

# Stage: Bold, Surreal 'Visit' in Spanish

## By HOWARD THOMPSON

No production or theater on earth could recapture the power and magic of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's "The Visit" as performed on Broadway with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne 15 years ago. Undaunted, a Spanish-language unit has staged a bold, starkly surrealist version, with grotesque trappings and a large cast that works astonishingly well up to a point.

The conception and direction, by Max Ferra, are brilliant, as were those of two previous and better-rounded projects of the I.N.T.A.R. company, "The House of Bernarda Alba" and "The White Whore and the Bit Player." This pair caught and held fire.

But the catch in the present play is time. After the world's richest woman offers her home village a bribe to execute her original seducer,

## The Cast

LA VISITA ("The Visit"), by Friedrich Dürrenmatt, a tragicomedy, performed in Spanish. Translated and adapted by Lourdes Casal and Max Ferra; music composed and played by Thiago De Mello; setting by Dale Pavson; lighting by Edy Sanchez; costumes by Sybil Del Gaudio and Jane Goreni; make-up by Rolando Zaragoza; movement supervisor, Graciela Mas; directed by Max Ferra. Presented by I.N.T.A.R., 508 West 53d Street.

Bobby	.....	Tony Benitez
Mujer I	.....	Antonietta Maximo Blanco
Anton Schill	.....	Cesar Carbo
Mujer III	.....	Delia Cerpa
Maestro	.....	Jose William Correa
Ciego I	.....	Vivian Correa
Hombre II	.....	Jose Fernandez
Ciego II	.....	Julia Carmen Friedman
Clara Zachanassian	.....	Ofelia Gonzalez
Hombre I	.....	Juan Granda
Carlos	.....	Conrado Hernandez
Alcalde	.....	Manuel Martinez
Policia	.....	Gregorio Motezuma
Medico	.....	Antonio Monroe
Pedro y Periodista	.....	Marcelino Rosado
Olalla	.....	Esther Saud
Sra. Schill	.....	Sol
Mujer II	.....	Teresa Yenque
Conductor	.....	Wilfredo A. Zaгал
Pastor	.....	Rolando Zaragoza

the action has no place to go but down, down, down—for about 30 minutes too long. Two hours would have sufficed at least now.

As the leads (as the Lunts, let's face it), Ofelia Gonzales

is firmly dignified, without her predecessor's vital, demonic cool, while Cesar Carbo is a grief-stricken victim, without Mr. Lunt's terror, which vaulted the whole thing into gripping high gear. In the swarming cast, fine support comes from Manuel Martinez as the Mayor and from the fierce, weird miming of Tony Benitez, Delia Cerpa and Antonietta Blanco.

The impact of the cynical text is carried by the production, which visually churns to an eccentric boil on a clever, compact set, abetted by the lighting, the music and especially the colorful, bizarre costumes, with the transformed villagers finally slithering like animals in rustling plastic.

All this occurs, on weekends through June 10, in a two-sided theater arena the size of a dime. In Spanish or what-have-you, it's quite a show.