We dedicate this issue to the memory of our colleagues
Vern G. Williamsen
Francisco Ruiz Ramón
Shirley Whitaker

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Comedia Performance

This issue was guest-edited by David Johnston (Queen’s University Belfast), Donald R. Larson (The Ohio State University), Susan Paun de García (Denison University), and Jonathan Thacker (Merton College, University of Oxford).

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*Comedia Performance* is the journal of the Association for Hispanic Classical Theater, an organization devoted to the study of the *comedia* and other forms of early modern Spanish theater. *Comedia Performance* publishes articles on diverse aspects of performance of the Spanish *comedia* and other theatrical forms. Appropriate subjects for articles include, but are not limited to, historical or modern staging of the *comedia*, translating the *comedia* for the stage, performance theory, textual issues pertaining to performance, historical issues such as audience composition, *corral* design, costuming, blocking, set design, and spectator response. *Comedia Performance* does not publish text-based literary studies.

*Comedia Performance* publishes interviews with directors and actors, theater reviews and book reviews in special sections.

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All submissions must be original and unpublished. After publication, authors may solicit permission to reproduce their material in books or other journals. Articles may be in either English or Spanish and should be submitted electronically. We do not accept paper submissions. Articles should use MLA style and not exceed 25 double-spaced, typed pages, including notes and bibliography. Send article submissions to: comediaperformancesubmissions@gmail.com

*Comedia Performance* is a refereed journal. A committee of experts will read all submissions. Please submit articles to the appropriate editor. E-mails of editors appear under Editorial Board.
Guidelines for theater reviews:

1. Reviews should be between three and five pages long, including pictures.
2. Reviews should not include endnotes and bibliography.
3. Reviews should not include a detailed description of plot. For canonical plays, no plot summary is necessary. For lesser-known plays, a two- to three-line synopsis should suffice.
4. Avoid minute descriptions of action, costume, lighting or sets. Avoid constructions such as, “And then Don Lope comes out and says...” Instead, comment on the efficacy of the blocking of particular scenes or the effect caused by costume and decor. Do not describe details of the performance unless you are going to comment on them.
5. Avoid structures such as “This reviewer thinks...” Reviews are by definition subjective.
6. One reviewer may not publish more than two reviews in a single issue.
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2015 International Siglo de Oro Drama Festival
GUEST EDITORS’ NOTE

During the week of November 25-29, 2013, the Association for Hispanic Classical Theater and Out of the Wings joined forces to co-sponsor a symposium in Bath, England, entitled “The Comedia: Translation and Performance.” The symposium was planned to take advantage of a fall season of Spanish comedias held at the Ustinov Studio of the Theatre Royal, Bath. Curated by Laurence Boswell, the Artistic Director of the Studio and a leading proponent of Golden Age theater in the English-speaking world, the special season consisted of three works, all performed in newly commissioned translations: Lope de Vega’s A Lady of Little Sense, translated by David Johnston and directed by Laurence Boswell; Lope’s Punishment without Revenge, translated by Meredith Oakes and directed by Laurence Boswell; and Tirso de Molina’s Don Gil of the Green Breeches, translated by Sean O’Brien and directed by Mehmet Ergen. The plays, credits for which are given below, were performed on successive nights during the symposium, and
each was accorded an enthusiastic reception, as had been the case throughout the season.

Day-time hours during the conference were devoted to papers focused on one or more of the plays being performed that week, round-tables, and informal discussions with the actors and creative teams of various productions. Out of these sessions, as well as out of the performances themselves, emerged the essays contained in this special issue of *Comedia Performance*, planned as a companion to a special issue of the *Bulletin of the Comediantes*. By design, the essays contained herein deal with aspects of staging and performance, while those found in the companion issue of the *Bulletin of the Comediantes* deal with matters of translation and adaptation. All in greater or lesser degree have to do with at least one of the works performed during the week of the symposium.

The guest editors of the two special issues are the same as the organizers of the conference itself: David Johnston (Queen’s University Belfast), Donald R. Larson (The Ohio State University), Susan Paun de García (Denison University), and Jonathan Thacker (Merton College, University of Oxford). It is their pleasure on this occasion to give sincere thanks to all who have contributed to the two special issues, as well as to all those—some fifty-five individuals, representing a half-dozen different countries—who attended the symposium. They would also like to express their gratitude to Laurence Boswell, not only for curating the Golden
Guest Editors

Age season but also for the support he gave during the planning and execution of the conference; to Frances Macadam, Administrator of the Ustinov Studio; to the acting company of the Spanish season; to the directors, designers, composers, and choreographers of the season; and, finally, to the entire staff of the Theatre Royal, Bath. Thanks are also due to the Embassy of Spain, Office for Cultural and Scientific Affairs for its support of the conference, and to Edward H. Friedman, editor of the Bulletin of the Comediantes, and Barbara Mujica, editor of Comedia Performance, for affording us the opportunity to make known some of the many fruits of the conference.

This special issue of Comedia Performance is dedicated to the memory of Vern Williamsen, who passed away last summer. Vern was a leading figure in the field of early modern Spanish theatre, and an advisor, mentor, and friend to generations of students and scholars, both in the United States and around the world. He will be sorely missed. We are pleased to preface this issue with an In Memoriam essay written by his daughter, Professor Amy R. Williamsen, of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. More recently, we lost two more of our dear and esteemed colleagues: Francisco Ruiz Ramón and Shirley Whitaker. We dedicate this issue to their memories as well.

***
Following are the actors and principal members of the creative units of the 2013 Spanish Golden Age Season at the Ustinov Studio, Theatre Royal, Bath:

**A Lady of Little Sense**

Liseo  
Turin/Duardo  
Leandro/Feniso/Pedro  
Otavio  
Miseno/Rufino/Dance Master  
Nise  
Celia  
Finea  
Clara  
Laurencio  
Simon Scardifield  
Chris Andrew Mellon  
Doug Rao  
William Hoyland  
Jim Bywater  
Katie Lightfoot  
Annie Hemingway  
Frances McNamee  
Hedydd Dylan  
Nick Barber

Director  
Set and Costume Designer  
Lighting Designer  
Sound Designer and Composer  
Choreography and Movement Director  
Laurence Boswell  
Mark Bailey  
Ben Ormerod  
Jon Nicholls  
Lucy Collingford
**Guest Editors**

*Punishment without Revenge*

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<td>Febo</td>
<td>Jim Bywater</td>
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<td>Duke</td>
<td>William Hoyland</td>
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<td>Cintia</td>
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<td>Federico</td>
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<td>Batin</td>
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*Don Gil of the Green Breeches*

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Donna Juana</td>
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<td>Don Martin</td>
<td>Doug Rao</td>
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<td>Donna Ines</td>
<td>Katie Lightfoot</td>
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<td>Don Pedro</td>
<td>William Hoyland</td>
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<td>Donna Clara</td>
<td>Annie Hemingway</td>
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<td>Don Juan</td>
<td>Simon Scardifield</td>
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Quintana                                Chris Andrew Mellon
Caramanchel/Don Diego                  Jim Bywater
Ossorio/Bailiff                        Nick Barber
Clelia/Valdiviesa/Aguilara             Frances McNamee

Director                                Mehmet Ergen
Set and Costume                         Mark Bailey
    Designer                              Ben Ormerod
Lighting Designer                       Jon Nicholls
Sound Designer and Composer             Lucy Collingford
Choreography and Movement Director     Jon Nicholls
Polyphony resonated throughout my father’s life in which he artfully wove together multiple melodic lines. Many of the readers of this issue of *Co-media Performance* will have known him from his work with Golden Age theater through encounters in person, online or in print—the hundreds of condolences my family received from across the globe have both comforted and astounded us. Collectively, these touching remembrances intertwine with the memories we cherish from our years with him.

Born the eldest of four sons, only three of whom survived into adulthood, he relished sharing colorful tales of the adversity he faced as a youth struggling through the Great Depression. After working as a dishwasher to help pay for his studies, he graduated with his degree in Music from San Jose State University in 1948. The first teaching post of his twenty-year career as a public school teacher in California took him to a one-room schoolhouse in
the wilds of the Gold Country, where he encountered many memorable characters, from a fiercely independent one-armed prospector who helped him survive a winter avalanche to a feisty first grader known only as “Peter Rabbit.” Some of his favorite stories involved his adventures as a Boy Scout Troop Leader camping in the Sierras with underprivileged youths, sharing the natural wonders of a state he loved dearly.

One day on a whim, he offered a Norwegian friend a ride to visit family; there he met Clara Aasland whom he married after a whirlwind courtship. Fittingly, they marked their 50th wedding anniversary at a national celebration of Norwegian culture. Fortunately for Hispanism, the high school where he had been recognized as educator of the
Williamsen 9

year needed someone to teach Spanish, so the administration arranged to send him to the immersion program in Guadalajara offered by the University of Arizona. While there, he fell in love with yet another language and culture. Inspired by his experiences, he moved his wife and daughter to Tucson where he pursued his Master’s degree under the tutelage of the formidable Tirso scholar, Miss Ruth Lee Kennedy, who abhorred many modern “imperfections,” including the MLA practice of referring to scholars only by their last name. In 1965, a year after the birth of his daughter Tora, the family relocated again, this time to Fulton, Missouri where he taught full-time at Westminster College as he completed his doctorate at the University of Missouri. During this time, my sister and I, witnessing him emerge, exhausted and battle-weary from the forbidden realm of the basement where he “wrestled with the dissertation,” became convinced that Dissertation was a monster who lived under our house and could only be tamed by the sounds of our father typing on his Underwood. Once the dissertation was completely appeased, he was hired by his alma mater where he taught for more than 20 years.

In his second academic career, he mentored countless students, empowering them to follow their own passions. He was a favorite undergraduate advisor for he would take the time to help each student develop a plan of study tailored to talents and aspirations, encouraging the pursuit of many double majors and dual degrees before these were common-
place. While in Columbia, he benefitted from the chance to work with devoted colleagues as he nurtured graduate students who would eventually become some of the most talented scholars in our field. Perhaps conditioned by the strong women in his own life, he avidly supported women scholars—several have recently shared memories of how he enriched their careers whether in classrooms where he included authors like María de Zayas or in conferences where he insisted on equitable treatment for all. At the end of each graduate seminar, he would invite his students to our home, where he prepared gourmet meals that eventually came to the attention of the local press, leading to a feature article about his culinary skills.

His scholarly activity often focused on those whose contributions had been undervalued. From his early work on the theater of Sor Juana to his research on the “minor” dramatists, including his beloved Mira de Amescua, he continually sought opportunities to promote the appreciation of marginalized voices. His meticulous editions and bibliographies, his artful translations, and his countless articles each represent significant contributions. His musical expertise allowed him to perceive and elucidate the effect of the musicality of Spanish versification, leading to his classic study on polymetry as audible “sign.”

A fortuitous invitation by his former classmate Donald T. Dietz to an early festival at the Chamizal National Theater crystallized his lifelong
interest in performance that had been rekindled when he went to Almagro during his sabbatical year in Spain. As one of the founding members of the Association of Hispanic Classical Theater, he worked to move our field in new directions, especially those foregrounding performance. He earned acclaim for the successful 1985 University of Missouri production of his translation of *La discreta enamorada* [*In Love but Discreet*]. He also became a cyberspace pioneer, creating a digital archive of *comedia* texts at a time when all encoding still had to be done through the laborious implementation of HTML. He used the website to share generously the fruits of decades of work, earning the gratitude of many, including undergraduates struggling with the intricacies of Spanish prosody. He especially treasured the note from an appreciative serviceman who wrote to thank him for the solace he had found in the literary classics available online from AHCT.

Upon his retirement, he remained active, making the yearly pilgrimage to El Paso to enjoy the Chamizal “Siglo de Oro” festival and the AHCT conference whenever possible. He also embraced the chance to revisit his musical roots. He returned to Tucson, Arizona where he sang tenor with the Sons of Orpheus All Male Chorus, performing at various notable venues, including a concert at the White House and an appearance with Linda Ronstadt at San Javier del Bac. When his health no longer permitted him to sing with the chorus, he turned his hand to arranging, scoring many of their
favorite selections. His musical legacy continues through his daughter Tora, a soulful alto, and his grandson Pablo, a gifted young composer.

After 22 years in the Old Pueblo, he and my mother moved to North Carolina to live with my son Erik and me. Here in the outskirts of Greensboro, following a prolonged illness, he died peacefully at home late this summer. He remained sharp and lucid until his final moments; his love for the *comedia* and his fellow *comediantes* never wavered.
Once while in a local emergency room, he exercised his playful wit while waiting for test results by searching for satisfactory solutions to translation quandaries forwarded by colleagues via email. On his last Sunday evening, he spent a pleasant hour animatedly conversing with a new acquaintance who had just discovered the *comedia* through the introductory chapter to his Twayne book on the minor dramatists, which included what he himself considered one of his most important contributions to our field: his insights into the dramatic structure of the *comedia*.

When his surviving family (wife Clara, brother Paul and his wife Judy, daughters Amy and Tora and son-in-law John and grandsons Erik and Pablo) gathered to celebrate his life, we were joined by new friends in Oak Ridge and lifelong friends in Tucson. The cast of characters present represented the many facets of a life well-lived. From professional dancers to bridge partners, from Sons of Norway to Sons of Orpheus, we came together to enjoy good food, fine wine, great music and lively conversation as he requested.

In a letter he wished to share with friends and family, he summarized his life. Let me end my remarks with his words:

*Who would have expected that the skinny little know-it-all pest whose greatest dream was the seemingly impossible goal of becoming a teacher could possibly accomplish what my luck has brought me? I have lived a longer and more pro-
ducitive life than most others I have known and I wish you all the same fate. Just remember that I was able to pursue two basic interests in my life, Spanish Language and Literature and my first love, Music and, at the same time pass on those interests for generations to come. I have not died since my spirit ripples on into eternity. With love to all, Vern

If you wish to honor his memory, our family requests that donations be made either to Sons of Orpheus (http://www.sonsoforpheus.org) or to AHCT (www.comedias.org).
Francisco Ruiz Ramón is without a doubt the most well-known critic of Spanish Golden Age and Contemporary Spanish Theater in the second half of the twentieth century. He was born in Xàtiva (Sp. Játifa), a small town in the Province of Valencia, Spain, in 1930, and died at 1:00 AM, on 17 January 2015, at the age of 84, in Tampa, Florida, USA. He obtained his licenciatura in Valencia in 1953, and in 1962, his doctorate from the Complutense University of Madrid. He held sundry posts at the University of Oslo (1957-1963), the University of Puerto Rico (1963-1968), Purdue University (1968-1983), the University of Chicago (1983-1987), and Vanderbilt University (1987-1992), wherein he became Centennial Professor of Spanish. He was also a Visiting Scholar in several universities in Spain, Germany, Italy, Belgium, France, and Canada. He is survived by his wife Genoveva and children Pablo, Astrid, and Frederic.
By far his most popular books were his two manuals on Spanish Theater: *Historia del teatro español (desde sus orígenes hasta 1900)* [1967] and *Historia del teatro español: siglo XX* (1971), which were reprinted more than 10 times. He also edited many Golden Age plays by Lope de Vega (*Fuenteovejuna* and *El duque de Viseo*) and, especially, Pedro Calderón de la Barca. Indeed, many of the Calderón editions read by students and scholars throughout the twentieth century were edited by Ruiz Ramón. His *Tragedias*, published in three volumes by Alianza (1967, 1968, 1969), consisted of 10 canonical texts, among them *La vida es sueño*, *La hija del aire*, *El mayor monstruo del mundo*, *A secreto agravio, secreta venganza*, *El médico de su honra*, *El pintor de su deshonra*, *La devoción de la cruz*, *El mágico prodigioso*, *Los cabellos de Absalón*, and *La cisma de Inglaterra*. He also edited single editions of some of the above plays in Cátedra, Salvat, and Castalia. Ruiz Ramón also published editions of lesser known plays dealing with the Spanish Encounter in America, among them Lope de Vega’s *Arauco domado* and *El Nuevo Mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón*, Ricardo de Turia’s *La bellígera española*, Fernando de Zárate’s *La conquista de México*, and Miguel de Carvajal y Luis Hurtado de Toledo’s *Las cortes de la muerte* (cf. *América en el teatro clásico español* [Pamplona, EUNASA, 1993]). Ruiz Ramón also edited, for Cátedra, two modern plays by José Martín Recuerda: *Las salvajes en Puente San Gil* and *Las ar-
recogías del Beaterio de Santa María Egipcíaca. Other Ruiz Ramón books examined Benito Pérez Galdós (Tres personajes galdosianos [Revista de Occidente]), Calderón, and Baroque and contemporary theater: Estudios del teatro español clásico y contemporáneo (Cátedra), Calderón y la tragedia (Alhambra), Celebración y catarsis (U de Murcia), Paradigmas del teatro clásico español (Cátedra), and Calderón nuestro contemporáneo (Castalia).

His articles dealt mainly with Calderón, particularly La vida es sueño. Moreover, he perused Celestina, Tirso de Molina, and modern authors like Pedro Salinas, Antonio Machado, Julián Marías, Miguel de Unamuno, Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Federico García Lorca, and lesser known playwrights Domingo Miras and López Mozo. He also authored four plays: Nupcias (1965), El inquisidor (1989), Juego de espejos (1991), and Retablo de Indias (1992).

Ruiz Ramón was an active presenter in several professional venues, among them the Association for Hispanic Classical Theater, the Asociación Internacional de Teatro Español y Novohispano de los Siglos de Oro, the Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, the Asociación Internacional Siglo de Oro, and the Coloquio Anglogermano sobre Calderón.

Francisco Ruiz Ramón was a total professional and a most eloquent speaker. He was elegant, serious, at times challenging, and always kind. He will be sadly missed, and remembered, by the entire
community of scholars in Golden Age and Modern Theater Studies.
IN MEMORIAM: SHIRLEY WHITAKER

BARBARA MUJICA
Georgetown University

Shirley Blue Whitaker, who passed away on December 27, 2014, at the age of 86, was a quintessential scholar. She was a meticulous researcher whose use of primary sources enriched our knowledge not only of Spanish theater, but also of European history. A stalwart *comediante*, she attended AHCT conferences well after her retirement and published in *Comedia Performance* as late as 2011. She was a devoted mentor and valued colleague.

Shirley’s book on Álvaro Cubillo de Aragón shed light on a little known playwright of the Golden Age. She wrote scores of articles on the luminaries of the Spanish theater. Her recent research focused on Court Theater. Not given to fads or jargon, she delved into the archives and based her assertions on solid evidence.

Shirley was born in Lumberton, NC on September 19, 1928. She received her Bachelor’s degree and her Masters’ degree from Duke University.
and her PhD in Romance Languages from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. She was an associate professor of Spanish at Mary Baldwin College and at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro until she retired.

Shirley was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the Modern Language Association, the Renaissance Society of America, and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese.

We will miss her.
Lope’s *La dama bobo* provides a vivid opportunity to explore the importance and meanings of dance artistically and culturally in seventeenth-century Spanish theatre and as part of the educational process of young women of the period. In addition, because of the staying power of the script, *La dama bobo* also offers a vehicle to engage dance and dance music as creative and re-creative elements in modern production, which generates discussion of reconstruction, authenticity, historically informed performance, and re-invention, to mention a few of the terms that are part of the discourse in performing arts fields.

Dance is critical to *La dama bobo* as a means to share the instructional process that Finea finds so difficult, especially to acquire the accomplishments for which instruction is provided by the
dancing master, and as the culminating proof of the power of love to instill in Finea, all the graces represented by dance.

Dance is therefore also critical to a successful production of *La dama boba*. Contemporary audiences would have had an understanding, if not experience, of Finea’s dance training experience, and likewise, would have easily recognized the dance types and understood the particular messages those dances conveyed about character and perception. However, the very interwoven nature of dance and the related question of dance music in the play increases the challenge of presenting plays like *La dama boba* to modern audiences, since not all the “understoods” are still understood, raising issues of authentic performance that have been debated over recent decades in the dance, theatre, and music communities. There is extensive scholarship on “authentic” (also “historically informed” and “historically aware”\(^1\)) early music performance with passionate adherents to the full range of positions. In western theatre, the largest discussion of authenticity or legitimacy has been on production of Shakespeare and Shakespearean period plays with widely ranging opinions.\(^2\) The scholarly discourse in dance looks back to the twentieth-century early music movement, but is a current important topic in the field. World-renowned Baroque dance scholar Catherine Turocy thinks in terms of “historically attuned performance” and “how body-mind con-
structs in use in the historical period might inform today’s performance” (157, 172). Choreographer and theoretician Mark Franko believes that “[t]he move from reconstruction to reinvention is also a move toward the creation of choreography that actively rethinks historical sources” (“Repeatability” 60). So what is the role of historical dance sources in presenting Golden Age plays today? Will reconstructed steps and patterns set to period music speak to today’s audiences as they did to seventeenth-century viewers? If not, is there a core meaning that can be identified to honor and convey the original meaning and reach the original impact in a new production?

To consider these issues through the lens of La dama boba, I will examine the period dancing context so we can better understand Finea’s experience. Using Juan de Esquivel Navarro’s Discursos sobre el arte del danzado and other early resources, I will consider seventeenth-century aspects—Lope’s approach to dance, the work of the dancing master and his relationship to the female student, and the final dance, “Viene de Panamá.” In addition, I will also consider recent examination of “re” in dance through the work of major dance thinkers.

This brings us to the very extensive discourse on dance and the many words that are used in the context of authenticity in dance performance, including reconstruction, recreation, reinvention, restaging, re-interpretation.³ Dance reconstruction
in the West grew as the early music movement grew, and in fact the majority of the earliest work was done by musicologists whose research interests include early dance music—scholars such as Ingrid Brainard on fifteenth-century dance and Julia Sutton on sixteenth-century dance. As early music interests moved into later centuries, so did early dance interests, bringing in dance scholar/performers who worked with Baroque and nineteenth-century resources. More recently, as Mark Franko has noted, there has been significant work done on dance that, for some, is still within memory: “Some of the most incisive thinking on dance and considerations of reconstruction, recreation, reinvention have involved work with twentieth-century dance” (“Approaches” 3). That thinking contributes to the depth of our understanding of the issues regarding, in order to pick one word, reconstruction.

According to early Italian dance scholar Barbara Sparti, who gives the example of seventeenth-century operas that were revised to take into consideration the particular audience before which they were being performed, there has long been fluidity in what constitutes the performing art work. For instance, an Italian opera performed in France would have French dances inserted (7). She does not, however, believe “that since there is no normative text, we are free to ‘recreate’ dances as we wish, but that the concept of ‘authenticity’ is a relative one” (7).
As both scholar and performer, Franko has made major contributions to mature discourse on dance reconstruction through what he describes as “a productive argument with reconstruction over its pretenses to authenticity,” with interests in a flowing relationship between theory and practice. His explorations led to a perception of an interesting, perhaps ironic, congruence between theatrical theory, which has a central focus of repeatability—“the desire to endow performance with a textual status”—and reconstruction, which “also derives its underlying rationale from a similar need to render performance unchanging or in some way stable and permanent.” His approach to working with historical material is through the language of deconstruction which is supported “through an analysis of all available primary sources (libretti, theory, pictorial representations, etc.) before it can be implemented in choreography” (“Repeatability” 60).

The place of the audience in dance reconstruction has been a frequent area of attention for dance scholars, with the recognition that a rigid adherence to historic sources as understood by the modern interpreter/choreographer might not be comprehensible or make visual or cultural sense, or be enjoyable for modern audiences. As Sparti noted, this concern is not new—we are just considering it in light of much later performances of early works. Franko described certain reconstruction as “condescending,” “patronizing, tongue-in-cheek,” as a pre-
emptive reaction by reconstructors to what they perceived as the inaccessibility of the material they were presenting to audiences. However, he has seen a progression from “[t]hose staid and antiquated presentations” to “a degree of literal accuracy with the requisite theatrical immediacy,” to “reconstructions [that] began to convey something closer to the theatrical force of the original choreography: a force, moreover, that potentially influences new work rather than merely animating an historical artifact” (“Repeatability” 57). Lesley-Anne Sayers believes that building or finding cultural or other relationships for audiences “yields ways of creating resonance for today’s audiences. For me, validity can be present in a number of ways, but relates most closely to the quality of the dialogue that has taken place among recreators, performers, and spectators in a widening circle of knowledge” (42).

Beatriz Martínez del Fresno considers dance through a material culture lens, and believes that dance, when explored through the historical objects documenting it, cannot be observed directly, that it is actually “patrimonio intangible” (7). Viewed in this way, the necessary connection between object, whether tangible or intangible, and the original culture makes clear that true reconstruction is very complex—three-dimensional when most of the evidence is two-dimensional (9).

Instead of reconstrucción, Martínez del Fresno proposes re-construcción:
Pensaremos entonces que se trata de dar sentido a piezas procedentes de un período y un contexto cultural determinado, pero siempre con la consciencia de estar aproximándonos a un repertorio “muerto” que inevitablemente reviviremos desde nuestra visión de aquella época presentándolo como un discurso completo y con unos objetivos precisos de rendimiento científico, artístico, cultural, comunicativo, comercial o recreativo. Desde este punto de vista no es posible transportar objetiva y literalmente el original a nuestros tiempos (lo que hace unos años pretendían un tanto ingenuamente los defensores más puristas de la autenticidad) porque en el proceso inevitablemente se produce una re-interpretación. (11)

As mentioned earlier, some of the most exciting current work in understanding dance reconstruction is taking place with dance material from the twentieth century. In her reflection on her work on ballets of the 1920s, Sayers suggests definitions for reconstruction and recreation: “If reconstruction is defined as seeking to repeat the parameters of an original performance, by recreation is meant practices that establish a freer relationship to an original work and an enhanced dialogue with the past” (30).

For Kate Elswit, working with dancer Rami Nair, who inherited from Lilavati Häger the dance
work *Dixit Dominus*, a collaboration between choreographer Kurt Jooss and Häger, “the newer set of ‘re’-performances has tended to focus on what can be made in the present using the past. They posit understandings of history that are produced . . . . between actively acquiring sources and passively allowing oneself to be affected by that which must remain unavailable within them” (“Inheriting” 6). Elsewhere she has reflected on the complexity of “re” performances as the “intersection of multiple contested legacies,” placing those contested legacies in an international context and “flattening distinct temporalities we have inherited.” In this way of approaching historical dance “in re-[re-construction, re-enactment, re-invention], it is not about dance as movement in itself, but about the movement in the dance” (“Reconstructing”).

With this background of “re” in mind, I will now turn to a consideration of how Lope’s *La dama boba* provides a vivid opportunity to explore a number of resources to think about not only dance, but dance in the context of the educational process of young women in the seventeenth century, in particular for accomplishments in which instruction was provided by the dancing master. While the process in *La dama boba* is not usual in terms of timing, which generally takes some years of childhood, and the principal student, Finea, goes through her entire training in a compressed time frame, exhibiting child-like and childish behaviors to an extreme,
she ultimately acquires the desired graces of young womanhood. Her accomplishments, coinciding with the successful resolution of her earlier inabilities, are featured in act 3 in the dance that she performs to perfection with Nise, a performance that, as Donald Larson has noted, is “meant to symbolize the balance and accord of the end of the play” (60). And yet, this final dance, “Viene de Panamá,” does not stand alone in *La dama boba*. In order for this dance to occupy its prominent place, Lope uses the study of dance to establish dance early in the play as important. Using Juan de Esquivel Navarro’s *Discursos sobre el arte del danzado* and other early resources, it is possible to enrich our understanding of the social and cultural context of Lope’s approach to dance, the work of the dancing master and his relationship to the female student, and the dance, “Viene de Panamá.”

Juan de Esquivel Navarro, a student of Antonio de Almenda, dancing master to King Philip IV, published *Discursos sobre el arte del danzado* in Seville in 1642. This treatise on seventeenth-century Spanish dance is a major resource that provides information about dance types, dance steps, the dancing school, and the role of the dancing master. We can learn a lot from Esquivel because he addresses both potential dance students and potential dancing masters. At the crux between Renaissance and Baroque, Esquivel is perfect for the exploration of *La dama boba*. He provides the context
for Otavio wanting his daughters, especially Finea, to learn dance:

Dancing teaches one how to comport oneself well, with a serene face, graceful movements, strength in the legs, and agility . . . . [T]his pastime [dancing] deserves a superior position among the others [pastimes] because the others benefit from finding the body prepared to perform them with greater skill. So it is fitting that the greatest Monarchs and private citizens, who have the means to do it, practice it, as much for pleasure and entertainment, as for majesty and refinement, qualities which naturally proceed from the Dance, testifying to its nobility by their very manifestations. (Brooks 268)

Later, and particularly important in examining La dama boba, Esquivel gives us insight into the proper relationship between a dancing master and a female pupil:

Good manners embrace all, because this way, the Masters meet their obligations and promises, being punctual, and the female students can be trusted to them. This cannot be done with Masters of low repute, because the students run the risk of an im-
pudence by one of these Masters, an offense worthy of serious punishment. Aside from the Master being in the situation of a father, such treachery does not merit the trust that one invested in him. [...] 

I also say that as far as earning a living goes, even if he is not outstanding in all things, but has good knowledge of what is practiced in the Schools, a Master has all that he needs, as long as he also knows how to teach women, which is very important and difficult, since although they dance with the same measure, rhythm, and comportment, the variations are very different. He must be careful always to cover up with the instrument the defects and errors of the dancers . . . . (Brooks 295-97)

So even if the dancing master is not accomplished in all areas of the field, Esquivel feels that he can succeed “as long as he also knows how to teach women,” identifying that activity as “very important and difficult.”

