OUR 20TH YEAR!

It’s difficult to imagine that The Mexican Film Bulletin has now been around for nearly 20 years, but it’s true! Our first issue was published in August 1994, and we are still here. A few of our original readers are with us, but new ones are always welcome. This publication is dedicated to Mexican cinema, past and present, and we don’t intend to stop doing what we’re doing (at least not any time soon).

Thank you for your support.

OBITUARIES

ALMA MURIEL

Alma Muriel, a popular actress in films and on television from the 1970s into the 2000s, died in her home in the state of Quintana Roo on 5 January 2014, apparently of a heart attack. Alma Muriel del Sordo was born in Mexico City in October 1951. She began her professional acting career in the late 1960s, and appeared in over 30 films, in numerous telenovelas and TV shows, and on the stage. She received 3 Ariel nominations for her acting.

After a few years of supporting and ingenue parts, Muriel’s more substantial screen roles alternated between serious dramas such as Retrato de una mujer casada and Cuando tejen las arañas, and "popular" cinema like El preso no. 9 and Burlesque.

Muriel was married to singer José María Napoleón and impresario Sergio Romo, and also had relationships with Joaquín Cordero, and Ricardo Cortés. She is survived by a son and daughter.

JOSÉ EMILIO PACHECO

Writer José Emilio Pacheco died on 26 January 2014 of heart trouble; he was 74 years old. José Emilio Pacheco Berny was born in Mexico City in June 1939. He studied at UNAM and began working for various literary magazines and newspaper “cultural” supplements while still a student. Pacheco was a poet, novelist, essayist, university professor, and screenwriter: he published numerous books of poetry, short stories, and novels, in addition to editing literary anthologies and translating the work of various international authors into Spanish. He was the recipient of many awards and prizes for his long career in literature.

Pacheco’s works were adapted into several Mexican films: Viento distante (1964), a 3-story film, contained adaptations of two Pacheco stories, and Mariana, Mariana (1986), was based on his novel “Las batallas en el desierto.” Pacheco also worked personally on the scripts of a number of films, including Los cachorros, El castillo de la pureza, El Santo oficio, Foxtrot, La pasión según Berenice, and El lugar sin límites, for directors including Jorge Fons, Arturo Ripstein, and Jaime Humberto Hermosillo.

[Personal note: José Emilio Pacheco taught at the University of Maryland, where I am employed, for a number of years, usually working one semester per academic year. Sadly, I never took the opportunity to meet him, even though his office was located less than 10 minutes away from mine.]

JUANITA MOORE

Actress Juanita Moore died on 1 January 2014; she was 99 years old. Moore, born in Mississippi but raised in California, made her film debut in 1949. Her most famous screen role was in the 1959 remake of Imitation of Life, where she played the African-American mother of Sarah Jane (played by Susan Kohner, daughter of Mexican actress Lupita Tovar) and the best friend of Lora (Lana Turner). Moore received an Academy Award nomination for her work in this film. She continued to act on stage, in films and on television until 2001.

Moore appeared in Joselito Rodríguez’s 1969 remake of his 1948 hit, Angelitos negros, taking the role originally played by Rita Montaner (Pedro Infante was replaced by Manuel López Ochoa, and Martha Rangel played Emilia Guiú’s part).
NADIA HARO OLIVA

Actress Nadia Haro Oliva died in Mexico City on 17 January 2014; she was 97 years old. Albertina Charlotte Boulesque Noblecourt was born in France in 1917, and worked as a fashion model as a teenager. Thanks to her interest in the sport of fencing, she met Antonio Haro Oliva, a Mexican military officer stationed in Paris, who was also a competitive fencer (Haro Oliva represented Mexico in various Olympic Games, and also worked in Mexican cinema, specialising in fencing scenes). They married and returned to Mexico. Interestingly enough, both Haro Oliva and his wife participated in the 1948 Olympics as fencers.

Under the name Nadia Haro Oliva, Nadia became an actress in the late 1940s, and made her film debut in 1956. Her most notable role came in Misterios de la magia negra (1957), but she also appeared in Buñuel’s El ángel exterminador (1962) and a handful of other films in the Fifties and Sixties. She later worked on the stage and on television, and, with Antonio Haro Oliva, owned the Teatro Arlequín. Her husband died in 2002 and, after suffering a fall, Nadia Haro Oliva retired from acting in 2004.

RAFAEL CORKIDI

[another belated obituary, since I missed the original announcement back in September]

Filmmaker Rafael Corkidi died on 18 September 2013 in Boca del Río, Veracruz. He had suffered an embolism. Corkidi was born in Puebla in 1930 and originally worked as a commercial photographer, entering the film industry in the 1950s by working on various newsreels. A member of the “Nuevo Cine” group of the Sixties, he served as a cinematographer on various projects, receiving an Ariel for El Topo, directed by Alejandro Jodorowsky (he’d previously shot Fando y Lis for the director, and later was dp on La montaña sagrada). Corkidi also photographed features directed by Alberto Isaac and Juan López Moctezuma, among others, and shot numerous “experimental” shorts and documentaries.

Corkidi began his feature directorial career with Ángeles y querubines, following this with Auandar Anapu, Deseos, and Pafnucio Santo. He was also a pioneer in the use of videotape, and in the 1980s directed a number of projects in this medium, including Las Lupitas and Figuras de la Pasión. His last feature-length project was El maestro prodigioso in 2009-10, although he was reportedly writing a script at the time of his death.

Rafael Corkidi also worked extensively in television, and taught film in various venues, including his own school “Mar de encuentros” in Boca del Río. He received the lifetime achievement Ariel de Oro in 2013.

[A personal story: in 1999 I attended the International Congress of the Americas, located at the Universidad de las Américas in Cholula (outside of Puebla). While walking around the campus, I looked in an open door and saw someone sitting at a large video-editing console. The nameplate on the door read “Rafael Corkidi.” I didn’t want to interrupt the director at work—although the fact that his door was open should have indicated he was available—and I never got the chance to meet him, which I have long regretted.]

