

THEATER / FILM

‘RESET’ BRINGS BODIES, HUMOR AND AI TO KOUBEK CENTER

Written By Miguel Sirgado
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Luciano Cortés, Luciano Rosso, and Alfonso Barón in “RESET,” a physical-theater work exploring technology, artificial intelligence and human connection, at Miami’s Koubek Center Friday, Aug. 28, and Saturday, Aug. 29. (Photo by Javier Labrador, courtesy of FUNDarte)

Three bodies enter a system. They repeat, obey and function as expected.

Then something goes wrong.

That breakdown is the starting point of “RESET,” a physical-theater work by Argentine performers Alfonso Barón, Luciano Cortés and Luciano Rosso, coming to Miami’s Koubek Center Friday, Aug. 28, and Saturday, Aug. 29.

“We wanted to talk about the speed of the world we live in and how we’re constantly running after this ball, or this carrot, that seems to be life,” Rosso says.

Presented by FUNDarte, Miami-Dade County Auditorium’s “Away from Home” Series and the Koubek Center, “RESET” uses movement, extreme gesture, absurdist humor and tightly synchronized choreography to explore technology, artificial intelligence and the systems increasingly woven into everyday life.

The project began with a proposal from FUNDarte and the desire, Rosso says, for three longtime friends to create together. Their questions about the accelerating pace of contemporary life quickly led them to technology and AI —not only as subjects, but as tools in the creative process.

Rosso experimented directly with artificial intelligence while developing the work, using prompts and ideas to generate material that could become a starting point for scenes.



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Luciano Rosso in “RESET.” “I’m a theater animal,” he says. “I’d rather spend that time rehearsing a new show than creating content online.” (Photo by Javier Labrador, courtesy of FUNDarte)

“It was sort of a collaboration,” he says, amused by the idea. “It’s strange to say that because we’re talking about technology and not a person. But I learned how to approach it so it could give me material that I could then enrich.”

The results surprised him.

“I had never given AI this kind of role in the creative process,” Rosso says. “It became a trigger for so many things, and some of those scenes are still evolving—a little like technology itself.”

Rosso and Barón, both based in Paris, bring to “RESET” a long shared history performing together in “Un Poyo Rojo,” a largely wordless physical-theater work that has toured internationally for more than 15 years.

Cortés followed a different path. An actor, dancer and physical-theater performer, he has worked with the Argentine immersive-theater company Fuerza Bruta and Catalan experimental-theater company La Fura dels Baus. After moving to Miami in 2018, he founded the physical-theater company Salvaje Teatro, bringing his own approach to movement and performance to the trio.

Joining an established partnership made Cortés apprehensive at first.

“Their bodies had already developed this symbiosis,” he says. “I wondered how my body, with its own way of moving, would fit into that dynamic.”



Luciano Rosso, Luciano Cortés and Alfonso Barón in “RESET.” “There is some value of the living human body—the body that gets tired, becomes exhausted—connects us with our humanity,” says Cortés. (Photo by Javier Labrador, courtesy of FUNDarte)

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Instead, he says, the connection came quickly.

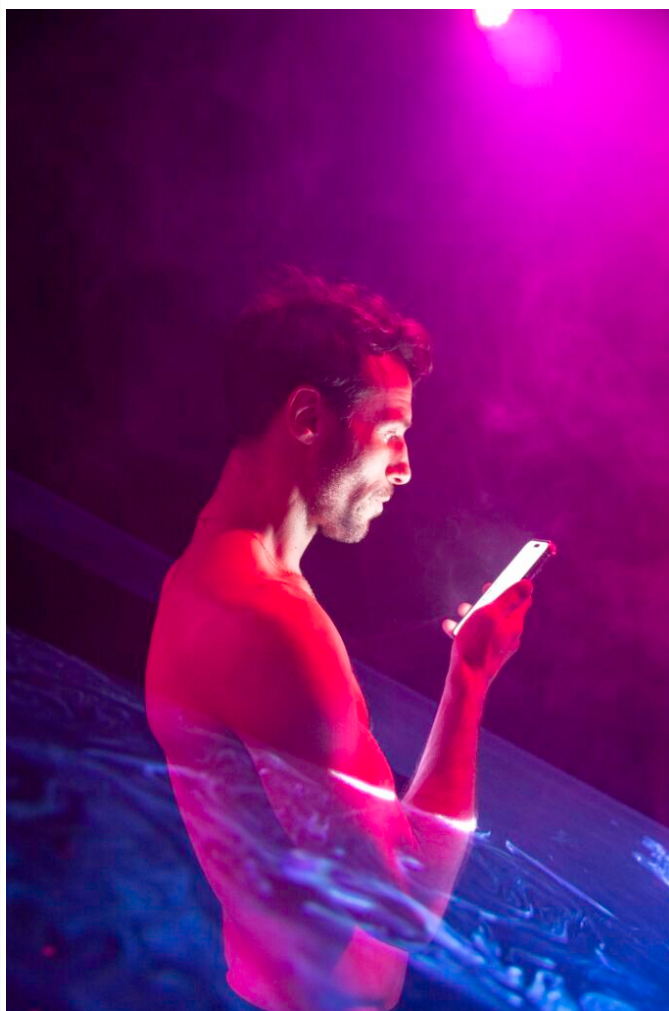
“We’ve been friends for many years, and we share humor and many ways of seeing and thinking about art. It was like playing a chord with three notes. We played it, and it sounded wonderful.”

dinosaurs,” he says. “Instead of shutting down an idea, you accept it and see how you can transform it.”

