

Emilio Carballido

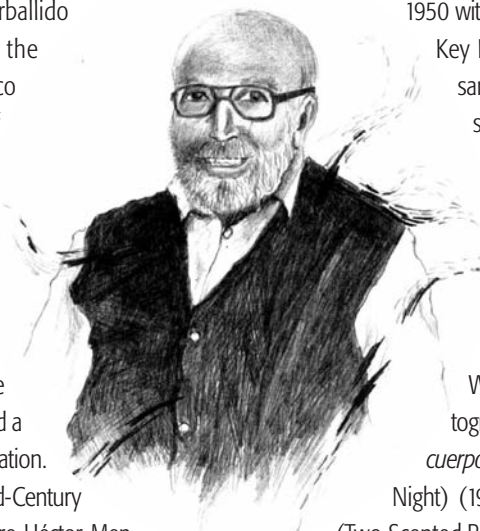
A Poet on Stage

Born in Córdoba, Veracruz, Emilio Carballido studied English literature and theater at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). He worked at the National Ballet of Mexico as the literary supervisor, going on tour several times through Latin America, Europe and Asia. He was also a professor at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, and California State University at Los Angeles.

He was part of the generation that came after the Contemporáneos, who inaugurated a vanguard movement of theatrical renovation. Carballido's generation is known as the Mid-Century Generation. Among its famous members are Héctor Mendoza, Luisa Josefina Hernández, Jorge Ibarguengoitia and Carballido himself. Emilio recognized that the presence in Mexico of director Seki Sano, a student of Stanislavski, was a big influence for rethinking realism as a technique for directing and acting. Carballido taught playwrights Sabina Berman and Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda, who he recognized as two leaders of their own generation.

Rosario Castellanos admired his work unreservedly. She once wrote of him, "In Emilio there is an essential quality: congeniality. He has always used it to approach his creations, to interpret them. It has allowed him to go beyond mere appearances to reach the truest nucleus of the general laws guiding human behavior and the human personality. Emilio Carballido's message contains no conformism or cowardice. Believing in the dignity of man does not mean closing your eyes to the traps where it is often lost. Realism, in the best sense of the term, is what we find in this dramatic work. Richness of imagination and of resources. Honorability and valor for expressing what he knows. Rigor."

He began his literary career in 1946 when he published his first novel. Later he published a collection of short stories, *La caja vacía* (The Empty Box) (1962). Carballido wrote film scripts, among the best known of which is *Macario*, based on a story by Bruno Traven, and nominated for an Oscar for best foreign film. The author of works that used irony and humor to question Mexican society's double standard, he made a name for himself as a playwright in



1950 with *Rosalba y los llaveros* (Rosalba and the Key Rings), directed by Salvador Novo. That same year he received a Rockefeller fellowship and in 1955, another from the Mexican Writers Center. He wrote about 150 performance pieces, among which are plots for plays, librettos for opera and film scripts. Some of his best known works are *Felicidad* (Happiness) (1957); *Te juro, Juana que tengo ganas* (I Swear, Juana, that I Want It) (1963); *Fotografía en la playa* (Photograph on the Beach) (1993); and *Escrito en el cuerpo de la noche* (Written on the Body of the Night) (1993). His comedy *Rosa de dos aromas* (Two-Scented Rose) (1986) has been one of the Mexican theater's most successful plays.

In 2002, he received many awards and distinctions: he won the Juan Ruiz de Alarcón National Award for Playwriting, yet another in a long list throughout his career; he was inducted into the Academy of the Arts; and he received the Golden Ariel in Mexico City's Fine Arts Palace, a national film award for his life's work as the writer of more than 50 film scripts. In 2005, his last play, *Lula y Perla (más la justicia)* (Lula and Perla [Plus Justice]), opened as part of the celebrations for his eightieth birthday. In his opinion, to be a good playwright, in addition to natural talent and training, you need "to have sensible literary skills, to write well, because an idea might be very good, but if it's not well written, it's good for nothing, and it won't be effective: the playwright is a poet on stage, that's all."¹

Carballido, educator and promoter of new authors, will be remembered as a writer who was always young, pro-active, contemporary and innovative. ■■■

María Cristina Hernández Escobar
Assistant Editor

NOTES

¹ His words on receiving the Juan Ruiz de Alarcón Award in May 2002.

Two-Scented Rose



SYNOPSIS

Two women discover they have been in love with the same man when they are both told that Marco Antonio —“Maco” to Gabriela, his wife, or “Tony” to his lover Marlene— is in jail.

The two women meet at the jail. A few misunderstandings reveal to them the circumstances that make them enemies according to the dictates of society. Despite everything, they agree to help Marco Antonio and start doing all they can to get the money together to get him out of jail. However, along the way, they go through many difficulties —some very painful, presented with black humor— and both come to a bitter-sweet awareness. They reflect about the life they have each led in a profoundly misogynist society in which they have not been fully in control of their decisions, regardless of their formal schooling or their socio-economic status. In the end, they face the dilemma of opting between getting him out of jail or leaving him there so he can assume the consequences of his actions as the Marxist he is.

Drawings in this section by Héctor Ponce de León.