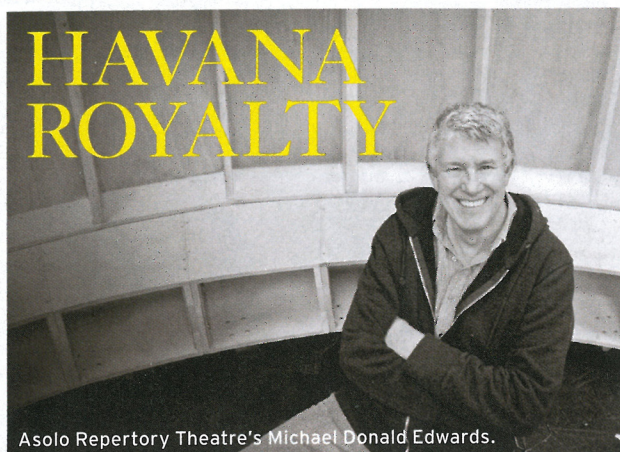


# AMERICAN THEATRE

MARCH 2012 THEATRE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

## FRONT & CENTER

### ■ SARASOTA, FLA.



Asolo Repertory Theatre's Michael Donald Edwards.

**MICHAEL DONALD EDWARDS** knows that his latest Shakespeare project—a retooled *Hamlet*, with the subtitle *Prince of Cuba*, performed in English and Spanish—is a little lunatic. But,” he adds, “it’s a passionate lunacy.”

During his five years as producing artistic director of **Asolo Repertory Theatre** in Sarasota, Fla., Edwards says he has realized the theatre needs to do more to serve the state’s Spanish-speaking audience. These are

people “who may not go to the theatre now, but should have something to see. In a few years, they are going to be the majority in Florida.”

Edwards characterizes the production as a “bridge between communities and cultures” and a way to reach the Spanish-speaking communities of Sarasota, Tampa Bay and Miami. “Hopefully, they will

hear the theatre’s name, know the doors are open, and find that they can come in and take a pride of ownership.”

*Hamlet, Prince of Cuba* will feature members of the Asolo resident acting company and bilingual guest artists, including Frankie J. Alvarez as Hamlet, Mercedes Herrero as Gertrude and Emilio Delgado as Claudius. Edwards has worked closely with Pulitzer-winning playwright Nilo Cruz, who has written the Spanish translation that will be

performed several times during the March 23–May 6 run in Sarasota and at a subsequent May 11–13 run at the new **South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center** (where Asolo Rep presented Lynn Nottage’s *Las Meninas* last season).

“We will rehearse and open the play in English in Sarasota, and then go back into rehearsal in Spanish,” Edwards reports. “This will be a first for our company.”

Translator Cruz has been “incredibly rigorous,” Edwards avows. During a weekend in Miami, “He had me act out all the parts of my adaptation and explain why I’ve cut this or moved that. He challenged me and made me justify the decisions I had made.”

The production is meant to evoke Cuba in 1895, around the time of the invasion of the island led by José Martí. “It was the beginning of the American presence in Cuba,” the director points out. Costume designer Clint Ramos and scenic designer Dane Laffrey have used the time frame as “their starting-off point. It’s fairly abstract and not literal,” Edwards notes. “The Cuban idea is a point of entry.” —*Jay Handelman*

# READ ALL ABOUT IT!

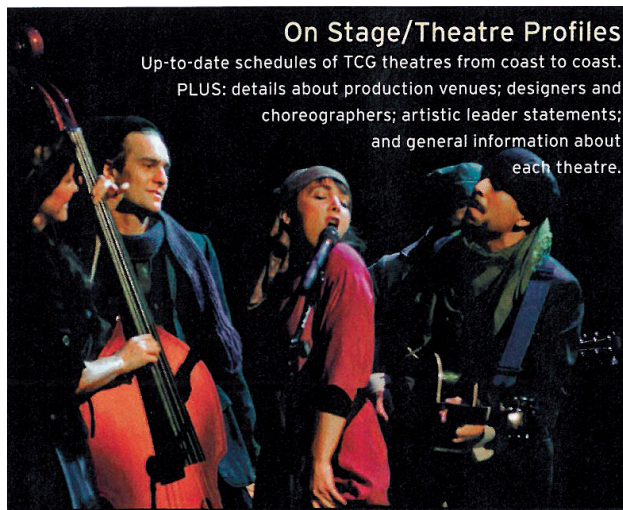
**ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE IS FEATURED IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE OF AMERICAN THEATRE!**

- HAVANA ROYALTY  
- YENTL BAND

## On Stage/Theatre Profiles

Up-to-date schedules of TCG theatres from coast to coast.

PLUS: details about production venues; designers and choreographers; artistic leader statements; and general information about each theatre.



Summer Dawn Wallace, Jon-Michael Miller, Ashley Scallon, Tony Stopperan and Luke Bartholomew in *Yentl* at Asolo Repertory Theatre in Sarasota, Fla.

## THE YENTL BAND

Asolo Repertory Theatre's production of *Yentl* features contemporary original music by acclaimed singer-songwriter, Jill Sobule.

**ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE**  
2011–2012 SEASON ASOLOREP.ORG