

LA CELESTINA

by
Robert Lepage



Text
Fernando de Rojas

French version by MICHEL GARNEAU (CANADA)
Translated into Spanish by: Alvaro García Meseguer

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with
Nuria Espert (Celestina)
Miguel Palenzuela
Carmen Arévalo
David Selvas
Carmen del Valle
Pep Molina
Nuria Moreno
Roberto Mori
Nuria García
Marta Fernández-Muro
Manuel Puchades

Co-production

EX MACHINA

**La Fundación de la Comunidad Valenciana, Fundación Ciudad de las artes
escénicas de Valencia**
**Festival de las Artes de Forum universal de las culturas - Barcelona 2004, Teatre
Lliure; Salamanca 2005, Plaza Mayor de Europa and
Teatro Cuyás (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria)**
**Forum Barcelona 2004; Teatre Lliure; Salamanca 2005, Plaza Mayor de Europa
and Teatro Cuyás, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria**

Director: **Robert Lepage**
Set designer: **Carl Fillion**
Music: **Sylvy Grenier**
Costume designer: **François Barbeau**

Production manager: **Lucie Juneau, Ex Machina**
Associate producer: **Richard Castelli, Epidemic**
Associate Production - Spain: **Pilar de Yzaguirre, Ysarca**

THE CHARACTERS

PLEBERIO, Melibea's father

CALIXTO

MELIBEA

SEMPRONIO et TRISTÁN , Calixto's servants

CELESTINA

ELICIA, whore

PÁRMENO et SOSIA, Calixto's servants

LUCRECIA, Melibea's servants

ALISA, Melibea's mother

AREUSA, whore

CENTURIO, skilled swordsman and hired assassin

The Celestina is the first European novel, a fifteenth-century Spanish masterpiece remarkable for its originality and depth.

A young nobleman enlists the services of Celestina, an old bawd, to help him seduce a girl; the seduction ends in tragedy. It is not, however, the love story that is important. It is Celestina who dominates the scene.

She is a frank and lusty old pagan of the Renaissance, brimming over with classical lore and a salty wisdom gained in the course of a vigorous and sinful life, which she still loves with a wonderful heartiness. Her greatest regret, indeed, is that in her remote youth she neglected some few opportunities to enjoy herself. In her old age her pleasure is in purveying pleasures to others. She is one of the great creations of all literature and has a secure place beside her two compatriots, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.

This Spanish classic, the greatest of the forebears of Cervantes, was originally published anonymously, in 1499 but later editions bear the name of Fernando de Rojas.

NURIA ESPERT



More than 150 awards granted all over the world gives evidence of the fact that Nuria Espert is considered one of the most outstanding and prolific personalities in the field of both the interpretation and the scene direction in Europe and America.

At present (September 2003) she has just finished a tournée of Euripides' *Medea* under the direction of M. Cacoyannys and is giving a series of recitals with her show *Songs and poems* paying homage to Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht. At the same time she is preparing the direction of *Tosca* for the Teatro Real in Madrid and the Tokio Opera House.

Nuria Espert was born in Hospitalet del Llobregat (Barcelona) and when she was twelve years old she became a member of the Official Children's Company at Teatro Romea in Barcelona. A professional from the age of 12, she played Juliet at 16 and the title-role in Euripides' *Medea* at 19. Later on, when she was 24 years old, she set up her own company and toured all over Spain, its productions, in many of which she appeared, ranging from O'Neill, Brecht, and Sartre to the classical Spanish dramatists, Lope de Vega, Calderón, Guimerá, Euripides, and Shakespeare among others.

In 1969 she started a fruitful professional relationship with the Argentinean scene director Víctor García, who directed her in three performances: *The servants* by J. Genet, *Yerma* by Federico García Lorca and *Divine words* by Valle-Inclán. With these three works Nuria Espert's Company was invited by the most prestigious international festivals.

From 1979 to 1981 Espert directed the Spanish Centro Dramático Nacional and, in particular, the María Guerrero theatre. In this period she played the main role of *Mistress Rosita the single one* by García Lorca under the direction of Jorge Lavelli.

She created Euripides' *Medea* as well as Shakespeare's Hamlet and both Ariel and Prospero in *The Tempest* and Oscar Wilde's *Salome*.

Some of her last interpretative works merit to be pointed out. Thus for instance, she played the role of Yoko in *Make-up* by H. Inoue, the role of Arkadina in Chejov's *The gull*, the role of María Callas in *Master Class* by T. McNally and the role of Marta in *Who fears Virginia Wolf?*

Since 1986 Nuria Espert alternates her work as an actress with scene direction works, not only in theatre but also in opera productions.

In theatre she has directed Glenda Jackson and Joan Plowright in London (*The house of Bernarda Alba*, by Lorca), Irene Papas in Barcelona (Euripides' *Medea*) and Tamasaburo Bando in Tokio (*Counterdance*), among others.

In opera she has directed *Madame Buterfly*, *Elektra*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *Carmen*, *Turandot* which have been presented all over the world in the most important opera theatres, such as Liceu (Barcelona), Covent Garden (London), Royal Theatre (Glasgow), Los Angeles Opera, La Monnaie (Brussels), La Maestranza (Sevilla), etc. sharing responsibilities with musical directors such as Plácido Domingo and Zubin Metha.