There are not a lot of contemporary resources that open a window on the work of the dancing master, and particularly on the dancing master’s work with female students. While somewhat later, another major source that is helpful in this regard is Gottfried Taubert’s 1717 Rechtschaffener Tantzmeister. Taubert lays out a
clear pedagogical methodology for the dancing master to use with all his students. He identifies the essential qualities of the dancing master as “a good gift for teaching, which, in addition to good theory and method, also requires civility, modesty, and patience” (808). He more than once emphasizes the importance of politeness as a necessary quality of the dancing master (798). Taubert goes on to discuss the necessity of the dancing master being able to work with a variety of students, noting that:

students differ a lot: some have never been exposed to the subject and are very weak and timid; some have already learned something from bunglers and hacks, and are completely confused and unorganized; some are sleepy, lazy, and dull by nature; some are so flighty, restless, and impatient, that they make every step superficially, never allowing enough time, but rushing from one to the other, sometimes skipping a note or some other part of the cadence . . . . (808)

While Finea does not appear to be weak and timid, or to have learned badly from previous teachers, it is rather easy for us to see in her some of the other characteristics that Taubert identifies in students—dullness, flightiness, impatience. Nevertheless, it is the obligation of the dancing master to reach out even to these students with a “wise and
well considered method [that] makes the flighty steadfast, the arrogant docile, and the inattentive diligent and patient” (808-09).

Taubert also says that no matter what the age, sex, origin, or physical attributes of the student, the dancing master must instruct the students in a civil and rational manner, that is, he must: not only teach him diligently about propriety in dress, and also, with regard to propriety in manner, to treat everyone [he meets] at social gatherings with courtesy and gracious gestures appropriate to his or her rank, age, character, and worth, and indeed to behave with respectful courtesy in all social interactions; but also demonstrate for him all motions and gestures with due modesty and patience, couch his words in a relaxed and gentle speaking manner, and not make any vulgar faux pas . . . (810)

It is important to note here that the work of the dancing master encompasses much more than dancing—it includes dress, manner, gesture, speaking, and appropriate public behavior. In fact, in discussing women and their conversation, Taubert again makes us think of Finea:

A man’s true pleasure in dancing is diminished, furthermore, by a woman’s poor elo-
cution, namely when she, like many others, has been brought up to be so unsociable, simple, and awkward that she cannot produce one single suitable word in company, but instead when asked to show what she knows about any subject, answers with a yes or no and otherwise hems and haws. (259)

Indeed, Taubert even has words that speak to Otavio’s responsibilities as a father in providing Finea with a proper upbringing: “one should take special care in child-rearing that his children, sons as well as daughters, be exposed to eloquence from an early age, so that in social intercourse they can participate in amicable conversation” (260). While Otavio seems to have come to this obligation rather late for Finea, he does get there, which provides a critical context for *La dama boba*.

This brings us to the dancing master in *La dama boba*—a master who would never have passed the exams for either Esquivel or Taubert in his treatment of Finea. Yes, Finea is “sleepy, lazy, or dull” in a social sense—the dancing lesson scene opens with the dancing master asking if she is tired so soon (*Dama* 2.1365). She is “flighty,” bouncing from her annoyance with dancing and the dancing master to wanting him to bring a tambourine the next day, which leads her to thinking about bells. She is impatient with his refusal to exit dancing. And she certainly makes steps superficially, not al-
lowing enough time, “rushing from one to the other, sometimes skipping a note or some other part of the cadence”—which we know because the dancing master tells her that she cannot keep time. Our dancing master, however, does not exhibit the good manners that both Esquivel and Taubert identify as critical to a good dancing master. Instead of modeling the civil behavior that he should be teaching Finea, the dancing master, although he has a moment where he intends to humor her, quickly becomes contentious, refuses to do her bidding, calls her names (calling Finea a mentecata should qualify as one of Taubert’s faux pas), and finally lies to her. In addition, because he fails in what Esquivel identifies as a substitute father role, Otavio’s own abilities as a father having selected and approved this dancing master, are called into question.

So the hired dancing master fails in the position. In fact, what happens is that Laurencio becomes the real dancing master who fulfills the fuller scope of the role of dancing master as defined by Esquivel and Taubert. Through love inspired by Laurencio, Finea learns dance and the other graces typically taught by the dancing master. In her monologue at the beginning of act 3, Finea credits love with her transformation because of Laurencio (3.2059-62). Immediately after, in conversation with Clara, Finea tells her that “Laurencio ha sido el maestro” (3.2085). Clara puts it most clearly when she says earlier to Finea about Laurencio, “Es maes-
tro con quien más / para aprender te conformas” (2.1568-69). Laurencio with dance also brings to mind Aldemaro in Lope’s *El maestro de danzar* as a mirror image: Laurencio uses the language of love to teach dance (although that was not his primary goal), and Aldemaro uses the language of dance to teach love.

One of the challenges in working with the dances in Golden Age plays is that the dance forms are frequently not identified, and Lope in particular often does not identify them. In the case of *La dama boba*, the dance in act 3 performed by Finea and Nise is a pivotal point in the arc of the play—it is critical to keep the dance/song in, and particularly critical for modern audiences for its performance to be a compelling and integrated part of the play so that it serves its original function. María Teresa Caicho calls attention to the fact that the largest and most complex dances in Lope tend to come in the third act (217). For Finea in particular, the act 3 dance/song is necessary to reveal her transformation to the audience as well as those in the world of the play, and to provide the resolution, according to Donald Larson, of the earlier chaos, confusion, and improper role-playing (59).

As Maurice Esses notes, “in practice there is no clear division between dance and song in Spain during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries” (554). Lope does not give any overt indications of the dance type to which this song/dance
is to be performed, and the text of the song does not particularly help. Neither the stage direction found in Schevill’s edition, based on the autograph manuscript, nor a variant found in the first edition of 1617, cited in Schevill, is very revealing. They are, respectively: “los Músicos canten, y las dos baylen ansi” (following 3.2220) and “Cantan los musicos, y baylan Nise, y Finea lo que quisieren” (Schevill 137).

The chacona has been proposed as the dance type for this dance. Donají Cuéllar supports the identification of the chacona for La dama boba’s act 3 dance based on two forms of chacona, one its early erotic form as described by Curt Sachs, and the other the later French chaconne, characterized by Louis Horst as a couple performing different figures during eight-measure phrases, which are repeated thematic phrases in $\frac{3}{4}$ time as being nearest to the text of the song (85-86). At the time of La dama boba (1613), the chacona was known, along with the zarabanda and some other dances, as lascivious. While banning these dances from performance as the Consejo de Castilla apparently attempted to do (Castro Escudero 185: 28-33) might not have been successful, it seems unlikely that a dance of such a character would have been Otavio’s—a father’s—choice to show off the marriage-worthy charms of two daughters, and in particular the successful training of Finea. In El amante agradecido (1618), Lope does use a chacona as
identified in the text of the dance/song, performed in act 2 by an unidentified group [a *cuadrilla*], not by the principal female, but the circumstances are quite different. While Lucinda is a lady of pure standing, that fact is not clear to everyone in the play at the time of the *chacona* because her uncle has stashed her in a house of loose morals—“*¡vida bona, vida bona, / esta vieja es la Chacona!*” (*Amante* 127). In *El maestro de danzar* (1594), Aldemaro as the dancing master names a number of dances to Florela and company. All these dances would have been appropriate for the celebratory events in preparation and to teach well-bred young ladies. The *chacona* and its scandalous relatives are not included in Aldemaro’s list of dances (*Maestro* 134-35). Somewhat later in *La Dorotea* (1632), Lope discusses “*las danzas antiguas, con estas acciones gesticulares y movimientos lascivos de las chaconas*” (qtd. in Castro Escudero 182: 33), so it is clear that he was aware of the character of the *chacona* and the way in which the public would perceive it.

The origin of the opinion that “Viene de Panamá” is a *chacona* may be found in Francisco de Quevedo’s jab at Lope in *El discurso de todos los diablos o infierno enmendado*—in which he names “Vengo [sic] de Panamá” (83)—for using songs to deliver prohibited dances to the public (86). Cacho speculates that this attack may have been one of Lope’s motives for removing act 3 dances. The
dances named by Quevedo include zarabanda, chacona, and others. Cacho herself feels that the text of the dance/song in La dama boba, when viewed in the context of the third-act dance in Lope’s Servir a señor discreto, could similarly be an American indian or Guinean dance (215), although this latter dance would seem to be as inappropriate as the chacona, with violent movements and gestures of little decency as described by Covarrubias (Castro Escudero 188-89: 28).

The internal rhythmic evidence of the song lends itself equally well to a gallarda or other triple time dance. In addition, textually there is some evidence that the dance could be a gallarda. Both immediately before and after the dance/song, characters use words that are a dance term or that evoke dance. As Nise and Finea begin their dance, Liseo says in an aside: “¡Todo es mudanzas amor!” (3.2220). William Oliver translates this line as “Love is all inconstancy” which certainly makes a lot of sense for the change of affection that Liseo is in the process of enacting. But in Spanish, the word mudanza also has a dance meaning—the step combinations that make up variations. While mudanza is a word that is used for dance variations for all dance types, not just the gallarda, the gallarda was known for its many variations, performed as couples, alternating solos, or groups. So Liseo’s aside is a lovely double entendre that introduces the dance that re-
veals what Love has wrought, even while his love is undergoing variation—again.

After the dance/song, Miseno utters the first word: ¡Gallardamente, por cierto! (3.2319). Certainly an enthusiastic response to an unexpectedly lovely performance by Finea. But with gallardamente as the very first word, it seems quite possible that Miseno refers not only to how the dance was performed, but what kind of dance it was—a gallarda. With these two lines by Liseo and Miseno, Lope has bracketed the “Viene de Panamá” with language that works on multiple levels, one of which is that of dance. However, a factor that might work against a gallarda, and in favor of another form is the length of the song, which would be quite demanding if danced throughout by both dancers. But it would depend greatly on the choreography, and the possibility of the two ladies both alternating solos and dancing in combination as well as using a variety of step choices from the wide step vocabulary available for use in the gallarda.

Cuéllar does develop an interesting correlation between the text of the dance song and the characters, with the text showing the true nature of the inhabitants of the play, and the dance revealing the faces they show in public—their seeming. In the text of the song, Cuéllar identifies Laurencio’s pecuniary interest, the pact that he and Liseo undertake for the conquest of the sisters, his skill in courting Finea, his success with both sisters, and the ri-
valry of the sisters, while in the performance of the dance, Cuéllar sees Nise and Finea as “cultured and refined ladies, incapable of arguing about the love of a man,” which the audience knows is not true. But Cuéllar goes on to say that “the dance suspends all tension, creating an order that is very far from reality. In that moment, the dramatic text and the spectacular text are tied up in a masterful way, carrying the dimension of being to the song, and that of seeming to the dance” (83).

In the play we never see the reality of the work of the dancing master like Esquivel or Taubert interacting appropriately with a female student or teaching in the dancing school which would help a modern audience understand what was correct, but I believe that contemporary audiences would have had an understanding, if not experience, of how very wrong the dancing master’s behavior in La dama bobo was. Likewise, the dance types were easily recognized then and conveyed particular messages to audiences about character and perception, although they would not hold those same meanings for today’s viewers. So these are some of the challenges in presenting plays like La dama bobo to modern audiences. But I think it is particularly important for us to take a step back and examine the dancing context so we can better understand Finea’s experience.

Ultimately, how does historical research or work with historical dance materials help us in pro-
duction, and how do we use those resources to enrich a modern audience experience? Do we attempt to present an accurate seventeenth-century dancing lesson to a twenty-first century audience, or do we convey through performance in a way our audience will understand that the dancing master is acting irresponsibly to his young charge? If we do not explore the historical sources on the role of, and rules for, the dancing master, how will we know the challenges that Finea faces in becoming a proper lady when the supposed professional to whom that task is entrusted fails in his responsibilities? We are willing to accept, through a now mature discourse in dance, theatre, and music, that we cannot recreate the precise performance experience of a historical audience; but with the best will in the world, in some cases we cannot even identify the elements. So rather than speculating on a dance form for “Viene de Panamá,” would not the most important aspect of the dance be what it conveyed and conveys to the on- and off-stage audiences about Finea's growth, her surprising accomplishments, her unanticipated graces? Sayers challenges us to explore the richness of our resources in order to revitalize work:

[W]e have to dare—dare to get beneath the surface form of a work and really engage with its raison d'être, including its politics and sociocultural context. In other words,
we must get at the life sources of its original innovations and its many possible versions. We have to dare to question, dare to take apart and explore the identity of the work, and dare to allow it to live through new interpretations and realizations. (42-43)

Joining her in the engaged use of dance historical materials, Franko suggests that “reinvention can practice cultural critique as a form of active theorizing on dance history . . . . It consists in inscribing the plurality of visions restoring, conceptualizing, and/or inventing the act (“Repeatability” 74). So let us use historical resources and the plays themselves, as Stuart Hodes suggests, to identify the conceptual frameworks of dance in the Comedia so that we know what the critical meaning is, while acknowledging that the “movement is evanescent” (100).

NOTES

1 Termed “ersatz shibboleths” by Richard Taruskin because “they still imply invidious comparison with what is unaware, inaccurate, and un- or misinformed” (139-40).

2 Jonas Barish quickly discards one possible definition: “If by ‘authentic’ we mean ‘historically accurate’: correctly reproducing the conditions of
original performance, then we are of course talking about plays from the past, for which such acts of recovery present problems” (817). He then defines what he perceives as the more usual meaning of authenticity: “an attempt to re-create what the play might have looked like to its first audiences.” Yet even in this case, he admits that we cannot succeed, for lack of knowledge of the goals of early stage techniques, how they were “achieved, … [and how] to duplicate them, since the living tradition that might have enable us to do so has long ago lapsed” (818). Thomas Clayton finds “strict ‘fidelity to the script and playwright,’” as the critical quality of a legitimate production an impossibility (516), and identifies box office and ideology as two motivators that create legitimacy in modern theatre (535-536). Richard Schechner denies the possibility of precisely duplicating an original performance because of “contextual and historical circumstances.” In fact, for Schechner, not only can performances not be duplicated, they also cannot be preserved (51).

Roger Copeland adds “reworking,” “re-mounting,” “rechoregraphing,” and “reconstituting” to the list in his introduction to Dance Reconstructed (11).

All quotations of La dama boba are taken from Schevill.

“It is not until the 18th century that diferencia assumes a specialized meaning in the
field of dancing. Both Ferriol y Boxeraus (1745) and Minguet y Yrol (1758-1764) use *diferencia* to refer to the choreographic figures performed by groups of dancers, especially in the *contradanza*. By contrast, the term normally employed for any unified sequence of dance-steps is *mudanza*. It first appears with this meaning in a Spanish choreographic source in the late 16th century [*Reglas de danzar*, E MN Barbieri Mss 14059/2]. In subsequent dance treatises, until the advent of the 19th century, *mudanza* continues to designate “a combination of steps which, shifting from one to another, form a whole” (Esses 6).

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Critics have amply studied the ambiguities in Lope de Vega’s *El castigo sin venganza*, but until recently, few have examined their ramifications for performance and audience reception. The profoundly psychological nature of this court drama and its highly stylized language offer challenges for both performers and audiences. Various plausible interpretations of key scenes\(^1\) are possible, prompting questions about how viewers might understand the action.

The dramatic arc of *El castigo sin venganza* is formed by three moments of great tension: the initial meeting between Federico and Casandra in the first act, the crisis at the end of the second in which they recognize their love for one another, and their murder by the Duke of Ferrara at the end of the third. Although the first and last are more visu-
ally spectacular, the second, with its myriad metaphors, classical allusions, and theological subtleties, has more potential to either engage viewers or lose them entirely. It is doubtful that even a sophisticated seventeenth-century audience would have understood at first hearing the nuances of Lope’s highly baroque language, and for modern audiences, the linguistic intricacies could well render the dialogue incomprehensible.

Of course, good actors convey meaning not just through words but through acting. The British actress Maria Aikens asserts that today’s audiences probably do not understand a significant amount of Shakespeare’s language, yet still reel with laughter when watching his comedies. In comedy, timing and the illusion of spontaneity are as important as words (59). These qualities are equally important in tragedy, especially for a play like El castigo sin venganza, in which linguistic cues can be equivocal. Taking Aristotle and the early Spanish preceptistas as her point of departure, Evangelina Rodríguez Cuadros argues that tragedy requires the spectator to identify with the character psychologically. The character mirrors the spectator, revealing to him an image of himself. Roberto González Echeverría points out the centrality of mirrors in Castigo; characters are caught in the reflection of the mirror, just as “the audience… is caught in the play’s game” (283).
The most moving tragedies are not those that offer an accumulation of horrifying spectacles, argues Rodríguez Cuadros, but those that ignite in the spectator eleos and fobos, compassion and fear, but not only as emotions felt for the character on the stage, but for oneself. That is, the spectator must feel that what the character is going through, he (the spectator) could be going through, and what the character is forced to do, he could be forced to do: “Lo trágico no es, pues, la experiencia del mal ajeno que únicamente promueve lastimoso melodramatismo… sino la experiencia admirativa y espantosa de que todo ello me puede pasar a mí” (189). Even though sexual honor is not a prodigious motivating force in our society, everyone has at some time felt betrayed or trapped in a situation requiring action one is loath to take. Furthermore, identification does not imply approval. Robert M. Gordon explains that a spectator can feel a character’s emotions but not condone his actions, just as one can feel “out of sympathy” with oneself (472). It is just this sense of identification and disapproval that can bring about emotional growth. It is therefore incumbent on the actor to make his character credible and magnetic.

So how do director and actor build a convincing character? Performance theorists have devoted much thought and ink to how meaning is communicated onstage. Isaac Benabu stresses the importance of the physical appearance of the actors (207). Whether or not we like a character will be
determined in part by the actor’s look. Kier Elam has written extensively on proxemics—spatial conventions and relationships—and paralinguistic features such as pitch, tempo, loudness, intonation, and non-verbal sounds (78-87). Ray L. Birdwhistell’s notion of kinesics stresses the importance of body movement (eye contact, facial expression, hand gesture, etc.) to convey meaning. Gestures cannot be analyzed as discrete units of meaning, but must be seen as parts of a kinesic pattern or continuum, argues Birdwhistell. Units of meaning—kinemes, kinemorphs—combine to convey ideas much in the same way language does (101-19). Performance practitioners have studied kinesics in order to use movement to enhance the spoken text or introduce elements such as irony or humor. While Birdwhistell holds that gesture is closely related to culture, Paul Ekman believes that many facial expressions are universal. Research such as Birdwhistell’s and Ekman’s has stressed the importance of paralinguistic communication and has led some theater professionals to focus heavily on movement and gesture to convey meaning. Synetic Theater in Washington, D.C., has taken this tendency to an extreme, producing wordless versions of Shakespeare’s classics that convey meaning entirely through movement and non-linguistic sound.

Awareness of the relationship between movement and meaning dates back to the ancient Greeks, of course. In early modern Spain, stage
movement was highly codified. In his *Philosophía antigua poética* (1596), Alonso López-Pinciano describes positions of the hands, feet, body, lips, and eyes that serve to communicate diverse psychological states. Actors were expected to master the gestural language of the stage, which, although based on intuitive physical responses to particular situations, was codified by social usage and distilled for the theater. Just as painters learned to sketch individual body parts in myriad positions and recombine them into new images, actors mastered fixed movements, which became a gestural language that served to bring characters to life. One of Lope’s last plays, *El castigo sin venganza* was performed only once during his lifetime.² Although we cannot know what kinds of stage and gestural movement might have clarified Lope’s intentions, we can scrutinize the text for suggestions about how modern directors might address some of the challenges the play poses.

*El castigo sin venganza* is a play rich in interpretive possibilities because nearly every character and situation is subject to multiple and contradictory readings. Roberto González Echeverría wrote that it “has provoked polemics as no other work by Lope and that, in spite of the amount of criticism it has received, always makes us feel that we are at ground zero in our effort to understand it” (272). Currie K. Thompson shows that all three main characters have been depicted as both a victim
and agent of tragedy by different scholars, and the action has also been interpreted from diverse perspectives: moral, historical, relational. Indeed, the very notion of “punishment without vengeance” has been debated endlessly. Thompson sees the incongruity of the work as a manifestation of “unstable irony,” an irony deriving from unresolved paradoxes that are essential to the play’s tragic core. “All three of the main characters are divided beings,” he writes, “and all three suffer from their divided condition, thereby meeting the central requirements which Aristotle set for tragic heroes…. To seek to reduce the characters to being either essential good or evil is… to ignore the peculiar status of El castigo sin venganza as tragedy” (233). Edward Friedman notes that “Lope develops a poetic discourse laden with irony. He is by no means subtle in the linking of language to circumstance. Characters are feeling one thing and saying another…” (219). Melveena McKendrick sees the ambiguity of the play as its “very substance”; it derives from the language of the work itself, which “mirrors the play’s presentation of the truth as something shifting, partial and contrived” (82). For González Echeverría, the play exposes a breakdown in language caused by contradictions that language cannot resolve (275). How can a director deal with a dramatic text whose meaning defies delineation?

Using Jonathan Bate’s notion of “aspectuality,” Susan L. Fischer sheds light on this question.
“Aspectuality,” a notion pertinent to fields as diverse as physics and literary criticism, asserts that “truth is not singular” but can embrace multiple and contradictory aspects, only one of which can be grasped at a given moment (Bate 327). What distinguishes Shakespeare, Lope, and other outstanding playwrights is “performativity”: “Instead of being predetermined, identity is performed through action. At the same time, a vacuum is created in the space which belongs to the motive; spectators and readers rush in to fill that vacuum, thus performing their own versions of the play” (Bate 332). Shakespeare’s plays have endured precisely because they permit multiple interpretations reflecting different historical and ideological perspectives, explains Bate. Fischer explains that this does not mean that all interpretations are valid, however, as words do have semantic limits. Furthermore, it is possible for audiences to grasp the paradoxical nature of characters or action, accepting a kind of “half-knowledge” that leaves room for doubt (Fischer 138). For Fischer, Castigo shares with Shakespeare’s plays the steady intensification of ambiguity that makes the play forever tantalizing and adaptable to myriad perspectives. Given the inherent fluidity of the text, it would be futile to try to fix the meaning (as many critics have tried to do) or even to reconcile conflicting perceptions.

Let us see how this notion influences performance and reception. As the play opens, the
Duke of Ferrara, disguised to prevent his subjects from discovering his debauchery, steals through the streets and calls at a brothel. It is significant that the action occurs at night. Darkness can be the shield of trysts and fun; Erich Segal writes that “night is instinctively sensual” and often the backdrop for lovers’ encounters (3). Darkness underscores the Duke’s immorality, argues John Varey (228). But darkness can also convey psychological oppression or restrictiveness. Unlike many of Lope’s earlier plays that take place in open spaces and villages, *El castigo sin venganza* unfolds primarily in closed, claustrophobic environments. How the director uses the night—to suggest wanton pleasure-seeking or asphyxiating confinement—depends on how s/he wishes to develop the action and the character.

The opening scene is vital because it introduces the audience to the character. The image of the Duke that the director and actor convey will influence the spectators’ understanding of the rest of the action. A director who sees the Duke as fundamentally evil might stress night as simply a cover for his licentiousness. But night could also express a sense of confinement that suggests the Duke’s perception of his diminishing horizons: Until now he has lived a life of joyful libertinage, but now his subjects are demanding a legitimate successor. The Duke had always assumed his illegitimate son Federico, whom he truly loves, would be his heir, but political circumstances have forced him to take
Casandra as his wife. The Duke knows he is behaving badly ("Yo confieso que he vivido / libremente" [1.165-66]), yet feels victimized by his people’s demands. His remarks reveal a stabbing cynicism. He comments on the vagaries of the masses, lamenting that gossip and anonymous accusations can cause sudden plunges in fortune (1.157-64), thereby foreshadowing the play’s tragic end. A director could also use night to suggest blindness. The Duke will be “in the dark” throughout the play. He is blind to the effects his profligacy will have on his marriage, to the budding relationship between Federico and Casandra, and to the dangers his stay in Rome will unleash.

How spectators understand will depend on whether the actor plays his character as simply a libertine and a cynic or as a tortured soul trapped by fate. Lighting and acting techniques such as pauses, pacing, timbre adjustment and gestural language will be determined by what kind of a nighttime atmosphere the director chooses to create. Is the actor swaggering or creeping along in the shadows? Does a murky heaviness create a sense of discomfort for the spectator? Even if “night” is created only through costume—the traditional red cape of characters dressed de noche—the director can use tone, movement, and incidental music to suggest moroseness. “Night,” like the characters and the text, is permeated with ambiguity.
Thompson points out that the early scenes of the play present a contrast between art and nature. A product of sophisticated court culture, the Duke comments on the poets “de la nueva seta” (1.19) and on capricious theater audiences (1.183-85) as he wanders through the streets of Ferrara. In contrast, Federico, “seeks solace in a natural _locus amoenus_” and emerges only when he hears Casandra calling for help. Thompson places Federico in a bucolic environment reminiscent of Garcilaso’s _Egloga primera_ (229). Similarly, Varey stresses the “clara luz del día” of the tableau (231). However, the question is rather more complex. For one thing, there is no clear indication in the text of when this scene takes place in relation to the previous one. We know the sun has risen because the characters can see images. Casandra mentions reflections in the river (“árboles y sombras” [1.382], and Federico describes the “verdes ropas” of the trees (1.246) But is the atmosphere bright and bursting with natural beauty or is the emphasis on the _sombras_—the proverbial dark forest, where danger could lurk anywhere? Thompson notes that forests are fraught with danger and that there are several references to fierce animals in the play (230). Furthermore, the scene begins with a fall, a traditional negative omen. Rather than as beatic, the atmosphere could be depicted as murky and threatening. The director could use lighting and scenery to create two distinct dramatic spaces, one dark and one light, or else
stage both segments in an atmosphere of looming disaster with a darkened set.

The stunning image of Federico carrying Casandra out of the woods to safety after her carriage accident is the first spectacularly dramatic moment of the tragedy. Is Federico’s act of gallantry routine and innocent, or is it charged with eroticism, excitement, and anxiety? Opinions vary radically on the nature of Casandra and Federico. For some critics, Casandra is a positive character, a well-intentioned young woman whose transgressions are due to her husband’s neglect (E.M. Wilson, C. van Dam); for others, she is a bitter adulteress who deserves little compassion (T.E. May). For Benabu, she is a hypocrite: “the vengeance she persuades herself to wreak on the Duke is a cover for her growing passion for Federico” (211). Federico is either a youthful victim of circumstance (T.E. May) or a cunning traitor (Geraldine Nichols). For Thompson, both characters are a complex amalgam of human tendencies, inherently decent yet weak, dutiful yet sinful. Any of these interpretations is viable. The challenge for the director is to define the characters dramatically in a way that is consistent with his or her broad concept of the play.

The scene’s ambiguities offer myriad possibilities for actors. Almost every utterance could be construed as either a simple courtesy or an erotic overture. Federico praises his good fortune, which caused him to deviate from his path. Gestural signs
or stressing words such as *buena fortuna* could fill his comment with intention. Federico then asks for Casandra’s hand, and played with sensitivity, their touch could be explosive. He kneels at her feet, an act that could be construed as a simple social nicety or as sign of courtly subjugation. Casandra holds out her arms to embrace him and he offers his hand instead. Is he struggling to avoid her embrace for fear of offending his father or is he already thinking that he would be a better husband for her than the Duke? She, in turn, insists on an embrace. Do the actors actually hug or does the Count avoid her arms? And if they do hug, does the audience see the gesture as a simple greeting or as the prelude to a deeper physical relationship? When Federico answers, “El alma os dé la respuesta” (1.411), does the audience understand he is offering her his love? Are the words accompanied by gazes and sighs that convey passion, or signs of apprehension that suggest psychological struggle?

The rest of the dialogue is replete with double entendres. Casandra celebrates having “errado / el camino que seguí, / pues más presto te conocí / por yerro tan acertado” (1.478-82). The repeated mention of choosing the “wrong path” could bolster a moralistic interpretation: they have gone astray both literally and figuratively. Another view is that she is simply happy—perhaps too happy—to meet the Duke’s son, but is not certain of her feelings or where they will lead. She vacillates between insis-
ting that she sees Federico only as a stepson (“Ma-
dre os seré desde hoy” [1.488]) and expressing (al-
beit cagily) her preference for him over his father:
“De vos tan contenta estoy, / y tanto el alma repar
a / en prenda tan dulce y cara, / que me da más regocijo
/ teneros a vos por hijo, / que ser Duquesa en Ferrara” (1.492-97).

For directors who share Wilson’s view that
Casandra is essentially a good wife forced into a
compromising situation by her husband’s debauch-
ery, this scene would have to be played with re-
straint. No matter what her inclinations, according
to this interpretation, at this point in the play Casan-
dra feels duty-bound to protect her husband’s honor.
But for those who see the scene as the first step to-
ward an inevitable affair, the actress must put
Casandra’s eagerness and smoldering desire in evi-
dence. Certainly, as Benabu says, “Casandra’s at-
traction for Federico is clearly established in Act I”
(206). But whether she is the victim of an uncon-
trollable passion against which she struggles or the
aggressor in the relationship with Federico depends
on how the actress plays the role. The audience
cannot doubt that her feelings have been ignited.
After her encounter with Federico, she tells her
maid quite explicitly that she feels trapped. She can
neither return to her family in Mantua without com-
promising her father’s honor and incurring his
wrath nor stay in Ferrara and marry Federico
Similarly, Federico confesses his passions to his clever and perceptive servant. However, there are still unanswered questions. Some critics have argued that the characters of *El castigo sin venganza*, like their classical models, are simply pawns of a cruel and intransigent fate. Edward Friedman writes, “Following the model of classical tragedy, Lope allows fate to control the emotions and the destinies of the three principal characters, who are all victims of circumstance” (216). However, Friedman points out that Lope removes the play from its classical grounding by introducing an element of responsibility (223). Other critics insist that to view such characters as impotent hostages of outside forces or even of inner passions is to remove them from the Counter Reformation context in which they were produced (Mujica 175ff). Although sixteenth-century theologians debated the relative roles of grace and freewill in salvation, the Council of Trent came down squarely against determinism (*Canons* 6).

