BARRIO GRRRL!

Book and lyrics by QUIARA ALEGRÍA HUDES
Music by BILL SHERMAN
Directed by PETER FLYNN
Choreographed by DEVANAND JANKI

Performances for Young Audiences is made possible by Bank of America

The Kennedy Center
Spunky 9-year-old Ana is faced with a very big decision. On the one hand, as her alter-ego Barrio Grrrl, she’s pretty busy preserving justice in the barrio and protecting her neighborhood. On the other hand, in the world where Ana lives with her abuelo (grandfather) and misses her mom who is far, far away in Iraq, reality is sneaking up on her. It’s time for Ana to decide what’s most important: being a superhero or a girl who works little miracles in real life.

**BILL SHERMAN** Composer

Bill Sherman won the 2008 Tony Award® for Best Orchestration for In the Heights and the 2008 Grammy Award® as the co-producer of the In The Heights Original Broadway Cast Album. He also earned a Drama Desk nomination for Outstanding Orchestration for In the Heights Off-Broadway. Bill is the composer for Sesame Workshop’s new The Electric Company, AMC’s Storymaker’s, the second season of MTV’s Gamekillers, as well as Nike’s Kobe Mentu. He has also contributed songs to Sesame Street and Chasing Broadway Dreams, a documentary about In The Heights on its road to Broadway. Bill is a proud member of NY’s premier hip-hop, improv, and comedy group, Freestyle Love Supreme that traveled to the Aspen, Edinburgh, Melbourne, and Montreal comedy festivals. He is a graduate of Wesleyan University.

**PETER FLYNN** Director

Peter Flynn is the new Artistic Director of the Hangar Theatre in Ithaca, NY where his credits include staging Claudia Shear’s Dirty Blonde starring Tony Award® nominee Emily Skinner, and David Mamet’s November. Broadway: Actors’ Fund concerts of On the 20th Century starring Douglas Sills, Marin Mazzie, and Joanne Worley; Chess starring Josh Groban; and Funny Girl with 16 Fanny Brices, including Whoopi Goldberg, Bebe Neuwirth, and Jane Krakowski. Off-Broadway: Henry & Mudge, Junie B. Jones (nominated for two Lucille Lortel Awards including Best Musical), and Rhapsody in Seth - Actors’ Playhouse starring Seth Rudetsky. Other New York credits: The Broadway Musicals of 1953 - Town Hall; Romulus, a new opera - Guggenheim Museum; and Babes in Toyland - Avery Fisher Hall. Regional credits: Gypsy - St. Louis MUNY; Man of La Mancha - Maltz Jupiter Theater (Carbonell Awards for Best Director and Best Musical); How Can You Run with a Shell on Your Back? - Chicago Shakespeare Theater; Children of Eden - Arvada Center in Denver; The Piano Lesson and The Crucible - Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center; The Santaland Diaries - Pittsburgh City Theatre; A Child’s Christmas in Wales - National Theatre of the Deaf. As a writer, he has created the script for two musicals with composer/lyricist Brooks Ashmanskas, Lily based on Edith Wharton’s The House of Mirth and the upcoming For Love of the Game, based on the Michael Shaara novel and commissioned by the Huntington Theatre. Graduate: Northwestern University.

**QUIARA ALEGRIA HUDES** Playwright

Quiara Alegría Hudes is a two-time Pulitzer Prize Finalist. Her work for musical theater includes the Tony Award®-winning Best Musical In the Heights (book and lyrics). Her plays include Elliot, A Soldier’s Fugue and 26 Miles. She has been honored with the Lucille Lortel Award, the Outer Critics Circle Award, the Paula Vogel Award in Playwriting, and the Clader Prize. Originally trained as a musician, Hudes graduated from public school in Philadelphia and went on to receive a B.A. in music composition from Yale and an M.F.A in playwriting from Brown. She has found many homes for her writing, including: New Dramatists, where she is a resident writer; Page 73; Alliance Theatre; Miracle Theatre; Hartford Stage, where she is the Aetna New Voices Fellow; Goodman Theatre, where she is the Joyce Fellow; and Philadelphia Young Playwrights, which produced her first play in the tenth grade and where she now serves as a mentor and board member. She is currently working on a trilogy of plays about music in American life.
NOTES FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

Ana encapsulates everything a hero can be: an underdog, ambitious, not afraid to get her sparkly new white sneakers dirty, someone who thinks you get the most from your community when you give to the community.

