

LA MOSCA: A Solo Performance of My Own Design

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Abstract

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La Mosca is a solo performance intended for the stage that highlights the significance of familial values. It examines the way that values of masculinity were imposed upon me throughout my life, and how that directly influenced the relationship I have with my family. The performance illuminates this through the lens of an ancestral history in order to emphasize how these sentiments will continue in a cycle unless they are actively identified, examined, and broken.

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Graduate Thesis - *La Mosca*

Jeffrey Fracé

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One of the predominant reasons that I enrolled in a graduate acting program was a question that kept looming over my head as I grew more serious about a career in performance. That question is: What difference am I going to make? I found much joy and challenge in embodying characters and the amount of research and soul that goes into that process, but I wanted to find how my work could help others see the world differently. After watching the PATP Class of '19 perform their solo shows, I was fascinated by the way that some showcased very specific stories that held sentiments that we could all relate to somehow. In Solo Performance with Val at the end of my second year, I realized how afraid I was to tell any specific story about my life on the stage. I had a fear that no one would relate — that the audience would miss the significance of my story. However, with Val's encouragement, I wrote a short piece that was specific to my experience. I was surprised with the feedback I got from some classmates. Not only did they understand the significance, but they also related to some of the most minute details. This empowered me with a sense of freedom going into the commencement of the creation of *La Mosca*.

Moving across the country to attend graduate school has caused astronomical impacts in the development of my character. One that surprised me the most was how much I would miss my family. In total transparency, I didn't value my family much when I lived with them. Hanging

out with my friends was always more important to me than a family dinner. I quickly learned that distance really does make the heart grow fonder. But, I started to wonder if there was something that was more deeply rooted in how I organized my priorities. I looked to my family's past and found a commonality between all the men — we have all distanced ourselves from the core family at some point in some way, shape, or form. Why? I wanted to examine this central question through a semi-biographical and ancestral lens. The script I am submitting as my thesis is inspired by a conglomeration of events experienced by several men in my family to create a fictional story of a wrestler blinded by ambition.

When I first began to organize the structure of my show, I called upon the quintessential knowledge given to us by John Jacobsen in our film acting class about the importance of story structure. He taught us how to recognize the different “events” present in a majority of stories and how important they are in bringing a story and its characters to life. This knowledge was crucial in developing a character with an identifiable arc that is playable from an actor's perspective. I also relied on the freedom in creating a character posited by Jeffrey Fracé in *Composition* at the end of my first year. There was a palpable fear that came with creating a fictional story inspired by real people. When in doubt, I would return to this freedom of exploration and how something like physical location or time in history can hold an inherent influence in elements of character. I also relied on a key piece of advice from Shakespeare with Amy Thone — if a character displays contradictions (they do something in one scene and the opposite in another), it's important that the actor plays them fully and refrains from balancing them out. This is usually where the play's core questions can be observed by an audience through character analysis. This served as a constant guidance in the creation of the central character.

I recognized early in the creation of my thesis how much potential this show has to be converted into a film. I plan to one day bring this to fruition after adding more characters and events to the story I have so far. The pandemic has made me realize more than ever how important it is for actors to be able to generate their own content. The University of Washington has profoundly prepared me for this by giving me the tools that I need to enter an industry that is adding more value and demand for this kind of work, and for also helping me find within myself that my work will make a difference in at least one person's life.

LA MOSCA

(Lights up on Arturo Vivas. A young man of about 25. Stands with his arms crossed. There is a chair positioned behind him upstage right. There is a backpack leaning against the chair.)

Me llaman LA MOSCA. They call me The Fly. Ay. Don't laugh. The hunnies stick all over that like honey, let me tell you. I picked it up a few fights back at *Buenaventura* when this little man came up to me after the fight and told me I was untouchable. Like a fly. Can you believe that? I stood there lookin' down at this little dude, and he's lookin at me with eyes big like this, and I'm lookin at him, and he's lookin' at me, and IN ME it felt like he could see his hero or something. And in those 2 seconds, I found my purpose. Damn straight. I'm going to be the greatest *luchador* in the history of *Lucha Libre*. There will be people of all ages from here in Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, down to the tip of Chile that'll look up at me with those same eyes — big, like this *(5 pointed hand over each eye)*. WOO, MAN! Gives me the CHILLS just thinking about it, but hey, whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve (Napoleon Hill). If I can touch the untouchable, then that makes me The Fly. *La Mosca*. But they used to call me by my real name, Arturo. Arturo Vivas. What do they call you? ... Dario. Yeah I know that, every wrestler in Colombia knows your name! But you ain't got no nicknames or nothin'? ... Dario. Y'know, that's my old man's name... He ain't around anymore though. Matter fact *(Arturo leans in and inspects Dario)* ... you look just like him, got the hair and all... You sure you're not my dad? *(Menacing pause.)* Nah man I'm just foolin'. *Relajate.* Relax.

