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Yana Wana's Legend of the Bluebonnet

By

**MARÍA F. ROCHA and
ROXANNE SCHROEDER-ARCE**

Original music and lyrics by
HÉCTOR MARTÍNEZ MORALES

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(YANA WANA'S LEGEND OF THE BLUEBONNET)

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PRODUCTION

Director	Robyn Flatt
Musical Director	S-Ankh Rasa
Stage Manager	Dwight Sandell
Choreographer.....	Fernando Hernandez
Scenic Design.....	Scott Osborne
Lighting Design	Linda Blase
Props Design	Josh Smith
Props Design Assistant.....	Rebecca Bongiorno
Sound Design	Marco Salinas
Costume Design.....	Frida Espinosa Müller
Scenic Artist.....	Brian Longworth
Dramaturg	David Lozano
Technical Director.....	Josh Smith
Assistant Technical Director	Jeffrey Stanfield
Interim Production Manager	Matt Grevan

The play was subsequently produced at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center in Austin, Texas, produced by the Indigenous Cultures Institute of San Marcos, Texas, and Teatro Vivo of Austin, with support from the city of Austin, the city of San Marcos and other funders.

CAST:

CONSUELO Barbara Mojica
TCAKEI David Allan Barrera
SWING Gaz Garcia
MARIA Genevieve Schroeder-Arce & Mercy Olguin
SACRED DEER José Dominguez-Leal
& Mario Ollincoyotl Ramirez
MOM Madison Palomo
YANA WANA Malysa Quiles
ABUELA Yvonne Flores & Erica Saenz

PRODUCTION:

Director Rudy Ramirez
Stage Manager Jackie R. Pérez
Lighting Design Alex Casillas
Lighting Technician Chris Clark
Music Director Julian Arizola
Costume Design Laura Gonzalez
Scenic Design Tomás Salas
Scenic Assistant Maggie Armendariz
Dramaturg Mario Garza, Ph.D.
Choreographer Mario Ollincoyotl Ramirez
Booking Agent Oscar Franco
Graphic Design Paul Del Bosque
Videographer Jose Lozano

Yana Wana's Legend of the Bluebonnet

CHARACTERS

MARIA (w): 12; lives in Dallas with her mother and brother.

ABUELA (w): 60; also referred to as Grandmother, Kis and Flor.

CHORUS/ANCESTORS: 4-6 additional actors also doubling as other characters:

CACIQUE (Chief) (m): 50; leader of the people, plays the drum at moments.

MOM (w): 30; also referred to as Margie. Also plays YANA WANA'S MOTHER.

YANA WANA (w): 12; also speaks for ASAWAN, her doll.

CONSUELO (w): 30s; a curandera or healer.

K'UĀNA TCAKEI (m): 12; pronounced Koo-ah-na Chah-kay. Also plays Yana Wana's brother, MATZĀN (pronounced Mah-t-san), and is a musician.

SACRED DEER (m): Ageless.

ADDITIONAL ANCESTORS/VILLAGERS/SINGERS: Age and gender not specific.

CASTING NOTES

The play can be performed with 7 to 15 actors, depending on how roles are doubled or expanded. The following are ideas of how roles can be doubled or expanded depending on the needs of your cast:

Doubling examples: Cacique could be spoken by Consuelo as another storyteller encouraged by Abuela, or could be spoken by a chorus of ancestors. Also, the deer could be a puppet.

Expansion examples: Asawan (the doll) could be an additional actor and the ancestors' lines could be split differently.

AUTHENTICITY AND REPRESENTATION

Yana Wana's Legend of the Bluebonnet offers the rare opportunity to enter the world of native people in Texas who have been mislabeled as Hispanic. They have abandoned this false identity and are reclaiming their indigeneity. Many of the “Hispanics” in Texas are descendants of the Coahuiltecan people who have been there for more than 14,000 years. Today, thousands of these Indigenous people in Texas are now practicing their ancient ceremonies and traditions, learning their native languages and living the values of their ancestors. It is critically important that this play be performed with dedicated attention to authenticity and respect for the original people of this land. Whenever possible, all roles should be played by native actors, and care must always be given to ensure that the Coahuiltecan and Spanish words are correctly pronounced.

