

LATIN AMERICAN THEATRE REVIEW

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

Editor	Jacqueline E. Bixler
Managing Editor	Stuart A. Day
Associate Editor	Vicky Unruh
Book Review Editor	Paola Hernández
Interview Editors	Jorge Dubatti, Beatriz Rizk
Assistant Editors	Santa Arias, Jill Kuhnheim, Cacilda Rêgo, Yajaira Padilla, Antonio Luciano Tosta
Editorial Assistants	Dana Meredith, Gina Sandí Díaz
Publisher	Center of Latin American Studies The University of Kansas

Subscription information: Individuals, \$25.00 per year. Institutions, \$65.00 per year. Most back issues available; write for price list. Discount available for multiyear subscriptions.

Please send manuscripts (in MLA style) and other items to be considered for publication directly to Dr. Jacqueline E. Bixler, Editor, *Latin American Theatre Review* (jbixler@vt.edu). Please send book reviews to Dr. Paola Hernández (pshernandez@wisc.edu).

Please direct all business correspondence to the *Latin American Theatre Review*, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-2168 USA (latr@ku.edu)

Manuscripts must be accompanied by an abstract of 100-125 words in English. Limitations of space require that submissions conform to the following:

Critical studies:	6500 words	Reviews:	500 words for critical study
Interviews:	2000 words		750 words for published play
Festival Reports:	2000 words		1000 words for play collection
Performance Reviews:	500 words plus photos		

LATIN AMERICAN THEATRE REVIEW

50/1

Fall 2016

Contents

Abstracts	5
Introduction	
<i>Stuart A. Day</i>	9
Making it Relevant: Reflections on the Teaching of Brazilian Theatre in the United States	
<i>Severino J. Albuquerque</i>	13
A Practical Approach to Teaching Mexican Political Cabaret	
<i>Gastón Alzate and Paola Marín</i>	31
Mexican “History” in and as Theatre in the Classroom and Beyond	
<i>Jacqueline E. Bixler</i>	45
Devising as Pedagogical Practice in Latin American Theatre	
<i>Debra A. Castillo</i>	61
Teaching Latin American Migrations Through Theatre	
<i>Amalia Gladhart</i>	79
The Coyote-Scholar in the Doctoral Theatre and Performance Studies Classroom: Reading <i>Rabinal Achí</i> , Güegüence, sor Juana, and Rascón Banda	
<i>Jean Graham-Jones</i>	93
The Art of Production: Staging Latin(o) American Plays	
<i>Paola Hernández</i>	113

The Campesino's Early <i>Actos</i> as Templates for Today's Students <i>Jorge A. Huerta</i>	133
Service Learning: Staging Hispanic Theatre for Bilingual Elementary Students <i>Sarah M. Misemer</i>	147
Expanding the "American" and Latina/o Theatre History Canons: The Case of Josefina Niggli <i>Jimmy A. Noriega</i>	161
(un)Learning Curves: Stripping the Myth of the "Real" Woman <i>Kimberly Ramírez</i>	179
Theatre and Mass Culture: Pedagogical Tools for Stimulating Critical Thinking <i>Analola Santana</i>	191
Hispanic Caribbean Theatre on the Move: Crossing Borders, Redefining Boundaries <i>Camilla Stevens</i>	205
Re-Imagining Screen and Stage in a Human Rights-Centered Curriculum <i>Brenda Werth</i>	223
Performance reviews	
Mexico City's Spring 2016 Theatre Season <i>Timothy G. Compton</i>	239
Teatro Vista Stages Chicago Premiere of <i>In the Time of the Butterflies</i> <i>Regan Postma-Montaño</i>	255
<i>Elizabeth I</i> en clave argentina <i>Paula Varsavsky</i>	259
Interviews	
Entrevista a Elena Guiochins <i>Alfonso Varona</i>	263

In Memoriam

Una vida en el teatro: Jesús Valdés, primer actor de Saltillo
Armín Gómez Barrios and Jesús Valdez Ramos279

Book Reviews287

Call for essays

**SPECIAL ISSUE OF
LATIN AMERICAN THEATRE REVIEW
IN HONOR OF SANDRA M. CYPESS**

Topic: *Gender Politics and Cultural Memory in Contemporary Latin American and Latin@ Theatre*

We invite you to submit an essay on Latin American or Latin@ theatre for a special issue in honor of our newly retired colleague, Sandra M. Cypess. Sandy has been a pioneer in the study of Latin American theatre as well as Latin American women dramatists.

