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EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA:
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CENTER OF AUDIOVISUAL EXPRESSIVE ARTS
THE TORCUATO DI TELLA INSTITUTE

DISSERTATION
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Marion Hannah Love, B.A., M.A.T.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1972

Approved by

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Department of Theatre
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For
Hugo Alvarez
with love
INTRODUCTION

When I first proposed a study of the contemporary Argentine theatre to friends and colleagues, the reactions which greeted me were remarkably similar: a raised eyebrow, a half smile and the inevitable question, "Theatre in Buenos Aires? Is there one?" That we in the English speaking world and, particularly North America, know and appreciate so little about South America as a whole, let alone the theatrical activity of a specific country, is both understandable and lamentable. For decades, we in the North have regarded South American politics and culture as quaintly romantic, lacking in maturity, and generally unimpressive. The consequence of this attitude has been to under-estimate, if not totally ignore, most of the thought, activity, and artistry in this part of the world. It is only when a Fidel Castro or a Salvador Allende poses a threat to North American political ideology and economic foreign investments or when a Pablo Neruda receives the Nobel Prize for literature, that we remember, once more, that the peoples composing the nineteen nations to the South possess their own distinctive social, intellectual, and artistic identities.

As the North American society prospered and expanded over the years, its industrialists looked to South America as a fertile field for increasing economic profits. The labor force was cheap, industrial progress minimal, and the potential for success, unlimited. Venezuela
possessed oil; Bolivia, tin; Chile, copper; Brazil, rubber; Argentina, land. So it was that the economic invasion (or "economic exploitation" as it is referred to by many) began. Nations which had undergone hardships struggling for political independence from Spain, now found themselves economically and, eventually, culturally dependent on foreign investors.

El sueño de muchos sería que llegáramos a ser como Canadá o Australia, que nos vinieran a visitar y exclamaran: "¡Miran! Igualito a Inglaterra, che." O: "¡Mira! Igualito a las ciudades de Estados Unidos, che. Acá, yo norteamericano, me siento como en casa!" ... Un país bocón es un país que ha creado a través de los años una estructura compleja de dependencia — subdesarrollo se dice también: subdesarrollo económico, político y cultural — que es muy difícil de romper.

(The dream of many would be that we could become like Canada or Australia; that those who would come to visit would exclaim: "Look! Just like England!" Or: "Look! Just like cities in the United States. I, as a North American, feel at home here!" ... A top-drawer country is a country that over the years has created a complex structure of dependency — it's also referred to as economic, political and cultural underdevelopment — which is very difficult to break.)

In the midst of complex socio-economic realities existing to the South, a raft of cultural myths began to evolve for those of us abroad. The media bombarded us with a barrage of picturesque stories and legends, semi and half truths. We read historical accounts of lost Incan, Mayan, and Aztec civilizations, adventure tales about daring explorers penetrating the Amazon jungles or crossing the Andes mountains, newspaper clippings referring to enigmatic political personalities such as Trujillo and the Perons. Hollywood and the film industry encouraged the myths creating the visual stereotypes: Marlon Brando as a typical peasant revolutionary, Caesar Romero as a suave Latin lover,
Carmen Miranda as a carefree señorita, and the Frito Bandido as the norm. Argentina, for example, was depicted as the land of the gaucho and the pampa, the land of Rudolph Valentino and the tango.

In 1968, three Argentine playwrights, Ricardo Talesnick, Griselda Gambaro, and Carlos Somigliana participated in a forty-five day "good-will" excursion through the United States. The trip, sponsored by the U.S. State Department, was an effort to acquaint South American artists with what was occurring in North American academic and professional theatre. "Nos sentíamos incluidos en una masa amorfa de personas etiquetadas como de segunda categoría -- negros, portorriqueños, mexicanos -- todos respetables pero ninguno respetado." (We felt ourselves included in an amorphous mass of persons classified in a second class category -- negros, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans -- all respectable but none respected.)

Reflecting upon a meeting with Edward Albee, Somigliana ironically remembered that, for the first time, he and his fellow authors had met with someone who

... sabía donde quedaba la Argentina, sabía que Buenos Aires no era una aldea, que no era la capital de Brasil ni de Venezuela, que había teatros, que tenía una actividad cultural orgánica e importante, que los argentinos no nos vestíamos de gauchos, que no era asombroso que aquí hubiese autores teatrales.

( . . . knew where Argentina was, knew that Buenos Aires was not some village, nor the capital of Brazil or Venezuela, that there were theatres, that it had its own important cultural activity, that the Argentines did not dress like gauchos, and was not surprised that there were playwrights there.)

Most of us, however, have persisted doggedly in maintaining the myths, neglecting to recognize the realities which exist in 1972.
Some South American nations still experience political revolutions and continue to function under dictatorial regimes, but the days of nominal politics are numbered. A literate and rapidly growing middle class is increasingly conscious of its power and its rights. The economic and intellectual strangleholds of the aristocracy and the Church have weakened considerably. Exposure to Marxist ideologies, admiration for national martyrs (Che Guevara) and the increasing power of labor unions and student groups are forcing Latin American governments to confront and to correct social and political inequities.

Nowhere are the social and political upheavals more noticeable and problematic than in Argentina. Five times larger than France, the Argentine nation reaches from the subtropics in the North to the Antarctic wastes in the South. Its one million square miles are rich in natural resources: oil, minerals, and vast stretches of land ideally suited for the breeding of livestock. Yet, the same immense territory contains a sparse population of predominately European stock. Although the economy of Argentina still rests on an agricultural base, only a small percentage of its total population of twenty-six million peoples, controls the land. The provinces of Buenos Aires, the southern tip of Santa Fe, southeastern Córdoba, and eastern La Pampa comprise the nation's economic core (the pampas). In addition, it is these areas which contain the country's major industries, urban centers, educational facilities, and wealth. This heart of the nation comprises less than one-fifth of the total land
area and supports over two-thirds of the total population. Buenos Aires, alone, contains over eight million people and is the country's economic, cultural, and political center.

Unlike the rest of South America, Argentina is most appropriately labelled a Latin country. Its inhabitants are of predominately Spanish and Italian origin. The miscegenation of Spanish and Indians during the years of the conquest and the systematic, brutal elimination of natives during the late 1800's in order to clear the land for livestock purposes, left the country with a minimal indigenous population. In addition, the cultural and social patterning of the country underwent a strong Europeanization with the flood of Italian, Spanish, German, and Eastern European immigrants who arrived during the early and mid 1900's.

Thus, the Argentine of today, especially the porteño (man of the port city, therefore, of Buenos Aires) is most likely to be a first or second generation European. His parents came to Argentina in search of prosperity and, frequently, as a refuge from war-torn Europe. He and his children form the base of Argentina's large and powerful middle class. He follows a white collar profession and can be found in professional services, the small businesses, and the civil service jobs. Unaccustomed, for the most part, to agricultural work and often unable to secure substantial land tracts for such development, he sought success within the urban structure. His life is comfortable but not luxurious. Although inflation frequently strikes as a result of Argentina's necessity to import more than it exports, the average
Argentine can boast of a higher daily caloric intake than the average North American. The standard of living is high, entertainments abound, and the Argentine city dweller is usually well-informed concerning world events (Buenos Aires produces six daily in-depth newspapers), and well educated in one of the best school systems in South America.

However, accelerating urbanization and increased industrialization have resulted in multiple problems for the country and its people. One of the most serious has been a widening of the economic and cultural gap that has existed for centuries between Buenos Aires and the interior. Unlike Lima and Mexico, Buenos Aires was not established as a Vice-Royalty until late in the seventeenth century. In 1776 Buenos Aires was little more than a military barrack and a cow town. Under the influence of the early viceroys, the municipal authorities were encouraged to begin a vigorous program of social and cultural elevation. Soon Argentina possessed a university, libraries, a printing press, and a theatre. However, the cultural development was directed upon French-Spanish Neo-classic lines. With the expulsion of Spanish authority and the subsequent declaration of Independence in 1810, Argentina attempted to determine its own social and cultural development. Fierce controversy arose over the orientation of the move with the citizens of Buenos Aires opting for continuing Europeanization and the much less sophisticated peoples of the interior remaining hostile to all that was not American-Argentine. Eventually, economics determined the cultural route when Buenos Aires looked to England as a market for beef. The interior was finally opened up and
linked to the capital city when the British constructed an elaborate railway system which could transport livestock and leather to Buenos Aires and, ultimately, to England. In the twentieth century, North America began to invest funds and equipment into the country with the result that the urban centers became the founts of wealth. The city of Córdoba developed into the Detroit of Argentina and Buenos Aires into a combination Chicago-New York. As these centers grew and the potentials for prosperity increased, the man who was barely eeking out an existence on the land turned to the city as a logical recourse for an improved standard of living. Especially important in this moment were Juan and Eva Perón who governed Argentina from 1945-1956. Under their leadership, the blue collar worker and the mestizo or cabecita negra from the interior were encouraged to come to the city and, ultimately, to support Perón. Labor unions formed. The government sponsored work projects. For the first time, Argentina's lower classes were directly involved in the political process. Although they came in waves and most often found work, they could not find housing. Thus, within a short period of time, numerous villas miserias or shack villages began to spring up around Buenos Aires providing the new city dweller with deplorable living conditions and the city with a slum problem that held the potentials for political unrest and social upheaval. The land became more and more barren; the cities were swollen.

Despite the military regime which has ruled Argentine politics for over forty years, vast numbers of the Argentine peoples have managed to assume some degree of power concerning the orientation of the country.
The violent student-worker strikes in Córdoba (1968) and later ones in Tucumán and Rosario unseated the dictators General Onganía (1970) and Levingston (1971). However, censorship and repression often permeates much of contemporary Argentine life. Many in the country look with increasing dissatisfaction to North American intervention in Argentine politics, economics and cultural progress. As well, the socialist position of neighboring Chile indicates to an increasingly large number of Argentines, a possible way of development. In actuality, however, such an approach seems unlikely due to Argentina's traditional and conservative middle class community. The vast majority of Argentines are searching for a tenable third world position. The increasing rise of nationalism is noted both on a violent and non-violent level. Admiration for Che Guevara (born in Rosario) and for the Uruguayan guerilla movement (Tupamaros) are encouraging many young Argentines to use force in order to unseat the government and, hopefully, lead Argentina into a new phase of political freedom or, as it is labelled, People's freedom. In another vein, Argentines are demonstrating their interest and appreciation for national artists much more than in the past. This is not to say that European and North American influence has disappeared. It has not. Even today one can see the latest in European styles, the newest in North American movies, and the most recent in Hippie styles of behavior. What is new, however, is the emphasis upon Argentina and the pride in Argentine artists.

In Argentina, the political and socio-economic temper of the times is reflected nowhere more clearly than in the contemporary drama. In recent years, a wave of socio-political plays by young, talented
dramatists has re-shaped and re-vitalized the Buenos Aires' theatre. Actor-author Guillermo Gentile pits a retard, a homosexual, and a hippie against each other in Hablemos a calzon quitado (Let's Put Our Cards on the Table) to equate the problem of individual liberation and maturation with social revolution. Roberto Cossa in Nuestro fin de la semana (Our Week-end) depicts the frustrations of daily living: the contemporary tragedy of middle-class man permanently caught in a routine existence and robbed of potential and hope. Griselda Gambaro describes power struggles in which man is persecutor and victim, driven to destroy and condemned to an isolated existence in her two act Los siameses (The Siamese Twins). In grand guignol style, Ricardo Monti recounts the political juggling of Argentina from 1900-1971 in Historia tendenciosa de la clase media argentina de los extraños sucesos en que se vieron envueltos algunos hombres públicos, su completa dilucidación y otras escandalosas revelaciones (A Tendentious History of the Argentine Middle Class, The Strange Events in which Some Public Figures Found Themselves Involved, Their Complete Elucidation and Other Scandalous Revelations). Prior to this work, Monti electrified both public and critics in 1970 with a dynamic first effort: a compelling, black humor drama entitled Una noche con el señor Magnus y sus hijos (An Evening with Mr. Magnus and His Sons) which illustrated in parable form the hell of a bourgeois, capitalistic, dehumanized society.

It is only in recent years that the works of these Argentine authors and others which could be mentioned have begun to attract the
attention of North American scholars and theatrical practitioners. Until the 1960's the majority of English speaking research in Spanish American drama dealt with dramatic criticism centering on the play itself. Very little was investigated or published concerning theatrical practice, artistic experiment, or dramatic history. The first and to date only English survey of Latin American theatre is *Behind Spanish American Footlights* published in 1941 with a more valuable expanded version appearing in 1961. Within the last ten years, however, North American scholars have begun to look with some interest at the theatrical activity to the South. Publications such as the *Latin American Theatre Review* (University of Kansas) serve an invaluable function, providing current information on artistic movements, dramatic and theatrical criticisms of new plays, information on South and North American productions, and an indice of research studies in progress. The recent appearance of William Oliver's dramatic anthology *Voices of Change in Latin American Theatre* is a welcome addition to the much neglected field of English translations. While occasionally stilted, Oliver's translations are still actable and, furthermore, the plays he has chosen are current ones including the much acclaimed *El campo* (The Camp) by Griselda Gambaro.

In view of the fact that, as yet, the number of in-depth theatrical studies are scarce, one cannot help but appreciate the 1970 edition of the *Drama Review* in which critics Joanne Fottlitzer and Richard Schechner attempted to analyze the nature and scope of the contemporary experimental theatre in South America. The articles were
intended to fill a gap. They were written to provide us with a glimpse of some experimental work occurring in 1968. THAT THE PERCEPTIONS AND FINAL JUDGEMENTS OF BOTH CRITICS WERE NARROW AND BIASED IS REGRETTABLE AND DISHEARTENING.

Pottlitzer's article, aptly titled "Theatre of a Forgotten Continent," was a cursory treatment of all of Latin American experimental activity. Although one can take exception with her tendency to generalize far too frequently about movements and countries, the article provided an easy panoramic view.

Much more problematic and misleading was the Schechner interview, "Conformists in the Heart." Focusing on Argentine theatre, Schechner concluded that Buenos Aires produced a drama that was government censored, imitative of North American and European forms, palid, and irrelevant. "Nothing seemed to touch the real life of the theatre people, let alone other people." During his fifteen day excursion, he had seen rehearsals and/or performances of Viet Rock, America Hurrah, Krapp's Last Tape and Ubu Chained.

During the same year that Mr. Schechner and Miss Pottlitzer were making their trip, a critic for the Latin American Theatre Review, Virginia Ramos Foster, published an article dealing with Buenos Aires theatre for the 1967-68 season. She reviewed, briefly, the work of a number of contemporary dramatists, focusing upon their most recent plays with the aims of characterizing the prevailing mood and orientation of Argentine drama. Instead of a tired, out-moded drama, Mrs. Foster found quite the opposite: a committed group of young writers dealing
with the problems of political failure and frustration, social hypocrisy and involvement, the fate of man in the modern city, and metaphysical-ethical attitudes. "The young dramatist creates new moods, as opposed to ultimate declamations, and reflects not only Argentine reality in the immediate, exterior sense, but probes the realities of the universal human condition."

Two disparate views of Argentine theatre. Has Buenos Aires' theatre changed so much in one year? Had Mrs. Foster misinterpreted the theatrical climate? Or had Mr. Schechner? The truth is that both erred, but in varying degrees.

True, Mrs. Foster accurately identified the socio-political writing mood of the times, clearly summarized the characteristics of the national drama being written, and isolated the more important writing talents. But, she failed to note certain underlying problems which Schechner accurately recognized. Commercial theatre was still strong. Empresarios gave the public the most recent New York, Paris, and London hits. Independent theatres and commercial houses were staging, for all intents and purposes, the same types of shows -- the great majority being non-national. Collective creations and experiments between audience-performers were rare. Censorship continued to determine much of what could be presented. The Deputy (Hochhuth), The Homecoming (Pinter), Saved (Bond), and The Boys in the Band (Crowley) had been closed. In general, a theatrical traditionalism and a cultural provincialism existed.

But, where Schechner erred and Mrs. Foster had not was in
blindly assuming that all of Argentine theatre was irrelevant and imitative. Considering that Schechner's article appeared some two years after his trip, one wonders why there was no effort to look at a total season. Why, for example, was there no mention of the social protest plays occurring that year? Why no mention of the political plays? And, most importantly, why no mention of Buenos Aires' most exciting and controversial new theatre, the Center of Audio-visual Expressive Arts, the Torcuato Di Tella Institute?

The Di Tella theatre opened in 1965. Its purpose was to provide Argentine artists and audience with a theatrical laboratory. New authors appeared before the public for the first time. Established performers and inexperienced talents worked side by side. Director-actor groups experimented in collective creations. Visual artists investigated the possibilities of live sculpture and dramatic form. The public was invited to view and to participate in a wide range of theatrical experiences ranging from happenings to Artaudian spectacles of cruelty, multi-media experiments and Dionysiacal theatre rites. What Schechner chose to discuss and to criticize, he did so fairly and justly. What he failed to note was, perhaps, the heart and soul of contemporary Argentine theatre -- a theatre that was being touched by the experiments in the Di Tella.

This study is dedicated to that "heart and soul." It is undertaken with the intention of not just recording the brief and chaotic five year history of the Di Tella movement, but, rather, with
providing for those of us abroad an insight into a peoples and a theatre. The story of the Di Tella's origin, development, and disappearance explains, in large part, the nature of the current problems which beset the Argentine theatre. Through an appreciation of the scope of the Di Tella venture, a knowledge of the activities of the artists who participated in the theatre, and an awareness of the attitudes of both public and press, we, who are not porteño, may be able to know our neighbors to the South somewhat better. We may find ourselves refining, re-shaping, and re-thinking attitudes... hopefully, discarding myths. For if it is true that the theatre can mirror life, then the life -- the honest reflections of realities -- seen, imagined, and revealed by the Di Tella artists is vitally important to those of us abroad who might wish to know rather than to forget a continent.
FOOTNOTES


3Ibid., p. 50.


CHAPTER I

PRELUDE TO AN INSTITUTE

The first known theatre to be erected in the capital city of Buenos Aires was the Corral de Comedias or La Ranchería as it was popularly called. Built in 1783 under the patronage of the Spanish Viceroy, Juan José de Vértiz y Salcedo, this theatre provided the city's early inhabitants with a strong cultural link to their homeland. Dramas, loas, sainetes, and entremeses imported from Spain were staged summer and winter for the pleasure and edification of the crowds. The theatre was built on what is today the junction of Peru and Alsina streets. It was a crude adobe and wooden structure topped with a straw roof. A large curtain hid the stage from the eyes of the entering public. In ornate gold letters it bore the motto "Es la comedia espejo de la vida" ("Drama is the mirror of life") thereby subtly reminding the spectators to be aware of the educational-moral purpose behind the theatrical experience.

Although extant letters and chronicles from the period testify to the popularity of theatre since the days of the conquest, La Ranchería was the first commercial theatre to be erected in Argentina. Prior to 1783, the great majority of drama sought in some way to praise the Spanish crown or the Catholic Church. Corpus Christi was a favorite holiday in which to present theatrical spectacles and one of the most early references in porteño theatrical history concerns
a loa written by the priest Juan Gabriel Lozano and presented in Buenos Aires at the Corpus Christi Festival, 1544.\footnote{Most frequently, the dramas were staged in homes or in plazas.} By 1783, the Buenos Aires public was a strong supporter of whatever theatrical activity occurring within the city. Anxious to develop Buenos Aires along the same cultural lines as the older, more sophisticated cities of Lima and Mexico, the Viceroy approached the city fathers with the idea of erecting a permanent theatre. Although the Viceroyalty of the River Plate was new (1776), Vertiz insisted that a theatre was an absolute necessity for the cultural maturing of the community. The Viceroy argued that soon after its establishment as a Viceroyalty in the early sixteenth century, Lima erected the Corral de Santo Domingo and by 1599, the city possessed a permanent acting company.\footnote{Vertiz assured the Buenos Aires' municipality that with financial support from Spain, the city could soon boast of a theatre which would rival the best houses in Spain. While this building was in construction, a temporary theatre could be erected near the military barracks in the La Ranchería district. The soldiers would provide a ready-made audience and a handy fire brigade in case of accidents.} Ecclesiastical opposition to the establishment of a permanent theatre was strong but not necessarily insurmountable. The aristocracy remained adamant in their insistence to elevate Buenos Aires to a cultural capital of South America. The Church Fathers complained that the erection of a theatre was a sure way to bring sin and corruption into the city. One of the most vocal members of the clergy
was a Father de Costa of the Church of San Juan, situated in La Ranchería district. Father de Costa threatened his parishioners with excommunication should they dare to support the concept or the box office of a theatre located in the same district as his church. Very soon, Father de Costa received a summons from Vértiz that requested the priest's service to God to continue elsewhere within Argentina.

Eventually, the clergy could do little else but grant Vértiz' requests. The construction of La Ranchería began. The public enthusiasm for the project continued at a high pitch and the initial success of the theatre was exceptional. It operated according to "precautions" laid down by Ferdinand V for the Madrid theatres. Drama from the homeland dominated the seasons although occasional native works appeared. In accord with the demands of the Church, each play, whether Spanish or colonial, received ecclesiastical approval before being included in the repertory. Aristocracy, clergy, city officials, workers, and soldiers attended the productions, seated on pine benches or standing in the pits. Within three years time, however, the experiment had worn thin. Poor performances, repetitious seasons, and frequently mediocre plays rapidly resulted in a dissatisfied public which turned its attention to more exciting diversions: circuses, acrobats, puppet shows, and cock fights.

On the evening of August 6, 1772 during the Festival of San Roque, a firecracker exploded on the straw roof of the theatre, burning La Ranchería to the ground. Strong suspicion existed then, as it
continues to exist today, whether or not the rocket had been aimed deliberately from the nearby Church of San Juan (Father de Costa's ex-home). Whatever the truth underlying the origin of the fire, the fact remains that the theatre and all it contained in the way of scenery, properties, costumes, and a library were destroyed in the blaze.

Although the destruction of the building was in itself a great historical loss, the fact that its library contained a text of the first national work to treat an American theme makes the event a doubly tragic one. The play was a five act work entitled Siripo by José de Lavardén. The story dealt with murder and romance centering around the adventures of Lucía de Miranda whose husband is killed by an Indian chieftain, Siripo. When the widow refuses to marry Siripo, he sees no alternative but to murder her as well. Scholar Mariano G. Bosch points out that "no conocemos su verdadero argumento ni si el se ajustaba a las fábulas del Abate Centenera o el paraguayo Ruy Díaz de Guzmán; o un episodio inventado conservado parecido con ellas." ("we don't know its true plot nor if it belongs to the tales of the Abbot Centenera or to the Paraguayan Ruy Díaz de Guzmán; or to an imagined episode relatively similar to those.")

Although the original text was destroyed, at least one copy of the play appears to have remained in existence. Historical documents during the early 1800's testify to the re-staging and popularity of the play during the Rosas years. Today, no complete copy of the text exists; however, theatrical scholars generally attest
to the authenticity of a discovered second act published by Juan María Gutiérrez. This remnant does permit us a glimpse into the nature of national drama at the time. What we see is that, not unsurprisingly, colonial dramatists may have treated national topics but their formal structures imitated the Neo-classic precepts of France and Spain. Thus, de Levarde'n's work is based on a legend, employs noble personnages, develops over five acts, and utilizes hendecasyllables, artificial dialogue, lengthy monologues, and agnorasis to communicate the plot.

Since the days of La Ranchería and Siripo, Buenos Aires has grown to a modern sprawling city of some eight million people. Its theatres have increased from one to over fifty, not including all those bars, cafes, and private homes where artists frequently group together to perform a review, a happening, or a theatrical experience of some type. The theatres, themselves, vary in style from the ornate gold leafed Teatro Colón to intimate, simple little houses such as the Artea or Teatro Transón.

Each season, the public can choose from a wide variety of dramatic offerings including both national and international authors. However, critic Emilio Stevanovitch estimates that between seventy to eighty percent of a season's productions are still non-Argentine. "It's quite understandable because Argentine plays have not been very popular. Now, they've become popular. Now, there's a sort of nationalism to go and see what happens."^h

The preponderance of non-Argentine drama is not new in the Buenos
Aires' theatre as the story of La Ranchería illustrates. Although there have been periods of dramatic excellence on the national scale (i.e. the appearance of Florencio Sánchez, Roberto Payró and Gregorio de LaFerrere at the turn of the twentieth century), international drama has continued to dominate the Argentine stage. The prevailing artistic-economic belief was and still is that a "solid success abroad" would be a "probable success at home." Thus, many Argentine plays and Argentine dramatists have met with less than enthusiastic support from empresarios and from a public largely composed of multi-European backgrounds.

Adding to the difficulty from the mid 1800's until the early 1900's was the appearance and success of foreign touring companies. The first groups to appear in Buenos Aires were headed by such great European stars as Adelaida Ristori, Tomas Silvini, Sarah Bernhardt, and Eleanora Duse. Not only was the public exposed to a constant repertory of European plays but the finest in European acting talent interpreted them! At this early stage, both Argentine authors and actors could not help but suffer and learn by comparison.

In order to have some concept of the artistic situation of playwrights and theatre artists in Buenos Aires over the last few years, it is helpful to understand the theatrical structure in which they create and produce. Speaking somewhat simplistically, theatre in the capital city falls into one of three main categories: National-Municipal theatre, commercial or independent. Naturally, the guidelines separating each of the three areas is often hazy but, nevertheless, certain patterns of development, orientation, and difficulties are
discernable if one looks closely.

In 1935, the National Cultural Commission of Argentina created the Teatro Nacional de Comedias (CN) and a sister organization, the Instituto Nacional de Estudios de Teatro. Both entities were to provide the Argentine people with a theatre which could present the best in classic national and international drama as well as providing a research center where investigators might document and preserve the theatrical history of the country. The state, serving as empresario, undertook the responsibility of funding the organizations with annual allotments as well as reserving certain rights pertaining to the choice of directors for the CN and its proposed repertoires.

In actuality, the CN, housed in the Cervantes Theatre, and the Municipal theatre, located in the Teatro General San Martín, have suffered repeatedly from a variety of imaginable problems: lack of artistic orientation and direction, mediocrity in talent and production, insufficient funds to implement quality seasons, and government interference with production programs. Except for two brief periods — during the leaderships of Antonio Cunill Cabanellas (1936-1940) and Orestes Caviglia (1956-1960) — the CN has proved to be a relatively uninspiring and disappointing venture. Analyzing the situation in 1967, critic Andrés B. Pohrebny was moved to complain that

... en la actualidad la CN no existe más que de nombre -- como tantas otras cosas en nuestro país -- en razón de que la forma en que viene trabajando no se diferencia en nada de como lo hace un compañia más, que tiene por empresario a hombre sin visión artística.
presently the National Theatre exists in name only -- as do so many other things in our country -- for the reason that the way in which it continues to function does not differ from that of "just another company" that has as its empresario someone without artistic vision.)

Emilio Stevanovitch echoed Pohreby's complaint one year later referring to the season presented at the Teatro General San Martín.

Mucha gente sobre el escenario, gran despliegue, y pobreza en los resultados artísticos del San Martín. ... A esta altura, resultaba imprescindible una revisión total en la planificación del San Martín, pues la senda impresa, por lo visto, conduce al desierto sin horizontes.

(Many people on the stage, a great display and poverty in the artistic results at the San Martín. . . . At this level, it is essential that there be a total revision of the program at the San Martín or its path, obviously, will lead to a desert without horizons.)