Like all human beings, Lope’s characters constantly find themselves in situations that are not of their own making but to which they must respond, a concept of human existence Calderón depicts in *El gran teatro del mundo*. Freedom, from this standpoint, resides in the individual’s ability to choose in any particular situation from multiple courses of action. Whether the director sees the characters as free or predetermined will influence
the staging of the play. For the actors, however, the more important issue is that the characters feel un-free and act in particular ways because of their perceived powerlessness.

By act 2, the situation has changed. Both Federico and Casandra are struggling with their desire. Thoughts of Casandra torment Federico. Although he understands the consequences of acting on his emotions, he cannot quell his yearning (2.1707-08). For Casandra, the Duke’s continued debaucheries provoke resentment. Casandra is explicit about not only her sinful inclinations but also about her quest for vengeance: “loca imagino / hallar vengan- zas y gustos / en el mayor desatino” (2.1823-25). Imagination can be a means of realizing the proclivities of the will, but a wish is not an act. Dwelling on an iniquitous desire is a “sin of thought,” but the Catechism of the Council of Trent states that although human beings are prone to sin, they can regulate their thoughts to prevent themselves from acting on them (315).

The tension-filled confrontation between Federico and Casandra derives its power from metaphors that become successively more challenging. Federico’s confession of love begins with familiar images of hubris. The lover struggling toward the beloved aims too high, and is punished for his pretensions. Thus, as did Phaeton and Icarus, Federico rashly strives to reach the sun, Casandra, only to plunge back down to earth because her marriage to
his father is an insurmountable obstacle. Similarly, the monster-slaying Bellerophon, who rides the winged horse Pegasus successfully into battle, fails when he aims too high and seeks to reach Olympus. The confession continues with references to perpetrators of treachery: the Greek warrior Sinon, who pretends to abandon his people in order to convince the Trojans to accept the giant wooden horse that will lead to their defeat; Jason, leader of the Argonauts, who betrays Medea to marry Creusa. The passage ends with a reference to Argos, builder of the ship used by the Argonauts, but also the giant with 100 eyes, who, like the man of honor, is always vigilant. Through cultismos Federico expresses his struggle against his ruinous desires, his awareness of the offense to his father to which they may lead, and the inevitable outcome of betrayal. But will the audience grasp these subtleties?

Perhaps Lope assumes that it won’t, because Casandra mocks his fanciful language: “¿Estás, Conde, enamorado / de alguna imagen de bronce, / ninfa o diosa de alabastro?” (2.1479-81). Women express their desires more clearly, she argues (2.1482-97). How should the actress interpret Casandra’s anxiousness to hear an explicit declaration of love and move forward with the relationship? Is she motivated by passion or vengeance? Is she addled by love or clear-headed and firm? Does she see herself as a pawn of destiny or an agent of her own destiny? Or is she both a victim and a per-
petrator? In order for the audience to identify with her and see her as a tragic heroine, the director and actress must answer these questions.

The scene reaches its climax with Federico’s declaration of love: “tú me engañas, yo me abrazo / tú me incitas, yo me pierdo…” (2.1521-22). The contraposition of tú and yo in the seven-line passage both links the lovers and places them in opposition to each other. They are inexorably connected; one’s actions redound on the other. The agent in the drama is clearly Casandra: she acts and he reacts. But they are also engaged in an elaborate tug-of-war in which he pulls against her: “tú me libras, yo me enlazo / tú me llevas, yo me quedo” (2.1525-26). Federico’s use of tú is significant. At the beginning of the play he addresses Casandra as vuestra Alteza, gradually sliding into the more familiar vos. The use of tú here reflects an intense sense of intimacy. To the perceptive spectator, it might suggest an inexorable bond, entwined destinies. Jeremy King remarks on the fluidity of forms of address in early modern Spain, with tú being common usage among the nobility for husbands and wives. Most of the time Federico uses vos to address Casandra, but in this moment of tortured revelation, he expresses his feelings—at least, in part—through a pronoun.

The subsequent speech by Casandra is a play of antitheses: tierra-cielo, fuego-hielo, guerra paz, tormenta- calma. The repeated use of the word confusión highlights her state of mind. Will the au-
dience catch the subtleties of her highly baroque phraseology? Much will depend on which words the actress emphasizes and how she deals with the ambiguities. When Casandra capitulates—“…lo que siento consiento” (2.1558)—does the actress convey determination to act or horror at the inability to stand firm? What does consenting to her feelings involve? The following lines seem to express the opposite of consent: “no yerra quien piensa” (2.1578). Sin consists of actions; sinful thoughts do not doom the individual because one cannot control one’s thoughts, and free will gives one the ability to resist. Up until this point, Casandra is technically innocent. Will spectators see her as such or will they see her as a fraud?

Proxemic relations become especially significant in the final scenes of act 2. When Casandra justifies her love for Federico (“…inclino / al mal, por tantos disgustos / del Duque…” 2.1821-23), the text makes it clear that she is not aware he is near. She speaks about him in the third person, acknowledging his presence many lines later, when she has made her decision to succumb to her desires (“Éste es el Conde, ¡Ay de mí! / pero ya determinada / ¿qué temo?” 2.1856-58). Likewise, Federico does not immediately see her. Both articulate their love through literary images. What this scene conveys will depend at least partially on how the actors are positioned on the stage. Placing them apart and facing away from each other until the moment of mu-
tual recognition will convey psychological distance: two separate individuals submerged in their own intimate struggles. Placing them in close proximity to one another but facing in opposite directions will accentuate their bond: lovers trapped in a cárcel de amor from which there is no escape. Placing them face to face without seeing each other will convey the lovers’ blindness: they know the consequences of their misguided desire but have turned a blind eye. Perhaps they walk toward each other and touch. Perhaps they stand stiffly, battling against their desire to embrace. The possibilities are myriad.

In a long, lyrical set of quintillas punctuated by the gloss “sin mí, sin vos, y sin Dios” (2.1911-75), Federico expresses his feelings of doom. He is beside himself (“sin mí”) with confusion, torn between desire and moral obligation. He knows that union with Casandra is a chimera and that he must abandon her (“sin vos”). Finally, he knows that his love is a mortal sin that will cost him his salvation (“sin Dios”). Both of them know what they must do. “Huye de mí, que de ti / yo no sé si huir podré…” (2.1996-97), Casandra tells Federico. The abundance of references to death in these passages fore- shadows the denouement and suggests that both Casandra and Federico are fully aware of the penalty for yielding to desire.

What happens next? The general consensus is that the two lovers engage in an affair. The act
ends with what seems to be a conscious decision on the part of both to embrace death rather than forgo the pleasures of love, even if it means condemning their own and each other’s immortal souls to hell:

Casandra. Conde, tú serás mi muerte.
Federico. Y yo, aunque muerto, estoy tal que me alegro, con perderte, que sea el alma inmortal, por no dejar de quererte.

(2.2026-30)

Whether or not the actors fall into each other’s arms or leave in opposite directions, it seems likely that viewers will assume that they have opted for adultery.

But is there another way to play this scene? The version of El castigo sin venganza that appears in the Sainz de Robles edition eliminates the final quintilla, which is preceded by a stage direction not included in most modern editions: “Entrándose cada uno por su parte.” This alteration is significant, as it could change the way viewers understand the action. Casandra has just expressed doubts about moving ahead with her plan: “Ya determinada estuve; / pero advertir es razón / que por una mano sube / el veneno al corazón” (2.2012-15). She is still struggling with the notion that only an act can constitute a sin. Until she makes the decision to “drink the
poison,” there is still hope she can avoid dishonor. Federico seems less convinced. She is a siren who has lured him into a trap, he alleges, and now, caught in the net, he cannot escape alive. She continues to resist: “fama, resiste” (2.2020). He professes confusion: “¡Oh, qué extraño desconcierto!” (2.2022). It is not until the last lines of the act that they resign themselves to death:

    Casandra.    Yo voy muriendo por ti.
    Federico.    Yo, no, porque ya voy
                 muerto.
                 (2.2024-25)

But must these words be taken literally? Couldn’t they be understood as a rhetorical remnant of courtly love, in which “dying” for the loved one is a formula cliché?

Critics will argue that since modern editions (e.g. Carreño, Williamsen) are more accurate and complete, those are the ones that should be used. I agree, but the Sainz de Robles edition does offer an alternate way of performing these scenes. In this version, Casandra asserts her determination to exercise self-control nearly until the very end. The visual image of the two lovers exiting on different sides of the stage might leave spectators with the impression that in the end, Casandra and Federico choose to take the high road. The exchanges between Casandra and Federico at the beginning of act 3, in
which they express their dismay at the Duke’s return from Rome, would not necessarily have to mean that they were involved in a physical affair. The possible innocence of Federico and Casandra makes his decision to kill them even more horrendous.

But even if Casandra and Federico were innocent, that would not change the outcome of the play. The Duke has his son and wife killed, not because they are guilty, but because he has received an anonymous note accusing them of defiling his “cama y honor” (3.2489). The code of honor does not demand proof. Suspicion alone is enough to justify an honor killing, and even a longing glance or an unchaperoned conversation would be enough to set tongues wagging. Federico has made enemies at the Duke’s palace by snubbing Aurora in favor of Casandra, and so he is the instrument of a double betrayal. The anonymous note brings the play full circle. In act 1 the Duke complains about adverse fortune brought about by gossip and accusations, and now he is the victim of just that.

The play ends with one of the most ghastly scenes in Spanish theater: the Duke’s indirect murder of Casandra and Federico. The punishment is ostensibly “without vengeance” on Ferrara’s part because, lacking a public accusation, the Duke has avoided casting the assassination as an honor killing. But Lope undermines the notion that the Duke has annihilated his wife and son without vengeance,
argues David Gitlitz, through the use of irony that slowly and deliberately alters the sense of the Duke’s words (20). From the spectator’s perspective, there is no ambiguity about what has happened. Two people lie dead on the stage. And yet, this is the most debated scene in the play. Much of the discussion concerns the Duke’s role in his own tragedy. He supposedly returns from Rome transformed into “a saint” (3.2363). Determined to be a good husband to Casandra, he now feels compelled to defend his honor by having her and the son he has always professed to love murdered. But the Duke recognizes that his past unruliness has set the wheels of tragedy inexorably in motion: “El vicioso proceder / de las mocedades mías / truvo el castigo” (3.2516-18). In this sense, he is an agent more than a victim. Unlike certain other critics, Edward M. Wilson does not find Ferrara’s conversion entirely unconvincing; for Wilson, the Duke’s concern with his reputation, his desire to “creerse muy virtuoso, de ser virtuoso extremado” (283) raises the specter of hypocrisy. Wilson sees the Duke as such a negative individual that it is difficult to feel compassion for him (265).

Alexander Parker takes a more nuanced view. He argues that the Duke is a casualty of relentless social pressures which he feels powerless to combat. For Parker, the Comedia’s men of honor are both victims and perpetuators of the honor code, a crushing set of laws that obligates the individual
to place reputation above love. This view of the human condition is “not a heroic but a sad one,” writes Parker.

It is the predicament of man individualized from all other men yet in intimate solidarity with them, caught in circumstances that are the responsibility of all, whose ramifications the individual cannot see, prisoner as he is of the partial perspectives of a limited time and space, yet both the sufferer of acts that come in from outside the partial perspectives and the agent of acts that have their repercussions beyond them. (236)

Peter N. Dunn, advancing a similar position, argues that in the Comedia, the honor code constitutes a kind of alternate religion, one that, like Christianity, exalts sacrifice and bloodshed. But while Christianity stresses forgiveness, the honor code proscribes forgiveness, making it impossible for the Duke to reject the prescribed course of action. As I have shown elsewhere, from a theological perspective, men of honor, endowed as they are with freewill, can elect to forgive. The tragedy is that they do not recognize their own freedom, but instead feel hamstrung by society’s demands (165-77). As González Echeverría writes, “Beyond morality, and perhaps even beyond Christianity, Lope’s
tragedy offers a picture of humankind as prey to an insoluble dilemma” (286).

Isaac Benabu has elucidated the difficulties of constructing a stage character from this complex text. He points out that the Duke has relatively few lines in the play, which means that it is largely up to the actor to create the character, but this requires the formulation of a clear idea of the subject. The Duke’s conversion from sinner to saint makes for an incoherent character. His one unifying characteristic is his love for his son, which he articulates throughout the play. However, even this affection is subject to contradictory interpretations. González Echeverría holds that because the Duke sees his son as a projection of himself, his intense love is the result of a “narcissistic passion” (278). Directors who share this perspective might seek to project a monolithic view of the Duke, highlighting his profligacy and self-centeredness. The actor’s demeanor would be hard and aloof. No matter how much anguish he expressed, he would have his wife and son killed unflinchingly, with a firm jaw. Perhaps he would turn his back to their dead bodies and gaze into space with cold, dispassionate eyes.

However, for Benabu, the Duke is a tragic hero. He points out that from the beginning, the Duke is pensive and self-aware, distinguished by what Benabu sees as his sincere love for his son and concern for his subjects and household. Other than in the first scene, the “audience does not see the
Duke on stage in situations in which he might be perceived as a negative character” (210). Benabu argues that “Lope did not compose the character as negative… Far from it” (211). The key for Benabu is the extraordinary pain the Duke feels upon learning of the adultery of his wife and son: “…the actor must take the action much further than the words in the play-text indicate, and he must maintain the Duke’s emotional imbalance to the end of the play. He must register shock, pain, and a sense of betrayal…” (213).

Theater is performance, and any play lends itself to a spectrum of interpretations. However, *El castigo sin venganza* offers directors and actors a particularly broad palette of staging possibilities. It is futile to argue about the play’s *real* meaning and the characters’ *true* motives. Perhaps Donald R. Larson sums it up best: “…in tragedy we are not asked to justify why a particular mistake leads to catastrophe, but simply to accept the fact that it does” (147). Different productions will tell different stories. Ultimately, what audiences know and when they know it will depend on the director’s and performers’ view of the concept, plot, and characters. Perhaps insightful viewers will sense the multiple layers of meaning beyond the obvious. These endless possibilities are what make the play truly performative.
NOTES

1 Although I have referred to scenes in this article, John Varey points out that Lope did not divide his plays into scenes, but rather indicates changes of place and time with a line (226).

2 Antonio Carreño notes that Lope had it published almost immediately, so that “la comedia apenas representada pasa a ser preferentemente leida” (19). Nevertheless, it has been performed many times on modern stages.

3 All quotes are from the Carreño edition.

Works Cited


DON GIL ON DON GIL: MUSICAL REFERENCES IN TIRSO DE MOLINA’S DON GIL DE LAS CALZAS VERDES, AND MUSIC IN THEATRE ROYAL BATH’S 2013 PRODUCTION OF DON GIL OF THE GREEN BREECHES

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As evidenced by collaborations among a wide range of Hispanists, domestic and foreign theatre companies, directors, set designers, and actors, an increasing number of translations has allowed more works of Spanish seventeenth-century theatre to be staged and performed for English-speaking audiences. A recent successful collaboration was Bath Theatre Royal Ustinov Studio’s 2013 production of Don Gil of the Green Breeches. The reasons for its success are many, but I would submit that a major factor was the utilization of music. This production, directed by Mehmet Ergen and based on Sean O’Brien’s translation and composer Jon Nicholls’s musical settings, was an excellent
demonstration of how music enhances performances of comedias. Imitating the impact that music must have had in Tirso de Molina’s time, songs in this production were at the center of carefully conceived scenes that utilized musical expression to support not only dramatic structure, but also character development, irony, gender inversion, and cross dressing. In this essay, I will first outline the importance of music in Tirso’s text of Don Gil de las calzas verdes, and then will explore how music was employed in Theatre Royal Bath’s production.

In his El arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo (1609), Lope de Vega demonstrates, in three hundred ninety or so verses of light and ironic tone, his insights and knowledge about the history of drama, as well as his predecessors’ precepts on how to create proper plays. At the same time, he shows himself to be one of the first playwrights concerned about the economics of his craft. Lope’s approach to drama is governed by years of experience seeing what truly entertained the general public. Music was unequivocally amongst the dramatic components that his audiences most appreciated. Poetry, Lope asserts, is to imitate the actions of men, and to do this, “Se hace de tres cosas, que son: plática, / verso dulce, armonía, o sea la música” (García Santo-Tomás 134 lines 57-58).

Music was used in Spanish theatre well before Lope’s time, but he was among the first to incorporate the practice into a treatise and make it a
standard widely imitated by Comedia playwrights throughout the seventeenth century. Lope’s use of songs, dances, and instruments transcends mere incidental, structural, and technical theatrical functions; it is consubstantial with themes and ideology. In his *El maestro de danzar*, for instance, the feigned dance master, Aldemaro, reveals at the beginning of act 2 a philosophy of love based on the structure and components of the guitar, associating the five strings with the five senses, as well as with the order in which each string represents a different phase in the process of falling in love (2.1213-60).

Even though musicians of the Comedia undoubtedly knew to subordinate music to text, there was an incontrovertible, essential, and mutually influential bond between music and poetry, demonstrated in influential treatises of the era outside of Spain, like the ones by Luzzasco Luzzaschi (1545-1607) (Strainchamps). No wonder Lope de Vega and many of the playwrights of his “school,” especially those who studied in major universities, such as Salamanca and Alcalá, demonstrate in their works not only a significant level of musical knowledge, but also an acute understanding of how to exploit its sound effects dramatically, particularly as a tool to enhance the emotional impact of scenes on spectators.

As one of Lope de Vega’s most famous and preeminent disciples, Tirso de Molina followed closely Lope’s precepts. It is no surprise to see Tir-
so’s comedias filled with “letra para cantar [y bailar]” in the form of estribillos, villancicos, seguidillas, as well as endechas, mayas, canciones de siega y espigadera, muiñeiras, cantares de gala y enhorabuena, cantos de vela, himnos epitalámicos, rondas y serenatas, in short, introducing all sorts of traditional lyric poetry and irregular versification in his plays (Jareño 16-18), many of them meant to be played or sung on stage. Angel López argues that a vast portion of what is “popular” or traditional poetry originally was probably meant to be sung or danced: “... esta poesía nace del ritmo de la danza. El estudio de la métrica, el ritmo acentual, los temas..., todo nos habla de una poesía que nació para ser cantada y para cantar los sentimientos de las gentes” (9).

Similarly to Lope, Tirso’s incorporation of songs in theatrical scenes is so masterful that it is frequently difficult to decipher when these song-texts come from tradition or when they are an original creation of the playwright. Both Lope and Tirso, Jareño asserts (17), wrote seguidillas with such authenticity that their lyrics seem to flow straight from the mouths of townsfolk. Yet, for all these references to music, no scores currently exist for the dances most performed in seventeenth-century theatre, including the ¡ay-ay-ay!, capona, carretería, guinea, Juan Redondo, laturulú, mariona, matachines, zambapalo, and zarambeque. These dances and others, like the zarabanda, escamarrán,
and chacona, were already out of style by the beginning of the century, but the public remained fond of them.

After Lope’s precepts in Arte nuevo, music as an important theatrical element would continue to be important in treatises throughout the seventeenth century, as attested in Francisco Bances Candamo’s (1662-1704) Theatro de los theatros de los passados y presentes siglos (1689-90), in which music is one of the eleven principal components of drama: “Argumento, Contextura, Episodios, Costumbres, Personages, Locución, Representantes, Mussica, Danza, Trages y Aparato Scenico” (32). In practice, in just about all comedias where music appears, it is used to signal character entrances and exits, provide atmosphere, and underscore scene types, among many other technical and structural functions (Stein 23-25; Umpierre 4-91). According to Friar Manuel Guerra y Ribera’s Aprobación a la verdadera quinta parte de comedias de don Pedro Calderón (1682), music’s functions appear to vary depending on the category of the works in which it appears (e.g., “de santos,” “históricas,” or “de capa y espada”) (Herzig 95-106). Music in religious comedias, for example, perhaps more than in any other type, is essential in performance. Typically, in addition to having popular songs and new music composed explicitly for the work, there is liturgical and instrumental music, both embedded with symbolic content and persuasive ideology, very similar
to what we find in the *autos sacramentales*. In historical plays and *comedias* of intrigue, on the other hand, music generally appears within “verisimilar” contexts, that is, in situations in which music is utilized in real life: serenades, private, social or municipal balls, or for personal entertainment. This type of music usually includes popular or courtly dances; popular songs whose lyrics can contribute many dramatic possibilities, including character expression, which are generally based on popular romances and letrillas; songs associated with certain festivities (weddings, romerías, mayas); rustic work/labor songs; or music in vogue. In historical comedias, however, this music is less extensive, and its principal function appears be a distinctly symbolic one (Asunción Flórez 363-64).

In *Don Gil*, musical references are scattered throughout the play—for example, “Suena música dentro” (1.739); “Músicos cantando” (1.744); “La música en paz os ponga” (1.844); “Salid, señor, a danzar” (I: 845)—demonstrating a consistent presence of music. This is typical in plays of the era, including those that do not specify music and/or musicians in the list of characters. In act 1, Juana’s long expository monologue about how Martín courted and seduced her before leaving alludes to the role of music in seduction: “Papeles leí de día, / músicas de noche oí, / joyas recibí, y ya sabes / qué se sigue al recibir. . . .” (131-34). Also, in act 1 (699), there is a mention of *villancicos*, in reference
to the low class, rustic, and pastoral implications of the name Gil.

Other musical references are perhaps less obvious. In act 2, for example, Doña Inés, in love with Juana-Gil much to the dismay of Don Juan, diverts the latter’s desire for vengeance on her “Don Gilito” and directs it to Martín-Gil, to whom Inés claims her father intends to marry her. Invigorated by the hope of earning Inés’s hand once again, Juan declares: “Pues si con su muerte merca / mi fe tu amor, el laurel / ya mi cabeza previene; / que te hago voto solene / que pueden doblar por él” (2.1223-27). According to Alonso Zamora Vicente, the last two lines reference a traditional song already popular before the time of this play: “¿Quién te me enojó, Isabel? / ¿Quién con lágrimas te tiene? / Que hago voto solene / que pueden doblar por él” (174 n1226). “Doblar,” of course, refers to the playing of bells. Various composers wrote settings for this song, which appears in Francisco Salinas’s *De musica libri septem* (1577), and various playwrights glossed the verses, such as Lope in *La moza de cántaro*. If this process implies a certain recycling of songs from play to play, it would explain why often these melodies were rarely written down; they were, in other words, so well-known that musicians were comfortable with them, and could easily perform various improvisations and renditions.

Three more relevant references occur in the *enredos* of act 3. The first occurs when Juana-Gil,
in an effort to keep Clara’s love, swears not to be in love with Inés: “Vive Dios, que es doña Inés / a mis ojos fría y fea: / si Francisca se llamara, / todas las efes tuviera” (3.2429-32). Juana-Gil’s comments about Inés paraphrase the text of another popular song: “Una novia que yo tuve / todas las efes tenía: / era fea, flaca, floja / fregona, frágil y fría” (249-50n2430). This song is also glossed in Mateo Aléman’s *Guzmán de Alfarache* and Lope’s *La esclava de su galán*. In the second reference, Inés overhears Juana-Gil speaking with Clara and, feeling deceived, screams for someone to avenge her. Caught red-handed, Juana-Gil rushes, barely successfully, to repair the damage, somehow managing to conjure up another identity as Elvira, to which Doña Inés sarcastically remarks: “¡No está mala la deshecha! / Dígale eso a doña Clara, / pues la tiene satisfecha / su amor, su palabra y fe” (3.2503-06). The relationship to the dance is important here because it is a metaphor for the back and forth dramatic entanglements that occur throughout the work. Inés compares the careful moving, sliding, bobbing, and weaving of Juana-Gil’s elusive entanglements to that of a deshecha, which is a song attached to the end of a poetic composition, and a type of movement in Spanish dance that dancers make with one foot, “undoing” the steps previously made by the other foot. In the third reference, in a climactic scene, all “Giles” appear on stage at the same time. Caramanchel hears the voices of all pretenders, and
says in an aside, “Muy grueso don Gil es éste. / El que sirvo habla atiplado. . . .” (3.2779-80), referring to the low and dark voice of Don Juan, in contrast with the high-pitched treble voice of Doña Juana.

As is frequently the case in the theatre of the Spanish Golden Age, the number of implicit musical references is higher than those that are explicit. However, when music is explicit, its dramatic impact is unequivocal. In Don Gil’s orchard scenes of act 1, songs take up about forty lines in the text. This fact alone is significant because most explicit music / musician appearances in the Comedia are brief, generally represented by a single quatrain. The first song, “Alamicos del Prado,” occurs when Juana-Gil and her newly hired servant arrive in the Duke’s orchard in anticipation of the first meeting between Martín, who dishonored and left Juana in Valladolid, and Inés, to whom Martín’s avaricious father has conspired to wed him. Juana’s industrious nature, which the song also supports, manifests itself in her ability to anticipate, foil, and outwit Martín at every point:

(Músicos cantando; DON JUAN, DOÑA INÉS y DOÑA CLARA, como de campo)

MUSICOS. Alamicos del prado, fuentes del Duque, despertad a mi niña por que me escuche;
y decid que compare
con sus arenas,
sus desdén y gracias,
mi amor y penas;
y pues vuestros arroyos
saltan y bullen,
despertad a mi niña
por que me escuche. (1.744-55)

This song is an *albada en seguidillas*, or “alborada” (Jareño 52; López 54).³ Even though much of the music referenced in the *Comedia* is lost, we can deduce key information about it through song-texts. “Alamicos del Prado” is divided into three quatrains with 7-5-7-5 versification, one of the most typical meters of the *seguidilla*. In the song-text, the word “despertad” reveals the primary theme of *alboradas*, or dawn songs, where a character serenades his love object at sunrise. Since many *seguidillas* of the period are homorhythmic in two to four parts, in syncopated triple meter (Sage and Friedman), then it is logical to have music that matches these characteristics in support of the idyllic setting.

If the first song creates the idyllic ambiance that Juana-Gil shatters with her entrance, the second song that follows immediately after (1.851-901) is essential for plot development. In a world in which *hombría* is a dominant trait of the ideal man—i.e. being valiant, strong, and unwavering—curiously, it
is the ambiguity of Juana-Gil’s hermaphroditic characteristics—i.e. delicate feminine physical features and a unique sensitivity—that appeals both to Inés and Clara, who quickly take notice. Speaking to Don Juan, Inés gives the cue for musicians to perform “Al molino del amor” (1.864-901): “Salid, señor, a danzar” (1.845). This piece has been called the literary pinnacle of the traditional “canción de molino.” According to Angel López, rhythm, music, and sensorial experience are ingrained in the structure and lyricism of the verses. The song commences with *tempo allegro*, which naturally accelerates until in the final verses of the first strophe the organization of the accents imitates the excitement the “niña enamorada” feels as she joyfully jumps; later, it imitates the up and down motion of the waves, as well as the foam in the water. Moreover, the accumulation of verbs denotes the point of maximum tempo, mimicking the rapid wing flapping of birds (46). At this point the verses begin to underline the slow march of the bullocks on their way to drink water, marking a change in tempo, and signaling the little girl’s sadness because the mill is running out of water (47). López concludes that the structure of the song is supported by two popular lyric elements—the *distich* (1.892-93) or rhyming couplet, and the *seguidilla* (1.898-901)—which contain all poetic themes of Tirso’s play: the mill, the enamored girl, the steers that drink the river dry, the stopped mill, and the miller (47).
Interestingly, songs with similar themes appear in Tirso’s *La dama del olivar* (“por la harina apuréis / de esperanzas candeales, / que con el agua amasais / de mis ojos”) and *Deleitar aprovechando* (“Molinico, ¿por qué no mueles? / Porque me beben el agua los bueyes”). Lope also paraphrases the same themes in *La comedia del molino*, and in *La juventud de San Isidro*. Tirso includes a “canción de molino” in *Don Gil* not in its traditional rustic and rural ambiance that the windmills and the grinding of flour represent—indeed a typical comical effect in primitive theatre—but ingeniously places it in an urban setting with courtly characters (Zamora Vicente 152 n864).

Some critics see the song, “Al molino del amor,” as merely an example of the many elements added by Tirso to appeal to a specific popular audience; however, William Blue’s eloquently constructed analysis elucidates that the song is much more than ornamental, being consistent with inherited practices of utilizing music in plays for dramatic technical and structural purposes:

By means of an extended conceit of the water, the mill, and the grindstone, we are given a vision of the power and the promise of love. It can be a positive force which, through a refinement process can produce the very substance of life or it can be a negative force which, by means of the powerful
grinding wheels —jealousy—can destroy the hopes of those who come before it. (17)

The song not only appears at a very crucial moment, but its message revolves around the figure of the molinera as a metaphor for the transformations of the protagonist throughout the play, thereby becoming a window into the complexities of Juana’s mind. Very much in line with Blue’s interpretation, “Al molino del amor” is in essence a type of meta-theatre, or Meta-Imitation in the words of Ellen Frye (129), revealing yet another dramatic function of music in the play.

While we hear “Al molino del amor,” Juana-Gil dances with Inés and Clara. In the succeeding dialogue we learn that Inés assumes Juana-Gil is the “Gil” to whom her father has promised her in marriage, and thus the enredo begins. Because stage directions explicitly call for “músicos” throughout these scenes, we can assume that there is music in the background (perhaps only instruments). This occurs at key moments in the action, for example, in support of Juan’s jealousy or during the dramatic entanglement of the following scene, as Inés furiously rejects Martín-Gil who expects to marry her.

