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OBITUARIES GUSTAVO ROJO

Actor Gustavo Rojo, veteran of the Golden Age of Mexican cinema, died on 22 April 2017; he was 93 years old. Gustavo Adolfo Krefeld Sarandí Rojo y Pinto was born on a ship crossing the Atlantic Ocean in September 1924; upon arrival in Uruguay, he became a citizen of that country. Rojo's mother was writer Mercedes Pinto; his older sister became an actress under the name Pituka de Foronda, and his younger brother Rubén Rojo also had a long acting career.



Gustavo Rojo began acting as a teenager in Mexican cinema, and continued to work in films and on television until 2016. In addition to his Mexican career, Rojo also made numerous films in Spain and other European countries, as well as South America. He also worked on various Hollywood TV series in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Rojo's film credits include *Eterna agonía*, *El gran calavera* (directed by Luis Buñuel), *La principessa delle Canarie* (with Silvana Pampanini and Marcelo Mastroianni), *Alexander the Great* (with Richard Burton), *El Condor* (with Lee Van Cleef), *The Valley of Gwangi*, *Old Shatterhand*, and many others.

Gustavo Rojo was married three times: to Mercedes Castellanos (the mother of his first daughter, Alejandra), to actress Erika Remberg, and to former "Miss Peru" and occasional actress Carmela Stein (the mother of his other 3 children, including actress Ana Patricia Rojo).

◆◆◆ ALMA DELIA FUENTES

Actress Alma Delia Fuentes died on 2 April 2017 at the age of 80. Alma Delia Susana Fuentes González, born in Mexico City in January 1937, became a professional actress while still a child, making her screen debut in 1946. Although she had already made nearly a dozen films, Fuentes became famous after appearing in Luis Buñuel's

Los olvidados (1950), for which she received an Ariel nomination. She later won an Ariel as Best Juvenile Actress for her role in *Historia de un corazón* and was also nominated for *Mi esposa y la otra*. She eventually appeared in more than 50 feature films.

Fuentes married Julio Azcárraga in 1954. They had 4 children. This marriage ended in divorce; Fuentes was later briefly married to actor Rafael del Río. After her wedding to Azcárraga (a member of the powerful Azcárraga media family), Fuentes temporarily retired from acting but returned to television and cinema in the 1960s, with roles in *La isla de los dinosaurios*, *Lucio Vázquez*, *Peligro! Mujeres en acción* and *Doctor Satán*, among others. After *Fallaste corazón* (1969), she retired once more, this time for good.

In late 2015, the magazine "Proceso" interviewed Fuentes in her decaying home in Naucalpan (in the state of México), where she was living in poverty, forgotten by most. The mystery of her early retirement from acting and virtual disappearance was never clarified.



◆◆◆ MARGARITA ISABEL

Actress Margarita Isabel died in Cuernavaca of respiratory problems on 9 April 2017. Margarita Isabel Morales González was born in Mexico City in July 1941. She studied acting with the famous Seki

Sano at the Instituto de Bella Artes, and became a professional actress in the 1960s, although she also worked as a television presenter and politically active journalist. She appeared in numerous films, on the stage, and on television, retiring in the late 2000s. Her credits include *Los recuerdos de porvenir*, *La otra virginidad*, *Las apariencias engañan*, *Como agua para chocolate*, *Danzón*, *Mujeres insumisas*, and *Cronos*, for directors including



Arturo Ripstein, Jaime Humberto Hermosillo (multiple times), Guillermo del Toro, Alfonso Arau, Alberto Isaac, and María Novaro.

Margarita Isabel won three Arieles, for *Mujeres insumisas*, *Dos crímenes*, and *Como agua para chocolate*; she was also nominated for *Chido Guan, el tacos de oro* and *Las apariencias engañan*.

She was married to Mario Iván Martínez Ortega in the 1960s; one of their two sons is actor Mario Iván Martínez.



MARIO MORENO IVANOVA

Mario Moreno Ivanova, the biological and adopted son of Mario Moreno “Cantinflas,” died of a heart attack on 15 May 2017.

Moreno Ivanova was the son of Cantinflas and Marion Roberts, a young woman from the USA who met the famed film comedian in Mexico in 1959. Their child was born in September 1960. Roberts committed suicide in December 1961, and young Mario was adopted by Cantinflas and his wife Valentina in 1962.



Mario Moreno Ivanova was only peripherally involved in the film industry, producing one feature film, *Welcome María* (1986), which received minimal distribution. After his father’s death in 1993, Moreno Ivanova and his cousin, Eduardo Moreno Laparade, entered into a decades-long legal dispute over the rights to the majority of the films of Cantinflas. Moreno Laparade eventually won this case.

Moreno is survived by Valentina del Moral and Mario Moreno del Moral, children of his first marriage to Abril del Moral. He subsequently married Sandra Bernat, but the marriage was dissolved in an acrimonious divorce. In 2013, their son Mario Moreno Bernat committed suicide, and their other two children also experienced various personal tribulations. Moreno was married to Tita Marbez at the time of his death, although they were separated.



CINE SEARCH

In MFB 4/11 (June 1998), I posted a list of Mexican films I’d like to see but had been unable to obtain. Fortunately, most of these films subsequently became available on television or video:

Águilas frente al sol (1932)

Sueño de amor (1935)

Marihuana (*El monstruo verde*): FOUND

Refugiados en Madrid (1938): FOUND

La golondrina (1938): FOUND

Carnival en el trópico (1941): FOUND

El As Negro (1943): FOUND

La mujer sin cabeza (1943): FOUND

Tribunal de justicia (1943)

De Nueva York a Huipangillo (1943)

Arsenio Lupin (1945): FOUND

Inspector Víctor vs. Arsenio Lupin (1945): FOUND

El canto de la sirena (1946)

Casa de perdición (1954): FOUND

El río y la muerte (1954): FOUND

La fuerza del deseo (1955)

Santo contra el rey del crimen (1961): FOUND

Santo en el hotel de la muerte (1961): FOUND

Santo contra el cerebro diabólico (1961): FOUND

Santo contra el estrangulador (1963): FOUND

Santo contra la hija de Frankenstein (1971): FOUND

El vampiro y el sexo (1968): FOUND

Enigma de muerte (1968): FOUND

Arañas infernales (1966): FOUND

La mujeres panteras (1966): FOUND

Los destrampados (1971): FOUND

El rincón de las vírgenes (1972): FOUND

Los Supersabios (1978): FOUND

Veneno para las hadas (1984): FOUND

Here are some other films that have made my “want to see” list in intervening years:

Yolanda (*Brindis al amor*) (1943): released (cut and dubbed into English) as *Toast to Love* in 1951

Mis manos (1964): an entry in the Primer Concurso de Cine Experimental.

Director Julio Cahero was a long-time assistant director in the industry. A rural drama.

Cautivo del más allá (1967): the original film that was later released (with added gore and nudity) as *Terror, sexo y brujería* (1985), which I have seen.

Super Colt 38 (1968): L.E. Vergara, who hired Boris

Karloff & John Carradine to make Mexican films, also made 2 Westerns, one with Nick Adams and this one, starring Jeffrey Hunter. I saw it years ago, it’s rare now.

Blue Demon y las seductoras (1968): nude scenes version of *Blue Demon y las invasoras*



Los leprosos y el sexo : nude scenes version of *Santo* vs. *los jinetes del terror* (1970): This version exists in the Calderón archives but is not currently available.

Roy del espacio (1979): rare animated science-fiction



feature.

Thanatos (1985):
fantasy film directed
by Christian
González (his first
feature)

Los mercenarios
(*El tanque negro*)
(1986) : I don't
know what it's

about, but I'd like to see it. Directed by Eduardo Carrasco Zanini & starring "Flaco" Guzmán.

Las profesoras del amor (1987): allegedly contains explicit (non-simulated) sex scenes, perhaps the first feature in Mexican cinema to do so. Directed by Ángel Rodríguez Vázquez under a pseudonym. See: <http://archivo.eluniversal.com.mx/espectaculos/74573.html>

Guerreros diabólicos (1990) : available on a 3-film DVD but this generally fetches over \$20 and I'm not paying that. "Members of a Satanic cult kidnap women!"

Ambar (1992): fantasy-adventure, dir. Luis Estrada.

❖❖❖
SEXY-COMEDIES

One of the most popular genres of 1980s Mexican cinema was the “sexy-comedy”—although the genre is difficult to define, well over 125 films which probably fit into this category were produced between 1978 (arguably the year when sexy-comedies were born) and 1990.

What is a sexy-comedy? Most of these films have the following traits:

- a. ensemble casts featuring both major comedic stars and supporting comedians, as well as attractive women (of course)
- b. narratives revolve around sexual subjects (in other words, these aren't plots that just happen to contain a lot of sexual activity, the films deal centrally with sexual topics)
- c. farcical plots containing mistaken identity, impersonation (including cross-dressing), etc.
- d. contemporary, urban settings (with some notable exceptions). There are only a handful of sexy-comedies which contain fantasy elements, are located in rural areas, or are set in any time period other than contemporary Mexico.