ROBERT LEPAGE



photo © Sophie Grenier

Québécois visionary and one of Canada's foremost cultural ambassadors, Robert Lepage has established himself as an internationally acclaimed director (stage and film), designer, playwright and performer. His dynamic and original approach constantly pushes the boundaries of theatrical performance, most notably with the use of new technologies. Drawing inspiration from contemporary life, his work has influenced a generation of artists and practitioners.

Born in Quebec, 1957, Robert Lepage had a profound interest in geography from an early age, so much so that he even dreamed of becoming a professor. However, it was his interest in art, which was to lead him to what would become his greatest passion, theatre. In 1975, at the age of 17, he began his training at the Conservatoire d'Art Dramatique de Québec. On returning from an internship in Paris (1978), he spent two years acting, writing and directing various productions before joining Théâtre Repère.

In 1984, he created ***Circulations***, which was presented across Canada and won an award as Best Canadian Production during La Quinzaine Internationale de Théâtre de Québec. The following year, he creates ***The Dragons' Trilogy***, his work first received international recognition. This was followed by ***Vinci*** (1986), ***The Polygraph*** (1987-1990) and ***Tectonic Plates*** (1988-1990). In 1988, he founded his own Professional Management Company, Robert Lepage Inc. (RLI).

From 1989 to 1993, he was the artistic director at the National Arts Center's French Theatre, in Ottawa. At the same time, he continued his innovative stage-directing with ***Needles and Opium*** (1991-1993/1994-1996), ***Coriolan***, ***Macbeth*** and ***La Tempête*** (1992-1994) and ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** (1992), for which he became the first North-American ever to direct a Shakespeare play at London's Royal National Theatre.

In 1994, Robert Lepage took an important step by founding his own multidisciplinary production company, Ex Machina. Taking on once more the role of artistic director, he lead his new team through the creative process that produced the critically acclaimed ***Seven Streams of the River Ota*** (1994), ***Le Songe d'une nuit d'été*** (1995) along with his third one-man show, ***Elsinore*** (1995-1997). In 1994, he began to branch out, extending his talents into the world of cinema. His abilities as a scriptwriter and director were immediately recognised with his first feature film, ***Le Confessionnal***, which was invited to open the Director's Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival in 1995. He later went on to direct ***Le Polygraphe*** (1996), ***Nô*** (1998), his first English feature film, ***Possible Worlds*** (2000) and in 2003, he directed ***The Far Side of the Moon***, adapted from his play.

La Caserne Dalhousie, a multi-disciplinary production centre, opened in June of 1997 under Lepage's watchful eye. In their new workspace, he and his team created and produced **Geometry of Miracles** (1998), **Zulu Time** (1999), **the far side of the moon** (2000), **La Casa Azul** (2001), **Busker's Opera** (2004), a new version of **Dragons' Trilogy** with a new cast (2003), the opera **1984**, based on George Orwell's novel (2005) and his latest solo piece, **The Andersen Project** (2005).

His growing reputation elicited offers from many different fields thus allowing him to broaden his artistic experience. He present with great success the double-bill **Bluebeards Castle** and **Erwartung** at the Canadian Opera Company (1992), he conceived and directed for the stage Peter Gabriel's **Secret World Tour** (1993) and presents **The Damnation of Faust** in Japan (1999) and in Paris (2001). He later took on the role of artistic director of Métissages (2000), an exhibition at Le Musée de la Civilisation du Québec. Later, he teamed up again with Gabriel to stage his 2002 tour, **Growing Up Live**. In February 2005, he collaborated with Cirque du Soleil who called on his talent to create a permanent Las Vegas show named **KÀ**.

Robert Lepage's work has been recognized and honoured numerous times. The most recent prizes include the medal of l'Ordre National du Québec, awarded in 1999. In September of 2000, he was the recipient of the SORIQ Award, acknowledging his dynamic and varied international career. In October 2001, he was honoured to become a 'World Leader' at the Harbourfront Centre, recognising once more the extent of his worldwide success. In 2002, the French embassy invited him to join the Legion of Honor, the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce named him "Grand Québécois" and he was recipient of the Herbert Whittaker Drama Bench Award for his outstanding contribution to Canadian Theatre. In November 2003, he was recipient of the Prix Denise-Pelletier, the most prestigious award attributed by the Government of Québec in the field of stage arts. He received The Hans Christian Andersen Prize 2004 to an outstanding artist whose work of art will contribute to spreading an awareness of Hans Christian Andersen internationally. In 2005, he received the Samuel-de-Champlain Prize for his contribution to the French and Canadian culture and he received in Moscow the International Stanislavsky Award for his contribution to the World Theatre Art.

Contact

EPIDEMIC

Richard Castelli : Directeur / Director — rc@epidemic.net
Florence Berthaud : Coordination & communication — fb@epidemic.net
Sarah Ford : Spectacles / Performances — production@epidemic.net
Céline Dal : Installations & expositions / exhibitions — exhibitions@epidemic.net

EPIDEMIC Sevrans

15 – 15 bis, allée Massenet
F-93270 SEVRAN, FRANCE
T : 33 (0)1 43 83 49 53
F : 33 (0)1 49 36 04 39

EPIDEMIC Paris

Tel : 33 (0) 1 53 34 03 69
Fax : 33 (0) 1 53 01 38 36
production@epidemic.net
<http://www.epidemic.net>