

YEARA MILTON

Bronx Journal Staff Reporter

**O**n Saturday May 5th Lydia Ramirez's one-woman show "I Love America" debuted at the Lovinger Theatre, located on the Lehman College Campus. The show marked the end of the month long Teatro Latino series, which showcased the works of various Latino dance, music, and theatre artists.

The play tells the story of the "yoleros" -Dominicans who risk their lives on small speedboats called "yolas." They do so in hopes that they'll be able to better their living conditions in the United States. Those that attempt the trips leave behind parents, children, wives, and husbands without any guarantee that they'll even make it to their first stop—Puerto Rico.

Many of the passengers on these midnight excursions only make it so far as the Mona Passage, an area just off the coast of Puerto Rico, known for its sharks. Those that do make it to shore are often caught by the Border Patrol Police and sent to jail where they await deportation. The few that actually make it to their final destination—New York City, find that their hardships are only just beginning. "I Love America" is their story, as told by Lydia Ramirez through the actualization of eleven characters, each of which have a deeply personal story to tell.

Just a few hours before show time the Dominican born playwright/ actress sat down for a one to one interview, in which she spoke about her inspirations and intentions in telling this particular story.

"I hope that audiences walk away from this with a better appreciation and understanding for the immigrant that comes to the United States. The men and women that you see on the streets selling their homemade food, or scrubbing toilets, or cleaning tables—you don't know what kind of struggles those people have had to endure in order to get here," said a passionate Ms. Ramirez.

Ms. Ramirez, who came to the United States when she was just six years old, has retained close ties with her native country by making frequent visits. It was her interest as well as her familiarity with the native people that allowed her to conduct many of the personal interviews.

"I Love America" was a three-year writing process in which Ms. Ramirez worked closely with the Coast Guard and Border Patrol Police in Puerto Rico. She was able to

witness first hand some of the Coast Guards rescue missions, which weren't always so successful. "This is a really big problem in the Dominican Republic, and I was interested in doing something that would draw attention to that issue," said Ms. Ramirez.

Besides the somewhat sociopolitical theme, the play isn't always so grim.

One of the brighter aspects of the play is the incorporation of some of the more celebrated characteristics of the Dominican Republic such as the merengue music that plays from time to time throughout the play. This play is as much about taking pride in deep-seeded traditions as it is about the Dominicans struggle to reach the United States.

Although the majority of the people at the show were Hispanic their reactions to the play couldn't be more diverse.

"It was great. I thought the actress did a phenomenal job in both the acting and writing," said 28-year-old Marilyn Franco, a waitress and aspiring actress, who lives in the neighborhood. "I'm Dominican so I really identified with a few of the characters," she added.

Sylvia Soto, a 24-year-old business major at the college, wasn't able to make up her mind on whether or not she enjoyed it. "It was okay... I mean... I don't know," she said.

Noel Mendez, who works as an usher at the Lovinger

Theatre and is also an aspiring actor said, "The show was good but it probably appeals more to Dominican people."

"For the most part I think my show has been well received by the community.

Sometimes the problem is that Hispanic people only want certain stories told. They don't want for the negative things to be told," said Ms. Lydia Ramirez. "My responsibility is to the stories, and the truth is that most people want to hear the truth," she added.

continue on page A-16

## YOUR HOROSCOPE FOR THE MONTH



### TAURUS

April 20 -May 20

Be ready to defend yourself. Make sure you did your work properly.

Your numbers: 12, 23, 26



### VIRGO

Aug. 23 -Sept. 22

Get out socially with colleagues. You'll find out a lot if you're observant.

Your numbers: 9, 11, 45

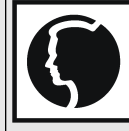


### CAPRICORN

Dec. 22 -Jan. 19

Take the time to do a good job. Your boss will appreciate your efforts.

Your numbers: 10, 28, 44



### GEMINI

May 21-June 20

Start something new; get involved in groups that can help you develop your interest.

Your numbers: 3, 16, 44



### LIBRA

Sept. 23 -Oct. 22

Problems with lovers will continue to mount if you have been avoiding the issues at hand.

Your numbers: 8, 24, 38



### AQUARIUS

Jan. 20 -Feb. 18

Secret activities will be most disconcerting. Don't be too quick to judge.

Your numbers: 3, 31, 45



### CANCER

June 21-July 22

Don't be taken in financially by a "get rich quick" scheme that doesn't hold water.

Your numbers: 7, 18, 24



### SCORPIO

Oct. 23 -Nov. 21

Run your ideas past good and honest friends. It's better to be safe than sorry.