The CN started its career under the leadership of a gifted and committed artist. Antonio Cunill Cabanellas outlined a vigorous program of theatre and implemented it with success from 1936 until 1940. It was his intention to have both the CN and the National Theatre Institute work in close harmony to bring before the Argentine people the best in Argentine plays. Therefore, during his term as director, he oriented the programs of the CN towards a national drama. Of the twenty-five shows staged, only two were by non-Argentines (one drama by Lope de Vega and another by Rostand). After Cunill Cabanellas resigned his post in 1940, the leadership passed to the well-known author Alejandro Berutti who guided the organization for five more years in the same general pattern as his predecessor.

During the Perón years (1946-1956), the CN experienced its first serious set back. Torn apart by internal artistic and political dissensions, suffering from repeated changes in leadership and
orientation, and experiencing government censorship, the CN rapidly
degenerated into a mediocre entity. Then, in 1956, the situation was
reversed.

The directorship passed into the hands of actor Orestes
Caviglia. Totally revamping the program, Caviglia proved, once again,
that the CN could be a theatrical entity worthy of its name. Providing
fresh artistic approaches to staging, choosing varied and provocative
plays, selecting and training a balanced company of exceptional talent,
Caviglia launched the CN on a golden four years. The Comedia Nacional
and Orestes Caviglia were synonymous with quality.

Four years later, the rupture occurred. The artist and the
state abruptly parted company. Caviglia had prepared a production
of G.B. Shaw's *Man and Superman* which the Ministry of Culture promptly
denounced. Branding the production as dangerous to the well-being
of the Argentine state, the Ministry requested that Caviglia remove
the show from the CN repertoire. Unable to accept what had developed
into repeated, nagging government interference in his artistic
activities, Caviglia responded by offering his resignation.

He llegado al triste convencimiento de que usted y yo
no entendemos el Teatro de igual manera. ... Para usted parece
ser una cuestión de pequeña política. Para mí, es un arte máximo.

(I have come to the sad conclusion that you and I do not
understand theatre in the same way. ... For you it appears to
be a question of small politics. For me, it is a supreme art.)

Upon Caviglia's abrupt departure, the entire cast of *Man and
Superman* resigned from the CN literally bankrupting the organization
in terms of experienced talent. At that time, the members of the
company included such outstanding performers as Inda Ledesma, Milagros de la Vega, Ernesto Bianco, Jorge Rivera López, and Violeta Antier. With Caviglia, they formed the Gente de Teatro Asociado, destined to become one of Buenos Aires' most respected and important acting companies for many seasons.

From 1956 on, the CN has never managed to regain the promise nor the spirit that it demonstrated during the Caviglia years. Government interference continues. The most recent case concerns Carlos Gorostiza's production in the San Martín of the Devil's Disciple (again Shaw) in November, 1971. Following the premiere performance, the Ministry of Culture requested that certain references to the "wisdom and efficacy" of military rule which had delighted the opening night audience be deleted from subsequent performances. The cuts were made!

In general, the CN and the Municipal theatre produce an eclectic program. The work is efficient and artistically acceptable. But, what the CN lacks now, it has lacked repeatedly: fresh insights and artistic experimentation. With rare exceptions such as the April, 1971 production of Lope de Vega's Caballero por milagros (The Knight by Miracles) staged by Jorge Petraglia in a delightfully humorous and scenically charming manner, the Comedia Nacional is MUSEUM theatre!

Moving to the second major area of the tri-part theatre syndicate in Buenos Aires, we encounter the commercial branch. As one might expect, the commercial theatre is Argentine Broadway. The major activity takes place on and around the glittering Calle Corrientes. One can choose to see stylish reviews, musical comedies, world-wide hits.
The shows for the 1970-1971 season included such a diverse collection as *Hair*, *Butterflies are Free*, *Loot*, and *Victor ou les enfants terribles*. Customarily, productions are lavishly mounted with name stars and production personnel. Although the seasons can best be classified as entertainment or escapist theatre, there does exist occasional thought-provoking drama and a broad eclecticism in authors. However, the public is not exposed to radical experimentation in either content or form. Commercial empresarios rarely take a chance on "the questionable" or "the unknown." Yet, one must remember that both the artistic expertise and the dramatic eclecticism which is evident in the commercial theatre today is exceptional, considering the lamentable situation which existed in the early years of the century.

During the 1920's the commercial theatre had reached a promising point economically and a low point artistically. Empresarios were quick to realize that fortunes could be amassed easily on Calle Corrientes. The senility which marked the disastrous second presidency of Hipólito Irigoyen found its counterpart in the sterile theatre of the times. The Argentine solution to national problems resembled that of the rest of the 1920's world: "forget your troubles; come on, get happy!" Diversion and entertainment were the key words. And theatrical empresarios delivered just that -- entertaining fluff in cheap, often shoddy productions. Drama critic José María stated: "El teatro nacional entra en un período de regresión total.... Este período, comienza en las postrimerías de 1918 -- auge de la revista -- y se extiende por doce años consecutivos, señala para el teatro argentino
un período de verdadera descomposición." ('the national theatre entered into a period of total regression. . . . This period, which began in the last stages of 1918 — the highpoint of the review — extended for twelve consecutive years and signaled for the Argentine theatre a period of actual decomposition."

But the same dark period was marked by a spark of life. Reacting to the decadence of the commercial theatre and envisioning a new concept of art and the artist's responsibility, a small group of leading intellectuals and dramatic artists created what is now known as the Independent Theatre Movement. Briefly stated, their aims were:

... to react against the monotony of the commercial theatre, to bring the people in close touch with the best expressions of dramatic arts, to provide a stage for the most capable national writers -- who found that their very ability stood in their way, to train the actors and technicians needed to realize the movement's own ambitions and to place the actor at the service of the play instead of the other way around, which was customary on our stage.

It is essential to remember that the impetus for the movement was not in the hands of cast-offs and professional discontents from the commercial stage. Often, established theatre artists such as the dramatist Samuel Eichelbaum played significant roles in helping to create Independent groups. Most frequently, however, the Independents were formed of idealistic non-professionals. Through a fierce dedication to the theatrical art, those composing the groups launched vigorous self-training programs, emphasizing quality productions and ensemble efforts.

The grandfather of all the Independent groups was Leonidas Barletta's Teatro del Pueblo, formed in 1930 and still operating today.
Barletta, well-known as a novelist and poet, was greatly influenced by Russian socialism. His prose works illustrate a belief in the goodness of the common man and the necessity of a proletarian revolution to insure human dignity. Despairing of the commercial theatre and contemporary Argentine drama, Barletta grouped together a band of disinterested, young artists with the idea of "restaurar la dignidad que entre nosotros le había usurpado a los espectáculos escénicos. Procuró, desde el primer momento, la formación de una cultura popular del teatro." ("restoring the dignity that has been usurped from us by scenic spectacle. He proposed from the first moment, the formation of a popular theatre.")

The first few years of existence for the Teatro del Pueblo were difficult. Young men and women without much previous experience in theatre were busily learning a craft with all of its inherent responsibilities and disciplines. In addition, the Independent theatres were attempting to train a public to understand as well as to enjoy theatre. The average price of a ticket was fifteen cents -- designed to attract a non-theatre-going public. Performances were held in small rented theatres, at fairs, in parks, and in plazas. In order to reach el pueblo, the troupe began to entertain at local events by means of a travelling wagon (similar in concept to the experiment of García Lorca with La Barraca in Spain.)

We organized an ambitious cultural program, carrying the world's best plays to the most remote corners of Argentina. ... Traveling in a wagon drawn by two white mares, we took the work of Lope de Vega, Molière, and Shakespeare everywhere.

The Independent Theatres' desire to reach and to educate a
new audience was matched by its efforts to find new Argentine dramatic talents. They deliberately encouraged writers to submit their works for production. The Teatro del Pueblo, for example, was able to boast as its discovery the powerful dramatist Roberto Arlt and, later, a master of contemporary farce, Román Gómez Masía.

Plays by foreign authors, especially Europeans, were popular with the companies. Of the first five hundred performances of the Teatro del Pueblo, fifty were plays by non-Argentine authors. The choices were eclectic: Plautus' Aulularia, Gogol's The Marriage, Synge's Riders to the Sea, Evreinov's The Chief Thing, and O'Neill's Emperor Jones.

In addition to regular international programs, the Independent groups often oriented their work in a specific way: illustrating the particular philosophical and/or political bents of the troupes. The Teatro del Pueblo produced what became known as teatro polémico (polemical theatre). Scenes from the current production or a short piece were presented to the public, after which a discussion was held involving cast, crew, and audience. Barletta usually guided these discussions. The initial reasoning behind these sessions was to provide the company with a first hand knowledge of the public's opinions concerning the quality of the work being presented. But, also, the discussion was designed to acquaint the public with the art and the business of theatre. Ultimately, these sessions became less and less discussions of art and more and more opportunities to express political opinions. "People of the most varied backgrounds
and attitudes joined in these animated verbal bouts, which might last for hours."

By the mid-forties, the first phase of the Independent movement was drawing to a close. Actors who worked all day in one job and went to the theatre to perform at night were finding that the strain could not be endured for too long. There was a necessity to receive pay and the commercial theatre could pay. Furthermore, the audiences were beginning to desert the theatres in favor of the new and exciting media: radio, television, and the film. Government censorship was increasing and, occasionally, pieces such as La mandragora (Machiavelli) could not be produced for fear of harsh state injunctions. In 1948, Perón issued his famous contempt law forbidding actors to pursue politics in the theatre. The impetus for the Independent Theatre began to peter out.

In retrospect, the Independents accomplished a great deal during this initial phase of their activity. They had illustrated that the public was capable of appreciating and understanding a diverse and a rich theatre. They also demonstrated that there were a number of Argentine dramatic and theatrical talents who were not second-rate when compared with the Europeans and the North Americans. A new group of writers, actors, and technicians had cut their artistic teeth in the Independent companies and proved that they had a secure and in-depth grasp of their craft. Furthermore, the Independent movement had altered permanently the state of the commercial theatre.
The teatro independiente used to be a place where people who were not necessarily actors but who liked the theatre would devote their nights, not to sleep, but to act. Ninety-five per cent of them were workers or employees who would take small cellars, without any heat or ventilation. And they produced plays which the commercial empresarios would not dare stage. I mean Ibsen; I mean Brecht; I mean Genet. But, then, all of a sudden, the Independent Theatre Movement made empresarios realize that they could also stage this kind of thing with good seats, good lighting, good ventilation -- which is when the Independent Theatre petered out. Quite a few of its members passed on to the professional stage. They brought a discipline to the professional actor which he had not had before.13

The Independent Movement which exists today and can be identified from the fifties is still a non-profit organization and is still composed of actors who work all day and go to the theatre at night. However, there are differences. First, the actors forming the Independent groups do not band together normally for much longer than one production. There are no large scale philosophical purposes orienting a group other than the desire to produce a quality show. If any major current can be evidenced in the sixties it is the socio-political thematics: a result of a total cultural trend enveloping the country. The Independents produce on a limited budget and hope for house receipts to keep them operating longer than one to two weeks. In strict numerical terms, the Independents still compose the large percentage of theatres in the capital. And they are still the leaders in producing the most experimental and the most radical works. New actors and new authors normally find their first home in the Independent theatre but the necessity to meet harsh economic realities frequently hamper both artistic dreams and artistic experiments.

In the midst of the national, commercial and independent scene
of the early sixties, the Center of Audiovisual Expressive Arts appeared -- totally unlike anything that had existed before or that existed then. It was a unique effort in theatrical pioneering and, in many respects, was a "battle against windmills."
FOOTNOTES

1 Luís Ordaz, El teatro en el Río de la Plata desde sus orígenes hasta nuestros días (Buenos Aires: Edición Leviatán, 1956), p. 15.


3 Mariano G. Bosch, Manuel de Levardén as cited by Luís Ordaz, El teatro en el Río de la Plata, p. 21.

4 Interview with Emilio Stevanovitch, Buenos Aires, Argentina, April 13, 1971.


8 José Marial, El teatro independiente (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Alpe, 1955), p. 34.


10 Ordaz, El teatro en el Río de la Plata, p. 201.


12 Aloisi, p. 23.

13 Interview with Emilio Stevanovitch.
CHAPTER II

THE FORMATION OF THE TORCUATO DI TELIA INSTITUTE

The Center of Audiovisual Expressive Arts formed one section of the Torcuato Di Tella Institute (ITDT) -- a unique entity in Argentine history. Never before had the state or private individuals sought to encourage and to actively support an investigative center for the social sciences and the arts. In the past, social scientists had looked to private interest groups to help finance special research projects. However, grants-in-aid and adequate facilities in which to carry out research were severely limited. On the national level, social scientists rarely found government support to conduct studies and frequently upon graduating from universities, these scientists were confronted with the harsh reality that jobs -- especially research positions -- were non-existent.

In the arts, financial assistance to conduct experiments was impossible to obtain. Whatever economic aid that appeared was post-facto: "angelic aid" to secure a concert hall for a music recital, a gallery for a visual arts display, or an award occasionally accompanied by a small sum of money.

In theatre, the situation was, perhaps, more grave. There were "no awards plus prize money" for the efforts of an experimental theatre group. Backers to provide a troupe or an author with a theatre
hall were few and far between. Most frequently, artists pooled their own funds, mounted a show as rapidly and cheaply as possible, and hoped for critical and public support to continue the production.

What the creators of the Di Tella Institute proposed was neither a gallery for display purposes nor a foundation devoted to promoting research elsewhere. Instead, they sought to establish for researchers a structured framework -- a complex of laboratories -- in which experimentation in the social sciences and the arts might occur without the usual handicaps of insufficient funds, antiquated facilities, and public or critical disinterest. The Di Tella would be a philanthropic entity "creado con la idea de servir a la comunidad, canalizando actividades hacia tareas de creación e investigación." ("created with the idea of serving the community, channeling activities in the direction of investigative and creative tasks."\(^1\)

Each of the laboratories would encompass a special field of interest. There would be, for example, Centers of Economics, Public Administration, Advanced Musical Studies, etc. Supporting the activities of each laboratory would be multiple central services (photography, design, public relations, etc.). Guiding the programs would be a small nucleus of highly qualified personnel: directors and assistants who had achieved renown in their field and who were chosen for their ability to stimulate fresh ideas and to encourage research.

The concept for the venture belonged to Guido Di Tella. He sought to provide Argentina with a center for investigations into the arts as well as the social sciences. Furthermore, the Institute
would serve as a tribute to the memory of his father, Torcuato Di Tella. Don Torcuato had emigrated from Italy in 1895. Over the years the Di Tella name and influence had become powerful forces in Argentine life. A complex industrial operation was created that had prestige not only in Argentina but throughout much of South America and Europe. The operation was known by the letters S.I.A.M. standing for Sociedad Industrial Americana de Maquinarias (American Industrial Society of Machines). The S.I.A.M.-Di Tella industries encompassed a wide range of consumer products including household appliances, business machinery, and automobiles. Although Don Torcuato died in 1948, the Di Tella family had maintained tight control over all aspects of the S.I.A.M. empire with María Robiola de Di Tella (Don Torcuato's widow) as the titular head of the Board of Directors. The business continued to expand after 1948 and on July 22, 1958, ten years after Don Torcuato's death, son Guido inaugurated the Di Tella Foundation and revealed the plans for the Torcuato Di Tella Institute.

The Foundation was established as a form of non-profit trust set up to administer a large part of the capital from S.I.A.M. and its subsidiaries. The Foundation received a major portion of S.I.A.M. stock from which the dividends were used to finance the Institute. "The Foundation was only the third such endowed philanthropic organization in Argentina and the Institute was unique in its range of proposed activities."² The Board of Directors for both organizations was the same: five members of the Di Tella family. Thus, one can
understand why, although it was the policy of the Foundation not to interfere in any functional way within the Institute, it did exert a strong influence. Primarily, the Foundation was involved with two major aspects of the Institution's operation: the choice of administrative personnel and the channeling of funds. Therefore, while the Foundation could remain aloof from actually interfering with events in the Di Tella Institute, it could control the activities to a great extent by supplying or cutting off funds and by deciding who would organize and operate the Di Tella.

The proposition behind the founding of the Institute was to provide Argentina with multiple experimental laboratories where investigations could occur in fields which were recognized as vital but nationally neglected. The orientation ultimately served to reflect three basic interests of the Di Tella family. Don Torcuato had always been attracted to the arts and over his lifetime, he had accumulated a personal art collection reputed to be worth over one million dollars. This collection would serve as the base for the permanent art exhibit and holdings of the proposed Center of Visual Art (CAV). Son Torcuato Di Tella had renounced the leadership of the family business to pursue his interests in sociology and within a short time, he had achieved much recognition for his numerous publications. Of the nine separate centers, six were devoted to research in the social sciences. Lastly, the Institute, by design, was a philanthropic project reflecting the personal interests Don Torcuato had had in philanthropy. The Di Tella Institute could serve,
however, as a more formal, long range program than had any of the private philanthropic activity of Don Torcuato. Thus, the Di Tella family was offering a tribute to the memory of Don Torcuato -- a tribute to his ideals and to his interests.

The Di Tella Foundation would provide the initial sum for the inauguration of the Institute as well as an additional three million dollars for the construction of special facilities. The Board of Directors, in the meantime, was looking to national and international organizations and private citizens for aid in helping to support the project.

Concretizing the over-all scope and long range operation of the Institute in 1958, the Di Tella family and its advisers settled on 1960 as the inaugural year. María Robiola de Di Tella served as president of the Board of Directors -- a position which she would hold until her death in 1967. The Board named sociologist Enrique Oteiza as Executive Director of the operation and under his leadership from 1960 until 1970, the Di Tella Institute took shape, providing Buenos Aires with a highly innovative and frequently controversial center of activity.

The attempt was to try to create an Institution to stimulate creativity in sciences and arts with the idea that Argentina had a type of evolution and development which made of it a very dependent country in cultural terms because of, first the Spanish colonization, then development with European immigration, then foreign capital -- mostly British -- the second World War, and so on. This made a society and a population that considered art always something from the outside, and that usually was linked with important artistic movements in other parts of the world many years after the phenomena occurred elsewhere -- and in science, particularly in social
sciences. So, after making the decision that the effort was going to be placed in innovating and creating creative types of activities, social sciences and the arts were selected as two areas particularly neglected in Argentina from the point of view of support in this context.3

The Institute officially opened in 1960 with two centers functioning: the Center for Economic Research (CIE) and the Latin American Center for Advanced Musical Studies (CLAEM.) Within the following eight years, the Institute expanded to include six social science centers, three art centers and ten special service areas. The chart on page 171 (Appendix I) serves to illustrate the developmental pattern of the Institute giving the complete title of each section, the date at which it opened, its code letters, and its director.

All three arts centers were functioning by 1965, housed in specially designed headquarters at 946 Florida Street. The man chosen to head the theatrical laboratory (Center of Audiovisual Expressive Arts [CEA]) was actor-author-director Roberto Villanueva. Born in Córdoba, Villanueva had spent most of his artistic life in Buenos Aires. As an actor, he had appeared in numerous productions, frequently with Jorge Petraglia and Leal Rey who were to become involved in Di Tella activities from the very beginning. Although Villanueva's theatrical activity had been classically traditional in the avant-garde -- Waiting for Godot, The Caretaker -- he was very much interested in the possibilities of new form: theatre of cruelty, re-working the classics in contemporary fashion, the creative potentials of untrained actors, etc. When his CEA duties permitted, he personally staged
experiments in all these areas (Ubu Chained, Timon of Athens by William Shakespeare) and continued to practice his craft as actor by performing in various productions (Los siameses, Reconstrucción de la opera de Viena).

During 1963 and most of 1964, however, Villanueva limited his activities to supervising the preparation of the theatre, defining and re-defining the orientation of the Center, and to planning various courses of action for the future. One of the first necessities was to clarify for the public and for those who were to participate in the CEA what was meant by audio-visual expression.

Audiovisual expression dates from the time when man began to use words to explain his gestures and music to accompany them for the dance.

From the beginning interdependent sound and gesture were the natural media for human communication and expression, the media for language.

All language is in the process of development; it is essentially experimental. New techniques seek to study man's speech and provide it with a greater resonance and wider public.

The language of music, the dance, and the theatre has spoken strongly to people through the ages. New electro-mechanical techniques such as the cinema, television and audiovisual spectacles complete the history of the media of audiovisual expression. This history constitutes a search for the communication of man's complete expression.

Villanueva appeared to view the CEA as, first and foremost, a laboratory where artists might experiment in sound and gesture using people, film, lights to create new images, new metaphors, a new theatrical language. In keeping with the laboratory approach to theatre, neither Villanueva nor Oteiza set any rigid limits as to the type of experimentation which might occur. "El Instituto no tiene ninguna posición estética determinada. Nuestra intención es ofrecer
un panorama de todo lo que se puede hacer en teatro." ("The Institute has no predetermined aesthetic position. Our intention is to offer a panorama of everything that can be done in theatre.") The Villanueva-Oteiza statement regarding the CEA's open door artistic policy was designed to encourage artists to try the unknown without fear of administrative censorship or economic reprisals. Simultaneously, it was a warning for the public and the press that they must not expect the events in the CEA to follow any pre-established artistic patterns, to cater to public and critical tastes, or to imitate and reflect currently acceptable contextual-formal norms. If the Center was to be a laboratory for theatrical experimentation, then the CEA artists would receive the right to pursue their artistic investigations without Di Telia pressure.

Hopefully, the experiments in the Di Telia would lead to a deeper penetration of the theatrical experience than had been encountered by both artists and the public in the past. In the attempt to search and to question the limits of "theatre" and the "nature of man," the Di Telia artists were about to challenge what they felt was outmoded artistic tradition, dramatic dogma, theatrical apathy and public prejudice. The new was not intended to be valued in and for itself but, rather, as a way in which to arrive at a more complete understanding of twentieth century man and his society. Although some of the public and certain areas of the press felt that the experiments in CAV and CEA signified a wholesale rejection of the past, this was not intended to be the case. Rather, the past was viewed as
a necessary springboard into the present and the future.

Of all Villanueva's statements concerning the nature of the work practiced in CEA, this statement was, perhaps, the most important. The artists looked for new possibilities of expression and frequently were successful artistically. But, the public and the press repeatedly were confused, uncomfortable, and disoriented. The Di Telia organization made a serious mistake when it failed to reiterate Villanueva's statement again and again for the understanding of the public and especially, of the press to whom and for whom it desired contact.

A second aim of the CEA was to provide a showcase for new Argentine artists, particularly playwrights. Economic considerations which frequently prohibited the production of unknowns were eliminated within the Di Telia structure. Trained personnel and a fully equipped plant were ready to provide promising young dramatists with the best
CELIA BARBOSA PRESENTA:
ULTRA ZUM!!

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EL DESATINO


possible production of their work.

From 1965 until 1970 (the year in which the Centers of Audiovisual Expressive Arts and Visual Arts closed), there was a total of eighty-six different programs staged. Although a number of productions were works by already established, international dramatists (Osborne, Beckett, Pinter), over two-thirds of the total programs were original creations. Yet, in terms of dramatists who texted new scripts, leaving the mountings to others, only one playwright appeared: Griselda Gambaro. For the most part, the CEA programs were collective creations, texted experiments directed by the author, multi-media concerts, non-formally-texted experiments, and re-interpretations or re-dialogued creations of established materials.

The normal running time for a show was no longer than one month. Most often, a production would run for only a few days and alternate with another show during the contract period. At no point in CEA history, however, was it the intention of the Di Tella staff to maintain a show for a year. In a few cases (Mario Trejo's Libertad y otras intoxicaciones), a successful work was remounted if the schedule permitted and, especially, if the box-office could benefit.

Once Villanueva had approved the concept for a production and included it in that season's repertoire, the performers were aided with whatever assistance the Institute could provide. Behind the actual stage area was a rehearsal hall with a working area the
exact dimensions of the theatre stage. This permitted the groups to work out their productions in detail. The theatre itself was relatively intimate with a seating capacity for two hundred and forty-four spectators. The stage was shallow and curved at both ends, heightening the concept of intimacy between performers and audience. The back wall, painted a cream color, rose to the ceiling unmolested by teasers, flies, or battens. The area was ideal for the projection of films or slides. It was, to use Peter Brook's term, "empty space."

Situated above the heads of the audience area were twenty-four lighting instruments, each with a capacity for one hundred watts of electricity. The sound system, operating on one hundred watts as well, recorded between frequencies of 25 - 1500 H.P. and had a range of three decibels. Films, photomagnetic tapes, monaural, and stereophonic records could be utilized with the system. Six slide projectors (35 mm. and 60x60 mm.) with capabilities for zoom lens shots were housed with the sound equipment in an elevated booth located at the back of the auditorium. Both the slide projectors and the sound system could be synchronized and operated simultaneously by means of a memory bank.

The ITDT met the salaries for the permanent personnel of the CEA (Villanueva and his assistants). It financed the equipping of the laboratory, as well. But, the directors, performers, and crews contracted for a production received no salary for their work. They were provided with whatever film and sound assistance they required
and, in return, were expected to absorb the production costs of their shows. Sixty percent of the ticket receipts were turned over to the performing group with the remaining forty going to the CEA.

El CEA mantenía la sala, mantenía el personal técnico y con los grupos que se hacían espectáculos, se les ofrecía la sala, se les ofrecía toda la asistencia técnica, incluso la posibilidad de realizar cintas de sonido... la publicidad y, en fin, toda la organización de la cosa. No recibían sueldo, en cambio, no recibían ninguna ayuda financiera. El montaje le tenía que pagar el grupo y recibía un porcentaje bastante elevado de los recaudos de las entradas con las cuales generalmente podían salvar los gastos del montaje de la obra pero no conseguir dinero para subsistir.

(The CEA provided the auditorium, provided the technical personnel and to all the groups who produced works, it offered the auditorium; it offered them all the technical assistance including the possibility of making tapes... publicity and, in short, all the organization of the thing. They didn't receive a salary, nor any financial help. The group had to pay for the mounting and it received a rather high percentage of the ticket receipts with which, generally, they could cover the costs of mounting the work but not enough money to exist.)

Needless to say, the financial situation of most of the Di Telia participants was poor if not impossible. Troupes which attempted some of the more daring avant-garde experiments or those who were searching for new methods of heightening the theatrical experience often suffered economically especially if the press was critical or the public disinterested. In such instances, a second experiment was financially unfeasible. At times, a producer-director would compromise an artistic position to secure, hopefully, a more favorable press and a full house. The most memorable example of this was Rodríguez Arias' 1968 production of Love & Song which played to large houses and a good press.

Como en sus anteriores "tiras cómicas" animadas en
escena, Rodríguez Arias busca el estatismo de los dibujos, la fantasía interplanetaria de los trajes y el diálogo sentencioso y entrecortado, que parece surgir en globitos de las bocas de sus criaturas, tan lujosamente desparatadas como los ensueños tropicales de Hollywood. La diferencia está en que aquí hay una trama. ...

(As he had done in his comic strips put on stage, R.A. looked for the static quality of comics, the fantasy of their space suits, and the sententious and choppy dialogue, that seems to emerge from tiny bubbles out of the mouth of his characters, as gloriously outlandish as the tropical daydreams of Hollywood. The difference lies in the fact that there is a theme here. . .)

Ironically, Love & Song was no more than a spectacular and lavishly costumed treatment of the author's first critically unsuccessful work, Drácula, el vampiro.

Most often, Villanueva scheduled a season's repertoire with a healthy percentage of draw names: performers who were well-known (Jorge Petraglia, Marili Marini, Nacha Guevara) or those who had achieved recognizable earlier events (Jorge Bonino, Mario Trejo, Norman Briski). This insured the laboratory's forty percent and permitted a certain flexibility for the CEA staff to try experiments with less well known artists.

