

Alfredo Dias Gomes (1922-1999)

One of Brazil's top playwrights of the century, Alfredo Dias Gomes, died 18 May 1999 in a traffic accident in São Paulo. Dias Gomes gave the national stage a number of memorable characters and plot lines, and despite his considerable difficulties with official censorship throughout his career, some of his plays stand among the most important in twentieth-century Brazilian theatre. *O pagador de promessas* (1960) stands as the absolute paradigm of Brazilian regionalist drama. Along with *O berço do herói* (1965) and several other plays, it confirms that Dias Gomes's merit as a playwright lies in the fact that he is able to incorporate regional elements (local color, language, characters) and still present us with a universally valid work. Dias Gomes had a lifelong interest in historical drama, having authored one of the best such plays in all of Brazilian theatre, *O Santo Inquérito* (1966). For long periods of his career he was also involved in radio and television. Three of his dramatic works have had phenomenal success in other media as well: the film version of *O pagador de promessas* was awarded the First Prize in major international film festivals (including Cannes in 1962), while *O berço do herói* and *O bem-amado* (1963), a satire of corrupt and hypocritical Brazilian politicians, achieved tremendous popularity as *telenovelas*. In fact, the Globo Network adaptation of *O berço do herói* (titled *Roque Santeiro*, 1985-86) became the most popular program of all time in Brazilian television.

Dias Gomes also wrote novels (such as *Sucupira, ame-a ou deixe-a* and *Odorico na cabeça*) and his autobiography, *Apenas um subversivo*, was published in 1998. He was inducted into the Brazilian Academy of Letters in 1991.

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