

LINDA

A short dramedy with music by
Diana Burbano

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www.youthplays.com
info@youthplays.com
424-703-5315

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

LA LINDA, a young Chicana who might be dressed in a Wonder Woman costume.

TIME

Sometime in the early '80s.

THANK YOU

Thank you to Andrea Esparza and Sylvia Blush for the first production, and to Lynda Carter and Linda Ronstadt for the inspiration.

(LINDA comes out carrying a box. She is singing a traditional Mariachi song, "Los Laureles," which was on Linda Ronstadt's Canciones de Mi Padre. She ends with a loud Mariachi cry. She stops, listening. Laughs.)

LA LINDA: If mi Abuelita was still here, she would've answered back just as loud and we would've danced around the kitchen, using cucharas for castanets until mi papá would yell at us to quit with the tonterías and get him a chela.

I found this stuffed in the closet of mi Ita's room.

(She sets down the box which is labeled "Mi Linda". She opens it. Takes out Linda Ronstadt's Living in the USA record.)

I wanted to BE Linda Ronstadt. For such a tiny little thing, Linda had such a big sound! I LOVED her god-so-beautiful voice and her cheesy, sexy look. I remember wearing the tube socks and short shorts.

(Pulls a pair of roller skates out of the box.)

My skates! *(Puts them on during the following:)* Que patas tan grandes! I begged and begged for these. I loved to skate around and around our neighborhood on Saturday mornings belting out:

(Sings to the tune of "You're No Good":)

"IN THE HOOD, IN THE HOOD, IN THE HOOD SKA-TIN' IN THE HOOOOOD..."

Until Mr. Gonzalez came out and begged me to stop. He said I was flat. I said, "So was Linda!" He said, "I meant your voice."

"I'LL SAY IT AGAIN..."

(Sings a bit more to Mr. Gonzalez in the audience. We hear a door slam.)

When I was really little I used to confuse La Ronstadt with Wonder Woman. La Mujer Maravilla. She was a Lynda, too.

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Lynda Carter! With a Y instead of an I, for fancies. You know, I never missed one minute of that TV show. Not one.

La Wonder Woman gave me hope. Once, in the second grade, I got knocked down by this boy in my class. He'd pull my braids and sit on me like I was a pony. The teachers never did anything. When the bell rang, he whispered "wetback" in my ear. I knew what it meant. At seven years old, it wasn't the first time I'd heard that word.

When I got home that day, I asked my Abuelita what Wonder Woman's golden lasso of truth was made of, and she said she had some of the material in her sewing kit!

I took my lasso to school. I tried to rope the boy, but I ended up whipping him hard in the face with the end of the rope. He told on me to the playground lady. She looked at me all stern at first, and then she smiled! She said, "Good for you, mija. Don't let no boy treat you like crap."

I wanted to be Linda. (*Pronounced Lih-n-da.*) Linda! (*Pronounced Lee-n-da.*) and fierce.

Linda means sexy, tough and in command, not just pretty. Pretty is boring. I bought myself gold Wonder Woman bracelets. At least I thought they were gold until they left big welts on my wrists. That was OK, tho'. I liked the scars. They made me feel tuff, like las Lindas.

(*Sings the theme to Wonder Woman a la "Blue Bayou."*)

"WONDER WOMAN... WHERE THE WORLD IS MINE,
WHERE I'M FIGHTING CRIME, ON THE BLUEEEEE BAY-
OUOOOO!"

Ain't nobody said to either Linda, "Girl, you're asking for it." Cause they weren't! And if you wolf-whistled, you'd get a red boot (*Kicks:*) to the face.

Las Lindas were fly. I put their posters all over my walls. My brothers teased me a lot for not having no boys on my wall like a normal girl, but whatever! I was a Linda! A superhero badass singer who could do whatever I wanted. La Mujer Maravilla.

(She does a little bolero to center stage.)

Abuelita decided that she was going to send me to the "fancy" high school near her work. It had better test scores, better students, no gangs. Yeah—it was white. I stuck out like a little brown sore thumb. Oh, Hera. I was miserable.

Right before Christmas vacation, that first year, I signed up for the school talent show.

The popular girls howled laughing when they saw that. Jerks. They followed me around at recess, teasing me. Telling me to give it up—nobody wanted to see me onstage. I never cried. Never. Amazons don't cry.

