

# LATIN AMERICAN THEATRE REVIEW

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

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## Abstracts

### Severino João Albuquerque, "Representando o Irrepresentável: Encenações de Tortura no Teatro Brasileiro da Ditadura Militar."

Drawing from plays written and published during Brazil's military dictatorship (1964-1985), this article examines portrayals of torture in works by five committed playwrights. As dramatic representations of an experience which is very difficult if not impossible to reproduce, the scenes studied here (from Oduvaldo Vianna Filho's *Papa Highürte*, Augusto Boal's *Torquemada*, Plínio Marcos's *O Abajur Lilás*, Jorge Andrade's *Milagre na Cela*, and João Ribeiro Chaves Neto's *Patéuica*) include a variety of approaches, from mere suggestion and indirectness to the most faithful realism. Special attention is devoted to the uses of verbal and nonverbal languages in these plays, and to how such forms of expression interact in conveying the essential malignancy of the state of affairs denounced therein. (In Portuguese) (SJA)

### Margo Milleret, "Acting into Action: Teatro Arena's *Zumbi*."

One of Teatro Arena de São Paulo's most intriguing and popular plays is *Arena Conta Zumbi* (1965). The play, based on historical accounts, chronicles the resistance efforts of ex-slaves in northeastern Brazil during the late 17th century. This study analyzes the play's experimental staging techniques and its utilization of events from history as a vehicle for political protest. Both of these characteristics of the play are derived from such disparate sources as Brecht and Brazilian popular culture. The study concludes that *Zumbi* occupies a place in the history of Brazilian drama not only because its music, movement, and color were both unusual and beautiful but also because it succeeded in meeting the expectations of its homogeneous audience that went to the theatre as an outlet for political protest. (MM)

### David George, "Os Comediantes and *Bridal Gown*."

This two-article series—"Os Comediantes and *Bridal Gown*" and "*Nelson 2 Rodrigues*"—examines a 40-year cycle of the modern Brazilian stage that begins and ends with epoch-making stagings of works by Nelson Rodrigues: *Wedding Dress*, directed in 1943 by Zbigniew Ziembinski with his company Os Comediantes, and *Nelson 2 Rodrigues*, staged in 1984 by Antunes Filho with his Grupo Macunaíma. The two articles demonstrate that Nelson Rodrigues' strategic position in the cycle is a result of his stature as the most revolutionary and provocative figure in modern Brazilian dramaturgy, who exploded the veil of consciousness and reason and exposed the hidden zones of the subconscious, examining taboos and perversions, as well as patriarchal society's violent sexual repression, especially of women. Nelson Rodrigues was also responsible for many innovations in stagecraft.

Finally, a basic contention in the two articles is that the archetypal and mythical dimensions embedded in the plays provide the glue binding texts and productions. (DG)

### Catherine M. Boyle, "Egon Wolff's *La balsa de la Medusa*: Is the Bourgeoisie Waving or Drowning?"

This study considers Egon Wolff's *La balsa de Medusa* as forming, along with *Los invasores* and *Flores de papel*, a trilogy about the Chilean bourgeoisie. It is noted that there are striking similarities between *La balsa de la Medusa* and Luis Buñuel's film, *The Exterminating Angel*, and that both works are essentially studies of the bourgeoisie adrift, stripped of the social facade. It is shown how the play works on two levels, that of an exploration of the psyche of the bourgeoisie, and that of the study of the role of the class in society. The latter, the author implies, is safe and well as a result of the class's capacity to protect itself, while the former is paralyzed, the bourgeois condition an incessant repetition of empty social ritual, acted out within the mansion in which the characters are trapped. Set within the context of modern Chile, the trilogy is not, as has been suggested, about the progressive destruction of the bourgeoisie, but about its resistance to cyclical social threats, and about the nature of the edifice of social power, within whose walls there is the perpetual torment of guilt and fear. And yet, a relentless complacency. (CMB)