The idea of music as harmony in Lope’s El maestro de danzar, also manifests itself in Don Gil. In act 1, Caramanchel praises his master: “Gil es mi amo, y es la prima / y el bordón de todo nombre. . .” (1.812-13), alluding to the strings of the guitar (Vi-
Musical ability was an essential characteristic of the ideal person, and was not only attractive for both sexes in social circles no matter the status, but it appears to demonstrate a certain spiritual state of being in tune with the universal spheres. Tirso himself, in *Cigarrales de Toledo*, writes: “Milagrosa eficacia comunicó el cielo a la Música; con cuanto intenta sale, adormece los Argos, domestica los brutos, atrae las piedras, suspende los tormentos, ahuyenta los espíritus, y si es verdad lo que afirman tantos antiguos, conserva el mundo con la suave consonancia de sus orbes. . . .” Consequently, when Don Juan chooses not to dance with Inés, he is discredited in her eyes. In contrast, Inés and Laura fall for the sweet treble voice of the masterfully stepping Juana-Gil, whose “danza” manifests the multilayered character’s harmony with the universe.

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of using music in contemporary performances of *comedias*, despite the fact that original music for the vast majority of plays has been lost. Moreover, it is not that modern performances have not included music, they have; yet, in most cases, the music was incidental, sometimes without any direct relation to the plot and themes of the work being performed. The fact that there is a carefully negotiated unity between the original Spanish text, the translation, and sound design / music in Bath Theatre Royal’s 2013 *Comedia* performances is
what separates them from many others. Of course, it helps to have good musicians in the cast, and just about all the actors in the Ustinov company displayed some type of musical ability, most notably, Jim Bywater, who plays the guitar, and Frances McNamee, who sings very well. Perhaps the most impressive fact about the Bath productions is how quickly they were put together. Just as in the times of Lope and Tirso where performers only had a few rehearsals before showtime, the cast of Bath Theatre Royal had to hit the ground running, spending a lot of time singing and dancing to Nicholls’s arrangements in the first days, and quickly integrating them into the rehearsal process. Indeed, the Golden Age Season at Bath showed that with relatively simple but well thought-out musical arrangements, one can recapture the role that music played in performances of the seventeenth century.

Jon Nicholls’s settings of “O Poplars in the Meadow” and “Light of Foot and Light of Heart” have several significant technical and structural functions. From a distance, Juana-Gil and Caramanchel observe how Inés and Clara sing in a type of courtly locus amoenus. The stunningly staged vegetation and fountains of the orchard, and the women’s soothing voices, singing in unison and sensitive to the song’s dynamics to a slow but lively duple meter accompaniment in a minor mode, support the idyllic atmosphere so well described in the song-text. There is, of course, a sense of dramatic
irony, since Don Juan believes Inés’s promises to marry him are genuine, and the scene’s ambiance only equivocally seems to assure him of that promise, that is, until Juana-Gil enters the scene.

Juana-Gil’s end game is to restore her honor, and she goes to great lengths in order to manipulate events to realize this objective. In Tirso’s play, music is a medium through which Juana-Gil lures Inés away from Martín-Gil, and O’Brien’s translation cleverly keeps many of the opportunities offered in the Spanish original. In Jon Nicholls’s setting of “Light of Foot,” there is a guitar accompaniment—which the composer himself plays—with castanets, and a solo voice, performed by actor / singer Frances McNamee. On a balcony on stage, the song is performed in a traditional ABA structure. The first part of the song (A) has an obvious flamenco-tinged quality, with guitar strumming, castanets and foot stomping in syncopated rhythm, giving this piece a coquettish quality from which characters draw their gestures and body movements, causing laughter in the audience. It is in this part that Juana-Gil seduces Inés with her skillful dancing and delicate, if not feminine, physical features, supporting some of the gender-bending and inversion of gender roles so evident in the play. The ideal early modern gentleman needed, among many other qualities, not only strength, but also exquisite sensitivity to the arts, particularly music and dancing. In performance, the cast did an excellent job utilizing this
song to highlight these ideological overtones. Inés and Clara fight over the chance to dance with Juana-Gil, and Juan, jealous of the new suitor, becomes more unattractive to Inés because of his inability, unlike Juana-Gil, to keep up with the rhythmic challenges of the music. In the second part of the song (B), which changes to a slower tempo and rhythm with a sweet sound, the seduced Inés is unwilling to share him with Clara, who begs Inés for her turn. As they quarrel, the song quickly goes back to the first part (A), with Juana-Gil dancing along with both Inés and Clara. Interestingly, by the time the music stops, Don Juan is completely out of the picture. It becomes apparent in the performance how songs in the first act contribute significantly to plot development, since they propel Juana-Gil to begin successfully pulling the strings of the play’s entanglements.

Another technique that Jon Nicholls implements—something that I suspect theatre musicians and composers of the seventeenth century must have done as well—is to sprinkle shortened instrumental versions of the accompaniment of the first two songs (i.e. the main songs) throughout the work, at junctures that are not noted in the play’s text, but that nevertheless make sense on stage and enhance the dramatic effect. Of particular interest are the set changes when instrumental versions of the song “Light of Foot” (i.e. guitars, tapping, and types of shaken idiophones) are utilized to provide
dramatic continuity and keep the audience engaged. For its part, the instrumental accompaniment to the song “Poplars in the Meadow” functions as a dramatic transition, for example, right before the orchard scene of act 1 during Juana-Gil’s and Caramaranchel’s dialogue, when the latter reacts to the sound of guitars: “What music is this?” (30). Also, we hear instrumental accompaniment during long monologues, such as Juana’s exposition at the beginning of act 1, or in act 2 when she concocts another subplot about Elvira in order to fool Inés once more and gain her sympathy. Throughout these monologues, instrumental variations of the previous songs underscore the drama.

Yet, there are other arrangements of music different from those that are drawn from the major songs. These include instrumental music for the main theme and for the end of the show. Perhaps none of these pieces is more purposely overdramatic than the music during Martín’s brief monologues in act 3, when a certain “phantom” lady is foiling his plans at every turn. The combination of strumming guitars—one guitar playing an arpeggiated accompaniment and another a legato melody—and percussion instruments, along with dissonant tonalities in the background, creates tension, an ironic, dark, and mysterious atmosphere more characteristic of dramatically serious comedias. In this case, however, the musical effect supports the zany, caricatured gestures and body movements of actor
Doug Rao (Martin), provoking incessant laughter in the audience, who know the real industrious ma-
termind behind Don Martín’s failures.

Two of Nicholls’s instrumental pieces aim not just to reflect the main theme and support a grand finale, but they also appear to provide mu-
sic unity, since these arrangements play at the be-
ning, throughout the drama, and at the end of the performance. For instance, the piece “Main Theme” plays as the curtain rises until the first scene begins, and shares as well the function of transitions with the instrumental version of “O Poplars in the Mea-
dows.” The sound file, “Main Theme,” is thirty sec-
onds long (it can obviously be repeated in perfor-
mance), and the director, Mehmet Ergen made the most of this music. In “Main Theme,” there are strings (i.e. bass, cello / violoncello, and guitars), brass (trumpet), and percussion (idiophones, cym-
bals), which together provide a mixed sound of pe-
riod and modern music. Four sets of instruments alternate: bass / cellos / violoncellos play first, em-
phasizing rapid sixteenth notes, much like we would hear in an oratorio by J. S. Bach; then guitars strum, followed by percussion. The instruments play this way twice, and then the third time, trumpets—in a quasi-Phrygian mode resembling what we would hear in a pasodoble—come in and play until the end. The duple meter of the piece is syncopated by percussion instruments, and the staccato sixteenth notes of the bass, with the bright texture of the
trumpets’ jazzy style, give a quirky, chaotic, and tense sensation, typical of musical themes of many sitcoms. As its various subthemes hint, this music seems to reflect and foreshadow the numerous entanglements of the plot’s seemingly endless twists from the very beginning to the end of the performance.

The audio file for “End Dance” is slightly longer (a repeatable 53 seconds) to accommodate the resolution of the play and the organized final bows of the cast, which remains in character. The arrangement is essentially the same as “Main Theme”—similar instrumentation, tonalities, tempo, and rhythm—but is organized differently. Idiophones, castanets, and tapping begin the piece in a lively tempo in support of the celebratory procession typical of a finale, followed by strings, and eventually a Spanish trumpet on the melody, hinting at the characteristic Andalusian-type cadences and the common ornamented triplets with trills and melismas associated with “Spanishness,” until the ending with cymbals.

Though this music may be interpreted as stereotypically “Flamenco-ish,” and at times lacking the necessary rhythmic complexities characteristic of authentic period music (such as in seguidillas), the musical arrangements for the productions worked perfectly on stage. In Don Gil, these songs help create an idyllic ambiance; they are a medium through which characters seduce love objects; and
they aid plot development by acting as an important catalyst that propels the characteristic dramatic entanglements of the *comedia de enredo*. Helmut Hatzfeld asserts that the “plain language of *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* is a typically baroque language of fused reality and illusion, of scroll-type sentence structures and of a variety of chiastic contraposti” (31); in this sense, music parallels the play structurally. The numerous twists and turns in the plot are mirrored in this scene, in which both songs and dancing are intertwined, and although this music is not authentic to the period, I would argue that there is, in a broader definition of the term, also “baroqueness” in Nicholls’s compositions. These original musical arrangements and the way the directors and cast implement them in performance contribute significantly to the larger discussion of how to make *Comedia* texts more attractive and accessible to modern audiences. Jack Sage notes the need to make these plays come to life in ways that modern audiences can understand and appreciate:

For some centuries. . . [t]he comedies were seen as little more than witty doodlings and then, latterly, as equally conformist sermons in comic disguise. Perhaps at last what actual stagings of his plays, (not least The Gate’s Spanish Golden Age 1991/2 season), have shown is that the real playwright—for all his illustrious achievements as Friar Gabriel
Téllez—had a professional genius for providing professional actors with dramas teeming with opportunities to enact ‘liberal’, Christian fundamentalist attitudes in a persuasive light. The Gate’s realizations showed that *Damned for Despair* and *Don Gil* are both in their different ways excellent examples of Tirso’s performance potential. *(Damned 4)*

Music also provides some answers and examples as to how to enhance today’s adaptations and performances of these classical theatrical works with meaningful components which, if not explicit in stage directions, are implicitly required in the action, especially in association with numerous scene types (i.e. religious, rustic, courtly, supernatural, weddings, etc.), which are essential in keeping these works from becoming “little more than witty doodlings” on paper.

NOTES

1 See Covarrubias, *Tesoro*: “Un cierto género de cancioncita, o que se acaba el canto.” The form was also used to accompany Spanish dance. Not to be confused with *endecha*. For the latter, see Esses 601-02.

2 Something similar occurs in Lope’s *La dama boba*, where the “Mudanza” references refer both to the elusive and inconstant nature of love, as well as to a
dance movement. See Nena Couch’s article in this issue.

3 Sage and Friedman summarize the early seguidilla: “Literary antecedents of the seguidilla may be detected as far back as the 15th century or possibly earlier, but it seems not to have existed as a piece of music until the 1590s when, as a provocative street song and dance accompanied by loud strumming of the guitar, its popularity began to surpass even that of the similarly outrageous zarabanda. Rough indications of this early music are given by J.C. Amat in his Guitarra española (1596). It was described by G. Correas, Cervantes, and many others about 1600 as an exciting, salacious kind of plebeian couple-dance. Poets were soon cultivating it as a spicy coda (coplas plus seguida) to longer poems such as the romance (ballad). More courtly versions were set by musicians from the 1620s onwards.” See “seguidilla” in Oxford Music online. Jareño explains the importance of this song-dance in Spanish Golden Age theater: “Si la seguidilla fue, en efecto en el Siglo de Oro español el molde preferido por el pueblo y poetas para ‘echar el corazón al aire. . ’ es sobre todo en el teatro donde hallará su mejor empleo literario. Así, la seguidilla, que hunde sus raíces en los más lejanos hontanares de la poesía medieval, y que se mantiene presente en la lírica de los cancioneros cortesanos del período pre-renacentista, alcanza sobre todo su apogeo a partir de 1600, y si Lope fue maestro en ella, Tirso no le va a la zaga” (18). See also Hanssen’s chapter on “La seguidilla” 113-246.

4 See Godwin 205-18. Theories on Harmonia Mundi, Musica mundana, etc. in influential figures such as Gioseffo Zarlino (1517-1590) and Jean Bodin (1523-1596).
or 1530-1596), among many others, heavily influenced the thinkers of the era about the effect of the universal spheres on humanity, and the importance of music in this relationship.

5 There was a clear societal difference between “bailes,” in which typically dancers, as some moralists would say, disreputably and shabbily moved their arms and feet, and “danza,” which required a strictly measured use of the arms and performed “con gravedad a compás de instrumento, con orden, escuela y enseñanza de preceptos.” Diccionario de Autoridades qtd. in Asunción Flórez 37.

6 I wish to express my eternal gratitude to directors Laurence Boswell and Mehmet Ergen, translator Sean O’Brien, Movement Director Lucy Cullingford, to the Bath Theatre Royal-Ustinov Studio, to the whole cast, and most especially, to Sound Designer/Composer Jon Nicholls, who has graciously shared digital sound files of the compositions he created (performed by Nicholls and cast members) specifically for the Ustinov Studio performances of Don Gil of the Green Breeches (November 2013).

7 There are various studies on this topic. See for example, Sánchez 126-41, whose study “undertakes a historical and analytical study of the transvestite theme at a critical time of shifting identity formation. In the play’s heightened gender performance the concept of identity as moldable and variable emerges as a reflection of the new early modern awareness of the self. . . A reevaluation of Tirso de Molina’s use of transvestism in Don Gil de las calzas verdes, uncovers poignant dis-
courses that offer compelling insights into an evolving feminized Spanish society” (122).

Works Cited


---. *Treinta canciones de Lope de Vega, puestas en música por Guerrero, Orlando de Lasso, Palo-
CROSS-GENDER CASTING AND CONTEMPORARY COMEDIA PERFORMANCE

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Beginning with the founding of the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC) in 1986, Spain has experienced a renewed interest in its Golden Age of theater, and continues to re-interpret various comedias from this canon. Annual theater festivals in Spain and beyond, such as the festivals in Almagro and El Paso, as well as the 2013 Golden Age Theatre season held at the Ustinov Studio of the Theatre Royal in Bath, England, allow modern audiences to experience seventeenth-century dramatic intrigue at the same time that directors approach early modern themes with artistic freedom. The translation from page to stage has not been without debate regarding whether or not modern artistic license adapts or distorts the original play-text to fit its twenty-first-century context. The question of performance as adaptation includes various textual and extratextual elements (reduction, cos-
tuming, set design, use of modern music), but with the CNTC’s 2012 production of *La vida es sueño* and the Ustinov’s 2013 *Don Gil of the Green Breeches*, the tensions between modern and early modern extended to questions of gender.


In the image from *La vida es sueño* at the 2012 Almagro International Classical Theater Festival reproduced here (Figure 1), we can easily identify the two characters featured in the photo as Segismundo, Calderón’s famed protagonist, and Rosaura, the female avenger in the Spanish *mujer varonil* tradition. They meet here for the first time in act 1 as Rosaura and Clarín arrive in Poland and stumble upon Segismundo locked in his tower. Di-
rector Helena Pimenta’s casting choice is both conventional and unconventional in the context of early modern drama, given that the male lead is played by Spanish actress Blanca Portillo, known for her roles in films such as El color de las nubes and Volver, as well as in a number of other theatrical productions.

The CNTC’s production proved enormously successful and even prompted a revival in March 2014 in Madrid. Part and parcel to this success was Portillo’s celebrated interpretation of Segismundo. The decision to cross-gender cast the lead role of Segismundo sharpens our view of the Comedia’s fundamentally self-conscious nature. When compared with the Comedia’s performance tradition of cross-dressed leading ladies, as in Don Gil of the Green Breeches, the cross-gender casting here brings into sharper focus the art form’s continued play of identity as carried out by central gender-bending characters.

Cross-gender casting serves as one example of “open” or “nontraditional” casting, the practice of choosing actors for parts without a strict adherence to a character’s original gender, race, class, or age as denoted in the dramatic text itself. In the case of gender, theater scholars and practitioners have identified a variety of motivations and desirable effects that can be achieved in the contemporary performance of drama from all eras. In terms of artistic impact, Richard Schechner argues that cross-gender casting disentangles the stage character from the actor, “encouraging spectators and performers to
critically examine interacting performance texts rather than assuming a simple-minded identification of the performer with the roles,” while also further unbinding theater from realism. Audience members and actors alike approach the interpretation of characters, as well as the representation of created realities within drama, with renewed freedom and a defamiliarized perspective. Director Diana Marré echoes these thoughts on characterization in her reflections on a cross-gender cast production of *Comedy of Errors*. She explains that the detachment of actor from character at the level of gender allowed for a new approach to previously difficult and/or stagnant passages: “It made them use another voice and another body. It brought life into what they were doing because they were doing an impersonation, and for some reason it just made the language work. Those characters had less trouble with the verse than the characters that I cast to type” (qtd. in Daniels 163).

Open casting also serves to make drama more inclusive and provide more roles to a broader range of actors, while connecting with the entirety of the human experience to which it speaks. Cross-gender casting holds the potential to transform the experience of classical drama through performance, as well as the social landscape of the contemporary culture in which it flourishes, by challenging audience members to process the character without a strict one-to-one correspondence of gender.
As the *Comedia* develops a contemporary performance history, the exchange of what is past and what is present will continue from the stage as modern companies approach early modern dramatic works. In the case of cross-gender casting as a contemporary staging practice for the *Comedia*, I maintain that the effect of such a practice only brings us closer to, and functions as an extension of, many facets of both the historical realities of the original staging and reception of the *Comedia*, as well as its internal, creative precepts as related to identity and theatrical play.

Portillo’s performance marks Spain’s most high-profile entrance into the experimentation with cross-gender casting in contemporary *Comedia* performance. The artistic and sociological potential of cross-gender casting has largely been measured within the realm of early modern English drama, where Shakespearean roles reign as the working definition of “classical” parts. During the early modern period of England and Spain, theater transformed from a ritualized practice to a fundamental cultural phenomenon, creating a forum to explore social values while entertaining popular and elite audiences alike.¹ Within this theater, cross-dressing emerged as a popular plotline, and in the case of England, a necessity for staging anything at all, since women were not permitted on the stage. While Spanish authorities permitted actresses on their stage in order to avoid any possible emasculation of male actors in female clothing (though not
without objections), in England, female parts were played by male actors. As Ursula K. Heise notes in her comparison of cross-dressing in the two countries, these policies, though contrary in practice, respond to the same anxiety surrounding the potential negative effect of unbridled female sexuality (361-62). Despite the controversy surrounding the practice, cross-dressing fit well with the aims of popular drama. The role reversals served as a key element for entertaining audiences of the public theater and sustaining their interest.

Richard Hornby speaks equally to the English and Spanish commercial stages when he states that “[p]laying the opposite sex is as old as theatre” (641). Whether this “playing” occurs within the confines of the dramatic storyline or at the level of casting depends, nevertheless, on the specific staging practices of the tradition at hand. It is with the English performance context in mind that Hornby asserts: “women playing men has a less venerable tradition” (641). This is, of course, entirely untrue of the Spanish classical tradition; female actors played a broad range of transgressive female types (typically grouped under the term _mujer varonil_), many of whom cross-dress as men within their individual character plots.²

Though individual acts of cross-dressing remained firmly on the fringes of seventeenth-century Spanish society, Rosaura’s presence in the scene depicted in Figure 1 evokes the ample theatrical tradition/convention of the woman dressed as
man, extensively catalogued by Carmen Bravo-Villasante. Although the Spanish stage permitted female actors, eliminating the essential need for transvestism as in the English tradition, dramatists routinely opted to include the practice in plays with serious and comedic tones for a variety of purposes. Costuming, of course, explains the popularity of the female cross-dressing plot, since a woman wearing a male costume would have been more revealing and sexually alluring to audience members than a female one. While the sartorial detail certainly contributes to the commercial impetus to include cross-dressing in plays, it explains the motivation for—but not the entirety of—the effect. Cross-dressed heroines made for interesting and complex heroines who introduced a wider variety of sexual desires into a given dramatic intrigue while exposing the theatrical nature of identity. Characters like Tirso de Molina’s Don Gil present a superior version of masculinity that diverts female attention from the male protagonist and takes advantage of greater verbal and physical liberty to decry the injustices of the honor code, redirect the focus of the dramatic action, and create intricate levels of comedic confusion. Indeed, the use of transvestism became one of the key features of the Comedia.

The particular excitement and sense of anticipation surrounding Portillo’s appearance on stage as Segismundo at the Almagro festival and in subsequent performances in Madrid stemmed from her well-established professional reputation and celebri-
ty status, as well as from the nature of the part itself. A press release announcing the revival of the 2012 production pinpoints the fascination with the cross-gender casting as key to the production’s “it” factor: “El hecho de que una mujer interpretara el papel de Segismundo levantó una expectación inicial que, vistos los resultados, ha puesto de manifiesto el acierto de esta elección” (“Blanca”). The celebrity surrounding actresses of the Comedia taking on gender-bending roles begins with such early performers as Francisca Baltasara, Bárbara Coronel, and Jusepa Vaca, famous for their portrayals of mujeres varoniles, and continues on in the excitement and curiosity surrounding Portillo’s contemporary interpretation of Segismundo.

Blanca Portillo’s portrayal of Segismundo, of course, contrasts with another tradition of stage cross-dressing. She does not play Rosaura, the woman dressed as man, but rather Segismundo, the man wrapped in chains. In modern performances of early modern English drama, many prominent actresses have taken on lead male roles, such as Fiona Shaw in Richard II (1995), Kathryn Hunter as King Lear in 1997 and as Richard III in 2003, Vanessa Redgrave as Prospero in The Tempest in 2000, and Dawn French as Bottom in A Midsummer Night’s Dream in 2001 (Klett 166). Portillo herself portrayed Hamlet in a 2009 production directed by Tomaz Pandur, and according to Schechner, at least two hundred women have done so “over the centuries.” While Rosaura’s cross-dressed performance
develops within the confines of Calderón’s created reality, a modern performance’s cross-gender casting of the male lead represents an interpretive directorial decision.

In the case of Portillo’s portrayal of Segismundo, the casting inevitably carries with it a commentary on gendered practices beyond the scope of those relevant to Calderón. Such a commentary amounts to a deconstruction of the “universal” themes consistently linked to male heroes. Just as Schechner envisions cross-gender casting as creating greater professional opportunities for actresses, so too does director Helena Pimenta for actresses of the Comedia. She explains:

En el teatro clásico, los papeles masculinos tienen una mayor dimensión en abundancia y profundidad. Para mí, Segismundo es un ser humano, representa el recorrido vital de un ser humano, su despertar a la conciencia y su capacidad, desde la concepción más animal, para reconstruir la dignidad. Me parecía que el hecho de que Segismundo lo interpretara una actriz, aunque ella vaya vestida de hombre, significaba que los hombres no son los únicos que tienen derecho a tener un recorrido vital, sino también las mujeres. (qtd. in García)

The cross-gender staging of the play acknowledges the social strides for gender parity carried out in the
gap between the original context of performance and the work as imagined for a twenty-first century audience. As Pimenta notes, Portillo’s portrayal inevitably talks back to the gender politics that led to the creation of the original protagonist in order to assert that women, just as much as men, can and should have access to the kind of philosophical and psychological complexity inherent to Segismundo’s character development.

The decision to cast an actress in the role of Segismundo does not just make a contemporary statement about the accessibility of acting parts. The casting choice also affects the way in which actors and audience members experience the character of Segismundo, as suggested by Schechner, Hornby, and directors who have used cross-gendered and other forms of open casting. Portillo describes her approach to playing Segismundo as detached from an explicitly gendered interpretation. She instead emphasizes a human point of departure, separate from gender, which allows her to connect with, and portray, characters like Hamlet and Segismundo: “Yo juego a construir seres humanos. Más allá de su aspecto, de su género, me gusta averiguar qué tipo de ser humano se esconde. Me siento cómoda con Segismundo porque le entiendo, que es lo que debe hacer una actriz. Además, con él no pongo en juego mi lado masculino” (qtd. in Fernández). Portillo’s approach to, and identification with, the character of Segismundo led to an impactful and celebrated performance that merited repetition. How exactly each
audience member processed the performance would be impossible to determine, though it seems certain that the cross-gender portrayal elicited strong curiosity and high expectations on the part of the theater-going public.

The consciousness of the cross-gender casting of Segismundo leading into the CNTC’s production, as reflected in publicity surrounding the performance and Pimenta’s reflections on the character, links the open casting decision to seventeenth-century actresses and the public interest in their gender-bending roles. This same consciousness, however, makes it impossible for contemporary audiences to ignore the cross-gendered nature of the performance, precluding the non-gendered imagining of Segismundo employed in Portillo’s interpretation of the character. Watching the cross-gender Segismundo involves an organization of gender-based identifications that no longer align according to normative expectations. Elizabeth Klett describes this process of reception, asserting its potential to disrupt both ideologies of gender and classical theater simultaneously:

In performances such as these, the complex processes of reading those cross-gendered bodies ensures that the audience cannot easily identify them as “male,” “female,” “masculine,” or “feminine.” The performances continually destabilize such identities, and in tandem they challenge en-
trenched iconographies of Shakespearean roles. [...] When used strategically, women’s cross-gender performance can change our ideas about what gender and Shakespeare can or should look like. (167)

Klett further points out that while entirely female-cast Shakespeare productions sometimes led to humorous results, the isolation of a cross-dressed lead allowed for a more focused critique of masculinity. Hunter’s diminutive physical stature, for example, highlighted “Richard’s difficulties with achieving masculinity” (176). Portillo discusses how she did not go out of her way to play the role specifically as a man or a woman: “En la obra, hemos sacado ese lado que a veces los hombres no se atreven a sacar, el aspecto más sensible, la fragilidad. [...] Este gran pensador deja de ser un monstruo masculino, dictador, para convertirse en un ser humano” (qtd. in García). Her performance eschewed normative masculinity at the end of the second act, for example, when she delivered the famed soliloquy with persistent sobs, resulting in headlines such as “Blanca Portillo hace un tierno Segismundo en ‘La vida es sueño’” (Catalán Deus) and “La princesa Segismundo” (García).

The cross-gender portrayal of Segismundo prompts a juggling of masculine and feminine identifiers that ultimately layer to form these headlines of alternative masculinity. If such a process changes the face of the famed character as compared to non-
cross-gender versions, the manipulation of gender norms introduced by Portillo’s Segismundo is not altogether foreign to the original text. If we accept Portillo’s account of Segismundo within the CNTC’s production, Rosaura and Segismundo share very little in common in terms of their negotiation of gender norms. Both performances, however, only become intelligible to their audiences through the rearrangement of mainstream notions of the masculine and feminine. The non-gendered, “human” subjectivity suggested by Portillo’s discussion of portraying Segismundo evades Rosaura within the realm of _La vida es sueño_. There is simply no “más allá de su género” in that she cannot pursue a resolution to her conflict without deferring to normative gender expectations, even once she has rendered them pliable to the cross-dressing act. She instead manipulates normative masculinity and femininity, first through elements of disguise, and later through language itself during her final petition to Segismundo in act 3. Rather than propose a human (i.e. non-gendered) basis of identification with which Segismundo may sympathize, Rosaura goes the exact opposite route, portraying herself as “monstruo de una especie y otra, / entre galas de mujer / armas de varón me adornan” (3. 2724-30). Corresponding with her various moments of role-play throughout the play, Rosaura codifies herself as a constant mix of gendered elements, preserving essentialized notions of femininity and masculinity at the same time that she mixes and manipulates
them: “Mujer, vengo a persuadirte / al remedio de mi honra; / y varón, vengo a alentarte / a que cobres tu corona” (3. 2902-05).

As Portillo’s Segismundo inches closer to Rosaura, he also expands upon his own narrative of self-fashioning. Segismundo’s is not a cross-dressed plot. His story arc, however, does rely upon fundamental questions of subjectivity, self-knowledge, and free will. In fact, Segismundo’s struggles with perception and reality, as well as Basilio’s tactics to prevent his son’s supposed fate, form the basis of Lionel Abel’s concept of metatheater. Abel even marks Segismundo’s character plot as the emblematic overhauling of genre: “The tragedy fails. Basilio’s play succeeds. Metatheatre has replaced tragedy” (72). While it remains doubtful whether early modern society had fully detached itself from the religiosity that would necessitate the substitution of tragedy for metatheater, as scholars such as Edward Friedman have argued, the play’s main character’s quest to obrar bien carries with it a clearly theatrical discourse about the making of the self. From this vantage point, the creation of a cross-gender Segismundo further highlights early modern theater’s quintessential play of subjectivity, the liminal abundance of in-betweens embodied by characters such as Rosaura.

Cross-gender casting calls our attention to the centrality of self-conscious performance to the Comedia. The dismantling or destabilizing of gender effected by the cross-gender version of
Segismundo occurs within an art form that frequently meddles with identity in its various forms as a central type of theatrical play and artifice. Segismundo himself cannot get far into his philosophical journey without becoming intertwined with one such character: Rosaura. The Spanish Comedia features many dynamic female characters who bend gender with the express purpose of rectifying a specific personal circumstance, all the while carrying the art form to greater heights of comic perplexity. As the number of mistaken identities and performances of gender increases, so too does the corresponding thematic commentary on identity and its theatrical qualities. On the whole, strong female characters form a crucial aspect of the Comedia, allowing ample opportunities to showcase seventeenth-century female actors’ artistic talent. As Dawn Smith points out, various reactions of pleasure and moral disapproval to the original performances of Golden Age theater indicate the notable skill of these actresses: “it is not surprising that the dramatists themselves were eager to take advantage of this theatrical talent (although we do not know for sure which came first: the plays with strong roles for women, or the women actors to perform them)” (13). While the plotlines for these actresses are not limited to cross-dressing intrigue, the device appears frequently and introduces added layers of illusion and sensorial perplexity to the drama. Perhaps one of the strongest examples of such an effect is Tirso de Molina’s Don Gil de las calzas verdes,
whose title character uses an imitation of identity to manipulate all of the other characters on stage, while inspiring several other performances of Don Gil based on her own.4

Central to the enjoyment of watching Don Gil is the rapidity with which Doña Juana’s version of Don Gil captivates those around her/him. The Theatre Royal performance of the play in 2013, under the direction of Mehmet Ergen, captured this excitement by staging a euphoric moment of wonder as Juana reflects upon her success while leaves fall from the sky. During a question-and-answer session after one of the performances, actress Hedydd Dylan commented that she aimed to play the moment as if the character were high. The narcotic nod highlights the way in which the excesses of control and mastery forged by Doña Juana’s gender play allow her to operate on another dramatic level than that of her dramatic counterparts, as she goes on to direct the imitations and confusions of other characters, and their versions of Don Gil, from the stage.

