

# Musical Turns Childrens Tale Into Yule Tradition

By Sue Major Holmes

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Novelist Rudolfo Anaya wove for his granddaughter a tale of traditions crossing the generations. When he was finished, he discovered it was the Christmas story he always wanted to write.

Now his story is coming to the stage in La Compañía de Teatro de Albuquerque's production of "The Farolitos of Christmas: A New Mexico Christmas Story."

The story, set in Northern New Mexico in the 1940s, tells how 11-year-old Luz becomes concerned because her grandfather is too sick to chop wood to make luminarias, or bonfires.

Luz believes that without them, the pastores, or shepherds, will not stop at their house for the traditional Los Pastores, or retelling of the shepherds' journey to see the baby Jesus.

Through a series of discoveries, Luz develops the present-day concept of *farolitos*, lighted candles held in sand in a sack. (In some parts of the state *farolitos* also are known as *luminarias*.)

"It is my way of saying maybe that's how they got invented in the first place, by children," Anaya said. "Children take such great joy out of setting them up and seeing them."

He said he always had wanted to do a Christmas story.

"Now I have a 4-year-old granddaughter that I tell a lot of stories to. So last Christmas I wrote it for her. Actually, I told it to her but it turned into having so many characters... I wrote it down and said, 'Maybe this is the Christmas story I always wanted to write.'"

So the tale became a short story for all children. The short story is now in print.

Anaya had flirted with writing a Christmas story before. His novel, "Bless Me, Última" includes a chapter about a Christmas play in which the children on stage start fighting and the play ends in chaos. Anaya said people who mention the book to him always mention that scene.

"That was a laughing Christmas story. This one is more aimed at children, it's more traditional," he said.

Artistic director Irene Oliver-Lewis said La Compañía's production, which she adapted and is directing, keeps Anaya's narrative but adds "stylistic acting techniques."



JOURNAL PHOTO/ALEXANDRIA KING

Luz (Lia Roger Kinlecheene) shows her grandfather, Abuelo (José Francisco Ortega), the *farolito* she discovered by accident in a scene from the play "The Farolitos of Christmas."

THE FAROLITOS OF CHRISTMAS, adapted for the stage and directed by Irene Oliver-Lewis, is based on a short story by Rudolfo Anaya. La Compañía de Teatro de Albuquerque is staging the play at 8 p.m. Friday and 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday. Most of the dialogue is in English, with some in Spanish; most songs are in Spanish. Tickets for adults are \$5 in advance at the Lobo Campus Pharmacy, Central and Yale SE and \$6 at the door. Tickets for senior citizens, students and children are \$4. Call 242-7929 for reservations.

The play also incorporates some of the traditional Las Posadas, the musical re-enactment of Mary and Joseph seeking lodging before the birth of Jesus, with the couple being invited in at Luz's house.

The play also includes familiar tunes, such as "Silent Night" and "Jingle Bells," which are sung in English.

Anaya said he hopes the story inspires more literature for children.

Oliver-Lewis added: "We have the Nutcracker and A Christmas Carol; those are the things you studied. Now Hispanics will have a story at Christmas that's one of their traditions."



PHOTO/BOBBY HANSSON

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## ves Legacy ndian Art

"LOST AND FOUND TRADITIONS: NATIVE AMERICAN ART 1965-1985" is at the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C. through March 6. It will be exhibited at the Albuquerque Museum April 3-June 5, 1988, the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, Oct. 9-Dec. 11, 1988, the Rochester, N.Y., Museum and Science Center, Jan. 6-March 5, 1989 and the Columbus, Ga., Museum of Arts and Sciences, June 25-Oct. 15, 1989.

uch of the growth in the market of Indian crafts. According to one curator at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art, that growth had a negative side: The strength of the commercial market encouraged hasty workmanship and poor design in some instances and it rained the Southwest of vintage Indian objects at an alarming rate.

There were cries that traditional Indian arts and crafts were dead, or at the very

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Anaya Rudolfo - "Farolitos"