

Stage: 'The Love of Don Perlimplin'

Lorca's Play Is Done by Spanish Repertory

By RICHARD EDER

"The Love of Don Perlimplin and Belisa in Her Garden" isn't usually counted among Garcia Lorca's major plays; mainly because it is short. But in its brevity it manages the same quicksilver turns on desire and frustration as "Yerma" and "The House of Bernarda Alba."

It is more abstract, more of a fable than these. It is more playful and more lyrical, but when the tragedy comes, it comes quite as hard.

It is a lovely play, but like all of Lorca's best work, hard to perform. The poetry doesn't interfere with the theater; it fuses with it, and this makes Garcia Lorca one of the few creators of successful poetic drama in this century. The problem is to perform it so that the poetic images don't overpower the play, crushing it under a weight of black capes, flowers and rushing blood.

The Spanish Repertory Theater, a company of Spanish and Latin American actors housed in the small but

The Cast

AMOR DE DON PERLIMPLIN CON BELISA EN SU JARDIN, The love of Don Perlimplin Belisa in Her Garden, a play by Federico Garcia Lorca. Directed by Christopher Marlowe; costumes by Ofelia Gonzalez; lighting by Robert Federico. Presented by the Spanish Repertory Theater, Gilberto Zeldívar, producer. At the Gramercy Arts Theater, 138 East 27th Street.
Don Perlimplin.....Alfonso Mariscalvas
Belisa.....Tilyan Deandelo
Marcolfa.....Ofelia Gonzalez
La Madre De Belisa.....Lolita Gutierrez.

charming Gramercy Arts Theater, began this week a series of performances of "Don Perlimplin."

The black capes are overdone, the staging is unimpressive but, thanks to the principal actor, the play is a real success.

Don Perlimplin is a middle-aged boy, well-to-do, cosseted and scolded by an aging servant, and quite prepared to go to his grave a bachelor. As a boy he heard of a man whose wife strangled him; that was all he wanted to know about marriage.

Then he sees Belisa and is transformed. They marry, but not well. She is young, beautiful and all flesh. He is old, radiant and all spirit. He desires her, but can't satisfy her; she desires young men and takes them.

So the metamorphoses begin. He inflames her with

Brief Story of Desire and Frustration

accounts of a young lover who will come to her in a red cape. She waits for him in her garden. Perlimplin waves a sword and rushes out swearing to kill his rival. The man in the red cape enters, mortally wounded. Perlimplin has killed him; that is, he has killed himself.

He has won Belisa's lust, nor for his decrepit body, but for a creature of his mind. She is frustrated as he has been frustrated: She cannot have the man she lusts for because he is imaginary, and his imaginer is dead.

Dressed in a white silk bathrobe, holding a candle, Alfonso Manosalvas is pure shaggy bewilderment as a man waking from a 50-year sleep into a brightly colored and deadly world. He carries the play over some less convincing acting by other members of the cast—though as the servant, Ofelia Gonzalez is extremely good—and an embarrassingly trite use of four caped and sombreroed figures as silent symbols. It isn't that Garcia Lorca didn't put them in the play: He did, but not as sherry advertisements.