

Film Review: "Ya Vamos!", Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 383 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10017; five 16 MM films, approximately 15 minutes each in color and sound with film guide containing cultural notes, list of new vocabulary, summary, complete script and questions for comprehension; price range \$180 to \$215 each or \$940 for complete series.

The Holt "Ya vamos!" Film Series is helpful for third year and perhaps for advanced second year Spanish students. It consists of five, fifteen minute color movies, "A Mexico," "A Chapultepec," "Al desfile," "A Toledo," and "Al Escorial," and it is accompanied by corresponding film guides. This guide gives a brief summary, in English, of the cities which are to serve as backdrop for the film. It then presents the reader with a summary of the action in Spanish, a list of new or unusual words and their English equivalent and the script.

The films involve casual dialogue between two young couples in their late teens who go on excursions in two important cities of the Hispanic World. Colorful Mexico City and gay Mexican music provide the backdrop for films one and two, while Madrid and its historical surroundings are presented in films four and five. (Film number three, "Al desfile," was not available to us for review.) The sharp contrast between the spoken Spanish of Mexico City and that of Madrid is very helpful in pointing out for the student the basic differences in both. Namely, the "Madrid "th" sound of Z and C and a different intonation pattern. Superb color photography, musical background, cultural scenes, and the intonation of the spoken language—though not its syntax—combine to capture the flavor of a "slice-of-life" from the perspective of a tourist.

In the "Ya vamos a Mexico" and "Ya vamos a Chapultepec" films, for instance, the camera effectively captures the Mexican custom of women greeting each other with a kiss on the cheek and men with a handshake, the popular Mexican sport, *Frontenis*, the street musician who plays for whatever a charitable soul may give him, and the eternal haggling.

Although Mexicans speak in these movies, their Spanish is more universal than Mexican. Typically Mexican words such as "camion"

and “muchacha” are replaced by the more universal “autobus,” and “chica.” Due to the casual, and thus rapid, pace of the dialogue the films should not be shown before the class has had a chance to study the film guide and perhaps to recite the script out loud.

The Spanish films “Ya vamos a Toledo” and “Ya vamos al Escorial” also exhibit valuable cultural insights such as the kissing of an elderly woman’s hand by a young man, body language (both hands and eyes), chaperons, the drinking of wine instead of pop at a picnic, and the random appearance of a burro laden with freshly baked bread. Although humor is present throughout the series, it is perhaps in this Spanish sequence that it reaches a high point. The changing attitude of a nearly deaf lady toward an unknown telephone caller who turns out to be a dear friend of hers, is hilarious.

The dialogue in these films tends to be more rapid than its Mexican counterpart, a fact owing perhaps to the natural pace of the native speakers. The Spanish spoken here is not universal but rather “Castilian.” The use of the expression “hacer fotos” instead of the most common “tomar fotos,” or “tirar fotos” illustrates this point. It is as if the producer of this series had as his model the “correct” Spanish spoken in Madrid.

These movies offer the viewer a “slice-of-life” from the perspective of a tourist, because we see only the “beautiful” people of both Mexico City and Madrid. In an ever shrinking world, the alert student—whose numbers are increasing—is apt to question the authenticity of films based on rich kids whose values are not much different from his own.

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