

LATIN AMERICAN THEATRE REVIEW

*a Journal devoted to
the Theatre and Drama
of Spanish and Portuguese
America*

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Abstracts

John E. Lyon, "The Argentine Theatre and the Problem of National Identity: A Critical Survey."

Preoccupation with national identity has long been a dominant factor in Argentine culture. The theatre, as the most public of all the arts, is under the greatest pressure from society to reflect the spirit of the times and the community. Argentine dramatists of the past thirty years, confronted by an amorphous social structure and political instability, have responded to this pressure in various ways. Some have rejected the national environment and retreated into a theatre of abstract problems or individual psychology. Others have sought a sense of identity in the purely American aspects of Argentine culture, the folklore of the Interior or the urban mythology of Buenos Aires. Others have tried to define their social context and their relationship to it in some form of political or ideological commitment. All these writers are "typically" Argentine in the sense that—directly or indirectly—their attitudes and choice of subjects are affected by the great cultural debate on the nature of *la realidad argentina*. The generation of the early sixties, avoiding intellectual abstraction, myth and political tendentiousness, gives the first real sign of emancipation from a self-conscious quest for identity. (JEL)

Joan Rea Green, "The Hero in Contemporary Spanish American Theatre: A Case of Diminishing Returns."

Since the Middle Ages, the figure of the hero has steadily diminished in stature and, although we still find the realistic or low mimetic hero in contemporary literature, more and more we encounter anomic types. These ironic, absurd, inadequate, alienated, or confused protagonists are manifest in the Spanish American drama in a highly graphic and direct way, and reflect the general condition of a disordered century. From Peru to Argentina, from Cuba to the Dominican Republic, the quest for identity is the same. In all the plays discussed, the ironic hero reflects the spiritual dichotomy of contemporary life as he strives to unite the lines of communication between the conscious and unconscious zones of the human psyche. (JRG)

Louis H. Quackenbush, "The *auto* Tradition in Brazilian Drama."

"The *auto* Tradition in Brazilian Drama" traces the development of the Hebraic-Christian *auto* technique from its early peninsular origins to the present. An analysis of *auto* dramatic form and content provides the necessary background for the study and appreciation of this important Brazilian drama form. Also, a thematic and conceptual study is made of numerous *auto* styles in Brazil. The colonial works of José de Anchieta are analyzed as well as the contemporary production of such prominent writers as Ariano Suassuna and Cabral de Melo Neto. The *auto* has had a long history in Brazil, dramatizing the development of religious consciousness and ethical behavior. It is also an expression of the folklore and social awareness of the Brazilian people, and a prime example of the continuance of an ancient form, revitalized by current dramatic philosophy. (LHQ)

George O. Schanzer, "The Mexican Stage in the Fall of 1971."

Individual complaints notwithstanding, Mexico's theatre enjoyed a rather successful season last fall. This is due in good measure to the non-commercial sector of the legitimate stage. The University of Mexico, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, and Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social sponsored many outstanding dramatic events, both revivals and *estrenos*, such as Vicente Leñero's *El juicio*. The repertoire of amateur and professional groups included national, Latin American, and a generous sprinkling of cosmopolitan works, old and new. This report deals in some detail with the Seguro Social theatres, the return of Usigli, and the theatrical price structure which assures good-sized audiences from all walks of life. (GOS)

Carlos Miguel Suárez Radillo, "Vigencia de la realidad venezolana en el teatro de César Rengifo."

César Rengifo has established himself as one of the most prolific and important dramatists of Venezuela. Rengifo and the Venezuelan theatre in general are engaged in a search for identity with a variety of themes and dramatic forms. To determine the Venezuelan future the playwrights have resolved to examine the past by means of legends, costumbristic and

historical plays, and by the sheer creative ability of the playwrights based on their own agonies and experiences. They occasionally borrow advanced techniques from the modern American and European theatre to help in this search for an authentic expression of national character. Rengifo's works are grouped under such topics as historical plays, farces and satires, and works dealing with the problems created by the petroleum industry. Like other writers in his country, Rengifo is vitally concerned with the Venezuelan experiences while at the same time seeking universal values in his works. (In Spanish) (GKC)

Teresinha Alves Pereira, "II Festival de Teatro Latino-americano 1972: Depoimento."

Nine plays were staged for the II Latin American Theatre Festival held from February 20 to 28 in Mexico City, one from each represented country: Cuba, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Argentina, Mexico and two from Chile. This article is a report from the Brazilian author who attended the festival and describes the nature of the plays presented, their themes, plots and the performance, audience receptiveness, debates and criticism. (In Portuguese) (TAP)

Peter J. Schoenbach, "Rio and São Paulo Theatres in 1970: National Dramaturgy."

The 1970 theatre season in Brazil was as rich in works of national dramaturgy as it had been in plays in translation. After the important contribution in popular themes and language of Plínio Marcos, a new group of playwrights emerged. Antônio Bivar, José Vicente, Leilah Assunção and others were concerned with the existential problems of young persons like themselves. They dealt with the difficulty of communication and identity in urban Brazil and the search for new values to replace traditional ones. The plays incorporated dreams, fantasy, and highly poetic language so that reality and the unreal were difficult to distinguish. They concentrated on the effect of society on the individual by utilizing elements of the Theatre of the Absurd. The symbolic nature of the characters enabled the dramatists of the "Teatro Nôvo" to criticize Brazilian society without interference from censorship. During the season the São Paulo Theatre Commission provided funds to encourage productions of national authorship; an unprecedented number of young playwrights had their works presented. In addition to the new group, such established figures as Gianfrancesco Guarnieri, Augusto Boal and Jorge Andrade continued to publish and have their plays staged. (PJS)

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