While submissions on all topics will be considered, the focus of this issue will be: *Gender Politics and Cultural Memory in Contemporary Latin American and Latin@ Theatre*

All submissions will be peer-reviewed

Deadline for submission: **April 1st, 2017**

Maximum length: 25 pages, including notes and works cited

Articles may be written in English, Spanish, or Portuguese

Times New Roman, 12 pt. font

Double spacing

MLA format for notes (endnotes) and works cited

Questions, suggestions, and submitted articles should be sent to:

Amalia Gladhart (gladhart@uoregon.edu)

Priscilla Meléndez (priscilla.melendez@trincoll.edu)

Abstracts

Severino J. Albuquerque, “Making it Relevant: Reflections on the Teaching of Brazilian Theatre in the United States”

With a focus on the relevance of Brazilian theatre in the United States, this article aims to gauge the diversity of challenges faced by those involved in the teaching of it in US colleges and universities and the staging of scenes or entire plays in those institutions and other venues. Attention is also given to related factors such as the availability of translated texts, the linguistic background and teaching and learning goals of instructors and students, the directorial vision of those in charge of stagings, and the ever present obstacle of a less commonly spoken language, as is the case of Portuguese in the US. Conclusions presented here were made possible by those colleagues who answered my email queries and/or responded to the brief questionnaire sent them, the text of which is reproduced in Appendix I. Appendix II is an account by the co-directors of a specific staging, that of Qorpo Santo’s *As Relações Naturais* at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the spring of 2008.

Gastón Alzate and Paola Marín, “A Practical Approach to Teaching Mexican Political Cabaret”

This article presents a practical approach to teaching Mexican political cabaret theatre in the US. It starts with a brief overview of the reasons why the movement begun to flourish in the 80s, as well as its connections to tent theatre (*carpa*), and musical revue theatre from the early 20th century. While it is impossible to state a single approach to the teaching and practice of contemporary Mexican cabaret—as multiple actors and troupes have developed their own approaches—their common traits are indicated here. The starting point is a workshop the authors took with Nora Huerta and Cecilia Stores at Mexico’s National Center for the Arts in August 2015. Ms. Huerta and Ms. Stores are actresses/directors belonging to the well-known Las Reinas Chulas (Cute Little Queens) cabaret troupe. The article ends by offering examples of sketches dealing with US political hegemony by significant Mexican cabaret artists. These may be of interest for US artists and faculty members interested in teaching Mexican political cabaret in particular and Latin American theatre in general.

Jacqueline E. Bixler, “Mexican ‘History’ in and as Theatre in the Classroom and Beyond”

Since Rodolfo Usigli’s *El gesticulador* (1938), the theaters of Mexico City and elsewhere have served as a staging ground for the re-thinking and re-presentation of past episodes of Mexican history. Over the years, I have developed a course titled “Contemporary Mexican Theatre: Staging the Past,” in which graduate students and advanced undergraduates read and discuss plays that revive certain historical entities and episodes as part of this creative re-opening and critical inquiry into the past. The objective of the class is threefold: to instill an appreciation for theatre as a means of revis(it)ing history; to convey the important role that history has played in the formation of contemporary Mexican consciousness; and to familiarize students with theoretical approaches that range from Hayden White’s concept of metahistory to Hans-Thies Lehmann’s “postdramatic” theatre. The overall objective of the class is to create an awareness of the complexity of Mexican history, of the power of the written word, and of the power of theatre in particular as a means of setting the story straight, giving voice to the vanquished as well as the vanished, demanding the truth and an end to impunity, and ultimately avoiding the repetition of past errors.

Debra A. Castillo, “Devising as Pedagogical Practice in Latin American Theatre”

In some theatre communities in Latin America, devised projects (*creación colectiva*) became a dominant presence throughout the 1960s-1980s, grounding a practice that remains

fundamental today, though such work presents a challenge to study in traditional, script-based classrooms. For those of us who work with Latin American theatre in an academic setting in the United States and who would like to give our students a taste of the challenges and rewards of developing and staging devised productions, the big questions we always ask ourselves include where to begin, with which models, in what balance of textual reading and production work, and in which language. The challenge, then, is not with devising per se, but rather with determining how to incorporate student devising adequately into “rigorous” theatre study, where the word “rigorous” stands in for a host of often-underexplored presumptions about methodologies and practices. This article is illustrated with examples of recent devised productions by the Cornell theatre troupe Teatrotaller. I am convinced—having done both scene work and full production—that the advantages of performance in the target language are best achieved when the stakes are high, not just scene work in a classroom setting, but full performance for a diverse public.

