

Theatre in Latin America: The Penn State Symposium

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As the lights came up on the October 28-30 Theatre in Latin America Symposium at Penn State, no one could have foretold its successes. The managing director, Leon Lyday, briefed his prompters De Costa, Boorman, Lichtblau, Woodyard, Schoenbach, and Forster, as the cast of thousands* waited expectantly in the wings. A demanding but understanding taskmaster, Lyday (twenty minute stop watch in hand), reminded each player that individual monologues were not to exceed the time limit. Some talked of the rights of the masses, revolution, a utopic paradise on earth, and not a few languished in existential anguish or listened to the tic-tac (or was it "tric trac"?) of the clock. A compromise was suggested by one and another screamed woolf, woolf. Few if any prima donnas exceeded the limits of propriety, and the acts were worthy of Artaud or O'Neill.

As on all such occasions when men (and women) shall join together to form a more perfect theatre, some became the teachers of all; Boorman used her theatrics, and Dauster and Kronik their texts to define and enlighten. As images of alchemy danced in our heads and schizophrenic frustration led to a search for a comrade in arms, all found the thread to a better life in this world of the new aesthetic.

Maestros Arrom, Dragún, and Dias Gomes instructed, lulled, and entertained us with overtures to a generational approach to Latin American literature, with a popular theatrical refrain, and movements from a dramatic Brazilian symphony.

The "entreactos" entertainment was provided by the Penn State Department of Theatre and Film, the Teatro de Repertorio del Ateneo de Caracas, the Teatro de Los Pobres of El Paso, and the Compañía de Teatro Repertorio Español. The plays within our play which the groups performed were: *The Cradle of the Hero*, *O assalto* (in Spanish), *La farra*, *Los desarraigados*, and *Los soles truncos*.

Our last act was the cast party which topped off the activities of the three days with mountains of deep fried prawns, steamed clams, oysters on the half shell, scallops, and a variety of succulent sauces, salads and desserts. This sumptuous buffet, together with the theatrical events which preceded it, left everyone "con la barriga llena, el corazón desbordando y la cabeza repleta de ideas nuevas."

We wish to thank the Pennsylvania State University, its Institute for the Arts and Humanistic Studies, the Las Américas Publishing Company, and particularly, Leon Lyday for their organizational support and contributions which made the Symposium possible. There was a good deal of talk of making this an annual theatre spectacular to be sponsored by other universities in the future.

And, finally, from our own gossip section:

1. To the two girls (they would rather remain anonymous) who will now have to diet for several weeks after devouring three plates of seafood (12" diameter) and two side dishes, we say "buen provecho."
2. Frank Dauster was reported to have commented to Merlin Forster on his way out of the La Chaumière restaurant Friday night, "I can't remember when I've enjoyed a conference more."

3. And a shy Latin lady was overhead whispering to a friend, "to have had so much fun must be a sin."

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* I, like Padre Las Casas, only add one or maybe two zeros to each statistic. And what would we do if we could not document something in each paper we write?

PROGRAM:

Thursday, October 28

SECTION I—THE LATIN AMERICAN THEATRE FROM 1900-1950: A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW

Fred Clark, "Brazilian Theatre: 1900-1950"

Eleanor Maxwell Dial, "Mexican Theatre in the 1940's: Critics & Crisis"

Erminio Neglia, "La corriente popular en el teatro rioplatense de *Juan Moreira a Gorostiza*"

Gloria Orenstein, "Surrealism in Recent Spanish American Theatre"

Clementine Rabassa, "The Tip of the Iceberg: O'Neill, Aguilera-Malta and 'Négritude'—A Comparative Approach to the Evaluation of Latin American Theatre"

Friday, October 29

SECTION II—EXISTENTIALISM, CRUELTY AND THE ABSURD: INFLUENCES AND INNOVATIONS (I)

Richard Callan, "Martínez' *Juicio Final*: A Definition of Human Existence"

Francesca Colecchia, "Carlos Solórzano's Existential Anguish: The Sin of Having Been Born"

Howard Quackenbush, "The Legacy of Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* in the Spanish American Absurdist Theatre"

SECTION III—EXISTENTIALISM, CRUELTY AND THE ABSURD: INFLUENCES AND INNOVATIONS (II)

Virginia Brownell, "The Adam and Eve Cycle: Paradise and Procreation in *La víspera del degüello*"

Sandra Cypess, "Expressions of Artaudian Theory in Latin American Theatre"

George Schanzer, "¿La vanguardia varada? (Argentina)"

SECTION IV—ON THE TEACHING OF DRAMA

Joan Green Boorman, "The Play's the Thing: A Dynamic Approach to Drama"

Frank Dauster, "The Text as Theatre"

John Kronik, "On the Road to Schizophrenia: The Dramatic Text and the Teaching of Drama"

Saturday, October 30

SECTION V—RADICALISM AND REVOLUTION

Bruce-Novoa, "Revolutionizing the Popular Image"

Teresa Cajiao Salas, "De compromiso al teatro militante: la obra de Isidora Aguirre"

Tamara Holzapfel, "*Compañero*: The Revolutionary and His Double"

Maida Watson, "Enrique Buenaventura y el teatro experimental colombiano"

SECTION VI—THE NEW SOCIAL THEATRE

Pedro Bravo-Elizondo, "*Lisístrata González y Una Casa en Lota Alto*, El teatro popular en Chile: 1970-1973"

Robert J. Morris, "Achievements and Frustrations of the Peruvian Theatre, 1965-1975"

Joanne Pottlitzer, "Theatre: Tools for a New Aesthetic (Chile and Argentina)"

George W. Woodyard, "Threads, Roses and Music: Life Forces in Carballido's Theatre"

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS:

Oswaldo Dragún, "El teatro argentino contemporáneo"

José Juan Arrom, "Generaciones y estilos en el teatro hispanoamericano"

Dias Gomes, "O teatro brasileiro contemporáneo"