

Scenes from Barcelona

Catalan Theater on the European Fringe

An evening with Sergi Belbel, Carles Batlle,
and Pau Miró

King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center — New York University
53 Washington Square South — Monday, 7 May 2007, 6pm



Intro

Barcelona is now experiencing the most dynamic, opulent, and paradoxical period in its modern theater history. It is the commanding hub of an energetic Catalan theater scene, which in recent years has witnessed an outpouring of new dramatists, a crescendo in theater attendance, and a continual rise in the presence of international directors, playwrights, and companies.

This event, sponsored by the Catalan Center, the Institut Ramon Llull, and the King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center, will showcase the work of Sergi Belbel, Carles Batlle, and Pau Miró, three of the most dynamic and creative voices to emerge on the contemporary Catalan theater scene. A staged reading in English of excerpts from their recent work — *Strangers* by Belbel (2004); *Suite* by Batlle (1999); and *It's Raining in Barcelona* by Miró (2004) — will be followed by a discussion with the playwrights, moderated by Professor Sharon Feldman.

Sharon G. Feldman is an Associate Professor in the Department of Latin American and Iberian Studies at the University of Richmond. Her forthcoming book on the contemporary Barcelona stage is titled [In the Eye of the Storm](#).

Tonight's Staged Readings

Actors:

Man — Peter Rini

Woman — Ofelia Marin

Directed by Maria Litvan

Video projections by Laia Cabrera

Sergi Belbel

Sergi Belbel (1963) is at the forefront of Spain's post-Franco theatrical landscape. An accomplished playwright, director, and translator, he recently assumed the role of Artistic Director of the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya. He has authored more than twenty plays and received a succession of awards in Catalonia, Spain, and beyond. Belbel has played a leading role in reinvigorating the tradition of text-based drama in Catalan. His presence on the international theater scene is unrivaled by that of any other living dramatist from Spain.

Strangers, Belbel's most ambitious work to date, was commissioned by the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya in conjunction with the "Universal Forum of Cultures Barcelona-2004." Touching upon the timely issues of cultural diversity, immigration, racism, and ethnocentrism, it is the saga of a European family whose pain and trauma emerge as part of a foreboding cycle of repetition. Although Barcelona is not specifically mentioned in the text, there are several aspects of the context that are reminders of the multicultural and multiethnic conditions that have shaped the evolution of this city throughout the past two centuries.

Carles Batlle

Carles Batlle (Barcelona, 1963) is an audacious experimental dramatist, as well as a critic and scholar, whose plays have been staged in various cities and festivals throughout Europe. He is Director of the "Obrador," the workshop space of Barcelona's Sala Beckett, one of Spain's most prominent experimental theater venues. He is also coordinator of the joint Doctoral Program in Performing Arts at the Theater Institute of Barcelona and the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

Suite, Batlle's most award-winning play to date, premiered at the Beckett under the direction of Toni Casares in 2001. At first glance, it is a play of intimate dimensions and domestic affairs. When transferred to a broader, more public, space, however Batlle's dense plot of emotion, betrayal, and infidelity — the private story of two marriages — establishes a harsh allegory of contemporary (postnational) Europe: lost, disoriented, and adrift, without a precise memory or destiny.

Pau Miró

Pau Miró (1974) is an actor, director, and dramatist. After graduating in 1999 from the Institut de Teatre de Barcelona, he founded his own company, Menudos, which was affiliated with Barcelona's Teatre Malic. As an actor, he has worked with such directors as Lluís Pasqual, Oriol Broggi, and Carlota Subirós. In 2005, he was selected to participate in a program at Barcelona's Teatre Lliure to encourage the production of new Catalan plays, and he recently premiered a new work, *Somriure de l'elefant* ("The Elephant's Smile"), under his own direction at the Barcelona Grec summer festival in 2006.

It's Raining in Barcelona was nominated by Barcelona spectators for five "Butaca" prizes when it premiered in 2004 under the direction of Toni Casares. Miró's play takes place in the Raval quarter of Barcelona, an area historically and infamously regarded as a haven for prostitutes, thieves, and drug dealers, that in recent years has experienced an overall renaissance in construction and design, as well as exponential growth in the cultural diversity of its inhabitants. Miró captures this contemporary spirit of the Raval, portraying it as a place of continual transformation, as reflected in the eyes a prostitute, her client and her pimp.