

# HOT SEATS

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## TEATROS HISPANOS

# A Lost Treasure Recovered

By Felix Arocho

**I**t's a dream come true to have the plays of Spain's Golden Age on my stage," says Silvia Brito, Executive Artistic Director of the Thalia Spanish Theatre in Sunnyside, Queens.

The occasion for her enthusiasm is Thalia's third collaboration on a classic with Manhattan-based Teatro Circulo. Now running through December 14, their production of *Jealous of Herself* (*La celosa de si misma*) by Tirso de Molina is believed to be the play's first since 1624!

This comedy's time may have come—both the Thalia and Teatro Circulo found the play ideally suited for their purpose of bringing 16th and 17th century Spanish classics to the widest possible contemporary public. The story of an unhappy wife who disguises herself, only to have her unsuspecting husband fall in love with her, is hilarious, and the poetic form in which the play is written—short stanzas rather than the long monologues more typical of the period—makes it accessible to today's audience.



Wanda Arriaga and Magda Nieves in *La Celosa de si Misma* (*Jealous of Herself*).

"These masterpieces are the roots of Spain's theatre tradition," Brito says. "They were usually performed in the plazas for everyone." Thalia aims to present them in the same spirit and in the same, authentic style.

For this production actors' diaries and other documents from the period were studied to recreate a night of 17th century theatre. A *loa* (a prologue) opens the show, followed by the comedy, with an *entremés* (entr'acte—in this case a comic sketch by Cervantes) performed at intermission. The evening closes with dances and songs, a *fin de fiesta*. A full English synopsis will be available.

For 21 years Thalia Spanish Theatre has been a pillar of Hispanic culture in New York, offering contemporary drama, comedy, zarzuela (Spanish operetta), and flamenco. And now Silvia Brito's dream of presenting the classics of the Golden Age has come true.

For ticket information see listings on page 6.