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Danny De La Paz and Sal Lopez in the Latino Theater Company's 2010 staging of 'Dementia.' (Photo by Christopher Ash)

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This Month in Theatre History

From the birth of Barrymore ancestor Louisa Lane to an honor for Maya drama 'Rabinal Achí,' January started the year with a range of theatrical milestones.

BY THE OSCAR G. BROCKETT CENTER FOR THEATRE HISTORY AND CRITICISM

200 YEARS AGO (1820)

Louisa Lane, ancestor of the Barrymore theatre family, is born in London. At 7 she will immigrate with her mother to New York City, becoming a popular child performer, then go on to earn acclaim for her acting as an adult. She and husband John Drew will open Philadelphia's Arch Street Theatre in 1843. While Drew is touring, Lane will take over management of the theatre, becoming the first woman to run a major U.S. theatre.

70 YEARS AGO (1950)

Carson McCullers's *The Member of the Wedding*, based on Cullers's bestselling 1946 novel of the same name, premieres at the Empire Theatre on Broadway, starring Ethel Waters and Julie Harris. Waters will win the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for her portrayal of Berenice Sadie Brown, a role she will recreate in the play's film adaptation. The production, directed by Harold Clurman, will go on to run 501 performances.

15 YEARS AGO (2005)

The annual staging of *Rabinal Achí*, a Maya drama written in the K'iche' language that incorporates song and dance, is presented in Rabinal, Baya Verapaz, Guatemala. The work, dating back to the early 1600s, represents one of the most important surviving examples of pre-Columbian performance art. This year UNESCO proclaims the dance drama piece an official Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, part of the final cohort of the biannual honors, which were first given in 2001.

10 YEARS AGO (2010)

The Los Angeles Theatre Center launches its first Annual Playwrights Festival with

a reading of *Dementia*, written by Evelina Fernandez. The reading is directed by José Luis Valenzuela, artistic director of LATC's resident troupe, the Latino Theater Company, which will offer a full-scale production later in the year. Four years later the company will host Encuentro 2014, the largest Latinx theatre festival in more than 25 years.

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