ALMA MURIEL MOVIES

Cuando tejen las arañas [When the Spiders Spin] (CONACITE DOS, 1977) Dir: Roberto Gavaldon; Scr: Vicente Leñero, Francisco del Villar; Story: Fernando Galiana, Francisco del Villar; Photo: Fernando Colin; Music: Gustavo C. Carrión; Prod Mgr: Luz Maria Rojas; Asst Dir: Ángel Rodríguez; Film Ed: Ángel Camacho; Art Dir: Antonio Javier Castro; Decor: Héctor González Morales; Makeup: Graciela Muñoz; Camera Op: Antonio Ruiz; Costume Supv: Ariadne Welter; Sound Ed: Rogelio Zúñiga; Sound: Consuelo
Rendón; Choreog: Pedro Sáenz, Pablo Leder; Re-rec: Ricardo Saldivar; Union: STIC

Cast: Alma Muriel (Laura), Jaime Moreno (Alex), Carlos Piñar (Sergio), Raquel Olmedo (Julia), Alfredo Leal (Daniel), Angélica Chain (Claudia), Armando Sáenz, Adriana Page (? Lorena), Marcelo Villami (abortion doctor), Argentina Morales (? Manuela, housekeeper), Gustavo Rojo (Laura’s father), Antonio Escobar, Moris Grey (transvestite at party), José Legarreta

Notes: Cuando tejen las arañas contains a number of sure-fire melodramatic/exploitation elements but is actually fairly mild and—at least until the final third—rather slow-paced. [Note: the DVD release and the version available on YouTube (from the ‘De Película’ channel) both appear to be slightly trimmed, most nudity having been removed.]

Laura returns to Mexico after spending several years in a Swiss boarding school. Her mother Julia fails to meet her at the airport, being too busy in bed with her younger lover, torero Daniel. Laura refuses to speak to her former boyfriend Sergio, telling her friend Claudia that no man could measure up to her late father. Claudia introduces Laura to professional photographer Alex. The virginal and somewhat repressed Laura, although she doesn’t need the money, accepts an offer to model for Alex, and eventually seduces him.

However, when Laura becomes pregnant, Alex blames her for being careless. Laura has an abortion and marries Sergio, but continues her affair with Alex. Sergio eventually divorces her. Laura begins drinking and living a dissolute life. After a party at Alex’s house in which she used drugs, Laura wakes up, nude in bed with Alex and Lorena, Claudia’s part-time lesbian lover. A horrified Laura shoots the sleeping Alex (with a pistol she’d found earlier in his dresser). Alex survives, so Laura is sent to a mental hospital rather than prison. She undergoes various treatments, including electro-shock therapy, before being released as “cured.” As the film concludes, a dazed Laura appears at Claudia’s house and asks to stay there. A spiderweb graphic overlays the final shot.

Cuando tejen las arañas contains a few references to Claudia “spinning her web” to entrap the innocent Laura, and the final shot reinforces this motif. However, Claudia is not portrayed as a predatory, evil lesbian who masterminds Laura's downfall, so the occasional references to Claudia-as-spider feel forced and awkward. Laura's emotional problems are pretty obvious, and aren't the result of Claudia's manipulations: Laura is obsessed with her father and his memory (at least until she learns he was gay), doesn't get along with her mother, is sexually repressed (she's a virgin until she sleeps with Alex for the first time), and later develops substance-abuse issues. Claudia, Julia, Alex, and Sergio don't really help Laura's emotional and psychological stability, but they don't consciously scheme to ruin her, either.

The script for Cuando tejen las arañas was co-authored by Francisco del Villar, who had written and directed a number of “adult” dramas from the mid-Sixties to the mid-Seventies. Although he intended to direct this film as well, when he was named head of the CONACITE DOS production company, del Villar turned Cuando tejen las arañas over to Roberto Gavaldón. As it turned out, del Villar never directed another film (he died in 1978), and this was Gavaldón's final project as well (although he lived until 1986). It's difficult to say if the finished product would have been very different under del Villar's control, although his Seventies films did tend to be somewhat more graphic in terms of sex and nudity than this one is.

The production values of Cuando tejen las arañas are satisfactory, with substantial sets (and/or location shooting in some nice residences), glossy photography, and a reasonable number of extras when needed. Gustavo César Carrión's score trots out some of his overly familiar themes, but is adequate for the purpose.

The performances are overall rather good. Alma Muriel gets to run the gamut from stoic and restrained to depressed to manic and back again to depressed; Angélica Chain shows dramatic talent she rarely had the opportunity to display. Raquel Olmedo is hissable as Laura's mother (and cuts a fine figure in black lingerie), and Jaime Moreno—although more or less playing his standard character—is well-suited to his role. Interestingly enough, although Gustavo Rojo plays Laura's father in flashback sequences, the voiceover narration attributed to his character was almost certainly done by someone else.

Amor libre [Free Love] (CONACINE, 1978) Dir: Jaime Humberto Hermosillo; Scr: Francisco Sánchez; Photo: Jorge Stahl Jr.; Music: Nacho Méndez; Prod Mgr: Luis Quintanilla; Asst Dir: Winfield Sánchez; Film Ed: Rafael Ceballos; Prod Des: Lucero Isaac; Art Dir: José Rodríguez Granada; Camera Op: Cirilo Rodríguez; Makeup: Ana Guerrero; Recordist: Angel Trejo; Sound Ed:
Cast: Alma Muriel (Julia*), Julissa (Julia), Manuel Ojeda (Ernesto), Jorge Balzaretti (Octavio "Pachuli"), José Alonso (Mario), Roberto Cobo (bus singer), Ana Ofelia Murguía (Ernesto's wife), Virginia López, Emma Roldán (old lady on street), Magnolia Rivas, Farness de Bernal (drunk), Armando Martínez "El Pecas" (boy), Blanca Torres (offended woman), Miguel Gómez Checa, Margarita Isabel Morales (woman at bar in nightclub), Rolando Castro, Alma Levi, José Luis Avendaño (bus driver), María Guadalupe Delgado, Iaco Alba

*this is sometimes spelled "July" in Spanish-language sources (but is pronounced "Julie," rather than like the English-language pronunciation of the month)

Notes: Amor libre is a really fine film about the friendship between two young women, well-written and acted and serious-but-fun. It’s also loaded with appearances by Jaime Humberto Hermosillo’s stock company, including Emma Roldán, Roberto Cobo, Farness de Bernal, Margarita Isabel, Blanca Torres, Magnolia Rivas, María Guadalupe Delgado (the director’s mother), etc.

