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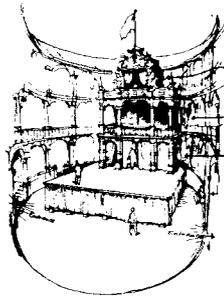
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University of British Columbia

Frederic Wood Theatre
presents

YERMA

By
Federico Garcia Lorca

Directed By
Catherine Caines

January 11-21
1989

The Frederic Wood Theatre Magazine
A Seasonal Publication of University Productions Inc.

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Federico Garcia Lorca: A Brief Chronology

1898, June 5th.
Federico Garcia Lorca born at Fuentevaqueros, near Granada.

1918
Published his first book, *Impresions y paisajes* (prose).

1920
Production of his first play, *El maleficio de la mariposa* in Madrid.

1921
Publication of *Libro de poemas*.

1923
Law degree, University of Granada.

1927
Publication of *Canciones* (Songs). *Mariana Pineda* produced with success in Barcelona and Madrid. Garcia Lorca's drawings attract attention at exhibition in Barcelona gallery.

1928
Publication of *Romancero gitano* (Gypsy Ballads).

1929-30
Trip to the United States and Cuba; gives lectures. Composition of poems of *Poeta en Nueva York*.

1930
On his return, *La zapatera prodigiosa* (*The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife*) a success in Madrid.

1931
Publication of *Poema del cante jondo*.

1932
Founder and director of the traveling university-theatre, La Barraca.

1933
Bodas de sangre (*Blood Wedding*) and *Don Perlimplin* performed in Madrid; to Argentina to lecture; directed his own plays and the classics in Buenos Aires.

1934
YERMA produced in Madrid.

1935
The puppet play *Retablillo de Don Cristobal* produced in Madrid; *Llanto por Ignacio Sanchez Mejias* published; *Doña Rosita la soltera* produced in Barcelona; finishes a book of sonnets and announces that *La destruccion de Sodoma* is nearly finished.

1936
Reads *El publico* for friends.
August. When the victorious right-wing forces occupied Granada at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, Federico Garcia Lorca was executed and his body thrown into an unmarked grave.

Poems

Little song of the first desire

*In the green morning
I wished to be a heart.
A heart.*

*And in the ripe afternoon
I wished to be a nightingale.
A nightingale.*

*Soul, put on orange color.
Soul, put on orange color.*

*In the living morning
I wished to be I.
A heart.*

*And in the waning afternoon
I wished to be my voice.
A nightingale.*

*Soul, put on orange color,
Soul, put on orange color!*

Song of the Dry Orange-Tree

*Woodman.
Cut for me the shades
Free me from the martyrdom
of seeing myself without fruitage.*

*Why was I born between mirrors?
Day reflects me
and the night copies me
in all its stars.*

*I wish to live without seeing myself.
And ants and downy seeds,
I will dream that these are my
leaves and my birds.*

*Woodman.
Cut for me the shades.
Free me from the martyrdom
of seeing myself without fruitage.*

The leave-taking

*If I die
leave the balcony open.*

*The boy eats oranges
From my balcony I see it.*

*The reaper cuts the wheat.
From my balcony I feel it.*

*If I die,
leave the balcony open!*

YERMA

By Federico Garcia Lorca

Translated by
James Graham-Lujan and
Richard L. O'Connell

Directed By
Catherine Caines

CAST

In order of appearance

Yerma. Barbara Cormack
Juan. Jason Smith
Maria. Allison Sanders
Victor. Michael Cavers
Miranda, an old woman. Susan C. Bertoia
Isabela, a young girl. Sheila Stowell
Monserat, a young girl. Mireille Chambers

Laundresses:

Luisa. Sandra Birkenhead
Pilar. Sara Levine
Juanita. Lisa Beley
Isabela. Mindy Forrester
Rosa. Trish Williams
Paula. Jo Howitz

Sisters-in-law:

Magdalena. Kathleen Duborg
Rosita. Johane Meehan

Conchita, a woman. Eliza Green-Moncur
Dolores. Laura K. Burke
Carmen, a young woman. Michelle Porter

Men:

José. Kurt Eby
Estefan. Tom Shulte
Miguel. Kelly Aisenstat

Boys:

Marco. John Stefaniuk
Garcia. Brian Irwin

Celebrants:

Marcela. Jo Howitz
Emanuela. Trish Williams
Carmela. Martina Smyth
Filipa. Diana Stein
Consuela. Laara Sadiq
Catalana. Suzanne Buchan-Grieder

Antonio, the Male Mask. Phil Barnett
Miguela, the Female Mask. Michele Melland

Act I Scene I - Anytime
Act I Scene II - One year later
Act II Scene I - Two years later
Act II Scene II - One month later

Set Design By Robert Gardiner
Costume Design By Mara Gottler
Lighting Design By Kairiin Bright

PRODUCTION

Technical Director. Ian Pratt
Properties. Sherry Milne
Costume Supervisor. Chelsea Moore
Set Construction. Don Griffiths, John Henrickson,
Robert Moser
Cutter Jean Driscoll-Bell

Stage Manager Nick Davis
Assistant Stage Manager. Nik von Schulmann
Assistant Director. Tracy Holmes
Assistant Scene Designer. Blanka Jurenka
Costume Design Assistant. Jill Buckham
Scenic Artist. Bill Rasmussen
Lighting Operator. Erin Jarvis
Sound Operator. Tania Lazib
Wardrobe Mistress. Catherine King
Make Up. Nick Davis
Stage Crew. Nancy Lyons, Glen Winter
Costume Assistants. Heike Anderson, Nancy Canning, Colin Lim
Scene Painter. J. Cricket Price
Properties Assistant. Heather Kent
Lighting Crew. Glen Winter

Original Music. Tracy Holmes
Soundscape. Susan C. Bertoia
Movement coach. Trish Williams
Guitarists. Brian Irwin, Suzanne Buchan-Grieder

Box Office Carol Fisher, Linda McRae, Jason Smith
House Manager Jill Buckham
Business Manager Marjorie Fordham
Production Robert Eberle

Acknowledgements:

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YERMA

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There will be one 15 minute intermission.