When one talks about the Di Tella, eventually the question of monies must arise, and nowhere were funds more of a persistent problem than in the arts centers. In general, the total income of the ITDT was derived from three principal sources: the Di Tella Foundation, grants from philanthropic organizations and public/private interest groups. During the initial two years of the Institute, the major responsibility for the financing of the programs lay with the Di
Tella and the Ford Foundations. The Ford Foundation had supported the formation of the Center for Economic Investigation in November of 1961 with an endowment of $360,000. Other groups assisting during the 1960-1961 year were the Federal Investment Council, the Organization of American States, the National Arts Fund of Argentina, the Administrative Commission of the Assistance Foundation for Economic Development and Fiat of Argentina.

Over the years, multiple different foundations and groups contributed to the activities of the Institute. However, most determined the nature of their aid reminding us of Brooks Atkinson's charge that "foundations like to succeed in their own field; they like to spend money in ways that augment their prestige."10 Thus, in 1964, out of fifteen contributing groups, ten designated where and to whom their assistance be given. In 1966, ten out of eleven determined the area of their aid.

The Ford Foundation must be commended for its support of the Di Tella program from the very beginning. It has continued to aid the IITD liberally with eleven separate endowments, the most recent and largest grant in January, 1970 totalling $2,100,000 for the Institute's social science centers. However, each of the grants has been directed to the social research centers. When questioned concerning the nature of their support in general and their attitudes concerning the CEA in particular, the official reply was:

The mandate we have from our officers for work in the developing countries of the world does not normally include provision for the arts and humanities. All of the grants provided
to the Di Tella Institute were thus reserved for the social science centers. However, we understood that such support would undoubtedly, albeit indirectly, assist the art centers since it would ease the pressure on the central budget from the social science side of the scale.\footnote{11}

The reply leaves many questions unanswered. What is one to assume from the use of the word "normally?" Why does an enlightened and humanistic organization -- long noted for its support of cultural programs on the national level -- assume that scientific centers in "developing countries" are more deserving of foreign aid than are cultural centers?

While it cannot be denied that outside assistance to the social science centers did permit Di Tella funds to go into the arts branches, the fact is that NO TANGIBLE SUPPORT of the arts programs by a name organization such as the Ford Foundation over ten years implied a rejection of these programs. If it was not a rejection, it was, at the very least, an indication that the arts branches were a luxury. One wonders, therefore, if the grant to Schechner and Pottlitzer for their South American excursion in 1968 by the Ford Foundation was a token way of appeasing those who had criticized the Ford Foundation's stand regarding cultural programs abroad. Nevertheless, both Schechner and Pottlitzer were North American artists and the cost of their junket would be far less expensive than any funding of the arts programs in the Di Tella. Furthermore, the attitudes of Schechner and Pottlitzer were familiar to the Ford Foundation officers whereas the artists connected with the Di Tella were unknown quantities, especially politically and philosophically. By 1970, both CAV and the CEA were
In serious trouble regarding the press and the municipal authorities. Furthermore, they were desperately in need of an established organization to support them morally even if not financially. No-one did.

The Ford Foundation staff have taken no specific position with respect to the Center of Audiovisual Experimentation. It is conceivable, of course, that our concern with general matters of financing at the Institute may have indirectly affected the Institute's thinking. But, I would tend to believe that it was basically the hard facts of income and expenditure that were the key determinants of their decisions about the Center.\textsuperscript{12}

Economic facts cannot be denied. During the last year of existence, theatrical events had suffered at the box office. Also, the number of events was noticeably fewer than in 1967 and in 1968. Operating expenses for the plant itself had to be met. But, as was originally stated in 1960-1965: CAV and CEA were philanthropic entities and CEA artists were expected to assume production costs for their shows. No outside support had been forthcoming for the entire history of the CEA or CAV. Therefore, why and when had finances become such a monumental problem?

Both Oteiza and Villanueva cite economic hardship as the reason for the closure of the CEA and CAV. Why, then, should Romero Brest, as director of CAV, have permitted artist Hugo Álvarez to begin preparations for a work entitled \textit{Experience, 1970}, indicating to him that the budget for that year had been approved and adequate to meet the predicted expenses for the year?

The question of support becomes more involved when one
considers that the only arts center to receive sizeable assistance from a foreign foundation was the Latin American Center for Advanced Musical Studies. It was, from the beginning, an advanced training institute for already proven composers. CLEAM, under the direction of Alberto Ginastera, proposed "to offer young composers on the continent the opportunity of carrying out post-graduate studies in the city of Buenos Aires under the direction of specialized teachers." The orientation and implementation of its program were reminiscent of U.S. university doctoral programs in music. And when one notes that CLEAM established a collaborative working relationship with the University of Indiana Music Department, exchanging students, faculty, and materials, the comparison is apt.

In 1962, the Rockefeller Foundation provided CLEAM with a grant of $156,000. An additional sum of $97,000 was directed to the Latin American Music Center, University of Indiana. When questioned concerning their support of the Institute, the officers of the Rockefeller Foundation did not reply. The Ford Foundation did not support CLEAM but indicates that its aid was primarily geared to those centers stressing an academic approach. "... a substantial portion of grant support, especially in the early years was earmarked for training Institute social scientists to the doctoral level in graduate programs abroad."14

Reflecting on the nature of North American support of the Di Tella, Enrique Oteiza evaluated the situation as follows:

... from the point of view of American foundations, we had some support of the Rockefeller Foundation at the beginning -- for music
only -- and then they stopped. And the Ford Foundation never supported our artistic activity, only social sciences which indirectly supported the artistic activity because by giving a greater amount of money in total it liberated our own money for the arts. But, I mean, explicitly and directly, they didn't support it. I think mostly because they had a somewhat narrow definition of what development is -- a quite narrow view of development as economic development. So they considered it was sort of a luxury, that there was no reason for them to pay while they could use their money in other types of programs more conventionally considered.15

However, a third factor affecting funds and attitudes concerning the continued existence of CAV and the CEA appears to lie in a more subtle area. As early as 1964, visual artists becoming associated with the Di Tella found themselves to be "instant news copy." Their artistic positions -- frequently attacks on bourgeoisie complacency, indifference, and conservatism -- had merited them the label of Beatnik. Publicly, these same artists refused to fit into traditional molds -- in dress, in action, and in "public deportment." When in 1967 and 1968, theatre and visual artists had begun to initiate a series of experiences and productions which challenged the political structures of Argentina and the United States, which scoffed at the Institute structure and those who supported it, and which questioned many contemporary mores relating to family, church, the sexes etc., the municipality summoned the police to close exhibitions (Experiencia 1968) and to arrest performers (Roberto Villanueva and Marilú Marini, 1970). Newspaper articles referring to indecent, morally questionable and tasteless exhibitionism were more frequent. Artists and public who dressed in hippie clothing were searched for drugs and frequently harrassed in the Di Tella headquarters as well as the nearby Galería del Este which was a meeting place for
artists. Inuendos and gossip abounded referring to questionable sexual activities of the artists, their traffic in drugs (marijuana and hard drugs), and their obvious communist-anarchistic sympathies.

... for many people who were traditionals in Argentina -- the traditional power elite -- the Di Tella was a dangerous thing. They didn't know why exactly, but they didn't like it for the most part.16

The romance between the arts and the establishment which had begun so sweetly and idealistically in 1960 had soured beyond repair ten years later.
FOOTNOTES


3 Interview with Enrique Oteiza, Buenos Aires, Argentina, April 4, 1971.


7 The program of events for the 1964-1969 seasons in the Center of Audiovisual Expressive Arts is listed in Appendix B, p. 175.

8 Interview with Roberto Villanueva, Buenos Aires, Argentina, April 4, 1971.


11 Nita Rous Manitzas, Letter from The Ford Foundation (August 30, 1971). The full text of the letter may be found in Appendix C, p. 186.

12 Ibid.

15. Oteiza.
16. Ibid.
Although the Center of Audiovisual Expressive Arts opened in 1965, the ITDT's interests in audiovisual experimentation dated as far back as 1961. In that year Jorge Romero Brest, serving as director of the National Museum of Fine Arts, had helped to organize with the Di Tella and the Institute for American Arts (School of Architecture, University of Buenos Aires) an audiovisual exhibit entitled Candonga by architects Miguel Ascensio and Rafael Iglesia. This exhibit, dealing with the early Jesuit missions of Argentina and mounted in the National Museum, was one of the first audiovisual experiments in Argentina. Recognizing the artistic and public interest in this art form, the ITDT encouraged artists to continue creating audiovisual works. In the following year, the Institute purchased a mobile audiovisual unit with which it sponsored travelling exhibits into the interior of Argentina. By the end of 1963, thirty-three cities had witnessed at least one audiovisual presentation under ITDT sponsorship: La Pampa, Santa Fe, Córdoba, San Luís, Entre Ríos, Corrientes, Chaco, Salta, Jujuy, Catamarca, La Rioja.

In Buenos Aires, the Di Tella headquarters on Florida Street were almost completely equipped and a simple series of events could be staged in the theatrical laboratory by the end of 1964. The season was a short one and non-theatrical. Instead, there was a film festival:
the total cinematic work of six national directors — Ricardo Aranovich, Fernando Birri, Enrique Dawi, Simón Feldman, David José Kohón and Osías Wilenski. in addition, there was a presentation of twenty-five short subject films by various Argentines. The only audiovisual exhibit to occur that year was a multiple creation by four members of CLARM: Blas Emilio Atehortúa, César Bolaños, Alberto Villalpando, and Miguel Angel Rondando. The work, entitled Villancicos de Navidad (Christmas Carols) and staged December 15-19, featured original compositions by the group along with a series of photographs based on popular American legends and topics.

The official inaugural of the CEA occurred in the fall of 1965. In an interview for TEATRO XX, Villanueva attempted to preview the up-coming season and indicated that the laboratory would offer "a little of everything."

A principios de abril calculamos que estará totalmente instalada y se presentarán los diferentes géneros de espectáculos que en ella se ofrecerán. En materia de cine, hay prevista una historia del cine en cincuenta y ocho funciones con films de museo, para lo cual se ha celebrado un convenio con la Cinemática Argentina, y una visión del nuevo cine americano presentada por su principal animador, Jonas Mekas. Se desarrollará también un ciclo de espectáculos audiovisuales sobre poesía argentina, diseño industrial, artes gráficas, y muchas otras variantes y en lo que se refiere al teatro se montará en primer término Lutero de John Osborne y luego El desatino, la pieza más reciente de Griselda Gambaro.

(By the beginning of April we anticipate being fully installed and different types of programs will be presented. As regards film, a history of the film in fifty-eight programs of museum films is anticipated, for which an agreement with Cinemática Argentina has just been signed, and a panorama of the New American Cinema, presented by its principal exponent, Jonas Mekas. A series of audiovisual programs about Argentine poetry, industrial
design, graphic arts, and many others will be promoted and, as far as theatre is concerned, John Osborne's Luther will be mounted first and then El desatino, the most recent play of Griselda Gambaro.\(^1\)

The inaugural year proved to be semi-conservative and experimentally cautious. There were five general categories of events: children's theatre, audiovisuals, film, theatre, and one-man shows. The children's theatre presented four programs involving song, dance, mime, and photography. The productions operated in conjunction with the Department of Education, University of Buenos Aires. By the end of the 1966 season, however, children's theatre would disappear completely from the CEA repertoire as attention turned to more vanguardistic theatre.

Film festivals continued to attract the public. The appearance of a group of artists connected with the New American Cinema provided a perfect subject for a special event. The films included works by Ron Rice, Andy Warhol, Stan Vanderbeek, Peter Brook and many others. The second film presentation for the season was a sequence of ten short subject works from Poland.

In the area of audio-visuals there were four presentations. Villanueva mounted all four which included a repeat from the 1964 season (Villancicos de Navidad.) Assisting Villanueva were Humberto Rivas and Roberto Alvarado (Department of Photography), Juan Carlos Distéfano (Department of Design) as well as various musicians (César Bolaños, Miguel Angel Rondano, Blas Atehortúa and Alberto Villalpando.) who composed sound tapes for the presentation. One audio-visual was entitled Introducción para Lutero (Introduction for Luther) and served to promote the theatrical inaugural.
The production of *Lutero* (Luther), directed by Jorge Petraglia and designed by Leal Rey opened the Center officially in May, 1965. The work itself was four years old and not John Osborne's best dramatic work despite the excellent translation into Spanish by Gabriel Rúa. The public was familiar with Osborne's previous work and with Brechtian alienation devices. Argentina's Nuevo Teatro had produced *Mother Courage* in 1949. Since that time Brecht had become a favorite with the Buenos Aires public.

The choice of Petraglia and Rey to open the Center was not surprising. Villanueva had worked closely with both men during student days in the School of Architecture and had continued to remain in close contact as actor and director. All three were intimately acquainted with each other's talents and theatrical expertise. In addition, Petraglia and Rey were important theatrical names -- respected by the critics and increasingly popular with the public. Petraglia had recently returned from France where he had staged a work for the Theatre Festival of Nations and where he had premiered Samuel Beckett's *Embers* at the playwright's request. *Lutero*, Jorge Petraglia, and Leal Rey appeared to be a sure bet for initial success.

Petraglia mounted his show, cutting certain sections of the play (ie. the Papal hunting scene) and employing the sound and photographic possibilities at his disposal. Projections were splashed on the walls attempting to draw an ideological relationship between text-action-and-history.

In general, the press remained coolly unreceptive to Osborne's
work but the production was another matter. Leal Rey received mild praise for his interpretation of the title role but in regard to his designs, the critics were enthusiastic: "... nuestro más cálido aplauso a su responsable. ... exhuma la tendencia al juego escénico con presencia de objetos: una idea que da vigor y textura al teatro moderno" ("... our warmest applause to the man responsible for staging. ... He revives the tendency towards stage effects on the basis of objects, an idea that gives strength and texture to modern theatre.")

Although Petraglia was criticized for the "comprensible tentación" ("understandable temptation") to over-use slides, he was praised for his work as actor (Cardinal Cayetano) and as director: "... da continuadas evidencias de comprender más complejidades del montaje total" ("... gives continuing evidence of understanding the complexities of theatrical staging.")

The second and only other dramatic work of the season was the premiere of El desatino (The Blunder) by the new playwright Griselda Gambaro. Again the press did not appear to be overly enthusiastic about the Di Tella's second theatrical effort although the general opinion concerning author Gambaro was that she possessed recognizable talent:

... estamos antes una nueva señal de una época de decadencia, infame y caótica, lo que no impide reconocer la inteligencia y la habilidad de esta autora que se presenta por primera vez en el escenario evidenciando estar bien dotada para su labor futura.

(... we are before a new sign in a time of decadence, infamy, and chaos, but this does not stop us from recognizing the intelligence and the ability of this author whose work is
produced for the first time and shows promise for her future work.\textsuperscript{5}

"El desatino" ... es la primera obra conocida de Griselda Gambaro. Suficiente para demostrar a una escritora aguda, con elevado sentido del humor, imaginativa, que pisa el escenario sin preconceptos. ...

\textsuperscript{6} ("The Blunder" . . . is the first known work of Griselda Gambaro. It is sufficient to demonstrate a perceptive writer who possesses a heightened sense of humor, is imaginative and treads the stage without preconceptions. . . )

The production of El desatino was extremely important on two counts. First, it demonstrated that the CEA was determined to inaugurate as quickly as possible its stated policy of encouraging new authors. Second, it illustrated that these authors would have the best production assistance available. The director and interpreter of the lead role in El desatino was none other than Jorge Petraglia. Leal Rey designed the set and the costumes and acted the second lead.

The play was absurdist with strong over-tones of Pinter and Beckett. The public was non-receptive to the work apparently confused by Gambaro's metaphysics and unimpressed by Petraglia's "theatre of cruelty" techniques.

In 1967, Petraglia and Gambaro would collaborate again, this time for a production of a new play, Los siameses. In the two years between the productions of El desatino and Los siameses, Gambaro not only matured as a playwright but achieved a high degree of success outside of the Di Tella. Independent groups began to stage earlier works she had written and, soon, a Gambaro cult became obvious. By 1967, she had established herself as an important and provocative Argentine
playwright of the absurd. On a parallel scale, the CEA public was maturing, becoming more accustomed to a variety of productions ranging from those immersed in camp, to those involving aesthetic and audience aggression, or those which challenged morals, politics, and theatre itself.

The third aspect of the 1965 season and, in some ways, one of the most important for what was to occur later, was in the area of modern dance. Of the two dance efforts presented, the most successful was the camp creation of Marilú Marini and Ana Kamien. Their work, entitled Danse Bouquet, (Dance Bouquet) was a multi-media effort which they maintained would illustrate that "queremos ser serias pero no solemnes." ("we want to be serious but not solemn.") Danse Bouquet was a series of seven sketches involving parodies and burlesque interpretations of contemporary myths: James Bond, the Hollywood spectacular (Cleopatra), Violeta of La Traviata, the world of the astronauts ("Maravilla, la Mujer Maravilla contra Astra la Superpilla del Planeta Ultra y su Monstruo Destructor.") ("Maravilla, the Marvellous Woman Against Astra, the Super-Broad from the Planet Ultra and Her Monster Destructor.") Marini and Kamien's production was choreographic POP with everything designed as an irreverent and humorous look at society. The hallowed world of the opera -- especially sacred for the Argentines whose famed Teatro Colón was a source of immense national pride and international prestige -- was the source for a spoof on operatic heroines. The choreographers staged a scene involving a drunken Violeta wobbling across the stage dressed in costumes by CAV
artists Delia Cancela and Pablo Mesejean and accompanied by the modernist sound tracks of Miguel Rondano.

The creative talents of Cancela, Mesejean, Rondano, Kamien, and Marini had jelled to make Danse Bouquet the first POP theatrical spectacle in the Di Tella. It was also the first unqualified success. Comparing it to the environmental piece Ultra Zum! (Ultra Zoom!) by Celia Barbosa the critical consensus was "Ana Kamien y Marilú Marini han demostrado que no todo ha de ser monstruo en el mundo de lo beatnik." ("Ana Kamien and Marilú Marini have demonstrated that not everything has to be monstrous in the world of the beatnik,")

While the review of Danse Bouquet is laudatory, a subtle implication is observable. The Di Tella visual arts and theatre laboratories were beginning to receive press comments which referred repeatedly to "hippie" presentations and/or "beatnik" elements. The catch-word was the simplest way to define many avant-garde experiments. But, unfortunately the terminology soon carried with it a raft of implications: drugs, revolutionaries, sexual deviation. 1965 was, as yet, not a crisis year for this type of review or "special interest" article but the seeds were being sown for a more hostile press and a bewildered public (1968). Finally, a boycott of CAV and CEA by the news media occurred in 1969.

During this three year inter-rim (1965-1968), the CEA was attempting to formulate its program in a meaningful way. One of the more important orientations was the healthy co-operation between CAV and the CEA already initiated by Danse Bouquet. By the end of 1966,
CAV artists Marta Minujin, Rodríguez Arias, Delia Cancela, Juan Stoppani, Susan Salgado, Oscar Masotta, Leopoldo Maler, Roberto Jacoby, Pablo Suárez and Pablo Mesejean had staged or had participated in events within the CEA laboratory. This inter-action was encouraged by Villanueva who, in 1965, had expressed his desire that the CEA be used as a sounding board for the other centers in the Institute. Enrique Oteiza attempted, deliberately, to initiate this artistic cross-over by housing the three arts centers in close proximity in the Florida building.

My assumption was that putting all of them in one house -- not to beat them with possibilities of inter-action -- and supported by some central services -- that this was going to stimulate sort of an inter-penetration, an inter-action between the different parts. ... I never forced them to inter-act. I don't think it was possible to get any results by forcing them. ... The building resulted more adequate by coincidence than by design. ... After awhile, some people came from the museum and they did some of the more creative things that were produced during the whole period of existence of the experience. Rodríguez Arias and his group. ... and Marta Minujin, who was a painter originally, went into a sort of complex type of artistic creation. The people in the theatre went down for some visual arts experiments and, somewhat, musical sound was incorporated into many of these things.9

Of the three arts centers, CIAEM never encouraged the artistic cross-over. Those musicians who appeared regularly in CEA events were from outside the CIAEM laboratory or worked in special capacities within the electronic laboratory of the Di Tella. Undoubtedly, the closed academic structuring of the CIAEM program was a hindrance to the type of inter-activity realized by the other more liberally oriented centers.

1966 was the first year in which the artistic cross-over between
CAV and the CEA became obvious. Minujín, Masotta, and Roberto Whitman staged Happenings. Rodríguez Arias mounted the first of his camp theatrical spectacles, Drácula, el vampiro (Dracula, The Vampire) and by so doing began his investigations into the nature of the theatrical elements. Leopoldo Maler staged a not too successful Pop treatment of Little Red Riding Hood entitled Caperucita Rota (Little Ripped Riding Hood).

For the 1966 season there was a notable expansion of the types of productions but as yet no clear lines of development were obvious. Films and audiovisuals were still much in evidence but children's theatre had disappeared altogether. There were no new texted plays by budding Argentine authors but performance groups were much in evidence. Teatro Blanco staged a contemporary version of Tirso de Molina's El burlador de Sevilla (The Trickster of Seville) and a new troupe entitled "Theatre of Cruelty" staged a homage to Artaud (Artaud '66). Two of the more interesting facts concerning the composition of the latter troupe was that one of the principal actresses was the soon to be Di Tella favorite, satirical songstress Nacha Guevara. As well, the first public venture of the troupe had been a presentation in 1965 of (There Is No Pity for Hamlet) scripted by Alberto Vanasco and Mario Trejo. Like Guevara, the name of Mario Trejo would soon become famous to the Di Tella public as the director of one of the most memorable and succesful CEA shows: Libertad y otras intoxicaciones (1968).

One of the outstanding CEA events for the 1966 season and,
indeed its entire history, was the one man show *Bonino aclara ciertas
dudas* (Bonino Clarifies Certain Doubts) by a non-actor from Córdoba,
Jorge Bonino. An architect by profession, Bonino was fascinated
by the problems of communication and the limitations of language. He
mounted a showcase in which he explained, in one instance, certain
geraphical and political realities of the contemporary world, employing
nothing more than the most lucid, rational, totally comprehensible
 Gibberish imaginable. The show was a smash hit! Bonino was an over­
night star. "Buenos Aires no recuerda, quizás, otra ovación como
la de esa noche." ("Buenos Aires does not remember, perhaps, another
ovation like the one last night.")

Amongst the other successful works that year was a dance
 effort by the popular international choreographer Graciela Martínez
who was labelled the "Queen of Pop in the Dance" by the press. She
had recently returned from a successful European tour where through
an invitation of the French government she had trained and taught
for a year. The other dance presentation was a work by Ana Kamien
and Marilú Marini utilizing models as dancers. They never quite managed
to co-ordinate the efforts of these non-dancers into a meaningful
"professional" evening. "Mejor no ser invitado" ("Better not to be
invited") was the press reaction to the choreographers' *La fiesta,
hoy* (Party, Today).

The use of non-dancers in *La fiesta, hoy* was a deliberate
choice on the part of the choreographers. As the CEA events would
demonstrate, certain directors (ie. Mario Trejo, Roberto Villanueva,
Carlos Trafic preferred to employ young, inexperienced actors for their works in order to probe new artistic possibilities without worry of preconceptions and prejudices on the part of the acting personnel. However, the Di Tella economic policies were such that many troupes were composed of inexperienced talent primarily because it was the cheapest talent available. Well over half the productions utilized non-professionals and considering that production costs for shows were to be met by the director, the use of new or semi-experienced performers was one way in which to save. Eventually, the press reacted.

Una academia está en Florida al 900, y se llama Centro de Experimentación Audiovisual. La admisión no es demasiado estricta: basta tener juventud, entusiasmo, dos o tres gags occurrentes, un surtido de diapositivas y una banda de sonido con suficientes gluglus, sirenas y cacofonías.

(An Academy is located at Florida 900 and it is called the Center for Audiovisual Expressive Arts. The admission is not too strict: it's enough to be young, enthusiastic, have two or three running gags, a sheaf of slides, and a sound band with sufficient gluglus, sirens, and cacaphonies.)

The need to utilize inexperienced talent for budgetary purposes eventually resulted in the regular appearance of many performers. For example, actors Jorge Fiszson and Rubén Fraga were two of the most talented young actors to come out of the Di Tella. They appeared repeatedly in a number of shows. Some directors developed their own troupes such as Rodríguez Arias. He normally staged his creations with Facundo and Marucha Bo in the title roles, often supplemented by designer Jaun Stoppani, dancer Marilú Marini or Rodríguez Arias himself. The reappearance of many of these performers in three or more shows a season resulted in the impression that the Di Tella organization had a stable
company. Such was not the case. At no time was it the intention of either Roberto Villanueva or Enrique Oteiza to limit the CEA activities to the presentations of a permanent or semi-permanent company. However, as can be seen by a glance at the seasons' offerings over the CEA's history, a remarkable number of the same directors presented shows year after year. Similarly, a study of the programs for those shows indicates that the production crews, acting personnel, and special effects people were familiar names -- many serving as actor in one production (Rubén Fraga in El burlador) assistant in another (co-director of La duquesa de Amalfi de Leal Rey).

The re-appearance of many directors and many of the same acting personnel resulted in a relatively obvious patterning of experimental productions within the CEA. The laboratory soon demonstrated that there were four main categories of theatrical experiments. The first and least controversial was the avant-garde which maintained a certain essence of classicism, acceptable to the public principally by virtue of its concern for traditional style. In this realm one could cite the experiments of Petraglia, Gambaro, satirical socio-political songstress Nacha Guevara, musical groups who staged parodies, such as Les Luthiers, I Musicisti. These performers could titillate the audience with theatrical or thematic experimentation but it was kept within the bounds of the classic (i.e. the texted script, the play with a plot, the one-man show with risque but not threatening material). Normally, these performers played to good houses and developed a regular public.
A second major experimental group was that which created in the field of camp. This area shall be discussed in detail in the following chapter as many of the CEA presentations in Camp art were staged by members of the CAV laboratory. Amongst the Camp devotees were designers Cancela and Mesejean, actor-designer Juan Stoppani, actress-artist Susan Salgado, actor-director-artist Leopoldo Maler, artist-director Rodríguez Arias. As well, the other main tendency in the Camp presentations were in the realm of dance with Graciela Martínez, Ana Kamien and Marilú Marini as the three principal exponents. In general, these artists treated all subjects and themes with an irreverence designed to make their audiences laugh and think simultaneously. The public for many of these shows was a young, visually oriented and artistically open-minded one.

The third and fourth categories of avant-garde experiments in the CEA deal in the realm of aggression. The first form of aggression was that undertaken by Rodríguez Arias, Marta Minujin, Roberto Villanueva, Grupo Vertical, Tim Teatro and others which shall be cited later. These directors and groups assaulted the dramatic and theatrical aesthetic searching for ways in which to disrupt preconceptions concerning the presentation and purpose of the theatrical experience. In this area, therefore, audiences were required to open their sensibilities to potentially new ways of communication and integration with the actors and with their fellow audience members.

The final area deals with those experiments which were aggressive socially and politically. In this realm, one can cite the
experiments of Mario Trejo, Grupo Lobo, Roberto Favre, Roberto Jacoby. These artists attacked complacency, institutionalism, social injustice, political inequities, etc. Frequently, their methodology also employed aesthetically aggressive tactics which not only heightened the impact of their message but frequently angered the press and public. Unfortunately, the commotion caused by situations such as Grupo Lobo's male actors carressing male audience members usually obscured the press and public's rational assessment of the group and resulted in a purely emotional criticism.

