

LATIN AMERICAN THEATRE REVIEW

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

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

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Abstracts

Severino J. Albuquerque, “Tulio Carella’s Recife Days: Politics, Sexuality, and Performance in *Orgia*”

This essay contextualizes the queer project undertaken by Argentinian playwright and critic Tulio Carella’s alter-ego Lucio Ginarte in the performative narrative that makes up most of his hybrid diary, *Orgia* (1968; 2011). Ginarte’s symbolic, sexualized occupation of Recife’s downtown in 1960-1961 foreshadows the queering of public spaces and openly affirms the physicality and presentness of interclass and interracial gay sex in Latin America. The essay also shows how Carella’s visibility in the bustling Buenos Aires literary and theatrical scene in the 1940s and 1950s all but disappeared in the wake of the Recife “scandal” and the subsequent publication of *Orgia*. With the author relegated to “el closet de la crítica” (Molloy), his plays vanished from the stages.

Janneth Aldana Cedeño, “El distanciamiento brechtiano en el teatro de Santiago García (1960-1990)”

The greatest part of Santiago García’s artistic creation and, by extension, of the group Teatro La Candelaria under his direction, has been done through the sustained effort to generate an art devoted to contemporary social transformations, simultaneously committed to the critical judgment of the potential spectators. Bertolt Brecht’s contributions, particularly his theorizing on the “detachment effect,” have been instrumental to artists in establishing effective communication with those sectors of society that do not have access to certain cultural goods but desire to change their difficult living conditions.

Andres Amerikaner, “Un poquito más de *Danubio*: Virgilio Piñera y el revisionismo absurdo”

Virgilio Piñera is widely recognized as one of the pioneers of absurdism in Cuba, but his place within the broader global tradition of the Theatre of the Absurd remains contested. Piñera wrote his seminal play *Falsa alarma* in 1948, prior to the opening of Eugène Ionesco’s *La cantatrice chauve*, but he expanded the text by incorporating a number of prototypically absurd passages on the occasion of the play’s first run in 1957. In comparing the original *Falsa alarma* with the revised version, this article attempts to settle the lingering question of Piñera’s status as progenitor of the absurd by charting his stylistic evolution and exploring his connections to the intellectual circuits of that time period.

Mary Barnard, “Leaving Behind Ways of Knowing: *Hatun Yachaywasi* by G. Juan Vilca”

Hatun Yachaywasi depicts the rural to urban migration of its protagonist as an erasure of tradition, culture, and indigenous knowledge. Chawpi, a young indigenous man from the Andes, uses his entrance to Puno’s main university as an opportunity to distance himself from his village’s politics and his family’s poverty. The work questions how certain forms of knowledge are valued above others as Chawpi must redefine his relationship with his mute brother and uneducated, yet traditionally skilled father upon seeking higher education. The play also reframes debates on race and migration in the Andes by presenting the struggle between Chawpi’s father Román and his landlord Emilio as one born of a common event:

the 1969 Reforma Agraria. As all the principal characters are of the same indigenous origin, their divisions lie in how they define themselves within cultural frameworks forged during this crucial period in Peruvian history.

Yeliz Biber Vangölu, “From Suffering to Shangri-La: Maria Irene Fornes’ Musings on the Future in *Enter THE NIGHT*”

This essay discusses how the construction of alternative spaces in theatre can challenge the main modes of spatiality by focusing on the Cuban-American playwright Maria Irene Fornes’s *Enter THE NIGHT* (1993). The play produces two different modes of spatiality, one of which is overlaid with references to film and music and functions as a backdrop to the main line of development. These side texts finally override the main text and subtly challenge the primary spatial perceptions. This essay argues that the secondary sources as well as the caring relationship between the characters create a space that ultimately produces the message of the play by resisting the overlying sense of darkness and illness that rules the lives of the characters.

Trevor Boffone, “La Llorona on Stage: Re-visiting Chicana Cultural Paradigms in Josefina López’s *Unconquered Spirits*”

This article examines the “bad woman” archetype of La Llorona and how it has been used to destabilize patriarchal discourses in Chicana theatre. Chicana feminist playwrights appropriate, subvert, and transform La Llorona in such a way as to create discourses of resistance, deploying the female body as a tool for cultural upheaval and using theater practice as a weapon of sociopolitical resistance. By presenting versions of these *malas mujeres* that are created outside of the male gaze, playwright Josefina López offers complex portrayals of rigid cultural paradigms that limit the possibilities of Chicana womanhood. After a brief overview of the Llorona myth as it pertains to Chican@ theater, this article uses López’s *Unconquered Spirits* (1995) to explore how the myth of La Llorona has been performed across time and theater spaces. López’s play demonstrates how body and performance work in unison to reconfigure cultural paradigms, in this case La Llorona, to shape each character’s own re-imagined identities.

María de la Luz Hurtado, “El ensayo de la muerte en *La huida* de Andrés Pérez: entramados de subjetividad, cuerpo y violencia de la historia”

In exploring Andrés Pérez’s *La huida*, staged by him in 2001 after a 25-year process of rewriting the script he wrote in 1975, this essay highlights his struggle to convey deep personal trauma by narrativizing an undisclosed homophobic state murder perpetrated in Chile in 1929. Semiotic complexity, auto-reflexivity, and metatheatricality are all part of the radical turn that Pérez took during this extended process between the time of the dictatorship to that of the post-conflict period. This study suggests that Pérez’s creative battle was anchored in the impossibility of naming the unnameable in the face of psychic, physical, and historical voids that combine the irradicable (trauma) and the irrevocable (death).