I was doing my chores that night, and I THREW the laundry into the basket so hard it made the whole thing flip over onto the floor. 'Ita didn't yell, though. She helped me pick up the basket, made me pan con chocolaté, and we watched her novelas together until I fell asleep.

That was a tough Christmas. The family mi 'Ita worked for made her work late every night. And I don't know where she found the time or the money, but when I opened my Christmas present, Abuelita had made me a Wonder Woman costume. It was nestled in a fancy box from Nordstroms, tissue paper and everything.

I waited to try it on until my brothers were outside trying to kill each other with their new Lawn Darts. I put "Simple Dreams" on the record player, stripped down to my chones, and piece by piece I became la Mujer Maravilla. I put the tiara on my head and—

(She does the Wonder Woman paddle turn and reveals the Wonder Woman costume under her jacket.)

I got super dizzy, but looking at myself in the mirror, I belonged in that superhero costume. This was baby feminista armor.

As Linda hit the last note on "Poor Poor Pitiful Me," a beam of sunshine came in the window and glanced off the tiara. Just like in the TV show! It was a sign. I knew then and there what my talent show act was going to be.

I'd played guitar for years, even though my dad said the guitar was for the boys. I knew I was asking for trouble. Look – all the other acts were basically a bunch of cheerleaders doing stupid dance moves to canned music. Two of them were dancing to "Play that Funky Music, White Boy." Which should tell you all you need to know about my stupid school.

I was #12 – really close to the end. I was pretty damn nervous. Had to pee SO BAD, but I couldn't get in and out of the costume in time, so I had to hold it. My turn finally came. I rolled out onstage with my guitar. I toe-stopped, strummed my first chord and sang:

(To the tune of "Blue Bayou":)

"I'M GOING BACK SOMEDAY, COME WHAT MAY, TO
PARADISE ISLE –
WHERE THE GIRLS ARE TOUGH, AND BOYS GET
ROUGHED UP, PARADISE ISLE –
WHERE I CAN GO – WITH MY LAA-SSOO, AND I CAN
CLEARLY SEE,
THAT FAMILIAR SUNRISE, THROUGH TIED-UP GUYS,
HOW HAPPY I'D BE."

I got so into it, that at the end I twirled and fell, *(Falls:)* but I played like I'd planned it. *(Plays it off with a Flashdance gesture:)*
Tada!

I was in a weird DC alternate universe. I knew people were laughing. I heard them. I didn't care. I bowed like I was Linda Ronstadt herself, at a concert in the Hollywood Bowl. Mi 'Ita was clapping like crazy. I looked out, and yeah, it wasn't like I was winning everyone over. This wasn't an ABC Family Movie, where all of a sudden I was accepted for my differences. They were laughing in that mean way kids have. But. BUT. There were actually a few people who seemed to be clapping for real. A teacher I didn't know gave me the thumbs up. Someone's mom was whistling. A cool-looking teen girl was smiling. I saw them. My fellow Amazons. In the sea of mockery I endured for the next six months, I remembered those genuine looks of approval and acceptance, and that fanned a little flame in my soul.

The next year, there was an elective called Xicano studies. With an X. An X! Like X-Men, X. A superhero letter if ever I saw one.

That Xicano Studies class was so intimidating. Holy crap. It took almost till the end of the semester for me to actually speak up in class. But I was listening. I found out so much about myself, about my family. About where I came from, and who I was. I felt like I had been born again.

Want to read the entire script? Order a perusal copy today!

LINDA
(en español)
de Diana Burbano

PERSONAJE

LA LINDA, una joven chicana que podri ´a estar vestida con un disfraz de Wonder Woman.

ESCENARIO

En algu ´n momento de principios de los 80.

AGRADECIMIENTOS

Gracias a UNAM Universidad Nacional Auto ´noma de Me ´xico y Lupe Saucedo.

(LINDA sale por la puerta principal llevando una caja. Ella está cantando, "Los Laureles," como Linda Ronstadt en Canciones de Mi Padre. Termina con un fuerte grito de Mariachi. Para, escucha y se ríe.)

LA LINDA: Si mi abuelita estuviera aquí, ella hubiera respondido con un gritazo fuerte y las dos hubiéramos bailado alrededor de la cocina, usando cucharas como castañuelas hasta que mi papá nos gritaba "Dejen con las tonterías y tráeme una chela!"