It is, of course, necessary to remember that although the four part divisioning of the experimental programs in the CEA was healthy, it occasionally created problems between those who adamantly supported only one or two tendencies. I refer not only to members of the press and public but those inside the Di Tella organization as well. Villanueva must be commended for his efforts to maintain a healthy distribution of events and approaches during the major Di Tella seasons. With the exception of the final year when many of the more significant Di Tella names had disappeared, the laboratory provided a wide panorama for the public. However both it, and the press, and, eventually, certain elements of the artistic community charged that the Di Tella was not fulfilling its function as a worthwhile theatrical laboratory, a meaningful experiment, and a valuable adjunct to the cultural life of Buenos Aires.

The newspapers attacked the public whom they saw as a closed group of intellectual snobs who "va a observar, a ser observado y
a felicitar las abundantes amistades desparramadas en la platea o sobre el escenario." ("go to observe, be observed, and to greet their multiple friends distributed throughout the audience or on the stage.") The artists charged that the critics were too traditional and the public, too impressed by important names within the Di Tella structure. Much of the confusion and anger directed towards the Di Tella and growing out of it had as its starting point the Center of Visual Arts and the dynamic, talented group of artists who introduced Pop art to Argentina. The story of their development, their interaction with the CEA, their eventual separation from the newer, more politically aware artists of 1967 and 1968 is basic to an understanding of what occurred within the theatrical center and why the Di Tella arts programs faltered in 1970.
CHAPTER IV

POP AND THE POLICE

Lo que yo hago es lo más anti-pop que pueda haber, yo siempre hago anti-pop; me dirijo a la gente en un diálogo directo.

Marta Minujin

(What I do is the most anti-pop that can exist; I always do anti-pop; I express myself to the public in a direct dialogue.)

Nuestra apariencia es el romanticismo. "Hacen todo para nada," dice la gente, y no es así, porque lo hacemos para que la gente lo vea.

Juan Stoppani

(Our appearance is Romanticism. "They do all this for nothing," say the people, and this is not so because we do it in order that people see.)

Quiero que mi espectáculo [Drácula] sea como un baño de sol o un helado. ... Yo no tengo nada que ver con el pop.

Alfredo Rodríguez Arias

(I want my play [Dracula] to be like a sun bath or an ice cream. ... I don't have anything to do with pop.)

In spite of fervent protests and denials, the artists cited above and a large number of those associated with them (ie. Pablo Mesejean, Delia Cancela, Dalila Puzzovio) were tagged with the label POP. They were, they explained, new objectivists experimenting in camp and urban folklore. The press and public listened and responded: "popists," "opists," and "beatniks." For the sake of argument, I shall concede and refer to them by Marchel Duchamps' term "neo-Dadaists."

By 1962, the Argentine neo-Dadaists had entered the Buenos Aires'
art scene with a resounding bang and within one to two years they would be experimenting as a group in their new home, the Center of Visual Arts, Di Tella Institute. The Center was soon to be labelled "The Great Cathedral," "The Noah's Ark of the Beatnik," and the "Mecca for Avant-Garde Art."

The figure responsible for solidifying the movement in the Di Tella was the renowned art critic and historian, Jorge Romero Brest. Continually in the forefront of the "new" in art, Romero Brest was well-known for his numerous texts concerning European and Latin American art. He had also been the dynamic force behind the re-structuring and re-orientation of the National Museum of Fine Arts where he served as director from 1956-1963. Following a major difference of opinion regarding the display of an artist's work in the Museum, Romero Brest resigned his post and, immediately, assumed the leadership of the Center of Visual Arts. During 1963 and 1964, he encouraged the neo-Dadaists to exhibit in the Di Tella galleries which, he stated, were conceived with the purpose of

1. Co-operating in the dissemination and encouragement of the visual arts.

2. Maintaining a close contact with similar centers and with individuals connected with the visual arts, at home and abroad.  

The Di Tella movement, of which Romero Brest would eventually be called "The Great Pope," had taken shape during the early sixties. It was composed of a group of energetic, artistically talented, and
vocal band of young creators. Refusing to view art as a sacred
cow and partly enjoying the creative act as diversion, they enthusi­
astically mounted works in major galleries and attempted to clarify
their artistic attitudes to the press and public. In 1962, a
collective creation of Dalila Fuzzovio, Marta Minujín, Rubén
Santantonín, and Zulema Ciodia appeared in the Museum of Modern Art.
The work, entitled El hombre antes del hombre, (Man Before Man)
was an exhibition of objects . . . a series of statements about
contemporary culture: its myths, its manifestations, its being.
Jointly, the quartet published a manifesto.

Hay que hacer algo. Hay que sacudir un poco o un mucho a
este ambiente antes de que nos trague a todos en la grisalla
de su indiferencia.

(It's necessary to do something. It's necessary to shake up the
atmosphere a little or a lot before it swallows us all up in the
greyness of its indifference.)

Santantonín baptized the creation "el arte de las cosas" ("the art of
things") and the world of POP was born.

But, besides creating art with the world of contemporary things,
these neo-Dadaists sought the active participation of the public for the
fulfillment of their works. They required a public that was willing
to take a chance, run a risk. Their works of art were not something
to be viewed in a gallery -- cold and aloof -- not something to be
promptly forgotten when one returned home. Art could occur anywhere.
It was, in many instances, a VERB! It should make a vital, visceral
difference. The object was a catalyst and demanded the participation
of the viewer as an accomplice in the creative act.
An important pre-cursor to the movement in the sixties and already a type of myth was a young Argentine named Alberto Greco. Towards the late fifties, Greco had begun to experiment in an art form he labelled Vivo-dito. He would publish, for example, an announcement in the city newspaper that at six in the afternoon he could be found in the Plaza Italia. At six, he appeared and promptly proceeded to use himself in a series of instantaneous creations. Or, he would halt a passer-by, encircle him in a ring of yellow, blue, or red chalk, sign "Greco," and declare to his astonished subject: "You are a work of art. You have been transformed. Now you may go."

On December 9, 1964, Greco staged a Vivo-dito in the Bonino gallery with the assistance of Romero Brest. The work itself was a homage to Buenos Aires and was no more, no less than a public party using the guests as works of art. Romero Brest had inscribed the invitations enthusiastically.

Espeto con la ansiedad el Vivo-dito de Greco. Ha de ser una forma nueva de acentuar la "actitud" creadora, sin los inconvenientes de la "realizacion." ¡Fermento! ¡Fermento! Lo que necesitamos. Aunque se destruye la imagen sustantivo puede ser que se salve el verbo, cuando tal vez no haya otra cosa que hacer.

(I anxiously await the Vivo-dito of Greco. It has to be a new way of accentuating the creative act without the inconveniences of the "realization." Ferment! Ferment! What we need. Although the substantive image is destroyed, perhaps the verb can be saved when there is nothing else.)

In 1965, Alberto Greco performed his final Vivo-dito. He inscribed the word "Fin" on the palm of his hand and committed suicide.

By that same year, the neo-Dadaists had begun to appear with regularity in Buenos Aires most important galleries (the Lirolay,
Bonino, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Di Tella. Besides creating a stir artistically, they were consistently creating a furor publicly by their actions, by their dress, and by their pronouncements.

In 1965, for example, Edgardo Giménez, Carlos Squirru, and Delia Puzzovio raised a colossal poster on the corner of Viamonte and Florida Avenues. The subject? The three artists smiling at the passers-by, asking the question: "¿Por qué son tan geniales?" ("Why are they such geniuses?") On seeing the display, Marta Minujin dismantled her display of mattresses Revuelguese y viva (Mallow About and Live) then on permanent exhibition in the Di Tella gallery and proceeded to throw the pieces out the window proclaiming that never again would she display in a gallery but, instead, perform art in the streets.

Delia Cancela and Pablo Mesejean staged a fashion show (1967) using non-professionals as models, made up like Twiggy, and accompanied by the music of the Beatles and Ike and Tina Turner. The models entered the gallery as their numbers were called and proceeded to parade in 1920 vamp style amongst the spectators seated on the floor. The clothes were a combination of mini's, maxi's, Argentine flags draped over the shoulders, U.S. stars and stripes used as patterns for stockings. The spectators, observed the press, were as interesting as the models, sporting hippie buttons that advocated LSD and warned about the dangers of working every day. Calling the show Para Usar con Riesgo (Use With Care), Cancela and Mesejean designed and fabricated clothing which
reviewers found offensive -- "lo único que está en peligro es el buen gusto" ("the only thing that's in danger is good taste") and which two years later would be labelled fashionable.

Ultimately, the public and the municipality began to respond. Rodríguez Arias, dressed in velvet black jacket, dark red pants, orange shirt, and crimson tie, attempted to attend an opening night's performance at the Teatro Colón. He was refused a seat for being improperly attired. Raúl Escarri, Marta Minujín and Leopoldo Maler distributed pages with appropriate instructions on how to read them to passers-by on street corners of the city. The police abruptly halted the "activity," branding Escarri's creation as subversive. The text in question was a description of the Argentine Navy Club. And in 1967, artist Gustavo del Río, venturing out onto Florida street to emphasize a display he was staging in the Di Tella, startled a woman who responded by screaming. (Del Río was dressed in blouse, boots and mini skirt.) The artist was arrested and promptly jailed for indecent behavior.

Considering the environmental and the visceral approaches the CAV artists were assuming in their artistic creations, it is understandable why, within one year after the CEA inaugural, they began to turn to the theatre for fresh approaches to creation. The possibilities of working with sound, film, actors, and spectators continued to open up new panoramas. Similarly, the entrance of the CAV artists transformed the, until then, relatively conservative nature of the CEA laboratory and thrust it into the center of an
artistic whirlwind.

One of the first CAV people to begin experimenting in the CEA was Marta Minujin. Fascinated by the possibilities of environmental art, Minujin had staged an award winning audience participation work in 1965 entitled *La Menesunda* (a porteño word referring to "confusion" or "mess.") The following year, she entered the CEA world creating a Happening. Her work, entitled *Simultaneidad an simultaneidad* (*Simultaneity in Simultaneity*) called for the assistance of Michael Kaprow in New York and Wolf Vostell in Berlin. According to Michael Kirby, Minujin's happening was "probably the first performance piece in history to make use of several co-ordinated mass media." 

Minujin explained to the participants (in the Di Tella and in homes all over Buenos Aires) that she would be in communication with Kaprow and Vostell over telephone and radio. All three creators directed "todos los que quieran" ("all those who wish") to perform certain actions. Kaprow, for example, initiated the event by instructing the listeners to take a bottle of milk and with the contents write the word "FALL EX" on the street corner. Then, they were to send a telegram to the White House with the word "MILK" and the name of the corner.

Minujin's section was divided into two parts. The studio portion of the Happening ("Enveloping Simultaneity") involved an audience of well-known Argentine personalities: actors, critics, educators, athletes. Upon arriving at the theatre, October 24, each person was admitted one at a time into the theatre as his name was
When he entered, the room was filled with the sound of his voice and a series of seventeen slides were projected on the theatre walls showing him in different positions and wearing the clothes he had on that evening. (Minujin and her guests had had a lengthy recording and filming session eight days before.) On the back wall of the auditorium, projections were shown of the entire group filmed from the front; on the front wall, projections of the group filmed from the back. Each celebrity assumed the dual role of participant and spectator. Once in their seats, equipped with television set and radio, they were prepared to participate in the rest of the Happening with the Buenos Aires' public who had been informed of the event for a week before.

In Part II ("Instantaneous Invasion"), Minujin talked while the television sets recorded the activities of three celebrities in their homes. The participants were a journalist, a model, and a prize fighter who were watching their sets and listening to Minujin: "We have arrived at the Invasion. . . . look at the invaded ones. They are moving their radio controls, just like you are doing. . . . You are now the invaded ones." 10

Minujin's words were directed to the studio audience and to those at home. Finally, the climactic moment of the Happening came. Five hundred people, chosen by the social research department of the University of Buenos Aires, received telephone calls (Minujin: "You are a creator. Look at your environment.") 11 Another one hundred received telegrams with the message: "You are a creator. Simultaneity in simultaneity." 12
The news media carefully recorded the events of both the Happening and the filming session on the 16th. Of those who had originally participated the evening of October 16, very few returned for the 24th. The majority were new faces, non-irritated and non-frustrated by the lengthy filming session earlier.

Was the event successful? With Happenings, success is measured only by the degree of participation. According to Minujin and to critic Kirby the work was an exceptional and an unqualified success. Perhaps, the only way to judge is that on the evening of October 24, upon leaving the Di Tella building, one could see on Florida Street, between Paraguay and Córdoba, two full bottles of milk and one empty with an indiscernible word scrawled on the pavement.13

A second artist to achieve international fame for his work in the CEA was Alfredo Rodríguez Arias who with Juan Stoppani, Delia Cancela and Pablo Mesejean created four theatrical experiences over two years time. The first creation of the group was Drácula el vampiro (Dracula, The Vampire), 1966. Unlike the traditional Lon Chaney, Bela Lugosi creations, Rodríguez Arias' work was a sally into the world of sophisticated POP. Everything was conceived in the realm of an excellent joke. The actors, dressed in costumes designed by Cancela and Mesejean, had nothing of the horrific. Instead, they appeared delicately, almost childishly innocent, in Shirley Temple dresses, short pants, and tiger skin wraps.

Anxious to create a theatrical experience in which he could
focus on the dissociative-associative aspects of the dramatic spectacle, Rodríguez Arias emphasized the poetry of a bare text and an implicit action. In Drácula the spoken text served a dual purpose: to narrate a plot that was not consequential and to counterpoint the actor's gestures which, frequently, bore no corresponding relationship to what he was saying. A sound band of The Rolling Stones, Proby, and Sonny and Cher underlined the words and movements which were reminiscent of 1920 Hollywood vamp movies.

Almost unanimously, the major newspapers classified the work as dull and boring and the director as incompetent. "La idea, según se anuncia, pretende ser algo así como una sátira a la historieta: si fracasó... [es] porque hasta una humilde historieta tiene sus mecanismos de composición, que es conveniente conocer antes de permitirse denostar." ("The idea, according to the announcement, attempts to be something like a satire of a comic strip: if it fails... [it is] because even the simplest story has its mechanics of composition which are convenient to know before producing it.")

Undaunted by the press and encouraged by artists in both centers, Rodríguez Arias remounted the work in 1967 interpreting the role of Jonathan, himself. That same year he prepared Aventuras I and II (Adventures I and II) and in 1968, Futura (Future) and Love & Song. Although his work never achieved enthusiastic public support, he did manage to exert a great influence over a number of Di Tella artists who saw in his work the essence of poetry and simplicity; a stripping of non-essentials to reach the bare bones of the dramatic
experience: sound and movement. The tendency towards this type of essential theatre could be identified, also, in Villanueva's *Timón de Atenas* (Timon of Athens) 1967, Trejo's *Libertad y otras intoxicaciones* (Liberty and Other Intoxications) 1967, and the experiments of Grupo Lobo in 1968. Although these works differed in the manner of presentation and were conceived with different ends in view, all three of the groups resembled the troupe of Rodríguez Arias in the determination to create a theatrical experience which "se sustenta en formas, imágenes, ideas, pensamientos: claros, simples, casi elementales, y por tanto, muy amplios" ("feeds on forms, images, ideas, thoughts: clear, simple, almost elemental and, therefore, very full.")

With the exception of *Love & Song* which had a folkloric plot tying the various sections of the work together and was a spectacle of color and costume, the essence of *Aventuras I* and *II* and *Futura* was a continuing experiment in disassociated theatrical forms. For *Aventuras* the text was simply and neutrally narrated. There was a plot but interest focused primarily on the sound-sense value of the individual words. Words of color had their own tone. "ROJO" ("RED") was delivered in a harsh, aggressive voice. Words dealing with movement were delivered to correspond with the action. Thus, "LENTAMENTE" ("SLOWLY") was uttered syllable by syllable in an unhurried voice. Nouns were activated. "FLECHA" ("ARROW") was pronounced with sharp consonantal sounds or with prolonged vowel sounds to indicate the arrow's flight.

Scenic action for *Aventuras* did not correspond to the material
related at the moment. When the actors would refer to embracing each other, they would be back to back or at opposite sides of the stage. Costuming heightened the sense of dislocation for the audience. A segment referring to an adventure of primitive tribes was costumed by Cancela and Mesejean in futuristic ensembles: a type of short pant-overall combination, close fitting caps and high-heeled or platform shoes. In Aventuras II the designers attempted a synthesis of contemporary clothing with that of tomorrow by designing clothes with a definite militaristic flavor.

By the time of Futura, Rodríguez Arias was no favorite with the critics and his audiences were mostly composed of artists and a small interested public. During Futura’s run there were times when an audience might not number more than eight-ten people. In this new work, he maintained the patterns he had established in his earlier presentations. Gestures took on a sculptured tone already evident in Aventuras I y II. Horizontals, verticals, arms, legs, heads, bodies -- everything served to create a series of signs pointing to a meaning but it was not necessarily in relation to either the material spoken or the verbal tones vocalized. The audience was permitted to draw its own relationships. This time, Rodríguez Arias had abandoned the "text-plot" which was apparent in Drácula and Aventuras. Neutral information was fed to the audience and they were at liberty to associate or disassociate it from the visual-vocal environment established on stage.

The theatre of Rodríguez Arias spans both the plastic and the theatrical arts. His interest is in the elements which compose the
theatrical form and in the evocative possibilities each element has separated and counterpointed from the others. Plot may or may not be apparent. It is not a fundamental. The essential factor is the stark simplicity and totality of each element suggestive and poetic in its own right and isolated in conjunction with another. Needless to say, Rodríguez Arias’ theatre would not be one for popular consumption. It requires an audience willing to experiment and whose imaginations are as fertile as the artist's himself. Experiments which search for the meaning and nature of the theatrical form have seldom captured enthusiastic public support. But, adventures of this type are essential for a further discovery into the possibilities of theatre. If only for the fact that Rodríguez Arias investigated the nature of the beast, his work must be considered of value. The fact that he was recognized both by artists in Argentina and abroad as a significant innovator in the world of theatre is an added distinction. Roberto Villanueva summed up his importance by stating that where Rodríguez Arias' work is concerned there are "no puntos referenciales en el hacer teatral internacional" ("no reference points in international theatrical activity.")¹⁶ Since leaving the Di Tella, Rodríguez Arias and troupe (the designer, Juan Stoppani and the actors, Facundo and Marucha Bo are amongst the members) have played outside Argentina: Hunter College in New York by invitation of the Organization of American States (Drácula, el vampiro), Chechoslovakia where they premiered the work Eva Perón by Copi, and France where his Histoire du Théâtre was warmly received by the critics.
During the year that Rodríguez Arias was mounting Aventuras and remounting Drácula, other CAV artists were busily preparing works for a new event entitled Experiencias ’67. The event dealt with a display in various sections -- each created by a different artist -- in which the artists would make some comment on their attitudes towards the year 1967. Without going into a detailed explanation of the various displays, it is significant to note two factors. First, the CAV artists were requiring the public to participate in the events much more than in the past and, as well, live models were used to corporealize many of the experiences. More attention was being paid to fully integrating the theatrical as well as the plastic aspects of visual arts creation. The second important factor concerning Experiencias ’68 was that in a subtle way, the artists were starting to criticize the institutional framework and contemporary values. Cancela and Mesejean had devised cardboard cutouts which were modeled after a number of assistants who worked daily in the ITDT. The faces were left blank but the costumes-dresses and the machinery-props (type-writers, computers, etc.) left no question as to the individual involved nor the de-humanizing aspect of the society which both artists were criticizing.

In 1968, the calm atmosphere of Experiencias ’67 changed abruptly and violently. The country was now under severe military rule since the coup in 1967 which had deposed President Illia and placed General Onganía in power. During the first year of Onganía’s presidency, the country had begun to feel the pressure of increasing
censorship. By May of 1968, the Di Tella artists were reacting to Onganía's regime and to an Argentine mentality which permitted a dictatorship to exist. Furthermore, an especially strong anti-American sentiment was prevalent as it related to economic policies imposed on Latin American by the United States, the racial strife and the Viet Nam war.

With the mounting of Experiencias 68 artistic frustration, internal Di Tella divisiveness, and municipal power all came into play. Roberto Jacoby, a CAV artist who had staged two shows in the 1967 season of the CEA, mounted an attack for Experiencias 68. Utilizing a poster which enumerated instances of anti-black situations in the United States and a computer which spewed out current data relating to the dead, wounded, and missing in the Viet Nam War, Jacoby's experience was factual, saddening and accurate. Accompanying his presentation was a letter -- placed on a large poster as well as mimeod for those who wished a copy -- in which he criticized the Di Tella organization which he claimed had created an environment where the public went for "un baño de cultura." ("a culture bath.")17

Earlier, Jacoby along with other CAV artists had issued a stinging indictment directed against Romero Brest, Puzzovio, Minujin, Rodríguez Arias, etc. who were continuing to create while being in contradiction:

... estar en contra de la sociedad y de querer al mismo tiempo, ser aceptados por ella. ... matan el arte, no para destruir el engranaje sino para confirmarlo. Ese es el camino que Romero Brest ha llevado hasta sus últimas consecuencias: legalizar y estetizar el sistema capitalista.
( . . . being against society and, at the same time, desirous of being accepted by it. . . . They murder art, not by destroying the structure but, rather by confirming it. This is the road that Romero Brest has followed to its ultimate consequences: he has legalized and given aesthetic consent to the capitalistic system.)

Jacoby's anger was matched by another CAV artist, Pablo Suárez. Suárez had refused to mount a show for Experiencias '68. In a scathing "open letter" to Romero Brest, Suárez charged that the Di Telia and Romero Brest were at fault for undermining artistic creativity, were guilty of pandering to the political and economic establishment, and were directly responsible for creating an Institution which was a refuge for an elite few. For Suárez, any work which he would create within the confines of the Di Telia was meaningless because it "... tendría un público muy limitado de gente que presume de intelectualidad por el hecho meramente geográfico de pararse tranquilamente en la sala grande de la casa del arte." ("would have a very limited public of people who presume to be intellectuals by the mere geographic fact of peacefully standing in the large art gallery of this building.")

Although Jacoby and Suárez were vocal, it was not their charges that eventually brought down the wrath of the municipal authorities and resulted in the violent closing of Experiencias '68. The problem was a creation by artist Roberto Plate (actor, CEA: Ostinanto 1966 and Sr. Frankenstein 1967). Plate had erected four white walls with two figures on two doors: a man and a woman. The "public toilet" with its inviting blank walls inspired and titilated the public who eagerly responded by scribbling a wide range of comments:
innocuous, obscene, innocently foolish, and anarchistic. Four days
after the display opened, the Buenos Aires' police padlocked the
doors and closed the experience. The charge was that Plate's work
was morally indecent and politically suspect.

En masse, all of the artists exhibiting at the time reacted.
They tore apart their creations, dragged them onto Florida Street,
burned them before the eyes of the spectators and the watching police.
Anxious that their position be exceedingly clear to the municipality
and the citizens of Buenos Aires, they handed out pamphlets to all
passers-by. The statement reads as follows:

Con una intervención policial y judicial se ha clausurado
una de las obras expuestas en la muestra EXPERIENCIAS '68
del Instituto Torcuato Di Tella. Esta es la tercera vez que
en menos de un año la policía suplanta las armas de la crítica
por la crítica de las armas, atribuyéndose un papel que no le
corresponde: el de ejercer la censura estética.

Por lo visto no solo tratan de imponer su punto de
vista en la moda y los gustos, con absurdos cortes de pelo
y detenciones arbitrarias de artistas y jóvenes en general, sino
que también lo hacen con la obra de esos artistas.

Pero los artistas e intelectuales no han sido los
principales perseguidos: la represión también se dirige contra
el movimiento obrero y estudiantil: una vez logrado esto,
pretende acallar toda conciencia libre en nuestro país.

Los artistas argentinos nos oponemos resueltamente el
establecimiento de un estado policial en nuestro país.

LOS PARTICIPANTES DE LA MUESTRA "EXPERIENCIAS '68"
RETIRAMOS NUESTRAS OBRAS EN SEÑAL DE PROTESTA.

(By a policial and a judicial act, one of the works
exhibited in EXPERIENCES '68 has been closed. This is the third
time in less than a year that the police have supplanted the
weapons of criticism for the criticism of weapons, attributing
to themselves a role which does not fit: that of exercising
aesthetic censorship.)
As has been seen, they have not only tried to impose their point of view in style and taste, with absurd haircuts and arbitrary detentions of artists and young people in general, but they also try to do the same thing as it relates to the work of these artists.

But artists and intellectuals have not been the principal ones to suffer this persecution: repression is also directed against worker and student movements: once this is accomplished, all free thought will be silenced in this country.

We Argentine artists resolutely oppose the establishment of a police state in our country.

WE, THE PARTICIPANTS OF "EXPERIENCES '68" RETRACT OUR WORKS IN A SIGN OF PROTEST.20

The twelve exhibitors for Experiencias '68 included among others, Alfredo Rodríguez Arias, Juan Stoppani, Pablo Mesejean, and Delia Cancela. Added to the twelve names on the official statement were fifty-three others from all three arts centers. Amongst those who were involved with the CEA and who signed were Martín Micharvegas, Nacha Guevara, Hugo Álvarez, Mario Trejo, Carlos Cutaia, and the director of the Department of Design and husband of Griselda Gambaro, Juan C. Distefano.

The CAV-police confrontation was front page news in the local papers for weeks. Artists were interviewed by magazine writers and appeared on television broadcasts. Attitudes and temperaments were heated concerning the repressive tactics of the police (the Di Tella artists) and the irresponsible antics of the artists (the Municipal authorities). The truth, however, lay in the fact that the artists could not have asked for any better public participation in which the spectator becomes creator than that demonstrated by the Buenos Aires police force. Experiencias '68 was a colossal success.
Shortly thereafter, Suárez and Jacoty joined with some other artists in a public pronouncement which again made them news copy. They declared that they were in agreement with a recent statement from Havana, Cuba which stated that "la obra cultural por excelencia de un país como el nuestro es la Revolución." ("the cultural work, par excellence, of a country like ours is the Revolution."\(^{21}\) Those members of the public who had been suspicious of certain left-wing or communist leanings on the part of Di Tella artists, now were assured that their suspicions were justified.

By 1969 confrontations between the artists and the municipality were less dramatic but nonetheless constant. A general harrassment was maintained by the police, interrupting CEA shows to ask for cards of identification from the public, disrupting lunches or coffees in the near-by Galería del Este to search artists and friends for drugs. The result was a constant barrage of criticism concerning the Di Tella and general confusion. The public was torn between what the facts appeared to state (strange actions, weird antics, hippie-style clothing, long hair, advocacy of revolutionary tactics against the government, police arrests for suspicion of possessing drugs) and what the artists claimed (unjust municipal harrassment, unfounded charges made by the police, Institutional favoritism, U.S. economic interference with the workings of the Di Tella, and repeated censorship of materials.) The one certainty from all sides -- public and artistic -- was that Argentina's cultural experiment was rapidly crumbling away: torn apart by internal fractioning and external actions. The prestige and stability of the
ITDT had suffered a severe blow.

The problems with which the CAV artists struggled for some six years were not unsimilar to those occurring within the CEA. There, too, censorship was apparent on both the Institutional and the municipal levels. However, during 1967 and 1968, the Center of Audio-visual Expressive Arts found, at last, its artistic footing. During these two years, regardless of nagging police interference and lack of substantial economic support, the CEA flourished as a progressive theatrical laboratory.

2.Ibid.

3.Ibid., p. 72.


7."Para usar con riesgo," p. 37 (Unknown magazine).

8.The outline for Marta Minujin's Simultaneidad en simultaneidad may be found in Appendix C, p.186.


10.Ibid., p. 152.