I'm sorry, you've been sitting there this whole time listening to me ta— Do you want some water? *OYE MA! UN POQUITO DE AGUA PARA DON DARIO?* *(Back to Dario)* How about a buñuelo? You sure? They're still warm? No? *No?* Ima get you a buñuelo. *MA!* Where the fu-nah, it's cool my mom can bring it, its no thing. Not like she's doing anything... Nah, she cleans houses down around *Barrio Alrevado* but when she ain't she kind of just lounges... smokes her cigarettes... Ain't no need to bring her in here man, she don't care a damn about any of this. Always got something to say about how I'm wasting my life away. Always talking about, why don't you pray like you did when you were a kid? Ask God to provide, ask God for forgiveness — man fuck that. She has no idea what she's talkin' about. Whatever, we're getting off track.

(Back to the subject at hand, Arturo looks at Dario with a beaming glance.) Dario. Hey man I can't even begin to thank you for comin' to see me. When I wrote you, my little sister, Ligia, told me there was no way in hell Dario Rodriguez was coming out to the slums of Cali for— How long you been managing wrestlers? ... 20 years is a long time to be doing one thing. What do you love so much about it? — I mean why keep doing it? How do I know you won't just quit on me a year from now talkin' 'bout how you found some new purpose in pottery or upholstery or something? ...

I was hoping you'd seen that match down in *Palmira*, it was WILD wasn't it? Man didn't know what he had coming to him ... What is it you "see" in me? ...

I'm in it Dario, I swear it to you. I'm ready to take this to the next level. I'm all in. I'm gonna be the greatest, and you and me? We're gonna make history you and me. Believe that. *(With*

increasing excitement) Imagine that on a marquee, glowing in lights, LA MOSCA: as managed by Don Dario, that'll fill the seats! Packed shows man, big money. Let's do this, where do I sign?

...

Ahhhhh you business folk always tryin to undercut a deal. Proposition, what's your proposition? ... Spain...? You want me to wrestle in Spain? What's in Spain? ... Shit I didn't even know they had a European league. I don't know man, I don't know. When would we leave? ... Tonight?! I've got a job here, I've got my girl, my sister, my moms... To just up and leave?

Let's do it. I'll meet you at the airport late tonight. Thank you for this, Don Dario. I won't disappoint you. It's you and me now, baby! *(Dario leaves the room.)*

(Spotlight on Arturo standing with his arms crossed. He looks troubled, yet excited. He isn't sure what to do first. He stands motionless with the same expression as the light fades in full wash.)

(During transition) "Night came so quickly."

Please get out of my way Ligia, I need to leave here now or I'm definitely going to miss this flight and then it'll be YOUR fault. Now, you want it to be your fault that a once in a lifetime opportunity just passes me by, come on now. Just gotta double check my bag ...

What do you mean what about you and ma? You two will go on without me just fine, I'll write ... ay don't say that, of course I will, soon as I get settled somewhere I'll send a letter and you send one back, we'll talk that way. You two will be fi— *(He becomes stern. A side of him we haven't seen yet:)* shut your mouth. Talking about what you two have "done for me." You haven't done anything for me except ask me for money all the goddamn time. And ma too. Always asking me for money. It should be moms that's making the money and giving me some. I've had enough of it. Who busts his ass everyday to help out around here? Who stays up all night without a single clue of how he'll help himself? It's just ask ask ask. I'm done giving, Ligia, it's my turn to go out there and take. I've made up my mind. I'm out of here...

Come on now don't cry, don't cry *chiquita*. I'm sorry, I know you've always supported me in this and for that I'm thankful. So you of all people should know — this is my destiny. I need to take this, and it has to be right here, right now. I won't let it go. Come here. What was that song we always used to sing together when we were kids? Come on you know it. *(Begins singing No Woman No Cry by Bob Marley & the Wailers)* No woman, no cry. No woman, no cry. And the next part: oba oba-serving the hypocrites! You used to love that. You'll be the first person I write as soon as I get settled. I love you, *chiquita*. Isn't it wild how things happen the way they do? Get to bed, and if you see ma — not a word. I'll write her in my own time.