Julie and Julia are partners in a small shop selling knick-knacks, curios, handicrafts, and the like. Julie is quiet and reserved, a reader, and still lives with her mother in a crowded apartment. Julia is a brash, upwardly-mobile, working-class chilango, a bit vulgar, who lives in a nice “penthouse” apartment on top of a vecindad. She convinces Julie to become her roommate. Julia is having an affair with married airline pilot Ernesto, but when Ernesto’s wife appears and forces her husband to choose, he leaves Julia behind. Julie starts dating Octavio, a university student who met Julia on a bus (actually, he grabbed her butt at the bus stop, but she found it amusing rather than insulting).

Ernesto stops by the shop on Julia’s day off, and confesses to Julie that he left his wife, but doesn’t want to reconcile with Julia. Instead, he and Julie begin an affair and Julie disappears from the shop and apartment. Julia makes a date with Mario, a young man whose fiancée Julia had insulted in their shop. Mario returns with Julia to her apartment; she doesn’t want to sleep with him, and he attempts to rape her. After a desperate and violent struggle, Julia pushes Mario through a glass window and locks herself in her bedroom. He leaves, vowing revenge. Octavio commiserates with Julia and they sleep together.

Amor libre features a number of well-rounded characters—along with the aforementioned fun cameos—but the film revolves around Julie and Julia and their friendship. It’s never mentioned how they met, how long they’ve known each other, or how they became business partners. If they’ve been friends for a long time, then why does Julia suddenly invite Julie to become her roommate? There are also a few “getting to know you” scenes which don’t make as much sense if the two women have been acquainted for a significant period.

The two women, quite different at the outset despite their similar names (in fact, Julia says Julie is really also "Julia," but apparently changed her name to the more Anglicised “Julie”), gradually become more alike as the film goes on. Julie loosens up, even donning a “Solid Gold” t-shirt given to her by Julia, a drastic change from her usual conservative attire (the first thing she does when she moves into Julia’s apartment is buy a black bikini, a sign of her “liberation”), and plunges into an affair with Ernesto, after a rather chaste and tentative relationship with Octavio. Julia, on the other hand, absorbs some of Julie’s “intellectual” traits, picking up the “serious” novel (“Lord Jim” by Joseph Conrad) Julie discarded when she ran off with Ernesto, and reading it. In one scene, Julia talks with a young boy about the wonder of flying, and as the film ends, it is Julie who is flying in Ernesto’s aircraft (well, it appears they’re having sex in the cockpit, or something).

Alma Muriel and Julissa are both quite good in their roles, although Muriel plays only a slight variation on her usual demure persona. Julissa, on the other hand, is practically unrecognisable as the brash Julia, wearing tight clothes, sporting a very late-Seventies hairstyle, and speaking in a decent approximation of a chilango accent. Julissa also appears completely nude in several scenes (Muriel does not), which comes as a bit of a shock. Manuel Ojeda and Jorge Balzaretti are also fine, while José Alonso is frighteningly crude and brutal in a part with limited screen-time. The rest of the cast is essentially limited to cameos which contribute little to the plot but make the film fun to watch.

**Cast:**

Alma Muriel *(Christian)*,
Lyn May *(Ming)*,
Angélica Chain *(Gina)*,
Princesa Lea *(Cristal)*,
Lucy Gallardo *(Doña)*,
Jannette Mass *(Jannette)*,
Polo Ortín *(Polo, emcee)*,
Alberto Rojas "El Caballo" *(Caballo)*,
Susana Cabrera *(bargirl)*, Tito Junco *(Lic. Robledo)*, Vitola *(Vitola)*,

**Notes:** although it may seem counter-intuitive, given that it’s a film about strippers (or “exotic dancers”), *Burlesque* at times has a strong feminist slant. The female characters are not all admirable, but they are recognisably human, while the men in the movie do not receive the same empathetic treatment in the plot or dialogue.

*Burlesque* is not a “sexy-comedy,” but rather a late entry in the *fichera* genre. Sexy-comedies, although they often have dramatic aspects, deal mostly with sexual and romantic relationships between people in all walks of life, and feature numerous soft-core sex scenes (many of them humourous and very few of them erotic), while the *fichera* genre largely focused on bargirls, strippers, etc. (and the men in their lives, personal and professional), and fall more strongly on the dramatic side of the spectrum.

*Burlesque* contains no sex scenes and is not a comedy (although there is comic relief). It takes place in one night and one location, the eponymous “Burlesque” cabaret, and concentrates on the activities of the show’s performers: exotic dancers Christian, Ming, Gina, and Cristal, with lesser attention paid to a middle-aged bargirl (played by Susana Cabrera), several other dancers, the club manager La Doña, waiter El Caballo, emcee Polo, and so on.

The format of the film is a familiar one, alternating scenes of “performance” (in some cases intercut with dramatic or comedic scenes, in other instances allowing the musical numbers to run uninterrupted) with “plot.” The exotic dances occupy far more of the film’s running time than the drama: Jannette Mass, Princesa Lea, Angélica Chain, Lyn May, Gloriella, Lina D’Mar, and Alma Muriel each perform two numbers (and there are two, virtually identical “parades” of all the dancers), along with individual “specialities” from Vitola and Norma Lee, and several songs by the Silvestre Méndez band. The dances are nicely staged (although shot in a very unimaginative manner, mostly medium long-shot, as if the camera were sitting in the audience at the cabaret) and the music itself is fairly effective (Gustavo C. Carrión avoids using too many of his canned themes, fortunately), but after a while the repetition becomes rather tedious.

The major sub-plots:

(a) Christian intends to quit her job and marry don Pepe, a wealthy older admirer. But Pepe admits he’s married, with children, and isn’t rich at all: he embezzled money from his firm to buy her a ring and give her cash. Christian returns the ring and as much money as is left. She’s promoted to star of the show by la Doña, then extorts money claiming she’s pregnant by her boyfriend Julio and needs an abortion (it’s a lie—she plans to run off to Acapulco). Julio accidentally reveals the truth, la Doña tears up the check, and as the film ends Christian realises she has to continue working at the “Burlesque” club.

(b) Ming, the headliner, wishes to leave the club and become a movie star. She’s counting upon producer Caldera Fox (possibly referring to real-life producer Calderón Stell) and agent Limón Blanco (probably a spoof of well-known agent Blanca Estela Limón) to give her a lucrative contract. In the end, Jannette gets the film role of “La Paralítica” (a reference to *Nosotros los pobres*, and the
least-likely role for a stripper to play!) and Ming is resigned to continuing her dancing career for now. She accepts the gift of a mink coat from bureaucrat Robledo, after rejecting his advances when she thought she was leaving “Burlesque.”