11.Ibid.

12.Ibid.


15.Romero Brest, El arte, p. 79.


18 "Muerte," p. 75.

19 Pablo Suárez, Letter to Romero Brest, May 13, 1968. The full text of the letter may be found in Appendix D, p. 189.

20 Di Tella artists, Open letter to the public, May 23, 1968.

21 "Muerte," p. 73.
CHAPTER V

UP . . . UP . . . AND AWAY

A vigorous and eclectic program of theatre functioned in the laboratory that year and the next. It is impossible to describe in detail the enormous activity for these years but, nevertheless, it is important to recognize certain patterns which began to develop and the artists who contributed to Argentine theatrical experiment.

The most obvious characteristic of these years was the number of functions within the laboratory. Compared with the six events in 1965 and ten in 1966, the CEA staged twenty-four productions in 1967, twenty in 1968 and eighteen in 1969. However, with the increased number of events, there was, also, a recognizable diminishing of related functions. Although Roberto Villanueva was still actively preparing audio-visual shows, his is the only name that appears in the programs for the 1967 and 1968 years. During 1969, Villanueva mounted no audio-visuals but, instead, four other artists presented two works in this area. The number of audio-visuals over these three years remained relatively stable (between three and four presentations per year) -- a sharp contrast to the increasing activity in the theatrical events. Children's theatre and film presentations were totally abandoned. The film work which did appear was utilized for multimedia presentations and/or in a supportive relationship to other events. The interest in Happenings was waning and the only artist to present a
work in this field was Oscar Masotta with *El helicoptro* (*The Helicopter*) in 1967.

As indicated previously, the CAV artist were firmly entrenched in the CEA by the end of 1967. In that year, Rodríguez Arias mounted two shows (*Aventuras I and II* and *Drácula, el vampiro*) with the assistance of Juan Stoppani, Delia Cancela and Pablo Mesejean. Roberto Jacoby experimented in multi-media presentations (*Parametros* and *Beat, beat, Beatles*) aided in both cases by musicians from CIAEM. Of those musicians who assisted artists in the CEA four names appear with regularity: Carlos Cutaia, Miguel Angel Rondano and Miguel Angel Tellechea, and Fernando von Reichenbach. These four musician-composers were not associated except in a subsidiary way with CIAEM and were primarily concerned with activities in the Electronic Music Laboratory. The CIAEM people, therefore, were not involved with the CEA or with CAV in any large ways. Their assistance was sporadic and indicative that the inter-penetration of all three arts centers never reached its maximum of possibility as Oteiza had wished.

During 1967 a number of artists who had appeared in the first two initial years continued to stage shows. Jorge Petraglia acted in and directed Griselda Gambaro’s second play *Los siameses* (1967). In addition he performed the role of Bosola in *La Duquesa de Amalfi* (*The Duchess of Malfi*) 1968, and the title role in *Krapp's Last Tape* (1966). His last show was Pinter’s *The Dwarves* (1969). Ana Kamien and Marilú Marini staged individual dance concerts during these years as well as choreographing other productions. Jorge Bonino staged a second one man
show in 1968 entitled Asfixiones o enunciados (Asphyxiations or Statements). Celia Barbosa designed a second environmental piece entitled Oh sólida carne (Oh, Solid Flesh) 1968. Norberto Montero, Norman Briski, and Adolfo Batán all appeared with new productions which received a positive press although not necessarily an enthusiastic one.

The area which emerged as most exciting and controversial during these three seasons was in the field of collective creations: director-actor troupes. The one group which had a substantial history was Carlos Mathus' TIM TEATRO. This troupe had formed in Rosario in 1958 and for seven years had searched for new methods of staging and interpretation in which to mount their spectacles. From 1963 they had presented a wide range of works including classically avant-garde pieces by Adamov and Ghelderode and original creations by Carlos Mathus and others growing out of the exercises performed amongst the members of the troupe itself. The work which opened the 1967 season was TIM TEATRO's Cuarto de espejos (Room of Mirrors) and the reaction of the public and the press was unanimously favorable. The piece was a creative effort of the troupe which had arisen during the rehearsal of a separate work. It was an experiment in association: "... con superposiciones de la realidad con los proyectos, con los recuerdos; con la visión desde diferentes ángulos de la misma cosa, con la reiteración absurda de situaciones sin peso." ("... with superpositions of reality with projections and past associations; with different angles of vision focused on the same thing, with an absurd reiteration of situations lacking substance.")¹ Mathus' cinematographic style of staging brought
memories of Robbe Grillet's *Last Year in Marienbad* and his insistence on multiple views of the same situation was an attempt to realize on the stage Robbe Grillet's film exercise of capturing a totality of an emotion, an attitude, a state of being.

However, beyond the impact of TIM TEATRO's experiments for 1967, there were two other troupes who solidified the suspicion that, at last, the CEA was finding its way in the realm of experimental troupe creations. Roberto Villanueva chose for his inaugural directorial piece in the Di Tella a classic work: William Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*. But, Villanueva's production was not Shakespeare's text passage by passage. Instead, Villanueva and his troupe of twenty relatively inexperienced young actors used it as a starting place, setting it within an original composition, re-working passages, deleting others, re-arranging and re-wording phrases. The *Timon* was to be revealed indirectly across the relation of the creative work.

I proposed a situation to the actors which was equivalent to that which corresponded to the model because each situation of the model corresponded to the original Shakespearean situation and to the new situation invented by me which was super-imposed upon that of Shakespeare. The actors did not know Shakespeare's ideas or mine. I proposed an equivalent situation to them which was a third situation. The actors and I discussed the action -- as a group or as individuals in that situation. Once we discussed it in
detail, I put them in contact with the sequences --
let's say improvising that moment in the sequence. I
corrected very little of it. That was the process of
Timon.²

Villanueva's basic idea was to develop a story line
cconcerning a group of people -- survivors from a catastrophe -- who
are besieged by a plaque. They search for an answer and salvation
in the midst of their suffering. Stumbling across Shakespeare's text,
they begin to act it out, accepting the work as a sacred piece of
literature. Although they do not fully understand the play and are
confused by the mysterious implications of the text, they discover
that, for them, Timon is a Christ who suffers and who must die for
man to be re-born.

Commenting on his production, Villanueva stated that:

El Timón de Atenas de William Shakespeare no era el Timón. ... 
no era la pieza de Shakespeare llamada Timón de Atenas. Era una
pieza -- el Timón de Atenas de William Shakespeare -- como quien
dice el Evangelio según San Mateo, por ejemplo. Yo utilizaba
el texto ... fragmentos del texto de Shakespeare y respetaba
bastante la especie del argumento de las cosas pero cambiaba
toda la estructura y cambiaba todo el contexto y era un espectáculo
absolutamente distinto. ... Algunos críticos generosos decían que
era lo más shakespeareano que habían visto en la vida.

(Timon of Athens by William Shakespeare was not the Timon. ... 
it was not Shakespeare's play called Timon. It was a play --
Timon of Athens by William Shakespeare -- as someone would say
The Gospel according to Saint Mathew, for example. I used the
text. ... fragments of Shakespeare's text and I very much
respected the plot but I changed all the structure and I changed
all the context and it was an absolutely different play. ... 
which some generous critics said was the most Shakespearean work
they had seen in their lives.)³

The actors worked on an almost bare stage. Dominating the
scenic element was a table platform, center stage, and an immense
triangular shaped metal rack situated on the back wall, rising into
space. The actors, dressed in long pants, shoe-less and bare chested, roamed about the stage shouting, chanting, miming, uttering dislocated words, moving in silences. As the action developed, the spectator became aware of multitudes moving about the stage, in and out of pictures reminiscent of scenes from Delacroix and Dore and Da Vinci's _The Last Supper_. Using only a small troupe, Villanueva had manipulated them about the stage so expertly that the spectator was forced into permanent activity to capture the sense of the "historic whole" of the action.

Clearly obvious in the production was a sense of ceremony -- not only for the religious and ritualistic overtones implicit in the work but for Villanueva's incorporation of Artaudian elements of spectacle and cruelty. The choreographed movement, the mime, the chants, the sounds all created a dramatic rite.

The spectator, too, was a part of the creation for it was his task to create the missing links between the two texts. The spectators "present" was the intermediary between the "future" on stage and the "past" which was being revealed-relived. Actors-characters and public-creators were participating in an experience that was both revelatory and purgative.

.... la escena del banquete, del Timón de Villanueva, con su rito de antropofagía universal, y el de la soledad y autoinmolación del Timón. Shakespeare es un autor cruel, cruel como Dante, como Dostoievsky. Esta crueldad está en la raíz misma de las obras cumbres del arte. Villanueva nos descubre esta raíz esencial, la ferocidad del mundo, de la vida.

( . . . the banquet scene from Villanueva's _Timon_, with its rite of universal cannibalism, and the solitude and self-sacrifice of _Timon_. Shakespeare is a cruel author, cruel as Dante, as Dostoievsky. This cruelty is in the same root as all great works
of art. Villanueva discovers this essential root for us, the ferocity of the world, of life.\(^4\)

Villanueva's efforts with his troupe were exceptional and considering that the majority of the talent was fresh and relatively inexperienced, the results were far beyond what one might expect. In the case of Timon, an experienced and sensitive director had successfully manipulated raw talent and provided the public with a moving, meaningful evening of theatre.

Experiments in "re-structured texts" were not uncommon although very few achieved the level of Villanueva's creation. In 1966 Teatro Blanco had made the first, in a rather unglorious, attempt at re-structuring Tirso de Molina's El burlador de Sevilla. The results were uneven, lacking in subtleties and mostly boring. In general, experiments along this line lacked the controlling hand of an experienced director and the surety of a firm creative concept. Villanueva had both.

The second director and troupe to make an impact during 1967 was Mario Trejo and Teatro de la Tribu. Trejo was a poet and theatre man and earlier had composed a piece for Teatro de la Peste which in 1966 presented their homage to Artaud in the CEA (Artuad 66). Now Trejo not only assisted in the writing of his new work but he directed it as well. The production was entitled Libertad y otras intoxicaciones (Liberty and Other Intoxications) and, like Timón, was predominately a collective creation, involved ritual and ceremony, and was interpreted by untrained talent.

Using poets, clerks, students, journalists, sociologists, painters, metalurgical workers, etc., Trejo had them improvise and create
much of the "text" which, according to Ramos Foster was a type of theatrical inquisition. While the work was inquisitory in the sense that it brutally and directly attacked many contemporary political attitudes, it was, more importantly, inquistory in its use of theatre of cruelty and theatre of purgation techniques. The actors spoke, shouted, chanted, sang and pantomimed the action. The audience -- an integral part of the event -- were enemies to be harangued, a congregation through which to walk carrying incense, a mass that had to be moved to THINK and to ACT.

The work was divided into nine scenes. Classical conventions of time, place, action were non-existent. The content was a stinging indictment of all forms of totalitarianism: political, social, religious, military. By discarding the theatrical conventions, Trejo also denounced theatrical and dramatic totalitarianism -- that of authors, of producers, and of spectators.

The work was submerged in the present: a revelation of the essential cruelty, cannibalism and bestiality which invest our lives. By enmeshing his actors and the audience in the "now," Trejo intended to create, as did Villanueva, an experience in theatrical ceremony where the soul could be purged.

How much of Trejo's work is a direct result of his contact with the Living Theatre cannot be fully evaluated but there are certain "signs" which indicate that he was impressed by both Beck and Malina's works. The play was dedicated to the Living Theatre and Trejo acknowledges that the opening "circular scene" and closing "funereal pile" were
inspired by the North American company. Furthermore, he also indicated that the section entitled "El calabozo" was inspired by Kenneth Brown's play The Brig.

Of the three collective creations in 1967, the one which received the most enthusiastic response from artists and public was Trejo's Libertad y otras intoxicaciones. It was "un éxito como el Di Tella no había conocido hasta ese momento" ("a success like the Di Tella had not known until that moment"). Although certain members of the public were wary of Trejo's dialectic, most spectators warmly applauded his efforts and a great number of enthusiastic types became converts to Trejoesque theatre. Social commitment! Political commitment! Relevancy! Ceremony! Rite!

Perhaps the most satisfying way to understand Trejo's political theatre of ceremony is to read his program notes to the work.

La obsesión principal es el canibalismo, en todas sus formas, con todas sus ceremonias: a chacun son juif, su negro, su amarillo, su cabecita negra, su latinoamericano, su pobre, su diferente.

Aborto sin dolor -- también llamado píldora --, violación, castración, Dachau, sacrificios, a lo largo de la historia, la humanidad ha venido ejercitando estos rituales, brutal o sutilmente, física o intelectualmente. Comprender no basta. Se necesita la blood consciousness que pedía D.H. Lawrence. Los intelectuales se conforman, en general, con pensar de un modo y vivir de otro. Pero nadie puede creer ya que un poema salve la vida de un vietnamita.

Muerte entonces a los embajadores surrealistas. Mes enfants: Pot is not the Drug. Ruido no es sonido.

Se trata de manifestar, no de representar. Se trata de espontaneidad, no de improvisación. Rascarse la cabeza o meterse el dedo en la nariz es un acto de espontaneidad, no de improvisación.

(The principal obsession is cannibalism, in all of its
forms, with all of its ceremonies: to each his Jew, his negro, his oriental, his cabecita negra, his Latin American, his poor man, his different man.

Painless abortion -- also called, the pill -- violence, castration, Dachau, sacrifices, throughout history mankind has come practicing these rituals, brutally or subtly, physically or intellectually. To understand is not enough. One needs the blood consciousness that D.H. Lawrence called for. Usually the intellectuals accept, thinking one way and living another. But no one can believe now that a poem will save the life of one Viet-Namese.

Death, then, to the surrealistic ambassadors. My children: Pot is not the drug. Noise is not the sound.

This is intended to be a revelation, not a representation. This is intended to be spontaneous not an improvisation. Scratching your head or picking your nose is a spontaneous act not an improvised one.)

Regardless of how successful Libertad y otras intoxicaciones may have been with the Buenos Aires theatrical world, a singular problematic fact appears. For the establishment, the work was an indictment of totalitarianism and cruelty. Argentina as well as the individual Argentine was called to account. BUT, the play was also levelled at other governments and other nations -- specifically, the United States of America. Considering the fact that Trejo was attacking injustice and brutality of North American actions in Viet Nam, in Latin America, in the United States, the work was -- to U.S. eyes -- not at all flattering. Added to the content, one must remember that Trejo was laudatory of the Living Theatre's socio-political diatribes on the stage (which had never praised American politics or the "establishment"). If Oteiza and Villanueva had hoped for North American economic support for the CEA, such works as Trejo's Libertad were not helpful towards achieving "friendly relations." It is seldom common that a Foundation is going to consistently feed the
hand that bites it.

For Trejo's second effort, La reconstrucción de la Ópera de Viena (1968), the vitality and excitement recognizable in Libertad were missing. The press found it fragmentary, lacking in poetry, artificial, and a rather sordid parody. In terms of the actors, the conclusion was the already familiar chant that passionate amateurs can never be more than amateurs: "la sola voluntad no suple a la experiencia," ("mere desire can never supplant experience").

In summary, the 1967 season was both successful and mediocre: successful from an experimental point of view and mediocre from the public's view. The house remained frequently sparse. The press continued to claim that the large percentage of events were boring (Crash!), artistically confusing (Sr. Frankenstein), and interpreted by mediocre performers (Etcétera, Etcétera). On the distaff side, the Di Tella for 1967 had made some definite inroads into theatrical and dramatic discovery. Trejo and Villanueva had to be commended for their outstanding work. Gambaro had scored brilliantly with Los siameses (The Siamese Twins) and was considered the best writing talent that either the Di Tella or Argentina had produced in the vanguardistic field in a long time. Ana Kamion had mounted an impressive evening of dance with ¡Oh! Casta Diva. TIM Teatro and Carlos Mathus were lauded for their work in theatrical group creation. And Rodríguez Arias, despite a cool press and a small audience, was making strong inroads in the field of "new dramatic forms" employing visual artistic sculpture on stage. BUT, the Di Tella was still not providing the public or the municipality with
a theatrical entity which had consistently successful shows or entertaining ones.

During 1968, the momentum of the preceding season continued. The twenty separate shows included familiar names: Carlos Mathus, Marilú Marini, Rodríguez Arias, Mario Trejo, Jorge Bonino, Jorge Petraglia and Roberto Villanueva. In this year, for the first time, Villanueva had managed to incorporate the talents of a great number of the CEA "regulars" into the mounting of Alfred Jarry's absurdist Ubu Chained. Never before, nor again would a Di Telia work utilize the efforts of so many major artists. Among the familiar names present were: Marilú Marini as choreographer and interpreter of Mama Ubu; Jorge Fiszson (who had been the principal lead in Timon) as Papa Ubu; Rodríguez Arias and two of his troupe, Facundo Bo and Juan Stoppani; Nacha Guevara (who would mount her own satirical song review in 1968) as songstress; Jorge Bonino and Carlos Cutaia.

Stoppani, Marini, and Villanueva had designed the set and costumes. For the most part, the production was simplistic — Villanueva utilizing, again, a major set piece that was suggestive and transportable: a bed. The metal bed-object served as bench, as boat, as whatever-was-needed. The costumes ranged from sheets, to paper hats, to obvious cardboard shields.

The work was a success but, as far as the CEA organization was concerned, it was, perhaps, a culmination point for already existing internal problems. Within the Di Telia organization, there existed a strong difference of opinion concerning the "suitability" of particular
types of staging and suggestive materials. In short, some members of the Di Tella felt that far too frequently, directors and actors were over-stepping the bounds of "good taste" by deliberately staging scenes which were morally questionable. Often, such scenes dealt with homosexuality. In the case of Ubu, the matter was brought to a head.

Marini had choreographed a dance, using male actors, semi-nude, carrying chains and moving about the stage in such a way as to imply homosexual relationships. Villanueva had accepted the choreography as integral to the play and meaningful. In the preview performances of the work, certain members of the Di Tella raised heated arguments over the necessity of the dance and en masse denounced it as tasteless. In an effort to maintain internal solidarity at a time when the Center was just beginning to get its "artistic feet on the ground," Villanueva cut the section. Marini, Rodríguez Arias and others raised strong objections but to no avail. Ubu played to full houses and a good press. Nothing was objectionable!

This internal problem was symptomatic of a number of minor irritating difficulties which were becoming more constant as the Center continued its experiments. In general, the Di Tella events were not bland. Authors, directors, and actors espoused political leanings, attacked moral and social prejudices and naivete, questioned contemporary values. The problem, however, lay in methodology. When and if, sex, for example, was a topic for presentation the question of taste and audacity came to the forefront. The homosexual overtones or sub-text of Los siameses which Petraglia had interpreted was totally acceptable
in view of the fact that it was masked by other "existential-intellectual-metaphysical-vanguardistic" interpretations inherent in the play. Trejo's orgiastic scene at the culmination of Libertad was, possibly homosexual in one sense, certainly heterosexual in another, and positively humanitarian in general. Rodríguez Arias' sterilization of relationships was potentially a negation of male-female, but his creations were so totally infused with a sense of dislocation in terms of the theatrical form that such a specific concern as heterosexuality-homosexuality was not at all a major factor. Ubu was another matter. In short, freedom of expression in the Di Tella was broad but it was far preferable to keep freedom within certain bounds.

One group which appeared toward the end of the 1968 season did not adhere to the limits and enjoyed a long history in the Di Tella organization, a relatively select and sparse public, and a damming press. The group was Grupo Lobo. Its director was Carlos Trafic.

Grupo Lobo, composed of five men and three women, presented their first effort in 1968 and entitled it Tiempo Lobo (Wolf Time). Trafic was interested in reaching the public, creating a communion, breaking the limits of the barriers. He had his actors move into the auditorium, surround the spectators, embrace and fondle whomever they contacted. The actors challenged all manner of sexual preconceptions and stereotypes by dressing in whatever clothing they preferred or by removing their clothing à la Living Theatre. But, in the midst of this element, Grupo Lobo was creating a text or an environment that was
PLATE XXVI

PLATE XXVII
rich in images. The spectator was forced to re-evaluate relationships, make connections and re-interpret situations. He had to decide when and if the actor was actor or character; when and if he, as a spectator, was spectator or "role-player."

The press came out against Grupo Lobo strongly and brutally. "Ya en la calle, nos asalta la reflexión: ¿no hay ninguna comisión de censura en esta bendita ciudad?" ("Once in the street, the thought crosses our mind: Is there no censorship committee in this blessed city?")

Playwright Griselda Gambaro, whose work was much more traditional than that of either Mario Trejo or Carlos Trafic, denounced the above criticism and others by claiming that the sole misfortune of Tiempo Lobo was to have been presented in Buenos Aires, an extremely provincial city which had had no prior experience in this kind of avant-garde theatre.

Press and public to the contrary, Grupo Lobo continued to investigate the possibilities of audience-actor contact. Towards the end of 1968, Trafic and group presented a private experimental performance of a second work entitled Tiempo Fregar (Time to Sweep). The play took place in a small attic in the Di Tella building. Fifteen to twenty spectators viewed the trial performance seated on the stairway or on chairs strewn about the room. The performance was an investigation into the reactions of the public and the actors when both are integrally involved in the action from the very beginning. Hopefully, Trafic felt, he and his troupe would be able to use some of the reactions and
revelations discovered that evening to enrich and to deepen his work when it would be presented to the general public.

The performance began with a group of fregonas (cleaning women), impersonated by men and women, entering the cramped space. The actors were dressed in costumes reminiscent of Buñuel -- single breasted, or in a long pink evening dress, or stylish wig and blonde beard. Immediately, they set about cleaning the dirty area, forcing the spectators to move about constantly. The depressing area, the dislocated spectators, the absurd costuming all fused together to create a sense of disassociation and depression.

In 1969, Tiempo Fregar was presented to the public -- with changes. Carlos Trafic had been replaced by Roberto Villanueva as director. Villanueva assumed that as the guiding force for the production, he would permit the actors to discover and to develop the action almost totally at liberty. He envisioned his role as observer or advisor and not as a dominating force. Whether for this reason, or for the fact that the Di Tella auditorium was not the intimate, dirty attic of 1968, Tiempo fregar failed to have the same urgency and threatening quality that the original preview possessed. The fregonas (cleaning women) were forced to assault the audience directly rather than having the spectators deliberately involved from the outset. The tone of the work took on the sense of spectacle rather than environment.

The audience was upset. The large proportion walked out during the work and those who stayed often numbered no more than fifteen or twenty. The press denounced the entire production as monotonous, as
childish, and as indicative of the same tiresome experiments for which the Di Tella was becoming notorious.

En el programa, el director del Centro informa que esto es un espectáculo o etapa en el proceso de creación del grupo. Sería interesante que se propusieran dificultades más insalvables que la de revolverse por el suelo. Cualquier niño de tres años es capaz de hacer lo mismo. Con la diferencia de que se divierte.

(In the program, the director of the Center informs us that this is a spectacle or a stage in the process of creation of the group. It would be interesting if they would propose difficulties more challenging than that of rolling around on the floor. Any three year old child can do the same. The difference is that he enjoys himself.)

By the end of 1968, the turmoil that was rocking the Center of Visual Arts was also making itself felt within the confines of the Center of Audiovisual Expressive Arts. Regardless of successful productions by Nacha Guevara, Jorge Petraglia, Roberto Villanueva, and Jorge Bonino, the CEA was not providing the public or the press with a Center which was experimentally "safe" or which pretended to be a showcase for Argentine theatrical arts. The experiments were provocative - politically, morally, and socially. The investigations in form frequently continued to mystify the public and confuse the press. Furthermore, the sympathy of many CEA artists (ie. Mario Trejo) with the actions of the visual artists during the Experiences '68 disturbance confirmed municipal suspicions that both CEA and CAV were "cut from the same cloth." Both centers were thorns! Internal feuds over content and methods of presentation complicated the operation of the Center further. Funds were still problematic and most new groups could mount their shows only in the most simplistic ways possible. U.S. aid
was not directed to either CAV or the CEA and what Argentine aid from private sources that had been forthcoming was slowly disappearing as the papers continued to cite police problems, questionable productions, infantile actions, hippie-beatnik gatherings.

The effect of the 1968 explosion is seen nowhere more clearly than in what happened in the CEA during 1969. For the total season, there were eighteen shows. The only familiar names are Nacha Guevara (a song review), Jorge Petraglia (The Dwarves), Les Luthiers (a musical parody entitled Blanca Nieves y los Pecados capitales [Snow White and the Seven Mortal Sins]) and Grupo Lobo's Tiempo de Fregar. The remaining works were performed by dancers, rock groups, satirical song troupes. Only one other theatrical troupe appeared -- a new group directed by Jorge Romero who staged a rather obtuse mime performance of Aristophanes' Las Nubes (The Clouds).

Rodríguez Arias, Facundo Bo, Juan Stoppani and the rest of the Drácula troupe departed for a tour of South America, the United States, and Europe. Mario Trejo and troupe refused to perform in the Di Tella any longer. Some members of the troupe travelled to Chile, while others went to Brazil to study and perform with Julian Beck and Judith Malina. Delia Cancela and Pablo Mesejean followed Arias to Europe and fast became involved in the world of fashion designing and selling clothes. Griselda Gambaro left the Di Tella to continue writing and having her work performed outside the organization. Roberto Jacoby refused to present any more experiments in the CEA or CAV. Miguel Rondano and César Bolaños were absent.
The 1969 Di Tella year reminded one of starting all over again. The public was scant save for a few exceptional cases such as Petraglia's sensitive production of Pinter's play *The Dwarves* and Nacha Guevara's recital. For the most part, the public was wary of the Di Tella environment and the experiments. The press was cool or scathing. They charged that the Di Tella was developing into a one troupe company (Grupo Lobo) where almost anything could be seen on stage. Reports concerning the hippie colony which frequented the Galería Este, located beside the Di Tella, cited repeated occasions in which the police were arresting persons suspected of illicit and immoral conduct and of possessing drugs.

The situation, far from being grave, was instead pathetic. The season contained two repeats: Les Luthiers' *Blanca Nieves* and Grupo Lobo's *Casa I Hora 1/4* (First House, 1/4 of an Hour). Dancer Suzanna Zimmerman and her laboratory performed an environment entitled *Ceremonias* (Ceremonies). Grupo 67 from Santa Fe staged a collective creation entitled *Yezidas* and Mario Arocena mounted a suspense, police work called *Orquideas para Tina muerte* (Orchids for Dead Tina). Other than Carlos Cuataia's *El huevo* (The Egg), no other familiar name from the CILAM side of the Di Tella appeared. The final show listed for the year was Marilú Marini's singular effort *Marilú Marini es Marilú Marini* (Marilú Marini is Marilú Marini).

In March Villanueva and Marini began rehearsals for a production of *Romeo and Juliet* similar in many respects to the *Timón*. Villanueva had grouped a number of young, untrained talents. During one of the
evening rehearsals, the police entered the hall, arrested Villanueva, Marini and all members of the cast charging them with immoral conduct and possession of drugs. The newspapers were filled with articles, photographs and assertions.