The female cross-dresser initiates the complex process of reception exemplified by Portillo’s portrayal of Segismundo. The break between appearance and reality that Juana plays with derives from this same rupture as experienced by the audience. Tracy Sedinger emphasizes in her discussion of early modern stage transvestism that the cross-dressed stage actor offers an experience of dramatic irony for audiences, who see one gender proposed
by the play, but know the actor to be of another. This does not create androgyny, but rather a break between the visible and the knowable (68-69). In the case of *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*, the play both makes the audience privy to multiple occurrences of this break and consistently signals the heterogeneous nature of Juana’s character. While we watch Doña Juana/Don Gil pass as woman and then man to orchestrate further imitations, the servant characters consistently remind us that Doña Juana is a manly woman and Don Gil is a womanly man. As Jelena Sánchez points out in her discussion of Tirso’s play, if Juana offers a version of masculinity for audiences, it is a highly effeminized version that “represents the ubiquity of a feminized mass culture in Spain” (140). In addition to the sexual connotations of the green breeches, Caramanchel’s consistent commentary lets no one forget the feminine aspects of Don Gil’s appearance. This constant reminder of Don Gil’s effeminacy does not just resonate with a feminized society, but also offers a blended figure that the audience can identify as neither man nor woman throughout the play. These reminders signal the way in which only a blurring of these identities can sustain the break between appearance and reality that follows (and multiplies to the point of farcicality).

Through cross-dressing, the metadramaturga creates a spectacle that demonstrates the link between identity and invention by breaking the ties between appearance and knowledge. In this
sense, she does not just excite male audience members through her apparel, but also manipulates the theatricality of everyday life to confuse normative notions of subjectivity from the stage. In *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*, this is done to extremes, creating multiple layers of imitation and confusion. The most fundamental confusion, that of Juana/Gil’s identity, coupled with the audience’s awareness of the subsequent intrigue, creates a theater within a theater that many (in the play and in the audience) wanted to watch.

On the one hand, early modern Spanish theater does not seem to offer a form of “role model feminism,” given the conservative marriage endings that typify *comedias de capa y espada*. While cross-dressed characters often acquire increased physical and verbal agency to speak out against their own abandonment and to outperform their former suitor’s normative brand of masculinity, these efforts culminate in a marriage to this same offender. On the other hand, while the exact contours of the *mujer varonil*’s character arc may fall short of a full critique of patriarchy, the theatrical mechanisms by which her antics gain traction suggest an underlying critique of identity’s mutable qualities. As Alisa Solomon argues in her discussion of the innate ties between gender and the development of Western drama:

Theater can question the very means of its production, call attention to its own process-
es and limits, and, as a result, raise questions about the images and ideologies it may give stage and voice to. It can self-reflexively consider its own embeddedness in cultural institutions and historical moments. When it does so, theater—in Stuart Hall’s terms—“negotiates” dominant culture, at once re-producing and resisting it: self-conscious theater self-deconstructs. (2-3)

Given a patriarchal vision of woman as artificial, malleable, and changeable, Solomon goes on to argue that femininity has always been caught up with notions of acting and impersonation. As such, the theatrical representation of gender serves as prime material and mechanism for the self-conscious negotiation of dominant culture played out from the stage.

Solomon’s assertions regarding the relationship between gender and theater stem largely from the prevalence of female impersonation on the English Jacobean stage, where often a play could not happen without theatrical transvestism. While the early modern Spanish commercial dramatic venture did not necessitate female impersonation in the same way that the English stage did, the active choice to negotiate gender identity, as in the examples of Don Gil and Rosaura, makes all the more explicit and referential the public’s complicity in the illusion of gender. Theater-goers would have experienced a similar disconnect between sight and
knowledge, given that they witness a transformation of gender that goes unrecognized by the other characters on stage for the majority of the play. These cross-dressing plots not only make self-conscious reference to the social construction of gender, but they also make possible further interrogations or negotiations of normative structures of desire, as well as other levels of identity.

My intention here has been, first, to emphasize that many seemingly modern or “postmodern” diversions from early modern playtexts merely expand upon, or intensify, the extant self-referential treatment of identity inherent to early modern Spanish drama. Secondly, when interpretive changes wrought by contemporary staging to elements such as traditional casting or conservative endings enter into the created realities of seventeenth-century drama, they cannot be read as culturally distinct from the self-conscious performances already at play in the original playtext. When Pimenta and Portillo explain their motivations for the cross-dressed casting of Segismundo, they imagine a re-reading or contemporary assertion of Segismundo as a character whose spiritual journey lends itself to both women and men, correcting the kind of principle of white male universality that continually yielded male protagonists. The reception of the performance, nevertheless, insists upon a gendered reading of the portrayal in which Portillo’s interpretation inevitably operates within a normative ideology of masculinity: Portillo creates a Segismundo
who is “tierno,” challenging a traditional version of masculinity, but ultimately constituted within its parameters. Rosaura’s own maneuvering of male and female points of identification reflects the inescapability of gender’s performativity. Even as she weaves in and out of different gender identities, and even as she defines herself dually as man and woman, she does so within the confines of clearly delineated and culturally prescribed definitions of each sex. The early modern, in this sense, anticipates the modern. If Portillo’s portrayal of Segismundo’s recorrido vital aims to reshape a masculine role to be more inclusive of women, such a motive meets its early modern match in the mujer varonil’s attempt to appropriate masculine privilege (in its visual and verbal forms) to correct woman’s lack of options upon being dishonored.

During any given performance of an early modern Spanish play, we experience what Charles Ganelin refers to as “the hermeneutical bridge.” Drawing on theories of reception and reader response, Ganelin posits the performance of Golden Age drama as generating an inevitable temporal cross of historical/literary past and interpretive present: “Past meets present in continuous mediation, in part because of their constant contact, in part because the past’s traditions are so essential to the formulations of our understanding not only of past literary works but of present ones as well” (38). In somuch as a Golden Age play draws upon past social and literary conventions, ultimately the inter-
pretation of the original playtext responds to the expectations of the twenty-first century audience, fashioning a new artwork that furthers the performance history of a given play. The performance of an early modern play can go two ways: it can “offer a continuity of a tradition,” fulfilling “certain normative expectations of its genre and period” or it can break away from that same tradition (39).

In the latter case, we find ourselves within an artistic medium defined neither exclusively by its early modern literary origin nor its twenty-first century theatrical context, perhaps captured best by the interlocking gaze of Calderón’s protagonists (Figure 1). It is here that contemporary performance can highlight a series of extratextual elements unique to the staging of the early modern playtext. In the 2003 production of Don Gil de las calzas verdes by the Teatro Corsario in Spain, Caramanchel, played by Luis Miguel García, positions himself on the bridge occupied by Doña Juana and her servant at the start of the play. Caramanchel assumes a liminal physical positioning, given that he stands on a connector of two definable places. As he delivers his speech, his “audition” for the role of Don Gil’s criado, he tries on Don Gil’s green scarf, providing another implicit reference (here, sartorial) to the invented nature of Gil’s persona and its reliance on clothing to best Don Martín’s original Don Gil. Though slightly less contemporary, the 1989 production of El vergonzoso en palacio at the Almagro festival makes highly explicit the implicit homoerotic tensions between
Serafina and Juana as the two rehearse Serafina’s next cross-dressed role. To offer a more recent example, contemporary stagings can even tamper with the conservative marriage arrangement without changing the words themselves. Returning to the 2012 CNTC rendition of *La vida es sueño*, in the final scene, when Rosaura receives the news that she will marry Astolfo, she appears notably shocked and crestfallen, encoding the decision as decidedly unwelcome.

Blanca Portillo’s portrayal of Segismundo was a wild success, continuing the CNTC’s program of bringing Spain’s classics to a modern audience. As we continue to stage and critique performances of the *Comedia*, we must keep in mind that we are representing, and receiving, a genre born out of defiance in the spirit of an ingenuity that only expands throughout the seventeenth century. Cross-gender casting creates more opportunities for actors and audience members to experience the art form, as actresses can now take on emblematic male roles such as that of Segismundo. But such casting decisions do not occur within a genre blind to the challenging of gender roles or devoid of interesting roles for women. Characters like Don Gil also remind us of the comedic heights achieved by those actresses who graced the stage in the seventeenth century. These actresses and the gender-bending characters they portrayed infused the *Comedia* with a manipulation of identity that meets the creative
When the past meets present, we find that the past is very present. Ultimately, Portillo’s cross-gendered casting as well as Tirso’s cross-dressed character draw our attention once again to our own complicity in bearing witness to, and sustaining, the theatrical illusion of identities and identities upon identities in their various layers on stage. As the imitations of imitations of Don Gil spiral to greater depths of confusion, the cross-dressed Doña Juana ascends to new heights of knowledge and power, brandishing a wondrous discovery of ingenuity for the audience. In this sense, if contemporary performance forges a cross of expectations, the mirror image of Segismundo and Rosaura during their first encounter emblematizes for us the mutually sustaining nature of this cross. As the two gaze at each other, fascinated and perplexed by the encounter, we see the way in which performance holds up a mirror to the relationship between gender and theater across centuries.

NOTES

1 For a detailed comparison of the two traditions, see Walter Cohen’s Drama of a Nation.

2 Melveena McKendrick provides a comprehensive overview of the various character types that fall under this label (Woman and Society).
3 For further discussion of queer approaches to the *Comedia* and the relationship between representations of same-sex desire and stage transvestism, see Matthew Stroud’s *Plot Twists and Critical Turns*.

4 Doña Juana crafts her version of Don Gil, which inspires imitations, through Don Martín’s original creation of the character. In order to discuss these different levels of imitation, Ellen Frye coins the term “meta-imitation” as a specific degree of metatheatrical gesture in which “a character attempts to mimic another character precisely, but that other character is him-or herself already an imitation” or “when one character adopts a new identity, and while in that role, takes on yet another identity” (129), both of which occur in Tirso’s play. Meta-imitation, in fact, is so pervasive that it is “the backbone of the entire structure of the play” (140).

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(RE)STAGING THE TRAGIC GAZE IN LOPE’S *EL CASTIGO SIN VENGANZA*: A VERBAL (MIS)REPRESENTATION OF A VISUAL REPRESENTATION?

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_Ceci n’est pas une pipe_

By presenting a verbal and visual action in a perpetual present moment, theatre creates an experience that lives before other people. Performed by live actors during a time shared with an audience, a live performance has an impact and effectiveness that is immediate and powerful. The overt presence of the actor and the audience in or at the performance makes clear its nature as event rather than object. Transitory and indeterminate, it eludes representation, or what James Heffernan denominates, in his proverbial re-definition of ekphrasis, “a verbal representation of a visual representation.” Magritte’s picture title *Ceci n’est pas une pipe*, which Heffernan labels a “critique of representation” (304), captures
the idea that a verbal and graphic re-creation of a mise en scène, after the fact, is inevitably not that mise en scène, but rather a mis-representation of that representation, which was itself a stage illusion of “reality.” The act of reading and resurrecting a performance is fraught with tensions: “eloquent silence, plenitudinous emptiness, exact inexactitudes, present absence,” as Valentine Cunningham observes with respect to the paradox of representation in the mediation titled “Why Ekphrasis?” (71).

This brief foray into ancient rhetorical practice to which we shall return below—with its focus on impact rather than mere analysis—is intended to penetrate the process of re-viewing performance in the spirit of “curating enquiry” rather than sustained critique.¹ It takes as a point of departure William Hoyland’s characterization of the Duke of Ferrara in Laurence Boswell’s production of Meredith Oakes’s “pithy and pointed new translation” (Taylor) of Lope’s El castigo sin venganza [Punishment Without Revenge], presented by the Ustinov Studio, Theatre Royal Bath in 2013. It also returns briefly, by way of contrast, to Eduardo Vasco’s production of the play, presented by Madrid’s Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC) in 2005.²

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Fig 1. William Hoyland as Duke of Ferrara in Ustinov Studio’s 2013 production of *Punishment without Revenge*, directed by Laurence Boswell. Photo courtesy of Jane Hobson.

If Ferrara’s Duke is generally thought to be at the center of the “tragedia,” so denominated by the autographic manuscript of 1631, and more controversially, a “tragic figure”—a tormented and despondent man upon learning that his son has both betrayed and dishonored him in an *affaire de coeur* with his stepmother—such a construction of character was not entirely apprehended by everyone spectating at Boswell’s mise en scène. When Hoyland-Ferrara first stepped out under the gallery upstage right, donned his hood, opened with the loaded “I really mustn’t be recognized” (7) under the
gaze of the all-knowing prostitute Cintia (Hedydd Dylan) looking down from on high, and swigged from a bottle of wine, there was a certain tightness in actor’s style that did not convey the discomfiture of an arguably ruminative Duke in conflict with his profligate lifestyle. From the outset, then, the performance of this actor in this dramatic, as opposed to cinematic, role promised (for many spectators) to be not so much riveting as leaden. In fact, the actor admitted in a post-performance discussion that, because of his vast experience in cinema, he struggled with delivering speeches directly to a live audience; he needed to “plunge in” and “state what he was feeling” (Fig. 1).

Hoyland was prone to thunderous vocal explosions and bouts of anger, at times clenching fists and teeth; for example, when Federico pretended to scorn Aurora because of a rival’s attention, the Duke bellowed, to the crash of cymbals, “Your language is barbaric and indecent” (41). These histrionic acting choices seemed to work against the actor’s stated notion that his character, however misogynous, was not an “inhuman monster” but a “human being.” Hoyland explained that he saw three possibilities with respect to the Duke’s “conversion” after returning from the papal wars: he was only pretending to change; he was convincing himself to change; he had in fact changed. The actor’s intention was to play the middle course: from that day on, the Duke would love Casandra. Hoyland was an imposing figure of
judgment as he eavesdropped on Federico and Casandra from on high in the gallery, so as to have proof of their *liaison dangereuse*: his white hair and beard stood out in the darkness, whereas his black gown (with its clerical collar and the dangling cross he often touched) merged with the blackout behind (Fig. 2). Despite protestations to the contrary, this Duke seemed to be effecting not so much punishment as revenge; in his speech of self-justification, he pointedly clenched fists and teeth to *indicate* the conflict between filial love and respect for an honor code that had “to prosecute its case” (92). Gestures at times over-accentuated the words of the text. And his escalation on “Silence, you wretch. […] You dog!” (94), as Federico went off to run Casandra through with a sword, made the tragedy seem not so much that of the Duke as of the lovers. Not surprisingly, then, this actor never quite succeeded in conveying through his performance the “both and all” of the Duke’s dauntingly “complejo” and “ambiguo” character in the words of seventeenth-century *comediante* Manuel Vallejo (the ingenious *alter ego* of Victor Dixon)—“sinner and saint, cruel and just a dissembler and also a seeker of truth” (Van Antwerp 206)³—hardly an easy task for an actor not always already steeped in the exigencies and nuances of (classical) theatre to master, differences of meter, rhythm, tone, and language notwithstanding.⁴
The energy of this spectator, by way of contrast, was drawn almost exclusively to the passionate conflict of the lovers Cassandra (Frances McNamee) and Federico (Nick Barber). McNamee’s consummately rendered Cassandra was exceedingly proud and intelligent. It was a pregnant moment every time stepson (Nick Barber) kneeled and kissed stepmother’s hand (Fig. 3). The actress explained that their attraction occurred when they first laid eyes on each other (offstage), as he rescued her from the river, whose “shade and coolness” (18) she had sought, however ironically. It was a primal encounter, filled with erotic arousal, and beyond reason: a matter of chemistry, magnetism, bodily odors. If there was a sense of imminent danger, the
lovers were doomed from the beginning, pressed on by passionate energy. As their passion intensified, outer garments were discarded, and white collars either disappeared or became untidy: Federico (Nick Barber), especially, became more disheveled (jacket off, white shirttails out, barefoot, hair messy) (Fig. 4). Cassandra later wore a red negligee, patterned in grey paisley, over a white nightgown; those colors arguably captured her desperation and foretold her bloody demise. For McNamee, the Duke’s treatment of his wife was pure effrontery. She imagined a rough encounter on their wedding night, virtually the “rape of a virgin.” The actress took the woman’s part in her fashioning of Cassandra, highlighting her strength and rebelliousness; the lines—“[A] wife is just an object / Like a chair or desk or portrait. […] I won’t live on terms like this” (37)—were pronounced with tears and tightened fists and read as a poignant feminist statement for today. This Cassandra had to be sure that Federico was in love with her, and “not Aurora” (48), before admitting, “My decision’s already made” (60). Anger at the Duke led her to take revenge. If Nick Barber viewed Federico as selfish and self-absorbed, he was also thought to exude a “neurotic anguish” that complemented Cassandra-McNamee’s “reined-in sensuality” (Billington) (Fig. 5). Federico was living moment to moment during the affair; later, he believed he could lead a double existence with Cassandra and Aurora, but then reality struck. If Federico was aware of his father’s sexual hypocrisy,
he was able to compartmentalize the Duke’s behavior. Though his father lavished love on him, it was an idealized relationship rather than open and free. These characters did not always speak their minds but let desires bottle up.

Fig. 3. Frances McNamee as Cassandra and Nick Barber as Federico in Ustinov Studio’s 2013 production of *Punishment without Revenge*, directed by Laurence Boswell. Photo courtesy of Jane Hobson.
If, as the adage goes, a picture is worth a thousand words, then the bloody spectacle of Federico and Casandra lying murdered in a still image at the end spoke volumes as it captured the audience’s gaze. Stepson and stepmother were revealed in the period “discovery space” in front of a blood-red Rorschach image splotched against black: Federico, in a blood-stained white shirt, lay on the silver ducal chair, by then a metonymic object, atop Casandra, gagged and bloody (Fig. 6). This intelligently enacted Aurora (Katie Lightfoot) offered a telling coda when, after seeing the spectacle of corpses upstage, she ignored the outstretched hand of this production’s ingratiating and opportunistic Marquis of Mantua (Doug Rao) and went off directly. She had moved in earlier as if to stop the killing of her love; clearly, she could not marry a man
she had only pretended to love, and who had followed orders to take Federico’s life. The deep sobbing of Cassandra’s maidservant Lucrecia (Annie Hemingway) also spoke volumes as she looked on from her position upstage right.

If the lovers were thought to emerge as “tragic figures” at the center of the tragedy, that would imply not only a willing suspension of judgment or even a certain “irreverence” regarding their (technically) incestuous affair—perhaps not so outré for some twenty-first century spectators—but also elicit an inquiry into the ways in which an actor’s depiction of character worked in tandem, or not, with a director’s artistic conception. In other words, because of Hoyland’s tepid rendition of the
Duke, Boswell’s production did not finally read, following the gaze of this spectator, as globally tragic as did, for example, Eduardo Vasco’s mise en scène of the play, updated to the Italy of the 1920s and 1930s under the fascist dictatorship of Mussolini. If Vasco did not deny that *El castigo* tells the story of the Duke’s tragic desolation, he opted more broadly to “conducir el final del montaje hacia la desolación de todos los personajes. De los que asisten como espectadores a la tragedia y de los que la sufren” (Zubieta 35, emphasis added). Though, for this spectator, the Bath production did not create such a pervasive feeling of tragedy, it did seem to capture the story Vasco thought Lope aimed to tell. “Habla fundamentalmente de la imposibilidad del amor, de que hay un momento en el que siempre se corta” (Zubieta 34), the director asserted, elaborating the idea in his Program Notes appositely, if paradoxically, entitled “*Et in Arcadia, ego*”:6

El amor que ha protagonizado su dramaturgia casi de manera absoluta, es ya otra cosa: no es un juego de galanteos y satisfacciones entre damas y caballeros, ni tampoco el enamoramiento cortesano doliente; es una pasión compleja, poderosa y madura que no entiende de formas, contextos, ni convenciones. Dоблегa toda voluntad a un único deseo: la posesión del ser amado física y espiritualmente, sin que nada más tenga sentido. Una vez conseguido
abandona a los amantes a su suerte, y ellos, ocupados, ebrios en su labor, no recuerdan el viejo epitafio latino. La muerte también habita en Arcadia. (9)

At the same time, Vasco’s performative vision privileged “la ambivalencia entre persona de Estado y persona humana,” comparing the Duke’s battle between public and private self to that of Sophocles’s tragic subject: “el conflicto de Creonte en Antígona es el de su Yo persona contra su Yo estado, como sucede con el Duque en El castigo, por eso el texto se centra en su personaje, por razones tradicionales de tragedia” (Zubieta 35). However much this Duke of Ferrara was linked to Il Duce, the actor (Arturo Querejeta) played down such a literal connection (as revealed over a drink after one show): “Fascista ¡bah! Dicen que tengo la facha de Mussolini. ¿Qué culpa tengo yo de haber nacido así, de parecerme a él, involuntariamente, desde luego. Hay que creer que al final el Duque queda destrozado como padre y como duque; si no, no se puede desempeñar el papel” (Fischer, “Lope’s Aspectuality” 150) (Fig. 7). It would seem that Vasco’s movement from the present (twentieth-century Italy) to the past (fifth-century BC Greece) in his mental conception of the tragedy worked to create a deeper understanding of the Duke’s conflict between public and private self, arguably impacting the actor in his creation of the role and, by extension, the audience in its response to what it heard and saw on stage.
Fig. 6. Nick Barber as Federico and Frances McNamee as Cassandra in Ustinov Studio’s 2013 production of *Punishment without Revenge*, directed by Laurence Boswell. Photo courtesy of Jane Hobson.

What then, in theoretical and practical terms, radically tipped the scales in Boswell’s production toward a reading of the lovers as tragic figures rather than the Duke, or of “todos los personajes” as tragic figures, as in Vasco’s production? A partial answer may lie in Aristotle’s reminder that acting is doing, not emoting:
Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of action and of life, and life consists in action, and its end is a mode of action, not quality. Now character determines men’s qualities, but it is by their actions that they are happy or the reverse. (9, emphasis added)

This is not to say (in modern acting terms) that the actor’s performance will not be emotionally charged, but that he will not “play the emotion directly,” he will evoke it: “The emotion which the actor experiences is a result of other things he does. The direct playing of an emotion (imitating the external manifestations of the emotion) produces ‘quality-acting’, which we usually call ‘ham’” (Rockwood 44, emphasis in original). Whether one follows the James-Lange theory which posits that emotional experience is largely due to the experience of bodily changes, or the opposite notion, that physiological changes are caused by emotions (collectively known as the Cannon-Bard theory of emotion), for the actor it only matters that the two factors—the mental apperception of a stimulus and the corresponding physical manifestation—work together:

The poor actor indicates to the audience the physical results of the emotion he is supposedly feeling, and short-cuts the mental process. He leaves out the vital why
of the emotional experience. [...] The actor, then, must know what his action is. He must physically do it, and he must know why he is doing it. (Rockwood 45, emphasis in original)

Fig. 7. Arturo Querétera as Duke in CNTC’s production of El castigo sin venganza, directed by Eduardo Vasco. Photo courtesy of Ros Ribas.

If we turn to seventeenth-century acting practice we may recall that, as Evangelina Rodríguez Cuadros asserts citing the Defensa para el uso de la comedias (1646) of D. Melchor de Cabrera y Guzmán, it is “el comediante el que da acción y voz a lo que representa ‘diciéndolo como si lo sintiera y
sintiéndolo como si de verdad padeciera y obrara (...) porque finge el método que le dió el arte y hace lo que le toca por su oficio”” (38). It would seem, then, that Hoyland’s construction of the Duke’s character in Boswell’s production did not lend sufficient action and voice to the part. The actor did not play as if he felt it, feeling it all as though he were really suffering and working. And in the “preparatory” commentary proffered by the comediante Vallejo, we also hear of acting as “doing” rather that simply “saying” through the technique of “la representación turbulenta, que consiste más en hacer que en hablar” (Dixon 72)—here with respect to the Duke’s first soliloquy (3.2467-2551) upon discovering through a letter that “el conde y la duquesa. . . / ofenden con infame atrevimiento / [su] cama y honor” (3.2485, 2488-89) (Fig. 8). Vallejo understands the complexity and ambiguity of his role, underscoring the comparison of the Duke to King David upon facing the death of his beloved son Absalom, and noting the irony of Ferrara’s professed moral “conversion”: “Si yo soy ya realmente como él un santo, como dijo Ricardo—y no un ‘santo fingido,’ como dirá Batín—el mensaje de la obra es semejante y tremendamente irónico: arrepentirnos de nuestros pecados de ninguna manera nos exime de su angustiada expiación” (72). With respect to the second soliloquy, spoken after the Duke has seen ocular proof of Federico and Casandra’s “crimen” (Dixon 73), Vallejo stresses that the play-text details the physiological symptoms
for the actor to draw on in creating the necessary “turbación” for the scene:

tiembla el cuerpo, expira el alma,
lloran los ojos, la sangre
muere en las venas heladas,
el pecho se desalienta,
el entendimiento falta,
la memoria está corrida
y la voluntad turbada.
Como arroyo que detiene
el hielo de noche larga,
del corazón a la boca
prende el dolor las palabras. (3.2871-2881)

The question arises as to how the actor might prepare to render such a state of turbación in believable fashion without over(re)acting, and forthwith to apostrophize paternal love to exculpate the son he adores, but then to allege a series of opposing arguments. In a task of dramaturgical exegesis drawing in large part on Vallejo-Dixon’s construction of the Duke as a stage character, Isaac Benabu offers some thoughts on how to enact the Duke’s alternately rational and irrational state: “On the stage it is easy to convey two emotions at once, as the audience sees both the character’s pain and his attempts to avoid it. . . . Theatrically, I think an actor would look further back in the play-text to understand the Duke’s mood in this soliloquy” (222). Vallejo astutely leaves open the question of whether
the Duke is vindictive and hypocritical, or sincere if self-deceiving, in his decision to mask vengeance as punishment. He posits that Lope may be wanting the audience to meditate on the alternative of separating punishment from vengeance, insofar as the Duke himself was the victim of the offense—perhaps in order to call into question the duplicity of the law of honor (or its modern equivalent of pride), even when punctiliously followed by a loyal adherent (73). This possibility certainly tips the scales in favor of the Duke being enacted in performance as a tragic figure, which Benabu advocates: “Beneath the Duke’s anger is the tormented man who confessed his pain earlier. It is the private face that utters, ‘Llanto sobra, y valor falta’ (3.3015)” (223). From the subjective gaze of this spectator / re-viewer, Ferrara fell short on that score in Boswell’s production, whereas his homologue in Vasco’s mise en scène came closer to fulfilling that theatrical vision.

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Fig. 8. William Hoyland as Duke of Ferrara in Ustinov Studio’s 2013 production of *Punishment without Revenge*, directed by Laurence Boswell. Photo courtesy of Jane Hobson.

**Ekphrasis—A Verbal (Mis)representation of a Visual Representation?**

The act of reading and re-viewing stage performance by die-hard performance critics, of re-presenting or re-visualizing—alas, never replicating—a mise en scène through “verbal painting,” can perhaps be the more gainfully considered in terms of Boswell and Vasco’s productions if we invoke the ancient rhetorical
process of ekphrasis, and its defining qualities of enargeia ("vividness") and phantasia ("impression"), which formed part of a program of progymnasmata or the training of an orator. Defined in the Progymnasmata (or elementary exercises in Greek rhetoric) as "a speech that brings the subject matter vividly before the eyes," it is a way of "making the listener ‘see’ the subject in their mind’s eye" through the power of words to kindle mental images or phantasmata (Webb 14, 2). It is an approach that makes listeners (and readers) into "spectators"—with the additional effect of producing an emotional impact, involving them imaginatively and affectively in the event. This means that what is imitated in ekphrasis, with its practices of enargeia (making visible) and phantasia (getting into the emotions, bringing urgency and passion to words), is not reality (and not the "illusion of reality" the theatrical representation can be) but the perception of reality: "the word does not seek to represent, but to have an effect in the audience’s mind that mimics the act of seeing" (Webb 38).

As Simon Goldhill underscores in "What Is Ekphrasis For?" ekphrasis, with its focus on "how viewing functions" and its relation to "psychological processes and the production of speech," is also related to the idea of spectacle and to the theatre—the space of seeing and illusion (2). If ekphrasis is meant to produce "a viewing subject" (2), Nikolaus’s qualification in the fifth century of making an audience “almost become viewers” is crucial
because the descriptive power of rhetorical theory is “a technique of illusion, semblance, of making to appear” (Goldhill 3). A psychological (rather than a narrative) analysis of ekphrasis takes us to Quintilian who uses phantasia (“impression”) to assert that, “through enargeia in ekphrastic prose the orator can reach the innermost mind—the deepest emotions—of the listener (6.2.29)”; such a way of provoking emotion perforce bypasses intellectual and critical faculties (Goldhill 4, 7).

