL turn to him very slowly with a sense of indignation, look at him, then turn from slowly)

I like apple pie.

(THEY look front slowly. The Christmas lights turn on slowly)

ALL  
Panetela borracha,  
Arroz con leche,  
Raspadura gigante,  
Harina en dulce,  
Boniatillo y tembleque,  
Pudin de coco,  
Guayaba con queso crema,  
Natilla y flan.

Chicharrones de pollo  
Con arroz blanco,  
Asopao y tamales,  
Lechon asado,  
Picadillo con tacos  
Y guacamole,  
Pasteles de yuca y platano  
Y quimbombo,  
Pasteles de yuca y platano  
Y quimbombo.

(DORIS stands, walks behind her chair and takes a turn of the century pose. SHE carries a feather fan)

ALL (Continued)

Panetela borracha,  
Arroz con leche,  
Raspadura gigante,  
Harina en dulce,

(DORIS walks to downstage right and fans herself)

Boniatillo y tembleque,  
Pudin de coco,  
Guayaba con queso crema,

(DORIS walks to downstage left and holds a pose)

Natilla y flan,  
Guayaba con queso crema,

JOHNNY

(Spoken)

Y apple pie.

(DORIS fans herself. RUBEN goes to Doris, kisses her hand, offers her his arm, they walk towards the aisle. JOHNNY stands, reaches for Vera's hand, THEY follow Ruben and Doris. JOSE RAFAEL offers Vicenta his arm. THEY follow. IVAN takes IRIS hand. THEY follow. THEY exit through the house as the music plays)

INTERMISSION

## ACT TWO

The ACTORS and the PIANIST enter through the front of the house. THEY take their chairs which have been left on stage through intermission and put them in place. THEY sit. The PIANIST stands on the floor level to the right of the piano and claps his hands to attract the actors attention. The stage is brightly lit.

TACA TACA

(The PIANIST conducts a composition which consists of three elements:

- 1- The phrases *Taca taca taca.*  
*Taca taca ta.*
- 2- A strong exhalation (not voice, but breath)
- 3- A high pitched sound, falsetto (like a train whistle)

The ACTORS start with the phrases. THEY are repeated until the conductor feels they are together and the rythm has been established)

## PIANIST

Una respiracion.

(After each "Taca taca taca. Taca taca ta" there will be an exhalation. This is repeated till the PIANIST says:)

Un agudo.

(After each "Taca taca taca. Taca taca ta" there will be a high pitched sound. This is repeated till the PIANIST says:)

Uno y uno.

(After each "Taca taca taca. Taca taca ta" there will be an exhalation and a high pitched sound. This is repeated till the PIANIST says:)

Dos y dos.

(After each "Taca taca taca. Taca taca ta" there will be two exhalations and two high pitched sounds. The PIANIST speaks to the audience)

Uds. tambien.

(HE encourages the audience by putting his hand to his ear, saying louder, etc.)

PIANIST (Continued)

El ultimo.

(A last set is done. The ACTORS applaud the audience as the audience applaud them. IRIS stands down-stage right. RUBEN goes behind the platform left where the cord that supports Iris picture is hooked)

FOTO  
PHOTO

IRIS

My birthday was coming up. And I was taken to a studio on a second floor of a department store. The photographer was a woman about 40 and she had very red lipstick, and her hair was kind of blond with a permanent.

(Going to the upper platform)

And she sat me down in these stairs. And the picture was going to come out in the newspaper and I was thinking everyone who sees the picture will think I live in this house with these kind of stairs and I was fidgety.

(SHE starts getting into the position of the photo)

And went like this. And the woman said, "Hold it."

(RUBEN lowers the picture. There is a light flash. The piano plays a high couple of chords SHE turns to the picture)

And that's the picture.

(RUBEN comes downstage looking at the picture)

RUBEN

That's a nice picture.