Within a matter of days, Oteiza and the Di Tella Board of Directors issued a statement to Villanueva, Romero Brest and, remaining directors of adjunct centers (i.e. Department of Photography, and the Electronic Laboratory) that due to the severe economic difficulties of the Di Tella Arts centers, all further presentations would have to be cancelled. The Florida headquarters would remain open for a reasonable length of time to permit artists to gather their materials, but no additional presentations would be feasible. The experiment in the arts had ended.
FOOTNOTES

1 Carlos Mathus, Program notes for Cuarto de espejos, 1967.
2 Interview with Roberto Villanueva, April 4, 1971.
3 Ibid.
5 Foster, p. 55.
7 Mario Trejo, Program notes for Libertad y otras intoxicaciones, 1967.
8 "Words, words, words."
10 Interview with Griselda Gambaro, Buenos Aires, Argentina, April 6, 1971.
CHAPTER VI

REVELATIONS

The closure of the Centers for Visual Art and Audiovisual Experimentation was accomplished rapidly and with little public display. Within a matter of days following the arrest of Villamueva, he and Romero Brest received the official notice from the Di Tella administrators. The Florida center was to be vacated in a few weeks. The artists were to gather their materials and remove them from the headquarters. From then on, the Florida building would be off-limits to anyone who did not have special permission from the Di Tella administrative stage. Until February, 1972, the Florida building was still employed for some musical activities. In addition, a handful of secretaries and staff officials continued clean-up duties. The equipment in the theatrical laboratory remained intact, photographs from the Di Tella productions were stashed in dusty filing cabinets in the Photography Studio, and one attendant continued to serve an occasional cup of coffee or tea to "special visitors" in the cafeteria-lounge. Presently, the empty Di Tella building is "protected" by a member of the Buenos Aires police force who stands outside armed with a machine gun.

The press handled the announcement of the closing very discreetly. A small notice was buried in the major newspapers referring to the cessation of activities for both CEA and CAV at the Florida
headquarters. A few CEA artists would continue to experiment in a large, old home in the Belgrano district of Buenos Aires but the Di Tellla Foundation would no longer subsidize any activities. For all intents and purposes, the Di Tellla experiment was ended.

Officially, the Di Tella Board of Directors cited economics as the principal factor leading to the closure. With both Centers failing to demonstrate a profit for any year of their existence, the ITDT officials could justifiably claim that a continued output of money to finance the laboratories was no longer feasible — especially when public support of the arts activities did not appear to be improving. Villanueva concurs that, although the make-up of the audience changed over the five years, the numbers did not increase. The CEA had sponsored eighty-six different shows for a total of 1700 performances. The audience total for the period was a meagre 144,000.

Villanueva and Enrique Oteiza agree that finances were probably responsible for the closure of the arts centers. As the ITDT continued to grow, the emphasis was directed towards the improvement and the expansion of the social science centers. Thus, funds flowed more rapidly and more consistently into those areas rather than the arts programs.

What both men do not know is the extent to which political and municipal pressure affected the closing. They are inclined to admit that such pressure was a possibility especially when police actions would be front page news and affect the box office:

There was never support — economic support for the arts section—by the government. This, in itself, is an indication of lack of
enthusiasm. They never appointed any grant for the Institute in art and there was a dislike expressed in the form of some periodic police and municipal interference, so, in a way, this affected our funds.¹

(Enrique Oteiza)

Presión política? Eso se dice, se sospecha pero no se sabe nada. Yo, honestamente, no sé nada de eso. Se que la razón económica es real. ... La razón económica era fuerte para decidir ese corte. ... Pero, tipo de presión, por ejemplo, de la Fundación Ford, yo no sé. ... Naturalmente, una acción pública como cumplían los centros de teatro y de la pintura es política. Toda acción pública es política. En el sistema como nuestro sistema militar y policial, cualquier tipo de manifestaciones de libertad como manifestaciones artísticas por otro lado asume un carácter político y peligroso para la mentalidad.

(Political pressure? It's said; it's supposed but no one knows. I, honestly, don't know. I do know that the economic reason was real enough. ... But political pressure, for example, from the Ford Foundation? I don't know. ... Naturally, a public action such as those effected by the theatrical and visual arts centers is political. All public action is political. In a system such as our military and police state, whatever type of manifestation of freedom such as artistic freedom assumes a political character and is dangerous for the mentality.)²

(Roberto Villanueva)

The one area which both men and many artists consider as influential in relation to the closing was the media. Without fail, Oteiza, Villanueva, Petraglia, Jacoby and Gambaro cite the responsibility of the press for the problematic box office, the municipal harrassment, and the confusion of public attitudes concerning the CEA project.

The difficulties that we had were with the mass media, particularly the big newspapers, the three bigger. La Prensa, La Nación, Clarín never understood the whole thing and they were always confused. They didn't know whether this was because we were different and innovative. They didn't know whether we were communists or immoralists or, well, crazy people. So they had fear and they not only didn't support us in many instances but they incited the Government to close us.³

La crítica generalmente lo recibía muy mal porque la crítica es muy tradicionalista. No hay una crítica joven aquí. ... Las cosas más clásicas, las cosas más comerciales las recibían mayor que las
cosas mas radicales. Tampoco no había una constante. ... Había un boycott en cierta medida pero no un boycott abierto sino mas subterráneo. Había un imagen periodística de centro snob, de centro receptor de influencias extranjeras -- no de las modalidades nacionales.

(The critics generally received the activities very badly because the criticism here is very traditional. There is no young criticism here. ... The more classic things, the more commercial things were received better than the more radical things. However, there was no constant. ... There was a boycott in a certain sense but not an open boycott, rather a hidden one. There was a newspaper image of a Snob center, of one which was a receptor of foreign influences rather than of national trends.)

(Roberto Villanueva)

Almost from the very beginning, the media had criticized the more radical experimentation occurring within the CEA and had described the public as intellectual and artistic snobs.

La sala del Instituto adolece de un público snob, mal educado, de una frivolidad lindante en lo que Fromm denomina "neurastenia histórica." Va a observar, a ser observado y a felicitar las abundantes amistades desparramadas en la platea o sobre el escenario. Las noches del estreno hacen palidecer cual cada evento del mismo tipo, no ya en Buenos Aires y menos mal que no son tantos sino hasta en París o Londres.

(The auditorium of the Institute smacks of a snob public, poorly educated and beautifully frivolous in a way which Fromm describes as "historical neurasthenia." They go to observe, to be observed and to congratulate their numerous friends distributed amongst the audience or on stage. Opening night pales any other event of its type in other sections of Buenos Aires and, fortunately, there are no others yet except in London or Paris.)

To some extent, the elitism of which Emilio Stevanovitch complained was true. Even Roberto Villanueva noted that after the first three years of operation, the CEA was drawing a much less traditional, much less intellectually and artistically conservative audience and, instead, a younger, less sophisticated, more curious, more open-minded
theatre public. Artists Roberto Jacoby and Pablo Suarez had criticized the audience in 1968, complaining that the Di Tella organization, itself, was responsible for creating a cultural monster that fostered a snob appeal for a public too anxious to accept currently popular artistic trends.

One must remember that the Buenos Aires public is neither culturally unsophisticated nor artistically deprived. It is exposed to the finest in classic and contemporary film fare. (Argentina sponsors one of the international film festivals annually at Mar del Plata.) In theatre, the public sees Brecht, Weiss, Pinter, Molière, Orton, and Behan -- often in the same season. Art displays are commonplace in shopping galleries. The public reads books, magazines, and newspapers with an astonishing avidity. It is an articulate public knowledgeable about national and international trends in politics, social currents, customs, arts and letters. Indeed, the average Argentine might very well challenge the eclecticism of his North American neighbor who seldom is capable of discussing what is happening outside of his own nation or even aware of the cultural developments in any country except his own and, perhaps, England.

Unfortunately, many of us in the so-called progressive nations often view the cultural activity of less industrially developed nations as unimportant and, at best, imitative. The appearance of outstanding authors or artists from these countries is viewed with surprise and bewilderment. Countries which are struggling to realize economic progress and political stability are imagined to neglect the arts for "the more
important things of life." What is forgotten is that many of these nations, especially the Latin American countries, stress the importance of the Renaissance man. One of their major complaints concerning the North American is that he forsakes the cultural aspects of life for the more callous concerns of business. Such an assessment is unjust from both sides. North Americans have produced a large number of important artists and significant cultural works. On the same scale, the Argentine, for example, can boast of many outstanding practitioners in arts and letters. The difference lies, to a great extent, in the availability of Argentine materials for international consideration and consumption. Argentine artists are much less translated than are North Americans. Harsh economic factors curtail much international movement of the artist or of his work. But, to negate the productivity and the validity of Argentine arts because of their failure to be known on an international scale is unforgivable and foolishly naive.

What is also true about the Argentine public and, perhaps, is related to a psychological factor pertaining to their tendency to view themselves as European South Americans, is the almost paranoic necessity to avoid outside criticism and to possess an internationally acceptable IMAGE. Thus, the most recent European styles in clothing are immediately visible on the streets of Buenos Aires. The most current international artistic trends are discussed and practiced. Frequently, the creators of new movements are visitors to the Argentine capital. Such was the case of the theatrical innovator Jerzy Grotowski who spoke in Córdoba and Buenos Aires in November, 1971. The Argentine
desire is to represent the nation as a leader -- if not politically then, at the very least, culturally. The people continue to encourage national arts emphasizing Argentina's position in the South American community while, at the same time, casting an eye to European attitudes and trends.

In one respect, the Di Tella Institute was a potential way in which to present the world with a showcase for Argentine arts and the Argentine society. A center of this type was unknown in the rest of South America. Although European and North American models were studied for the purposes of providing guidelines to the Di Tella project, the Argentine complex was still one of a kind. Thus, many segments of the public and, especially, the press envisioned the entire organization as an outstanding opportunity to improve the state of national arts and, at the same time, to propagandize Argentina's importance within the international artistic community. Such a complex could demonstrate to the world, the country's cultural sophistication and its concerns for the TOTAL MAN.

According to sociologist Oteiza, the public which frequented the Di Tella at first was predominately traditional and middle class. They were, according to him, supportive of events and "never put obstacles to or damaged anything that we did. They liked it or disliked it." As the CEA events became more artistically aggressive and radical, the majority of the earlier audiences were replaced by a less conservative and younger public. Undoubtedly, the notoriety given the Di Tella events and the Di Tella artists played a large role in determining the nature
of its audiences. As the newspapers began to detail the confrontations between artists and police and to relate the content of the more sensationalistic pieces (ie. Experiencias '68 and Tiempo de fregar), many traditional segments of the public preferred to leave the support of CEA and CAV to others. In an article dealing with the disappearance of the arts centers, Roberto Jacoby argued that while the press failed to understand the nature of Di Tella experiment at its very core, they did much towards enlightening a vast section of the middle-class about the nature and potential of the arts in Argentine society. Yet, Jacoby continued, the press was culpable for confusing and alienating a still larger majority of the public.

Con frecuencia los medios de comunicación masivos criticaron el "elitismo" de las actividades culturales del Di Tella. Pero fueron ellos, sin saberlo, quienes mayor papel jugaron en la extensión de la influencia del Di Tella entre los sectores medios. Pero, al mismo tiempo que difundían estas nuevas posiciones estéticas, las tornaban también difusas. Unos ponían el acento en los aspectos escandalosos y casi orgiásticos, mientras que otros valorizaban, más refinadamente, el cosmopolitismo y la sutileza de la elaboración. Cada cual cubría con sus propios mitos -- lo "moderno" o lo "escandaloso" -- un proceso cultural que no podían (o no querían) comprender en su esencia.

(Frequently, the mass media criticized the elitism of the cultural activities in the Di Tella. But it was they, without knowing it, who played a major role in extending the influence of the Di Tella amongst the middle classes. But, at the same time that they were spreading these new aesthetic positions, they were confusing the public as well. Some placed the accent on the scandalous and almost orgiastic aspects, while others valued, more refinedly, the cosmopolitanism and the subtleties of presentation. Each one masked with his own myths -- "modern" or "scandalous" -- a cultural process that they could not (or did not want to) understand in its essence.)

It is significant to note that, today, almost two years since the Di Tella closure, the vast majority of the public does not discuss
the artistic experimentation or the importance of cultural movements which occurred in the Centers. Instead, they refer to the notorious aspect of the venture. They remember photographs published showing the artists being searched by the police for drugs. They remember articles dealing with revolutionary or morally questionable productions. During the seven months I spent in Argentina, members of the public with whom I talked and who had seen at least one event in the Di Tella genuinely regretted the CEA's disappearance but were too quick to point out that the closure apparently was justified considering the anarchistic and morally suspicious nature of the enterprise. No member of the public, at any time, challenged the assertions of the press or questioned its role as a possible contributing factor to the disappearance of the two arts centers.

One of the very few members of the press who did attempt to provide an objective view of the Di Tella experiment was publisher-critic Emilio Stevanovitch. Although by disposition, Stevanovitch appears to be a conservative in his approach to theatre -- "the emphasis should be on the text" -- he is extremely eclectic in his tastes and a professional theatre man, having studied and worked with María Casares in France. Stevanovitch's theatrical journal Talía was a strong source of support and of healthy criticism for the CEA. Many events in the Center were reviewed and, in some cases, particular artists (ie. Jorge Bonino) were asked to contribute articles concerning their approaches to art for the journal. Although Stevanovitch questioned the activities of some groups (ie. Rodríguez Arias for his
pseudo-art), he was in the forefront when it came to applauding the Di Tella administrators for their farsightedness in establishing the Center. The majority of Talía's more favorable reviews were centered on the conservative shows, but the over-all attitude of the magazine and of Stevanovitch was that the CEA served a valuable and a necessary function in providing Argentina with a way to encourage its own dramatic and theatrical development. What Talía rightly criticized was the CEA's eventual tendency towards monotony in the types of shows staged and in the re-appearance of many performers who appeared to constitute an unofficial acting company for the laboratory. In addition, Talía cautioned the CEA that its artists must continue to maintain a spirit of self-criticism in relation to the practice of their art. The keys, as Stevanovitch saw it, were professionalism and quality coupled with investigation and presentation. In a private interview, he summarized his attitudes concerning the CEA one year after the closure.

It was one of the most interesting pioneering institutes as far as experimental theatres was concerned. They did everything from god-awful to very good. The run of the mill was average but you could see three or four different shows every month. The trouble started when the nucleus became very small and the same group acted all the things. That made people very tired. They always saw the same faces in different plays. And there came a time when really anything could be seen on the stage and the sort of self-criticism that was before disappeared completely... that was bad. . . The public started to dwindle. . . . The development within the experimental plays given at the Di Tella was good. Not within the group. They launched quite a few groups which then went on their own way -- Grupo Lobo with which you may or may not agree but they launched it there. Plays without words were very interesting. Adaptations of Greek classics. Aristophanes without words, pantomimes, sounds instead of words. . . . One of the great successes that is true is the attraction that the Di Tella had in the first years of its existence. You had to go and see what happened.
While Stevanovitch's criticism is a decidedly personal one -- "there came a time when really anything could be seen on stage" -- his assessment of the problems within the CEA appears to be accurate. Shows did range from excellent to atrocious. Villanueva admits that one of his major fears as director of the organization was the possibility that he would be overly dogmatic in terms of the material presented. For this reason, Villanueva permitted a large scale eclecticism in terms of the experiments. "Por eso no había una compañía. Por eso no tenía un movimiento representativo." ("Therefore, there was no company. Therefore, it did not have a representative movement.") Yet, Villanueva also indicated that it was this approach which probably was a major error in his handling of the CEA. Had he stressed the element of freedom less, selecting only one or two representative currents rather than multiple, the public and the press may have been more willing to deal with the Di Tella artistic concepts.

Although Villanueva and Oteiza stress that the CEA had no stable companies, there were unofficial companies which were automatically identifiable as CEA groups. Each director could stage his work with his own troupe of actors. The fact that many artists appeared and reappeared in the CEA events was a result of economics and of personal interest. Many of the performers were enthusiastic supporters of particular new movements and most were anxious to participate in as many activities as possible. Thus, Stevanovitch could claim with some degree of truth that the CEA appeared to be a one troupe theatrical laboratory.
When Villanueva and the CEA performers were unable to persuade the public and the municipal authorities that the Center still could produce valuable theatre, the end was imminent. There were few segments of the media which lamented the closure of the CEA. One exception was Talía. Early in 1970, the magazine issued an obituary reviewing the Center's achievements and failures, noting its own stand regarding the quality of productions in the CEA and, finally, praising the Center for its pioneering efforts and provocative approaches to theatre and the theatrical experience.

... sus habitantes constituían algo así como los primeros adelantados de una nueva forma de ver y sentir, de luchar con los molinos de viento que siempre se alzan antes quienes pretenden avanzar empujados por la audacia de la juventud.

Pero así como dejamos constancia de más de un reparo observado ante esa audacia, cuando esta perdía los controles mínimos, también hemos proclamado a los cuatro vientos la necesidad de la existencia del Di Tella.

(. . . its members constituted something like the first pioneers in a new way of seeing and feeling and of battling windmills that always rise up before those who attempt to advance pushed on by the brashness of youth.

But even when in more than one instance we have criticized this brashness, we have also proclaimed to the four winds the necessity of the existence of the Di Tella.)

What, then, had the Di Tella theatre accomplished during its brief history? First, it had accomplished its two primary goals of launching new artists on careers and of providing the Buenos Aires public with an active theatrical laboratory to experiment in new currents. Throughout the five years the public witnessed happenings, one-man shows, theatre of cruelty, children's theatre, multi-media events, dance and song recitals, polemical theatre, absurdist dramas, mime theatre, audience-performers experiences and old favorites in
re-constructed form. Griselda Gambaro had gone on to become one of Argentina's most talented playwrights of absurdist and socio-political theatre. In 1970 her play El campo was produced in Italy and at Hunter College, New York. Rodríguez Arias and his group TZE (pronounced "CHE") travelled to Hunter College to mount Drácula el vampiro (1969) under an OAS grant. Since that time, he has staged Eva Perón in Chechoslovakia and Histoire du théâtre in Paris where he now resides. Nacha Guevara is a darling of the cafe concert set and her most recent concert in November, 1971 was recorded on the Music Hall label, marking her fourth long play. Jorge Petraglia continues to act and direct at a frantic pace in both the professional and the independent theatres. His March, 1971 production of Lope de Vega's El caballero por milagros at the San Martín united him with Leal Rey (designer) and Marilú Marini (choreographer) in a production which delighted the public and critics and employed camp elements long familiar in the Di Tella theatrical laboratory. In October, 1971, Petraglia re-mounted Krapp's Last Tape for a special one night performance, staged a politically charged The Clouds at the Córdoba theatre Festival in November mounted The Cherry Orchard in December and for April, 1972 staged Gambaro's newest play, the political Nada que ver at the San Martín. Earlier in March Petraglia appeared in a play with ex-Di Tella actors Jorge Fiszson (Ubu, Timon) and Hugo Paletti (Las nubes). Directing the work was another Di Tella discovery, actor Rubén Fraga. Fraga's first efforts as a director suggested to the Buenos Aires municipality that he might be well able to mount a show for the San Martín. In early 1972 he was engaged in
re-mounting Camargo's *El campo* for the municipal theatre. Fiszson continues to spread his acting duties between the theatre and the film -- his most recent role in the award winning movie *Crónica de una señora*. Faletti appeared in a major role in the 1972 Best Play of the Year, *Historia de un secuestro*. One of Buenos Aires most popular performers is Norman Briski who continues to act in television, the stage, and film. Marta Minujin divides her time between New York and Buenos Aires where she still stages experiences and happenings. Designers Delia Cancela and Pablo Mesejean now reside in London where their interest in clothes has led them exclusively into the world of fashion. Dalila Puzzovio is a noted New York and Buenos Aires fashion designer who still manages to do occasional costume and set designs for Independent productions such as the 1971 staging of *La vera historia de Salomé* (text by Miguel Angel Rondano). Roberto Villanueva returned to the stage as actor (*Esta canción es un pájaro lastimado*, 1971) and translator (*Hair*, 1972). Currently, Villanueva is playing a dual role as director-teacher to a group of young actors in the city of Córdoba. Some members of Grupo Lobo travelled to Brazil where they worked with Julian Beck and Judith Malina. Others of the troupe continue to perform in Chile; while still more reside in Buenos Aires and occasionally mount shows such as the November, 1971 *Casa 1/4, Hora 1*. Les Luthiers, Ana Kamien, Graciela Martínez, Marcos Mundstock, and Martín Micharvegas continue one man shows in Buenos Aires and other major Argentine cities. What is evident, then, is that many of the Di Telia artists have managed to remain extremely active in national or international theatre. What
the Di Tella accomplished, therefore, was the discovery and encouragement of many national artists who, currently, are among the most well-known and most exciting talents on the Argentine stage.

But, perhaps, the most significant achievement of the Di Tella venture was in the area of involvement. The CEA demonstrated to the Argentine public that the art of theatre cannot be divorced from the business of society. Theatre is an outgrowth of the concerns and preoccupations of the milieu in which it exists. The nature and the form it assumes reflect, to a large extent, what the society will accept at that time.

However, each work of art seeks to impose its own truth. The power of that work springs from its truth. Once the work has been created, the artist(s) must communicate and, for the theatre, communication means "audience." In the case of the Di Tella, some artists called for the work of art to be a revolutionary tool (Suárez and Trejo). These artists viewed the chaos and terrorism prevalent in Argentina politics (especially under the brutal dictatorship of General Onganía, 1966-1970) and asked the public to react to effect a change. Nacha Guevara satirized contemporary social and cultural values in her witty and biting songs of protest. In dance, Marilú Marini and Ana Kamien took an irreverant look at current myths and attempted to force the public to look at its clay idols. Carlos Trafic's Grupo Lobo created a verbal and a physical attack against the audience to shock them into an awareness of their social and moral prejudices. Gambaro employed a subtler form of aggression -- the creation of uncertainty and fear --
to illustrate her vision of contemporary man as waged in a constant bitter struggle for survival and for identity. The visions of truth which these artists saw were all their own distinct visions. What they demanded in common from their audiences was that they be willing to experience and be committed to trying the new. An evening in the CEA could be dangerous. The spectator might be confronted with new thoughts, new images, new ways of seeing himself and his society. But, confrontation does not imply change. The artist can only present his truth. He cannot insure that it will be the truth for his audience.

Art does not change the world much; it only changes the world when the world is ready to be changed. If art is reinforcing something that the audience wants to believe then it may be effective indeed. But by and large, art has little direct influence and I think this is because although the artists may call upon the irrational and unconscious forces in his audience those same irrational forces will be their protection. As a general rule, until they get used to a new idea an audience will reject what a dramatist has to say if it challenges their preconceptions. If a play conflicts with certain of my preconceived ideas about art or morals then either I am going to have to reassess my ideas, which is uncomfortable and disturbing or else I must in some way rob the play of its power.

The Di Telia artists created visions of the truth as they saw it. The fact that they continue to create emphasizes that their commitment to those truths was authentic. Yet, the fact that the CEA was forcibly closed in the way in which it was, suggests that certain segments of the Argentine society saw the Di Telia experimenters and the Di Telia experiment as threats to the well-being of the Argentine society.
FOOTNOTES

1 Oteiza.

2 Interview, Villanueva.

3 Oteiza.

4 Interview, Villanueva.


6 Oteiza.

7 Roberto Jacoby, "El Di Tella," p. 28. (unknown Magazine)

8 Interview, Stevanovitch.


10 Interview, Stevanovitch.

11 Interview, Villanueva.

12 Mazza Leiva.

SUMMARY

At the outset, the Di Tella project appeared to be a valid one. The S.I.A.M. complex was an enormously powerful entity from a national and an international perspective. Not only could the corporation provide a substantial base for the financing of the Institute, but it could elicit assistance on a world-wide scale merely by the strength of its reputation as an industrial giant. The potentials for assistance appeared to be multiple and, ultimately, they would prove to include such prestigious organizations as the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, FIAT of Argentina, the Organization of American States, the Library of Congress, the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the Gillete Foundation and private citizens. The dual thrust of the Institute -- the arts and the social sciences -- permitted interested parties to aid those centers for which they felt a special affinity. But, as an analysis of the economic support indicates, those centers which stressed an academic or scientific approach to investigation received the largest proportion of the aid -- especially that coming from outside Argentina.

While the Rockefeller Foundation channeled a substantial amount of funds into the tightly structured Latin American Center of Advanced Musical Studies, no other major contributor supported the activities of the Centers of Visual Arts and Audiovisual Expressive Arts. Thus, the Di Tella Foundation assumed the responsibility for the establishment
of these laboratories and for their maintenance. One probable explanation for the reticence of many contributing groups to finance the arts laboratories directly appears to center on the attitude that developing nations ought to devote primary concerns to research in the social sciences -- the arts considered as essential to the total well-being of a nation but, ultimately, secondary to the more immediate problems involving economic, educational, and sociological investigations. It is true that the specialized grants made to the social science centers released some Di Tella funds for the arts centers. However, the fact that no major contributing organization outside of the Di Tella Foundation encouraged the formation of such centers or made any attempt to reassure the artists participating in CAV and CEA through spoken support let alone a token or short-term grant must be interpreted as a reluctance to "get involved" directly in areas which, perhaps, could be suspect or dangerous. Ginastera's CIAEM had garnered the two year Rockefeller Foundation assistance by devising a specialized advanced study program for twelve composer-musicians. His Center operated on a tightly formalized pattern and maintained a direct relationship with the University of Indiana. CAV and CEA, however, advocated an open-experimentation program with very little regulation on who might perform or how.

The social science programs could be financed with a relative amount of security for the contributors. Research demanded little public display. Investigations could be conducted in closed laboratory situations or under strictly controlled circumstances. The results of a
project often required no more than an assembling of the prepared data in reports for the perusal of a select few or published in a text for the interest of a specialized audience.

Theatrical production and visual art displays are separate propositions. Their nature demands an audience -- be it only one person -- for the realization of the art work. The audience is seldom a select or a controlled one. Normally, it is composed of peoples from the most varied backgrounds whose intellectual, visceral, and emotional response to the art work is individual. The public may not decide the ultimate worth or eventual importance of a new work but they do determine, along with that especially distinctive group of men called critics, the immediate value of the work and the artistic experience. Both the CEA and CAV were laboratories which required a public to exist. Each experiment had to be conducted in the open -- in full view of the public -- subject to applause for success and criticism for failure. There were few instances when a show could be repeated in new form to determine where and how the original experiment had blundered and to see if the renovated production could prove successful. Although the Centers themselves provided the performers with modern facilities and the necessary technical equipment to mount shows, the production costs still had to be borne by the performers or by an "angel." The latter were few and the returns from the box office - for a "hit" - barely covered the production costs. Furthermore, in keeping with the laboratory format, shows were limited to fixed runs which provided maximum exposure for many artists. Thus, successful shows could take
economic advantage of the situation while less popular productions were insured a reasonable amount of running time.

The Di Telia directors intended to finance the Institute as a philanthropic project. Therefore, box office receipts should not have interfered with the decision to maintain or to eliminate the arts centers. Yet, in 1970 the official decision to disband the Center of Visual Arts and the Center of Audiovisual Expressive Arts centered around the inability of both laboratories to solve economic problems. The annual reports for these centers indicate that they were financially in the red. However, since late 1967 economics seemed to be less of a problem than was the critical and municipal criticism of both the artists and the art projects connected with the Di Telia. As the press detailed sensationalistic productions and increasingly frequent confrontations between the Di Telia artists and the police, the public was growing more confused concerning the nature and the importance of the arts programs. As the reputations of the CEA and CAV began to suffer, the possibilities of additional support from any organization but the Di Telia Foundation were growing slimmer.

When the CEA officially opened in 1965, the Argentine theatre was in a neutral stage of development. The Independent Theatre as a separate movement was obviously over. The professional and Independents mounted the same types and the same quality of shows: eclectic theatre but rather conservative in approach. Although isolated instances of theatrical experimentation did occur, there was nothing to suggest that innovative artistic trends were imminent nor that any group
possessed the potential for a healthy life span. There was no theatre which gave experimenters the opportunity to investigate or to practice theatrical innovations on any large scale.