There is an assumption here, however, that, as Ruth Webb notes, “what the audience will feel that they can ‘see’ is the same as what the orator ‘sees’ and that the listener or reader will share the vision that he [sic] has created in his mind”; that the “speaker’s visual image is assumed to be transmitted to the audience through the medium of words and to give rise to a comparable image in their minds” (96). Thus, all the while that enargeia and phantasia persuade by getting at the emotions, the process also “ enslaves,” as Pseudo-Longinus posits in his treatise, On the Sublime:

What then is the effect of rhetorical visualization? There is much it can do to bring urgency and passion into our words; but when it is closely involved with factual arguments as well as persuading the listener, it enslaves him. (15.9, qtd. in Goldhill 4, emphasis added)
When rhetorical visualization overpowers the listener in factual cases, it is difficult to resist and be critical—by invoking the intellectual faculties—because, as Longinus states, “we are diverted from the demonstration to the astonishment caused by the visualization, which by its very brilliance conceals the factual aspect” (15.10-11, qtd. in Goldhill 5). This natural psychological response, according to Goldhill, points to the potentially violent power of *enargeia* as it functions in *ekphrasis* and *phantasia* because, as he paraphrases Longinus, “we are dragged by force away from proof, away from demonstration towards passive experience: *paschomen*. *Phantasia*, which utilizes the same power of *enargeia* as ekphrasis, *does* something to the listener” (Goldhill 5, emphasis in original).

**Caveat Criticus / Critica**

As Webb observes, “the orator and the actor both share the paradoxical state of feeling imaginary things as if [*quam si*] they were real, a state which they are able to induce in their audiences as well” (104). The act of re-viewing carries within it a danger of solipsism: each reader’s post-performance response remains only one—Protean—viewpoint, perforce influenced, slanted, or biased by “the accidents of a particular performance, our own attentiveness or lack of it, and even our sense of the play” (Gilbert 609). And it is inevitably “*quam si,*” subjective and contingent—potentially *enslaving*—
as Longinus posits. Given the potential might of enslavement and/or solipsism signaled above, the process of re-viewing, of re-presenting or re-visualizing—alas, never replicating—the potentially tragic aspects of the Duke’s character in the English and Spanish productions evoked here may be the more fruitfully conceptualized if we bear in mind Jaś Elsner’s notion of visuality and subjectivity as described in his chapter on “Ekphrasis and the Gaze”:

Ekphrasis itself, insofar as it provides a pedagogical model for the gaze, may be seen as both its enabler (in helping the viewers it is training to see) and its occluder (in the veil of words with which it screens and obscures the purported visual object). But when, in its own performance, ekphrasis demonstrates a clear self-awareness of both these qualities (enabling and occluding), then one might say that its true subject is not the verbal depiction of a visual object but, rather, the verbal enactment of the gaze that tries to relate with and penetrate the object. (68)

Notwithstanding that there are differences between classical ekphrasis (with its defining quality of \textit{enargeia}) and modern reception aesthetics, between (in telescopic terms) a focus on “action” and an emphasis on “signification,”\textsuperscript{9} perhaps Oscar Wilde got it right when he penned, with proverbial tongue-
in-cheek, in *The Picture of Dorian Grey* what is arguably a *caveat criticus / critica*:

All art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril. Those who read the symbol do so at their peril. It is the *spectator*, and not life, that art really mirrors. (Preface, emphasis added)

However much this verbal and graphic recreation of aspects of two mises en scène of Lope’s *El castigo sin venganza* is perforce *not* those mises en scène but verbal mis-representations of those visual representations, it is hoped that the subjective gaze of this spectator *enacted* and *mirrored* here has felicitously related with and penetrated the stage objects, so as to involve sentient devotees of performance imaginatively and affectively in theatrical events and leave to them the task of eking out whose tragedy it was, anyway. In this way, arguably, tragedy will become a resource, however “irreverent,” with which “to think, feel, and perform the urgencies of the times” (Foley and Howard 631).
The phrase “curating enquiry” is drawn from the self-denominated practice described by Billy Desmond in a book review of Frederick (‘Fritz’) S. Perls’s rather erratic tome, *From Planned Psychotherapy to Gestalt Therapy: Essays and Lectures 1945-1965*, which the reviewer labels a “retrospective” rather than a critique (276). Pertinently, the art of curating is described as “‘junction-making’—between objects, between people, and between people and objects” (cited in Max 64).

This article will reproduce some salient points detailed elsewhere, in an effort to determine the extent to which characters emerged on stage as tragic figures. Clearly, what follows here conforms subjectively to this spectator’s readings of the play both on the page and on stage. See Fischer, “Lope and Tirso,” regarding Bath’s Golden-Age Season; and Fischer, “Lope’s Aspectuality,” regarding the CNTC production.

The ambiguity and complexity of the Duke as a dramatic character has been amply noted and analyzed (see, for example, Carreño, González Echeverría, Larson, McKendrick, Van Antwerp). The Duke as an ambiguous and complex stage character has also been studied, albeit less frequently (see Dixon and Benabu for the construction of the Duke realized from the play-text; and Fischer, “Lope’s Aspectuality,” for a [re]construction of the Duke vis-à-vis stage performance). In a mesa-debate, “En torno al montaje Donde hay agravios no hay celos: la risa ayer y hoy,” which took place on 1 December 2014 at the Teatro Pavón (Madrid), CNTC artistic director Helena Pimenta remarked that academic articles reflecting on the plays not as “theatre” but as “drama” (i.e., through the prism of...
of poetic, historicist, materialist, feminist, postcolonialist, Lacanian, cognitive, digital, or other emerging approaches to textual study) have often informed her productions of Shakespeare and the Comedia. Indubitably, not every reading of early modern plays has to be undertaken with the stage specifically in mind, as some scholars who are also die-hard devotees / directors of theatre would contend, even though those plays were originally intended to be performed.

4 To be fair to Hoyland, Lope’s Duke only appears in some 780 lines in a play that runs 3024 lines (in the edition by A. David Kossoff); consequently, “the actor playing the part of the Duke must do a lot of filling in” (Benabu 218).

5 The final thought penned by Helene P. Foley and Jean E. Howard in their introduction to a special issue of PMLA on tragedy might help to explain why El castigo sin venganza is at once so problematic and enticing: “[T]ragedy is perhaps most vibrantly alive when treated irreverently, as a resource with which to think, feel, and perform the urgencies of the times” (631, emphasis added).

6 Et in Arcadia ego [Even in Arcadia, there I am], the title of two paintings by Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), is a memento mori indicating that even in a utopian world filled with satisfaction and pleasure, the shadow of death is forever hovering.

7 In this account of how an actor “se prepara,” there is an implicit connection, however anachronistic, with the first of Konstantin Stanislavski’s books on acting (An Actor Prepares, 1936), which was intended not as a specific method but as a systematic analysis of the “natural” order of theatrical truth for the purpose of stimulating the actor’s creativeness and imagination.
8 The potential pertinence of ekphrasis to reading and re-viewing performance emerged in a course on Renaissance Art at the Centre des Études Supérieures de la Renaissance (CESR) in Tours, France. I am grateful to Emeritus Professor Maurice Brock for stimulating my mind in that direction.

9 Jane P. Tompkins underscores this comparison, saying that if the modern critic would want to enable the reader to have mental or emotional experiences, moving toward an interpretation of the work, however insubstantial or provisional, the classical commentator would have sought to pull the reader into the action of a text so as to produce an effect, with virtually no interest in problematizing that effect, or even of reflecting critically on the nature of the experience: impact rather than analysis; language equated with “action,” not with “signification” (202-03, emphasis added). The passage cited from Longinus’s treatise, On the Sublime, to show the way in which a particular locution in Herodotus affects the hearer is worth reproducing here, in order to underscore the classical premise that “direct address effectively draws the reader in to the scene of the action”:

2. . . . Do you observe, my friend, how he [Herodotus] leads you in imagination through the region and makes you see what you hear? All such cases of direct personal address place the hearer on the very scene of the action. 3. So it is when you seem to be speaking, not to all and sundry, but to a single individual. . . . You will make your hearer more excited and more attentive, and full of active participation, if you keep him [sic] alert by words addressed to himself. (26.2-3, rpt. Richter 97)
As Tompkins explains, Longinus’s treatment of the passage from Herodotus sees language “as a force acting on the world, rather than as a series of signs to be deciphered” (203). In this sense, as Tompkins infers, it evokes Aristotle’s notion that tragedy “has vividness of impression in reading as well as in representation” and “concentrated effect” (katharsis through the evocation of pity and fear, notwithstanding) (Poetics 26.4-5).

Works Cited


Van Antwerp, Margaret A. “Fearful Symmetry: The poetic world of Lope’s El castigo sin venganza.”


Interviews

LOPE AND TIRSO BEYOND CULTURAL BOUNDARIES: INTERVIEWS WITH ACTORS

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Laurence Boswell’s new Golden Age Season at the Ustinov Studio Theatre (Bath)—to which this issue of Comedia Performance is dedicated—premiered in September 2013 three Spanish canonical plays: A Lady of Little Sense, Punishment Without Revenge, both by Lope de Vega and directed by Boswell himself, and Don Gil of the Green Breeches by Tirso de Molina, directed by Mehmet Ergen. However, this was not the first time that Spanish classical theater has been brought to the British stage by Boswell. In 1992, the director won the Lawrence Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in recognition of his first cycle dedicated to the Golden Age staged at the Gate Theatre in London, and twelve years later, in 2004, he succeeded once again in bringing another groundbreaking Golden Age Season, this time in
collaboration with the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon. The plays presented on that occasion were four fundamental works of Spanish Baroque theater, Lope’s *The Dog in the Manger*, Tirso’s *Tamar’s Revenge*, Cervantes’s *Pedro de Urdemalas* and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s *House of Desires* which were later also staged in Madrid and earned Boswell the *Medalla de oro al mérito en las bellas artes* award for his achievements in promoting the Golden Age dramatic patrimony in the UK.

The successful return of Lope and Tirso to the British stage in 2013 was made possible thanks to a cast of ten actors whose individual and ensemble work demonstrates how the Spanish *Comedia* can have a favorable reception by other cultures with different acting traditions. In addition to the astute selection of plays and three new translations for the stage, the cast was able to adapt perceptively to the sensibility of British audiences a variety of themes and cultural nuances that otherwise could result in difficulty in being properly understood and enjoyed beyond the Hispanic world.

The goal of these interviews is to trace the experience of five actors—exposed for the very first time to the *Comedia* genre (with the exception of Frances McNamee, who previously acted under Boswell’s direction)—and how this dramatic genre, for them, came to embody not only the spirit of Baroque Peninsular theater but also to emphasize its broad, multi-cultural appeal in cross-cultural translation. As a result, our dialogue with them focuses on: (1) how their background in Elizabethan and Jacobean traditions influenced their interpretation and understanding of their *Comedia* roles; (2) how they confronted the challenge of translating across cultures for the stage—normally kept ideologically separate
by geographical and temporal boundaries; (3) how this particular Golden Age Season contributed to their ongoing professional training; and (4) how they feel about participating in a hypothetical collaborative project that would encourage an ongoing exchange with Spanish classical theater and Elizabethan drama.

Among the interviewees are: Jim Bywater (Misenos, Rufino & Dance Master/ Caramanchel & Don Diego/Febo), Hedydd Dylan (Clara/Donna Juana/Cintia), William Hoyland (Don Otavio/Don Pedro/Duke of Ferrara), Katie Lightfoot (Nise/Donna Inés/Aurora), and Frances McNamee (Finea/Celia, Valdiviesa and Aguilara/Cassandra).

Fig. 1. Jim Bywater, Hedydd Dylan, William Hoyland, Katie Lightfoot, Frances McNamee.
Photos courtesy of the actors and of Ustinov Studio Theatre
1. Playing New Roles

Esther Fernández and Juan Hernando Vázquez (EF/JHV): Frances, you’ve worked with Boswell here in Bath in Calderón’s The Phoenix of Madrid (No hay burlas con el amor) in 2011, and in this Golden Age Season you’ve returned as the protagonist of the two plays by Lope de Vega. Did you notice any difference in the way Lope and Calderón conceived their heroines?

Frances McNamee (FM): The Phoenix and A Lady are linked in that Calderón created a parody of the sisterly relationship within Lope’s play, emphasizing the handicaps of extreme intelligence for a woman in seventeenth-century Spain, instead of focusing on the misfortune of stupidity. They’re all detailed and complex women and I enjoyed getting to the bottom of all three, although I can’t help but think that there are still things I haven’t found. In the case of The Phoenix and A Lady (they’re the easiest to compare), Lope writes as though he wants the audience to be on Finea’s side from the start, whereas with Beatriz they have to laugh at her pretension and condemn her bullying of her sister first, and then as the play unfolds, they start to see her goodness and, hopefully, that her cultivation of inapproachable intelligence is just to cover her deep insecurities and to keep people away. I think in terms of the audience’s empathy towards them, Cassandra and Beatriz have more changeable journeys. Finea’s is more of a straight road.
EF/JHV: Was the earlier experience as Beatriz in The Phoenix useful to you in playing the characters of Finea and Cassandra?

FM: Of course, I think every role I’ve done has helped in some way or other, but I felt very lucky to have had a (albeit brief) background in this genre because it gave me a confidence and a knowledge of the style to dive in head first with these characters, which is the only way to go. Having said that, they are all completely different.
characters and you have to approach them as such. I had more of an idea who Cassandra was in my first reading of her but Finea was a mystery for a while. Again I was fortunate to be in a supportive company and with a director who encouraged bravery in the rehearsal room. I was in a good place to respond well and take risks, which working with Boswell on *The Phoenix* certainly contributed to.

**EF/JHV:** William, your previous experience seems to have been mainly in modern theater. What motivated you to participate in this Golden Age Season?

**William Hoyland (WH):** I have done so much contemporary and modern stuff, and very little Shakespeare, although I love watching it. When this possibility came, I was intrigued, as I knew Lope de Vega’s work from one or two productions that have happened in this country, and I was fascinated by the idea of doing three Golden Age plays. That is what attracted me to work in classical theater, although Spanish rather than British. Nonetheless it’s unusual for me but I know that despite my great age, I still need to broaden my horizons as much as possible.

**EF/JHV:** Having done both classical and contemporary theater, do you think it’s good for an actor to seek opportunities in both? Or is it better to specialize in one or the other?

**WH:** Well, unfortunately we work in a commercial business, and you get to some extent pigeonholed by casting directors and directors, so it’s not often that you have that amount of choice. I’m fortunate enough to be
able to have a certain amount of choice, and I think that the wider the range of work you do, the more enriched you become, and all sorts of things leach over from one convention to another convention. So, I think, it benefits actors greatly to work in as many different genres as possible.

**EF/JHV:** Would you be willing to play roles in plays by more contemporary Spanish authors in translation after this experience?

**WH:** Of course I would, depending on the play. Absolutely, I think that would be great. I would like to do that, now that I have got into the Spanish thing, sort of, I’d be very interested in that.

**EF/JHV:** Jim, in this Golden Age Season you have performed Rufino and the Dance Master in *A Lady*, two secondary characters with great comical potential. How did you approach these two roles in order to get the most out of their humorous side?

**Jim Bywater (JB):** When performing those two roles I, inevitably, associated them with the English variety theatre style. The characters are eccentric, cartoonish, authoritarian—truer of Rufino than the Dance Master. I think, were the play set in England, the Dance Master would DEFINITELY have been either French or Italian, more likely French, merely for comic effect and to satisfy our racist propensities.
2. Contrasting Two Dramatic Traditions

**EF/JHV:** It has been said that the characters of Spanish Comedia tend to be less complex and multidimensional in comparison with those in Elizabethan drama. Do you agree with such a statement from your experience in both dramatic traditions?

**Heddyd Dylan (HD):** I don’t necessarily agree with that. Actually, I have found these characters to be very rich and complicated. I would say that in my experience of playing Shakespeare the character is clearer on the
page. This may have to do with the translations but it may also be that in Spanish Golden Age theater there is actually some subtext, which the actor must search for (which is not really the case in Shakespeare). I find Clara’s duality fascinating, for example.

**JB:** I think both traditions have complex characters, which give the actor the opportunity to delve into the personalities and to be inventive and creative. Of course, there are national differences (weather, invasions, expansion, religion, etc.), which would give a different focus and purpose to the writing.

**EF/JHV:** Jim, you have had broad experience performing some of the most famous Shakespearean fools and jesters, such as Puck, Touchstone, King Lear’s Fool, Trinculo, Lucio and Launce. Do those characters have anything in common with Caramanchel?

**JB:** I think that Caramanchel has been given, in common with the other clowns/fools, the duty to speak the truth both as a character and as a performer. Lawyers, doctors, priests and pimps “get it in the neck” from Caramanchel. The manservants in these plays also are free to give their opinions to their masters. And, I feel that the actor/character needs to keep in mind, during performance, that he/she is speaking for and from and on behalf of the audience. Thus, one hopes, the audience feels that the clown/fool is one of them.

**EF/JHV:** How do you approach issues of “translatability” and possible reception by your audience/s as you create a role in a translated play? Is Shakespeare, being so far removed from the contemporary public in lan-
guage and mores, also in a sense being “translated” for your audience/s?

**JB:** In some ways this question crosses over into the other questions about theatre style, patterns of speech, structure, etc. And, one of the major differences between then and now is that religion played a much great-er part in people’s lives. Translating the resulting behav-ior into believable action is difficult. To believe that you might actually go to hell for eternity has to be translated into something comparable. I’ll let you work that one out. I think one could safely describe the mounting of a Shakespearian play as a translation. There are parts of the plays that are difficult to understand because the meaning of some words has changed or, the seriousness of some gesture is difficult to fathom or, some social activity has been lost in the mists of time, etc. I have found, only on one occasion, a performance of *Henry IV* at the Royal Court Theatre, that the first act was played very deliberately and at a steady pace, the effect being that the audience was able to “tune in” to the rhythm and structure of the language. My enjoyment of the play trebled and my respect for the actors and director was increased.

**EF/JHV:** Hedydd, you have performed a series of Shakespearean characters such as Rosalind, Kate, and Regan. When you were presented for the first time with a character like Donna Juana in *Don Gil*, did you use your background and training in Shakespeare as a reference point to embody your character?

**HD:** I think my background in verse speaking has been very useful in terms of breathing and bringing variation
and a degree of naturalism to stylized language. However, I was initially a little thrown by the different rhythms. I also think that Shakespearean and Spanish Golden Age characters are similarly large and emotionally free, so I feel like I have an advantage in that sense also. I would also add that as a Welsh actress I have not been brought up with the famous English “stiff upper lip,” so these larger than life, storytelling characters feel like my family!

Fig. 4. Hedydd Dylan (Donna Juana) in *Don Gil of the Green Breeches*. 
Photographer: Jane Hobson. Photo courtesy of Ustinov Studio Theatre
EF/JHV: Katie, what’s the main difference in how to embody honor in Elizabethan theater and in Spanish Comedia?

Katie Lightfoot (KL): In my limited experience of playing Shakespeare (and here I can speak only for the female characters) one major difference I notice is that here, even the servants have honor! As an actor, you can’t “play honor,” but it undoubtedly informs who these people are. In Shakespeare, honor is mostly attached to those with very high status: royalty, the military, etc. In the Comedia, scorned lovers are compelled to act to save their honor. Aurora says, “Love, your power is tyrannous. So great, our life, our soul, our honor, are never able to recover from the harm you do to us.” The idea that Federico's rejection of her is not simply a personal affront, but a black mark on her honor, as an English woman I initially found difficult to comprehend. I think the major difference culturally is where that honors sits. It feels as though it lives in the body, rather than in the head (if that makes sense!).

EF/JHV: It has been said that Spanish honor is a very difficult concept to translate to other cultures. William, do you agree with this idea after embodying three father figures obsessed with honor, each in his own way?

WH: Yes, you bet! I certainly do. Don Pedro [in Don Gil] less, because he is in many ways a farcical character, in that he offers his daughter to three men in the course of a half an hour, and he is more interested in the money than anything else. But for Otavio [in A Lady] and the Duke [in Punishment], their sense of honor is very real. Each [is an] individual. As I was saying earlier, it is quite difficult to understand how important that
was for men of authority in Spain at that point, and we did our best.

3. Challenging Comedia Performance

**EF/JHV:** William, among the three father figures you play in this Season, the Duke is highly controversial. How was the process of creating such a character? Did you use any referent from other roles that you have played before to better understand his nature or emotions?

**WH:** To a certain extent, as you say, he is an extraordinarily complex and difficult man to handle, and I think it took me a long time to really get a proper handle on him because so much of what he does seems to be motivated by anger and revenge. Then, I gradually realized that he is also motivated by hurt as well as by the desire to maintain his honor. So this concept of honor is one, of course, that we don’t use in Britain these days very often. We have a phrase, “saving face,” which might be sort of roughly equal to “preserving one’s honor,” but “honor” is not a word that we ever use, or hardly ever, so those were the kind of additional, more difficult stumbling blocks.

In the last few years of my drama career I have played a number of murderers and killers and sadists, and I think that’s why I was possibly approached; but in a way, I had to put that behind me and think more of how, although he is a lecher and a licentious man, that doesn’t make him immoral as an evil man, unless, of course, you’re a woman in which case you probably do think he is an evil man. But the difference between the
morality of killing and the morality of whoring is big, and the fact that he is powerful enough to have sex with whoever he wants doesn’t mean that he is necessarily an evil man. These are the thoughts that were going through my head all the time and, in performance, I gradually realized that the love that he has for Federico is one of the most important things in his life, if not the most important thing. Consequently, when he realizes that Federico has betrayed him, it hurts him so much, and his initial reaction is one of anger; but then he realizes he has to be more crafty about it.

Fig. 5. William Hoyland (Duke of Ferrara) in *Punishment without Revenge*. Photographer: Jane Hobson. Photo courtesy of Ustinov Studio Theatre.
EF/JHV: William, what have been the most challenging aspects in creating the roles of Don Otavio, Don Pedro and the Duke? And the most rewarding ones?

WH: Well, as I said, Don Pedro is a much lighter, easier part to play, and consequently you embody him quite neatly. Otavio is more difficult in that he changes so dramatically at the very end of the play; having said “this woman’s adultery is bringing shame on the house, and the family name is in danger,” then at the very last minute he says “Oh, you love him, go on and marry him after all.” So that was difficult, showing the seeds of that change throughout early part of the play. In terms of the Duke, I think I’ve probably covered that one. It’s an intensely rich part. In terms of the most satisfying, the Duke was certainly the most satisfying when I got it right, because he is so complicated. He is passionate; he is so strong, that if you get those things right it works very well.

EF/JHV: Katie, what have been the main challenges posed by the three characters that you have played: Nise in A Lady, Aurora in Punishment and Donna Inés in Don Gil?

KL: Their size! These women have a profound sense of dignity. For Nise to stand in front of Laurencio and confront him about his feelings for Finea is both painful and unfamiliar. Her journey is one of trying to keep her head above water, whilst her understanding of the world changes around her. I find Aurora’s denouement particularly hard to fully understand. Up until the end, she has been determined through her deep sense of betrayal to
destroy Federico, yet at the end, when the Marquis says that he has killed him, she is unable to commit to leaving with him for Mantua. I'm still not entirely sure what Aurora’s fate is. I was somewhat terrified by the challenge of Ines! She's a complete joy for an actress, wildly grotesque and cutthroat in her determination to get what she wants. I've come to realize that you have to meet her head on. If I have a night where I'm feeling tentative or vulnerable, the audience doesn’t buy her and the comedy is lost.

Fig. 6. Katie Lightfoot (Aurora) in *Punishment without Revenge*. 
Photographer: Jane Hobson. Photo courtesy of Ustinov Studio Theatre
EF/JHV: Hedydd, what has been the main challenge in performing a character that unfolds into three (Donna Juana/Don Gil/Elvira)?

HD: Of all the characters I play in the Season, Donna Juana is closest to myself, so I found her relatively quickly. I came at Elvira from a different angle; I thought about how she spoke, what she looks like, what effect I wanted to have on Ines, etc. I worked on her from the outside in, which is not how I usually work, but it seemed fitting as she was not a real character but an invention by Juana. Don Gil was the most difficult for me. I initially tried to aim for a very convincing man, doing a lot of work on masculine physicality and lowering my voice, etc. I found this quite inhibiting; it made me feel quite stiff and unable to act freely. I also felt very encumbered by the costume. The sleeves and doublet are very tight, whereas I had hoped for broad shoulders and loose sleeves to help me feel able to swish around like a pirate! So with all these things considered, we settled on a more androgynous Don Gil, which does actually fit the text.

EF/JHV: Jim, has interpreting this range of characters presented particular challenges to you as an actor? Are there other types of roles that you would like to explore within the Spanish Comedia?

JB: I found it difficult, at times, to make the humor work when the structure of the lines is based in syllables and not beats. Iambic pentameter has a speech pattern that people use all the time in normal [English] speech. It may be, that it is very difficult to translate and maintain the syllabic structure and reveal the humor. Nor do I
know whether the Spanish language has an iambic pentameter equivalent. I would cast myself, as an alternative, as the fathers of the “heroines.” I think there is great comic potential in there.

**EF/JHV:** Frances, has your experience with Spanish Golden Age drama, first in 2011 and now, two years later, contributed to your professional trajectory as an actress in Britain?

**FM:** Greatly. I’ve been a professional actress for four years, and in that time the Spanish Golden Age canon (the small portion I’ve sampled anyway) has given me the chance to develop my versatility, verse speaking, and stamina! I’ve had the chance to create incredibly complex characters with massive emotional ranges, and having to access those feelings regularly is a useful exercise for other genres and mediums I might work on in the future. I think this whole experience has given me more confidence in what I can cope with. We had a lot of stuff thrown at us, so there is a part of me that thinks, “We did three plays in ten weeks, we do a different one every night, we sing, we dance, we look great in velvet and ruffs….We can do anything!”

**EF/JHV:** Katie, for you, however, this was your first contact with Spanish Golden Age drama. How have these new roles contributed to your professional trajectory as an actress?

**KL:** I am a total Spanish Golden Age novice, so I lacked a reference point for these plays. In terms of the challenge they have posed, I am hugely grateful for the opportunity to play women who are emotionally and men-
tally “bigger” than myself. By that I mean that the stakes are incredibly high for all of them, that what they feel and what they stand to gain or lose is felt hugely. Therefore, it has tested my technical ability as an actress to meet the physical demands of playing these characters, and equally the emotional challenge of fighting to hold on to loved ones, being rejected, having hopes destroyed, and all within two hours!

4. Collaborating Cross-Culturally

EF/JHV: What do you think about the possibility of the creation of a bilingual company in which English actors could be trained in Golden Age drama and Spanish actors in Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre?

WH: Well, it would be jolly difficult, would be my first thought. The advantage we had with this Golden Age Season is that we were doing modern translations of four hundred year-old plays, and that made them more accessible, in a way, than Shakespeare to an English audience. To an English audience who doesn’t go to the theatre very much, Shakespeare is often quite difficult because of the archaic language. We had the advantage of using modern language. I thought Meredith’s wasn’t particularly good, in that she managed to preserve a sense of period without using dated language. So I think there would be enormous problems in that suggestion. I mean the idea sounds good but it would be difficult.

HD: I think it’s a wonderful idea. I’ve spent a lot of time on this job wishing I could speak Spanish! I dare say that an English and a Spanish company would have a lot to
learn from each other.

**FM:** The sharing of our country’s finest literature can only be a good thing and I think this is a fascinating concept. Both English and Spanish actors naturally have different ways of bringing the text to life, and it would be important that, whatever exchange of ideas takes place, the flair and strengths of both sides of the company are preserved. I don’t know what exact format this would take, but it’s important in these circumstances, where one group may have more tangible experience of a particular text, that no one thinks himself or herself an expert. What would be great about this venture is the trading of fresh perspectives.

NOTES

1 The list of characters performed by each of the actors corresponds to the following plays in this order: *A Lady of Little Sense/Don Gil of the Green Breeches/Punishment without Revenge.*

2 We would like to express our gratitude to Laurence Boswell, Jim Bywater, Hedydd Dylan, William Hoyland, Katie Lightfoot, Frances McNamee and Frances Macadam for their generous collaboration in making these interviews possible. We are also indebted to Isabel de Sena and Evan Brown for their helpful comments and feedback.

3 Hoyland is referring here to Meredith Oakes, the translator of *Punishment without Revenge.*
SOUND AND MUSIC IN THE BATH PERFORMANCES OF COMEDIAS: JON NICHOLLS AND GROVER WILKINS WEIGH IN.

SUSAN PAUN DE GARCÍA
Denison University

During the November 2013 Symposium in Bath, lively discussion ensued in several sessions about the nature and variety of sound and music in performance of the Comedia, a conversation that continued afterwards over email. What follows is an encapsulation of the issues and opinions of two of the most vocal participants, Jon Nicholls, music and sound designer for the Bath productions, and Grover Wilkins, director of the Orchestra of New Spain, headquartered in Dallas.

Soon after the symposium, Wilkins wrote to Nicholls to congratulate him on the production, and Nicholls replied, elaborating on his process. The exchange is reproduced below, with their permission.

This email exchange prompted more questions, some general and some specific to the Bath
performances. I have collected them (questions in general, questions about Spanish Golden Age, and questions about the Bath plays), and provide the responses that Wilkins and Nicholls were so kind to provide over the summer of 2014.

The emails

Wednesday, 4 December 2013

Dear Jon,

May I offer you my most sincere congratulations on your music designs for the Festival of Spanish Theater? You managed to evoke a sense of Spain in all three productions, and to do so very tastefully.

I was very disappointed that you weren’t in Bath while we were there; it would have been most interesting for me as I try to set music with various Spanish works in Dallas. I realize it’s difficult and may not be worth the time from your perspective, but I would like to comment and ask for your response.

As I told you, I spoke on Tuesday morning [November 26, 2013] about setting music to La dama boba. I specifically asked to have my part scheduled for after the show so I could comment on what you had done with the show, after I first spoke about how one chooses and uses music in such a
show. It’s an art that has been ignored for a very long time.