(During the transition he grabs his bag, leaves the room, and attempts to sneak out of his house as quietly as possible until...)

Ma?

(Spotlight down on Ma who is standing with a gesture indicating that she is smoking a cigarette. She stands looking at Arturo with a look of disgust mixed with heartbreak.)

Uhuh. So you'll just up and leave now huh? Without saying goodbye to your own mother. Where do you think you're going? And don't you dare tell me that this is another thing for that wrestling bullshit. It's time you found a real job, its time you stopped jerking off and actually do something with your life, its time y—

Spain? What the fuck is in Spain? ... Let me tell you something Arturo. If you walk out of that door right now, you can forget you have a mother. You will never hear from me again. Now it's me... or them, Arturo Vivas. What's it going to be?

I hope they throw you out of the ring. And when you land on your head and suddenly can't walk anymore, you think of me. You think of this house, and how you've abandoned me tonight. And then pray to God because he'll be the only one that will help you then. *(She takes her cigarette and puts it out on her tongue before flicking it onto the ground. One look back at Arturo before exiting.)*

IN SPAIN - 6 months later...

Let's do this thing Dario. *Vamos*. You've seen the way I've been training for the past six months. There's no stoppin' me. You know this. So, let's. Go. I'm not waiting around any longer — where is this guy, they were supposed to pick us up 20 minutes ago, weren't they? This fuckin' guy is going to make me late to my first fight. I'm gonna walk in late, the crowds gonna see that — I can't have that, Dario, I can't have that. Give him another call. Get this guy on the phone. And when you do let me speak to him...

Alright yeah and tell him if he steps on it I'll buy him a drink after the match. He can believe that. Gonna need to celebrate after my first victory here in Barcelona. *(Arturo settles as he waits for the ride.)*

So tell me Don Dario, who's up first? Tell me what I gotta know about this guy... Fool calls himself *El Rosado*... what kinda name is that? Gonna rip his mask clean off. I never really understood the whole mask thing. I don't wear one myself because I like for people to see my face. I've gotta nice face, don't you think? I think *la lucha libre* must be littered with a bunch of ugly motherfuckers, always hiding their faces. Enough about the appeal of tradition, these fools are just too shy to show their faces. But this guy here, this guy I'll fight today... he better hope he wears a mask because I'm gonna humiliate him to the bone, his career will just *(mimes a poof)* cease to exist. Obliteration, Dario. It's what sends one man into oblivion and another into the light. Ima see the light today, my friend, and I'll have you to thank for that... thank you... What is it? I can see it on your face. Ahhh come on business man, step it to me like a man and tell me what you're thinking... Yeah, so? ... So this guy's won every fight you've seen him in, so what? Don't mean nothing to me. You can't scare me with that shit, I'm gonna go in there and win. I know I am, there's nothing you can say t— Oh... And if I lose? ... We'll see, we'll see. I need you to believe just as much as me, no? Remember what I told you: it's you and me now, baby. I can't have you filling my head with shit like that. That's death to me. How've you been in the business

this long filling men's heads with doubt like that? Ain't you supposed to be the best there is? Here's the taxi. Dario, either we're talkin' about winning or we ain't talkin' at all, now who's side are you on? ... Damn straight, let's do this. (*Gets in the taxi.*)

THAT NIGHT, AFTER THE FIGHT

WOO BABY, WHAT'D I TELL YOU? (*Does a little dance*) *Baile, baile, baile con baile!* I was dancing around this man like this! Like a friggin' belly dancer I was doin' it! I had this man down straight! What'd I tell you? Huh? Ay Dario, what'd I tell you? Obliteration. This man had no idea what he had coming — new kid on the block has something to say, believe it! Alright now get out of here *papi*. I gotta rest up for tomorrow's training. What'd I tell you though? Big money — you and me baby, aha! I'll see you bright and early. (*Dario leaves the room. Arturo is alone.*)

(*Arturo takes a moment to revel in his success before standing in the middle of the room once more with his arms crossed and a conflicted look on his face. There is a table near him with a chair. He sits and begins taking off his shoes before noticing that there is a letter on the table addressed to him. He picks it up and sees that it is from his sister. He reads it, but not out loud. Lights fade.*)

(*Lights up on Arturo seated in the same place sans letter. He looks troubled. He keeps nodding his head as Dario speaks to him, but he is lacking the energy and enthusiasm that we've seen in him up until this point.*)

(*Nodding*) What? Nah I'm here, yeah I hear you, I do. *El Rosado* wants another slice of me at the end of this month. If I don't accept, I have no shot at the championship final.