The Di Tella Foundation and, especially, Enrique Oteiza were the means by which Argentine drama and Argentine artists might experience a renaissance. The inauguration of the CEA meant that contextual and formal investigations into dramatic art could occur in sophisticated surroundings. Artists could question contemporary trends in drama, could try new approaches, could seek multiple ways in which to enrich the theatrical experience for themselves and for the public. Apparently, all this could be accomplished without fear that a poor box office would necessitate a cancelation after the premiere performance. Oteiza's enthusiasm for the arts complex and Villaneuva's artistic policy of open experimentation within the Center motivated the artists to approach the Di Tella project eagerly and with confidence that radical experimentation could occur. Ultimately, the Di Tella would prove to be the center for the most current and most progressive artistic trends of the 1960's.

Villanueva had feared that any dogmatism on his part as director of the CEA would negatively affect the possible artistic investigation which might take place within the laboratory. It is highly possible to speculate now that had Villanueva oriented the various approaches to theatrical experimentation in a more dictatorial way (i.e. exercising a certain degree of censorship), that press and municipal harassment may have been lessened. Villanueva's stand,
however, was based on the belief that true artistic experimentation depends upon a free circumstance in which artists -- responsible artists -- will demonstrate self-criticism as well as courage, confronting artistic as well as social or political questions with honesty, fully aware of the dangers involved yet demonstrating a responsibility to oneself and to the issue at hand. For some members of the Di Tella organization, particular issues were questionable in relation to their artistic validity. The same held true for the police and the press. Ultimately, the question of freedom and responsibility became the burning issues in the arts centers.

The press had cast a dubious eye at the antics and some of the productions of many Di Tella artists long since the obvious attack on immorality and anarchy was being heard. As long as artists continued only to throw mattresses out the window and raise posters on street corners, the activities were viewed as ridiculously juvenile but not harmful. The turning point appeared to occur within 1967-1968 when the country found itself under a stern military dictator and the issues of censorship became involved. The Di Tella artists began to attack the republic -- in concept and in quality -- charging the Argentine people with cowardice for failure to criticize what was pap, be it in politics, in economics, or in Di Tella art. Open warfare became obvious between some Di Tella artists and the establishment. Within a brief time, the municipality began to censor events, close shows and arrest performers for what they deemed as harmful to the moral well-being of the Argentine nation. A confused and irritated press leveled harsh indictments against the artists for a continued lack of
self-control and self-criticism. Artistic freedom, they implied, carried with it a responsibility for the well-being of the nation. Artistic freedom, the artists replied, carried with it a responsibility to confront the public with self-obvious truths. Bourgeois complacency had to be challenged. Man had to learn to see and to think. He must not sit back, sheepishly capitulating to the will and to the whims of another. The press and certain factions of the government claimed that experimentation had to be kept within bounds. The Di Tella was a showcase for the avant-garde arts. Progress could be effected but not at the expense of quality and responsibility. The artists retorted that the Di Tella never had been intended as a showcase for the arts. It had become such due to the Institute's involvement with the middle-class establishment and the economic manipulation of the organization by large interest groups. But, they pointed out, Villanueva's center was primarily an open experimental laboratory to investigate theatre. It formed part of a philanthropic unit. The end result should not be all that matters. It is the search. It is the potential. It is the possible viability of one way as opposed to another. Thus, it was that the aesthetic concept of the CEA and its public reality came into open conflict. Villanueva's lack of heavy-handed control for the CEA meant that the artists were permitted wide berth for investigations into content and form. Frequently, the press could not understand the necessity to produce certain events or for artists to attack the structure of the Di Tella itself. Adding to the furor was the fact that the open policy resulted in a rather mercurial laboratory. Shows ranged from the very good to the atrociously bad,
raw talent appeared with experienced, confused concepts alternated with brilliantly harmonious ones, ineffective approaches followed masterful moments. The CEA was proving to be an experimental laboratory but not necessarily a showcase for the best in contemporary Argentine theatre. The press repeatedly pointed out this truth.

During the first two years, the CEA had maintained an interesting but conservative experimental laboratory especially in those events which were under the direction of the theatrical artists. Unlike the POP experiments of choreographer-dancers Marilú Marini and Ana Kamien and the environmental experiences of Marta Minujin and Celia Barbosa, the theatrical events (Luther, El desatino, Artaud 66) were still comfortably familiar employing text, maintaining aesthetic distance between the audience and performers. In 1966, the first major interaction between experimenters in other disciplines began to occur within the CEA laboratory. Oteiza had hoped from the beginning that artists from the three centers might interact in order to provide a deeper penetration into the potential of the various arts for other disciplines. In 1966, artists Marta Minujin and Leopoldo Maler staged a Happening, sculptor Rodríguez Arias mounted Drácula, el vampiro with costumes designed by artists Delia Cancela and Pablo Mesejean. And, within one year, the events in the Di Tella theatre began to evidence a sharp transformation. The number of activities almost doubled. There was more emphasis on environmental pieces, an obvious interest in communal theatrical experiences, an orientation towards more Dionysiacal or Artaudian techniques, an emphasis on situations and topics which
were more directly related to socio-political problems.

As the focus of many events began to turn towards a more environmental theatre, the facilities of the laboratory appeared to be less adequate. Although the Center allowed for extensive use of multi-media equipment, the permanent seating arrangement prohibited artists from modifying the auditorium to any significant degree. Oteiza reflected in 1970 that were he to re-design the CEA now, he would create nothing more than a free space area with elevated equipment hung from a grid, and moveable chairs.

But, defined space notwithstanding, the CEA was active and artists from multiple disciplines were busily exchanging concepts and approaches to make the theatre center the most exciting hub for dramatic art in Buenos Aires. During the prime years of 1967, 1968, and 1969, the activities within the CEA began to fall into one of four major categories. Although a few artists produced events which might overlap categories, the majority of performers concentrated in a specific trend. Occasionally, there was internal bickering over the methodologies and directions which the Center was taking but it remained much less problematic than did the publicized criticism appearing in the Buenos Aires newspapers.

The first category of experimentation belonged to the classical or familiar avant-garde. In this trend one notes the texted work, anti-drama, absurdist, and existential avant-garde from Beckett-Ionesco on. The artists in this area rarely broke the proscenium arch or distaniation situation in any physical way. The second trend also involved a relative degree of familiarity for the audience in that it was a direct outgrowth
of already popular artistic currents appearing in visual arts, music, and dance. I refer to the POP-OP currents and environmental experiences. Here, artists parodied much of traditional art, spoofed conservativism, delighted in pricking sacred balloons, and usually charmed their audiences with the slightly risque, the amusing socio-political, the diverting romp. These two trends managed to dominate the CEA during 1965 until early 1968. Productions in these areas were often by established Argentine theatrical performers or by artists already successful in other disciplines. The third trend in the CEA made its most dramatic appearance in 1967 with Mario Trejo's *Libertad y otras intoxicaciones* which, besides being a success, illustrated a shift in Di Tella content. Trejo experimented in socio-political theatre creating a type of purgatory for the audience and an inquisition for Argentina. Other artists continued to work in this type of theatre, many openly attacking the Di Tella artists who catered to the public by providing them with pseudo-experimentation and pseudo-involvement. The theatre was viewed as a tool for social and political change. Events in this area were frequently inflammatory and openly antagonistic to the Argentine situation of the time as well as the Di Tella structure itself which they denounced as hypocritical pandering to middle-class interests and international financial monopolies - the United States in particular. The final trend which, in many ways, paralleled that just mentioned was also extremist but rather than in socio-political aspects, it was emotional. Here artists experimented with the potential of the audience to create, to share, and to fulfill the artist's proposition.
Experiments in radical aesthetic form were designed to motivate and to stimulate the imagination of the audience into new ways of seeing themselves and their world. No suggestion was considered irrelevant; no image, tasteless; no form, irrational.

This multi-faceted nature of the CEA resulted in an exciting and controversial center of the arts. Villanueva attempted to balance the seasons with a healthy percentage of distinctive trends; however, the press soon viewed his efforts with increasing skepticism. With some justification, the initial criticism was levelled at those productions which featured theatrically immature talent. The charge was that the Di Tella was fast becoming a haven for the inexperienced artist who staged monotonous and technically inept works. As Villanueva permitted the performers more liberty to attempt artistically daring and texturally provocative programs, the press had serious doubts about the nature and the orientation of the entire CEA venture. Repeatedly, it asserted that Villanueva and many artists were failing to demonstrate qualities of self-discipline and self-criticism in relation to productions. Reviews focused on shows that contained morally questionable features and labelled them sensationalistic, indecent, or dangerous to the well being of the Argentine society. More problematic, however, was the furor created by the artists on a personal level. News stories and photographs appeared depicting the performers in mod or unusual clothing, wearing long hair, occasionally arguing the virtues of LSD and marijuana, and sporting Hippie buttons advocating "Free Love" and "Down with the Establishment." The press
complained. The public was confused. The police began to interfere with performances. Soon the implication was clear from the press and the police points of view that the Di Tella may very possible be a Mecca for the sexually deviant and those addicted to narcotics. Problems increased when other artists began to criticize the nature of the Di Tella establishment, the art programs, and eventually, the political dictatorship of President Onganía. The municipal authorities increased their surveillance of Di Tella functions. Within a short time, they began to censor and to close various shows, to arrest and to search various artists. The press continued to describe the clashes between the police and the artists and to lament the lack of artistic responsibility apparently evident within the Di Tella organization.

Municipal harassment was severe during 1968 and continued throughout much of 1969. In that year, many artists long associated with the CEA and CAV preferred to work within the relative calm of the professional and independent theatre structure rather than the chaotic and, as many claimed, the hypocritical environment surrounding the Di Tella. A few performers, among them Rodríguez Arias, Delia Cancela and Pablo Mesejan, left the country in search of artistic as well as political freedom. For those who remained working with the CEA, the situation was far from ideal. The press instituted an unofficial boycott of most CEA activities, announcing upcoming shows but failing to provide any reviews. Those productions which featured a popular entertainer or which were predominantly conservative in avant-garde approach received reviews. Radical approaches in form or content did not.
1969 turned out to be an effort at picking up the pieces. Artists who were leaving the Di Tella were encouraged to remain in order to provide experience and morale. New performers received assurances that the CEA would provide them a secure laboratory and a free environment in which to experiment. In a like manner, Villanueva and Oteiza tried to persuade the public that the CEA laboratory was valuable for artistic progress and for Argentine cultural development. But, the damage to the Di Tella image had been enormous.

For the average members of the public, the CEA and CAV were trouble spots. The artists had managed to alienate a large section of the Buenos Aires community by failing to establish a consistent or meaningful dialogue with it which would explain certain artistic stances and attitudes. To a great extent, the press must be held culpable for encouraging this alienation by its repeated focusing upon the more bizarre and sensationalistic happenings that took place. Although the press cannot be condemned for criticizing shows that lacked quality standards, it was responsible for failing to clarify and to interpret to the public the laboratory aspect of the Di Tella theatre. The public was led to believe that the CEA would be a reflection of the best in Argentine theatrical art, when, in truth, it was created as an experimental entity in search of new ways to enhance the theatrical experience. Perhaps most importantly, the vast majority of the public was not aware that those experiments occurring in the CEA were often similar to other investigations occurring abroad. Mario Trejo's work
paralleled much of that done by Julian Beck and Judith Malina.
Villanueva's experiments with *Timon of Athens* were two years in
advance of Richard Schechner's work with the Performance Group
but similar in the ritualistic and Dionysiacal core of the theatrical
experience. The work of Carlos Trafic and Grupo Lobo paralleled many
of the efforts of John Vaccaro and the Playhouse of the Ridiculous.
The Di Tella experimental theatre was, therefore, in the mainstream of
contemporary international avant-garde art.

While one cannot deny the financial reason cited by the Di
Tella Board of Directors as a major factor in the closing of both CEA
and CAV, it is evident that the press and the police did much to
encourage the poor box office. Continued emphasis upon the political
leanings of the artists and an atmosphere of suspicion involving ethics
and morals, created audience confusion and mistrust. As well, President
Onganía's personal criticism of some Di Tella activity undoubtedly
influenced some of the public and, quite possibly, the ultimate decision
of the Board. CEA and CAV were continuing to be embarrassments and,
apparently, more trouble than they were worth. They closed in 1970.

Although the disappearance of the centers was regrettable, it
is doubtful that their continued existence would have proved profitable.
The suspicion and controversy surrounding them could not be eliminated
within a brief period of time. The fact that the arts'centers were
criticized for producing unintelligible and obscure work is not surprising.
An experimental theatre that is fully comprehensible or totally accepted
by the community is quite probably a compromise circumstance. Works that
advocate radical approaches to form or to content are seldom popular at first encounter. An avant-garde artist or an organization supporting avant-garde art should not expect popular approval. To do so is to be ignorant of the history of radical theatre and the masses over the centuries. Avant-garde approaches frequently require a tempering of the approach in order to create an environment of security for the audience. The artist should not underestimate the public for its potential to understand and to grow within the theatrical experience but, neither should he under-estimate its capacity to defend itself when values are being threatened. Unfortunately, many Di Tella artists refused to acknowledge this truth concerning their audiences. They ridiculed, provoked, and eventually alienated a vast majority of the audiences by failing to temper much activity until the audience could be educated in new ways of approaching and experiencing the theatre and the world. To the public, the Di Tella laboratory had been created as a gift for the Argentine theatrical world. But, after five years, the results of the laboratory proved that the artists involved were discomforting iconoclasts - questioning art as well as social values, politics and ethics.

In retrospect, however, the Di Tella experiment has proved exceedingly valuable. In less than two years since the closure of the CEA, the Argentine theatre can boast of a renaissance in various aspects. Many artists who were first discovered within the Di Tella have gone on to create significant careers in both the professional and independent theatres of Argentina (Griselda Gambaro, Nacha Guevara, Jorge Fizzzon, Rubén Fraga.) Others have invaded the international theatre as authors,
directors, and actors (Mario Trejo, Gambaro, Juan Stoppani, Facundo and Marucha Bo). Director-actor troupes have sprung up with increasing frequency to investigate the possibilities of collective creation and audience involvement. Experiments in staging and multi-media effects first employed and worked out in detail within the CEA laboratory have become commonplace and totally accepted even in that pantheon of traditional art, the San Martín Municipal Theatre.

In essence, therefore the Di Tella theatre accomplished what it had set out to do. It introduced new artists to the Argentine theatrical world. It revitalized a theatre long dominated by realistic, naturalistic, and conservative approaches. It rebelled against the ills of the current Argentine theatre and tried to provide a fresh approach, new alternatives. It challenged artists and audience to new ways of seeing, new ways of experiencing. The fact that Argentine theatre, 1972, is no longer artistically nor thematically neutral, no longer formally or contextually stale is, in great part, a result of the activity and turmoil of the Di Tella years.
## APPENDIX A

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<td>H. Rivas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEARS</td>
<td>CENTERS AND DEPARTMENTS</td>
<td>DIRECTOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Center of Urban and Regional Studies</td>
<td>J.E. Hardoy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Department of Patrons of the Centers of Art</td>
<td>M.A. Uribelarrea</td>
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<td>1966</td>
<td>Center of Research in the Sciences of Education</td>
<td>G.L. de Romero Brest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Department of Computers</td>
<td>P. Zadunaisky</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

CENTER OF AUDIOVISUAL EXPRESSIVE ARTS

PROGRAMS FOR THE 1964 SEASON

KEY: Director (d) Text (t)
      Music (m) Audio-visual (a-v)

FILM:

| Una historia negra          | (A Black Story)     | Ricardo Alventosa |
| 4 pintores, hoy             | (4 Painters Today)  | Ricardo Arce      |
| De vuelta a casa            | (On Returning Home)| Ricardo Becher    |
| Estadio                     | (Stadium)           | Juan Berend       |
| Café-Bar                    | (Cafe-Bar)          | Mauricio Berú     |
| Imágenes del pasado         | (Images of the Past)| Guillermo Fernández |
| Quema                       | (Fire)              | Jurado            |
| Tarjeta postal              | (Post Card)         | Abraham A. Fischerman |
| Petrolita                   | (Little Petro)      | Héctor Franzí     |
| De los abandonados          | (About the Negligent)| Victor Iturralde |
| Tierra seca                 | (Barren Earth)      | Mabel Itzcovich   |
| Feria                       | (Fair)              | Oscar Kantor      |
| La Pared                    | (The Wall)          | Ricardo Luna      |
| El grito postrero           | (The Last Cry)      | Jorge Martin      |
| La esoca de Lucinda         | (Lucinda’s Broom)   | Dino Minitti      |
| El señor Muller             | (Mr. Muller)        | Carlos Ochagavia  |
| Riganelli                   | (Riganelli)         | Carlos Orgambide  |
| Fiesta en Sumamao           | (Party in Sumamao)  | María E. Palant   |
| Los anclados                | (The Anchored Ones)| Aldo Luis Persano |
| José                        | (Joe)               | Fud Quintar       |
| Faena                       | (Labor)             | Enrique Raab      |
| Los gauchos                 | (The Gauchos)       | Humberto Ríos     |
| Nacimiento de un libro      | (Birth of a Book)   | Julio A. Rossa    |
| Los anónimos                | (The Anonymous Ones)| Mario Sábató      |
| Bazán                       | (Bazan)             | Pedro Stocki      |
|                            |                     | Ramiro Tamayo     |
Total film production of

AUDIOVISUALS:

Villancicos de Navidad (Christmas Carols)

Ricardo Aranovich
Fernando Birri
Simón Feldman
David J. Kohon
Osías Wilenski
Enrique Dawi

Blas Emilio Atehortúa
César Bolaños
Alberto Villalpando
Miguel Angel Rondano
PROGRAMS FOR THE 1965 SEASON

**FILM:**

### a. Polish Short Subject Films

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Director</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Señor artista</td>
<td>Katarzyna Latallo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los caballos árabes</td>
<td>Daniel Szczechura</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Sillón</td>
<td>Jerzy Sobolewski</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plaza</td>
<td>Teresa Radzian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Botón</td>
<td>Jan Lenica</td>
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<tr>
<td>El laberinto</td>
<td>Władysław Slesicki</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montaña</td>
<td>Tadeusz Wilkosz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gatos y gatitos</td>
<td>Jerzy Kotowski</td>
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<td>La vuelta al mundo en 10 minutos</td>
<td>Jan Lomnicki</td>
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<td>La suite polaca</td>
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### b. New American Cinema

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<tr>
<td>Scorpio Rising</td>
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<td>Mass</td>
<td>Bruce Baillie</td>
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<td>Thigh Line Lyre Triangular</td>
<td>Stan Brakhage</td>
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<td>Horse Over Tea Kettle</td>
<td>Roberto Breer</td>
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<td>Pat's Birthday</td>
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<td>Animations</td>
<td>Robert Breer</td>
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<td>Fistfight</td>
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<td>Nightspring Daystar</td>
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<td>The Connection</td>
<td>Shirley Clarke</td>
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<td>A Movie</td>
<td>Bruce Conner</td>
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<td>Ed Emshwiller</td>
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<td>Totem</td>
<td>Ed Emshwiller</td>
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<td>The Sand Castle</td>
<td>Jerome Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open the Door and See All the People</td>
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<td>Ken Jacobs</td>
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<td>George</td>
<td>Stanton Kaye</td>
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<td>Sins of the Fleshapoids</td>
<td>Mike Kuchar</td>
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<td>Jaremelu</td>
<td>Naomi Levine</td>
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<td>The Devil is Dead</td>
<td>Carl Linder</td>
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<td>Skin</td>
<td>Carl Linder</td>
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<td>Twice a Man</td>
<td>Gregory Markopoulos</td>
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<td>Hallelujah the Hills</td>
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<td>The Double Barrel Detective Story</td>
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<td>Guns of the Trees</td>
<td>Jonas Mekas</td>
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<td>Magazine of the Arts</td>
<td>Jonas Mekas</td>
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The Brig
Go, Go, Go
Wrestling
Senseless
Chum lum
On the Bowery
Come Back Africa
Good Times, Wonderful Times
No. 11
Wheels No. 2
Snapshots of the City
Breathdeath
Mario Montez Eats Banana
13 Most Beautiful Girls
Vinyl
Lord of the Flies

Jonas Mekas
Marie Menken
Marie Menken
Ron Rice
Ron Rice
Lionel Rogosin
Lionel Rogosin
Lionel Rogosin
Harry Smith
Stan Vanderbeek
Stan Vanderbeek
Stan Vanderbeek
Andy Warhol
Andy Warhol
Andy Warhol
Peter Brook

CHILDREN'S THEATRE:

Cecilia Bullaude y su grupo de danza moderna
Teatro de Títeres Chiribín
Gira que gira, no cuentes mentiras
Canciones y cuentos mimados
Li La Li y Globito
Minino Maulla y baila

Cecilia Bullaude (d)
Lidia and Roberto Blanco (d)
Teatro de Zárate
Abel Poletti (d)
Cecilia Bullaude (d)
Myriam Riva (d)
Cecilia Bullaude (d)

AUDIOVISUALS:

Poesía argentina (Argentine Poetry)
Introducción para Lutero (Introduction for Luther)
Villancicos de Navidad (Christmas Carols)
Klee (Klee)

Roberto Villanueva
Roberto Villanueva
Roberto Villanueva
Roberto Villanueva

THEATRICAL SHOWS:

Lutero (Luther)
El desatino (The Blunder)

John Osborne (t)
Jorge Petraglia (d)
Griselda Gambaro (t)
Jorge Petraglia (d)
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Director(s)</th>
<th>Composer(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>¡Ultra Zum!!</td>
<td>(Ultra Zoom! primer version)</td>
<td>Celia Barbosa</td>
<td>Carlos Cutaia</td>
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<td>Danse Bouquet</td>
<td>(Danse Bouquet)</td>
<td>Leopoldo Maler</td>
<td>Ana Kamien</td>
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<td>Marilú Marini</td>
<td>Delia Cancela</td>
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<td>Oscar Palacio</td>
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<td>Juan Stoppani</td>
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<td>Miguel Angel Rondano</td>
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<th>(Preparatory Works for)</th>
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<td>Homenaje a Dante</td>
<td>Homage to Dante</td>
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<td>El niño envuelto</td>
<td>The Swaddled Child</td>
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<td>Historia de la canción popular</td>
<td>A History of the Popular Argentine Song</td>
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<td>Los poetas y las máquinas</td>
<td>Poets and Machines</td>
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</table>

| Mimo                          | (Mime)                                     | Celia Barbosa   |
| ¡Ultra Zum!!                  | (Ultra Zoom! segunda version)              |                 |
| (segunda version)             |                                           |                 |
FIILM:

Expressionism in the Silent German Film:

- The Eyes of the Mummy Ma (1918) - Ernst Lubistch
- Assault (1928) - Ernö Metzner
- Dr. Caligari's Cabinet (1919) - Robert Wiene
- The Cabinet of the Wax Dolls (1924) - Paul Leni
- The Last Laugh (1924) - Friedrich W. Murnau
- Nosferatu the Vampire (1921-1922) - Friedrich W. Murnau
- Metropolis (1926) - Fritz Lang

HAPPENINGS:

- Simultaneidad en simultaneidad (Simultaneity in Simultaneity) - Marta Minujin
- Prune Flat

- Para inducir el espíritu de imagen (Inducing the Spirit of an Image) - Oscar Masotta
- Señales (Signs) - Mario Candelonesas
- Sobre happenings (About Happenings) - Roberto Jacoby, Eduardo Costa, Pablo Suárez, Oscar Bony and Miguel Angel Telechea

AUDIOVISUALS:

- Lectura Dantis (Lectura Dantis) - Eugenio Guasta
- Sonocrómias (Sonocrómias) - Marta Guerra Alem
- El jardín de Angelo (Angelo's Garden) - Iutta Waloschek
- Virreinal (Vice-Royalty) - Roberto Villanueva

THEATRICAL SHOWS:

- El niño envuelto (The Swaddled Child) - Carlos del Peral(t)
- Norman Briski (d)
- César Bolaños (m)
Artaud 66: Una antología del Teatro de la Crueldad

¿Jugamos a la bañadera?

Caperucita Rota

Drácula el vampiro

Mens Sana in Corpore Sano

El Burlador

La Fiesta, Hoy

Bonino Aclara Ciertas Dudas Ostinato

(Shall We Play in the Tub?)

