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Mexart 2006 - Divino Pastor Gongora

 Published Monday 14 August 2006 at 16:10 by **Nick Awde**

Okay, so it's in Spanish (there are surtitles) and it's set way back in the 18th century, when Mexico was New Spain, straining under the iron yoke of king and the Catholic church. But this powerful piece, in probing the eternal link between politics and theatre will make you ponder and laugh in equal measure.

Gongora wants to set the record straight. The incarcerated actor knows a horrible end is just around the corner - the garrotte lurks in the wings - for not only is he accused of treason but he has also had it away with the niece of the inquisitor who intends to sentence him. Led by ego and libido into taking a part in a new show, he had been so blinded he failed to realise that it was the herald for a major uprising. Apprehended, he finds himself accused of debauchery, a charge he is more than happy to admit - he's an actor after all - but also of treason, which he finds flattering but improbable.

Gongora is a comic actor and it is the humour that makes his predicament so familiar to us all. Weaving madcap narrative, song and snatches of plays, and always with a twinkle in his eye, the rotund Carlos Cobos rants, gyrates, sings and declaims. Aided by Miguel Angel Rivera's deft direction, Cobos engages with every word or tumble in the dust while William Gregory's evocative, pithy translation wrings out every double entendre with poetic dignity.

Lightening the worthy themes of censorship and oppression, this story within a story turns out to also be a play within a play as Jaime Chabaud's cracking script serves up clips from authentic contemporary works which, even when viewed from the triple-separation of language, culture and history, are jaw-dropping for their scatological subversion.

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Production information

Pleasance Dome, August 7-26

Author: Jaime Chabaud

Director: Miguel Angel Rivera

Producers: The Anglo Mexican Foundation with Jon Bonfiglio and Giles Ramsay presents Teatro del Mar

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 running time: 1hr

Production information displayed was believed correct at time of review. Information may change over the run of the show.

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Run sheet

Pleasance Dome Edinburgh

August 7-26 2006

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