Amalia Gladhart, “Teaching Latin American Migrations Through Theatre”

The concept of migration offers a useful organizing principle for an introduction to Latin American theatre, as it encompasses multiple theatre styles and practices. Issues of migration are often in the news (in Latin America and beyond), thereby offering a point of entry for students who may not have studied theatre in the past. Migration in its multiple forms (immigration, emigration, exile, return) has a long history in the theatres of the Americas, including not only contemporary plays set on the US-Mexico border, but also Puerto Rican and Argentine theatre from the first half of the twentieth century and recent theatre from Ecuador, Chile, and Argentina. As a liminal space, the stage offers unique possibilities for the representation of migration. Theatre is a privileged space for the consideration of the migrant’s experience of displacement, an intrinsically provisional space, continually redefined. Theatrical techniques used to evoke the displacements of immigration, exile, and return include: narrative and temporal disruption; multiple characters played by a single actor; the mixing of languages, with and without translation; the evocation of the absent or the disappeared; and satirical or grotesque exaggeration.

Jean Graham-Jones, “The Coyote-Scholar in the Doctoral Theatre and Performance Studies Classroom: Reading *Rabinal Achí*, Güegüence, sor Juana, and Rascón Banda”

In this essay, I describe two seminars I have created for students in a US doctoral theatre studies program. In both seminars, we study Latin American theatre and performance of distinct periods as well as considering these texts and practices from different conceptual places. In this approach, I have sought to put into pedagogical practice the various strategies and potential I attribute to Delia Poey’s concept of the coyote-scholar. Noting that we scholars, much like the border-crossing coyote, participate in transporting marginalized texts into academic discourse, Poey urges us to engage with the perturbing, disrupting, and recontextualizing potential of coyote-scholarship. In describing the initial class meetings of “The Borders of Latino American Theatre and Performance” and “Transatlantic Theatre and Performance: Golden Age Spain and Pre-Conquest-Colonial Latin America,” as well as collective class projects and the experience of conducting one of the seminars at Chile’s Pontificia Universidad Católica, I trace my students’ growing engagements as coyote-scholars and artists.

Paola Hernández, “The Art of Production: Staging Latin(o) American Plays”

In this essay, I explore a pedagogical model for a hybrid class that combines the reading of drama as literature with a fully staged production as the final project. In detailed description of different aspects of the class, this essay focuses on the benefits of moving from analyzing dramatic pieces to embodying them on stage. As students shift from theoretical analyses of

theatre to learning about the intricacies of production, they immerse themselves in a more inclusive expression of the performing arts by learning how to apply theory to practice.

Jorge A. Huerta, “The Campesino’s Early *Actos* as Templates for Today’s Students”

In this article the author argues that *actos*, short political sketches created collectively by members of the Teatro Campesino, are just as relevant and necessary today as they were in 1965. After a brief introduction to the early Teatro Campesino, the article discusses the efficacy of satire and laughter as a weapon. He defines the *acto* as a genre, with roots in *com-media dell’arte* and other street-theatre forms. By describing the conventions of the form, he guides today’s students on how to create their own *actos* as effective and entertaining tools of theatre for social change. Using *La quinta temporada (The Fifth Season)* as a “quintessential *acto*” the author demonstrates how to make an audience laugh and think about social problems, offering potential solutions in today’s complex political climate.

Sarah M. Misemer, “Service Learning: Staging Hispanic Theatre for Bilingual Elementary Students”

“Staging Hispanic Theatre” is a service-learning course that exemplifies a pedagogical practice that Rita Irwin and colleagues term “a/r/tography”—a strategy in which arts-making, research, teaching, and learning take place simultaneously, benefiting students, instructors, and audiences. Undergraduate students engage in high-impact practices (HIP) as they study children’s theatre and pedagogy, and they use this knowledge to write and act in their own plays in Spanish for elementary school children in bilingual programs. Undergraduate students mentor and model behavior for elementary students in the target language and simultaneously develop their own linguistic, literary, and pedagogical skills. They provide cultural capital for children who may not be familiar with theatre practices and behavior, and they explore how language can be used to communicate in real-world settings and how a liberal arts education can be applied to understand existing works of literature and to create new compositions. With this essay, I also show how arts-making and teaching practices can overlap with and impact research.