(HE sits on the stage floor crosslegged)

LAS TIAS  
THE AUNTS

(This speech is translated simultaneously by IRIS who remains sitted on the back platform. The asterisks indicate where RUBEN should take a short pause to allow audibility for IRIS translation)

RUBEN

Mis tias son tres. \* Dos casadas y una viuda. \* Y entonces estaban mis tios, \* que eran dos y un tio abuelo. \* Eso era por parte de padre \* Y todos vivian juntos. \* Y cuando mi madre vino a vivir a los Estados Unidos \* yo fui a vivir en casa de ellos. \* Y todos ellos tenian la mania de querer aparentar que tenian mas dinero del que tenian. \* Uno de mis tios se caso seis veces. \* Siempre pensando que la mujer tenia dinero. \* Y despues descubria que la mujer \* estaba tan arrancada como el. \* Entonces volvia a caer en la casa otra vez. \* Endeudado hasta aqui, \* porque lo cojia todo fiado \* para demostrarle a la mujer que tenia dinero. \* Entonces volvia otra vez. \* Y cada vez se metia mas en deuda. \* Ese era mi tio. \*

Entonces, como ellos vivian en un barrio un poquito clase media. \* Mis tias no querian que los vecinos supieran que por la noche no comiamos. \* Almorzabamos. \* Pero por la noche nananina. \* Chocolate con pan. \* Entonces como estabamos en la planta baja y el comedor se veia de la calle, \* todas las noches ponian la mesa, \* con mantel, \* vajilla, \* cubiertos, \* y toto. \* Para si alguien miraba para dentro \* pensaran que ibamos a comer de un momento a otro. \* Nos tomabamos el chocolate en la cocina \* y entonces se quitaba la mesa. \*

Entonces, cuando llego la television a Cuba \* y alguna de la gente del barrio se empezo a comprar su televisor, \* ellas dijeron; \* Bueno, aqui hay que resolver este problema. \* Y se compraron una antena. \* Y la pusieron en el techo. \*

Entonces ya yo no podia invitar a mis amiguitos a la casa, \* Para que no vieran que no habia televisor. \* Tu te imaginas que problema? \* Porque cuando llego la antena, \* era cuando mas ellos querian venir a mi casa, \* para ver los programas de television.



## VERA

When I was a little girl, my daddy used to take me to see a lot of the old Mexican films that would play in our neighborhood. Many would feature this voluptuous Mexican singer, Lola Beltran, who was famous for her canciones rancheras. The situation in each film was invariably the same, small town girl, raped by her uncle, runs off to the big city, a producer discovers her, they fall in love, and she becomes an overnight star.

(SHE sits a moment enthralled by the memory)

She'd be wearing an exquisitely embroidered peasant blouse, con mucho encaje, a long flowing peasant skirt con muchos planes, (her hair would usually be pulled back, entwined in bright colored ribbons) a pair of huge arracadas, golden earrings,

(The PIANIST takes the shawl from the piano and stands behind her)

and lots of silver bracelets and monedas de oro dangling from her wrists. I loved pretending I was her in one of her movies.

(SHE stands. The PIANIST puts the shawl around her shoulders. SHE takes an impressive pose. SHE starts walking downstage. J.R. puts his chair on stage, I. sits, DORIS sits on his lap. JOSE RAFAEL stands by the chair. RUBEN puts his chair on stage right and sits. VICENTA sits on his lap. IRIS sits on the floor by the chair. JOHNNY stands by the chair. THEY behave boisterously and laugh soundlessly; THEY light cigarettes. The Christmas lights go on)  
She would make her entrance into the smoke-filled bar, filled with people talking, laughing and drinking.

(SHE reaches downstage center)

Arranquense muchachos!

(Music starts. The sounds from the others can now be heard)

Por un amor  
Me desvelo y vivo apasionada.  
Tengo un amor  
Que mi vida dejo para siempre  
Amargo dolor

Ay corazon no sufras que aqui esta tu grandota!

VERA (Continued)

Esta vida mejor que se acabe  
No es para mi.

Oye viejo, no te duermas, dejate venir.

Por un amor,  
He llorado gotitas de sangre,  
Tengo un amor.

Oye chato, nos vemos despues.

