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MEXICAN THEATER TROUPE PERFORMS *EL AUTOMÓVIL GRIS*, FEATURING LIVE ACTORS AND SILENT FILM CLASSIC

“Enchanting...tradition and modernity are brilliantly combined.”—Ovaciones

Mexican theater company **Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes** bring its production *El Automóvil Gris (The Grey Automobile)*, an artistic tour-de-force that combines live actors with a silent film classic, to Weigel Auditorium on **Thursday, October 23 at 8 pm**. This imaginative show has been the talk of the international theater circuit, and this performance marks the company’s local debut.

El Automóvil Gris is director Claudio Valdés Kuri’s modern staging of the 1919 silent Mexican film classic of the same name. The film *El Automóvil Gris*, directed by legendary filmmaker Enrique Rosas, follows the exploits, capture, and eventual end of “The Grey Car Gang,” an infamous real band of thieves and home invaders who terrorized the country’s wealthy elite. Blending historical chronicle with tabloid sensationalism, Rosas cast many of the actual victims, policemen, and judges in the roles that they had lived for his film, which broke all of Mexico’s box office records in its original run.

For this theater production, Valdés Kuri followed the Japanese benshi tradition of silent film narration: live actors appear on stage and breathe life, voice, and commentary into the silent screen’s black-and-white images. A kimono-clad actress and a male actor who looks as if he’s just walked off the screen interpret multiple on-screen voices in Spanish, Spanglish, and Japanese, and add sound effects—all to live piano accompaniment. For this American version, subtitles help capture the spirit, vivacity, and humor of the Mexican version, and the director himself plays the role of the English narrator.

Founded in 1997 and led by Mexican director Claudio Valdés Kuri, Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes (Certain Inhabitants’ Theatre) has been internationally acclaimed for its three productions: *Becket o el honor de Dios* (Becket or the Honor of God); *De monstruos y prodigios: la historia de los Castrati* (Monsters and Prodigies, the History

of the Castrati); and *El Automóvil Gris* (The Grey Automobile). The company has won several awards and has performed in theaters and festivals around the world.

For more info on *El Automóvil Gris* and the company visit www.greyautomobile.com.

CALENDAR INFORMATION FOR
TEATRO DE CIERTOS HABITANTES / EL AUTOMÓVIL GRIS

Description: Mexican theater production combines silent film classic *El Automóvil Gris* with live actors at the Wexner Center.

Date and time: Thursday, October 23 at 8 pm.

Location: Weigel Auditorium, 1866 College Road

Tickets: \$16 general public; \$13 Wexner Center members; \$10 OSU students; \$5 High 5 tickets available for middle and high school students at Ticketmaster outlets

Ticket outlet: Wexner Center Ticket Office/Information Desk, 614 292-3535 and Ticketmaster outlets, 614 431-3600.

Public information: 614 292-3535 and www.wexarts.org

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Digital images available upon request.

EVENT SUPPORT

Major support for the Wexner Center's 2003–04 performing arts season is provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Additional season support is provided by the Ohio Arts Council and the Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation.

The production of *El Automóvil Gris*, created for English speaking audiences, is part of U.S. Audiences/International Work, an initiative of Arts International supported with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Additional support has been provided by the North Carolina Arts Council, Cultural Contact US-Mexico Fund for Culture, Duke Institute of the Arts, NCSU Center Stage with Campus Cinema, North Carolina Museum of Art, The Outreach Program of the Consortium in Latin American Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill & Duke University and the Duke University Center for International Studies/John Hope Franklin Center.

El Automóvil Gris (original version) is a co-production of Compañía Nacional de Teatro-INBA and Haus de Kulturen der Welt, with the support of Cineteca Nacional of Mexico, the Rosas Priego Family, and Gateway to the Americas.

WEXNER CENTER

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance understanding of the art of our time. In its programs, the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service.

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