(Little Torn Hood)

(Dracula, the Vampire)

(Mens Sana in Corpore Sano)

(The Trickster)

(Party, Today)

(Bonino Clarifies Certain Doubts)

(Ostinato)

Graciela Martínez

Leopoldo Maler (d)

Rodríguez Arias

Carlos del Peral (t)

Norman Briski (d)

Gerardo Masana (m)

Jorge Schussheim (m)

Teatro Blanco

Norberto Montero (d)

Ana Kamien, Marilú Marini (d)

Miguel Ángel Rondano (m)

Jorge Bonino

Carlos Cutaia (d)

Carlos Cutaia (t)

Rubén de León (t)

Carlos Cutaia (m)

José María Rodríguez (m)
PROGRAMS FOR THE 1967 SEASON

AUDIOVISUALS:

Virreinal (Vice-Royalty)  César Bolaños and Roberto Villanueva
Lecturae Dantis  (Lecturae Dantis)
El Jardín de Angelo (Angelo's Garden)
Carta al padre  (Letter to Father)
Miguel Angel  (Miguel Angel)
Klee

HAPPENINGS:

El Helicóptero (The Helicopter)  Oscar Masotta

THEATRICAL SPECTACLES:

Cuarto de espejos (Room of Mirrors)  Tim Teatro
(Mático vivace)  Carlos Mathus (d)
Etcétera, etcétera (Etcetera, Etcetera)  Amanda Castillo
El paseo de los domingos  (Sunday Stroll)
Jazzpium (Jazzpium)

Libertad y otras intoxicaciones (Liberty and Other Intoxications)
Imyloh (Imyloh)
¡Hola! (Hello!)
Apocaliptosis (Apocalyptosis)
... de la vida de nosotros  (... of our life)
¡Oh! ¡Casta diva! (Oh! Casta diva!)
Señor Frankenstein (Mr. Frankenstein)
Los Siameses (The Siamese Twins)
Astartusa o La Emplumada suicida (Astarte or the Feathered Suicide)
Danza ya (Dance Now)

Oscar Masotta
Libertad y otras intoxicaciones (Liberty and Other Intoxications)
Drácula, el vampiro (Dracula, The Vampire)
Aventuras I y 2 (Adventures I and 2)
Beat, beat Beatles (Beat, Beat Beatles)

Les Luthiers cuentan la opera (Les Luthiers Tell About Opera)
Parametros (Parameters)
¡Crash! (Crash!)
Alfa-Omega (Alpha-Omega)
El timón de Atenas de William Shakespeare (Timon of Athens by William Shakespeare)

RE-MOUNTING
Rodríguez Arias
Daniel Armesto,
Roberto Jacoby and
Miguel Angel Tellechea
Les Luthiers
Marcos Mundstock (d)
Gerardo Masana (m)
Jorge Maronza (m)

Roberto Jacoby
Oscar Araiz
César Bolaños
Roberto Villanueva
PROGRAMS FOR THE 1968 SEASON

AUDIOVISUALS:

Audiovisual (Institutional Audiovisual ITDT)
Roberto Villanueva (d)

Audiovisual CEA (Audiovisual CEA)
Roberto Villanueva (d)

THEATRICAL SHOWS:

El primero que llega (The First to Arrive)
Carlos Mathus

45 minutos con Marilú Marini (45 Minutes with Marilú Marini)
Marilú Marini

Los esperapalomas (The Waiting Doves)
Juan Carlos Uviedo

La historia del soldado (Story of a Soldier)
Carlos Mathus (d)

Futura (Future)
A. Krieger (m)

Nacha de noche (Nacha by Night)
Rodríguez Arias

Ella es Marcia (She is Marcia)
Nacho Quevara

El Love & Song (Love & Song)
Marcia Moretto

La reconstrucción de la Opera de Viena, precedida de El proceso de Godard/Wittgenstein
Rodríguez Arias

Ella as Nacha de noche (She is Nacha by Night)
Mario Trejo

El Love & Song (The Waiting Doves)

La reconstrucción de la Opera de Viena, precedida de El proceso de Godard/Wittgenstein

La reconstrucción de la Opera de Viena, precedida de El proceso de Godard/Wittgenstein

She (She)

Ubu encadenado (Ubu Chained)

Asfixiaciones o enunciados (Asphyxiations or Statements)

Macbeth, Macbeth (Macbeth, Macbeth)

Los maderos de San Juan (The Timber of San Juan)

La duques de Amalfi de Leal Rey (The Duchess of Amalfi by Leal Rey)

Danzas (Dances)

Tiempo Lobo (Wolf Time)

La Crestiada y/o el sombrero de Tristán Tzara (The Cresteia and/or Tristan Tzara's Hat)

Krapp (Krapp's Last Tape)

Oh sólida carne (Oh, Solid Flesh)

Roberto Villanueva (d)

Carlos Mathus

Roberto Villanueva (d)

Carlos Mathus (d)

A. Krieger (m)

Nacho Quevara

Marcia Moretto

Rodríguez Arias

Mario Trejo

Marcos Arocena

Roberto Villanueva

Jorge Bonino

Rodrigo Favre

Berta Roth

Jorge Petralia

Iris Scaccheri

Carlos Trafic

Rubén de León

Jorge Petraglia

Celia Barbosa
PROGRAMS FOR THE 1969 SEASON

AUDIOVISUALS:

El guirigayero
La Arruinación (The Ruination)
Muestra de A-V, 1961 (Showing of A-V, 1961)

THEATRICAL SHOWS:

Los enanos (The Dwarves)
Tiempo de Fregar (Time to Clean)
Polymorphias (Polymorphias)
Fuego Asoma (Fire Sign)
Anastasia Querida (Dear Anastasia)
Espectáculo Beat (Rock Festival)
Las Nubes (The Clouds)
Blanca Nieves y los 7 Pecados capitales
Oye Humanidad (Listen, People)
Canciones de fuego (Songs of the Noise of Guns)
Casa I, Hora 1/4 (First House, 1/4 of an Hour)
Ideas, Hechos (Ideas, Acts)
Exposición de una obra de teatro (Exposition of a Theatrical Work)
Ceremonias (Ceremonies)
Yezidas (Yezidas)
Orquídeas para Tina muerte (Orchids for Dead Tina)
El Huevo (The Egg)
Marilú Marini es Marilú Marini

Alberto Bellatti and Alfredo Parel
Mario Satz and Hugo Quitana

Harold Pinter (t)
Jorge Petraglia (d)
Grupo Lobo
Laboratorio de Danza
Suzana Zimmerman (d)
José María Paolantoni
Nacho Guevara
Almendra
Grupo Vertical
Jorge Romero (d)
Les Luthiers
Mauricio Mundstock (d)

Iris Scaccheri
Micharvegas
Grupo Lobo
Iris Scaccheri
Alfredo Álvarez
Suzanna Zimmerman
Grupo 67
Mario Arocena
Carlos Cutaia
Miguel Abuelo y Pomo
Marilú Marini
Dear Professor Love:

I have the pleasure of replying to your letter of August 4 concerning the Ford Foundation's support to the Torcuato Di Tella Institute in Buenos Aires. For the sake of clarity, I will frame my response in the order of the questions you pose.

1. The Foundation's program everywhere in Latin America is concerned, inter alia, with the development of strong social science teaching, research, and analysis. Our reasoning is that the process of modernization will be facilitated by persons competent to work in economics, sociology, political science, et al. Further, we are persuaded that the data and analysis emanating from these disciplines are essential both for policy-makers and for informed public dialogue about developmental issues and alternatives. In accordance with this line of reasoning, the Di Tella Institute, when it was originally founded, seemed to Foundation staff to have considerable potential for contributing on the social science front to the Argentine developmental process. Since then, the Foundation has made a series of grants designed to support the work and advancement of the Institute's several social science centers.

2. The Foundation has made the following grants to the Institute for direct support:

   November 1961, General support for the Center for Economic Research, $360,000
May 1967, Support for the Center of Urban and Regional Studies, $90,000

May 1967, Support for the Center for Educational Research, $50,000

June 1968, General support for the Institute's social science centers, $440,000

April 1969, General support for the Institute's social science centers, $500,000

October 1969, Support for the Center for Educational Research, $50,000

January 1970, Endowment grant for the Institute's social science centers, $2,100,000

3. All of the Foundation's grants contained stipulations for the use of the Foundation's funds, generally in accordance with the budget proposals made to us by the Institute's directors. Thus, for example, a substantial portion of grant support, especially in the early years, was earmarked for training Institute social science staff to the doctoral level in graduate programs abroad.

4. The mandate we have from our officers for work in the developing countries of the world does not normally include provision for the arts and humanities. All of the grants provided to the Di Tella Institute were thus reserved for the social science centers. However, we understood that such support would undoubtedly, albeit indirectly, assist the arts centers since it would ease the pressure on the central budget from the social science side of the house.

5. Foundation staff have taken no specific position with respect to the Center of Audiovisual Experimentation. It is conceivable, of course, that our concern with general matters of financing at the Institute may have indirectly affected the Institute's thinking. But I would tend to believe that it was basically the hard facts of income and expenditure that were the key determinants in their decisions about the Center.

6. The Foundation continues to support the Institute, through its endowment grant.
I hope this information is helpful. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Nita Rous Manitzas
Program Officer
APPENDIX D

(11 minutos + 48 horas)

por

ALIAN KAPROW NEW YORK
MARTA MINUJIN BUENOS AIRES
WOLF VOSTELL BERLIN

EL 24 OCTUBRE 1966

DESEDE LAS 0 HORAS HASTA LAS 0.10 HORAS, SERÁN EJECUTADAS SIMUL-
TÁNEAMENTE EN NUEVA YORK, BUENOS AIRES Y BERLIN

LAS ACCIONES PUEDEN SER INTERPRETADAS POR TODAS LAS PERSONAS QUE
QUIERAN Y A LA MISMA HORA EN CADA CIUDAD

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<th>CIUDAD</th>
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<td>KAPROW</td>
<td>ELLA FALL-EX, PONGA</td>
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<td>MINUJIN</td>
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<td>MINUJIN (TEXT)</td>
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<td>EN CUALQUIER</td>
<td>TODO LOS QUE</td>
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<td>OTRO LUGAR</td>
<td>QUIERAN</td>
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<td>0.10 h.-0.11</td>
<td>BERLÍN</td>
<td>VOSTELL</td>
<td>DE CADA UNA DE LAS ESCENAS DEBEN HACERSE FOTOGRAFÍAS POLAROID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.10 h.-0.11</td>
<td>NEW YORK</td>
<td>KAPROW</td>
<td>QUE DEBEN SER ENVIADAS A LAS 3 CIUDADES POR TELEFOTOGRÁFÍA. DEBEN SER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.10 h.-0.11</td>
<td>BUENOS AIRES</td>
<td>MINUJIN</td>
<td>PROYECTADAS DURANTE 48 HORAS SIN INTERRUPCIÓN EN LA GALERÍA BLOCK, FROBENSTR.</td>
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<td>0.10 h.-0.11</td>
<td>EN CUALQUIER</td>
<td>TODO LOS QUE</td>
<td>18. BERLÍN</td>
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En abril de 1966, la argentina Marta Minujin, el alemán Wolf Vostell y el americano Alan Kaprow idearon crear tres diferentes sucesos simultáneamente en sus tres países respectivos.

Parte de los "Sucesos" de Vostell, Kaprow y Minujin tendrían lugar simultáneamente día y hora, es decir que cada uno además de crear su propio "suceso" realizaría un trozo de acción de los "sucesos" de los otros artistas.

Concretando se ha fijado para el lunes 24 a las 24 horas, la señal de cambio de ambientación, aquí en Buenos Aires, por canal 13 saldrán al aire conjuntamente parte de los "sucesos" de Kaprow y Vostell más la invasión instantánea de Marta Minujin.

Radio Municipal y Radio Libertad emitirán 10 minutos en los cuales se podrán escuchar las voces de Kaprow y Vostell detallando las alternativas del "suceso" simultáneo, más el texto leído por Marta Minujin y que corresponde en parte a las imágenes mudas de lo que se ve por televisión.

El "suceso" creado por Marta Minujin, con la colaboración de Leopoldo Maler y que ocurre en el Instituto Di Tella se llama:

SIMULTANEIDAD EN SIMULTANEIDAD

Se compone de dos "sucesos", por supuesto simultáneos:

1) Invasión instantánea (radio, TV, teléfono, telegramas) que consiste en una emisión de diez minutos dentro del programa "Universidad del aire" (canal 13 TV), otra de diez minutos por Radio Libertad, simultáneamente con Radio Excelsior.

Este "suceso" a realizarse el lunes 24 de octubre, se desarrollará simultáneamente en Berlín y Nueva York, recibiendo Wolf Vostell en la primera y Alan Kaprow en la segunda, instrucciones de Marta Minujin por radio-teléfono; a la vez que ambos darán instrucciones por el mismo medio a Marta Minujin para que realice su "suceso".

Previamente se ha encontrado aquí mil personas que viven solas y estarán a la hora de la emisión en sus respectivas casas; serán los "invadidos". Por otra parte, cada uno de éstos habrá sido fotografiado, filmado y grabado su voz, para ser incluido en la emisión.

Veamos ahora lo que ocurrirá el día D de la hora h: "El" sabe que algo le va a ocurrir, enciende la TV y se apoltrona para ver el "suceso", apareciendo instantáneamente Marta Minujin, quien le habla y le indica que radio debe sintonizar para encontrar el texto que corresponde a cada imagen, cada una de las cuales lleva un número y de acuerdo con él se ha de cambiar de radio (por ejemplo, imagen 1 es Radio Libertad e imagen 2 es Radio Excelsior). Entre tanto
alguien lo llama por teléfono y al mismo tiempo recibe un telegrama, de suerte que durante diez minutos vive preso de los "medios de comunicación", con la radio en la mano y la TV encendida, atendiendo el teléfono y recibiendo telegramas. Y termina el "suceso."

2) Simultaneidad envolvente (aparatos de TV y radios para cada una de las personas participantes del "suceso" en el Instituto Di Tella, "slides", cine, fotografías, grabadores).

a) Fase preliminar el jueves 13 a partir de las 19 hs.: sesenta personas invitadas entran a la sala audiovisual del Instituto, donde hay sesenta aparatos de TV y sesenta radios portátiles preparados para cada una. Mientras se ubican son grabadas sus voces y sonidos opinando, son filmados y fotografiados en diversas actitudes. Luego se les ordena salir y de nuevo son filmados y fotografiados.

b) Fase de realización el lunes 24 a las 24 hs.: las mismas personas que han concurrido a la fase preliminar entran al Instituto, con la misma ropa que tenían entonces. Sobre la pantalla del frente se verán ellos mismos, ubicándose como en la vez anterior, mientras en las paredes se proyectarán las placas diapositivas que los reproducen de frente y de costado. En la pantalla del escenario pueden verse a sí mismos entrando y sentándose. Cada participante se ubica frente e un televisor y se de entrega una radio. En la televisión puede verse la invasión instantánea. Mientras tanto, sincroniza en su radio portátil las estaciones cuyas siglas aparecerán en las pantallas de televisión. De esta manera, se crea una doble situación en la que los participantes se verán a sí mismos reflejados en la sala y en los receptores de televisión. La terminación del suceso coincide con la finalización del programa especial en la TV y en las radios. Al levantarse de sus butacas para salir, la acción se repite proyectada en la pantalla del escenario. Fin.

NOTA: esta experiencia fue posible por el apoyo y gentileza de televisores DUMONT. Las radios portátiles fueron cedidas por atención de TONOMAC, y el film fue realizado por SUCESOS ARGENTINOS.

En la fotografía colaboraron:

Carmen Miranda
Juan Lopez
Julio Achinelli
Daniel Melgaeso
Pedro Roth
Gerardo Oclander
Mario Kohout
Roberto Alvarado
Humberto Rivas
Gabriela Peruch
Además colaboró: Telenoche

Asistente de último momento: Joe Borsani

Veinticuatro horas antes de la noche del jueves 13 de octubre de 1966, fueron citadas telefonicamente las 60 personas que participaron de la Simultaneidad Envolvente (primera parte) del "Suceso" creado por Marta Minujin.

Las 60 personas fueron elegidas entre periodistas, reporteros y gente de la prensa, eran ellos en este caso quienes eran fotografiados y reporteados, cada uno de sus pasos, sus gestos, y movimientos eran detectados por 17 fotógrafos ubicados en distintos puntos de la sala, sus voces registradas por diversos grabadores. Las restantes personas pertenecían a la televisión, radio, cine, universitarios, obreros y ejecutivos.

Estas 60 personas ubicadas platea por medio con una televisión al frente y una radio en la mano, fueron filmadas entrando y ubicándose, sentados de frente y de perfil, parándose y saliendo.

Para ello debieron esperar dos horas y media lo que les ocasionó fatiga, insatisfacción y aburrimiento.

Algunos conocidos entre sí discurrían en apretados grupos, otros absorbidos por la televisión esperaban que pasase algo, hubo encuentros, consultas psiquiátricas ganas de irse.

Siendo la 22 hs. la impaciencia fue total comenzaron a partir por lo cual fue necesario acortar la filmación a la mitad de lo fijado y apresurarse a fotografiar uno a uno de perfil, marcando seis pasos contra las paredes laterales de la sala.

22 y 30 hs. no quedaba nadie en la sala, el material obtenido es extremadamente escaso, los sonidos grabados confusos, y slides y films connotan la situación de apuro.

Por lo tanto, Simultaneidad Envolvente se transforma en otra cosa y se permite el acceso a la sala de 60 personas más.
11 minutes and 48 hours

by

Allan Kaprow New York
Marta Minujin Buenos Aires
Wolf Vostell Berlin

October 24, 1966

From 12:00 A.M. until 12:10 A.M., the following will be performed simultaneously in New York, Buenos Aires and Berlin.

The actions may be interpreted by everyone who wishes and at the same time in each city.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00-12:04</td>
<td>BERLIN</td>
<td>VOSTELL (TEXT)</td>
<td>Take a bottle of milk and write on it FALL-EX, put the bottles on the nearest street corners. Fill out a telegram with the word MILK and the names of the streets. Send it to the White House, Washington on the same day.</td>
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<td>NEW YORK</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:04-12:07</td>
<td>BERLIN</td>
<td>VOSTELL</td>
<td>Smear marmalade over your car and lick it. Then open the doors of the car and let people wrapped in metallic paper fall out.</td>
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<td>NEW YORK</td>
<td>KAPROW (TEXT)</td>
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<td>12:07-12:10</td>
<td>BERLIN</td>
<td>VOSTELL</td>
<td>Simultaneity in Simultaneity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:10-12:11</td>
<td>BERLIN</td>
<td>VOSTELL</td>
<td>All the scenes must be photographed with a Polaroid and the copies sent to the three cities by telephotography. They are to be projected during 48 hours without interruption in the Block Gallery, Frobenstrasse 18, Berlin.</td>
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In April, 1966, the Argentine Marta Minujin, the German Wolf Vostell, and the American Alan Kaprow planned to create three different simultaneous Happenings in their three respective countries. Part of the Happenings of Vostell, Kaprow, and Minujin would take place simultaneously on the same day at the same hour, that is to say, that each one, besides creating his own Happenings would perform a part of the action of the Happenings of the other artists. The realization has been fixed for Monday, the twenty-fourth, at midnight -- the signal for change of environment. Here in Buenos Aires, Channel 13 will broadcast part of the Happenings of Kaprow and Vostell plus the instantaneous invasion of Marta Minujin. Radio Municipal and Radio Libertad will broadcast for ten minutes during which the voices of Kaprow and Vostell will be heard detailing the alternatives of the simultaneous Happening, plus a text to be read by Marta Minujin which will correspond in part to the silent images visible on the television screen.

The Happening created by Marta Minujin with the collaboration of Leopoldo Maler will take place in the Di Tella Institute. It is called:

SIMULTANEITY IN SIMULTANEITY

It is composed of two Happenings -- simultaneous, of course:

1) **Instantaneous Invasion** (radio, TV, telephone, telegrams) consists of a ten minute broadcast during the program "University of the Air" (Channel 13 TV) and ten minutes over Radio Libertad with a simultaneous ten minutes on Radio Excelsior.
This Happening, to be performed on October 24th will be developed simultaneously in Berlin and New York with Wolf Vostell and Alan Kaprow receiving instructions from Marta Minujin by radio-telephone; at the same time both will give instructions by the same means to Marta Minujin in order that she can perform their Happening.

Now, let's see what will happen on D-day at H-hour.

"He" knows that something is going to happen; he turns on the TV and lingers in order to watch the Happening. Marta Minujin appears immediately talking to him and indicating that he must synchronize the radio in order to find the text which corresponds to each image, all of which bear a number and require that the radio station be changed (for example, image 1 is Radio Libertad and image 2 is Radio Excelsior). Meanwhile, someone will call him by telephone and, at the same time, he will receive a telegram in such a way that for ten minutes he will be a prisoner of "the communication media," with the radio in one hand, the TV turned on, talking on the telephone and receiving telegrams. Thus ends the Happening.

2) **Enveloping Simultaneity** (TV and radio sets for each one of the people participating in the Happening at the Di Tella Institute, slides, film, photographs, tape recorders).

a) Preliminary Phase - Thursday, the 13 starting from 7:00 P.M.: sixty people will enter the Audiovisual laboratory of the Institute where there are sixty TV sets and sixty portable radios prepared for each person. While they are getting situated, their voices will be taped. They will
be filmed and photographed in various postures. Then, they will be requested to leave and, again, they will be filmed and photographed.

b) Performance Phase - Monday, 24th, at midnight. The same people that have participated in the preliminary phase will enter the Institute wearing the same clothing that they had on the other evening. On the front screen, they will see themselves getting situated as before while on the walls, slides will be projected showing them in front view and profile. On the stage screen, they will see themselves entering and sitting down. Each participant will be situated in front of a television set and a radio will be given him. The instantaneous invasion can be seen on television. Meanwhile, with his portable radio, he can synchronize the stations whose call letters will appear on the television screen. In this way, a double situation will be created in which the participants will see themselves reflected in the room and on the television screens. The termination of the Happening coincides with the finish of the special program on TV and radio. When they get up from their seats in order to leave, the action will be projected on the stage screen. END.

NOTE: This experience was possible through the help and kindness of DUMONT television sets. The portable radios were donated by TONOMAC and the film was developed by SUCESOS ARGENTINOS.

The following collaborated in the photography:

Carmen Miranda
Juan Lopez
Julio Achinelli
Twenty-four hours before the evening of Thursday, October 13, 1966, the sixty people who were to participate in Enveloping Simultaneity (first part) of the Happening by Marta Minujin were contacted by telephone.

The sixty persons were chosen from among journalists, reporters and people of the press. It was they who in this case were photographed and "recorded." Their steps, their gestures, and their movements were recorded by 17 photographers located at different points in the auditorium. Their voices were recorded by different tape recorders.

The remaining people were radio, television, and film personalities, academicians, workers, and executives.

These sixty people were situated in the orchestra area, a television set in front of them and a portable radio in their hands. They were filmed entering, situating themselves, seated from the front and from a profile view, standing up and leaving.

They had to wait two and one-half hours which resulted in fatigue,
dissatisfaction, and boredom.

Some acquaintances talked to each other in tight groups, others, fascinated by the television, waited for something to happen. There were encounters, psychiatric consultations and a desire to get away. At 10:00, the impatience was total and they began to leave.

It was necessary to cut the filming to half of what had been planned and to hurry up the photography of each one from a profile view. At 10:30 no-one remained in the auditorium. The material obtained is extremely scarce; the taped sounds confused, the slides and film suggesting a hurried situation.

Therefore, Enveloping Simultaneity will be transformed into something else and we will allow sixty additional people to enter the auditorium.
Sr. Jorge Romero Brest:

Hace una semana le escribí dándole a conocer la obra que pensaba desarrollar en el Instituto Di Tella. Hoy, apenas unos días más tarde, ya me siento incapaz de hacerla por una imposibilidad moral. Sigo creyendo que era útil, aclaratoria y que podía llegar a conflictuar a algunos de los artistas invitados, o por lo menos, poner en tela de juicio los conceptos sobre los que sus obras estaban fundadas.

Lo que yo ya no creo es que ésto sea necesario. Me pregunto: ¿Es importante hacer algo dentro de la institución, aunque colabore a su destrucción? Las cosas se mueren cuando hay otras que las reemplazan. Si conocemos el final por qué insistir en hacer hasta la última pirueta? ¿Por qué no situarnos en la posición límite? Ayer precisamente comentaba con Ud. como a mí entender, la obra iba desapareciendo materialmente del escenario, y como se iban asumiendo actitudes y conceptos que abrirían una nueva época y que tenían un campo de acción más amplio y menos viciado.

Es evidente que, de plantear situaciones morales en las obras, de utilizar el significado como una materialidad, se desprende la necesidad de crear un lenguaje útil. Una lengua viva y no un código para elites. Se ha inventado un arma. Un arma recién cobra sentido en la acción. En el escaparate de una tienda, carece de toda peligrosidad.

Creo que la situación política y social del país origina este cambio. Hasta este momento yo podía discutir la acción que desarrolla el Instituto, aceptarla o enjuiciarla. Hoy lo que no acepto es al Instituto que representa la centralización cultural, la institucionalización, la imposibilidad de valorar las cosas en el momento en que éstas inciden sobre el medio, por que la institución solo deja entrar productos ya prestigiados a los que utiliza, cuando, o han perdido vigencia o son indiscutibles dado el grado de profesionalismo del que produce, es decir, los utiliza sin correr ningún riesgo. Esta centralización impide la difusión masiva de las experiencias que puedan realizar los artistas. Esta centralización hace que todo producto pase a alimentar el prestigio, no ya del que lo ha creado, sino del Instituto, que con esta ligerísima alteración justifica como propia la labor ajena y todo el movimiento que ella implica, sin arriesgar un solo centavo y beneficiándose todavía con la promoción periodística.
Si yo realizaría la obra en el Instituto, esta tendría un público muy limitado de gente que presume de intelectualidad por el hecho meramente geográfico de pararse tranquilamente en la sala grande de la casa del arte. Esta gente no tiene la más mínima preocupación por estas cosas, por lo cual la legibilidad del mensaje que yo pudiera plantear en mi obra carecería totalmente de sentido. Si a mí se me ocurriera escribir VIVA LA REVOLUCIÓN POPULAR en castellano, inglés o chino sería absolutamente lo mismo. Todo es arte. Esas cuatro paredes encierran el secreto de transformar todo lo que está entro de ellas en arte, y el arte no es peligroso. (la culpa es nuestra).

¿Entonces? Entonces, los que quieran trepar, trabajan en el Instituto. Yo no le aseguro que lleguen lejos. El I.T.D.T. no tiene dinero como para imponer nada a nivel internacional. Los que quieran ser entendidos en alguna forma diganlo en la calle o donde no se los tergiversen. A los que quieran estar bien con Dios y con el Diablo les recuerdo "los que quieran salvar la vida la perderán." A los espectadores les aseguro: lo que les muestran ya es viejo, mercadería de segunda mano. Nadie puede darles fabricado y envasado lo que está dándose en este momento, están dándose el Hombre, la obra: diseñar formas de vida.

PABLO SUÁREZ

Esta renuncia es una obra para el Instituto di Tellà. Creo que muestra claramente mi conflicto frente a la invitación, por lo que creo haber cumplido con el compromiso.
Buenos Aires, May 13, 1968

(Mr. Romero Brest:

A week ago I wrote to you to tell you about the work I planned to carry out at the Di Tella Institute. Today, only a few days later, ethical considerations make it impossible for me to do this work. I still believe that it was useful, enlightening, and could have stirred up some of the artists invited or, at least, questioned the concepts on which their works were based.

But I no longer think this is necessary. I ask myself: is it important to function inside the institution, even if your work helps to destroy it? Things die when there are other things to take their place. If we know what the final result is going to be, why insist on continuing to the very end? Why not take the final position? Just yesterday I was telling you how, in my opinion, the physical work of art is disappearing from the scene, and new attitudes and concepts are coming forth, opening a new era with a wider and purer field of action.

It is obvious that if you want to present moral situations, to use their meaning as a concrete reality, it is necessary to create a useful language. A living language and not a code for elites. A weapon has been developed. To be worth something it must be used, for inside a store window it is utterly useless.

I believe that the social and political situation in this country has brought about the change in my attitude. Up to this moment I could discuss the work of the Institute itself, accept it or criticize it. Today, what I cannot accept is that the Institute represents cultural centralization, institutionalization, the impossibility of assessing things at the moment when they impinge upon the medium; the reason is that the Institute only accepts those works which are prestigious, and uses them only when they are no longer vital or when the professionalism of the artist makes the work unimpeachable; in other words, shows them without taking any risks. Centralization prevents the widespread distribution of the artists' possible experiences. Centralization means that the work of art serves as a tool for enhancing the prestige not of the creator but of the Institute, which by means of this slight manoeuvre receives credit for the work of others and for the whole movement they represent, benefiting from newspaper publicity without risking a penny.

If I were to show my work in the Institute, its audience would be limited to people who think that the mere geographic fact of standing quietly in the high temple of the art world makes them intellectuals. These people are not the least bit concerned with politics or ethics, so that the comprehensibility of whatever message my work might contain would be a moot question. Whether I decided to write LONG LIVE THE
PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION in Spanish, English, or Chinese, the result would be the same. Everything is art. These four walls contain the secret of transforming everything within them into art, and art is not dangerous (the artists' fault).

What then? Then, let those who want to "get ahead" work in the Institute. I do not guarantee that they will get far. The I.T.D.T. does not have enough money to impose its choices on the international level. Let those who want somehow to be understood speak in the streets or someplace where their words will not be distorted. As to those who want to be on good terms with both God and the devil, let me remind them that he who would save his life must first lose it.

To the public I say: "What they are showing you is already old, secondhand merchandise. Nobody can give you, processed and prepackaged, what is happening at this moment: the rise of Man, of the true work of art, of new ways of life."

Pablo Suárez

This renunciation is a work of art for the Di Tella Institute. I believe that it clearly illustrates my conflict with the invitation which I feel would have been an act of compromise to accept.
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PROGRAMS

Center of Audiovisual Expressive Arts
Torcuato Di Tella Institute, 1969


Asztartusa, 1967.

Aventuras I y II, 1967.
Crash, 1967.

Cuarto de espejos, 1967.

Danza ya, 1967.

... de la vida de nosotros, 1967.


La duquesa de Amalfi de Leal Rey, 1968.

Drácula, el vampiro, 1966.

Imylooh, 1967.

¿Jugamos a la bañadera?, 1966.

Krapp, 1968.


45 minutos con Marilú Marini, 1968.

¡Oh! Casta Diva, 1967.

Ostinato, 1966.

El Paseo de los domingos, 1967.

La reconstrucción de la Opera de Viena (precidida de El proceso Godard/ variaciones Wittgenstein), 1968.

Señor Frankenstein, 1967.

She, 1968.

Los siameses, 1967.

Ubu encañado, 1968.

¡¡Ultra Zum!!, 1965.