

## REVIEW

of other soldiers on the base so she fills her time taking classes at the nearby community college, including art appreciation and poetry.

Soon these arts find their way into her dreams where she dances with the Salvador Dali moon that also plays the violin and quotes Shakespeare.

These scenes are much more fascinating to the audience than Gabriela's real world, a mundane and old story in which two people love each other but have changed since their meeting and marriage as teen-agers with raging hormones. Gabriela wants something better for herself than working at Costco the rest of her life and she wants something better for Benito who will not give up his goal to be a 20-year man with only nine years to go.

She has grown through her studies while Benito has been scarred emotionally by the Gulf War and is afraid to change course. It causes friction between the two when Benito, after returning from two weeks of maneuvers, wants only to have sex, but Gabriela wants to talk about their lives.

Rivera plays with time in his play as we watch a full scene played out in the middle between Benito and Gabriela and, in the last scene, the beginning of Benito's arrival home again, like a repeating coda, reminiscent of Dali's melting time artwork. And it's here that we find that the personification of the moon is much more than a contrivance. It ties in with Gabriela's first meeting with Benito when he did something "very manly, brave and gentle," making the last line of the play when Gabriela asks Benito, "Did

you look at the moon last night?" very significant.

In the surreal scenes Svetlana Efremova is marvelous as Cat as she teases Coyote about how much wonderful her pampered life is compared to his while being attracted to the wild animal. And Victor

Mack is as good as he expresses his disdain for humans and the superiority of the wild and free life as he is attracted sexually to Cat, but knowing it is against his nature for the two to mix.

Wells Rosales is fun to watch as the sex-crazed teenager Martin mooning over Gabriela and urging her to help him lose his virginity to no avail.

Robert Montano is wonderful as the moon as in his Daliesque way he looks poetically over all he surveys and gets quite upset over Shakespeare's calling him "inconstant." He brings a great deal of humor as well as insight to the role.

Montano does not fare as well as Benito in the real world which is much more drab and mundane as it is meant to be. Part of the problem is Ana Ortiz's characterization of Gabriela. While she is quite good in the emotional outbursts, when the role calls for her to be more reflective, Ortiz comes off as though she is reciting lines rather than becoming the character. It made it hard for Montano to play off of her.

But the play itself is a fascinating look into a surreal world that helps one cope, enhanced by Monica Raya's three-tiered set from which the moon looks down on the world and which later become a window looking out on the desert from the base housing.