In essence, Ana is an old-world character. She reflects my abuela’s ideal that being generous to one’s neighbors is an end in itself, not a means to an end. My abuela (grandmother in Spanish) moved from Puerto Rico to Philadelphia as an adult, and with her she brought an enormous heart and an enormous family. She became the unofficial godmother of entire city blocks. Each time she moved, her constituency of godchildren grew. In a neighborhood characterized on the nightly news as violent and scary, Abuela Yuya left her door unlocked all day long. Anyone could let themselves in and find the bottomless pots of rice and beans on the stove. Abuela shuffled around in house slippers, serving café con leche and arroz con habichuelas to anyone who needed a hot plate of food and company. She was not wealthy. With her modest social security checks, she made sure there was a hot plate of food for any person who needed it. She answered people’s questions, gave advice when asked, gave love always. A true community hero, even if she was unknown in the wider Philadelphia area.

What if every block in every city had a hero like that?

That’s what Barrio Grrrl imagines.

It says, you can be the hero!

It says, whether you’re nine or ninety-nine, you can make your block better. You can make your community stronger.

I grew up loving superheroes. Superman. Batman. Spiderman. But what about scrappy, everyday people who want to do good? My abuela couldn’t fly or shoot spiderwebs from her wrists, but yet she could take a can of beans, a cup of white rice, and a spoonful of ketchup and feed twelve people! Now that’s a superpower!

I also grew up hungry for female heroes. I loved Punky Brewster. I wore Superwoman pajamas to bed. And yet, my love for female superheroes went unfulfilled much of the time. More often, the females in TV and movies and Barbie boxes were concerned with boys, looking cute, and being popular. Ech! The women I knew in real life were much stronger and more interesting, so why did popular stories turn females into two-dimensional supermodels? Why not stories featuring bold and fearless young women?

And what kind of community would Ana help? On TV and movies I saw what felt like compartmentalized stories—white (Cheers), black (The Cosby Show), or Latino (telenovelas). But my personal experience marched to an altogether different drum. For one thing, I was both Jewish and Puerto Rican. So was I supposed to watch Sabado Gigante or Seinfeld? The neighborhood where I grew up, West Philly, was full of affordable starter homes, a landing pad for immigrants from all different countries. My best friends were Ethiopian and Vietnamese, neither of their parents spoke a lick of English. And my mom was the only Latino on the block.

So this musical, Barrio Grrrl, presents my own personal vision of utopia through one girl’s eyes. A mixed-ethnicity block. Doing a lot with limited means. A desire to help and spread joy. If I, personally, could be any superhero, I think I’d be Barrio Grrrl!

Quiara Alegria Hudes

Promotional video available November 2009!

ABOUT THE KENNEDY CENTER’S TOURING PROGRAM

For the past 17 years, Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences on Tour has been a leader in bringing imaginative and original works around the nation. The tours begin with world premieres at the Kennedy Center for Washington, DC metropolitan area audiences before being sent out on the road. The 2010-2011 season continues our tradition of bringing engaging stories, professional production values, and talented casts that will thrill your audiences. So let the fun begin...book today!
A girl, who fancies herself a superhero, wishes she could save every broken heart in el barrio, although she probably needs a little saving herself.

Spunky 9-year-old Ana is faced with a very big decision. On the one hand, as her alter-ego Barrio Grrrl with her invisible sidekick Amazing Voice, she’s pretty busy preserving justice in the barrio and protecting her neighborhood. On the other hand, in the world where Ana lives with her abuelo (grandfather) and misses her mom who is far, far away in Iraq, reality is sneaking up on her. It’s time for Ana to decide what’s most important: being a superhero or a girl who works little miracles in real life. Pulitzer Prize finalist and Tony Award® nominee Quiara Alegría Hudes (In the Heights) and Grammy®-winning music director for PBS’s new Electric Company Bill Sherman give audiences a funny and warmly truthful play that will make hearts sing.

Recommended for ages 9 and up, and grades 4 and up. Curriculum connections include cultural studies, teamwork, language studies, and interpersonal relationships.

Kennedy Center touring productions feature a comprehensive package of educational programs and materials designed to enhance the education values of our productions for young people, teachers, and families, including Cuesheet performance guides, ArtsEdge online content, and post-performance question-and-answer sessions with the company.

BOOKING INFORMATION
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