The Theatre of Lorca

Lorca is an original creator, if by that is understood to have imagined a world and a mode of expression which are inimitable. In Spanish literature he occupies his own particular place, and no one has known how, or been able, to follow him. He may well be an inspiration for other artists (the film/ballet *Blood Wedding* by Carlos Saura is an example), but his works in their entirety elude possible imitators and create difficulties for criticism.

Lorca is a member of the generation of 1927, a group of writers - Alberti, Cernuda, Aleixandre, Guillén, Alonso, among others - who gave Spanish poetry a brilliance perhaps unequalled since the seventeenth century. The group appeared at a privileged moment: before them, the great poets of the previous generation - Unamuno, Machado, Valle Inclán, Juan Ramon Jiménez - , who are today the indisputable classics of Spanish modernism, had already paved the way; ahead of them, the group had the European avant-garde, particularly surrealism; and uniting the two, a tradition that for them was essential: the hermetic baroque style of Gongora, the formal and intellectual precision of Quevedo, and the popular dimension of the theatre of Lope de Vega (Lorca organized a travelling theatre group, "la Barraca", and brought to the villages the works of the classics).

This tension between a tradition, immediate or distant, and its assimilation to the avant-garde permeates the poetry of the members of the Generation of 1927 despite the differences between them. It is not surprising that many years later, in 1977, Aleixandre accepted the Nobel Prize for literature in the name of his colleagues: of those who died during the Spanish Civil War (Lorca) or in exile (Cernuda), or of those who continued their work in other countries (Alberti, Guillén) or in the restrictive space of the Francoist dictatorship (Alonso, and Aleixandre himself).

Lorca (with Alberti) is the one who best represents the union of the popular spirit, the cultivated verbal ostentation of Gongora and the experimentalism of the avant-garde; who distributed his energy equally between poetry and theatre, and who had the most unified vision of art (he was a musician and admirer of Falla, a painter and close friend of Dalí). From this complexity comes the fascination his works arouse in readers and spectators, and the difficulty of defining them in a simple way.

Even at the risk of falling into such danger, we can point out some of the characteristics of Lorca's work.

In the first place, there is his tragic vision, which is manifested in the opposition between the most profound impulses of the individual (we could speak of instincts) and the circumstances that prevent their fulfillment. Synthesizing even more: the opposition between love and death: love, always charged with a strong sexual connotation, as an affirmation of that which is most vital, free, and regenerative, and death as the fatal destiny of love, which in Lorca's theatre is exteriorized progressively until it adopts a social face.

Another aspect is the dramatism that impregnates all of his work and blurs any absolute differentiation between poetry and theatre. His poetry has an indisputable dramatic dimension: one has only to read those condensed dramas which are the poems of the *Romancero Gitano*, or the implied dialogistic structure of the *Llanto por Ignacio Sanchez Mejias* (Ohana has composed a cantata on this elegy). Similarly, in his theatrical pieces, the border disappears between prose and verse, between the referential word and the suggestive or symbolic expression, between the recreation of popular language and individual, unique linguistic invention, to which we may add the concept of character as "voice" and situation as "stanza". Indeed, *Yerma* has the subtitle "Tragic Poem".

A quality of Lorca's theatre is the construction of his imaginary world on various (apparently contradictory) levels: a dramatic texture in which the "documentary" surface of reality is projected into a social, economic and cultural context, is confined within the

limits of a poetic archetype, and is given a tragic dimension in which the figures in conflict, moved by a single passion, fulfill their destiny.

For example, in *Yerma*, the maternal passion of the protagonist leads to tragedy, to an absolute negation, to the fulfillment of her name ("yerma" means uninhabited, barren land); the image that sustains the tragedy is archetypal: the woman is the earth, the man is the laborer, the child is the fruit and renewal of life; the tragic conditionings are economic and cultural - possession of the land, typical of agricultural societies and a common context of Lorca's last plays; blood relations, the concepts of legitimacy and honor, family relationships... The fable that develops this complex is a "case", often authentic, exaggerated by a popular imagination that is melodramatic and sensational: the case of the wife who kills her husband, or of the girl who commits suicide for love (*The House of Bernarda Alba*), or of the bride who runs away with her lover on her wedding day (*Blood Wedding*)...

More concentrated in its artistic conception and in its meaning than *Blood Wedding*, but without reaching the almost conventional form of *The House of Bernarda Alba* and its economic determinism (which takes on the role of death against the rights and impulses of love), *Yerma* continues to confound critics.

Some years ago, the celebrated staging by Victor Garcia, praised around the world, tried to accentuate the poetic level of the tragedy: a canvas, constantly changing form, allowed the figures to move as if in the air, appearing and disappearing in a space which consisted of their spoken words. It was a novel production, without doubt, but it left out that which realism tends to emphasize, and is proof once again of the difficulties of the theatre of Lorca.

Isaac Rubio

Dr. Isaac Rubio teaches in the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies at The University of British Columbia.

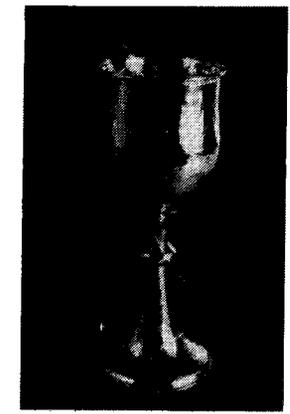


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