

PASIONES



Pasiones: Songs of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939
A Folk Cabaret
Featuring Jamie O'Reilly & Michael Smith

With Bob Weber, Cello
Katrina O'Reilly-Greene, Piano, Vocal, Clarinet
Produced by J. O'Reilly Productions
Visual Design by Peter Glazer with the
Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives and Jamie O'Reilly

“Peter Glazer’s production *Pasiones: Songs of the Spanish Civil War* followed the speakers. Jamie O'Reilly, Michael Smith and Katrina O'Reilly once again moved me to tears.” (Nora Guthrie, daughter of Woody)

Written with input from Spanish Civil War heroes and historians, (and heard in a compact disc sold worldwide), this program includes 20 stirring songs, sung in 6 languages, accompanied by the images of the war and the posters of the era. The folk-cabaret spotlights a powerful period in human history with the passion and commitment of top-notch performers: Jamie O'Reilly, Michael Smith, Katrina O'Reilly Greene and cellist Bob Weber who navigate the complex and diverse musical styles of the era with skill and grace. When they perform these songs, they honor the stories of the International Brigades and Spain (many told to them first-hand), those who lost their lives, and those who lived to spend a lifetime working for justice.

The cabaret weaves the poetry of Lorca and Hemingway, and reminiscences of war survivors, into a moving theater piece influenced by the sophistication of European cabaret (ala Brecht). *Pasiones* captures the fervor of the gatherings during the Worker’s Movement of the 1930s, and the folksongs of Spain. These timeless international songs and anthems – the ‘people’s music’ – sung in coffeehouses and marches of the 1960’s, are still heard in Progressive gatherings to this day.

HISTORY

In the 14 years since its debut on stage at Chicago's Lunar Cabaret, a haven for Chicago's political and fringe artists, *Pasiones* has seen three theatrical runs in Chicago – Rhinoceros Theater Fest, Theater on The Lake, and its 10th Anniversary show at the Athenaeum. In addition, the cabaret's been included in theater and humanities festivals, exhibitions, and gatherings on both coasts including appearances at Yale University, LeHigh University, San Francisco's Humanities West, Chicago's Instituto Cervantes, Oak Park Public Library and the Harold Washington Library. Michael and Jamie have been musical guests at a range of events produced by the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, both nationally and locally with the Friends of The Abraham Lincoln Brigade. In 1997 the celebrated *Pasiones* CD was recorded before a live audience at WFMT studio, who co-produced the celebrated recording with Stuart Rosenberg and Jamie O'Reilly. The recording is considered the mostly comprehensive contemporary American recording of these singular songs, produced with Spanish Civil War veterans in the audience.

RECENT EVENTS

The revised production of *Pasiones*, celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2007, receiving standing ovations in the Rhinoceros Theater Festival at Chicago's Athenaeum Theater, and played to a standing room only audience in the Oak Park Public Library's month-long "Big Read" salute to Ernest Hemingway.

The last Chicago area SCW Veterans, esteemed Psychiatrist Aaron Hilkevitch, passed away several years ago at his home in Hyde Park, marking the last funeral Jamie and Michael would sing to the heroes in the war against Franco. Jamie traveled to Spain in 2008, and visited war memorials and battlegrounds with members of the "Amigos," for whom the history is still fresh. In 2009, she hosted a screening of Julia Newman's award-winning film documentary *Into the Fire: American Women in the Spanish Civil War*, for Women's Media in cooperation with Facets Multimedia in Chicago. With the recent discovery of the "Mexican Suitcase" – lost war photos by Robert Capa and others, and the discovery of the mass grave where F. Garcia Lorca was buried, Spanish Civil War history remains in the news. Jamie and Michael's *Pasiones* performance of the songs is discussed at length on mudcat.org, the blog of SCW music aficionados.

Critics Praise of *Pasiones*

"It is more than glorious music they offer us; it is our history that would otherwise be forgotten. At a time when passion is so lacking in our lives, these two artists set our hearts on fire! Viva Jamie and Michael!" (Studs Terkel)

"They're not just going through the motions; each and every song receives a passionate treatment worthy of the subject. Smith and O'Reilly demonstrate powerfully that the music by the people who fought and died [In the Spanish Civil War] resonates throughout time and space." (Singout Magazine)

"*Pasiones* features internationally acclaimed musicians Michael Smith and Jamie O'Reilly who reconnoiter the intricate Iberian rhythms with such closely fused harmony and razor clear enunciation as to seem a single voice." (Critic's Choice, Chicago Reader)

"A smartly professional cabaret trio performed the beloved Spanish Civil War songs-songs of haunting, sometimes astonishing beauty-with text from Hemingway and Bertold Brecht woven in." (Vanity Fair Magazine)

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The *Pasiones* compact disc is sold at CDBaby.com