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**FROM A MOTEL ROOM IN EAST LOS ANGELES
TO THE STREETS OF CHICAGO**

**URBANTHEATER COMPANY PRESENTS THE MIDWEST
PREMIERE OF CULTURE CLASH CO-FOUNDER
RICHARD MONTOYA'S AWARD-WINNING PLAY
WATER & POWER, JUNE 20-JULY 22 AT BATEY URBANO**

Chicago, IL (May 31, 2017) – UrbanTheater Company (UTC) concludes its 11th season with the Midwest premiere of **Richard Montoya's *Water & Power***. Winner of the 2006 Ted Schmitt Award for World Premiere of an Outstanding New Play presented by the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle, the Culture Clash co-founder has adapted his play from its original setting in a motel room in East Los Angeles to Chicago's Division Street. Directed by **Richard Pérez** and co-produced by UTC's newly appointed Artistic Director **Miranda González**, *Water & Power* will be staged at **Batey Urbano, 2620 W. Division St.**, on the Paseo Boricua in the heart of Humboldt Park, from **June 20-July 22**.

Two ambitious Mexican-American brothers nicknamed Water and Power are climbing the ranks of Chicago's power structure and political machine. A gifted cop and a popular state senator respectively, Gilbert and Gabriel rose from the hardscrabble neighborhoods of the city's South side to the corridors of power. But on this dark and rainy night, they find themselves on a lonely stretch of Division Street, their careers hanging on the balance.

This ambitious new production of Montoya's play stars Dennis García as Water and UTC Executive Director Iván Vega as Power as well as Mike Cherry (The Fixer), Juan Delgado (Asunción García/Ministro/Vendor), Gabriel Elías González (Deer Dancer/Gibby/Gabby) and Andrew Neftalí Pérez (Norte/Sur). The design

team includes Megan Erxleben (Lighting Design) and Perry Landes (Sound Design), Caswell James (Set Design), Kelsey Cox and Fredy Rocha (Costume Designers), and Sara Carranza (House Manager/Props).

“*Water & Power* shows the internal and external conflicts of a man trying to live up to expectations and the values he gives up to get there. Montoya is a passionate person and this play reflects that passion. He has taken on the challenge of adapting the play for our community and setting it in Chicago. As a Chicago-native, I think that is a brave feat,” said Artistic Director **Miranda González**.

“I've been familiar with Richard Montoya and Culture Clash for awhile. It wasn't until 2013 when Montoya and I connected in Boston during the first national convening of the Latino/a Theatre Commons (now Latinx Theatre Commons) when I told him, it's not a matter of *if* we will work together, it's *when*. After four years, I've held on to that promise and I'm thrilled to finally be working with Montoya on the Midwest Premiere of *Water & Power*,” added UTC Executive Director **Iván Vega**.

“I am thrilled to see my play receive this Midwest premiere at the hands of the good people of Urban Theater Chicago and equally thrilled at the opportunity of adapting it to a different setting and finding the commonalities between the Latino communities of Los Angeles and Chicago. Am grateful to UTC director Ivan Vega and to Miranda for mixing it up and for helping connect these two vibrant cities and communities,” said **Montoya**, who also directed the big screen, Edward James Olmos-produced adaptation of the play, which was shown as part of the 31st Chicago Latino Film Festival in 2015.

Montoya will also participate in a panel discussion titled ***Norte/Sur: The Great Chicago Divide*** alongside José López, executive director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, and filmmaker Esau Meléndez on **Tuesday, June 20 at 3:30 pm** at the **National Museum of Mexican Art, 1852 West 19th St**. Additional panelists will be announced soon.

The UTC production of *Water & Power* is co-sponsored by the National Museum of Mexican Art and the Center for Latino Research at DePaul University.