This definition is certainly fluid. There are films which appear at first to belong to the genre--e.g., *El ratero de la vecindad* (1982), produced by Frontera Films, directed by Gilberto Martínez Solares, starring Alfonso Zayas, Angélica Chaín, Alberto Rojas, Rossy Mendoza, etc., all major sexy-comedy names, and advertised as if it was a sexy comedy--but which upon closer examination don't qualify (*El ratero de la vecindad* is a remake of *El rey del*

barrio and is essentially family-friendly). Other films marketed as sexy-comedies turn out to be more crime-oriented (especially the Frontera productions). So categorising a film as a sexy-comedy is not exact science.

The sexy-comedy did not suddenly appear, fully-formed. There are several significant groups of films which were predecessors to the genre, although they were less explicit (with little or no nudity) and--despite hedonistic goings-on--usually concluded in a morally conservative manner, supporting the institution of monogamous marriage.

In the latter half of the 1960s, veteran actor Mauricio Garcés teamed up with René Cardona Jr. for 8 films which strongly



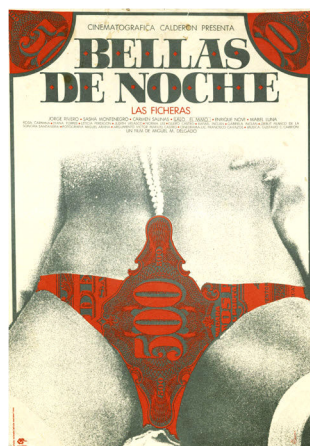
resemble sexy-comedies (Cardona Jr. also directed Garcés in *Las fieras*, which is less relevant). Garcés also appeared in at least 10 other proto-sexy comedies in this era. In the majority of these movies Garcés is portrayed as a womaniser whose reputation is either misleading or whose romantic/sexual activity results in various distressing situations for him, a trait later seen in sexy-comedies.

Four of Garcés' movies were produced by Interfilms, a relatively short-lived company which made nearly 20 films in a four-year period, largely risqué comedies (their other films were mostly adult melodramas). José Díaz Morales directed the entire Interfilms output, with the exception of one of the company's final films in 1970, *Los perturbados*, helmed by Fernando Durán Rojas. Along with the Garcés vehicles, the Interfilms movies—especially multi-story pictures such as *El amor y esas cosas*, *Besos, beso y más besos*, *Mujeres, mujeres, mujeres*, and the like—appear to be direct ancestors of the sexy-comedy.



There were also other, similar examples from other companies and directors in the same era, including *En estas camas nadie duerme*, *Trampas de amor*, *Novios y amantes*, and *Trío y cuarteto*.

Bellas de noche (1974) kicked off the *fichera* (bar-girl) sub-genre. Although these movies—other titles include



Las ficheras, *Noches de cabaret*, *Las del talón*, and *Las golfas del talón*—have certain connections with the future sexy-comedy genre (producers, directors, casts), the *fichera* films are more often dramas with some comic relief, as opposed to comedies.

While there is no universally accepted “first” sexy-comedy, 1978 saw the production of a handful of titles which fit most of the

aforementioned criteria: *Muñecas de medianoche*, *Las cariñosas*, and *El sexo me da risa*. Several more sexy-comedies were made in 1979, but 1980 was the year that the genre began to blossom, with more than a dozen examples and sexy-comedy production in 1981 was similarly robust. Annual production of sexy-comedies would fall and rise over the rest of the decade: 1988 was the biggest year for the genre, with more than 30 features. However, after 1989 the Mexican film industry entered a slump, and sexy-comedies virtually vanished from cinemas. Some of the genre's filmmakers and performers made the transition to *videohomes*, but the production values dropped precipitously and on-screen nudity largely disappeared.

Based on 117 sexy-comedies produced in the 1978-1990 period (any peripheral titles were removed), the most prolific production companies were Cinematográfica Calderón (16 features) and Frontera Films (13). No other producer made more than 8 sexy-comedies. Víctor Manuel “Güero” Castro directed 25 of these films; the only other director in double figures was Alfredo B. Crevenna with 10. Similarly, Castro wrote more sexy-comedies than anyone else (24); his frequent collaborator Francisco Cavazos had 15 writing credits, and the father/son team of Gilberto and Adolfo Martínez Solares scripted 12 pictures.

Numerous actors earned large numbers of credits on sexy-comedies. They include:

Polo Ortín	36
Pedro Weber “Chatanuga”	33
Flaco Ibáñez	30
Alfonso Zayas	26
Alberto “Caballo” Rojas	26
Charly Valentino	26
Rafael Inclán	25
César Bono	23
Rebeca Silva	22
Angélica Cháin	20

At least 19 other performers—including Carmen Salinas, Sasha Montenegro, María Cardinal, Víctor

Manuel Castro, Guillermo Rivas, Sergio Ramos, Lalo el Mimo, Arturo Cobo, and Luis de Alba-- had 10 or more sexy-comedy appearances.

One of the side-effects of the sexy-comedy flood was the creation of numerous sexy and comedic posters for the films.

The most notable artist in this genre was Luis Carreño Limón, son of famous caricaturist Jorge Carreño Alvarado. Luis Carreño, born in

1958, has his own blog featuring his caricatures, including some sexy-comedy posters:

<http://luiscarreño.blogspot.com/> His style-- dominated by caricatures of comedians and images of sexy women--was particularly apt for the sexy-comedy genre.

Sexy-comedy (and related) posters by Carreño include: *El vergonzoso*, *Casa de muñecas para adultos*, *El garañón* and *El garañón 2*, *El semental del Palo Alto*, *Dos cuates a todo dar*, *El muerto al hoyo...y el vivo también*, *Dos tipas de cuidado*, *El vampiro teporocho*, *Destrapados en Los Angeles*, *La lechería*, *Comezón a la mexicana*, *Para que dure...no se apure*, *Un macho en el*



reformatorio de señoritas, *Macho que ladra no muerde*, *Un macho en el salón de belleza*, *Un macho en el hotel*, *Los plomeros y las ficheras*, *Un macho en la tortería*, *Objetos sexuales*, *Pancho el sancho*, 41—*el hombre perfecto*, *Entre cornudos te veas*, and *Los pelotones y Juan Camaney*.

Two other artists worked on a significant number of sexy-comedy posters (in addition to some who did only a

handful). One of these is the unknown artist who handled most of the Frontera Films product, such as the "Vecindario," "Verdaderos," and "Día de los albañiles" series. The art on these posters features effective but extremely stylised, non-realistic caricatures of the stars.



An artist who did sign his work (unfortunately, illegibly!) was perhaps the second most prolific creator of sexy-comedy posters after Luis Carreño. His work features recognisable caricatures of comic stars but is rather awkward & unimaginative compared to the posters by Carreño and the unidentified

Frontera Films poster artist. This artist drew & painted posters for the "Mofles" films, *Dando y dando*, *Tacos tortas y enchiladas*, the "Pulquería" series, *Esos viejos raboverdes*, *Los lavaderos 2*, and *No me des las...gracias llorando*, among others.



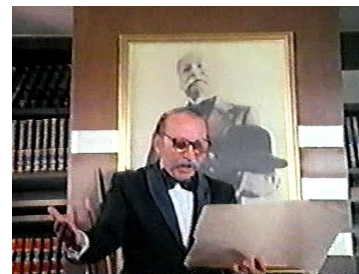
Eso viejos raboverdes [Those Dirty Old Men] (Productora Mazateca, 1980) *Prod-Director General-Adapt:* Gustavo Bravo Ahuja; *"Director de Escena":* Roberto Muñoz M.; *Story:* Jorge Fegan; *Photo:* Marcelo López R.; *Music:* Al Borgia, Billy Valle, Luis Rojas; *Prod Mgr:* Arturo Gutiérrez R.; *Prod Chief:* José "Güero" Rivera; *Asst Dir:* Francisco Guerrero; *Film Ed:* Federico Landeros; *Art Dir:* Corzo Duarte; *Camera Op:* Manuel

Tejada; *Lighting:* Luis Ramos Urquidi; *Makeup:* Graciela Muñoz; *Soudn Engin:* Víctor Rojo; *Union:* STIC

Cast: Rossy Mendoza (*Reina*), Anaís de Melo (*Coral*), María de Montecarlo, Martha Patricia, Estrella Fuentes, Polo Ortín (*board member with many children*), Armando Soto la Marina "Chicote" (*Pío María*), Manuel Medel (*Perfecto*), Jorge Fegan (*Inocencio*), Guillermo Alvarez Bianchi (*Prudencio*), Juan José Vidal "Cuco Pelucho" (*Cándido*), Rubén Márquez (*board member left behind*), Lourdes Azcárraga, Moris Grey (*Ernesto*), Guillermo Inclán (*judge*), Germán Barot (*Inocencio's son*), Fidel Garriga, Arturo Gutiérrez R. (*Jotacho*), Yolanda Rigel, Xóchitl, Arsenio Campos (*Froylán*), Blanca Estela Roth, Martha Stringer, Claudia Tate, Maika Montalvo, Laura Tovar, Jazmín Lira, Hilda "La Gorda," Patricia Escamilla, Julia Janette

Notes: this *sexy-comedy* is depressing rather than humorous, and not sexy at all. If you like seeing elderly men humiliated, this is the movie for you. Otherwise, it's just sad, slow, and aimless. Someone should have told the filmmakers that "funny" music, speeded-up action, food fights, and explosions that leave people with blackened faces are not guaranteed sure-fire laugh-getters (just watch some Capulina movies if you don't believe me).

