

Don Juan In His Own Language

By RICHARD F. SHEPARD

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Reviews/Theater

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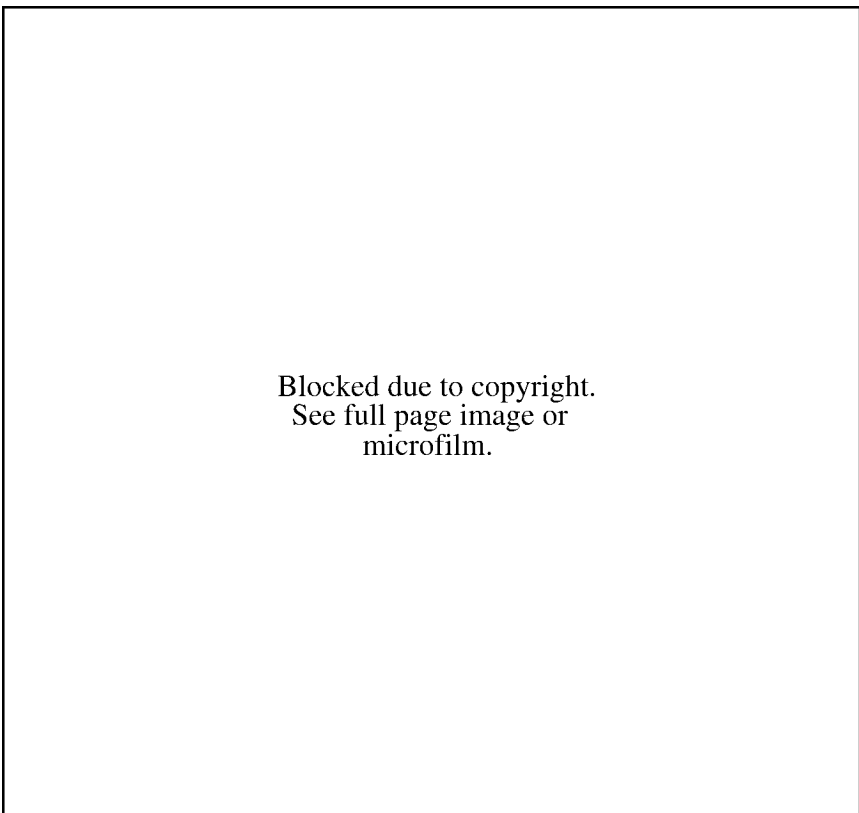
Was there ever a ladies' man like Don Juan? In these enlightened times, one rather hopes not after seeing his villainies enacted in his mother tongue at Repertorio Español. This versatile company is now staging "Don Juan Tenorio," José Zorrilla's 1844 drama.

There is something special in the interpretation of Don Juan in this Spanish presentation. It catches the sense of this macho man, a hero despite his monstrous seductions and slayings and his life as a profligate and profaner.

Don Juan has caught the attention of more than 40 writers, poets and composers, among them Molière, Byron, Goldoni, Mozart, Shaw and Brecht. He has had a long run, ever since the early 1600's when Tirso de Molina first created the fictitious blackguard for a theater piece. This early work as well as a later Zorrilla version will both be in the company's repertory starting next month.

The attraction of this story may lie in the confrontation of absolute evil with absolute decency and innocence. In the Zorrilla version, a more romantic view has Don Juan saved from hell by the intervention of the soul of the dead novice he had seduced and even loved. Under Rene Buch's direction, this is a romance in somber tones, enhanced by the stark sets and dramatic lighting of Robert Weber Federico.

Nelson Landrieu, in a gripping performance, gives us a Don Juan who is fiery and yet somehow sensitive. Adriana Sananes is luminous as the seduced novice and Ricardo Barber,



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Gerry Goodstein

Adriana Sananes and Nelson Landrieu in "Don Juan Tenorio."

as Don Juan's servant, gives a very limber performance.

And there is Ofelia Gonzalez, one of the most redoubtable of what is a very talented troupe, who lightens the gloom as an earthy, if deceitful, dueña who betrays her innocent charge for the cruelly attractive charms of Don Juan.

The audience at the matinee I attended deserves commendation. They were high school students of Spanish, and their quiet but attentive presence gives hope that the Spanish theater may become even more of a staple in the New York cultural world.

Villainous Gallant

DON JUAN TENORIO, by José Zorrilla; directed by Rene Buch; general coordination, Tom Keever; technical director, Rigoberto Obando; makeup, Rolando Zaragoza; assistant to Mr. Buch, Beatriz Cordoba; production design, Robert Weber Federico. Presented by Repertorio Español, Gilberto Zaldivar, producer; Mr. Buch, artistic director. At 138 East 27th Street.

Don Juan Tenorio Nelson Landrieu
Doña Inés de Ulloa Adriana Sananes
Brígida Ofelia Gonzalez
Doña Ana de Panoja Eva Tamargo
Lucía Maria Alvarez
Don Diego Tenorio Alfonso Manosalvas