Por un amor,  
Cuando sufre mi pecho lo hace  
Tan solo por ti.  
Tengo un amor  
Que me ha dejado heridas sin

(As it seems that VERA will never stop singing IVAN and RUBEN come from behind her. THEY pick her up and carry her off through the upstage right corner. SHE continues singing as they do this. SHE holds on to the platform and sings as they try to pull her off. SHE should get away from them always attempting to reach center stage and sing. There could be a chase around the theatre and general commotion. During this commotion JOSE RAFAEL takes the stage left chair and places it on the upper platform. VICENTA sits on the upstage side of the pianist's bench. IRIS places the stage right chair in its original place. THEY finally subdue VERA and calm her down. THEY are all on the upper platform and step) JOHNNY comes forward from the center of the group. As HE passes VERA he pats her on the head. HE reaches down center)

UN TRAJE BLANCO  
A WHITE SUIT

## JOHNNY

A white suit. Bien blanco. Hecho con cuatro botones. English cut. Hasta aqui. A pair of white sandals. Esas sandalitas que se hacian antes. Que son mejor, de calidad. Una camisita de seda. Neither black nor blue. Ni negra, ni azul. A color that would make the white stand out. And it depends how I get up that morning si me pongo sombrero o no. There is the hat que tiene el ala ancha. But the one that looks good on me es uno que no es muy redondo and it's not too small. And it overlaps my hair line just enough. And it's the same color as the shirt. Y un reloj. A 50,000 dollar watch. Y una heavy medalla de oro. Un Jaguar.

(Music starts)

La camisa abierta. The sun is setting. Five o'clock in the afternoon. Puerto Rico... Panama.... Haiti.

## WHITE SUIT

I'm on the boardwalk  
And a lady's with me.  
The sun is setting.  
It's not dark yet.

A white suit,  
A white suit,  
A white suit,  
A pair of sandals,  
A heavy medal,  
A lady with me,  
An open shirt.

Ahhh!

A white suit,  
A white suit,  
A white suit,  
A pair of sandals,  
A heavy medal,  
A lady with me,  
An open shirt.

Ahhh!

(One of the actors up-stage throws him a curro hat. HE puts it on and dances. HE sings the last few bars of the song as HE walks slowly to the up-right corner. ALL except VICENTA and JOSE RAFAEL go to their seats, arm in arm, in a leasurely tropical stroll manner accompanied by the "White Suit" theme. The lights are very dim now. A light goes on JOSE RAFAEL)

CONFESSION  
 CONFESSION

JOSE RAFAEL

In the grammar school where I went  
 (Going to the u-left corner)  
 the education was almost medieval. The punishments were  
 very severe.

(Lifting his arms straight up over his head)  
 Nos ponian con los brazos asi por horas. And the arms began  
 (His arms begin to come down)  
 to get tired and heavy. Porque despues de diez minutos esta  
 uno que se muere. And if someone caught us we'd have to get  
 back into position.

(Going back to the sitting position)  
 In the fifth grade we had a professor who was very mean.  
 Muy furioso. Era el maestro del quinto.

(HE takes a pencil out and demonstrates the  
 following)  
 Y se limpiaba las orejas con el lapiz mientras daba la clase.  
 He put the pencil in his ear. He scratched inside. And some-  
 times he fell asleep. Despues miraba... y quitaba la cera. In  
 the meantime there were three boys who masturbated right in their  
 seats. Yo miraba asi y los tres se estaban masturbando. We  
 were about nine. And I was fascinated with them masturbating  
 specially in front of that teacher.

After that, I studied with the Jesuits and that was restful.  
 I confessed with a priest who was very old and deaf, porque  
 mis pecados eran descomunales. Y el, ademas de sordo, estaba  
 tan viejo que ya no le importaba. Los otros curas preguntaban  
 mucho y jodian mucho. This one didn't ask any questions. Lo  
 absolvía a uno como espantando moscas. Just like chasing flies.  
 Hasta que me dio un ataque de arrepentimiento and I went to the  
 general priest and told him that I was homosexual, that I was  
 suffering. I was twelve. Y el se porto muy paternal y me  
 absolvió. But the following year they didn't let me re-enter  
 the school.