The board of directors of the golf club "El Hoyo Activo" are present when the will of their late founder is read. He proposed an annual contest to see who can have the best extra-marital affair. With the exception of one member who's knocked unconscious by his wife, the group embarks on a weekend of would-be wanton activity.



However, things don't go as planned. Inocencio and widower Pío María pay for a pool party at the home of a woman who promises lots of available young women: however, the young women bring young male escorts, and the two elderly men are left out. To add insult to injury, Inocencio has to hide because his son is one of the guests! Then, as Inocencio and Pío María attempt to sneak out, they are chased by a vicious dog.

Prudencio drives into the countryside with the sexy Reina, but she gets drunk and wrecks his car. Prudencio is arrested and charged with rape; Reina strolls off with the judge.

Cándido visits the brothel of Madame Olga, and is placed in the hands of two young women. However, they steal his clothes and toupee (after having a lesbian encounter in the shower while he waits outside), and

Cándido has to go home wearing a robe and blonde wig borrowed from Olga.

Perfecto visits the apartment of his young mistress, but a special punch she concocts (on his instructions) explodes, injuring them both. Perfecto, strapped to a gurney, falls out of the ambulance and rolls through the streets before crashing into a park fountain.

The last board member [played by Polo Ortín, whose character name is never given, as far as I can tell] is invited to a beauty contest by his contact Ernesto. The "Reyna [sic] de los Barrios" pageant turns out to be for transvestites (including Ernesto), and a brawl erupts. Everyone, including the board member, winds up in jail.

Esos viejos raboverdes is quite mean-spirited. The elderly board members are depicted as mildly naughty, but



not really lecherous or evil, so their ill-treatment does not really seem to be their "just desserts." Furthermore, several of the actors (particularly Manuel Medel and to a lesser extent El Chicote) seem

quite frail and the audience feels sorry for them (Medel is especially pitiful as he struggles to carry several bags of groceries upstairs to his mistress's apartment; he also has severe tremors which I hope were the result of his "acting").

Even putting these concerns aside, *Esos viejos raboverdes* is just not funny, relying the lowest level of physical comedy and grotesquely exaggerated facial mugging for "humor." The dialogue isn't witty and the timing and pacing is terrible.

The picture doesn't even deliver a satisfactory dose of cheesecake, let alone nudity, although Rossy Mendoza is pretty "impressive" in her role. The nudity is restricted to two fantasy sequences and the aforementioned (very short and not at all revealing) shower scene (shot with a red filter).

I can't really say much that is positive about this movie at all. Normally the presence of numerous veteran performers would be a plus, but they're treated so badly that it's simply not funny. The only (possible) point of trivial interest was the sight of a bread truck whose sign indicates "Twinky" is apparently spelled "Tuinky" in Mexico. So now you know.



Huevos rancheros [Ranch-Style Eggs] (Cin.

Filmex-Real Productora Filmica, 1981) *Prod*: J. Fernando Pérez Gavilán; *Dir-Scr*: René Cardona Jr.; *Photo*: Daniel López; *Music*: Gustavo C. Carrión; *Prod Coord*: Teresa Jauregui, J.F. Pérez Gavilán, Carmen de Alba, Miguel Ángel Gómez, Fermín Lara; *Prod Chief*: Alfredo Chavira; *Asst Dir*: Winfield Sánchez; *Film Ed*: Rafael Ceballos; *Decor*: Rafael Brizuela; *Camera Op*: Carlos Montaña; *Lighting*: Fernando Calvillo; *Makeup*: Ana Leticia Rojas; *Sound Engin*: Roberto Camacho; *Union*: STPC

Cast: "Un palo bien dado"-- Sasha Montenegro (*wife*), Carmen Salinas (*María*), Rafael Inclán (*Melitón*), Carlos Monden (*Ricardo*), Polo Ortín (*Manolo*), Michel Wagner (*Michelle*), Adriana Riva (*Lynn*), Miguel Ángel Gómez;

"La virginidad en el río"-- Lalo González "Piporro" (*Valentón de la Sierra*), Eleazar García "Chelelo" (*don Sebe*), Isaura Espinoza (*Chuchita*), Lucila Mariscal (*aunt*), Ricardo Carreón (*doctor*), Pedro Armendáriz Jr. (*El Charro Colorado*), Mario Arévalo, Rigoberto Carmona (*cantina man*), Alberto Arvizu (*Argumedo*), Jorge Zamora "Zamorita" (*El Charro Negro*), Ángel de la Peña, Alfredo Solares "El Pelón" (*cantinero*), Eleazar García Jr. (*wedding guest*)

Notes: for reasons unknown (to me), after about five years of making "international" films like *Supervivientes de los Andes*, *Tintorera!*, *Ciclón!*, and *Guyana, el crimen del siglo*, René Cardona Jr. suddenly returned to filmmaking for the local Mexican (and Spanish-language) market in 1981, directing a string of sexy-



comedies (and then signing with Televisine for more family-oriented movies). He would occasionally direct films aimed at a wider audience (*El tesoro del Amazonas* and *El ataque de los pájaros*), but these alternated with his domestic-market product.

Huevos rancheros is essentially a two-joke film (one joke for each story), and the first episode is horribly slow, stretching out the punch-line for 45 minutes. [Curiously, the Laguna Films video version I saw appears to be missing some more explicit nudity of Sasha Montenegro, although for what reason I don't know, since she is seen nude, and there is plentiful full-frontal nudity (male and female) in this episode and in the second story.] Sasha

Montenegro's character does not seem to have been given a name, so I'll just call her Sasha--

Sasha is married to engineer Ricardo. His rich family gave the couple a large house and Ricardo was appointed to a well-paying job, in the belief Sasha was pregnant.

This was a false alarm, but Sasha is willing to go to any



lengths to have a child. Her plans for a romantic tryst with her husband are spoiled when Ricardo's friend Manolo calls: he is trying to seduce two

gringas from Dallas who need their "working papers" if they are to stay in Mexico and become models. Ricardo agrees to meet them at a roller disco (!), posing as an influential man. To fool Sasha, Ricardo tells her he has to meet union official Melitón, who is threatening to call a strike at the construction job he's supervising.

Ricardo's evening does not go well: the *gringas* think he's too old for them, and he makes a fool out of himself trying to roller-skate. Meanwhile, a brusque man named Melitón--carrying a machete--shows up at Sasha's house,



demanding to see Ricardo. To save her husband's job (and life), Sasha seduces the man, only to learn he was just trying to deliver a machete Ricardo had purchased! As

the story concludes, Ricardo and Sasha proudly have their infant son (named "Ricardo Melitón") baptized.

"Un palo bien dado" is really pretty boring. Carmen Salinas putters around making wisecracks as Sasha's maid, and Polo Ortín does his usual *shtick* as the lecherous Manolo, but the story has no point and drags out the inevitable "twist" ending to unconscionable lengths. Fortunately, the second episode is more entertaining.

"La virginidad en el río"--Chuchita, the sexy daughter of don Sebe, is engaged to the fearsome *charro* Valentín de la Sierra. However, Valentín hears rumors that she has been cuckolding him (even before they're married!) with every man in the village (as the story opens, she's caught swimming nude by El Charro Colorado and they have sex). Valentín warns don Sebe he will kill Chuchita and her father if it turns out she isn't a virgin on their wedding day.

Don Sebe asks his sister to provide a remedy for the problem, but the older woman gets drunk at the wedding and forgets. Valentín shows up with a "doctor from the city" who is

ordered to inspect Chuchita and verify she's a virgin. Chuchita seduces the doctor; although he later attests to her "pure" state, Chuchita confesses to



Valentín that she is not a virgin any longer. But she blames it on her husband, claiming she was a virgin until the doctor "inspected" her!

