

# Marga Gomez' 'Latin Standards' is her last solo show, she says

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Fabian Echevarria/Brava Theater Center

Bay Area actor and comedian Marga Gomez is performing her final solo show, "Latin Standards" at Brava Theater Center in San Francisco.

By **SAM HURWITT** |

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San Francisco comedian and theater artist Marga Gomez has been delighting audiences with her one-woman shows for so long that when she says her current, 12th show will be her last, it's hard to get our mind around it. What will we do without our semi-regular check-ins into what's been on her mind?

"At first it was kind of just to get attention," Gomez says wryly, "but the premise of the show is that it is a farewell concert. I was pretty much done with writing this form, because I do want to force myself to write in other forms. And also I still love stand-up."

Her latest show, "Latin Standards" at Brava Theater Center, explores the connections between her Cuban immigrant father's life as a comedian in New York when she was a kid and her own journey coming up in the San Francisco stand-up scene in the mid-1980s. After its 12-show run on Brava's new cabaret stage, "Latin Standards" goes on to play [three nights at MACLA in San Jose, February 9-11](#).

Though she's covered a multitude of topics from sex to aging in her monologues, Gomez's parents have been a recurring topic in her shows from the beginning. Her first solo show, 1991's "Memory Tricks," was about her mother, a Puerto Rican dancer with the stage name Margo the Exotic. "A Line Around the Block" in 1994 told the story of her father, Willy Chevalier, who died in 1983. In 2005 she revisited her parents' story with "Los Big Names," about growing in a showbiz family. That doesn't mean that "Latin Standards" is covering old ground, however. With this show, Gomez says, she's exploring "stuff I hadn't covered about my father."

"Besides being a comedian and a producer of shows in the Latino community in New York, he became a songwriter," she says. "He just wrote songs and they got recorded and they did really well. He didn't sing, but he wrote these songs, and they're all kind of about my mother and how she didn't love him enough. And comedians in general are morose, so they would of course write the saddest songs ever."

"I thought I could do those songs and talk about what those songs meant to my father and how they had a relevance to my life," she added. "It's similar to stories I've told, but I think with a little bit more insight, and a little more urgency, because I feel like everything I put out now has to mean something."

Her decision to stop developing solo shows doesn't mean we're hearing the last of Marga Gomez. Far from it.

"Of course, it's only my final one-person show," she says. "It doesn't mean I'm going to go off on a little ice raft or wherever show people go when it's done."

She wants to try her hand at a screenplay. "I don't know that I would want to try to get my screenplay done, because I can't stand people telling me what to do," she says.

She loves the idea of trying to develop a duo act. "I do want a lot of stage time," she confesses. "I still need attention. I don't know if I could just be one of the cast of 'In the Heights' or something like that. But (Lin-Manuel Miranda) can call me if he wants."

Most of all she wants to tidy up the scripts to some of her solo shows with an eye toward getting them published. Right now, she says, "My scripts are mostly in my head, and what's on the page is a whole mess of misspellings and shorthand."

In the meantime, this being her last solo show doesn't mean she's not going to milk it for all it's worth. "I've been doing this final farewell concert since the end of 2016, and so has Cher," she says. "I'm a lesbian, and I need more closure."

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# 'LATIN STANDARDS'

Created and performed by Marga Gomez

**When & where:** Through Jan. 28 at Brava Theater Center Cabaret, 2781 24th St., San Francisco; \$25-\$30; [www.brava.org](http://www.brava.org); Feb. 9-11 at MACLA (Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana), 510 S. 1st St., San Jose; \$10-\$25; [maclaarte.org](http://maclaarte.org)

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