Entonces mis padres como castigo me metieron en un boarding  
 school. Intern for a year. En un pueblo por alla lejísimo.  
 And there, I slept with this boy who one day called me faggot  
 and I almost killed him. What happened was, in the dining-  
 room, they served him a small piece of pineapple and another

## JOSE RAFAEL (Continued)

boy , younger than he, was served a larger piece. And he changed the plates. And I said to him, "No le cambies la pina a Ernesto." And he said "Ni que fuera mozo tuyo, Maricon." Lo cogi contra las llaves del agua y le daba golpes y golpes y le decia, "Pedime perdon, hijo de puta, Say you're sorry. Me habia ofendido mucho. I was 14 and he was 17 but I almost killed him.

(HE returns to the corner)

As a punishment they had us standing in a yard 8 days. Uno en un extremo y el otro en el otro. We went to eat and sleep, but the rest of the time we were standing in opposite corners, facing each other. Ocho dias.

(The light changes to the upper platform left. JOSE RAFAEL leans against the wall where his chair would have been. VICENTA stands behind the chair on the upper platform as a few bars of "When you're ready to break" plays)

## CONEY ISLAND

## VICENTA

Ron and I were in the subway, riding back to Coney Island where I lived. And we were arguing. We argued to the point where when we got off at Stillwell ave. I said to him, "I'm going to kill myself". I meant it. And he left. Which made me feel worse.

I meant it. Instead of turning on Mermaid Ave. to go home, I walked to the boardwalk and went out on the pier. I was crying and I was hysterical. And it was dark already, and it was winter, and it was very windy and cold. I was pregnant and he kept breaking appointments and being evasive. And I was upset about how my parents felt. He'd say one thing one day. He'd say we'll do it tomorrow or we'll take care of that tomorrow and he'd forget, or come too late to do anything, and he kept postponing the codtor's visit and there were lots of things he wasn't telling me. And there were many complications that I can't even get into. And I wasn't even sure if I wanted to marry him anymore.

(SHE walks down the step)

And I am standing there hysterically crying and from out of no-where this dirty old man, filthy, like a bum you see on the

## VICENTA (Continued)

street, comes to me and says "You wanna fuck, baby?" And it made me so angry. I put my hand in my pocket and I said "If you come a step closer, I'm going to shoot you, you bum." And he ran away.

(The Christmas lights start coming up)  
And it made me forget everything. I just went home angry at the old man.

(Music for "When you're Ready to Break" starts.  
SHE steps up to the piano)

## WHEN YOU'RE READY TO BREAK

(The words indented are sung. The others are spoken)

When things have reached bottom,  
They still can get worse.

Yeap.

A car can splash mud in your face.  
Pigeons can (Aha) on your head.  
Pigeons can (Mmm) on your head.

Things can be bad,  
And still get much worse.  
You think you've reached bottom.

Not yet.

There's still quite a ways.  
It's not till you're ready to break  
That things can come to an end.  
Either y u're gone or you say,  
Shove it. Not me.  
I'm still in the game.

That's when.

When you're ready to break.

And then you carry on.  
Doing this and doing that.  
And who knows?  
You'll never know  
If you've been the pigeon  
In someone else's life.

When you're ready to break.

(With the last few bars of the song toward her chair through the darkened stage. After the last note SHE turns her head to the pianist. As SHE sits DORIS steps on the platform; JOSE RAFAEL takes his chair, puts it in place and sits; music for "El Reflejo de las Almas" plays; the stage becomes brighter, the Christmas lights dim down. SHE walks up, then center bordering the edge of the platform and starts speaking from there)

LOS ESPEJOS  
THE MIRRORS

DORIS

And when I arrived here, cuando yo llegue aqui

(Walking toward center)

se cortaron todos los hilos. The people I knew, my house, my work, my friends, my family were no longer with me. And I found I had lost all my identity. And I no longer knew who I was. Y lo olvide todo. And I could not remember any of the things I had learned. Including English. Estaba en un mundo where I had lost the mirrors where I had learned to see myself. Because one, through the people one knows in all of one's life, learns to know oneself. And that is our identity.

(All lights become brighter and brighter till the end of the piece)

EL REFLEJO DE LAS ALMAS

En horas de indomable insomnio  
Supe que la vida nos ensena  
Que a traves de los seres conocidos  
Se llega a conocer la propia esencia.

Supe que al perder el mundo en que vivia;  
Mi casa, mi familia y amistades  
Habia dejado de saber quien era.  
Que a traves de los seres conocidos  
Se llega a conocer la propia esencia.

