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## 'Sonia Flew' at San Jose Rep

In its new production 'Sonia Flew,' San Jose Rep examples the hard work of keeping a child safe

By [Beau Dowling](#)

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- [San Jose Repertory Theatre](#)  
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PEOPLE can bury their painful past so deep inside of them so that no one, not even close family members, will ever have to hear about it. In *Sonia Flew*, written by Melinda Lopez and now at San Jose Rep, the challenges of a parent keeping a child safe while coming to terms with a hard past is highlighted.

Sonia (brilliantly played by Ivonne Coll) is an immigrant from Cuba, sent to America by her parents in the early 1960s when she was 15 to avoid the inevitable Communist regime after Fidel Castro seized power. She lives in the Midwest with her husband, Daniel (Michael Santo), a Jewish psychologist, and her two children, Jen (Tiffany Ellen Solano) and Zak (Miles Gaston Villanueva). Sonia embraces the upcoming Chanukkah season, and Daniel's father, Sam, is due for his annual visit. The time is just a few months after 9/11—when patriotism and fear overrode better judgment. Zak has decided college isn't his true calling and enlists in the Marines, only he hasn't told his mother. The family dinner is turned upside down and the truth is revealed, sending Sonia reeling and even refusing to light the menorah. What Sonia is afraid of is how much Zak reminds her of herself at that age.



*FAMILY FEUD: Young Zak (Miles Gaston Villanueva) argues with his mother, Sonia (Ivonne Coll), in San Jose Rep's production of 'Sonia Flew.'*

We flashback to Cuba in the early 1960s: Sonia is 15 (played by Solano in a double role) and looking forward to a rally. She thinks Fidel is handsome and cannot wait to get dressed up in patriotic clothes, even though a girl wearing pants was considered revolutionary. Sonia's father, Orfeo (Julian López-Morillas), is a professor at the local school and has a special radio that can receive transmissions from America, an apparent no-no in the new Cuba. Her mother, Pilar (Kwana Martinez), can foresee the direction the country is going in and refuses to let her daughter grow up in such a volatile environment. The family know they are being watched by Tito, one of Fidel's lackeys. Against Sonia's wishes and with the help of a forged passport, they send her off to America. They never see each other again.

*Sonia Flew* exemplifies the sad fact that war, essentially, never changes. Tactical issues are basically moral issues; they have to do with human consequence. After growing up as she did, Sonia is wrought with anger because of her past and her refusal to revisit it. She lost her family once and will be damned if she'll lose it again. It's a dramatic, intense ride into realms of American psyche that even today people have a hard time talking about.

### **Sonia Flew**

San Jose Repertory Theatre

Runs through June 6

Tue at 7:30pm, Wed at 11am and/or 8pm, Thu-Fri 8pm, Sat 3 and 8pm, Sun at 2pm

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