

The 11th Golden Age Drama Festival

Catherine Larson

The 11th Golden Age Drama Festival was held at the Chamizal National Memorial from March 4-8 and 11-15, 1986 in El Paso, Texas, offering a variety of dramatic presentations by both professional and amateur groups. As in years past, the festival represents a major opportunity for audiences from Mexico and the United States to witness the staging of Golden Age plays by groups from Spain, Latin America, and the United States. The bicultural atmosphere of El Paso invites the participation of an audience from both sides of the border; in addition, the final week of the festival always includes the participants in a symposium on Golden Age drama as members of the viewing public.

The 11th Festival program included:

- March 4: *El burlador de Sevilla*, Escuela de Bellas Artes, Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua, Chihuahua, Mexico.
- March 5: *El celoso prudente*, La Columna de Aguascalientes, Aguascalientes, Mexico.
- March 6: *Los empeños de una casa*, Grupo de Teatro, Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social, Chihuahua, Mexico.
- March 7: *La vida del buscón*, Compañía de Teatro, Universidad de Colima, Colima, Mexico.
- March 8: *Entremeses de mujeres en farsa picante*, Teatro Real Español and Latin American Theatre Ensemble, New York, NY.
- March 11: *El dueño de las estrellas*, Escuela de Arte Teatral, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico, D.F.
- March 12: *Marta la piadosa*, Centro Universitario de Teatro, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico, D.F.
- March 13: *In Love but Discreet*, University Theatre, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.
- March 14: *Por el sótano y el torno*, Department of Drama, University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, PR.
- March 15: *La dama duende*, Compañía Pequeño Teatro de Madrid, Madrid, Spain.

The 1986 panel of judges included the noted Argentine playwright, Osvaldo Dragún, and two distinguished actors and directors, Vicente Castro and David Schuster. The judges determined prizes for best overall production, best director, best actor, best actress, and best supporting actor and actress in both the professional and university (amateur) categories, as well as a number of special prizes. This year's winners were:

Professional Category

Best Production: *Marta la piadosa*, Centro Universitario de Teatro, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

Best actor: Luis Perezagua, *La dama duende*

Best actress: Luisa Huertas, *Marta la piadosa*

Best supporting actor and actress: no prizes awarded

Best director: Raúl Zermeño, *Marta la piadosa*

University Category

Best production: tie—*In Love but Discreet*, University Theatre, University of Missouri-Columbia and *La vida del buscón*, Compañía de Teatro, Universidad de Colima, Mexico.

Best actor: Silverio Palacios, *La vida del buscón*

Honorable mention: Germán Arias, *El dueño de las estrellas*

Best actress: tie—Lulu Parga, *El celoso prudente* and Jennifer Anne Allton, *In Love but Discreet*

Best supporting actor: tie—Miguel Angel López, *El celoso prudente* and Manuel Zapién Robles, *La vida del buscón*

Honorable mention: Carlos M. Rico, *El burlador de Sevilla*

Best supporting actress: Teresa Cosío, *La vida del buscón*

Honorable mention: tie—Lynette Torres, *Por el sótano y el torno*; Carola García, *Por el sótano y el torno*; Gabriela Reynoso, *El dueño de las estrellas*; Susana Burciaga, *El burlador de Sevilla*; Sandra Zacarias, *El celoso prudente*

Best director: tie—Rafael Sandoval, *La vida del buscón* and Weldon B. Durham, *In Love but Discreet*

Special Awards

Best scenery: Pat Atkinson, *In Love but Discreet*

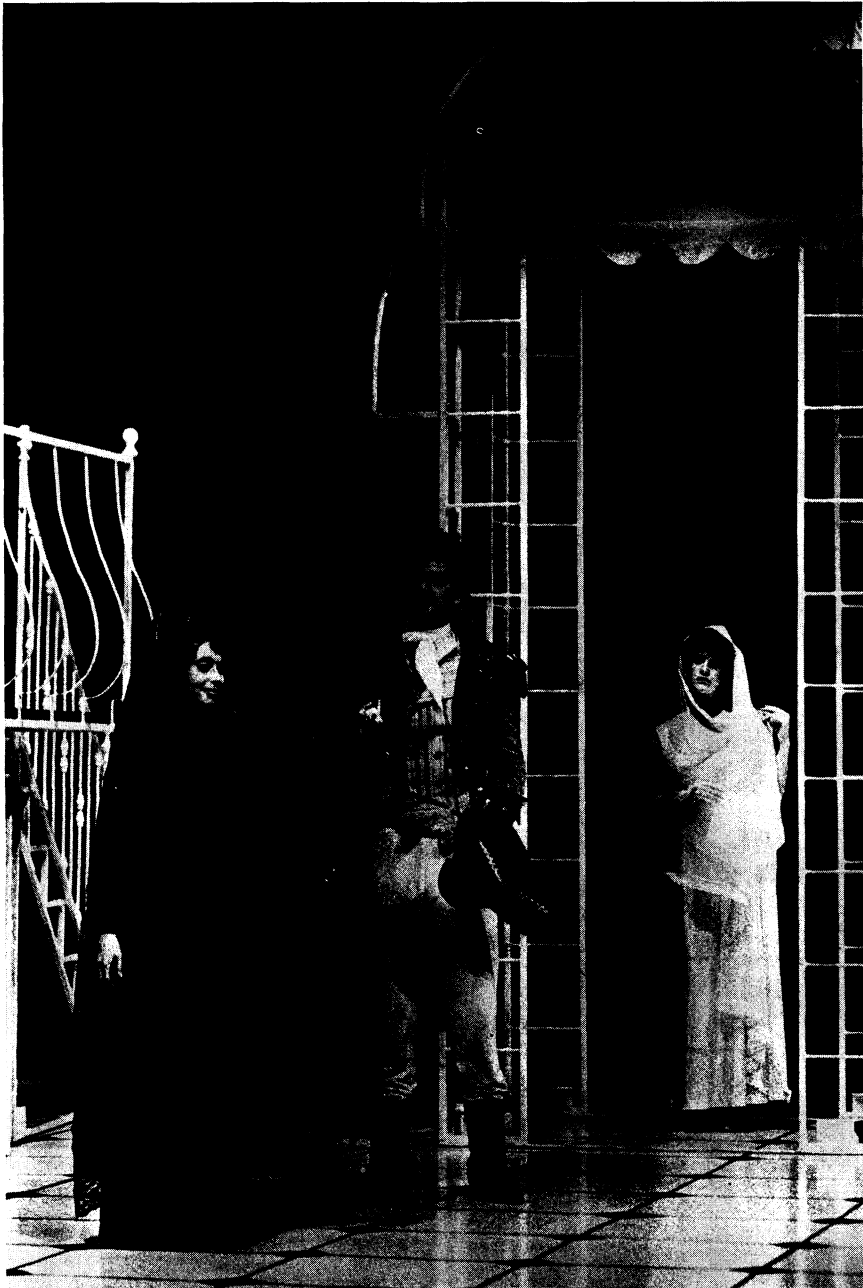
Honorable mention: Jesús Velasco, *El celoso prudente* and Jorge Reyna, *La vida del buscón* and *Marta la piadosa*