(c) Gina and Cristal have a professional rivalry that is complicated by their mutual relations with pimp Jorge. They play harsh “practical jokes” on each other, but Gina learns Jorge is wanted by the police for brutally mistreating a prostitute: she turns him in to the cops and Gina and Cristal leave the club at the end of the night as friends.

There are several comedic sub-plots as well, featuring humorous pairings of Vitola and Borolas, and Susana Cabrera and Gastón “Chato” Padilla, while Polo Ortín, Alberto Rojas, and Mario Alberto Rodríguez provide comic relief but don’t have specific stories of their own.

Each of the major sub-plots contains at least one scene with overtly “feminist” sentiments. Christian seemingly does the right thing by returning don Pepe’s ring (well, the pawn ticket for it!) and (some of his) money; la Doña tells him he shouldn’t be a “bitch” and says she need to harden her heart and exploit men. Instead, Christian attempts to swindle la Doña out of 25,000 pesos for an abortion, only to have her plan foiled by her bumbling boyfriend. So: men are fools, women are smarter and yet kinder, and when women try to exploit other women it doesn’t end well, because they need to pull together.

Meanwhile, Ming considers herself a true artist and wants to leave the sleazy world of the cabaret. Propositioned by Lic. Robledo, she chastises him for not respecting her as a woman, asking Robledo and his assistant if they’d want their wives, mothers, or sisters to be treated the same way. In the end, she gives in to Robledo’s importunations because she doesn’t get a film contract, accepting the gift of a mink coat (which, ironically, belongs to Robledo’s wife) for her favours.

Finally, Gina and Cristal fight over Jorge’s affections, only to realise he’s not worth it. Gina breaks off relations with him—due to his unfaithful nature—even before he asks her to provide him an alibi for the evening. Then, when told he’s accused of physical violence against another woman, she turns him over to the police without a second thought. Cristal extends an olive branch by offering Gina a ride home after the club closes, and they walk off together, united by the realisation that Jorge didn’t deserve either of them.

The scenes with Vitola and Susana Cabrera are mostly comedic, but there is an underlying sadness that these older women are being forced to compete with younger, more attractive women in order to earn a living. Cabrera’s character (who doesn’t seem to have a name) explicitly discusses this in one scene, and literally hijacks a drunken but wealthy norteño customer who is primarily interested in Ming; he ends the film passed out in the men’s room, and Cabrera is stuck with the tab for their drinks. Vitola, on the other hand, is still a performer in the show (she does a comedy strip-tease number & shares a dressing room with Jannette and Cristal), and her interactions with a cabaret patron are more humorous and less desperate than bargirl Cabrera’s.

The performances in *Burlesque*—both on stage and in the drama/comedy sections—are uniformly quite good. There is a fair amount of broad humour and some *picardía*, but (unlike some sexy-comedies) the supporting actors actually play roles rather than merely going through their standard *shtick*. Alma Muriel was perhaps the most serious “actress” of the major players, but Angélica Chaín and Lyn May are also fine (as is Princesa Lea, although her dialogue is delivered in rather halting, accented Spanish). Lyn May and Princesa Lea were more experienced exotic dancers and over-shadow Muriel and Chaín in this area somewhat. Good specialty numbers are delivered by Gloriella and the team of Norma Lee and Polo Francisco: the latter perform a dance which is essentially simulated sex, and Norma Lee is the only dancer who performs full-frontal nudity (the others are topless but wear g-strings, occasionally removing the latter but keeping their crotch turned away from the camera or discreetly covered with their hands).

Production values are quite good, with a substantial set for the nightclub, plenty of extras, and so forth. The Cardonas were seasoned professionals and *Burlesque* is a slick and well-made movie that combines a huge number of musical performances and an episodic, ensemble-cast plot in a more or less effective manner. Removing about half of the exotic dances would have improved the pace considerably, although it might have also disappointed those viewers who saw the film primarily because it’s loaded with scantily-clad women.
Trivia notes: this film features two actresses/dancers who played comic strip character “Rarotonga” on film, Gloriella and Princesa Lea. Gloriella’s second dance in Auándar Anapu is a clear homage to Rarotonga, featuring her in an Afro wig, animal skins, etc. Also, producer Caldera Fox mentions one of his previous films was La dama de las camelias [the Mexican title for the Alexandre Dumas novel usually referred to—especially in film adaptations--as “Camille”] contra El Santo!

Notes: Auándar Anapu is probably the most conventional feature film directed by Rafael Corkidi, at least in terms of film form. His first movie, Ángeles y querubines, was relatively straightforward but did contain various surrealistic sequences, and Corkidi’s subsequent features--Pafnucio Santo and Deseos--were extremely idiosyncratic in form (and in the case of Deseos, virtually incomprehensible in content). Auándar Anapu is a fantasy film/political allegory, but unfolds in a more or less realistic, linear manner.

After a cryptic sequence heralding the birth of a child "on the volcano," Auándar Anapu is introduced as a grown man. He causes water to flow from a rock to quench his thirst, then he rescues a prostitute (Magdalena) from a mob that is persecuting her. They travel together for a time, make love in a waterfall-fed pool, but eventually Magdalena is welcomed back to the brothel by her friends. Auándar also resolves a argument between two brothers, brings back a child from the dead, advises guerrilla leader La Sandoval, encourages workers to stand up for their rights, etc..

Meanwhile, blind cacique Tata Pedro Patricio is informed by his wife Aurora that their infant son is dying. She says Auándar Anapu can cure him, so Tata Pedro sends his paramilitary henchman Robles to find the mystic. [These two threads are intercut in the first part of the film.] Eventually, Auándar is located and brought to Tata Pedro’s home (in chains). He revives the child and warns Aurora the day of reckoning is coming: she and her family pack up and leave, unwilling to face the wrath of the oppessed workers when the latter finally revolt.

However, Robles schemes to remove the agitator Auándar from their midst. Patricia, Aurora's oldest daughter and the lover of Robles, is sent to seduce and drug Auándar. Robles arrives and guns down his nemesis; La Sandoval is also shot to death by the reactionary forces...
appears to be an administrator in a textile factory), and leads a protest march at the conclusion (a shot repeated 4 times to make sure the viewers get the meaning).

