

LATIN AMERICAN THEATRE REVIEW

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

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Abstracts

John W. Brokaw, "A Nineteenth-Century Acting Company—Teatro de Iturbide: 1856-57."

The history of the Mexican theatre is not well known in the United States for two primary reasons: a) most research has been directed at the drama, rather than theatrical production, since more evidence remains of the former; and b) what little has been published about the theatre is in Spanish. In an attempt to establish a frame of reference for further investigation, this article focuses upon the crucial element in nineteenth century production—the acting company. One troupe—that at the Iturbide theatre—is examined on evidence compiled from eye-witness accounts, press reports, and advertisements. Company organization, repertory, evening's bill, rehearsal and performance, scenery, and costumes are each analyzed on the basis of the extant evidence, and two tentative hypotheses are reached. One: on the whole, the similarities in organization and practice between the Iturbide and the other theatres are more important than their differences. Two: although typical in most ways of contemporary acting companies in Mexico, however, the Iturbide troupe was unique in two respects: a) its personnel were the most competent in the nation and, b) its management was able to capitalize on the company's strength and dominate its competition. (JWB)

Leon F. Lyday, "Egon Wolff's *Los invasores*: A Play within a Dream."

Los invasores deals with the invasion of a city by the poor who live on its outskirts. The invasion turns out not to be real, however, but rather a nightmare experienced by a wealthy industrialist—the play's central figure. At the end, nonetheless, it appears that a real invasion is beginning, and thus that the dream has prefigured reality. The essay centers on the innovative manner in which the play is structured around a dream-reality, and how its message—that the wealthy must awaken to the problems of the poor before it's too late—finds its expression through a careful blend of structure and theme. Also discussed is the interpretation that not only the protagonist's "nightmare," but also both the opening scene and the final moments of the drama (hence the entire work) are encased within a dream-reality. (LFL)

Sara P. Simon, "The Trashumante Theatre."

The Trashumante Theatre describes the manner in which, funded by the city of Monterrey, Mexico, an abandoned trailer was converted into a compact, completely equipped theatre. Hauled by a regular truck motor unit it makes the rounds of the more modest living areas that are located on the outskirts of the city, for the purpose of bringing entertainment to those residents who cannot afford the bus fare and admission fees charged by even the most modest-riced movie house. After the theatre opened in May, 1971, it offered only light entertainment such as Mexican regional folk dances, regional music, magicians, puppet shows and one-act farces. After it re-opened in February, 1972, it began to offer programs the programming committee felt would serve as a contribution to the community. There was instruction on topics such as personal hygiene and improvement in farming techniques. On Saturdays, during the summer months, the Trashumante becomes a four-hour lending library. Recently, in an attempt to stimulate the younger residents culturally, the programming committee hired an art instructor to give drawing lessons to the children in these areas. (SPS)

Dale S. Bailey, "*Pagador de Promesas*: A Brazilian Morality."

In two complementary ways, Dias Gomes' play, *Pagador de Promesas*, can be read as a modern morality play. The central figure, Zé-do-Burro, represents the individual as he is frustrated and exploited by institutions (for him, the church, the state, and the press) as well as by purblind, apathetic, and conscienceless fellow human beings. He also represents the imperishable aspirations of man's spirit, while his wife, Rosa, represents the more immediate demands of the flesh: he is innocence—resolute and unwavering in purpose; she is experience—compromising, acquiescent, and readily distracted. His martyrdom, the inevitable consequence of his dogged insistence on the primacy of his convictions and the sanctity of his vow, reemphasizes the threat to the sovereignty of the individual posed by power and selfishness, just as it serves to instruct the body on what is demanded of it by the soul. (DSB)

Robert J. Morris, "The Theatre of Julio Ortega."

The theatre of Julio Ortega, one of Peru's foremost contemporary dramatists, represents a growing trend in that country towards a rejection of traditional naturalistic tendencies. Ortega's dramatic production is a convincing statement in favor of a theatre of modern design which

emphasizes the intellectual and universal interests of mankind. As an introduction to Ortega's theatre, an analysis and evaluation of eleven one-act pieces is given along with final comments on his production as related to his thematic, dramatic and philosophical tenets. (RJM)

Wilder P. Scott, "Toward an Usigli Bibliography (1931-1971)."

No published record of the writings of the Mexican playwright Rodolfo Usigli exists in bibliographical form. The present work is an attempt to document the creative writings of the dramatist together with pertinent critical material produced by scholars concerning his works. Bibliographical entries are classified in the following categories: I. Plays by Usigli; II. Other Writings by Usigli; III. Translations by Usigli; IV. Published Translations of Usigli's Plays; V. Critical Writings about Usigli. Included are critical reviews from Mexican newspapers concerning the performances of many Usigli plays, but in general references to Usigli's works in widely used anthologies and histories of Spanish American literature have been omitted. Several unpublished epilogues and prologues written by Usigli in connection with his dramas have been included for reasons of historical completeness. While some remarks are made by the compiler concerning the scope of critical materials, or the nature of certain editions of Usigli plays on a random basis, the work is not a critical bibliography. (WPS)

Francis Donahue, "Guerrilla Theatre with a Mexican Accent."

The Mascarones, a Mexican Guerrilla Theatre aggregation, employ *corridos* (ballads), choral arrangements, mime and dramatization in an attempt to "put a rifle in the conscience of the people." Appearing in schools, plazas, suburban centers and workers' quarters, they offer a spirited repertory inspired by events from Mexico's past (*Zapata*) and its current history (*Jenaro Vázquez*). With revolutionary clout in their "theatre without walls," the Mascarones hope to change the form of contemporary bourgeois theatre. (FD)

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