Permit me. I was taken by the “travelling music,” i.e., the musical motif/cell that you used for scene changes. As I said to the participants, you managed in those few seconds to capture the essence of Spanish music with the juxtaposition of 3s and 2s in these rhythmic patterns we all recognize as quintessentially Spanish. The guitar played right into that. And the choral stuff was great, marvelously evocative, as well as the super dance section. I was amazed at the quality of the voices of Katie [Lightfoot] and Frances [McNamee]. Wow! Unfortunately, the renaissance choral recording was not played on Monday night. I only heard it in the Thursday night show, both before and during intermission. Nice touch, and in fact a very nice touch.

I did think it was too loud, too much in the nature of “If it’s music in the theater we have to play it really loud like movie music!” I only stumbled upon an explanation after the Tuesday morning session in speaking with the young woman assistant who said she was at the controls during the show and didn’t have any reason to play it at any other level. I for one think that that theater could stand live guitar instead of recorded guitar, and other instruments, but then there are many considerations, (not the least of which is economic), and, frankly, complications.
On the other hand, I found the recorded music for *Venganza* absolutely convincing and appropriate, in particular because it underlined the rather timeless nature of set and costumes—no specific instruments, rather suggestions; all was of a piece, and worked together to project a time in space and the menacing nature of the action. I was particularly taken with the filmic menacing and almost imperceptible low notes suggesting impending disaster. Bravo!

It was refreshing to have the guitar and vocal work in *Don Gil*, and it never seemed not loud enough. Several colleagues commented on that.

In any case, Jon, I’d be very interested in any comment in return that you have time to make. I have nothing but admiration for all of you for what you have done. It’s refreshing, amazing and of the highest quality.

Chapeau!

Grover

*Monday, January 13, 2014*

Dear Grover,

Thank you so much for your very kind comments, and please do accept my apologies for taking so long to reply—I went straight on to another couple of shows after Bath, and then have only
just emerged from the re-staging of all three shows for their London run.

I’m so glad you enjoyed the productions—as you can imagine, they were a joy to work on, musically, with huge opportunities to integrate the music and soundscapes at a very fundamental level. I do take your point about overall volume levels—it’s always something of a compromise between where I’d ideally like things to sit, and what the director asks for in terms of impact and excitement. I do agree that cinema has significantly affected the kinds of volume levels we’ve become used to—it’s a lively ongoing topic of debate amongst many of my composer / sound designer colleagues!

On the most general level, I was very excited by the three plays being very different; *La dama boba* felt it should probably sound the most “period,” and it was there that your suggestions for research listening were incredibly useful in terms of helping me start thinking about instrumentation and overall sound world. I agree it would have been lovely to have had some live players, but there simply wasn’t the available budget to have onstage musicians as well as the already quite sizeable (for a venue the size of the Ustinov) cast. At least we had some live singing! So I did end up using mostly samples, although I did work with a fabulous musician—Clare Salaman—who specialises in early string instruments. She played baroque violin and also nyckelharpa, which although not of course in
any way Spanish, does have a very strong feeling of that plangent senza vibrato Renaissance string sound, and which blends wonderfully with other instruments. I also used some of her playing on *Venganza*, which made a very interesting contrast with the more abstract / electronic textures in that show.

The core of the *La dama boba* score was the big song-and-dance number, which was the first thing I wrote, and then worked outwards, using it as the basis for most of the other cues—I think the first thing I came up with was actually the setting for the repeated “madness of love, oh the madness of love” phrase. I think I probably had the idea of a ritornello at the back of my mind (like the one in Monteverdi’s *Orfeo*, one of my favourite operas). Laurence [Boswell], Lucy [Cullingford] (the choreographer) and I spent a long time last summer batting ideas to and fro in really quite some detail, so we were all very happy with it by the time I came to teach it to the cast. I was very pleased by how they sang it, though I did double up the voices with recorded ones as well to make a bigger sound.

*Don Gil* ended up probably sounding the most stereotypically Spanish of all of them. I know the flamenco-tinged guitar music really wasn’t at all authentic period-wise, but the story’s so zany—almost like a classic screwball comedy—that there seemed to be quite a lot of leeway and license to do something that felt fairly light and fun.
Venganza was absolutely thrilling to work on—such a brilliant play, and the fact that it was set in Italy rather than Spain made me feel that it could really be scored in almost any way, as if Lope himself wanted to set it somewhere very other. I think I probably decided that treating it almost as a contemporary thriller would be an exciting way to go, and so it ended up sounding very percussive / soundscape-based—although the nyckelharpa phrases did work rather wonderfully alongside those very contemporary textures and seemed to anchor it just enough to somewhere further in the past. I think the Andrelina song was probably the first thing I wrote for that—sung by Frances McNamee, who played the leads in both Venganza and Dama boba—as well as a wonderful actor, she’s also a fantastic singer, not to mention pretty good at dancing too!

Thank you again for all your invaluable help and advice, and all best wishes for 2014.

Kind regards,
Jon

Questions in general

SPG: Whether vocal or instrumental, music played an enormous role in seventeenth-century theater. Typically, it would be the first element to greet the spectator and would supply the final flour-
ish in a typical production. In the seventeenth century, theatrical companies would have included musicians as well as actors and technicians to meet the needs of the frequent presence of music in plays of all genres. (In fact, many actors were known principally for their musical ability.) Of course, in addition to providing entertainment and embellishment, the dramatic functions of music in the theater are many, from indicating the entrance of characters to emphasizing the action of the plot or indicating a change of place in the action. What would be the starting point for giving a production continuity and focus?

**JN:** I feel it comes down to early design decisions, as it’s usually the first stage in a production process, and then the ways in which other members of the creative team respond and share ideas in what hopefully develops into an organic and positive process of a show’s evolution.

**GW:** Giving themes to characters, places or other dramatic indicators (Jon’s establishing an underlying feel of fear with the cinematic low, barely perceptible rumble).

**SPG:** When it comes to designing the sound and music for a production, how does a text indicate or suggest a time frame, a composer, an instrument, or a type of music? [Here, Nicholls and Wilkins differed in their views.]

**GW:** The following presumes that the best production of any historical piece of theater will be
created with adherence to a unified temporal (period) and geographical (place) concept. One can best transmit the original intent and meaning of a dramatic work by recreating the setting which was of the writer’s concept. This does not preclude the importance of other means of or guides to interpretation. But in the case of Comedia, the subject is so little known that we as proponents of this lost art may well have the best chance at recreating interest in the genre by respecting its original concept. This twentieth-century viewpoint became possible only as the nineteenth and then twentieth-century cultures began to discover a more enlightened view of history in general.

The general time frame of any comedia is the active lifetime of the author. Any temporal indication within the text applies to music as well as to any other element of a production, i.e., an historical event—inauguration, wedding, birth—about which we might have specific information of time and place. When one reads a text one might well listen to music of the decades of the author’s life. Composers are not an issue in Comedia. The concept of a composer being key is relevant only as indicative of musical trends as they were being codified, i.e., theory (composition) follows practice.* Depending on social level any character might well be expected to play a vihuela, harp, rebek, viol, or percussion instrument, as well as to dance. And certainly all could sing.
*Finding composers active around the dates and places of Comedia is as close as Google or Wikipedia. What is important is to be careful not to confuse the sheen of gooey modern recorded interpretations with the reality of the “musicians” in a corral.

**JN:** Early decisions by the director and designer are usually a more useful starting point when thinking about music; with the Bath productions it was decided quite early on that *La dama boba* and *Don Gil* would be anchored fairly strongly in the Spanish Golden Age, whereas *Punishment Without Revenge*, set in Italy rather than Spain, might have a more abstract setting in terms of period, although still very firmly set in a Renaissance context.

Having said that, texts do often mention particular instruments—Shakespeare’s always calling for “trumpets” or “hautboys” for example. However, I don’t generally feel these really need to be adhered to; it’s usually clear that what the playwright wants is a particular kind of musical effect – glory / triumph / majesty / terror, etc., and it’s the job of the composer / sound designer to respond to these using all the contemporary tools at our disposal. Sometimes a call for “hautboys” might, in the context of a production’s particular aesthetic, mean a strange electronic texture, or a string quartet, or a saxophone.
SPG: Aside from the expense, why not use live music? What would be counter-indications in a venue like the Ustinov?

GW: For the same reason we want to see a live acted performance. Beyond that, these plays were conceived with music as an integral aspect of the show. It’s up to us to learn how music was used and how we can best duplicate its effect.

JN: Live music of course has a unique on-stage energy, and with the right sort of stage, musicians can create a wonderfully organic relationship between actors and the music. The Ustinov is actually a rather good venue for live music, as its compact size, excellent acoustics and the proximity of audience to stage means that the impact of sound and music—either live or recorded—on audiences can be very powerful.

However, I don’t feel live music should be fetishised for its own sake. For me the most interesting use of live music is where musicians are fully integrated into the stage action, either in their own right or as actor-musicians. However, it does take a particular kind of musician to achieve this, who is comfortable moving around the stage, being very responsive to actors and the atmosphere of a scene, and being prepared for things to change at very short notice. Not all musicians, however brilliant an instrumentalist, can actually pull this off, and where the music is simply intended as an underscore, there’s often no very compelling reason why the
music should be live rather than recorded. Incidentally, I’m certainly not advocating the replacement of live musicians by samples where the music is to be recorded, and I always try to make use of the playing of as many actual instrumentalists to record as I can afford. On the Spanish Golden Age plays, I worked with a wonderful early string specialist, Clare Salaman (www.claresalaman.com), who plays a whole range of esoteric instruments, especially the Swedish nyckelharpa, which I used extensively. It’s an extraordinary instrument (although of course not in any way either Spanish or Renaissance) which has a uniquely plangent and expressive tone which blends wonderfully with other instruments, somehow lending them a slightly archaic “sheen.”

I think where live music does become very important is in situations where one wants to achieve a very intimate focused sound. For example the songs in Don Gil, which are performed entirely acoustically on guitar, hand percussion and voices, have a wonderful onstage immediacy and a marvelous interactive relationship between the musicians and the actors. They sing a line, pause for some dialogue while strumming the guitar quietly, then pick up again as the actors pause for breath—all that kind of thing’s lovely. However, these are (musically) light moments—in fact that’s part of their charm—and there is a heft and impact that’s easy to achieve with recorded music (and all the studio pro-
duction techniques one can deploy) that is much harder to achieve with live musicians, unless you can afford a lot of them! The great “Madness of Love” song in La dama boba, for example, needed to have considerable impact, and we didn’t feel this would be achievable with just a guitar and a tambourine. Accordingly we used a recorded backing which sounded like a much bigger ensemble, and although it was sung by a choir of live singers, they were doubled up with recorded voices projected from loudspeakers concealed above the choir.

**SPG:** What influence (if any) do film and television have in the use of sound on the stage?

**JN:** I think the impact has been profound, but has only really begun to be fully felt in the last decade as theatre sound technology has evolved to the level that cinematic sound technology reached long ago. With the advent of digital show control systems, able to address multiple loudspeakers with ease, sound designers are now able swiftly to create fully immersive, incredibly rich and complex sound and music scores, but that preserve the sensitivity and interactivity of a live instrumentalist. Theatre composers also now have the luxury of being able to conceive of their scores in three dimensions—taking advantage of the sort of surround-sound playback systems which film composers have taken for granted for years. I also think it’s significant that many more sound designers these days began as composers, or, like myself, take on both roles; the
opportunity to create complete sound worlds is thrilling.

Audiences have also come to expect a level of immersiveness and detail in stage soundscapes, and the heightening of atmosphere that this creates. Although this expectation might have originated in audiences’ experience of cinema, it’s increasingly now felt to be an inextricable part of contemporary theatre production.

Questions about Spanish Golden Age

**SPG:** How do you approach the Spanish Golden Age on the stage? What research is needed or pertinent? What genres, songs, and styles?

**GW:** (This question suggests a period production.) Start with dance. The director should establish the place of dance and music in the production. Even if dance will not be included, dance music of the period should be included as well as secular and sacred musical examples in choosing music to be used in the production. Separation of the genres was much less rigid in most cases than today.

Madrileños of 1613 would have known dance as a matter of course, and would have known much of the music from the city’s public theaters. The streets, not only of Madrid but also throughout Spain, were animated by street musicians; the churches by chant, organs, and choirs; not to mention the court and its professionals who sang and played at the apex of High Renaissance polyphony.
Music, at whatever level of sophistication, would have been an integral part of life.

The instrument par excellence of much of Spanish early music is, perhaps surprisingly, the harp. Related to the family of viols and vihuelas, the harp was easily transported, rich in colors and full in sonority. It has a wide range, and infinite coloration given the variety of ways in which it can be plucked and strummed. Much more easily available today are those other stringed instruments, the modern family of the vihuela (the guitar) and viols, the violin and cello family, in particular the latter.

Sources of music for modern performers are numerous among the many editions of published renaissance music.

**JN:** Detailed research was obviously key to the design process, and the costumes in particular were absolutely accurate historically. For my part, I spent a lot of time listening to seventeenth-century Spanish music (and also from further afield), as well as drawing on very helpful advice from specialists in the music of the period. I certainly made a lot of use of Renaissance rhythmic patterns, and of course instrumentation; I very much had the sound of vihuelas, viols and percussion in my mind, especially for *La dama boba*. However (and this is true of most “period” plays I work on), I reach a point where I step away from the research and begin composing with the research as a kind of lingering background context; this hopefully informs what I
write—to an extent—but doesn’t dictate it, as I always feel it’s absolutely crucial to respond musically to what I see on the ground in the rehearsal room, rather than on the page. One thing the entire creative team was crystal-clear on was that we were emphatically not setting out to recreate a seventeenth-century staging of the plays, but to stage them as we felt would be most effective for our audience, and whilst we wanted to honour the historical context from which they sprang, we had to use all the available contemporary theatrical tools at our disposal to stage them in 2013. Don Gil, for example, became very flamenco-influenced, which although a much later musical tradition, somehow seemed to suit the hyper-energised fast-paced style of both the story and the staging. Punishment without Revenge, on the other hand, felt like it could have a much more contemporary-sounding kind of soundworld, ranging from thunderous percussion to dark abstract soundscapes, and vocal settings that were closer to the world of contemporary opera than Renaissance Spain.

**SPG:** How is the use of music in Spanish Golden Age plays different from the equivalent in Shakespeare?

**JN:** It’s a fascinating question that I can really only answer in relation to the three plays we did at Bath, not having experienced any other Golden Age plays. On a technical level, I was fascinated to realise that the restrictions on female performers in
Renaissance England were not nearly so rigid in Spain, and the songs in Don Gil especially felt very natural set for female voices, whereas often in Shakespeare the songs somehow feel they’re perhaps conceived more with boys’ or men’s voices in mind. Perhaps more generally one could make a tentative case for songs in Shakespeare—especially the later plays—being often concerned with profound metaphysical / philosophical issues, or poetic images that are so profound that music is the only way they can be expressed—the “full fathom five” song in The Tempest for example (one of my favourites), which is an extraordinarily rich and complex image of mortality and change, or the “wind and the rain” song from Twelfth Night. In Don Gil, and perhaps La dama boba, the songs seem to be more to do with particular situations, or images that are quite concrete. Having said that, the song sung by Andrelina in Punishment without Revenge is a beautifully poetic and compressed expression of memory and loss, so I’m not sure how far I’d really want to push that point.

**SPG:** Adapters and translators give the text a “both then and now” feel. How does one achieve this with music?

**GW:** Choice of period of the music. Some generalities which suggest how we might best use the resources at our disposal to bring music to the stage in an appropriate way, i.e., a way that intensifies or illuminates the message of the play, the
meaning of the scene or which simply adds a color or a moment of respite to the action, but does so within the context of the play.

Context is the key. We have all seen “period” movies or plays which are set in sumptuous “period” castles, acted in gorgeous costumes of the same period but accompanied by a musical score in which the aural underlay is contemporary popular music or a Mozart piano concerto favored by the director, based on her exposure to the world of music, which in our day is not what it used to be! The solution is really quite simple. There are musicologists in our midst—university professors, musical ensemble members, even Early Music America (for early music) or a host of other experts—who would be thrilled to contribute to creation of a musical design for a colleague’s theatrical production—finally a chance to put the music they study where it was intended to go!

Of course, this all goes back to the director who, in the case of Bath, Laurence Boswell, was aware of the musical possibilities early on and called on the talents of Jon Nicholls to create the score we heard, and to which the dance was set.

My personal preference in most cases is to stage these plays in the context of the time in which they were originally conceived. My basis for this comes from years of applying the same rules in music, a discipline—an art—that has been developing this process for almost 100 years now. My own ex-
periences with Spanish baroque music are peculiarly well informed for the very reason that Spanish early music has come to be practiced as relatively late in the musical game as has Spanish theater in the theatrical world. For that very reason we of the Orchestra of New Spain in Dallas have had the luxury of pursuing performance practice in the area of Spanish music without the baggage that now burdens purveyors of the canon of early music, i.e., the works of Bach, Telemann, Handel, Vivaldi, etc.

We’re early in the game so can set the standard. By the same token we in Spanish Golden Age Theater have the same opportunity to leapfrog the Shakespeareans, and others, in setting a very high bar for “authentic” production of the Spanish product.

**JN:** With “period” productions I very often find that using period instrumentation anchors a play quite strongly, even though the actual musical language might move a long way away from period “authenticity” in terms of tonality etc. In *Punishment without Revenge*, for example, the nyckelharpa (an instrument which somehow sounds both ancient and timeless) created quite a strong “past” feeling, whilst playing phrases that were harmonically atonal.
Questions about the Bath plays

**SPG:** Did the directors have ideas for the music before you got involved?

**JN:** Perhaps fortunately, the directors and I all discovered that we’d all independently developed similar initial ideas about all three plays. We felt that the question of period authenticity really only needed to come into play in relation to *La dama bobo*, where the director and I both felt we wanted to reference the music and instrumentation of the period. *Don Gil* felt like such a crazy story—almost like a classic screwball comedy—that it seemed more useful to connect with the story’s anarchic energy rather than musical historical accuracy. *Punishment without Revenge* felt rather more distant from the worlds of the other two plays, and of course Lope sets it in Italy rather than Spain. We accordingly felt that a more contemporary, more cinematic musical style might work.

**SPG:** What sound cues rose out of the pages of Tirso and Lope? What specifics did the playwrights give you to work with? How do you work with a director to make him or her aware of this?

**JN:** I think there are two parts to this. The first is that there are several moments where the playwright calls for something specific to be heard for narrative purposes. So (to take each play in turn) in *Don Gil*, the characters in the orchard can clearly
hear music in the distance, as they explicitly refer to it and mention the musicians appearing. I was very fortunate to have two wonderful musicians in the cast—James Bywater who played guitar, and Frances McNamee, who as well as being a marvelous actress and a great dancer, has a fantastic singing voice. So for that moment I asked James to play an instrumental version of the song “O Poplars of the Meadow” offstage, before the full performance of the song onstage.

On the level of sound designing historical drama more generally, one of the challenges is that although a lot of historical music and songs survive, we more often than not have a fairly sketchy sense of what the day-to-day soundscapes of particular places might actually have been. I love the maid’s speech in La dama bobo in which she describes early morning on the streets of Madrid, packed with wonderful descriptions of all the sounds of the streets – carriages, carts, dogs, and the cries of the different street hawkers. It’s very rare for actual period soundscapes to have been described in this quite specific detail, and it’s an invaluable guide to what the city might actually have sounded like.

On the point about working with directors; on these shows I was very fortunate to have directors who were very keyed into music and sound, so I really didn’t have to make them aware of it as something to be dealt with. However, on other occasions there’s a certain degree of diplomatic dis-
cussion that needs to take place. Having said that, I think most directors working today know music and sound bring an enormous amount to productions, and don’t usually need very much persuading! When things get tricky it’s usually because the director and composer / sound designer haven’t managed to find a suitable vocabulary in which to discuss things; at least half the job of anyone working as creative in theatre is establishing an easy and efficient way to establish this kind of language early on.

**SPG:** What were the essential sounds that the audience needed to hear (both musical and non-musical)?

**JN:** Apart from the moments mentioned above, the songs and dances were of course essential. The huge “Madness of Love” song is at the core of *La dama boba*, and there are key songs and dances in *Don Gil*. In *Punishment without Revenge* there’s a song sung offstage by the Duke’s favourite singer Andrelina, which the Duke stops to listen to. All these needed to be in place right from the start of rehearsals.

In addition to music / sounds specifically mentioned by the playwright, there are also sounds which I felt might be useful for the characters to “hear” at particular moments that serve a particular dramatic purpose. For example, at the beginning of *Don Gil*, Dona Juana and her servant stop by a bridge, and mention that they can see Madrid in the
distance, and I felt it might be useful to reinforce this with very distant bells. In *La dama boba*, similar kinds of cues include bells ringing within the house whenever guests comes to the door, the sounds of musicians tuning up before the big song and dance number, and the sounds of all the doors being slammed and bolted at the climax when Don Ottavio discovers Laurencio hiding in the attic.

This leads on to a wider question about what audiences “need” to hear. These plays would of course very frequently have been performed in daylight, with minimal “sound effects” apart from live musical instruments. However, when staged indoors, atmospheres and naturalistic soundscapes (gardens, for example) feel quite important. Having said that, I usually try to distil these to their essences—gradually evolving layers of birdsong, for example, with different birds taking over at different times of day. Interestingly, *Punishment without Revenge* was the only play that felt as if naturalistic sound would be out-of-place, as the soundscapes were much more abstract, with no attempt to recreate (for example) the “real” sounds of the streets the Duke wanders at the start of the show.

**SPG:** How does sound design connect to the other elements at play: set, lighting design, costumes?

**JN:** Actually, in these shows the element the sound and music needed to connect to most strongly is the one you haven’t mentioned – movement and
choreography. I worked extremely closely from the outset with the movement director Lucy Cullingford, who’s an RSC-trained Renaissance specialist. We knew that as the dance numbers were so integral, we’d really have to hit the ground running from the first day of rehearsals, and we spent an overall period of a couple of months working and reworking the music beforehand. As well as the dances, all the transitional scene change moments were also carefully choreographed in an almost balletic sense to achieve maximum fluidity, and we spent a lot of time on these in the technical rehearsal, as Lucy worked out the swiftest way to get the stage reset and I rewrote particular music cues in situ.

Sound and music of course also has a technical relationship to lighting, as sound cues are often very carefully synchronised with changes in lighting – again this is quite a technical process, which we address mainly in the technical rehearsal and throughout the preview period.

Having said that, however, what we all ultimately strive for is the sense of an organic whole, in which design, lights, movement, music and sound all feel like an extension of the actors’ performances, creating an environment in which the story can most clearly be told.
San Félix, Sor Marcela de. *Los coloquios del Alma: Cuatro dramas alegóricos de Sor Marcela de San Félix, hija de Lope de Vega*. Ed. Susan M. Smith and Georgina Sabat de Rivers. Newark, Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta, 2006. 228 pp..

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A complete edition of Sor Marcela de San Félix’s work was published in 1988 by Electa Arénal and Georgina Sabat de Rivers under the title *Literatura conventual femenina: Sor Marcela de San Féix, hija de Lope de Vega. Obra completa*, which would seemingly make it unnecessary to re-edit Sor Marcela’s work so soon. However, *Los coloquios del Alma* brings together four of Sor Marcela’s dramatic works that contain a unifying thread. These plays follow the life of one particular character, Alma, a character that Susan M. Smith claims is a literary surrogate for the author, Sor Marcela. While the main body of the book is dedicated to the four plays or *coloquios*—which are very well annotated by the editors—it is the introductions by Smith and Sabat de Rivers that make this book truly special. Smith in particularly gives
the reader deeper insight into the lives of both Sor Marcela as a child and later as a nun, as well as her famous father, the phoenix himself, Lope de Vega. Smith’s introduction, in particular, stands apart as a phenomenal example of how a well researched topic can be made interesting not only for the average reader of obscure Golden Age works, but also as a potential teaching tool.

Smith’s introduction includes a brief biography of Sor Marcela’s life, as an illegitimate child who lives first with her mother, the actress Micaela de Luján, and later, after the death of his wife Juana Guardo, with her father. Smith also touches upon her decision to enter into the order of the Trinitarias Descalzas de Madrid, in a convent not far from her father’s house. Sor Marcela eventually becomes a full member of the order, overseeing various positions, including that of Reverend Mother, and, perhaps even more notably, her father’s confessor. Smith also includes notes on the Orden Trinitaria, gathered from her extensive time spent researching in the convents archives, which has been published in another of her books, El convento de las Trinitarias Descalzas de Madrid y la vida de sor Marcela (2001). The introduction then explains allegorical drama and the works of Sor Marcela—which, of five volumes, only one reportedly remains, as Sor Marcela herself purportedly destroyed the rest in an act of humility (Smith 19).

The most important contribution that Smith makes, however, is that which she titles “Ori-
entación para el Estudiante”. She sets out the four plays as a thematic series that follows the life of Alma, who begins in the first, “Muerte del apetito” as a young woman searching for her place in the world, then as a young novice in “Estimación de la religión”, and finally as an experienced nun facing challenges within the convent in “De virtudes” and “Celo indiscreto”. In all four plays Alma is faced with an antagonist who makes her question her devotion, while various virtues show up as allegorical characters to help her find her way. Smith expands on the protagonists, explaining how they fit in to the larger themes of religious allegory, as well as the various virtues and vices that aid and challenge Alma along the way. Smith then delves into the different themes, explaining in depth the four plays both individually and through their connections to each other. She also provides a note on linguistic conventions that might be unfamiliar, especially to a newer reader of Early Modern Spanish. This includes a vocabulary of archaic forms, an orthography that explains potential spelling differences, and an explanation of unfamiliar verb forms that were popular in Sor Marcela’s time but have fallen out of favor. Finally, she includes a criteria of the edition, which explains her choice of these particular plays, as well her reasons behind the ordering and titling as presented in this edition.

The plays are carefully edited with various footnotes to explain context along with translations to modern-day Spanish provided in the margins for
potential student readers. The plays themselves are well written, albeit perhaps not quite so well as those of her father. That, however, is an unfair comparison, and Sor Marcela’s work stands up on its own as dramas that would have been well received by her fellow sisters as both entertaining and instructive. From Alma’s first foray into devotion and mortification to her battles against “Celo Indiscrerto”—the priest who criticizes everyone and unwittingly condemns himself—and “Tibieza”—a sister who prefers to spend her time in activities other than prayer—there is plenty of material that pokes fun at convent life while reminding the nuns of their duties to God and Church.

Smith and Sabat de Rivers’ edition of Los coloquios de Alma brings to light four delightful plays that give the modern reader a glimpse into convent life in the Early Modern period. With the extensive footnotes and modern synonyms provided in the margins, along with the comprehensive research that informs the introduction, the plays become accessible to almost anyone with an interest in Golden Age plays or convent life. Students and teachers alike will find the book to be a great introduction to Sor Marcela’s life and writings. She might not be the Fénix himself, but she certainly deserves the treatment afforded her by Smith and Sabat de Rivers, and the attention that readers will be sure to show her after reading this excellent edition.
Although Le Guin focuses on a much later period than that which many comedia scholars might be readily familiar, *The Tonadilla in Performance* is nevertheless an interesting and informative book. In particular, the first chapter—to which I will return shortly—is both entertaining and illustrative of the inner workings of the theatrical experience of the eighteenth century.

The introduction sets the stage, with a brief history of the tonadilla as well as a summation of other secondary sources of the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Le Guin’s is the first full-length book written about the *tonadilla* since 1930. She claims that she will not take the *tonadilla* so seriously as her predecessors since “the *tonadillas* were not serious works, and they lacked substance. Like the ‘unimportant people’ they portrayed, they inhabited the interstices of official cul-
ture as it was represented by the evening’s entertainment” (12). Le Guin then explains that the book has three main aspects: “an attempt to understand song as a special comic register;” a focus specifically on the actors and administrators who were involved in the creation and execution of the *tonadillas*; and finally, permission to herself to “side-step big conclusions” (13). The last point is a bit of a risk to claim in an academic book, but perhaps not so risky as her first chapter, which she claims was “conceived as a full-blown comic exercise” (19).

The first chapter, framed as a letter written in December of 1766 from a brother visiting Madrid to his sister at home in France, is part fiction, part education, and quite entertaining all around. The premise is that the brother has just attended his first *comedia de teatro* with another sister and her new husband. He is there to work with his new Spanish brother-in-law and make sure his other sister is settling into her new home. He paints a picture of the city as filthy, with unusable streets, as well as the theater itself, complete with a patio for the common folk, the “stewpot” or *cazuela* for the ladies, and the tertulias or third floor balcony for the men who could afford a higher price. His explanation of the differences he sees in the Spanish theater brings it to life for the reader. He alludes to the *apuntador* reading lines and shouting over the crowd and actors alike; the changes that the Spanish companies make to Italian operas in order to convert them into zarzuelas with mixtures of spoken and sung lines; the gen-
eral disrespect the crowd seems to emit; and the de-
construction of theatrical illusion as the actors
acknowledge the audience and play various charac-
ters without even so much as a change of wardrobe.
To help Louis (or as he notes, in Spain “Luis”) un-
derstand this strange and marvelous spectacle, his
brother-in-law and a neighboring theater-goer,
Tomás de Iriarte, explain the intricacies of the
show, including the entremeses, tonadillas, and jor-
nadas as they are presented.

Although presenting the first chapter as a
fictionalized account in an academic book is precar-
ious, as the author herself admits, the risk pays off
in this instance. Not only is it thoroughly engaging,
but it is also informative and historically accurate.
The first chapter alone has 114 notes, more than any
other chapter, to back up and explain the more intri-
cate details that one might not attend to in a person-
al letter. Even his new friend, Iriarte, was a histori-
cal person who is known to have published poetry,
satire, and essays by the time of their fictional meet-
ing (305n).