"La virginidad en el río" is loaded with references to *ranchera* movies and Mexican popular culture. In addition to "El Charro Colorado" (costumed like "Juan Colorado," played by Antonio Aguilar in two 1960s movies), there is "El Charro Negro" (who says "I'm in the wrong movie"--the joke here is that he's played by Afro-Cuban Jorge Zamora), as well as verbal mentions of Irma Serrano, Santo, El Chapulín Colorado, Emilio "Indio" Fernández, and fictional and historical characters like Benjamín Argumedo and Lorenzo Rafael (from *María Candelaria*). Even Piporro's character name is a pun on "Valentín de la Sierra," another film role played by Antonio Aguilar ("Valentón" means "braggart").



However, the second episode is especially notable for the presence of Isaura Espinoza, whose amazing body is on display for the majority of her screen time. It's not hard to understand why Valentín decides to go ahead with the wedding despite his doubts about her virtue: even if she's been with "every man in town," he thinks, "it's a small town" (although he has second thoughts when he thinks about those men who were "just passing through"). Espinoza's outspoken character is also amusingly portrayed.

The technical aspects of *Huevos rancheros* (sort of a misleading title, since the *ranchera* aspect is only present in the second story--*huevos* means "eggs" but is also slang for testicles) are adequate. Most of the first episode was

shot in someone's luxurious house and the roller disco, the second in a rural village. The photography and sound are fine. The performances in the second episode are quite good, while those in the first story are weak in comparison.

An uneven film redeemed by the second episode.



Buenas y con...movidas [Hot Babes...and With Moves]* (Gazcón Films-Prod. Rosas Priego-Prod. Filmica Real, 1981) *Dir:* René Cardona Jr.; *Scr:* René Cardona Jr., Carlos Valdemar; *Photo:* Miguel Arana; *Music:* Gustavo César Carrión; *Prod Chief:* Alfredo Chavira; *Asst Dir:* Jesús Marín; *Film Ed:* Alfredo Rosas Priego; *Makeup:* Carmen Palomino; *Sound:* José Carles; *Re-rec:* Jesús González Gancy; *Union:* STPC

*[this title is a play on words. A "movida" is an affair but "conmovida" (one word) means "touched" or "moved" (in the sentimental sense). And saying a woman is "buena" doesn't necessarily mean she is a good person, it can mean she is sexy.]

Cast: Angélica Chain (*La Piadosa*), Lyn May (*La Guitarra*), Lucy Gallardo (*La Duquesa*), Alberto "Caballo" Rojas (*Filemón "Corneta"*), Isaura Espinoza (*La Mona Lisa*), Janett Mass (*La Presuntuosa*), Polo Ortín (*Polo*), Kippy Casado (*Tostones*), Pancho Muller (*Pedro de Riux Tirado*), Eduardo Alcaraz and Lina Michel (*parents of Jean-Paul*), Wanda Seuz (*La Bicicleta*), Ricardo Carreón (*Julius*), Luz María Jerez (*Carolina*), Humberto Elizondo (*Eleuterio*), Juan Luis (*Jean-Paul*), José Luis Fernández (*irate client*), Jesús Gómez (*client in car*), Paco Sañudo (*drunk client*); *clients at house:* Fernando Yapur, Carlos León, George Sámano; Rigoberto Carmona, Jaime Pizarro, Esteban González, José Luis Avendaño, Miguel A. Garrido, Isabel Estrada, Enrique Cuenca (*man dancing at end*)

Notes: *Buenas y con...movidas* does not have an original plot, but overall the picture succeeds because it at least has a plot, and because the various characters (and

performers) are *simpático*. Large doses of more or less gratuitous nudity also help.

The basic premise of *Buenas y con...movidas*--a poor woman has deceived her daughter (who lives elsewhere) into believing she is wealthy, and is helped by her friends into perpetuating the deception when the daughter shows up in person--was used numerous times in cinema prior to 1981. Damon Runyon's "Apple Annie," perhaps the origin of all of the versions, was adapted at least twice, as *Lady for a Day* and *Pocketful of Miracles*, with May Robson and Bette Davis, respectively. *La marquesa del barrio* (1950) featured Libertad Lamarque as the mother in a version of this plot (the same year, *Una gallega baila mambo* worked a variation on the story, although in this case the deceived person was a lawyer not the protagonist's daughter).

In *Buenas y con...movidas*, middle-aged hooker La Duquesa receives a message that her daughter Carolina is returning to Mexico from France with her fiancé and his parents for a brief visit. La Duquesa's prostitute friends--La Piadosa, Tostones, La Guitarra, La Bicicleta, La Mona Lisa, and the gay Corneta--agree to help deceive the visitors. La Piadosa convinces one of her regular clients, butler Polo, to allow them to use the mansion of his employer, banker don Pedro (away on an extended trip after the death of his wife).



Everyone poses as a member of the household staff, and milkman Eleuterio is drafted into service as the chauffeur. Polo despairs, but each time he threatens to withdraw his support, La Piadosa seduces him back into line.

Carolina, her fiancé Jean-Paul, Jean-Paul's parents, relative Julius, and the family maid Cuca arrive and are suitably impressed by the mansion, although some of the "servants" seem a little odd. Corneta sets his sights on the handsome Julius, although Tostones and La Mona Lisa are also interested in the guest. While practicing out loud his French ("voulez vous couche ave moi?") Corneta is overheard by maid Cuca, who shouts "Oui!" and leaps on him, in the nude.

La Duquesa is pleased to be reunited with her daughter, but gets nervous when Carolina says they are going to be able to stay longer than one night! The plan further begins to unravel when jealous hooker La Presuntuosa sends "clients" to the mansion--these men are entertained downstairs by La Guitarra, La Piadosa, and La Mona Lisa to keep them out of the way.

However, the guests are thrown into a panic when they learn don Pedro de Riux Tirado is coming home (they don't know he owns the house, they think he's a friend of La Duquesa). Carolina confesses to her mother that her fiancé's father swindled don Pedro during a business deal in France. To avoid nasty complications, the guests swiftly pack up and leave. Don Pedro arrives and is mistaken for another "client," and taken downstairs by the prostitutes. In a short time he is drunk and happy but La Presuntuosa tips off the police to the operations of the "brothel," and the house is raided.

Don Pedro's reputation and fortune are ruined by the scandal. The only way to recuperate his money is to establish a "Dance and Massage School" on the premises--i.e., really turn his home into a brothel. As the movie concludes, the establishment is a roaring success. A printed title reads "And everyone was happy--until the house was shut down again."



Buenas y con...movidas moves along at a sprightly pace, with little or no padding. Perhaps the most disposable sequence is a dinner in which the guests eat spaghetti that has had scouring powder and other non-food items accidentally added. A bit reminiscent of the Three Stooges, this scene isn't that funny and doesn't really advance the plot. There is also one extraneous rump-shaking Lyn May dance, but this occurs at the very end in a party sequence.

It's amusing to see how full nudity is blatantly shoe-horned into the picture, with lots of bath and shower scenes, changing of clothes, and so forth, right from the opening minutes of the film. Little of this is really sexual in nature--that is, there is not much in the way of simulated love-making (and what there is, is generally humorous, such as the scenes between the uncomfortable Corneta and the insatiable Cuca). Even those actresses of a certain age who don't take it all off (Gallardo and Michel) appear in abbreviated underwear.

The overall tone of the movie could probably be described as ribald, or naughty, rather than smutty or sexy. The lives of the various sex workers aren't too hard and they don't seem to despise their work (after all, this is a comedy not a social drama), although their clients are generally depicted as buffoons. Polo's relationship with La Piadosa is a cut above the usual hooker-client bond, but she still charges him for sex (or uses sex to make him compliant to her wishes).

The performances in *Buenas y con...movidas* are solid throughout. On the male side, Rojas (in his "flaming gay" period) and Ortín are amusing but somewhat more restrained than they would be in other pictures, and Humberto Elizondo is funny in a smaller role (Carreón, Alcaraz, etc., play their parts more or less straight). The actresses are also quite good and their characters are nicely separated out--although nobody gets any sort of back story except La Duquesa. One of the biggest surprises is the deft comedy touch displayed by Wanda Seux, whose film roles were generally restricted to nude scenes and strip acts. Angélica Chaín has ample opportunity to display her amazing body but her role isn't as large or developed as in some other movies; Kippy Casado (using a thick Argentine accent) is the female "comic relief."

Certainly not a great film, but a solid *sexy comedy* that delivers laughs and nude women in satisfying doses.