*Auándar Anapu* was filmed on location in Michoacán, and a significant portion of the dialogue is in the indigenous purépecha or Tarascan language (with Spanish sub-titles). As usual for a Corkidi film, the cinematography and use of locations is excellent, as is the choice of music (in many cases, typical music of the region--Héctor Sánchez won an Ariel for his score). The performances are satisfactory, within the didactic style of the film: Ernesto Gómez Cruz's Christ figure is humanised, enjoying sex, a cold beer, listening to music, talking to people, laughing, but speaking earnestly and seriously when the occasion warrants. Jorge Humberto Robles, who appeared in all 4 of Corkidi's fictional features of the Seventies, is fine, along with Aurora Clavel, Patricia Luke (Jorge's sister), and María de la Luz Zendejas, the only other professional actors in the cast.

Generally interesting and certainly more "accessible" than Corkidi's subsequent work.

Note: various running times are cited for this film, ranging from 80 minutes to 102 minutes. The version available on YouTube and the VideoVisa *El curandero* version both run about 95 minutes (although the video box for *El curandero* lists 102 minutes) and seem complete.

+++Pafnucio Santo [Holy Pafnucio]
(CONACINE-Rafael Corkidi, 1976) *Dir-Story:* Rafael Corkidi; *Translation*: Carlos Illescas; *Photo:* Rafael Corkidi; *Music* Héctor Sánchez; *Production:* Luis Urquieta; *Asst Dir:* José Luis Urquieta; *Film Ed:* Ángel Camacho; *Art Dir:* Tedoro Maus; *Camera Op:* Alberto Arellanos; *Music Rec:* Victor Rappoport; *Sound:* Roberto Muñoz & Guillermo Carrasco; *Dubbing Dir:* Roberto Schlosser; *Union:* STIC

*this may just mean "adaptation" or something of the sort (i.e., translation from Corkidi's ideas to the screen?)*

**Cast:** Pablo Corkidi (Pafnucio Santo), María de la Luz Zendejas (Frida Kahlo; Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz; captain *with Cortés*); Jorge Humberto Robles (Messenger; Hernán Cortés; judge; Romeo; Texas Ranger; revolutionary); Gina Morett (demon dancer; China poblana; Zapata); Susana Kamini (Patricia Kane; Juliet), Piya (Malinche), Don Juan Barrón (Adán; Jesús; revolutionary), José Luis Urquieta (soldier of Cortés), Sebastián (narrator)

**Notes:** although it still has a premise which can be succinctly stated--Pafnucio is sent through time and space to find a suitable mother for the new Messiah--and a more or less linear narrative, *Pafnucio Santo* is a formally very odd and unconventional film. Most of the scenes feature the characters lip-synching songs (often in foreign languages, some of them perhaps made-up dialects) to tell the story, opera-style (helpful Spanish sub-titles are included, thankfully). Corkidi's trademark mixture of nudity, religion, politics, and Mexican culture/history is on display, as is his usual fine cinematography and sharp eye for striking locations. This is one of the argiest of art-films, but at least it makes some sense, unlike his next project, *Deseos*.

After an opening sequence in which a black-clad, bicycle-riding Messenger of God observes (a) the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise (a theme Corkidi had also included in the beginning scenes of *Ángeles y querubines*), (b) the Crucifixion of Christ; (c) the crucifixion of Cortés; (d) and some reason, or turns him down. Pafnucio "interviews" famous nun-poet Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, La Malinche (the native woman who served as the interpreter for *conquistador* Hernán Cortés), artist Frida Kahlo, Juliet (of Romeo and Juliet), a singer dressed in a *china poblana* costume, mad Empress Carlota, urban

---
THE MEXICAN FILM BULLETIN  Volume 20 Number 1 (January-February 2014)

guerrilla Patricia Kane (a thinly veiled version of Patricia Hearst), and even Zapata (who has a moustache and dresses like a man but has a woman's body). After the death of Zapata, Pafnucio apparently gives up hope for the world; he strips off his football uniform and abandons his quest.

Pafnucio Santo is reasonably entertaining, even amusing at times in its weirdness, but most of the segments go on too long and the operatic format begins to drag after a time. As with most of Corkidi's films, this was shot on location (the states of Veracruz, Morelos, and México) in picturesque settings: the opening sequences take place in a barren desert, Pafnucio is introduced in an impressive ruined building with large stone columns, and the other scenes take place in different but equally interesting places. There is one awesome "set," a pavilion capped with a gigantic head of Benito Juárez, which appears in one sequence.

Although Corkidi's films are, as mentioned, anti-commercial art cinema (though they were released theatrically), they were made with "regular" film industry crews and not, as one might have guessed, with newcomers or technicians from beyond the fringe. In his documentaries and later video productions this changed, but his 1970s fiction films feature many familiar names in the cast and crew.

The acting is difficult to evaluate, since everyone is dubbed and lip-syncs "arias" most of the time to boot, so the performers mostly had to pose and gesture while wearing eccentric costumes. Corkidi put his son Pablo in the movie, a venerable Mexican cinema tradition dating back to René Cardona, most of the Rodriguez brothers, and even Alejandro Jodorowsky; Jorge Humberto Robles and María de la Luz Zendejas repeat from Auándar Anapu, while Gina Morett, Piya, and don Juan Barrón would be back for Deseos (along with Robles and Zendejas).

Pafnucio Santo is not boring, although it does occasionally seem longer than its 98 minutes. However, Corkidi's direction and cinematography and the audacious formal aspects, not to mention the caricatures of famous historical and literary figures and doses of nudity, help hold the viewer's interest.

![Image](image_url)

BACKSTAGE MURDERS

Han matado a Tongolele [Tongolele Has Been Killed] (Prods. Juno-Luis Manrique, 1948) Prod: Luis Manrique; Dir-Scr: Roberto Gavaldón; Dialog-Story: Ramón Obón; Photo: Jorge Stahl Jr.; Music Dir: Antonio Díaz Conde; Prod Chief: Paul de Castelain; Asst Dir: Jaime L. Contreras; Film Ed: Rafael Ceballos; Art Dir: Jorge Fernández; Decor: Pedro Gallo; Camera Op: Armando Stahl, Ignacio Romero; Makeup: Armando Meyer; Sound Rec: James L. Fields, R. Ruiz Esparza; Re-rec: Galdino Samperio; Costumes: Emma Roldán, Title Art: J.H. Villareal

[re-released in the '60s as Terror en el teatro]

Cast: Yolanda Montes "Tongolele" (Tongolele), David Silva (Carlos Blanco), Manuel Arvide (Marcelo), Concepción Lee (Lotto), Seki-Sano (Chang), Lilia Prado (Claria; her sister), José Baviera (impresario), Lila Kiwa (Lila), Julián de Meriche (Francesco, choreographer), Armando Velazco [sic] (police cmdte.), Ildefonso Vega (Cheto), Jorge Mondragón (medical examiner), Los Tex-Mex, Huesca y sus Costeños, Los Diablos del Ritmo, Niño de Caravaca y sus Gitanos, Humberto Rodriguez and Ignacio Peón (theatre employees)

Notes: a short and fairly entertaining mystery, Han matado a Tongolele ironically bogs down because it features too much footage of its titular star performing her specialty dances. There are other musical numbers as well, and these also hamper the pace, but one or two Tongolele dances would have been sufficient, especially since these are all quite similar.

