

# Traveling Company Plays Moliere Romp in Spanish

By **HOWARD THOMPSON**

The combination of charm, gusto and discipline is a becoming approach to an old knockabout farce like Moliere's "The Doctor in Spite of Himself," which is being performed in Spanish in a sixth-floor loft at 124 West 18th Street by the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater. The performances are previews before the troupe's outdoor, citywide performances start next month.

The enterprising group, now entering its seventh season, has previously staged more somber offerings. For its first full-fledged classic, it has revived a 307-year-old romp that is certainly Moliere's most bombastic, replete with gags, beatings and disguises, as a foxy woodcutter poses as a cure-all physician.

A game, limber cast zips through the chaos with relish, deftly catching the play-

wright's scathing footnotes about hypocrisy (the medical kind) and greed. This is a spirited, funny and understanding production, as adapted by the director, Norberto Kerner. Alfredo Blas's two sets are as pretty and bright as Maria Contesa Ferreira's period costumes.

The members of the cast are all good, but I especially liked Alberto Beraldo, a Walter Matthau lookalike, as the "doctor," Conchita Vargas as his peppery wife and the feisty, diminutive Irida Polanco as the doctor's victim. The show clips through a compact 85 minutes. A quick, runthrough of the English synopsis in the lobby should fill anybody in on the simple plot.

Performances, with "voluntary contributions," are at 8 tonight and 3 P.M. tomorrow, resuming Thursday for the final weekend. For reservations, call 691-9453.