Escuela de placer [School of Pleasure] (Prods. Rosas Priego-Prod. Fílmica Real-Gazcón Films, 1981)
Exec Prod: Alfonso Rosas Priego; *Dir:* René Cardona Jr.;
Scr: René Cardona Jr., Carlos Valdemar; *Photo:* Miguel Arana; *Music:* Gustavo César Carrión; *Prd Mgr:* Antonio Merino; *Prod Chief:* Alfredo Chavira; *Asst Dir:* Jesús Marín; *Film Ed:* Alfredo Rosas Priego; *Makeup:* Carmen Palomino; *Sound Engin:* José B. Carles; *Sound Ed:* Abraham Cruz; *Union:* STPC

Cast: Lyn May (*La Guitarra*), Angélica Chaín (*La Piadosa*), Enrique Cuenca "El Polivoz" (*Manuel Herculano Pulido*), Alberto "Caballo" Rojas (*Florentino Flores Clavel "Corneta"*), Isaura Espinoza (*La Mona Lisa*), Wanda Seux (*La Bicicleta*), Polo Ortín (*Polo Villaseñor*), Pedro Weber "Chatanooga" (*Plutarco*), Lucy Gallardo (*La Duquesa*), Carlos Monden (*Angelo*), Lorena Velázquez (*Lourdes aka "Lulú"*), Janette Mass (*La Presuntuosa*), Raúl Padilla Jr. "Chóforo" (*Mamuncio*), Kippy Casado (*Tostones*), Yolanda Ciani (*Irene*), Patricia Ferrer (*Chayito*), Roger Cudney (*client*), Sybil Young (*Angelo's girlfriend?*), Odila Flores (*Cristina?*), Pancho Muller [voice only] (*don Pedro de Riux Tirado*), Guillermo [Alvarez] Bianchi (*fat client*), Marcelo Villamil (*client*), Luis Guevara (*client*), Jucabeth González, Doris

Pavel, Suki Tarano, Laura Tovar, Antonio Torres, Miguel Ángel Gómez, Andree Moree, Gonzalo Sánchez (*bodyguard*), Nicolas Jasso

Notes: *Escuela de placer* is a sequel to *Buenas y con...movidas*, but the focus of the plot shifts almost entirely away from the characters in the first movie. This is very similar to an earlier linked pair of Cardona Jr. movies--*El día de la boda* and *El matrimonio es como el demonio*.



At the end of *Buenas y con...movidas*, don Pedro's home was a bustling brothel disguised as a "Dance School." *Escuela de placer* opens with the reading of don Pedro's will after his sudden death. Actually, don Pedro reads the will himself via a tape recording (at the end, he says "this tape won't self-destruct, if you keep it in a safe place"). He leaves his property to his butler Polo and the sex workers La Piadosa, La Duquesa, La Mona Lisa, La Bicicleta, Corneta, Tostones, and La Guitarra. However, banker Manuel of "Bancotex" informs them the house is mortgaged for a large amount and they have only a few months to pay it off.

The heirs decide the only way to pay the loan is to reopen the "Dance School," so they do. The brothel flourishes. Wealthy businessman Plutarco becomes a "member" of the "school," and is shown videotapes of the "instructors" in various states of undress (including the male Corneta in a pink leotard--when Plutarco places his order, he says anyone but Tostones and "that Pink Panther"). Soon he is spending nearly every afternoon at the school.

Plutarco's wife Irene is pleased to see the good effect this "exercise" is having on her husband, but when she suggests she join the school as well, he forbids it. Instead, he pays for his wife and children to take a European tour. This news gets back to Irene's friends Lulú and Chayito. Lulú is married to banker Manuel--whose boss is Plutarco, coincidentally enough. Manuel has a secret: there is no

mortgage on the mansion. He lost the deed gambling with gangster Angelo, and is stalling the *mafioso* with stories of the "tenants" who need time to vacate the premises. When La Duquesa and the others make a large payment on the debt, Manuel knows his scheme is about to unravel.

And to top it off, Lulú and Chayito decide to take "classes" at the "dance school," unknown to their husbands. They are mistaken for new employees by La Duquesa, who hands them over to La Bicicleta for "orientation" to their new jobs (as prostitutes!). Lulú and Chayito are a little confused when they are given sexy lingerie to wear, but assume it is for their "dance lesson."

Lulú is shocked to discover herself in a bedroom with Plutarco, both of them in their underwear. After a brief chase around the room, she convinces him she is innocent. Meanwhile, Chayito goes into a room with a man in a turban and emerges much later with a smile on her face.

Manuel is forced to escort Angelo to the house, where the usual party is going on. Suddenly, the police show up and arrest everyone! As the film ends, the house is back in business--but as a day-care center for children now, the hookers converted into nursemaids. [And in a bizarre "joke" ending, Corneta and a pregnant Polo stroll off, arguing about whether "their child" is going to be a boy or a girl.]

Escuela de placer is amusing but not as good as *Buenas y con...movidas*. La Duquesa, la Piadosa, la Mona Lisa, la Bicicleta, etc., are shunted into the background, with most of the attention focusing on the new characters Manuel, Plutarco, and their wives. The sequel also includes more in the way of padding--various exotic dances, some slapstick humor--than the first movie did. There is still a fair amount of nudity, but even this seems oddly irrelevant in many cases (the videos that Plutarco watches on TV to choose his "instructor" for example). Patricia Ferrer (wearing an unattractive wig) has a brief nude scene, but Lorena Velázquez merely displays her extremely well-preserved body in lacy underwear.

The performances are generally good but the humor is broader and less personal than in *Buenas y con...movidas*; Pedro Weber moderates his performance style a bit and Chóforo plays almost a straight role, while Enrique Cuenca is amusing as the corrupt banker.

One note about this picture and *Buenas y con...movidas*. These two pictures were largely shot in somebody's luxurious home. It's possible this house actually belonged to the Cardona family, since in *Escuela de placer* a very large portrait that appears to be René Cardona Sr. can be seen on one wall. The camera does not linger on this picture (which is in the background) so it isn't an overt joke, but those in the know would probably have been amused.



El macho biónico [The Bionic Macho Man]

(Prods. Rodas, 1981) *Exec Prod*: Mariagna Prats, Enrique Serrano; *Prod*: Rodolfo de Anda, Andrés García; *Dir*: Rodolfo de Anda; *Scr*: Gilberto de Anda, Rodolfo de Anda; *Orig. Play*: Mauricio Iglesias "El amor es una farsa"; *Photo*: Antonio de Anda; *Music*: Ernesto Cortázar [Jr.], Salvador Reyes; *Film Ed*: Francisco Chiu; *Re-rec*: Ricardo Saldívar; *Sound Ed*: J. Antonio López; *Union*: STIC

Cast: Andrés García (*Esteban Osuna*), Isela Vega (*Leonor "la Leona"*), Roberto Guzmán (*Moisés*), Rafael Inclán (*doctor*), Princesa Lea (*beach blonde and party guest*), Wanda Seux (*party guest*), Mariagna Prats (*Miss Money Penny*), Carlos East (*old monk*), Arturo Martínez [Jr.] (*waiter*), Ana María Guzmán, Judith Velazco, Hortencia Clavijo M. "La Cucara" [sic] (*Pepsicola*), Mario Arevalo (*monk*), Rubén Márquez (*monk*), José L. Murillo (*bartender*)

Notes: this is a moderately entertaining "sexy comedy," from the era in which Mexican films were fairly lenient about full frontal nudity (for women, of course). So there are a lot of scenes of naked women, a few interesting (although not necessarily funny) references to U.S.



popular culture, and some decent production values and location shooting in various cities (Acapulco, Guanajuato). But the movie is only mildly humorous at best.

Playboy Esteban Osuna and his gay valet Moy (for Moisés) flee Iran in a submarine-car after the Shah (an excellent double for the real thing) catches Esteban in bed with Queen Farah. After dallying in Acapulco on his yacht, Esteban and Moy head for Mexico City in his

private jet; the plane crashes, and Esteban loses an important part of his anatomy (especially important if you are an international playboy and sex symbol). Esteban and Moy travel to a secret lab in the USA; there, Mr. Goldman agrees to give Esteban a bionic penis (this word is never used in the film nor is the organ ever seen) for \$9 million. Esteban protests: the "astronaut" got two legs, an arm, and a bionic eye for only \$6 million! However, he agrees to pay for the implant.

Unfortunately, Esteban's new part fails to operate as expected during an orgy he arranges. Moy tells him there is a direct connection between the brain, heart and the bionic part: it will only work when Esteban is in love. Esteban spots Leonor, an exotic dancer in a nightclub, and experiences a reaction, but she rejects him because he doesn't look *macho* enough. Esteban tries a variety of guises--bullfighter, Tarzan, Zorro--as he follows Leonor around Mexico, but all his efforts fail. He finally gives up and enters a monastery. Meanwhile, Leonor reads a magazine article about Esteban's bionic part, decides he is the perfect man for her, and tracks him down at the monastery. They get married. When they return from their honeymoon, Moy shows off his bionic implant (buttocks).