Encontré esta caja debajo de la cama de mi 'Ita.

(Deja la caja. Saca un disco de Living in the USA de Linda Ronstadt.)

Guardo mis discos! Yo quería ser Linda Ronstadt. Parecía una muñequita pequeñita, pero Linda tenía una talento enorme! Me encantaba su dios-tan-hermosa voz y su estilo tan super-sexy. Yo me ponía los calcetines de tubo y chores bien cortos, como ella!

(Extrae un par de patines de la caja.)

Mis patines! Uf. Que patas tan grandes! Le rogué a mi papá que me comprara patines para mis 13 años. Los sábados por la mañana, yo patinaba, feliz, alrededor de nuestro barrio,

(Canta con la melodía "You're No Good":)

"IN THE HOOD, IN THE HOOD, IN THE HOOD SKA-TIN' IN THE HOOOOOD..."

El señor González me rogó que "por favor no cante! Estas destemplada!" Por lo menos yo tengo las ganas para cantar, en vez de sentarme en mi pompas y mirar Sábado Gigante todo el día!

"I'LL SAY IT AGAIN..."

(Canta un poco más de "You're No Good" a un Sr. González en la audiencia. Escuchamos un portazo.)

Cuando era muy pequeña, confundí La Ronstadt con Wonder Woman. La Mujer Maravilla también se llamaba Lynda. ¡Lynda Carter! Con "Y" en vez de una "L," por superheroína. Sabes, nunca me perdí un minuto de ese programa en televisión. Ni uno.

La Mujer Maravilla me dio esperanza. Una vez, en el segundo grado, me golpeó este chico en mi clase. Me tiraba las trenzas y se me sentaba encima como si fuera un caballito. Los profesores nunca hicieron nada.

Cuando sonó la campana, susurró: "wetback" en mi oído. Yo sabía lo que significaba. A los 7 años, no era la primera vez que escuchaba esa palabra.

Le pregunté a mi Abuelita qué materiales necesitaba para hacer Un Lazo de la Verdad como el de la Mujer Maravilla, y ella dijo que tenía ese preciso material en su kit de costura!

Llevé mi lazo a la escuela. Traté de hacerle cuerdas al muchacho, pero acabé azotándolo con fuerza en la cara con El Lazo. Me chismió a la señora del patio. Al principio ella me miró con severidad y luego sonrió. Ella dijo, "Bueno para tí, hija. No dejes que ningún muchacho te trate como mierda."

Yo quería ser Linda. *(Pronunciado Lih-n-da.)* ¡Linda! *(Pronunciado Lee-n-da.)* y feroz. Linda significa sexy, dura y dominante, no solo bonita. Ser bonita es aburrido.

Me compré pulseras de oro a la Mujer Maravilla. Al menos pensé que eran de oro hasta que me dejaron grandes ronchas en las muñecas.

Me gustaron las cicatrices. Me hacían sentir tenaz, como las Lindas.

(Canta el tema a Wonder Woman a "Blue Bayou" de la Linda R.:)

"WONDER WOMAN... WHERE THE WORLD IS MINE, WHERE I'M FIGHTING CRIME, ON THE BLUEEEEE BAY-OUOOOO!"

Nadie le dijo a las Lindas: "Chica, lo estás pidiendo". ¡Porque no era verdad! Y si silbabas como un lobo, recibirías una bota roja (*Patadas:*) en la cara.

Las Lindas eran magníficas. Puse sus carteles por todas mis paredes. Mis hermanos se burlaban mucho de mí por no tener chicos guapos en mi pared como una chica normal, ¡pero y qué! Yo era Linda! Un super-héroe badass cantante que podía hacer lo que yo quería. Mujer Maravilla / La Cantadora Dorada!

(*Ella baila un bolero al centro del escenario.*)

Abuelita decidió que iba a enviarme a la escuela secundaria de "fantasía" cerca de su trabajo. Tenía mejores resultados de pruebas, mejores estudiantes, no había pandillas. Sí – Era para "white people".

Me quedé como un cero a la izquierda. Oh, Hera. Yo estaba miserable.

Justo antes de las vacaciones de Navidad, ese primer año, me inscribí para el show de talentos de la escuela. Las chicas populares aullaban riendo cuando vieron eso. Bobas. Me siguieron en el recreo, burlándose de mí. Diciéndome que lo dejara –nadie quería verme en el escenario. Nunca lloré. Nunca. Las Amazonas no lloran.

