



# ¡Ay, CARMELA!

by  
JOSÉ SANCHIS SINISTERRA

[aycarmelatheplay.com](http://aycarmelatheplay.com)



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New York Premiere produced by Puy Navarro and Francisco Reyes  
Presented in January 2014 by Repertorio Español

Set and costume design: Will Bezek  
Original music by Edward Ware  
Lighting design: Derek Wright  
Sound design: Andy Evan Cohen  
Voice coach and musical arrangements: Pablo Zinger  
Choreographer: Kristi Spessard  
Photography and graphic design: Curro Amador and Antonio Zancada  
Additional photography: Nick Rogers  
Assistant director and production assistant: Laura Gómez

With Puy Navarro and Francisco Reyes  
Directed by Francisco Reyes

WITH THE SUPPORT OF



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Instituto Nacional de Artes Escénicas y de Música

Carmela and Paulino survive the Spanish Civil War travelling with their vaudeville comedy act. With a touch of flamenco and lots of flair, they win over every audience.

A twist of fate lands them under arrest by Franco's army at a small town theater. Now they've got a single night to improvise a comedy routine and wow senior military officers. And that's when things get really complicated. Among the audience is a group of prisoners facing execution the next morning, and Carmela and Paulino must ridicule them as part of the show.

How will they save the night and their necks without betraying everything they believe in?



A perfect mix of comedy and drama, *¡Ay, Carmela!* is a tribute to love, courage, life in the theatre, and a heartbreaking look at the absurdity of war.

An overnight success following its Spanish premiere in 1987, it was made into an award-winning movie by Carlos Saura, starring Carmen Maura as Carmela.

The show premiered in New York in January 2014, presented by Repertorio Español.





**B**ring  
*¡Ay Carmela!*  
to your theater



*"Carmela and Paulino are the funny and humble side, at times loving and pathetic, of a transcendental historical event that overwhelms their modest wits."* - José Sanchis Sinisterra, playwright.

#### HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) was indeed a very complex conflict that had an impact beyond the borders of Spain. The government system at the beginning of the war was a democratically elected Republic, which led to many social changes in the country, especially on subjects such as the role of the Church. Led by General Franco, right-wing officers rebelled against the Republic and its reforms, with the support of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Franco's army had to face the resistance from the Republican working class and also from the International Brigades, a group of anti-fascist volunteers from all over the world.

The war ended with Franco's victory on March 31, 1939, altering the European balance of power in favor of Nazi Germany. About 350,000 were killed, and there were atrocities on both sides. Spain entered into an institutionalized dictatorship, which lasted until Franco's death in 1975.





JOSÉ SANCHIS SINISTERRA (28 June 1940) is undoubtedly one of Spain's most prestigious contemporary playwrights. He has won numerous awards, including the National Theatre Award and several Max Awards for Best Playwright.

In 1977 he founded Teatro Fronterizo, a collective of theatre professionals, actors and researchers interested in experimenting with theatre and pushing its boundaries. A decade later he established the renowned Sala Beckett in Barcelona – the only theatre in the world authorized to bear Samuel Beckett's name.

His plays have been translated into French, English, Italian and German, among many other languages, and have been produced in Europe, the US, Latin America, and Africa.



PUY NAVARRO and FRANCISCO REYES are two Spanish theater actors and producers living in New York. Since 2005 they've presented works by classic and contemporary playwrights from Spain such as Félix Sabroso (*Women Slightly on the Edge*), Antonio Zancada (*Carrots*, premiered at The Duke on 42nd Street Theater), Calderón de la Barca (*Life is a Dream*, at United Nations and Almagro's International Classical Theater Festival) or Juan Mayorga (*Way To Heaven [Himmelweg]*, named Critic's Pick by *The New York Times*). ¡Ay, Carmela! is their second collaboration with Repertorio Español as producers.

