



## Sonia Flew – and took our hearts with her

By [Cynthia Corral](#)

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Last night I went to see a play I had never heard of and barely knew anything about. My friend and I had seen some [Facebook](#) comments calling **Sonia Flew** possibly the best production the [San Jose Repertory Theatre](#) had ever presented, but we didn't know how much stock to put into those comments. However, we are always game to see a new show, so we went into the Rep to see what this show was all about.

When the lights went up for intermission we looked at each other and said, "HOLY COW." In the second act I'm pretty sure I saw my friend wiping away a tear or two (as I surreptitiously wiped away my own), and he was one of the first up to give a standing ovation at the end.

This play probably is the best production I have ever seen from the San Jose Repertory, and I have seen a lot of plays at the Rep. It is one of the most brilliant, intertwined, powerful plays I have ever seen. The set design and lighting was some of the most gorgeous and detailed I have seen at the Rep. The entire cast of six was outstanding – though I give extra credit to Ivonne Coll for playing adult Sonia, the mother of two teens in the first act, who then manages to so completely age a decade or two to play Marta in the second act that it is hard to believe she is the same actress. Tiffany Ellen Solano and Miles Gaston Villanueva are also *incredibly amazing* in their roles as the younger characters. Kwana Martinez gives the moving performance as Pilar that brought tears to our eyes in the second act. And just as incredible are Michael Santo and Julian López-Morillas who play the men in both families. As a whole this was the best group of actors I have seen at The Rep.



*Miles Gaston Villanueva and Ivonne Coll as Zak and Sonia*

I might run out of superlatives to describe this show, so let me tell you now if you are not clear yet – this is one fantastic production and I don't just recommend it, it is a MUST see.



*Miles Gaston Villanueva & Tiffany Ellen Solano as Jose and young Sonia*

The story centers on Sonia, a woman who emigrated alone from Cuba as a teenager. Now married with two teenagers of her own, she is told right before Christmas that her 19 year old son is enlisting and wants to go to Afghanistan to help make a difference in the world. The first act is spent watching Sonia try to hold her life together while also openly falling apart at the thought of losing her son. In the second act we are brought back to Cuba and back in time, where we meet Sonia as a 15 year old girl also struggling to separate and but still clinging to her family. We see the struggles that Sonia went through of which her current children are unaware, and we see the struggles her parents went through which Sonia never understood.

The play is about so many things, but also about changes and how they affect us. We see marriages affected by change, parents dealing with changes in their growing children, and everyone wonders how the changing political climates will affect them. As a mother of adult teens myself, I was quite moved watching adult Sonia deal with knowing she must let her children go but struggling to stop them from making what she felt were very bad decisions. And the play quite profoundly portrays how we really do not understand what our parents have gone



*Kwana Martinez, Coll and Solano as Pilar, Marta and young Sonia*

through in their own lives, and how it affects the decisions they make about their own children.

From the beginning of the first act you are pretty sure you know where the story is going, but I can tell you that you will probably be wrong. As much as this story brought tears to the audience it is also not a depressing story. It is simply about Life and Love and Family. There will be changes in Life no matter how much you struggle against them. There is no controlling or stopping those changes. All we can do is hold on to those we love as best we can, give them as much love as possible, and try to get through the changes together.

What an amazing production to end the SJ Rep's 2009/2010 season!

Go see this production. I promise you will be glad you did.

**Sonia Flew**

May 8 – June 6, 2010

Written by Melinda Lopez

Directed by Richard Seer

**San Jose Repertory Theatre**

101 Paseo de San Antonio

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