Showtimes and Admission

Previews for *Water & Power* are from Tuesday, June 20-Thursday, June 22. **Press/Opening Night is on Friday, June 23**; the play closes on Saturday, July 29. **Showtimes are:** Previews, 7:30 pm; Thursdays-Saturdays, 7:30 pm; Sundays, 3 pm. **No performance June 30.**

Tickets: Suggested donation of \$20. You can reserve your tickets online by visiting, <https://dime.io/events/waterpower>. For more information, go to <http://urbantheaterchicago.org/water-power/>

About the Cast

Mike Cherry is from Seattle and a UTC ensemble member. His first role with UTC was in José Rivera's *Sonnets for an Old Century* at the Steppenwolf Garage Rep. He was most recently seen in *First Class* at Theatre on the Lake with UTC and in *Blacula: Young, Black and Undead* with Pegasus Players at Chicago Dramatists. Other Chicago theatre credits include The Goodman Theatre/Teatro Vista, Mary-Arrchie Theatre, Sankofa Theatre Company, Chicago Fusion Theatre, Shapeshifters Theatre, Oracle Productions and *Dramatis Personae*.

Juan Delgado is a stand-up comedian from the South side of Chicago who's been making people laugh for about two years. He's performed at the Mikey O Comedy Show, the Tomfoolery group and Midwest Entertainment. He got his start singing and dancing for a Latin show called *Club del Niño* and has recently hosted/performed and did stand up comedy in a play for the Chicago Theater group.

Dennis García is making his UTC debut with this production. Chicago credits include: *Bittersweet Ambrosia* (Meter Feeders Production), *My Mañana Comes* (Teatro Vista) and *Blacula: Young, Black and Undead* (Pegasus). Los Angeles credits include: *U Don't Know Me* (CASA 0101), *Always and Forever* (Watts Village Theatre), *A Christmas Carol* (South Coast Repertory). TV/ National Commercials credits include *Chicago Justice*, *Esurance* and *Honda*.

Gabriel Elias González will be attending The Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts)'s theater program, beginning in the fall of 2017. His acting experience includes playing the role of James in *James and the Giant Peach*. This is Gabriel's first professional role and he aspires to be an actor, director, or writer in the future.

Andrew Nefalí Pérez is a Chicago based actor born and raised in Logan Square and a current ensemble member with UTC. He is a recent graduate from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) with a BFA in Theatre Performance. Previous credits include *Life's a Dream* (UIC), *The Secret in the Wings* (UIC), *Waiting for Godot* (Tympanic Theatre Company U/S), *Lolita De Lares* (UTC), *Adoration of the Old Woman* (UTC), *Young Playwrights Festival* reading (Pegasus Theatre Chicago), *The Oxcart* reading (Court Theatre) and *School of the Americas* reading (UTC).

Iván Vega is an actor, producer and co-founding Artistic Director of UrbanTheater Company (UTC) and current Executive Director since 2010. His recent credits include: *Julia de Burgos: Child of Water* (UTC); *First Class* (UTC) & Theater on the Lake; *Cuba and His Teddy Bear* (UTC); *Broken Thread* (UTC); *Eulogy for a Small Time Thief* at Batey Urbano (UTC) (2007 After Dark Award for Outstanding Performance as 'David Dancer') and *Hortensia and the Museum of*

Dreams at Victory Gardens. Other credits include: *Short Eyes* at Aguijon Theater (UTC) (Inaugural Production); *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot* at Bailiwick; *Perversiones* at Aguijón Theater (2004 International Theater Festival in Arequipa/Cusco, Perú); *Anna in the Tropics* at Victory Gardens. TV credits include: *The Line* (CBS pilot) and *Chicago P.D.* (NBC). Iván holds his Bachelor's in Fine Arts in acting from the Theatre Conservatory at Roosevelt University.

About the Creative Team

Richard Montoya (*Playwright*) is a founding member of the historic performance trio Culture Clash. Born in San Diego, California, Richard was influenced by his family's involvement in matters of civil rights to pursue a career in political and social activism, and chose to accomplish these goals through writing original works and acting in plays and films concerned with matters of culture, racism, and Latino identity in the United States. His plays have been produced by Arizona Theater Company, Yale Rep, Campo Santo, Goodman Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, La Jolla Playhouse, and Arena Stage, among many others. He made his feature filmmaking debut as a director with a big screen, Edward James Olmos-produced adaptation of *Water & Power* starring Enrique Murciano and Clancy Brown. Montoya's second film, the documentary *Carlos in Wonderland*, about the legendary Chicano painter Carlos Almaraz, and co-directed with Elsa Flores Almaraz, is currently in post-production.