Estaba haciendo mis tareas esa noche y yo hincué la ropa en la canasta tan fuerte que bote toda la ropa sobre el piso. My Abuelita no gritó. Ella me ayudó a recoger la canasta, me hizo pan con chocolate, y vimos sus novelas juntas hasta que me quedé dormida.

Fue dura, esa Navidad. La patrona de Ita trabajaba hacía que trabajara tarde todas las noches. No sé de donde encontró el tiempo o el dinero, pero cuando abrí mi regalo de Navidad, Abuelita me había hecho un traje de Mujer Maravilla. Estaba ubicado en una caja de lujo de Nordstroms, papel de seda y todo.

Esperé a probarlo hasta que mis hermanos estaban afuera tratando de matarse unos a otros con sus nuevos dardos de césped. Puse "Simple Dreams" en el tocadiscos. Me desnudé a mis chones, y pieza por pieza me convertí en la Mujer Maravilla. Puse la tiara en mi cabeza y giré, (*hace la vuelta de la pala de Wonder Woman*). Me mareaba mucho, pero al mirarme en el espejo, pertenecía a ese traje de superhéroe. Era una armadura femenina.

Cuando Linda tocó la última nota sobre "Poor Poor Pitiful Me," un rayo de sol entró por la ventana y relució hacia la tiara. Al igual que en el programa de televisión! Era una señal. Yo sabía entonces y allí lo que mi acto de espectáculo de talento iba a ser. Había tocado la guitarra durante años, aunque mi padre dijo que la guitarra era para los chicos.

Sabía que estaba pidiendo problemas. Mira— todos los otros actos eran básicamente un montón de animadoras haciendo estúpidos movimientos de baile a la música enlatada. Dos de ellos estaban bailando para "Play that Funky Music, White Boy". Que te dice todo lo que necesitas saber sobre mi estúpida escuela.

Mi turno era #12— muy cerca del final. Estaba muy nerviosa. Tenía que hacer pipí algo horrible! Pero no pude entrar y salir del traje a tiempo, así que tuve que sostenerlo.

Finalmente llegó mi turno. Salí al escenario con mi guitarra. Me paré, toqué mi primer acorde y canté:

(*A la melodía de "Blue Bayou":*)

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"I'M GOING BACK SOMEDAY, COME WHAT MAY, TO PARADISE ISLE –
WHERE THE GIRLS ARE TOUGH, AND BOYS GET ROUGHED UP, PARADISE ISLE –
WHERE I CAN GO – WITH MY LAA-SSOO, AND I CAN CLEARLY SEE,
THAT FAMILIAR SUNRISE, THROUGH TIED-UP GUYS, HOW HAPPY I'D BE."

Me metí en eso, que al final me giró y me caí, (*Se cae:*), pero jugué como si lo había planeado. (*Juega con un gesto de Flashdance:*) Tada!

Yo estaba en un extraño universo DC alternativo. Sabía que la gente se reía. Los escuché. No me importaba. Me incliné como si fuera Linda Ronstadt, en un concierto en el Hollywood Bowl. Mi Ita aplaudía como una loca. Vez, no era como si estuviera ganándole a todo el mundo. Ésta no era una película de ABC Family, donde de repente me aceptaron mis diferencias. Se reían de esa manera que los niños tienen. Pero. PERO. En realidad habían algunas personas que parecían estar aplaudiendo de verdad. Una maestra que no conocía me dio el pulgar hacia arriba. La mamá de alguien estaba silbando. Una chica adolescente bien cool me estaba sonriendo. Las vi. Mis compañeras amazonas. En el mar de burla que soporté durante los próximos 6 meses, recordé aquellos genuinos momentos de aprobación y aceptación me daban un poco de llama en el alma.

El próximo año, cumpliendo mi horario de curso, vi una electiva llamada estudios Xicanos. Con una X. ¡Una X! Como X-Men, X. Una carta de superhéroe si alguna vez vi una.

Esa clase de estudios Xicano era tan intimidante. Mi madre! Era casi hasta el final del año para que realmente pudiera llegar a hablar en clase. Pero estaba escuchando. Me enteré tanto de mí

mismo, de mi familia. Acerca de dónde vine, y quién era yo. Me sentí como si hubiera nacido de nuevo.

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