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ATC Announces 2025 National Latine Playwrights Award Winner, Festival in Tempe

Phoenix, Ariz. – Arizona Theatre Company (ATC) today named Puerto Rican playwright Edwin Sánchez the recipient of the 2025 National Latine Playwrights Award for his powerful new work *Lottery Boy*. Sánchez’s work was chosen from more than 78 entries. This marks Sánchez’s second time receiving the honor.

Since its inception in 1995, the award celebrates Latine voices in American theatre and recognizes outstanding achievement in playwriting. Notable winners of the National Latine Playwrights Award include Luis Alfaro (MacArthur Fellowship or “genius” grant recipient), Karen Zacarías (Helen Hayes Award recipient), Kristoffer Diaz (Pulitzer Prize Finalist, 2024 Tony Nominee), Octavio Solis (NEA Fellowship), and Charise Castro Smith (co-writer of the Disney hit *Encanto* – Golden Globe, Winner, Best Motion Picture, Animated), and more.

In addition to naming the NLPA winner, ATC celebrates its second year hosting a Festival at Tempe Center for the Arts on Saturday, October 4 that invites the community to enjoy a reading of the prize-winning play, connect with other artists, and more festivities.

“Edwin Sánchez’s taut comic play, *Lottery Boy*, is a perfect play for this year’s NLPA” comments Matt August, Kasser Family Artistic Director. “I was immediately stuck by the play’s deep emotion, its wonder, and its cinematic style. The main character is infinitely lovable, put in an impossible situation with a band of misfits, and gets to have a magical dialogue with his dead parent that all of us wish we could have. It’s an exciting, moving, topical story about overcoming obstacles while we pursue the American Dream.”

ATC’s Playwright-in-Residence and NLPA & F Director Elaine Romero remarks, “Winning the NLPA twice is sort of like winning the lottery. We are so thrilled to recognize Edwin Sánchez’s artistry once again.”

Since its inception in 1995, the National Latine Playwrights Award has aimed to uplift and amplify Latine voices across the United States. It is one of the longest running awards dedicated to Latine playwrights, offering national visibility, a cash prize, a workshop of the play, and now a staged reading of the winning play. Historically, the award has been highly effective. Of the last 30 winners, 27 have gone on to have their work produced nationally or internationally and continue to be recognized by awards from the Tonys, Golden Globes, Pulitzer, and The National Endowment for the Arts, among many others.

When asked to reflect on winning the award this year, Sánchez responded, "While I treasured it the first time, this time feels sweeter to me. Maybe it's because it's later in life and it proves to me that I still have stories to tell, that I still matter as a playwright, or maybe it's because it's from a community I respect so much. I think it's both, and I am truly grateful for the honor."

Sánchez was first awarded the NLPA back in 2011 for *La Bella Familia* and currently has a play being adapted for film with Concord Studio called *Unmerciful Good Fortune* with Rosario Dawson set to lead the production. A common theme resonates through each of Sánchez's works – does the end justify the means?

Lottery Boy features a life transformed by money. At just 15 years old, Paco suddenly finds himself the winner of one of the largest lottery jackpots ever. But more money means more problems, more betrayals, and Paco finds that he is no longer sure which world he belongs in. He goes through the highest highs and the lowest lows as he realizes the only person he trusts isn't really there. The play cleverly pierces the veil between this world and the next as Paco discovers the true power of his late father's love.

Sánchez will be given a one-of-a-kind award sculpted by world renowned artist Zarco Guerrero. This is the second year Guerrero will make a unique sculpture for the NLPA winner. ATC will be partnering with Xico, a Latin & Indigenous Arts Organization, and Arizona Mexico Commission, a cross-border collaboration for this event.

The public is invited to attend the 2025 National Latine Playwrights Award & Festival which will take place at the Tempe Center for the Arts on Saturday, October 4, and will include a staged reading of *Lottery Boy*, an awards ceremony honoring Sánchez, and a post-show roundtable discussion. The event will be emceed by President & CEO of the Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Monica Villalobos. The reading will be directed by Jerry Ruiz, Associate Professor at ASU's School of Music, Dance, and Theatre.

Tickets will be available closer to the event date. Visit atc.org/nlpa for more information. Tickets may be available at the ATC Box Office at Tempe Center for the Arts the evening of the event, depending on previous demand.

About Edwin Sánchez

Winner of the National Latino Playwriting Award for *La Bella Familia*, Edwin Sánchez's recent productions include *Unmerciful Good Fortune* and *Trafficking in Broken Hearts*, both in Los Angeles, as well as the world premiere of the romantic comedy *I'll Take Romance* at the Evolution Theatre in Ohio. Other productions include: *Diosa*, produced by Hartford Stage after a successful workshop by New York Stage and Film, *Trafficking in Broken Hearts* at the Bank Street Theater in New York, *Unmerciful Good Fortune* at the Intar Theater in New York, for which he received the Princess Grace Playwriting Award in 1994, and *Barefoot Boy With Shoes On* at Primary Stages in New York. This play was selected by the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference to represent the National Playwrights Conference at the Schelykovo Playwrights Seminar in Russia; *Icarus* produced by Fourth Unity, Actors Theatre of Louisville as part of their Humana Festival, San Jose Rep and regionally throughout the U.S.; and *Trafficking in Broken Hearts* Atlantic Theater in New York, and productions in Brazil and Switzerland. He was also

among the playwrights involved with Brave New World, an organization commemorating the events surrounding September 11. Edwin is on the playwriting faculty at Wesleyan University.

About Arizona Theatre Company

Arizona Theatre Company's (ATC) performances provide space for individuals to share moments of joy, communion, and relief. The company's diverse range of productions invites audiences to connect, offering an escape from daily pressures and a chance to rediscover the power of community through laughter, love, and reflection. Founded in 1966 and celebrating its 57th season, ATC is led by Kasser Family Artistic Director Matt August. ATC is the only League of Resident Theatres (LORT) member in Arizona; operating in Tucson and Phoenix, and is the preeminent professional theatre in Arizona, recognized as the Official Arizona State Theatre. More at atc.org.