As the work took shape, that creative freedom gave way to tightly structured choreography.

“There is very little room for improvisation now,” Barón says. “The movement has to be extremely precise to create the effect we want. Suddenly you’re human, then an android, then an animal. The quality of movement keeps changing.”

For all its focus on technology, Barón describes what happens onstage as surprisingly handmade.



Alfonso Barón in “RESET.” “In a world that is becoming more virtual, theater for me is a place of refuge and salvation,” Barón says. (Photo by Javier Labrador, courtesy of FUNDarte)

“When you see it, you’re going to see something very artisanal,” he says. “We represent things in a very theatrical way. Technology doesn’t win.”

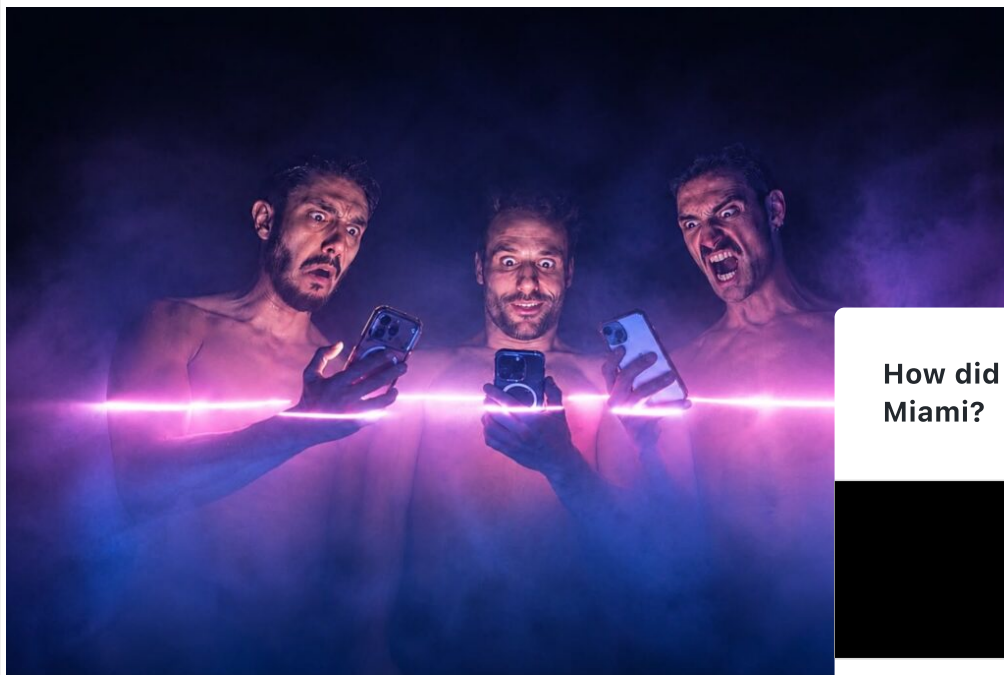
“There are no machines,” Barón continues. “You see three people representing technology with their bodies. In a world that is becoming more virtual, theater for me is a place of refuge and salvation.”

Cortés takes the question further.

“What interests us, beyond technology being the excuse for all of this, is ‘What is the value of the human being onstage in this era?’ ” he says.

He notes that AI has already entered music, writing and film, but theater may be a different genre altogether.

“We feel that theater may be one of those territories of resistance where it is very difficult for AI to enter. So our question became: How does AI enter that territory?”



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Cortés says it is the audience may be what sets theater apart,

“For theater to exist, that connection with the audience has to exist,” he says. “There is something about the value of the living human body—the body that gets tired, becomes exhausted, fails—that connects us with our humanity.”

For Cortés, those questions also resonate with the city where “RESET” will be performed. His work in Miami has included physical and immersive productions that challenge conventional relationships between performer and spectator.

“Technology crosses our lives every day,” he says. “But what happens to the body and to the real connection between human beings?”

He sees that question playing out in ordinary Miami life, where even getting together with friends can require coordinating packed calendars weeks in advance.

“We’re creating all this technological paraphernalia, and it’s great,” Cortés says. “But it is also distracting us and pulling us away from what is essential.”

But “RESET” also intends to make audiences laugh.



Luciano Cortés, Luciano Rosso and Alfonso Barón in “RESET.” “Suddenly we became a triad, like a chord with three notes,” Cortés says. “We played it, and it sounded wonderful.” (Photo by Javier Labrador, courtesy of FUNDarte).

For Rosso, humor has been part of his language since childhood, when he would stand in front of the television during family dinners, dancing and lip-synching to commercials.

“Humor is very healthy. It’s something beautiful, a way of communicating that fills my spirit,” he says. “Onstage, it is a wonderful and very powerful weapon. It’s been part of me since before it became my career.”

Barón hopes the physical language of the work leaves space for audiences to find meanings of their own.

“You lead the audience in a direction, but that direction opens other places,” he says. “The meaning may be one thing for you, another for me and another for my mother.”

Rosso has a simpler test for what he hopes audiences carry with them after “RESET.”

First, he wants them to have a good time. Then, perhaps, to leave with something to think about.

And one more thing.

“I’d love for people to leave the theater and not want to look at their phones for a while.”

WHAT: “RESET” by Alfonso Barón, Luciano Cortés and Luciano Rosso

WHERE: Koubek Center, 2705 SW 3rd St., Miami

WHEN: 8 p.m., Friday, Aug. 28, and Saturday, Aug. 29

COST: \$20

INFORMATION: 786-348-0789 or www.koubekcenter.org.

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