In addition to the basic parody of "The Six Million Dollar Man," *El macho biónico* also features scenes in which Esteban spoofs *The Exorcist* and "The Incredible Hulk," and as noted earlier, Zorro and Tarzan (in the Tarzan scene, he puts a knife in his mouth before diving in to wrestle an alligator, and cuts his lip!). He also dresses



up like a vampire for his wild party: the makeup and costume are probably intended to evoke George Hamilton in *Love at First Bite*.

El macho biónico seems to have been made on a fairly low budget: the sets are quite minimalist, although this is mitigated

by the use of some excellent locations. Andrés García plays his usual self, while Isela Vega doesn't have much to do except parade around naked (well, not all of the time). The real surprise for some viewers will be Roberto "Flaco" Guzmán as the flaming gay stereotype "Moy," but Guzmán had an extensive comedy background in addition to his many (later) action film roles, so he wasn't exactly being

cast against type. Nobody else really has much to do in the movie: Rafael Inclán is briefly seen as a doctor, and Princesa Lea has a couple of nude scenes (including one in which she and Wanda Seux warm up for Esteban by having lesbian sex).

A bit below average for a sexy-comedy of this era, but of mild interest due to its pop culture references.

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La pulquería [The Pulque Shop] (Cin. Calderón,



©(1981)
 Prod: Guillermo Calderón
 Stell; Dir: Víctor Manuel Castro; Adapt: Lic. Francisco Cavazos, Víctor Manuel Castro; Story: Guillermo Contreras, Víctor Manuel Castro, Lic. Francisco Cavazos;
 Photo: Miguel

Arana; Music: Gustavo C. Carrión; Prod Mgr: Roberto G. Rivera; Prod Chief: Enrique Morfín; Asst to Dir: Leandro Espinosa; Sub-Dir: Jesús Marín; Film Ed: Jorge Bustos; Art Dir: Salvador Lozano; Decor: José Tirado; Makeup: Josefina Palomino; Sound Ed: José Li-Ho; Union: STPC

Cast: Jorge Rivero (*Gerardo*), Sasha Montenegro (*Dr. Norma del Río*), Carmen Salinas (*La Corcholata*), Rebeca Silva (*Chabela*), Rafael Inclán (*Ayates*), Alfonso Zayas (*The Devil*), Jorge Noble (*El Sapo*), Luis de Alba (*Zacarías Tlacoyo*), Manuel "Loco" Valdéz [sic] (*Dr. Martínez*), Enrique Cuenca "Polivoz" (*doctor*), Rubén Olivares "El Púas" (*Nacho*), Isela Vega (*Lucila*), Polo Ortín (*Prof. Tinoco*), Manuel "Flaco" Ibáñez (*Celestino*), Alfredo Solares (*cilindrero*), Pedro Weber "Chatanooga" (*doctor*), Arturo Cobo "Cobitos" (*doctor*), Memo de Alvarado (*pulque shop customer*), Margarito Esparza (*midget*), Janette Mass (*blonde who gets medallion*), Mayte Gerald, Patty Martínez, Doris Pavel, Maricarmen Conde, Sonia Camacho, Jorge Mondragón (*Papa Quico*), Michel Grayeb, Roberto G. Rivera, Gloria Alicia Inclán (*taco vendor*), César Escalero, Rafael Torres, Héctor Kiev, Shandira de Uruguay, Norma Alvarado, Lucía Gálvez, América Cisneros, Isaura Espinoza (*"robbery" victim*),

Carolina Magaña, Michelle Duvois, Gonzalo Sánchez (*fake "robber"*)

Notes: *La pulquería* was one of the most successful sexy-comedies, spawning several sequels and numerous imitations. Bolstered by a fantastic cast, the movie is seriously schizophrenic--two parallel plots which barely and briefly intersect--but is still amusing and well-made (unlike many later sexy-comedies, *La pulquería* was shot mostly on studio sets, including some studio exteriors).

"La Caída de Luzbel" (The Fall of Lucifer) is a *pulque* shop in Mexico City. El Sapo is the owner, ex-boxer Nacho is the bartender. El Sapo lusts after Chabela, Nacho's sister. Nacho and Chabela live with their elderly grandfather, Papa Quico. Regular customers of the *pulquería* include Ayates (and his dog Onasis), schoolteacher Prof. Tinoco, policeman



Tlacoyo, and (via the takeout window since women aren't permitted inside) drunken prostitute La Corcholata.

Meanwhile, Gerardo is consulting a team of doctors about a personal problem: after years of activity as a wealthy playboy, he's now impotent. Gerardo tells psychiatrist Dr. Norma del Río about his sexual history, including his "tricks" (he gives a woman a medallion that allegedly belonged to his mother, he defends another from a fake "robber," and in his final fling, turns up the heat in his apartment so his six female guests will strip and dive into his indoor swimming pool). Unfortunately, none of Norma's

efforts cure Gerardo's problem (and since she has fallen in love with her patient, it is a double tragedy).

Gerardo says he'd even take help from "the Devil" to regain his potency.

Sure enough, the Devil appears. He doesn't have horns ("I'm not married," a reference to a cuckold, who is Mexico is said to "wear horns") and his tail is back in Hell, being "used for jump rope." The Devil agrees to return Gerardo's potency permanently if the young man can



introduce him to "love" within three days--the Devil has never experienced that human emotion.

Back in the *pulquería* sub-plot, El Sapo forces his way into Chabela's house and tries to rape her, but when the ailing Papa Quico tries to come to his granddaughter's aid,



the old man has a heart attack and dies. Nacho is informed of this and beats El Sapo within an inch of his life. The police arrive but El

Sapo refuses to accuse Nacho of assault, claiming 4 drunks beat him up and Nacho actually helped him. After the cops leave, El Sapo apologizes for his actions (and in a realistic bit, Nacho just stares at him for a minute and leaves).

Meanwhile, Gerardo and the Devil are driving around town when the Devil spots the *pulquería* and insists Gerardo take him inside (because of the shop's name, get it?). They make friends with Ayates. They get drunk and go back to Gerardo's house, where Norma has arranged for high-class prostitute Lucila to teach the Devil about "love." But Lucila won't sleep with anyone who is drunk ("he reminds me of my father") and departs. The next morning, Gerardo is resigned to spending the rest of his life impotent, but the Devil comes downstairs and says he did find love. With who? Ayates!

La pulquería alternates between the two plots, which are connected only



coincidentally towards the end--Gerardo and the Devil spend little screen time in the *pulque* shop--via the character of Ayates. The *pulquería* sequences veer into melodrama only at the end, when El Sapo assaults Chabela--this is a pretty realistic sequence, with Rebeca Silva vigorously fighting and screaming as Jorge Noble strips off her clothing--and Papa Quico dies. Otherwise, the scenes in the shop and its environs are filled with humor based on the lower-class status of the residents, on alcohol and sex, and other familiar topics.



El Vecindario (Los mexicanos calientes) [The Neighbourhood: The Hot Mexicans] (Frontera Films, 1981) *Exec Prod*: Adolfo Martínez Solares; *Dir*: Gilberto Martínez Solares; *Scr*: Gilberto Martínez Solares, Adolfo Martínez Solares; *Photo*: Armando Castellón; *Music*: Ernesto Cortázar [Jr.]; *Prod Mgr*: Alejandro Soberón Kuri; *Asst Dir*: Alejandro Rodríguez; *Film Ed*: José Munguía; *Union*: STIC



Cast: Alfonso Zayas (*Roberto*), Rafael Inclán (*Rubén Gálvez*), Ana Luisa Peluffo (*Gilda de Gálvez*), Angélica Chain (*Julieta*), Freddie [sic] Fernández "El Pichi" (*Edmundo*), Rossy Mendoza (*Irma*), Anaís de Melo (*Anita*), Gilberto Trujillo (*Julián Gálvez*)*, Óscar Fentanes (*Juan*), René Ruiz "Tun Tun" (*compadre*), Sebastián Soler, Adolfo Martínez Solares, Marcelo Villamil (*lawyer*), Clarisa Ahuet (*maid*), Queta Carrasco (*old lady*), Bob Nelson (*man in hall*), Jesús Gómez (*policeman*), Pepe Magaña? (*neighbour*), Carl-Hillos (*reporter*), Bruno Rey (*cab driver*), Carla Ivon, Dominic, Laura Garza, Dulcinea Carvalho

* Fentanes is listed on the credits as playing "Julián" but this is incorrect

Notes: the first in a long line of Frontera Films *sexy-comedias*, *El vecindario* is amusing enough, if you can overlook a few things. Such as having a misogynistic rapist who is never punished for his crimes as one of the main protagonists. Also incest, infidelity, suicide, and bigamy. Hilarious!