Dancer Tongolele has announced she will be retiring to marry reporter Carlos Blanco. On the night of her final performance, she is apparently murdered in her dressing room, mauled...
by the leopard "Mogli" that serves as part of her act (and also that of Asian magician Chang), although Carlos suspects human intervention in the crime.

The suspects include Chang, who loves Tongolele; Chang's jealous wife Lotto; choreographer Francesco, also in love with the dancer; Tongolele's former boyfriend Marcelo, who wants her to marry him; and drug-addicted chorus girl Clarita. Eventually, Carlos solves the mystery: the corpse in Tongolele's dressing room was Clarita (her face was so badly clawed that it was unrecognisable), who sneaked in to steal the star's fur coat, to sell for drug money. However, the mastermind behind the murder was Chang. He drugs Tongolele and is about to slash her to death with claw-tipped gloves, but Carlos intervenes and shoots the love-crazed magician to death.

Less than 80 minutes long, Han matado a Tongolele was directed briskly by Roberto Gavaldón, who tosses in some effective camera angles and at least one nice matched cut (from a shot of Mogli the leopard in his cage to a medium close-up of Tongolele in a cab, dressed in a leopard-skin coat and hat). The characters are eccentric enough to be interesting, the drug-addiction angle is relatively novel for the time period (there was a brief flurry of drug-themed stories in Mexican cinema around this time, for some reason), and everything is wrapped up in almost real time.

The performances are variable. Seki Sano, a Japanese political exile (deported for his leftist activities from Japan and later ejected from the Soviet Union!) who became an influential acting teacher in Mexico, does a good job as Chang (his spoken Spanish is excellent). Unfortunately, Tongolele herself is a better dancer than actress, and as a result has little to do, dramatically, and is given almost no dialogue. David Silva is generally good except he shows little or no emotion when his fiancee is apparently murdered, briskly carrying out his own investigation as if he had no personal relationship to the victim. Manuel Arvide, José Baviera and Julián de Meriche are fine, as is Lilia Prado in a dual role. Also of note are two Asian actresses, Concepción Lee (very effective as Chang's discarded wife) and Lila Kiwa.

Production values, photography, editing, etc., are good. This is essentially the Mexican equivalent of a B murder mystery, and is a slick, professional job.

Exec Prod: Pablo Caicedo Álvarez; Prod: Jesús Sotomayor
Martínez; Assot Prod: A. Hernández C.; Dir/Scrn: Fernando Cortés;
Adapt/Story: Fernando Galiana; Photo: José Ortiz Ramos; Music: Sergio Guerrero;
Prod Mgr: Luis Alcántara; Supv: Federico del Río T.; Prod Chief:
Luis G. Rubin; Asst Dir: Winfield Sánchez; Film Ed: Carlos Savage; Art Dir: Jesús Bracho; Decor: Rafael Suárez; Choreog: León Escobar; Camera Op: Miguel Arana, Manuel González, Carlos Sorensen; Makeup: Concepción Zamora; Sound Dir: Jesús González G.;
Dialog Rec: Francisco Alcaide; Recordist: Alfredo Solis;
Sound Ed: Teodulo Bustos Jr.; Union: STPC; Eastmancolor
Cast: Maria Antonieta Pons (Rosa Trejo), César del Campo (Julián), Manuel Medel (Pancholín), Rafael Banquells (police inspector), Silvia Pinal (herself), Tin Tan (himself), Luis Aguilar (himself), Lucho Gatica (himself), Ernesto Hill Olivera (himself), Agustín Lara (himself), Pedro Vargas (himself), José Pidal (Sebastián, prop mgr.), Tito Novaro (Pepe, trapeze artist), Francisco Meneses, Julián de Meriche (stage mgr.), Polo Ortín (Sr. Patiño), Wally Barron (pickpocket), Juan Vázquez (Pepe’s brother Ángel), René Barrera (cop), Víctor Manuel Castro (orchestra conductor), Daniel Arroyo (spectator), Miguel Suárez (don Luis del Campo), Mario García “Harapos,” Alejandro Reyna (cop at exit), Emilio Brillais (inspector’s asst.)
Notes: depending upon your tolerance for musical numbers (or your willingness to fast-forward through them), Teatro del crimen is either a colourful, relatively enjoyable “crime in the theatre” film, or a tedious bore. More than a dozen songs and dances take up a large percentage of this picture’s running time, but the backstage plot is interesting, the colour photography is lush, and the performers—both the “drama” actors and the musical guests—are solid.

Police arrive at the Teatro El Roble--presenting the revue “Fantasía Musical”--in response to a report of a
murder, but no one there knows of any such crime having been committed (it's never explained who made the call). However, during her first musical number, Rosa Trejo feels something drip on her from the "flies" (the area above the stage)—it's blood! [This may or may not have been borrowed from an extremely similar bit in the infamous "Sweet Marijuana" sequence of Murder at the Vanities (1934).] On a catwalk lies a body, later identified as singer Tito Santos, who has been stabbed to death. Santos, known as a cad, was disliked by many, including: Rosa (she dumped him because of his womanising, is now the girlfriend of producer Julián), prop manager Sebastián (Santos seduced and abandoned his daughter, she committed suicide), clown Pancholín (he loved Sebastián's daughter), Pepe and his brother Ángel (Tito was their drug dealer), etc.