### Eleanore Maxwell Dial, "A Pleasure and a Source: The Publications of the Teatro Clásico de México."

Alvaro Custodio has pursued his life in the theatre in Mexico and Spain imaginatively. His memorable staging and adaptations of some thirty plays in Mexico from 1953-1973, plays by Lope de Vega, Juan Ruíz de Alarcón, León Felipe, García Lorca, and Sergio Magaña, among other dramatists, elicited praise from critics. His activities were not, however, limited to his Teatro Clásico de México productions. Custodio created and wrote most of an attractively-printed *Boletín del Teatro Clásico de México* which he used to explore dramatic theory and to expound on the state of the theatre in Mexico, the United States and Europe. The *Boletín* and a supplement, *Notas y comentarios*, ran intermittently from 1958 to 1973 and provided a lively record of the theatre during that period. From 1966 to 1977 he edited several plays and books on theatre in the attractive series, Ediciones del Teatro Clásico de México. (EMD)

### Kirsten F. Nigro, "Rhetoric and History in Three Mexican Plays."

Celestino Gorotiza's *La Malinche* (1958), Salvador Novo's *Cuauhtémoc* (1962) and Rodolfo Usigli's *Corona de fuego* (1961) all deal with major aspects and figures of the Mexican Conquest between 1519 and 1525. These playwrights turn to the past to make sense of or to come to terms with the present, and seem to end by saying essentially the same thing—that however painful and disruptive, the Conquest should no longer be lamented, but rather, celebrated for the strong new race and nation to which it gave rise. This identical message, however, is encoded using quite different rhetorical strategies. The purpose of this essay, therefore, is to explore how these strategies work to win an audience or reader over to the playwrights' point of view. (KFN)

### Rosa Sarabia, "Darío y Lugones: dos visiones modernistas de Pierrot."

In response to critical underestimation of Modernist theatre, this article contributes to the study of modernismo in its dramatic expression by analyzing *Pierrot y Columbina: La eterna aventura* by Rubén Darío and *El Pierrot negro* by Leopoldo Lugones. The analysis, both semiological and ideological in approach, reveals that in Darío's work, the treatment of the character Pierrot—a metaphor for the artist—responds to a pessimistic vision of the world in which he is the victim of bourgeois society. For Lugones, however, the commedia dell'arte figure

recaptures a place in the world after coming to understand himself. Both positions obey the differing ideological postures regarding the artist's place and function in society. (In Spanish) (RS: DJC)

**Eva Golluscio de Montoya, "Elementos para una teoría dramática libertaria."**

Based on articles taken from the anarchist Argentine press at the beginning of the 20th Century (*La protesta* 1905-1906), the general lines of an Anarchist dramatic theory are established concerning the function of the producer, the receiver and the work. This article explores the importance of the theatrical productions of Argentine anarchist groups and their relationship with their faithful and sizeable audiences. (In Spanish) (EGM: DJC)

**Marta de París, "El teatro y los indios en el área de influencia guaranítica."**

This article begins with a summary of the history and function of theatre in colonial Paraguay. The didactic nature of the early presentations is linked to the evangelical mission of the Jesuit priests; and the developing dichotomy due to the two audiences—one Spanish speaking and one Guaraní speaking—is discussed. The vitality of theatre in Guaraní to the present day is in part due to the incorporation and melding of indigenist ritual and music with European elements. Because pre-conquest Guaraní theatre had a satirical or political bent, this tendency continues, along with the development of *autos sacramentales*, which come to include specific referents that change with each different tribe/audience. (In Spanish) (DJC)

**Carlos Espinosa Domínguez, "Facundina: teatro con todas las letras."**

This article traces the development of a new type of theatre in Argentina. Based in La Plata, in the interior, Eduardo Hall and Eugenio Barba create the piece *Facundina*, which is based on the story of Facundina Miranda, using techniques learned during the International School of Theater Anthropology in 1981. The play is analyzed with emphasis on non-verbal expression and the brilliant performance by Graciela Serra. In addition, the experimental group Inyäj is studied as an answer to the conservatism and elitism of the Buenos Aires theatre and its urban topics. The author concludes that *Facundina* and the work by Inyäj is best suited for the limited resources outside the capital; yet it is good enough in quality to have gained widespread acceptance at several international theatre festivals. (In Spanish) (DJC)