Richard Pérez (*Director*) is an award-winning actor, director and educator. He is the recipient of the Theatre Communications Group's New Generations/Future Leaders Fellowship, which took him to Chicago Dramatists as its first Associate Artistic Director in 2009. Prior to that, he was the Producing Artistic Director of the Bloomington Playwrights Project in Indiana for seven seasons. In that time he oversaw the production of over thirty new plays, with at least sixteen of those being world premieres. His directing credits include: *Roustabout*, *Miss Julie*, *Urinetown*, *All My Sons*, *True West*, *Hurly Burly*, *The Mercy Swing* (New York Fringe Festival) and *Nocturnal* (part of the Kennedy Center's New Visions/New Voices Festival). Chicago credits include: *Fucking A* for UTC and *Invasion of Skokie* for Chicago Dramatists. As an actor he has appeared as Councilman Ortiz on *Boss*, with Kelsey Grammer, as well as roles on *Chicago Fire* and *Chicago Med*.

Miranda González (*Artistic Director/Co-Producer*) was a founding ensemble member of Chicago's Only All Latina Theater company Teatro Luna and has devised and developed plays since 2000. After performing as an actress for 10 years she decided to turn her artistic endeavors towards directing. Previous directing and development credits include: *La Gringa*, *GL 2010*, *Of Princes* and *Princessas* at the 2010 Goodman Latino Theatre Festival; *10x10 Festival*, *Lullaby*, *The North/South Plays* workshop at the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs; *Crossed*, *Crime Scene Chicago* with Collaboraction; and Melissa DuPrey's *Sushi-Frito* at Free Street Theater.

Antonio Bruno (*Co-Producer/Production Manager*) is dedicated to his community, working with UTC as Company Manager; he is also on the Board of Directors of the Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center (SRBCC). He has worked as a sound designer for UTC's *Cuba and his Teddy Bear*, *First Class*, *Devil Land*, *Julia De Burgos: Child of Water*, *Lolita de Lares* and *La Gringa*. He also worked as Production Manager for the past three productions at UTC.

Jacqueline Marschke (*Stage Manager/Co-Production Manager*) is joining the UrbanTheater Company team for their production of *Water & Power*. Her other Chicago credits include Stage Management for *Giggle, Giggle, Quack* and *Northanger Abbey* (Lifeline Theatre) and *The Citizens Anthology* (The Inconvenience). She also served as Assistant Stage Manager for *Pirandello's Henry IV* and *The Life of Galileo* (Remy Bumpo Theatre Company), *No Wake* (Route 66 Theatre Company), and *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* (No Stakes Theatre Project).

Liza Ann Acosta (*Dramaturg*) Born in Brooklyn and raised in Ponce, Puerto Rico, this Boricua migrated to study Literature, History and Chemistry in South Carolina. She loved the South so much she did not want to stray too far and went to North Carolina to pursue an MA in English Literature. She worked as a translator for Hemingway biographer Michael Reynolds translating letters from a Cuban fisherman and pamphlets on bullfighting from the 1930s. Her edited translation of the play *Carnaval afuera, carnaval adentro* by René Marques was the subject of her MA thesis. After completing her Master's, she earned her PhD in Comparative Literature at Pennsylvania State University. She is currently the University Dean at North Park University, an Ensemble Member of Teatro Luna and the Literary Manager for UrbanTheater Company.

About UrbanTheater Company

Founded in 2005, UrbanTheater Company is committed to the creation and exploration of urban-inspired works that convey, illuminate and empathize with the human experience. As a platform for multicultural representation in the performance arena, UrbanTheater Company serves as a bridge between Chicago's urban and Latinx communities and a vehicle of performing arts. UrbanTheater Company engages itself in the work of community responsibility and strives to raise awareness and contribute to the important conversations concerning many of the social issues facing our diverse backgrounds. UTC's current Board of Directors is composed of: Juan Linares (President), Jerry Conner (Vice-President), Marty McCaffrey (Treasurer), Miranda González (Secretary) and Iván Vega.

For more information about UrbanTheater Company, visit <http://urbantheaterchicago.org>. Follow UTC on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/UrbanTheater> and on Twitter <http://twitter.com/UrbanTheater>