Suspicion eventually settles on Pancholín, but his dead body is discovered backstage. Someone makes an attempt on Rosa’s life, but the police inspector convinces her to perform in the musical finale, so the theatre audience won’t walk out and give the killer a chance to escape in the confusion. During the number, the black-cloaked killer is spotted above the stage once more: it’s Pancholín (his “corpse” was actually that of the theatre’s impresario, who was murdered and then covered in clown makeup). Pancholín is a former trapeze artist who suffered a serious fall and subsequent mental illness. Escaping from a sanitarium, he assumed the identity (and makeup) of a clown. Obsessed with Rosa, he killed Tito for her, but now thinks she must die, on the "if I can’t have her, no one can!” principle. The Inspector is compelled to shoot Pancholín to save Rosa: the clown plummets down to the stage and dies. The audience files out, unaware of what has transpired backstage during the show.

Having seen this film years ago, I was already aware of the identity of the murderer, but it’s fairly obvious in any case, since there aren’t many other suspects: clearly neither Rosa nor Julián is the murderer, Sebastián seems too meek and elderly, and the Pepe-Ángel team isn’t very prominent (and Ángel’s drug addiction isn’t revealed until close to the end). Pancholín is the logical candidate, and he acts slightly unbalanced most of the time as well. [Curiously, Manuel Medel never appears without the clown makeup during the movie—this ties in with the plot, since he’d have been spotted as the former trapeze performer otherwise, but Medel also displays a significant lack of vanity by playing the role entirely in whiteface.]

Teatro del crimen cuts back and forth between musical numbers and dramatic scenes. Most of the "major" musical stars have their performances presented uninterrupted, but there are exceptions, notably the grand finale, which seems to go on forever between images of dancers and scenes of Pancholín vs. the police. María Antonieta Pons has 3 solo numbers (including the finale), but everyone else is restricted to one apiece. These range from odd (Ernesto Olvera Hill's "organ that sings") to mildly entertaining (Silvia Pinal dancing after a fashion while wearing a baby-doll nightgown) to kitschy (Lucho Gatica, Tin Tan) to routine (Luis Aguilar, a standard ranchera number). Most of the songs and dances are fairly "realistic"—i.e., they are meant to represent stage performances, and don’t feature much in the way of fancy special effects, sets, or even camera movement. The guest stars vary in the amount of non-musical footage they have: Tin Tan and Luis Aguilar have brief comic bits, but everyone else is restricted to (very awkward) "shocked" reaction shots spliced in during Pancholín's final struggle.

The production values are overall quite good. Exterior shots feature the actual "Teatro El Roble," located on the Avenida de la Reforma in Mexico City (after suffering damage in the Mexico City earthquake of 1985, it was abandoned and eventually razed). The interiors were probably mostly filmed on sets, but effectively convey the ambiance of a large theatre and its backstage environs. The Eastmancolor photography is quite good and adds significantly to overall impact of Teatro del crimen.

Overall, glossy and entertaining although overloaded with musical numbers. 

★★★★
Enigma de muerte [Deadly Enigma] (Filmica Vergara, 1967*) Exec Prod: Jorge García Besne; Prod: Luis Enrique Vergara C.; Dir: Federico Curiel; Scr: Ramón Obón Jr.; Photo: Alfredo Uribe; Music: Gustavo César Carrión; Asst Dir: Tito Novaro; Film Ed: J. Juan Munguía; Art Dir: Octavio Ocampo, José Méndez; Camera Op: Morales Carlos [sic]; Décor: Raúl Cárdenas; Makeup: Maria Eugenia Luna; Music Rec/Re-rec: Heinrich Henkel; Recording: Guillermo Carrasco, Ricardo Saldivar; Dialog Rec: J. Joaquín Jiménez; Union: STIC © 1968

Cast: John Carradine (Von Kaiber [sp]), Mil Máscaras (himself), María Duval (Sandra), Isela Vega (Estrella), Eric del Castillo (Sandokan), David Silva (Polito, aka Robles), Dagoberto Rodríguez (Germán), Víctor Junco (Ringo), Patricia Ferrer (Zuleima), Santanón (Nerón), Altia Michel, [N. León] “Frankestein” (Hércules), Juan Garza (assassin), Mario Orea (police inspector), Víctor Alcocer (commandante de security organization), Jesús Gómez (Nazi henchman), ?Joe Carson (Carson, henchman), ?Dorrell Dixon (wrestler)

Notes: Enigma de muerte is essentially a whodunit set in a circus (actually, a carpa or feria), with no fantasy elements. Even the lucha libre connection is tenuous: Mil Máscaras appears in one wrestling match (vs. Dorrell Dixon?) early in the movie, but otherwise functions as a “straight” crimefighting hero. Although buoyed by a good cast and at least one pretty good action sequence, the movie is cheaply put together in a very slipshod manner, and is not nearly as entertaining as Carradine’s other Vergara features.

As in his other Vergara movies, Carradine appears in the prologue as himself, speaking directly to the audience. He speculates about the whereabouts of Nazis who fled Germany after WWII, which leads to the (animated) credits, then black and white stock footage of Allied air raids. As the bombs explode outside, two men meet in a darkened building (in color) in Germany; one of the men (speaking German) gives the other something to hide in his ring; the second man departs. In 1967, a meeting of a security organization is held. The chief (Víctor Alcocer, who is only seen briefly but who appears to have dubbed Carradine’s dialogue in later scenes) says Bela von Gobert (the spelling of this name and Carradine’s character name are approximate) will soon arrive from Germany: he has two parts of the formula for super-fuel “KN7”—Robles, who lives in Mexico, has the third part. The security organization doesn’t know exactly who Robles is, but they have somehow narrowed it down: he’s a member of a small carpa show. Agent Mil Máscaras will go undercover to try and spot the former Nazi.

The carpa is located in what appears to be an amusement park (feria). The performers include clown Polito, sharpshooter Ringo and his assistant (=target) Sandra, knife-thrower Sandokan and his assistant (=target) Estrella, strongman Hércules, a skinny clown (Carradine), a little-person clown, a bearded lady, a mind reader, etc. Mil Máscaras performs his “act”—he lifts up a fat lady from the audience and guesses her weight, which is then verified by putting her on a scale. Wow, that’s entertainment.

A security agent reports to Mil in his dressing room: as hard as it may be to believe, all of the performers (or their relatives) were living in Berlin during World War II! Small world!! One of these people is Robles, but the agent is killed by a thrown knife before he can tell Mil who the prime suspect is. Mil chases the assassin to a ferris wheel; after a long and reasonably exciting battle on the ride, the killer plummets to his death. Mil tells the police he was trying to prevent the man from escaping (from a ferris wheel? Why not just wait on the ground and grab him when he gets off?).

