

Bianca Marroquin will be starring as Roxie Hart when CHICAGO comes to Charlotte, Nov. 11 – 18.

Bianca Marroquin: Roxie and Me, A Dream of a Duo

by [Bianca Marroquin](#)
Broadway.com



First Person - Bianca Marroquin - headshot

About the author:

In her six appearances in *Chicago* on Broadway (and several stints on tour), Bianca Marroquin has played Roxie Hart opposite a stellar collection of Billy Flynns: George Hamilton, Usher, Joey Lawrence, Patrick Swayze, Wayne Brady, Kevin Richardson, Huey Lewis, Gregory Harrison and both former "Dukes," John Schneider and Tom Wopat. Obviously, this is a lady famous men feel comfortable sharing the stage with! The magnetic Marroquin also has the distinction of being the first Mexican actress to play a leading role on the Great White Way—and that's what Broadway.com asked her to reflect on in a First Person essay. A stage star in her native country (with NYC credits that include *The Pajama Game* and concerts at Joe's Pub), Marroquin describes what foxy Roxie has meant to her and her career:

The first time I met Roxie Hart was back in 2001 in Mexico City. *Chicago* was coming to town! I had appeared in other shows in

Mexico City (*Beauty and the Beast*, *Rent*, *The Phantom of the Opera*) as part of the ensemble or as a swing or dance captain. Each show came with a lot of work but not that much recognition. And that was okay. I loved what I did. I had always wanted to be a dancer, and that's what I was when I was a part of these amazing shows.

So naturally, when *Chicago* came to Mexico City, I wanted to fight for my little spot in the ensemble, and if I got lucky enough, maybe I could land the dance captain position. After all, the newspaper ad said that they wanted women between the ages of 35 and 47—preferably famous—for the leading roles. I was 25, and no one knew who the heck I was.

Well, it took an associate director by the name of Nigel West, who was doing the first round of auditions, to convince everyone in Mexico that I was the one to play Roxie. Nobody else could see past my age, and past the fact that I wasn't famous. But after rounds and rounds (and rounds!) of auditions, it finally happened. Roxie Hart was mine.

My whole world changed. I was in all the newspapers, magazines and TV shows. I was winning awards. Life was imitating art. Roxie and I were living parallel lives (except for the murder and adultery part). Several months later, just when I thought things couldn't get any better, I was called to the producer's office and received some pretty mind-blowing news.

I was invited by producers Barry and Fran Weissler to join the Broadway company as Roxie Hart—

only this time, I had to do it in English! After being in shock for a couple of days, I got to work. For three weeks, I studied the script in English during the day while performing the show in Spanish at night. Soon I was flying to New York to play Roxie on Broadway.

On June 18, 2002, with George Hamilton on one side as Billy, Stephanie Pope on the other side as Velma and a legendary ensemble behind me, I made my Broadway debut at the Shubert Theatre. That year, as George said on the card that was attached to the two dozen roses he sent me for my opening night, "Mexico lost the World Cup of soccer, but it has conquered Broadway tonight with your debut."

A couple of days into my Broadway run, I learned from the Mexican press that I was the first Mexican woman to cross over to Broadway in a lead role. Manolo Fabregas was the first man 45 years ago with *The King and I*, and then five years later Caludio Brook did it with *Man of La Mancha*.

I froze for about five seconds. I had not realized the magnitude of the situation. This was not just a personal triumph, this was a triumph for my entire country. I took a deep breath, and from that moment on, I welcomed the responsibility. In 2003, I was invited to lead the third national tour of *Chicago*. For two years straight I brought Roxie Hart to life all over the United States, continuing to search and discover new colors and depths within this character.

Roxie is a complex role. The first thing the audience sees her do is kill a man. Now try to get them on your side! I love to experience the challenge of conveying the arc of this character. The challenge of making her human. I learned that being honest takes you much further than trying to, well, "cutify" each moment because you're afraid of being too harsh and losing the audience. I realize now that my nearly seven-year relationship with Roxie has helped me to mature in every way possible—not just as an actor, but as a person.

It's always a thrill to tell Roxie's story. We all know what it is to want something so bad it hurts. Maybe we wouldn't go to the extremes that she did to get it...or would we? Personally speaking, there have been obstacles, but they were all worth fighting to overcome. There have been risks, but they were all worth taking. I'm the performer I am today because of the challenge of bringing Roxie to life every night, and I thank her.

Now it's the 20th anniversary celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month in the U.S., and I get to re-join the Broadway company of *Chicago*. Roxie has opened so many doors for me, and I can't wait to see what other adventures we'll take together. I am proud and honored to represent Latina blood on Broadway with my girl, Roxie Hart.