Best musical score: Luis Rivero, *Marta la piadosa*

Honorable mention: Quentin Kuyper and Julie Youmans, *In Love but Discreet*

Best costumes: Professional—Andrzej Włodarczyk, *Marta la piadosa*; University—Jorge Reyna, *La vida del buscón*

Honorable mention: Gloria Sáez, *Por el sótano y el torno* and Aurora Garfias Asiain, *El dueño de las estrellas*



La discreta enamorada de Lope de Vega, tr. Vern Williamsen. University of Missouri-Columbia. 11th Siglo de Oro Drama Festival, El Paso, TX, 1986. From left to right, Juliet Karr as Belisa, Jeffrey Paul Portell as Lucindo, Jennifer Ann Allton as Fenisa.

Best acting ensemble: *Marta la piadosa* and *In Love but Discreet*

Special award for translation: Vern Williamsen for *In Love but Discreet*

Special award for zarzuela: To the Pequeño Teatro de Madrid for their *zarzuela* based on *La dama duende*, given by the El Paso/Ciudad Juárez International Festival of Zarzuela Committee.

This year's festival offered great variety in the scenic adaptations of prose works (such as the *Buscón*) a *zarzuela* version of Calderón's *La dama duende*, short dramatic pieces and dances, and an English translation of Lope's *La discreta enamorada*. The actors and directors also underscored the ever-present problems of staging 16th and 17th century plays for contemporary audiences; their efforts to bring new life to these older texts led to lively and, occasionally, provocative experiments onstage. Particularly noteworthy was the UNAM's staging of Tirso's *Marta la piadosa* as the fusion of the classical play and the Mexican experience, illustrated through their use of wall projections and visual and musical spectacle, creating an imaginatively symbolic production.

The festival also served as the setting for the sixth annual Golden Age Spanish Drama Symposium, held at the University of Texas at El Paso campus from March 12-14. The symposium combined a forum for scholarly papers on the *comedia* with sessions in which actors and directors met with academics in an exchange designed to explore the esthetic factors and practical aspects involved in staging Golden Age drama. These encounters between literary scholars and theatre professionals have proved to be invaluable, in that academics are able to see a number of plays staged and consequently can bridge the gap between text and performance, while the actors and directors are given the opportunity to explore the critical reactions of a highly specialized audience. The symposium included general sessions on teaching the *comedia*, on the relationships between theory and representation, and on problems in translating the *comedia*, as well as special sessions on the dramas of Lope, Tirso, and Calderón, sixteenth century drama, sociological criticism, and problems of representation. One of the principal advantages of attending the conference was participation in the annual meeting of the recently founded Association for Hispanic Classical Theatre, a non-profit corporation designed to promote the study of Golden Age drama. This organization has been instrumental in collecting videotapes of performances of Siglo de Oro theatre; the tapes are made available on loan to members of the association for a nominal processing fee. (Note: for further information on the Association for Hispanic Classical Theatre, contact Donald Dietz at Texas Tech University.) The symposium offered a number of opportunities for participants to see demonstrations of ways that videotapes can highlight the teaching of the *comedia*. In all, the symposium included more than fifty different presentations which complemented the general sessions and the evening performances.

As in past years, the festival performances were followed by round table discussions, in which specialists in Golden Age drama and theatre professionals invited the actors, technicians, and directors to meet informally with the audience in order to discuss the performance just staged. The principal goal of the round table discussions is that of involving the audience directly in the theatrical event; the result is an exploration of the literary text in its relationship with the staged performance. This year's discussion leaders were

the noted *comedia* scholar, John J. Allen, and Robert Pomo, a distinguished director of Hispanic theatre.

A report on the 11th Golden Age Drama Festival and Symposium would be incomplete without acknowledging the efforts of three tireless supporters of Siglo de Oro theatre. Arturo Pérez of the University of Texas at El Paso worked with the Chamizal coordinating committee to provide an ever expanding and high quality symposium. Finally, Franklin G. Smith and Walker Reid of the National Park Service and the Chamizal National Memorial have again proved their devotion to Golden Age drama and to promoting an appreciation of Spain's legacy to the Americas and the world by sponsoring this truly international festival. After eleven years, the festival continues to offer a unique opportunity for theatre lovers and *comedia* scholars to see the theatre of the Golden Age come alive.

Indiana University