Your numbers: 13, 22, 40



### PISCES

Feb. 19 -March 20

You need some time and space to go over your concerns. Study your motives.

Your numbers: 14, 20, 30



### LEO

July 23 -Aug. 22

You will be uncertain about your personal life. Don't allow your mate to blame you.

Your numbers: 4, 32, 37



### SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22 -Dec. 21

Your loved ones will be angry if you spend too much of your time with friends.

Your numbers: 6, 2, 39



### ARIES

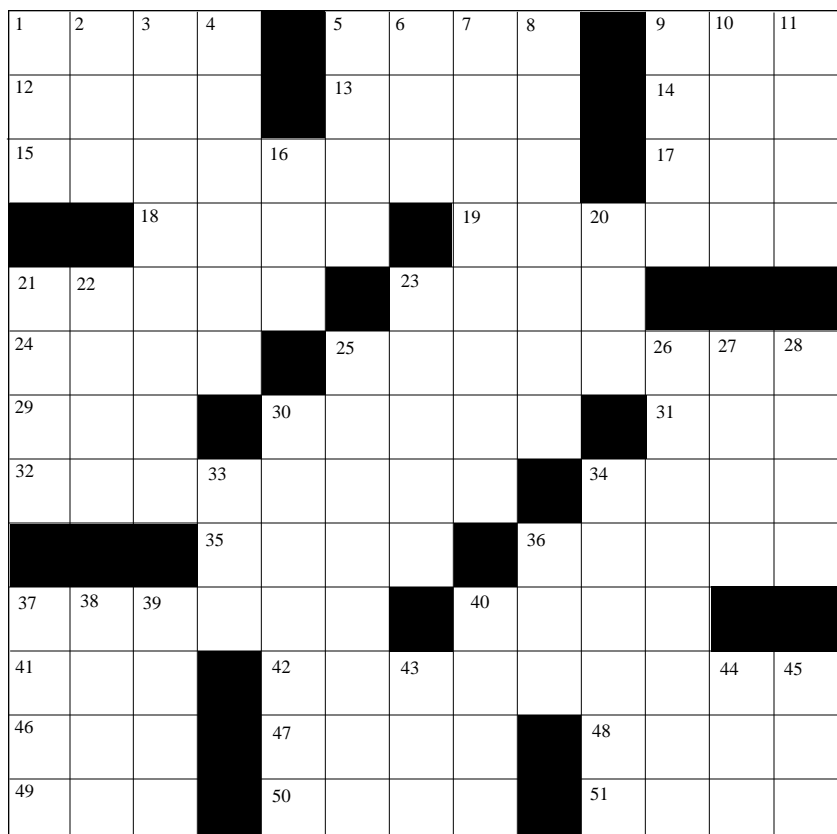
March 21-April 19

Exaggeration will get you into trouble. Be sensitive to other people's feelings.

Your numbers: 4, 12, 27

Answer on page A-16

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



### ACROSS

1. hindu dress
5. "Shane" actor Alan \_\_\_\_\_
9. Sprint rival
12. Sign of the future
13. Andy Taylor's son
14. Yours and mine
15. Unmarried men
17. Musical syllable
18. Countess's husband
19. Acrobat's garb
21. Once in a \_\_\_\_; occasionally
23. Toupees
24. Projecting roof edge
25. Before birth
29. Ike's monogram
30. Popular board game
31. Ecology org.
32. Most impudent
34. Nov. event
35. Med. school class
36. Not true
37. Glistens
40. \_\_\_\_\_ of characters
41. Overly
42. Fabrics
46. Fitting
47. Soon
48. Author Wiessel
49. Jamboree inits.
50. Doctor's "at once"
51. Bridle strap

### DOWN

1. Whimper
2. Medical org.
3. Gets
4. Breathe in
5. Lounge about
6. Mil. address
7. Most filthy
8. Decorative drawings
9. Butterfly's kin
10. Short and sharp
11. Mr. Gershwin et al.
16. Sooner, poetically
20. Cookie-selling org.
21. Unites
22. "Mary \_\_\_\_\_ little lamb" (2 wds.)
23. Wrench away
25. Game bird
26. Revealing
27. Gorillas
28. Dress trimming
30. Movie theaters
33. \_\_\_\_\_ Diego
34. Less difficult
36. A long way off
37. \_\_\_\_\_ in the back
38. Beer ingredient
39. Small degree
40. Copper piece
43. Nice \_\_\_\_ fault (2 wds.)
44. 52, in ancient Rome
45. Orrin Hatch, for one (Abbr.)