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## 2. BRILLIANT PERFORMANCE OF 'LA CELESTINA' AT EL CHAMIZAL

The Compañía de Teatro Repertorio Español de Nueva York staged a glittering production of LC at the Fifth Siglo de Oro Drama Festival at El Chamizal, March 18, 1980 with two performances at 7 and 10 pm. Ofelia González, who played the role of Celestina, turned in a dazzling performance that held the capacity crowd spellbound.

The company brought to El Paso its entire set from New York which consisted of an intricate network of levels and stairs. Robert Weber Federico who was in charge of lighting did an outstanding job in spotlighting the numerous scene changes.

The two lovers Calisto and Melibea, portrayed by Frank Robles and Yolanda Arenas, gave an extraordinary account of themselves. They were supported by a strong cast. Mateo Gomez essayed with phenomenal success

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the crafty Sempronio; Juan Carlos Giménez was a credible Pármeno. The rest of the cast in minor roles was more than adequate, Carmen Gutiérrez as Areúsa, Carmen Iris Camacho as Lucrecia, Rafael Pagán as Crito and Myrna Colón as Elicia. Alfredo Manosalvas in the role of Pleberio delivered the highly emotional soliloquy at the end.

The producer was Gilberto Zaldivar and the director René Buch who also adapted *LC* for this production.

The work was played with one intermission and lasted two and one half hours. The audience was attentive and engrossed by this professional company of actors and showed its appreciation with a standing ovation (the only work of the festival to be so honored). Since the company had performed *LC* here on a previous occasion, it was not eligible to compete for a prize this year. But all agreed that it was the most spectacular and most moving production of the Chamizal season.

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## CINEMA

CELESTINA. color. Director: Miguel Sabido; With Isela Vega, Ofelia Guilman, Marcela López Rey. Distributed by Columbia Pictures.

A better title for this film would be "Perversiones sexuales." In an attempt to modernize the *Celestina*, the director has focused on and exaggerated all sexual possibilities suggested by Rojas' characters. In a surrealistic and bloody dream sequence, the nude Calisto is castrated. Celestina has lesbian tendencies especially when she fondles and caresses Melibea while talking to her about Calisto. The servants spend much time at Celestina's house, which is a center for sex orgies. Calisto incessantly complains, sounding more like a paranoid schizophrenic than a man in love. Melibea, who looks closer to 40 than to 20, is well beyond her prime. She is a redhead, not a blond, and is not a suitable partner for Calisto both physically and temperamentally. Celestina is good but too young for this crowd!

The whole movie is over-acted and teeming with unnecessary violence. The twisting of the hawk's neck at the beginning and later its being chopped up is effective as a film technique but is a brutalization of Fernando de Rojas' own use of imagery.

There is so much shouting, violence, street language, and perverted sex in this movie that one gives a sigh of relief at Calisto's death. One feels that the finer qualities and artistic merit of the original have all been eliminated. The characters parade across the screen in Medieval garb shouting modern insults at one another. Technically, the movie is well-done, but the director has simply gone too far in trying to make the *Celestina* appealing to a twentieth century audience. Even expurgated, this is definitely NOT a film for the classroom!

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