The film follows the amorous adventures of three men: wealthy businessman Edmundo, married to Irma but having an affair with Gilda, the wife of one of his employees, Rubén. Rubén, who pretends to be very religious, keeps model Julieta as his mistress. Edmundo's chauffeur Roberto is a serial rapist and also a bigamist with two families, including son Juan in one and daughter Sofia in the other. When Sofia's mother commits suicide over Roberto's neglect and mistreatment (and his refusal to

legally recognise Sofia as his daughter), Roberto has her move in with Juan and Juan's mother Guadalupe. Juan and Sofia fall in love, she becomes pregnant, and they marry. Roberto is distraught until his *compadre* says Sofia is his daughter.



Meanwhile, Edmundo attends a party with erstwhile model Anita, then discovers it's a gay party. Disguising himself as a woman to escape, Edmundo is arrested. Irma threatens to divorce him, believing he's homosexual. They make up, but

Edmundo is arrested again, this time for rape and abduction (it was really Roberto, using Edmundo's auto). However, he's released when the victim declines to press charges, saying she's in love with the rapist! Irma asks Edmundo to stay, claiming she's pregnant (even though Edmundo had been told he was sterile). As the film concludes, Edmundo has resumed his affair with Gilda and Irma is consoling herself with Roberto.

Rubén's hypocritical moralising is exposed when his son Julián meets Julieta. Julián blackmails his father and takes over as Julieta's lover and "sugar daddy."



El vecindario does a good job of melding the three sub-plots. Curiously, although Edmundo is supposedly a rich businessman and Rubén is just one of his assistants, their homes are both quite luxurious (Roberto, on the other hand, lives in humble *barrios* with both of his families). Although Rubén is depicted as a hypocrite who uses religion to (a) cover up his philandering (claiming he's going to religious meetings when he's really seeing his mistress) and (b) criticise his wife and son for their too-worldly attitudes, he's actually less offensive as a character than either the lecherous, lying Edmundo or the self-centered, misogynist Roberto (in one scene, he's driving and waves a woman pedestrian that it's alright to cross the street, then deliberately speeds up to scare her!).

The performances are all fine and reasonably naturalistic. Zayas, Inclán and Fernández split up the screen time fairly evenly, a classic (and early) example of the *sexy-comedias*' "ensemble cast" structure. Chain has a

nude shower scene; de Melo, Mendoza and Peluffo are shown topless. Production values are satisfactory.

A few technical notes. For some reason, Frontera Films had a habit of post-dubbing much of the dialogue of their films. In *El vecindario*, Freddy Fernández does his own dialogue

sometimes, while in other scenes he is clearly dubbed by Bruno Rey (who has a bit role in the movie and dubs the dialogue of the judge as well).



Other performers are also dubbed, but some do their own voices. One version of this film (on YouTube) has at least one instance of very obvious music replacement: at Juan and Sofia's wedding, Tun Tun dances with Guadalupe to "El caballo y su montura," but this is replaced on the video by generic music. I'm not sure if this was YouTube's infamous music substitution, or if it was done on the DVD (I suspect the former).



Las modelos (de desnudos) [The Nude Models] (Filmadora Éxito, 1982) *Prod:* Guillermo Calderón S[tell]; *Dir:* Victor Manuel Castro; *Scr:* Lic. Francisco Cavazos, Víctor Manuel Castro; *Photo:* Miguel Arana; *Music:* Gustavo César Carrión; *Prod Mgr:* Antonio H. Rodríguez; *Prod Chief:* César Jiménez; *Sub-Dir:* Mario Llorca; *Film Ed:* Jorge Bustos; *Art Dir:* Alberto L. de Guevara; *Decor:* Cupertino Barrera; *Makeup:* Ana Julieta Rojas; *Sound Ed:* José Liho; *Union:* STPC

*the title on the film itself is just *Las modelos*; the Laguna Films video box incorrectly gives the title as "Modelo de desnudas"

Cast: Andrés García (*Roberto Ocaña*), Valentín Trujillo (*Rubén*), Sasha Montenegro (*Diana*), Carmen Salinas (*La Corcholata*), Adalberto Martínez "Resortes" (*Resortes*), Rafael Inclán (*Topillos*), Alfonso Zayas (*Chinto*), Luis de

Alba (*Chido*), Jaime Moreno (*El Gato*), Jorge Lavat (*Roberto's partner*), Hilda Aguirre (*Clara*), Mónica Prado (*Rocío*), Ana Luisa Peluffo (*Ana Luisa*), Lorena Velázquez (*Lorena*), Emilia Guiú (*Rubén's mother*), Roberto Cañedo (*Rubén's father*), El Güero Castro (*don Prudencio*), Polo Ortín (*Fidel*), Pedro Weber "Chatanooga" (*pistolero*), Alfredo "Pelón" Solares (*Gumaro aka "Alemendra"*), César Escalero, Lucía Gálvez, Tere Villa, Cristina Molinar [sic, aka Cristina Molina] (*daughter of wealthy man*), Leandro Espinoza (*Monasterio, art teacher*), Luis Almeida, Roberto López "Puck" [aka Puck Miranda], Clara Ahuet (*neighbor*), Samuel Villanueva "Sam" (*neighbor*), José de Jesús "Natera" (*neighbor*), Pedro Orozco "Pedrín" (*policeman*), Laura Romano, Roberto Martínez "Serapio" (*neighbor*), César Domínguez "Cocolo," Guillermo de Alvarado "Condorito" (*waiter*), Carl-Hillos (*man in hotel*), Marcelo Villamil (*guest at family gathering*), José Luis Avendaño and Carlos Suárez (*pistoleros*)

Notes: this is a fairly entertaining, if disjointed, movie, which intercuts between three unrelated plots and borrows quite liberally from other films. There is also a mysterious (and strong) resemblance between the premise of the Andrés García section (two con men--one of them elegant and refined, the other pretending to be mentally challenged--swindle people but eventually fall out over a woman and have a "swindling contest" to determine who has to leave town) and the (later) Hollywood movie, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. Coincidence? Perhaps!



The Mexican movies "cited" in *Las modelos* include *Misión cumplida* (1968--in both movies, a friend of Resortes pretends to be dead and the comedian makes a speech over the "cadaver" that goes from laudatory to hostile, and he then takes money from the dead man's clothes), the Calderón "nude scenes" movies of the 1950s like *La diana cazadora* (nude models posing for artists--shot in a very similar style--and the presence of Ana Luisa Peluffo and Roberto Cañedo in cameo roles), and *Muñecas de medianoche* (1978)--Rafael Inclán specifically refers to

"that movie with Jorge Rivero" in which the protagonists disguised themselves as women to avoid gangsters; he recommends that Alfonso Zayas do the same. *Muñecas de medianoche* and *Las modelos*, like many of the Calderón sexy-comedies of this era, share various cast members, including Sasha Montenegro, Carmen Salinas, Rafael Inclán, and Andrés García. Carmen Salinas reprises her familiar role (in many Calderón films) as the tipsy "La Corcholata," and *Las modelos de desnudos* even includes a character named "Dr. Carlos Taboada," presumably an in-joke reference to Mexican director-screenwriter Carlos Enrique Taboada.

Las modelos was made during the relatively narrow time period when full frontal female nudity was *de rigueur* in Mexican cinema, although these scenes are relatively brief (given the movie's theme): Mónica Prado, Hilda Aguirre and one other actress pose nude for art classes, Cristina Molina has a brief nude scene with Alfonso Zayas, and Sasha Montenegro's character removes her clothes in one sequence.

[Although the three plots are intercut, I will describe them separately to avoid confusion.] Rubén is an art student engaged to nude model Rocío. Although he is the son of a wealthy family, Rubén refuses to take money from them and supports himself by selling his (weird) paintings. El Gato, Rubén's cousin, advises against the marriage, saying the family will disown Rubén. Rubén introduces Rocío to his parents without revealing her profession, but El Gato shows up with a portrait of a nude Rocío that exposes the truth. Rubén insists he will marry Rocío anyway and support them with his "art," but she reveals that his parents had been subsidizing the "buyers" of his paintings, and he is ruining his future by sticking with her. They break up, but El Gato later apologizes to Rocío and says Rubén has "fallen very low"--Rocío finds him posing nude for art students! They reconcile.



Three henchmen of a wealthy man (gangster?) catch Chinto in bed with the daughter of their boss. Chinto flees and seeks shelter with his cousin

Topillos (who happens to be the boyfriend of Clara, another nude model, providing the only link between this



plot and the first one). Topillos allows Chinto to share his apartment, but Chinto has to disguise himself as "Marisol," his sister. The other residents of the *vecindad*--as well as Spanish landlord Prudencio--are captivated by "Marisol." The three gunmen eventually capture Chinto and tell him their employer has changed his mind: he doesn't want Chinto killed, he only wants the young man to marry his daughter. Since she is the heir to a huge fortune, Chinto agrees.