The rest of the book is equally informative,
but perhaps less pertinent to the comedia scholar.
Putting the emphasis on the tonadilla means that Le
Guin focuses quite a bit on the musical aspects,
which is not surprising given Le Guin’s profes-
sional interests as a Professor of Musicology. The four
remaining chapters, plus the “Intermedio” and “Fin
de Fiesta”—unnumbered and used as intermission
and epilogue to the book—discuss a variety of top-
ics that span everything from the origins of the rhythms used to the specific types of characters and the historical actors who played them.

In chapter 2, “Players,” Le Guin uses metatheatrical “rehearsal” *tonadillas* to illustrate how disorganized the companies were, and how little work—perhaps two or three short, poorly attended read-throughs before the performances—was put into a play. Chapter 3, “Rhythms,” focuses on the musical styles that preceded and influenced the *tonadilla*; rhythms could be used to provoke emotional or psychological reactions from the audience, as well as indicate the mental state of the characters. The “Intermedio” discusses the new royal palace built in the 1700s and the influence of Spain’s global empire on Spanish culture. Chapter 4 “Bandits” discusses the historical *bandoleros* and *banditos*, and how these appear in the *tonadilla*. Chapter 5, “Late Tonadillas,” discusses the changes that appeared in *tonadillas* written post 1780. These *tonadillas* have been previously considered to be “ugly or disfigured,” and yet Le Guin argues that they must have been in favor at the time or they would not have been produced, as the audience “had always voted their taste with their feet” (205). She theorizes on the possible influence of political and economic changes following the French Revolution, and believes that “theatrical life in this period was a reflection of growing social instability” (211). If the *tonadillas* were ugly, it was only that
they were continuing to function as they always had, as a reflection of the society around them.

Finally, in the epilogue “Fin de Fiestas: Las Músicas,” Le Guin discusses her own attempts to restage public performances of Las músicas in two different venues. The first was at a small conference on Hispanic theater music and identity in October 2006, during which she gave the audience an informal script on how they might behave in an eighteenth-century theater. The script, delivered right before lunch break, included the instructions to “review it and drink wine freely before returning” (247). The audience obliged and became true chisperos, clapping, whistling, talking over the music and interacting in a “slightly alarming” manner with the actors (247). The second recreation is “even rowdier” (248) but perhaps less successful. Part of the problem in this second audience would have been the mainly Anglophone audience, which, even with instruction, would not have understood the verbal jokes nor the musical references. Likewise, the change from the normal theater experience for the modern audience likely caught them off guard, and would have been seen as novelty.

Along with all of this information, Le Guin also supplies us with an extensive appendix of music examples, which include the lyrics and their respective notation, as well as the sheet music for many of the instruments as well.

All in all, The Tonadilla in Performance is an informative, entertaining, and extensively re-
searched work. The historical time period might not be ideal for the typical *comedia* scholar, but the scene Le Guin recreates in her first chapter gives abundant enough detail to imagine similar scenarios playing out on the Early Modern stage as well. And her attempts to recreate a *tonadilla* in front of modern audiences, while perhaps not the most scientific of methods, is a very engaging and dynamic exercise.
McGrath, Michael J. *La vida urbana en Segovia: Historia de una ciudad barroca*. Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 2012. Pasta dura. 201 pp. $34.95.

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*La vida urbana en Segovia: Historia de una ciudad barroca* es una excelente obra cuyo principal problema reside quizás en que el título no revela adecuadamente su contenido. Este libro no es una historia de la vida urbana en general, sino más bien una colección de documentos que, como el propio autor indica “se centran en dos actividades sociales: el teatro y las fiestas religiosas” durante el siglo XVII. Michael McGrath contribuye a los estudios emprendidos en las últimas décadas sobre aspectos económicos y administrativos del teatro y los festejos en la Alta Edad Moderna. Su aportación se enfoca en una ciudad, Segovia, muy poco estudiada por la crítica hasta el momento, por lo que constituye una fuente indispensable para aquellos interesados en el teatro y fiestas barrocas fuera de las grandes urbes.
McGrath divide su volumen en tres partes: una introducción, una sección en que recopila documentos relativos al teatro y otra con documentos sobre fiestas religiosas. Las veinte páginas de la introducción exponen, en primer lugar, los límites de la investigación y la metodología empleada. Acto seguido se ofrece una visión panorámica de la historia y vida diaria de Segovia. McGrath parte de la relevancia de la urbe en el siglo XV, analiza su auge económico y demográfico durante XVI y acaba centrándose en la crisis del XVII. Evalúa las causas del declive (expulsión de los moriscos, peste y colapso de la industria textil) y cómo éstas afectaron la vida de los segovianos. Partiendo de este marco, el autor analiza la actividad teatral en la ciudad durante el siglo XVII. Indaga en las condiciones de trabajo y funciones de las Compañías de la legua y las Compañías de título, ofrece un breve esbozo sobre la explotación de los corrales de comedia españoles y describe el caso particular del patio de comedias del Hospital de la Misericordia de Segovia. Finalmente, McGrath examina la importancia de las festividades religiosas, prestando especial atención a la organización y financiación del Corpus Christi y sus autos sacramentales, pero sin dejar de mencionar otras procesiones y festejos. La introducción de McGrath es clara, concisa y de amena lectura, aunque, dada su brevedad y la cantidad de tópicos que cubre, tal vez el lector especializado quede con ganas de una mayor profundización en las particularidades del teatro y festejos segovianos.
El grueso del libro consiste en la reproducción de un total de 64 documentos provenientes del Archivo Histórico Provincial de Segovia y del Archivo Municipal de Segovia. Los documentos se ordenan cronológicamente y van desde 1625 hasta 1705. McGrath opta por no modificar, puntuar ni modernizar los textos que transcribe. Incluye, eso sí, amplias notas a pie de página que sirven para aclarar vocablos, dar información histórica, contextualizar referencias, traducir pasajes en latín y sugerir otras lecturas. Al final del libro aparece un índice alfabético de términos (nombres propios, lugares, eventos, etc.) de gran utilidad. McGrath no analiza ninguno de los documentos ni extrae conclusiones generales de ellos, abriendo así la puerta a futuros estudios e interpretaciones.

De los 64 documentos, sólo nueve ocupan la sección titulada “Teatro.” Todos ellos están de un modo u otro relacionados con el funcionamiento del corral/patio de comedias del Hospital de la Misericordia y se refieren explícitamente a cuestiones administrativas o económicas. Encontramos cuatro contratos entre autores de comedias y la ciudad para representar cierto número de funciones. Los restantes textos son libranzas, memorias de jornales y otros escritos relacionados con la remodelación del patio del Hospital. Estos textos describen con gran detalle las obras de acondicionamiento que se llevaron a cabo en el patio. En ellos se especifican, entre otras cosas, qué hacía exactamente cada albañil o carpintero, qué cobraban, qué materiales utilizaron
y cuál era el precio de éstos. La única otra obra anteriormente publicada que presenta un abanico relativamente amplio de datos referentes al patio del Hospital de la Misericordia es *El teatro en Segovia* de Mariano Grau (Instituto Diego de Colmenares, 1958). La información aportada por Grau procede de una fuente textual diferente, los libros de cuentas del Hospital, por lo que la lectura conjunta de ambos trabajos proveerá al estudioso interesado en la actividad teatral segoviana del XVII con una base documental de primer orden.

La última sección de libro, en realidad más de la mitad de éste, incluye 55 documentos que conectan de uno u otro modo con la celebración de festivales religiosos. El variado conjunto de escritos relativos a festividades religiosas desvela las complejas relaciones existentes entre monarquía, ayuntamiento, iglesia y ciudadanos. Encontramos aquí, sobre todo, contratos entre la ciudad de Segovia o una parroquia y las diversas entidades que participaban en la organización de las celebraciones (autores de comedias, carpinteros encargados de construir los tablados, decoradores de carros, proveedores de gigantes y cabezudos, danzantes, etc.). Estos contratos nos permiten, sobre todo, adentrarnos en los aspectos financieros y logísticos de la organización de un festejo, pero además nos proporcionan noticias concretas sobre la escenificación de autos, tarascas, danzas y procesiones. Varios textos pormenorizan, entre otros elementos, el número de actores o danzantes, los instrumentos musicales usa-
dos, el recorrido de las procesiones, los tipos de disfraces y atuendos, la calidad de las telas empleadas y los modos en que se decoraban los carros y altares.

Dentro de esta última sección abundan también los exhaustivos estados de cuentas de los gastos incurridos por el ayuntamiento para la organización de las fiestas del Corpus. McGrath reproduce la contabilidad de doce años distintos, lo que permitirá en el futuro un análisis sobre cómo evolucionó el gasto. Estos estados de cuentas proporcionan una visión amplia sobre el coste monetario de cada uno de los elementos que constituían la celebración. Se especifica quiénes financiaban cada cosa, el modo en que participaban los distintos sectores de la sociedad y cuáles eran los muchos eventos que tenían lugar cada año.

Asimismo, la sección de festivales religiosos incluye otros documentos de diversa índole: disposiciones para recaudación de sisas destinadas a la financiación de eventos, el acta de reunión de una junta parroquial para preparar un festejo, una carta en la que una parroquia solicita la presencia de representantes del ayuntamiento en una procesión, textos relacionados con la remodelación de las bóvedas de la Iglesia de San Millán, recibos de donativos, etc. Es necesario indicar que, aunque la mayoría de textos transcritos por McGrath se publican aquí por primera vez, fragmentos de algunos de los documentos sobre el Corpus habían ya aparecido en Las fiestas del Corpus en Segovia (1594-1636) de
Juan Luis Flecniakoska (Instituto Diego Colmenares, 1956).

*La vida urbana* en Segovia es el primer libro en reunir un conjunto tan nutrido de documentos concernientes a la actividad teatral y festiva de la Segovia barroca. McGrath, quien ha estudiado el caso segoviano durante más de una década, se ha sumergido en la ardua y necesaria labor de rastrear dos archivos hasta ahora poco utilizados por los investigadores del teatro áureo. Con esta obra se hace patente, una vez más, la necesidad de sacar a la luz tantos y tantos pliegos que permanecen olvidados en archivos y bibliotecas de toda España. Aquellos dedicados al Siglo de Oro agradecemos este tipo de esfuerzo por localizar y editar nuevos documentos. *La vida urbana de Segovia* ofrece importantes herramientas de trabajo para investigadores no sólo del teatro y las fiestas, sino para todos aquellos interesados en la vida diaria de una ciudad española del XVII. No cabe duda que serán muchos quienes disfrutarán y podrán aprovecharse de la lectura de este nuevo volumen de McGrath.

TANIA DE MIGUEL MAGRO
West Virginia University

El segundo volumen de la colección Escena Clásica de la editorial Iberoamericana-Vevuert, Las musas rameras: oficio dramático y conciencia profesional en Lope de Vega, es el primer libro monográfico de Alejandro García Reidy. El presente texto surgió a partir de la tesis doctoral del autor, Lope de Vega frente a su escritura: el nacimiento de una conciencia profesional, que obtuvo el Premio 2012 TC/12 a la mejor tesis defendida durante los años 2009 y 2010. En Las musas rameras, García Reidy analiza el proceso de profesionalización de la escritura que comenzó a finales del XVI y principios del XVII como respuesta a toda una serie de cambios sociales, ideológicos, artísticos y económicos. El caso de Lope de Vega sirve para ejemplificar el momento en el que se inicia la transición desde un tradicional sistema de mecenazgo que concebía la
escritura literaria como labor independiente de la economía de mercado, hacia la paulatina y no siempre fácil aceptación de la escritura como oficio legítimo, gracias, entre otras cosas, a la aparición del teatro comercial moderno. García Reidy considera que Lope es el primer autor español con rasgos de escritor profesional moderno y con conciencia de serlo.

El libro se divide en cinco capítulos perfectamente documentados. El autor corrobora cada una de sus afirmaciones con una amplísima base textual de fuentes históricas y literarias. Refuerza asimismo sus interpretaciones mediante el empleo de diversas líneas teóricas que tratan el tema de la conciencia autorial. Es importante notar que, aunque Lope de Vega es el eje organizador de texto, el estudio no se limita a este autor. A lo largo de toda la obra se ofrece una amplia visión de la situación del escritor en la Alta Edad Moderna española y europea, por lo que resulta de muy recomendada lectura para cualquier estudioso de la literatura barroca.

El capítulo uno, “Los escritores en la Alta Edad Moderna: oficio y conciencia profesional,” sirve de marco contextual al resto del libro. Aquí se presentan los factores externos que posibilitaron los primeros pasos hacia la profesionalización de los escritores y que hicieron viable que el libro impreso se convirtiera en un bien de consumo con un valor comercial: difusión de la imprenta, crecimiento de las grandes urbes, incipiente desarrollo del capitalismo, expansión de la enseñanza de las letras y
afianzamiento de los teatros comerciales. En este capítulo se establece un interesante paralelo entre la evolución de la posición social del escritor y la de otros artistas que dentro y fuera de España luchaban para conseguir que las bellas artes fueran consideradas artes liberales y no mecánicas con la finalidad de obtener un estatus que les permitiera acceder a puestos oficiales o títulos.

El capítulo dos, “Los dramaturgos y el mercado teatral barroco,” versa sobre las relaciones mercantiles que podían establecerse entre un dramaturgo y los potenciales compradores de sus textos. El estudio pormenorizado de contratos y otros documentos demuestra que las comedias y autos tenían precios relativamente fijos que se pactaban de antemano y que generalmente no dependían del éxito de la representación. García Reidy ilustra los distintos tipos de contratos y clientes mediante ejemplos concretos de ventas realizadas por Lope y por otros dramaturgos contemporáneos. Aclara también que existió una relación directa entre la eclosión de la comedia nueva y la profesionalización de la labor del dramaturgo, base de la subsecuente profesionalización general de los escritores. En este capítulo se compara el fenómeno teatral español con el funcionamiento del negocio escénico en Inglaterra y Francia.

En el capítulo tres, “Las musas dan honor, mas no dan renta: literatura y economía en Lope de Vega,” García Reidy cierra el eterno debate sobre el verdadero impacto que la actividad de Lope como
dramaturgo tuvo en sus finanzas, ofreciendo un completo análisis de sus ingresos y comparando estos con los sueldos medios y el coste de vida de la época. Aunque, como el propio García Reidy reconoce, los datos sobre las finanzas personales de Lope no son demasiado abundantes, este investigador consigue extrapolard de modo convincente cifras aproximadas, calibrando, por ejemplo, el número estimado de textos teatrales compuestos o publicados, y el beneficio medio que aportaba la venta o publicación de una comedia o auto. Tras contrastar estas cifras con los otros ingresos de Lope (rentas eclesiásticas, pagos por su labor de secretario, beneficios obtenidos del mecenazgo, etc.), se concluye que la venta de obras de teatro era la principal fuente de ingresos del dramaturgo, alcanzando las dos terceras partes de sus ganancias totales. La escritura, por tanto, permitió a Lope vivir holgadamente, con una remuneración superior a la de un trabajador asalariado medio y comparable a la de un actor profesional.

El capítulo 4, “Lope de Vega frente a su escritura: el conflicto de un escritor de la Alta Edad Moderna,” es, desde mi punto de vista, el más innovador y sugestivo de la obra. Mediante la exploración de múltiples escritos de Lope y sus contemporáneos, García Reidy analiza el modo en que Lope de Vega consideraba su propia labor de escritor y la percepción que los demás tenían de él como autor literario. El gran acierto de este capítulo reside en que cada escrito aparece contextualizado e interpre-
tado dentro de su género, su tono, su destinatario y el momento de la carrera de Lope en que se compuso. Esto permite comprender que, frente a lo que a menudo se ha dicho, Lope no se contradice a sí mismo, sino que una cosa es lo que pensaba en privado, y otra muy distinta lo que manifestó en público. García Reidy explica que, mientras que en su epistolario Lope no dudó en reconocer que escribía comedias por dinero, en los pasajes dirigidos a una audiencia amplia, como los prolegómenos de sus partes de comedias o sus textos épicos, prefirió retratarse con una imagen más tradicional de escritor cultivado apartado de cualquier interés económico. Esto es debido a que Lope pretendía lograr un mecenazgo estable, para lo cual emprendió una muy estudiada campaña de autopromoción. García Reidy explora las múltiples técnicas usadas por Lope para crear una imagen de sí mismo que conjugase su atípica carrera literaria con las expectativas de aquellos a quienes quería impresionar. Demuestra igualmente que la actitud de Lope hacia su propia obra dramática fue evolucionando según aumentó su éxito. Si bien inicialmente el escritor intentó distanciarse abiertamente del mundo de la farándula, con el paso del tiempo fue mostrándose orgulloso de su labor como dramaturgo y de su éxito comercial. Destacan en este capítulo el interesantísimo estudio iconográfico de los retratos de Lope y la comparación de las reflexiones que Lope y Ben Jonson escriben sobre sus respectivas experiencias como dramaturgos.
El capítulo cinco, “Lope de Vega y la reapropiación autorial de su teatro,” se abre con la descripción de las legislaciones y usos vigentes en España y otros países europeos con respecto a la propiedad, derechos de impresión y comercialización de un texto dramático. Gracia Reidy hace un recorrido histórico por el negocio de la impresión de comedias en general para luego centrarse en el caso de Lope. Revela las causas del progresivo interés de Lope por controlar la divulgación de sus dramas en papel y examina el modo en que el autor intervino en la edición de sus obras. Finalmente profundiza en cómo Lope fue cambiando su consideración sobre la función de los textos dramáticos impresos. Aunque en un principio los vio como inferiores con respecto a la representación en las tablas, poco a poco fue valorando la transmisión impresa, llegando incluso a opinar que era superior por permitir una mejor recepción estética de los versos por parte de unos lectores más selectos. García Reidy destaca cómo Lope fue el único autor de su época que intentó, aunque sin éxito, que las autoridades establecieran un sistema para proteger los derechos de los escritores que limitase el uso que terceras personas pudieran hacer de un texto. El libro se cierra con una conclusión que resume todo lo anteriormente dicho.

Esta espléndida obra de García Reidy derrocha, a partes iguales, erudición y claridad. Es este uno de esos pocos libros académicos que se lee con placer e interés de principio a fin. El autor consigue
combinar la visión general con el caso particular mediante la conjugación de elementos procedentes de diversas disciplinas, manteniendo siempre una acertada estructuración y ritmo expositivo. Los investigadores del teatro áureo encontrarán en este texto un profundo examen sobre la conciencia profesional de Lope y el contexto social, económico y cultural que hizo posible su desarrollo. Mientras leía esta obra, se me venían a la cabeza todas aquellas veces en que un estudiante graduado me pidió un buen ejemplo de cómo escribir. La próxima vez que un estudiante me haga esta pregunta, le daré una copia de Las musas rameras.
Esta obra, como el mismo Friedman explica, no es una traducción de la obra de Cervantes sino la inspiración para la obra de Friedman. Como él mismo indica en la introducción, su obra sigue los parámetros de una comedia de enredo del Siglo de Oro en la que tenemos mujeres vestidas de hombre, líos amorosos, gracioso, obsesión con el honor. Pero además, Friedman va a plantear cuestiones sobre el metateatro, problemas de género y sobre el poder de las palabras a través de sus protagonistas femeninas.

La trama principal de la obra es la típica de una comedia de enredos amorosos: dos muchachas jóvenes, que son primas, están aburridas de estar encerradas en casa. Son dos mujeres educadas, bien leídas y conscientes de que su papel en la sociedad es muy limitado. Deciden vestirse de hombre y salir a ver mundo, para ello no sólo han de vestirse como hombres, sino que tienen que pensar como hombres.
Su salida al mundo no es sólo una salida, sino que como ellas mismas dicen van a escribir su propia obra "substituyendo un escenario por otro" (22).¹

Porque las dos muchachas saben que tienen que tener cuidado con su honor, han buscado a un hombre que las acompañe y proteja, y por supuesto que guarde su secreto, este personaje se va a llamar "Nonada" y aunque no habla mucho, sus comentarios suelen dar en el centro de la diana. Las dos damas-pastores (Julia y Porcia) se van a encontrar en el camino con uno de los galanes (Anastasio), quien se ha disfrazado de criado para poder entrar a servir a la dama de la que está enamorado, pero el disfraz no ha funcionado porque el mayordomo lo declaró "overqualified for the job (38)." Anastasio continúa hablando "[o]verqualified to be a servant! I cannot argue with that (38)." A lo que Julia le contesta "They say that clothes make the man (38)." Anastasio ""They" are wrong, sir² (38)." Obviamente, Anastasio no ve más allá de la ropa, pues no ve a las dos muchachas, sino a los pastores que representan. Y según él mismo dice: "I could not persuade my audience of one because I miscalculated my ability to enact a metamorphosis. I was less a thespian — less a servant— than a gentleman. In the end, blood trumps improvisation (39)." Y el problema sigue diciendo es que tendemos a borrar la líneas que di-

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¹ la traducción es mía.
² la cursiva es mía, para hacer énfasis.
viden la realidad de la ficción, la vida real de los mecanismos del teatro (39).

La mujer de la que Anastasio está enamorado, Rosamira, está enamorada de otro hombre, Dagoberto, y su padre la quiere casar con Manfredo, quien es amigo de Anastasio. Es el típico lio de una obra de una comedia, con la diferencia del contenido del lenguaje. Las tres mujeres son sabias, en el sentido de han estudiado y saben cual es su puesto en la sociedad y no lo quieren cambiar, saben que no lo pueden cambiar. Sin embargo, quieren tener la oportunidad de poder decidir con quien se han de casar. Así es como Rosamira le explica la situación a su padre: "Don Dagoberto's confidential report about my possible misconduct was my invention, a means of deferring the wedding talks with Don Manfredo (104)." Durante toda la obra son las mujeres las que llevan las riendas de la acción y al final cada una se casará con el hombre de su elección. Y como en toda comedia también los criados han de tener pareja al final y eso es lo que le prometen a Nonada, por lo cual él da las gracias y comenta en un aparte: "A new life, with a new wife. With these matchmakers, there is no way that she will be an old-fashion girl. Well, we have learned that times are changing (113)."

Las referencias al teatro, a la construcción del lenguaje son constantes, como lo son a los problemas sociales y las diferencias entre hombres y mujeres en la sociedad del XVII. Porque, al fin y al cabo, la obra sigue los modelos de la comedia, y los
personajes se comportan como lo harían en el XVII. Con todo el lenguaje es moderno, las ideas que se presentan son modernas, sobre todo las relacionadas con la construcción textual y la intertextualidad, las cuestiones de género que presenta son limitadas pero reales.

Es una obra de teatro divertida, entretenida, muy fácil de leer y que puede servir de introducción a un curso de teatro del Siglo de Oro a nivel básico, o simplemente a un curso de teatro.

RUTH SÁNCHEZ IMIZCOZ
The University of the South

Según la profesora Kallendorf el propósito de este volumen es cubrir la falta que existe de "[an] up-to-date guide to research in this field. What is needed is a serious, panoramic, state-of-the-art handbook in English to chart a course for future work (1)." Para ello ha reunido una serie impresionante de expertos, los cuales han participado en la creación de este interesante volumen. El libro está dividido en cuatro secciones: "Origins," "Themes," "Places," y "Intersections." A estas secciones hay que añadir al final un abstracto de cada uno de los artículos, una bibliografía selecta y un index.

"Origins" reúne cuatro artículos que tratan, como el título indica, de los orígenes de la comedia empezando con un artículo de Enrique Fernández Rivera sobre la *Celestina* comparándolo con lo que
en inglés se denomina **closet drama**: obras escritas para ser leídas versus obras escritas para ser actuadas. Sigue con un artículo de Robert Bayliss sobre el amor cortes y su influencia en la comedia, caso de estudio *El burlador de Sevilla*. Frederick A. de Armas escribe sobre la Comedia y la influencia de los clásicos griegos en los temas de las obras. La sección termina con un artículo de J. Enrique Duarte sobre la evolución del teatro sacramental, centrándose sobre todo en la obra de Calderón de la Barca.

"Themes" reúne cinco artículos, tres de los cuales van a tocar los sempiternos temas que aparecen el teatro del Siglo de Oro, uno que va a hablar de animales y el último dedicado al teatro breve. Robert Lauer va a escribir sobre los orígenes de las palabras honor y honra y cómo desarrollan sus significados con el paso del tiempo, también nos explica como hemos de entenderlos en el momento histórico que está en estudio y su relación con la idea de la limpieza de sangre. Usa como uno de sus ejemplos *Fuenteovejuna*. El artículo de Matthew Stroud habla de las obras en las que la esposa es asesinada por el marido con o sin causa y lo hace presentando cuatro situaciones con cuatro tipos diferentes de parejas. El tercer tema es el matrimonio también pero desde el punto de vista legal. La profesora Carrión hace un análisis comparando las leyes vigentes del momento sobre el matrimonio y las legalidades que aparecen en el teatro a través de obras como *La dama boba, La traición en la amistad, Valor, agravio*
y mujer y *El médico de su honra*. Más curioso, por lo original y por haber sido menos estudiado este tema, es el artículo de Adrienne Martin sobre la presencia de animales no sólo en los textos de las obras, sino en los corrales. Martin presenta la cuestión del uso real o representativo de los animales en el escenario. La sección termina con una visión panorámica del teatro breve, con una clasificación y definición de las distintas piezas que existían y de su uso en el contexto del espectáculo.

"Places" presenta artículos sobre la ciudad de Madrid como parte importante del texto teatral, Colón y el Nuevo Mundo, el teatro de Gil Vicente y la que de momento parece ser la única obra sobre el Japón en el repertorio del Siglo de Oro: *Los mártires del Japón* de Lope de Vega.

Este grupo de artículos comienza con uno de García de Santo-Tomás sobre la presencia de la ciudad de Madrid en las obras de Calderón, y como este crítico indica después de cuatrocientos años de estudiar el teatro todavía estamos descubriendo obras nuevas llenas de maravillas, y da gracias a que por fin el canon se está abriendo a la posibilidad de nuevos textos que hasta ahora habían sido ignorados (165). Del Madrid de los Austrias pasamos al Nuevo Mundo con la obra de Lope de Vega *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón*, y la comparación que hace Mariryca Ortiz Lottman entre Colón y San Cristóbal. En el siguiente artículo volvemos a la península con un análisis del teatro religioso de Gil Vicente por el profesor Manuel
Delgado. Este artículo sirve de eslabón al que sigue que tiene también un tema religioso, pero que nos vuelve a sacar del país para viajar hasta Japón. Su autora Christina Lee da un repaso a la historia de las relaciones entre Japón y España en los siglos XVI-XVII, como introducción al origen de esta comedia de encargo que escribió Lope de Vega sobre el martirio de Alonso Navarrete en Japón. El artículo termina con un análisis de la representación de la identidad japonesa en las tablas españolas, ya que la única forma en la que se distinguía a un español de alguien que no lo era durante la representación era a través del vestido (241).

Y finalmente "Intersections" presenta los trabajos en los que el teatro se cruza con otros géneros. Esta sección la abre Ed Friedman con el tema de la picaresca, ya que tanto la comedia nueva como la narrativa picaresca se desarrollan más o menos durante el mismo periodo. Así pues comparará los textos de El Buscón de Quevedo y Pedro de Urdemalas de Cervantes. La siguiente intersección viene de la mano de Ignacio Arellano y los emblemas, y como éstos tienen dos formas de presentarse en el escenario: a través del texto hablado y a través de la actuación del actor, de sus movimientos y acciones que reflejan la idea del emblema. El artículo de Cory Reed nos lleva al mundo de la ciencia y del discurso científico que empieza a tomar forma durante el siglo XVII. Se va a centrar en el análisis de dos obras canon de Calderón La vida es sueño y El médico de su honra. Ambas obras compuestas más
o menos a la vez que tenía lugar el juicio contra Ga-
lileo en 1633 (283). Una de las teorías que aplica en
su ensayo es la teoría del caos: orden y desorden. El
tema de la ciencia continúa, pero esta vez hablando
de sicología en la forma de melancolía y de la mano
de Teresa Soufas. El último ensayo es de Henry Su-
llivan quien dice que la editora "requested from
[him] a brief but general account of Lacan's poten-
tial as theorist for any psychoanalytical approach to
our reading of the Spanish Golden Age drama (311)
y para hacerlo decide concentrarse en sólo una obra:
*El médico de su honra*.

Llegado a este artículo siento la necesidad
de volver a la introducción del artículo de García de
Santo-Tomás en el que indica que "the field of *com-
edia* studies still suffers from a saturation of
analysis on a very small number of authors and
texts (165)," porque aunque este libro se presenta
como una visión panorámica del teatro, en realidad
termina convirtiéndose un paseo que analiza la obra
de Calderón de la Barca, y en particular *El médico
de su honra*. Y de forma un poco más general la
obra de Lope de Vega. Lo que acabo de decir no le
quita mérito al libro, porque lo tiene, pero el teatro
español del Siglo de Oro lo forman muchos más
autores, y en ese sentido este libro no es panóra-
co. Es verdad que algunos de los críticos aquí repre-
sentados proponen nuevas ideas y formas de anali-
zar la comedia, pero la mayor parte de ellos se limi-
tan a usar los mismos textos de siempre.
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Contributing to Part II, dedicated exclusively to Calderón’s La vida es sueño, are Nelson López, Christian Andrès, Ricardo Sáez, and Christine Aguilar-Adan. Topics include staging and directing La vida es sueño, a comparative study on Pierre Boasituau’s Theatrum Mundi and Calderón’s La vida es sueño and El gran teatro del mundo, poetic structure and style in the redondillas of La vida es sueño, and La vida es sueño and the political institution of the prince.

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Thursday, March 19, 2015 @ 7 pm
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Friday, March 20, 2015 @ 7 pm
“Coloquio de los perros” by Cervantes
Performed by Laboratorio Escénico Univalle from Cali, Colombia

Saturday, March 21, 2015 @ 7 pm
“El amor enamorado” by Lope de Vega
Drama Festival

Performed by Escuela Nacional de Arte Teatral INBA from Mexico City, Mexico
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