The carpa (located in a building such as might be found on a carnival midway) apparently has a lot of space: the undercover Nazis (in full military uniform) hold a meeting in a large storeroom. The skinny clown is Von Kaiber, a former concentration camp commandant. He tells them Von Gobert is on the way with the KN7 formula, which will revive the Third Reich (exactly how a super-fuel is to do this isn’t specified). Amusingly, the room is bugged and we see
mind-reader Zuleima, the bearded lady, and the little-person clown listening in! Apparently they’re all undercover agents for somebody.

Mil takes a walk with Sandra. She asks him to take off his mask, and he says it would be a risk—“my face could be more grotesque than any of the masks I wear!” After ditching Sandra, Mil is picked up by Estrella; Sandokan is jealous and warns the wrestler to stay away from his assistant. Mil is later knocked unconscious and nearly unmasked, but the show’s manager Germán and the drunk little-person clown appear and scare off the assailant.

In one of the movie’s most curious scenes, a blonde member of the show is brought to Von Kaidér’s secret torture chamber in the basement of the carpa and accused of being a spy. So, with Mil Máscaras, Zuleima, the midget clown, and the bearded lady, that makes five undercover agents?!

As Von Kaidér (looking quite excited) whips the woman, her dress starts to slip off, and—suddenly we see vertigo-inducing shots of the ferris wheel?! The woman’s screams continue on the soundtrack for a long time, until she passes out (or dies?), and Von Kaidér orders her disposal. Does this mean there were nude scenes in some versions of this movie? This "cutaway to irrelevant footage" trick is usually a tip-off. Someone uses lipstick to write "Leave today or you die" on the mirror in Mil’s dressing room; he suspects Sandra at first. She says Ringo babbles Nazi racist comments when drunk, and has Nazi insignia on something in his trunk. After more time-wasting scenes, Mil saves Estrella’s life by tossing a wooden box in front of a dagger tossed at her. He later rescues dwarf Nerón from strongman Hércules, and is challenged to an arm-wrestling match, with a difference: knife blades are embedded in the tabletop, so the loser will get a nasty cut. To make it even more interesting, the event is a “mask vs. hair” match (a wrestling tradition). Mil wins and we later see Hércules with a shaved head (Nothanael León—who usually appears bald—wears a ludicrous curly wig in the early scenes before reverting to his shiny-pate self at this point).

Later, in another jaw-dropping sequence, Germán introduces a smashing (yeah, right) new production number for his show. The carpa theatre is set up to look like a Western saloon and gambling parlor. Estrella and some other women dance out in cowgirl outfits and Estrella sings: “Heelly Beely, a boy from Montana, went down to Tijuana to see hees mama…” She keeps moving her lips for a long time, but only the instrumental track is heard!

[A slight digression. Does she mean "Hill Billy?" Can people from Montana really be called "hillbillies"? Is "Hill(y) Billy" a proper name? If he’s from Montana, what is his "mama" doing in Tijuana? Does "mama" refer to his biological mother, or his girlfriend? Sadly, since we don't hear the entire song, these questions will apparently never be answered...]

The gimmick is that the audience doesn’t know a “robbery” is going to occur; the lights go off and a shot rings out, everyone runs around and screams, then the lights come on and Germán says it was all part of the show. Except Sandokan has really been shot! (but only grazed—Ringo was the culprit). This sequence is really bizarre and—like 90% of the film—doesn’t advance the plot at all.

Von Kaidér’s henchmen bring Ringo to the torture chamber. Ringo’s drinking threatens the neo-Nazis’ scheme, so he’s doused with “nitric acid” and turns into a smoking skeleton. Once again, the movie’s technical ineptitude is exposed: no liquid or gas of any kind is shown! Instead, Ringo stands under a red spotlight and screams for a while before going all skeleton-y.

Sandokan dresses up like Mil Máscaras and shoots some of the Nazis from the ferris wheel, but is killed himself. The real Mil shows up and kicks Nazi butt, chasing Von Kaidér back to the torture chamber. The Nazi leader, displaying very poor judgement in a crisis situation, locks himself in his own gas chamber! Mil (apparently by accident) turns on the gas and Von Kaidér dies.

Outside, a car pulls up. It is Von Gobert, the son of the man seen in the opening sequence. He identifies Polito the clown as Robles, but in a surprise twist, the two men are anti-Nazis. Two decades earlier, Von Gobert’s father and Robles made a pact: if, when they met once more, the world had learned to live in peace, they would turn over
KN7 to the proper authorities. However, since the world is still screwed up, they burn the microfilm and the formula is lost forever.

*Enigma de muerte* is really disjointed and pointless. Don’t even try to figure out the plot, it makes no sense (especially after the “surprise” ending). Half the *carpa* cast are Nazis and the other half are people spying on the Nazis, but the man everyone is looking for is Robles, who isn’t a Nazi. But the Nazis think he and Von Gobert are Nazis, or something. Do they know Polito is Robles? Do they know Robles is part of the *carpa* cast (they must, otherwise why would they have their neo-Nazi organization based there)? Why do the Nazis keep trying to kill Estrella and Sandokan? If the *carpa* show has been located at the *feria* for a year, how was Von Kaider’s underground torture chamber (with a glass gas chamber, an electric chair, and other nifty pieces of equipment) constructed during that period without anyone noticing? How did the security organization discover Robles was working for the *carpa* and—if they knew that—why didn’t they know which person he was?

Some of the technical problems have been mentioned earlier, but on the positive side, the exteriors were shot at a real *feria* and these scenes are actually pretty well done. As noted above, the fight on the ferris wheel is fairly exciting (if not awe-inspiring) although it goes on a little too long. Mil Máscaras wears an interesting variety of masks in this movie, including a white one with a black octopus on the face (!) and a blue one that makes him look like the Toxic Avenger (this is the mask Sandokan is wearing when he is killed).

The cast is filled with familiar faces. María Duval and David Silva have little to do, since most of the intrigue is focused on Eric del Castillo, Isela Vega, Carradine, and Victor Junco (del Castillo and Duval practically repeat their roles from *Santo vs. el Estrangulador*, 1963). Patricia Ferrer, one of my favourites, doesn’t have much dialogue, but this was fairly early in her screen career. Federico Curiel’s direction is not too bad, but the stupidity of the script (sorry, Ramón Obón Jr.) and flaws and sloppiness in the production values turn this into a "so bad it’s good" curiosity piece at best.