But ... I can't do it. My Ma's dead. I got a letter from my sister a week ago. It said she just fell after I left Colombia and her heart attacked her. She died in the hallway of our home. In my sister's arms, she died. Right near the banister where she'd let the laundry out to dry on Saturdays. Used to hate how she did that. Leaving my underwear out for everyone to see...

Ligia's all alone. I need to go home ...

Hold the fight off for me. Let me go home, go to my Ma's funeral, and I'll be right back to fi— Dario don't do this, you know I'm all in but this is my mother...

Next year? No no, not when I'm this close to the championship. I know you've got pull in this business. Please pull some strings for me and postpone this. Please. I need to be home, I need to — You don't own me! I don't care what you had written on that contract, I don't care that I signed it. She's dead because of me, I should've been there with her. She'd still be here if you never brought me here... You're just wringing me for money, like an old towel you throw me around and use me. I ain't gonna let you do that...

No come on, Dario, come back man. I'm sorry. I don't know what to do, tell me what to do... I'll fight. I'll fight at the end of this month and win in her honor. You know I'm your man, big money.

THE END OF THE MONTH - AFTER THE REMATCH

What'd I tell you? I'm your man! *Rosado* couldn't get a right hold of me, I just kept slipping through his fingers, like sand he couldn't catch me. You saw how crazy the crowd went when I grabbed him round the head, neck, and arm like this (*gestures*) and slammed him down onto the ground? Old boy was out cold! The corners of that room rang! (*He runs from one side of the imaginary ring to the other, fist in the air, reliving his victory*) *MOSCA! MOSCA! LA MOSCA!* Every face in the room had their eyes big, like this! You and me Don Dario, we're going to the European finals! (*Pause.*)

What's the matter? We're celebrating and you got that look on your face. Like you've seen a ghost. *Hombre*, you gotta relax! Where are we celebrating?

... ..

That's impossible. How could he be dead? I didn't do that. There's no way... Make them take those things, put them on his chest and shock him awake. This ain't happening.
(*Arturo pacing. His energy is frantic.*)

I don't know. I don't know how it happened. You heard him, you heard what he said right before I dropped him. He fucking insulted my mother, said he was gonna see her tonight. I just — I lost control, alright? I'm sorry, I don't know what happened. I just heard this man say those words and I lost it. I saw red. I don't know what happened... (*His realization of what he's done increases in severity.*)

What'd I do? What'd I do? My career is over. My *life* is over. I never meant to kill him. What are we going to do, Dario? The press is going to rip me apart. They're gonna think I'm a monster. I'm no spook, you know this! You'll help me out of this won't you? ... Won't you?

Dario. DARIO! You can't leave me like this in the middle o — Dario don't leave, I woulda never left home if I knew you'd be walkin' out on my like this! FUCK YOU! No I'm sorry, please. You're the only one I've got left. Please help me. (*Arturo collapses to the floor as Dario exits the room.*) What'd I do?

(*Light shift... Arturo is now alone. He notices a letter on the floor in front of him. It is from his mother. We hear a voice over of the letter spoken by his mother.*)

Arturo,

I wish with all my heart that you'll do well in this new country where you've left to start a new life.

I'm sad that you're leaving. Although I know I don't see you every day, I will miss you very much, but I know that you have left in search of your destiny.

Now, I can only ask God, The Virgin, and the memory of your grandmother, that they always look after you. Let them take care of you and guide you onto the right path.

I know you are a good kid, please never stop being one. Always be yourself and remember that the future of your life is in your hands and in no one else's.

You are the architect of your life. In you are the pavements, the stairs, and the buildings of good

fortune. Don't let the walls or lakes of mud take over.

Take responsibility for all of your actions.

No matter how old you are, remember that, for me, you will always be my baby! And I will always be your mother and will always be here to applaud your successes, or to encourage you to heed your mistakes. I will forever be there for your good and well-being.

Please call me from time to time... I will always be happy to hear your voice.

You take with you a piece of my soul. I love you, never doubt that. I will always be here for you.
Your mother, Asuncion.

(He lowers the letter and takes a moment to process what he has read. He has been crying and is wildly conflicted in regards to what his life has come to. He has made a realization that the things that he believed mattered most to him actually mean nothing at all. He looks around the room as if looking for a hand to hold... A light turns on to his right. It startles him a little but then washes over him with a calming sense of relief and absolution. He begins to smile.)

God... take me home.

(Blowin' in the Wind by Peter, Paul & Mary begins playing as the light fades.)