Es el reflejo que las almas tienen  
Que nos muestra de nuestro ser  
La real presencia.

## DORIS (Continued)

Es el reflejo que las almas tienen  
Que como espejo nos muestra  
Nuestra esencia.

Que a traves de los seres conocidos  
Se aprende a conocer la propia esencia.

And without realizing it, I had filled my house with mirrors.  
To attempt to remember who I was. But that did not do it. I  
was in a fog. And I had to struggle in that fog to find an  
identity. Which will not be the same.

Que a traves de los seres conocidos  
Se aprende a conocer la propia esencia.

Que a traves de los seres conocidos  
Se aprende a conocer la propia esencia.

(JOSE RAFAEL and JOHNNY go to DORIS and hold her  
hand. IVAN and VICENTA follow. IVAN holds JOSE  
RAFAEL's hand and VICENTA holds JOHNNY's hand.  
VERA and RUBEN follow, then IRIS. THEY bow.  
THEY exit in two lines through the upstage right  
and left steps. THEY return through the opposite  
sides and form an inverted V on stage. THEY bow,  
extend their arms to the pianist, the pianist takes  
a bow, then comes down the step. THEY all fall.  
The PIANIST then returns to the piano and starts  
playing "Divino Manajar" a halo of Christmas lights  
starts slowly coming down over his head. The ACTORS  
start lifting their heads and sitting up as THEY  
sing. THEY come to standing position and exit through  
the front of the house as the music plays)



~~(THEY look at him)~~

~~I like apple pie.~~

*(They look at him moving very slowly and  
hesitatingly)*

~~(THEY look at him)~~

JOHNNY

I like apple pie.

ALL

- Panetela borracha.
- Arroz con leche.
- Raspadura gigante.
- Harina en dulce.
- Doniatillo y tembleque.
- Pudin de coco.
- Guayaba con queso crema.
- Natilla y flan.
- Guayaba con queso crema.
- Y apple pie.

- Chicharrones de pollo
- Con arroz blanco.
- Asopao y tamales.
- Lechón asado.
- Picadillo con tacos
- Y guacamole.
- Pasteles de yuca y platano
- Y quimbombó.
- Pasteles de yuca y platano
- Y quimbombó.

*Don't stand with the list from head*

- Panetela borracha.
- Arroz con leche.
- Raspadura gigante.
- Harina en dulce.
- Boniatillo y tembleque
- Pudin de coco.
- Guayaba con queso crema.
- Natilla y flan.
- Guayaba con queso crema.
- Y apple pie.

*Don't stand with <sup>to 2</sup> from himself*

*Don't stand with <sup>to 2</sup> from himself*

*Johnny  
(Spanish)*

*from head...*

*Right side of the head, they sit through the...  
Johnny takes...  
Rafael takes...  
...they follow*

To Arlynn from Lorenzo

the village

# VOICE

## Cap-a-Pie

Conceived and directed by Maria Irene Fornes. music by Jose Raul Bernardo. presented by and at INTAR, 508 West 53rd Street. 582-9875.

MON. MAY 19, 1975

\*\*\*

For breezy relaxation, and for theatre that contains something as opposed to artfully displayed nothing. I had a better, and briefer time, at Maria Irene Fornes's "CAP-A-PIE," a bilingual piece in which Miss Fornes has assembled fragments from the memories, dreams, fantasies, and aspirations of the eight personable young Hispanic actors who make up her cast, turned some of said memories etc. into song lyrics of her own, and made the whole into a very well-directed and appealing little revue, as leisurely as the painted clouds that drift across Robert Joyner's cunningly simple set.

BY MICHAEL FEINGOLD

; the dreams and remembrances of "Cap-a-Pie," spoken by the actors who carry them, seem like the grittiest realities. The witty music by Jose Raul Bernardo, and Susan Gregg's lighting, subtle and simple, like the set, are particular pleasures. The eight actors—no, the eight *people*—are Ivan Acosta, Rafael Arango, Vicenta M. Aviles, Doris Castellanos, Vira Colorado, Iris Diaz, Ruben Rabasa, and Johnny Robles, who scores a particular success with a song about a white suit. □