Information about the Coahuiltecan language can be found at: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/87775#page/13/mode/lup>

More information regarding Coahuiltecan people can be found at: <https://indigenuscultures.org/>

The roles of the ancestors are especially important in this play as Coahuiltecan people believe that ancestors are ever present in our daily lives, watching, guiding and praying for our well being. Maria's ancestors watch over her development as she comes ever closer into their embrace. At the end of the play when Maria “sees” and talks with Yana Wana it is symbolic of the final acceptance of who she is—an Indigenous person with all of the caring, responsibility and love that come with that legacy.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. Nami Tū (Tawaxāyo) 30
(My Relative [All Our Relations])
2. Tzamōxu (Xagú pā ānua)..... 32
(Sleep [Together with the Moon])
3. Aptzāi Yana Wana 46
(Ancient Yana Wana)
4. A'x (Pil', axtē, axtikpīl', puwāntz'an...)..... 58
(Rain [One, two, three, four...])
5. Nāiwixām kām xa 59
(We will remember you)

MUSIC NOTES

Translations for the lyrics can be found in the back of the book while composer's notes, performance notes and a guide on pronunciation is provided in the score.

Yana Wana's Legend of the Bluebonnet

SCENE 1

(A drum beats. The ANCESTORS and all the actors enter to conduct the indigenous opening to ask permission to present the play. One actor sounds the conch as everyone faces the east and salutes with one hand raised to the sun and the other hand over the heart. Everyone turns and faces south, saluting as the conch is sounded. Everyone turns and faces west, and the conch is sounded. Then north, and the conch is sounded. MARIA moves forward and stands in a spotlight. She looks frightened and nervous, as though defending herself at court, and she speaks.)

MARIA. Good morning, Mayor, and honorable members of the city council. My ... *(She struggles with her words.)* my—I'm sorry. *(Pauses to compose herself.)* My name is Maria. *(Lights fade.)*

(It's afternoon. MARIA's MOM sits at a table in the kitchen. She begins working on bills with her laptop. MARIA runs into and through the room with her earbuds in.)

MOM. Maria? *(In her face.)* Maria!

MARIA *(stops, takes her earbuds out)*. What?

MOM. Come back.

(MARIA turns around.)

MOM (*cont'd*). I know what happened today. The principal called. You've been suspended for a week!

MARIA. Ugh.

MOM. Maria, what is going on?

(*MARIA is quiet.*)

MOM (*cont'd*). You're a smart girl. Why do you keep getting into trouble?

MARIA. I didn't do anything wrong.

MOM. No? Mr. Roberts said you were in a fight.

MARIA. I wasn't in a fight. This girl was picking on another girl, and I told her to stop.

MOM. Why can't you just mind your own business?

MARIA. What? The girl was twice her size, and talking about her parents and making fun of her accent.

MOM. That's not how the principal described it, and he said when he called you in, you talked back to him.

MARIA. It wasn't a big deal. You should see what some other kids do at school, and they don't get suspended.

MOM. Maria, we're talking about you. Not other kids. He's the principal. You have to respect him.

MARIA. I thought respect was earned.

MOM. See. There you go, talking back—again. (*Takes a deep breath.*) So, I went to the school. To check on your classes. Ms. Smith said you're not passing her class.

MARIA. What?

MOM. You failed some test?

MARIA. It was a really hard test.

MOM. But you study. And you do your homework? You go into your room every night to do it.

MARIA. Yeah. I do it. Usually.

MOM. Then what's the problem?

(*MARIA doesn't respond.*)

MOM (*cont'd*). Maria?

MARIA. School sucks, Mom. It doesn't have anything to do with me.

MOM. What does that mean? It doesn't have anything to do with you? School's not supposed to be about you.

MARIA. I don't know, it's like I'm invisible there.

MOM. Where did I go wrong? School is not about you, and you're invisible? Look, I didn't love school either. But, I went. And I learned what I was supposed to learn. And I never even met a principal. Until now! Maria, look, something has to change. This is serious. Ms. Smith said you might fail this school year and have to repeat it.

MARIA. Fail? Repeat it?

MOM. What if you fail? Or get expelled? Then what? Then you drop out? No college! No decent job! You have to turn this around, or it's all downhill.

MARIA. Mom, I really don't care.

MOM. You're going to care. You have two long weeks to care.

MARIA. What do you mean?

MOM. Plenty of time for *Abuela* Flor to help you care.

MARIA. *Abuela* Flor?

MOM. Next week you're suspended from school. Then, spring break. And you're going to spend it all with *Abuela* Flor. In Laredo.

MARIA. You're sending me away?!

MOM. I don't know what else to do. Your dad and I think it'll be good for you. We're doing this because we love you.

MARIA. No. You hate me. *(Starts to cry.)*

MOM. We don't hate you. Look, *Abuela* Flor can help you.

MARIA. Help me? You mean fix me? Mom, I'm *not* going to *Abuela* Flor's.

MOM. Maria, don't talk to me like that. You are going to *Abuela* Flor's.

MARIA. This isn't fair. I'm NOT going!

(MARIA turns and runs up the stairs into her room.

MOM rolls the table off as the ANCESTORS enter from the other side. MARIA does not watch them but is present as they complete a movement sequence in honor of the beginning of MARIA's physical journey to Laredo and her spiritual journey to discovering her identity.)

