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For Immediate Release

California State University at Long Beach  
University Players Presents

## *Chavez Ravine*

by Richard Montoya, Ric Salinas & Herbert Siguenza  
Directed by Edgar Landa  
May 8<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009

*"This is an American Story..."*

LONG BEACH, CA April 2009 — The CSULB University Players production of *Chavez Ravine* opens Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, and runs for eight performances, closing on Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>. Director Edgar Landa served as assistant to the director of the premiere production at the Mark Taper Forum in 2003. Culture Clash, the renowned Chicano theatre group dramatized the historic events surrounding Chavez Ravine creating a "performance collage" to bring history, geography, "urban excavation," "forensic poetry" and storytelling together in a contemporary theater narrative. In spite of the Hispanic creative and thematic roots of the story, Landa assures audiences that "this is not a Latino story, this is an American story." That is, a story that depicts the loss of community and displacement of families as casualties not of the Brooklyn Dodgers' famed move to the West Coast (a common misconception) but rather from the pressures of eminent domain and the communist paranoia of 1950's America.

This will be Landa's fifth directorial contribution for the CSULB University Players; previous shows include *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Stand and Deliver*. He feels working on *Chavez Ravine* serves his undergraduate cast and production team well in their theatre education because "acting students should do very contemporary pieces about Los Angeles." In what Landa calls this "emotionally-biased but politically-ambiguous story" the director and his cast have incorporated a strong physicality inspired by Landa's fight-choreography background and utilizes acting principles that create a very theatrical style that promises to be visually exciting.

Landa most recently directed the world premieres of *King Cat Calico Finally Flies Free!* by Aaron Henne and *Preludes & Fugues* by John Glore and the premiere of *La Ofrenda* at Cal State University Los Angeles. Other directing credits include *Romeo & Juliet* (Arizona State University), *Lalo* (CTG/Ricardo Montalban Theater), *The Comedy of Errors* (Vox Humana Theatre), and Richard Foreman's *Film Is Evil: Radio Is Good* (Son of Semele Ensemble). Also with Son of Semele Ensemble, he directed the critically acclaimed musical adaptation of *Animal Farm* that garnered 2 Los Angeles Stage Alliance Ovation Awards (out of 7 nominations) for Best Director of a Musical and Best Musical in a Smaller Theatre.

Edgar is an alumnus of the Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab & the Directors Lab West and is a graduate of the USC School of Theatre. He serves on the Diversity Advisory Committee for Center Theater Group and on the Board of Directors for Edge of the World Theatre Festival. He is currently an adjunct faculty member in the theatre departments at CalArts and USC. He is also Managing Director of the Son of Semele Ensemble that was profiled in the December 2004 issue of American Theatre Magazine.

The CSULB University Players production of *Chavez Ravine* opens Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, and runs for eight performances, closing on Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 p.m., and Tuesday through Thursday at 7:30 p.m. This performance is in the Studio Theatre on the CSULB South Campus, accessible via West Campus Drive. Tickets are \$15 for general admission and \$12 for seniors and students (with valid ID). For tickets and information please call (562) 985-5526 or visit [www.csulb.edu/depts/theatre](http://www.csulb.edu/depts/theatre).

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