Ana Lidia García Peña, “La diva Virginia Fábregas: intersecciones entre su teatro y su vida, 1888-1950”

This study presents the life story of Virginia Fábregas, a major diva of Mexico at the start of the twentieth century. The discussion focuses on the following issues: changes in the theatre

between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; the artistic life of Fábregas; her theatre; her image of elegance; and her complex and scandalous divorce. Theories of Pierre Bourdieu on distinction and of Guy Debord on spectacle are used to explain how the theater became a fundamental space of sociability for the Mexican bourgeoisie of the time and how the apotheosis of this process was precisely the Teatro Virginia Fábregas in terms of distinction, taste, and bourgeois classing. The essay builds on historical theatre sources that help reconstruct the various stages of Fábregas's life.

Gilberto Icle, Milena Ferreira Mariz Beltrão, and Isadora Pillar Vieira, “*Cinco Tempos para a Morte: uma análise genética do processo de criação*”

This essay establishes a bridge between the process of creating the spectacle *Cinco Tempos para a Morte* and theatre genetics, using the principles of the latter. This methodological device is used to understand not only the final product (the spectacle), but also the collective creation process (the rehearsals) of the spectacle created and performed between 2010 and 2011 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, by the Usina do Trabalho do Ator group. By means of genetic studies, the analysis problematizes ways of recording the creative path, presenting the limitations of the documents used for the research. Finally, the study of the theatrical creation process is proposed as an infinite analysis.

Marin Laufenberg, “*Laughing it Out: Strategies of Affectively Remembering Dictatorship in Griselda Gambaro’s Antígona furiosa*”

This study brings into focus the interaction between levels of watchers and the watched in Griselda Gambaro's 1986 work, *Antígona furiosa*. Combinations of the laughable and the serious are shown to hold affective ways of understanding and remembering Argentina's most recent military dictatorship (1976-1983). Belittling and making light of Antígona's situation, Antinoo and Corifeo act as grotesque buffoons. The audience sometimes laughs with the buffoons, but then later reflects on it; at other moments, the two men mock and laugh while the audience merely observes their cruelty. Through both taking part in and observing nuances of humor, the importance of the witness's role in the theatre and in society is heightened and the audience ultimately acquires a new way of knowing the trauma of the dictatorship.

Maybel Mesa Morales, “*Cocinar y castigar: Recetario de torturas en Cocinando con Elisa de Lucía Laragione*”

This article explores spatial dimensions in Lucía Laragione's work *Cocinando con Elisa* (1993) and the way in which processes of representation of historical memory are inscribed as social reconfiguration. The point of departure is the theoretical framework that analyzes the language of spatial relationships as one of the fundamental means of interpreting reality (Lotman), pointing to the connections between space, power, and memory, as well as to the impact of their confrontation in the performative context of the play. In this study, the *telos* of torture is assumed as an alienated act of identity construction. *Cocinando con Elisa* is part of the corpus of Argentine dramaturgy that interprets torture in a symbolico-allegorical way as the essence of the domination device of Argentine dictatorship over the female body.

Natacha Osenda, “Revisiting the Appropriated Children: Subjectivity in Patricia Zangaro’s *A propósito de la duda*”

A propósito de la duda (2000) was created in homage to Las Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo in the hopes of “instilling doubt” regarding the issue of the appropriated children of the disappeared, those who were taken during Argentina’s last military dictatorship (1976-1983) and placed illegally with other families. This article studies how a persistent dualistic cultural interpretation of the dictatorship, the “Theory of the Two Evils,” and a body of psychological and legal discourses building on advancements in genetic science and long-standing notions of family lineage informed the play’s creation and mise-en-scène. In the play, the appropriated children are represented in terms of their true, biological identities, which must be restituted legally and legitimately for Argentine society to move forward.

María Teresa Sanhueza, “Compañía de Teatro Independiente El Rostro: 38 años haciendo teatro desde Concepción”

Concepción is a Chilean city rich in history and culture, home to the legendary Teatro de la Universidad de Concepción (TUC), which was the most active regional university theater during the 1950’s and 1960’s. Three young, idealistic actors named Gustavo Sáez, Ximena Ramírez, and Julio Muñoz founded the independent theatre company El Rostro in Concepción in 1978. This article traces the historiography of El Rostro during forty years of uninterrupted work in both dictatorship and democracy. During the Pinochet years, when most companies stopped their artistic endeavors due to censorship and political persecution, El Rostro was the only collective that managed to adapt, change, and survive while raising political and social consciousness. Risking their lives, they staged plays by Juan Radrigán (*Las brutas*, *Testimonios de la muerte de Sabina*, 1982), and Isadora Aguirre (*Retablo de Yumbel*, 1986). El Rostro’s history is a testament to the group’s commitment to its artistic mission and to the city. Today, theatre continues to flourish in Concepción and El Rostro remains in operation, revitalizing the stage with all kinds of productions, especially plays that educate the new generations through a strong repertoire of theatre for children.

Josh Stenberg, “Towards Global *Xiqu* Studies: Situating Latin America on the Trans-Pacific Circuit”

Xiqu (Chinese opera) studies have been increasingly considering transnational history and practice. New scholarship has improved the understanding of trans-Pacific connections in Cantonese opera between Asia and North America. This article recovers Cuba and Peru (especially Havana and Lima) as major nodes of Cantonese opera in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, showing how it was practiced and sketching out its reception and legacy. This contributes to the elaboration of a global perspective in *xiqu* studies, while laying the groundwork for future critical approaches surrounding Chinese and transnational performance in later 19th and earlier 20th-century Latin America.