SCENE 2

(The next morning. MARIA and MOM arrive at ABUELA's house, which is C, represented by a few furniture pieces. MARIA carries a backpack. They talk as they walk.)

MARIA. Mom ...

MOM. You'll be fine.

MARIA. But Mom, look at this place.

MOM. Shh ... she'll hear you. She loves you. That's all that matters.

MARIA. This is going to be the worst two weeks of my life.

MOM. Don't blame me. I didn't talk back to the principal.

Maria, you should be happy to visit your grandmother.

MARIA. Dad doesn't visit her. His own mother. But you send me here.

MOM. Shh ...

(ABUELA walks on and to them from behind them.)

ABUELA. Oh, *pues mira nomás*, you're here. Good. I just had to run to the *colonias*. There's no water again. And Karina Romero is about to have her first baby. *¡Mijita!*

(ABUELA opens her arms wide, grabs MARIA and hugs her tightly. She then turns to MOM and hugs her.)

ABUELA *(cont'd)*. Margie!

MOM. *Hola*, Flor. So good to see you. Karina. Wow. Time flies. I remember when she was just a kid herself. But no water?

ABUELA. *Otra vez*, but does the mayor care? No, he has water. His wife's not having a baby—with no water. *(Pauses.)* Oh my goodness, look at you two.

MOM *(hands her some bread)*. Ben sends his love.

ABUELA. *Pues*, I wish he'd *bring* his love.

MOM. I know, Flor. He's so busy.

ABUELA. *Ya sé*. I'm just so glad you're here.

MOM. Maria is so glad to be here too, right?

MARIA. Sure.

ABUELA. Do you need anything? Margie, coffee? I have some *pan dulce*.

(ABUELA sets a plate of pan dulce on the table. MARIA looks at the food and rolls her eyes.)

MOM. No, I'm good. We stopped at Whataburger. I should get Maria's things.

ABUELA. Maria should get Maria's things. She can get yours, too. You need to unwind before you go to bed so you can drive seven more hours back in the morning. I'll make coffee.

MOM. I can't drink coffee right now. We got a late start. I have to get on the road first thing tomorrow.

ABUELA. Maria, get your things.

MARIA. In a minute.

ABUELA. Excuse me?

MOM. Maria, get your bags from the car. Now!

(MARIA exits.)

ABUELA. *Mira esta muchacha.*

MOM. You see? Flor, Ben and I are so grateful that you could help us. We're just at our wits' end with her.

ABUELA. I wish you'd brought her earlier.

MOM. We didn't expect it to keep getting worse.

ABUELA. You young people always wait for problems to get too big. You have to see them coming and *sás* (*Slaps the palm of her hand on the other palm, like smashing an imaginary problem.*) fix them early.

MOM. This isn't my fault. Why are you making this my fault? I never got into fights or talked back to the principal. You know why she said she did it?

ABUELA. No.

MOM. She said that school isn't about her.

ABUELA. Well, it's true. No brown people in the books. No brown heroes on the walls. Maybe a few brown teachers, but not many, I bet.

MOM. So, now you're going to defend her? Flor, she just needs to learn some manners.

ABUELA. *Mira*, manners are nothing if you don't know why you use them. You and Benjamin don't help her know who she is. That's not good for a young girl. She needs to know

her roots, where she comes from, who are her people. She needs to dig into her ancestral memory, find what is already inside her. That's who she is.

(*MARIA enters with a suitcase.*)

MARIA. Me?

ABUELA. Yes, you. Three things you need to learn. Three parts of humanity your *mama y papa* seem to have forgotten. *Identidad. Comunidad. Responsabilidad.*

MOM (*overlapping*). *Responsabilidad*. I haven't forgotten.

ABUELA. Well, not the words. Words are nothing. You have to live the words. You have to walk the talk. Look, *Margarita*, you can lie down and I can give you a little *limpia*.

MOM. No, I don't need that.

ABUELA. Oh, I felt your energy. Believe me, you need it!

(*MARIA puts her earbuds in and sits down in another part of the room.*)

MOM. Look, Flor, I'm really grateful to you and I know you're going to teach Maria important things while she's here. But, all the *limpias* and things, I think she's going to get a little freaked out.

ABUELA. I think you should stay for a couple of weeks too. Actually, *no, sabes que?* You and *Benjamín* are too far gone. But Maria. I have hope. Oye, are you trusting me with her or not? If so, I do it my way.

MOM (*looks at MARIA who is listening to music*). Yes, of course. Your way. Maybe I'll take the *limpia* next time. (*She stands up.*) OK, I'm going to change for bed. *Gracias*, Flor. We really appreciate this.

ABUELA. *No hay problema.* Maria will be fine, Margie.
We're going to have fun.