Jimmy A. Noriega, “Expanding the ‘American’ and Latina/o Theatre History Canons: The Case of Josefina Niggli”

This essay focuses on Josefina Niggli as an example by which to expand the American and Latina/o theatre history canons. In doing so, the article seeks to (re)interrogate and disrupt the ways that we construct and disseminate theatre history in our scholarship and teaching. Niggli provides a valuable lesson from which to reevaluate the roles of historiography and identity politics in the construction of our theatrical past precisely because her life and work are the products of two revolutions: the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and the US Little Theatre movement. Both are integral to understanding her biography and body of work, yet no study has merged the two in an effort to understand the ways each contributed to her place in theatre history. This essay presents highlights from Niggli’s biography as they relate to the larger Little Theatre movement and concludes with an analysis of her play *Soldadera*.

Kimberly Ramírez, “(un)Learning Curves: Stripping the Myth of the ‘Real’ Woman”

This essay considers how commonly held stereotypes associated with Latina bodies influence student readings of scripts that exploit, perpetuate, or interrogate the myth that “real women have curves.” Learned impulses to become visible or to classify the Other introduce strong anxieties of leaving the Latina body unmarked, but championing curves as “real” interprets excess as visibility, costuming Latinas in consumable flesh while thinner, less curvaceous bodies appear culturally compromised, disregarded, or disembodied. That curves

make a woman “real” promotes an imagined, intermediate body that becomes easily marked between two binaries: spectrums of Latina bodies become singular, situated, and simplified, (mis)perceived as not black or white but brown, not fat nor thin but curvy. Playwrights, performers, and professors must collectively shift the Latina body learning curve(s) by un-learning the pseudo-feminist “real women have curves” myth with impressionable college students.

Analola Santana, “Theatre and Mass Culture: Pedagogical Tools for Stimulating Critical Thinking”

In this essay I use the performance of *De monstruos y prodigios* (2001) by Mexico’s Teatro de Ciertos Habitantes as a case study on how to approach a theatrical or dramatic analysis that refers to the effects of globalization and mass culture in Latin America. Today, mass media are an obligatory reference for theatrical production, as they create a dominant discourse that helps to shape how everyday “reality” is perceived. Thus, I find this to be a useful and creative pedagogical tool in promoting critical thinking in the classroom, as it leads the student to focus on the strategies used in art to question what is perceived as reality.

Camilla Stevens, “Hispanic Caribbean Theatre on the Move: Crossing Borders, Redefining Boundaries”

This essay reflects on the disciplinary trajectory of a course that I have taught both in foreign languages and literatures and in ethnic studies on the theme of migration in Hispanic Caribbean theatre. Crossing disciplinary borders sharpens our understanding of how theatrical performance has registered the complex social, economic, and political networks that connect the Hispanic Caribbean to the United States. Moreover, I argue that the viewing of Cuban, Dominican, and Puerto Rican theatre through a diasporic and transnational lens helps explain in part its marginalization in Latin American theatre studies, a field still dominated by national frames of reference. Exploring interdisciplinary approaches to teaching Latin American theatre not only resists the “border control” exerted by institutional units and academic disciplines but also helps redefine the field and spotlight its unique contributions to social scientific and humanistic inquiry.

Brenda Werth, “Re-Imagining Screen and Stage in a Human Rights-Centered Curriculum”

This essay explores the benefits of teaching and learning Latin American theatre in dialogue with film. Specifically, I discuss the dialogue between documentary modes of performance in the context of interdisciplinary courses on human rights and the arts that I have designed and taught in a Latin American studies program at American University. In my courses, I introduce theatre as a fundamental paradigm for understanding the collective, embodied, and intersubjective formations of human rights movements and action. Recent Latin American documentary theatre and film reveal a rich cross-pollination between genres; plays frequently incorporate documentary film footage, while many documentary films have become more theatrical or performative in nature. In this essay I show how studying documentary Latin American theatre and film in tandem can deepen and enhance an understanding of how these genres shape new modes of self-expression and activism, unsettle divisions between fact and fiction, advance and question existing forms of truth-telling, contribute new archives of knowledge, and engage discourses of memory, history, and human rights. I begin the essay by offering a theoretical framework and pedagogical rationale for learning and teaching documentary theatre in conjunction with documentary film. At the end of the essay, I propose the pairing of two Argentine works—Albertina Carri’s film *Los rubios* (2003) and Lola Arias’ play *Mi vida después* (2009)—as a case study for how to approach the joint teaching of documentary film and theatre.