MOM. Well, we'll see. I wish you luck. *(Exits to bathroom.)*

ABUELA. Let's catch up.

(MARIA has her earbuds in.)

ABUELA *(cont'd)*. Take those out.

(MARIA does.)

ABUELA *(cont'd)*. What do you want to talk about?

MARIA. Nothing. I can put my stuff away. Where's my room?

ABUELA. Right here. You'll sleep here *(Pulls out a few blankets and puts them on the floor.)* with your mom tonight. She's got your bed *(Referring to the couch.)* or you can sleep with me in my room, like you used to.

MARIA. Ugh. This is fine. *(Sits down and picks up her tablet.)* What's your Wi-Fi password?

ABUELA. My Wi-Fi password?

MARIA. Your wireless network?

ABUELA. I know what that is. *Pero*, I don't have anything like that, Maria.

MARIA. What? Really?

ABUELA. Really! *De verdad!* Want to know everything I have planned?

MARIA. What could you possibly have planned? You don't even have Wi-Fi.

ABUELA. We can do other things. We can cook together. And help in the *colonias*.

MARIA. *Colonias?*

ABUELA. Yes, you know. The *colonias*. You used to play over there all the time when you were little. You don't remember?

MARIA. No.

ABUELA. Well, it's right there. Real close. The people there need help, so I try to help.

MARIA. Why?

ABUELA. Because I care. We are a community and we care for each other. This includes you, Maria.

MARIA. Me?

ABUELA. Yes. Karina's baby is coming very soon. She'll need help. And I think it's time that I showed you about some of my work with *plantas* and healing.

MARIA. Are you serious?

ABUELA (*lifting her voice*). I'm VERY serious, Maria.

MARIA. I didn't ask to come here.

ABUELA. Nope. You didn't. *Pero sabes qué?* You're here. *Mira*, we can have fun while you're here or we can both annoy each other the whole time. You just let me know. I'm very flexible.

(MARIA doesn't say anything. ABUELA walks out. MARIA picks up her tablet, realizes that she has no connection and sulks. Music transition with the ANCESTORS. SACRED DEER comes in and leans in to look at MARIA on the floor. As MARIA falls asleep the ANCESTORS move closer. The DEER begins a movement sequence while MARIA sleeps and dreams.)

SCENE 3

(The next morning. MARIA comes into the kitchen, signified by a table. A comal on part of the table makes a stove. ABUELA has her hands in masa.)

ABUELA. *Buenos días.*

MARIA (*in a bad mood*). Where's my mom?

ABUELA. She left early. *Buenos días.*

MARIA. Ugh. *Buenos días.*

ABUELA. *Mira* Maria, here we start each day with positive words and actions. We give thanks for this day, ask for help in all our work, that our family stays well, and that all of our relations are safe.

MARIA. I have to pray? I never pray.

ABUELA. We can say “pray,” but what we mean is that we connect to the cosmos, the source of all creation. *Mira*, let me show you. Face the east.

(ABUELA turns MARIA to face east.)

ABUELA (*cont'd*). Say “*ota-uma*.”

MARIA. *Ota-uma*.

(As MARIA speaks, the ANCESTORS begin to enter the room, having heard their ancient language and, in the background, begin to watch MARIA as she begins her journey in learning about her Indigenous identity.)

ABUELA. That means “east.” Now in your mind, say “thank you for this day.”

(MARIA looks at ABUELA, rolls her eyes and mumbles “thank you.”)

ABUELA (*cont'd*). Now—

(ABUELA turns MARIA to face south.)

ABUELA (*cont'd*). Turn to the south and say “*se'ta*.”

MARIA. *Se'ta.*

(MARIA rolls her eyes again and mumbles something.)

ABUELA. And ask for help in our work today. Now—

(This time MARIA turns on her own.)

ABUELA *(cont'd)*. “*We'fla,*”

MARIA. *We'fla.*

ABUELA. West. Close your eyes and see all of your family in your mind and ask for their good health.

(MARIA closes her eyes and mumbles. Then she turns towards the north and looks at ABUELA.)

ABUELA *(cont'd, smiles at MARIA, who returns a half smile)*. North is “*haya'mta.*” Ask for all your relations.

MARIA. All my relations?

ABUELA. Yes. Say, “*haya'mta.*”

MARIA. *haya'mta.*

ABUELA. Say “*nami-tū Tawaxayo.*” That’s “all my relations.”

MARIA. *Nami-tū Tawaxayo.*

(MARIA gives ABUELA a self-satisfied look. ABUELA rushes to hug MARIA, who stands stiffly and accepts the hug. After a moment.)

ABUELA. Well, let’s make breakfast. Go ahead and wash your hands.

(MARIA walks over, grabs a cup and goes to drink water)

ABUELA *(cont'd)*. Wait! Don’t drink that.