The third plot involves Roberto and his slick friend, residents of the swanky Camino Real hotel. Roberto's friend makes the acquaintance of rich women, woos them,



then introduces them to his demented and violent "brother" Roberto. Roberto, in the course of his bizarre behavior, usually

manages to pocket several pieces of valuable jewelry before the women flee in horror. The two men are in the hotel lobby when Diana arrives and is welcomed by the manager as "the beer queen." They believe she is the daughter of the owner of a huge brewery, and make her their next target; however, Roberto refuses to play the idiot this time and makes a bet with his partner--the first man to swindle one million pesos out of Diana will get all of their accumulated loot, and the other must leave town.

Roberto poses as a former soccer player, now psychosomatically paraplegic after a failed romance. He confides in Diana, and says he needs a million pesos to visit "Dr. Carlos Taboada in Houston, Texas." Roberto's partner learns of the plot and he introduces himself to Diana as Dr. Taboada. [There is a hilarious scene when "Dr. Taboada" examines Roberto in Diana's presence, repeatedly whacking Roberto's legs to "prove" there is no feeling in them, as Roberto attempts to conceal his agony.] However, "Dr. Taboada" discovers Diana is not the heiress to a brewery empire, but a model who won a contest naming her "Queen of Beer." She vows to sell all of her contest prizes to pay Taboada's fee for "curing" Roberto. The false Taboada and Roberto agree to call off their original bet, substituting a new challenge: Roberto must seduce Diana within 24 hours or lose his share of their ill-gotten gains.

Roberto visits Diana's room and convinces her that "love" can restore his mobility. She strips to encourage him and Roberto "regains" his ability to walk, but before

they can consummate their relationship, "Dr. Taboada" walks in, and tells Roberto it was his plan to have Diana arouse him. Diana is instructed to leave the hotel--although she really loves Roberto--but returns when she gets a telegram from the real Taboada (in Houston). Roberto pretends to have a "relapse" when Diana reveals the truth about the impostor, but is once more "cured" by Diana. The next day, Roberto and his former partner prepare to go their separate ways, as Roberto ruefully confesses he has married Diana!

Las modelos has some problems, not the least of which is the almost complete absence of connections between the various plots. The Chinto sequences contain the most "padding"--the aforementioned *Resortes* "wake" scene, a dance sequence, a streetcorner speech by La Corcholata, etc.--while the Rubén-Rocío plot is the closest to traditional melodrama and has relatively little humor.

The Roberto-Diana plot is the best, most



coherent, and most amusing. Jorge Lavat is a good straight man for Andrés García, and the story contains enough twists and turns to keep the viewer guessing.

The cast of *Las modelos* is loaded with sexy-comedy stars--within a few years, producers would pare back the star power, utilizing one or two top "names" and a host of familiar faces in supporting roles--although some are underused (Chatanooga, Polo Ortín, even Inclán). The production values are adequate: curiously, the Rubén-Rocío sections and the Chinto plot were filmed mostly on studio sets, while the Roberto-Diana story was shot chiefly on location in the Camino Real hotel. This--and the complete lack of a link between the first two plots and the latter--might even hint that these sections were contemplated as parts of different movies and then combined after the fact.

Overall, generally amusing.

Trivia note: although made by the same producer, cast & crew as the sexy-comedies produced by Cinematográfica Calderón, this is billed as a "Filmadora Éxito" production for some reason. However, at least some promotional materials carry the Cinematográfica Calderón credit.





El día de los albañiles (Los maestros del amor)

[Day of the Bricklayers: the Masters of Love]

(Frontera Films, 1983) Exec Prod: Jorge Rubio Salazar; Prod: Gilberto Martínez Solares, Adolfo Martínez Solares, Santos & Alejandro Soberón; Dir: Adolfo Martínez Solares; Scr: Gilberto Martínez Solares & Adolfo Martínez Solares; Photo: Armando Castillón; Music: Ernesto Cortázar [hijo]; Film Ed: José Munguía; Asst Dir: Alejandro Todd

Cast: Alfonso Zayas (*Roberto*), Angélica Chaín (*Beatriz*), Luis de Alba (*Juan Camaney*), Miguel Ángel Rodríguez (*Enrique Salazar*), Rossy Mendoza (*maid*), Maribel Fernández "*La Pelangocha*" (*Lilia*), Joaquín García "*Borolas*" (*Roberto's uncle*), Gerardo Zepeda "*El Chiquillín*" (*Reynaldo*), Ana de Sade (*Rossy*), Óscar Fentanes (*Jorge González*), Sebastián Soler, Yair Martínez Solares (*Arturito González*), Gonzalo Sánchez (*Reynaldo's henchman*), Georgina Chavira, Susana Cuevas, Elba María, Eliezer Saldaña, Hernán Rocha, Cocolo, María Elena Cernuda, Serapio [Roberto Montufar] (*materials vendor*), Bernabé Palma (*Rubén, first man who falls*), José Natera? (*worker*), La Sonora Maracaibo, Los Únicos 9 de Colombia

Notes: many of the Frontera Films' *sexy-comedias* are actually crime films featuring comedians and sexual aspects. *El día de los albañiles*—the first in a series of 3 films—is a good example of this. The underlying plot premise is the attempt of an architect and his henchmen to cause fatal accidents on the job, allowing them to collect

insurance on the workers. Thrust into this story are comic characters Roberto and Juan Camaney, but their comedic antics and womanising are almost entirely peripheral to the narrative.

Down-and-out Roberto and his uncle are saved from a shoplifting charge by the kindly Beatriz, who gets them jobs on the construction site where she is employed providing food for the workers. Rossy, cousin of brutish foreman Reynaldo, frames petty crook Juan Camaney as the man who got her pregnant, and Juan is compelled by Reynaldo to labour on the site as well. Roberto falls in love with Beatriz, but she is unsure about committing herself; she's also courted by the sleazy architect Enrique. Enrique and Reynaldo provide free *pulque* to the construction workers, adding amphetamines to it so the workers are more productive, but they also become careless and are killed or injured on the job; Enrique then collects the insurance money.

When workman Jorge discovers the plot (it's never explained how), Enrique murders him and encases his body in concrete. Jorge's young son Arturito is left an orphan. While attempting to burglarise Enrique's home, Juan overhears Enrique and Reynaldo discussing their scheme and their intention to flee to the USA. However, it is Roberto's discovery of Jorge's corpse (his shoe was sticking out of a concrete slab) that unravels the plot.



Enrique and Reynaldo (with an abducted Beatriz) show up at the construction site to collect their hidden money and are attacked and subdued

by Roberto, Juan and some other workers. As the film concludes, Roberto marries Beatriz and his uncle marries the pregnant Rossy.

The finale of *El día de los albañiles* is rather slipshod, narratively. Although Juan—hiding under a sofa—hears Enrique talking about his plan, the scene ends abruptly and when Juan next appears (summoned by Roberto to help disinter Jorge's corpse)—with no explanation as to how he escaped—he doesn't even mention to the others what he knows! Enrique's culpability in Jorge's murder is exposed because Jorge died clutching a medallion that conveniently

bears Enrique's name. Later, however, a police spokesman tells a reporter the details of the *pulque* plot, which he must have gotten from Juan. Still, the film is rather less episodic and disjointed than a number of its contemporaries.

Sexy-comedies can often be sorted into "working-class" and "bourgeois" categories (there are some which contain both types of characters); *El día de los albañiles* is solidly



in the working-class category. Shot mostly on location—an actual construction site, working-class *barrios*, etc.—and focusing on the lives of the workers, the film has a nice air of *chilango*

versimilitude, without pretending to be too "realistic." The performances are generally good, relatively naturalistic and without a lot of *shtick*. Luis de Alba is somewhat separated out from the rest of the cast and thus has a bit more to do in the comedy area: his character is a thief who cultivates romances with maids, thus gaining access to their employers' homes so he can rob them. Alfonso Zayas, on the other hand, is more integrated into the plot, and is given a romantic relationship with Angélica Chaín's character and familial ties with his uncle, played by Borolas. Both Zayas and Borolas play their roles mostly straight, although they do mug a bit from time to time.

Chaín, a very beautiful and prolific actress of Middle Eastern origin (her last name was originally "Chahín") who appeared in many films from the early 1970s through the 1980s, looks a bit less glamorous and somewhat thinner here than in a

number of her other sexy-comedy roles. She has several nude scenes and in one nightclub sequence sports a "typical" '80s dress and hairstyle combination that has to be seen to be believed. As was



customary in Frontera productions, her dialogue appears to have been post-dubbed. Ana de Sade, playing the sexually voracious and scheming Rossy, also appears nude (in fact, she and some other actresses are nude in the film's opening sequence) and Rossy Mendoza has a topless scene.

Ernesto Cortázar Jr. once again supplies a music score consisting of various pieces of library music; the various themes will be familiar to anyone who has seen a lot of

Mexican cinema of the 1970s and 1980s. These tracks are usually fairly relevant to the action on-screen, but vary widely in musical style and even sound quality. To confuse matters further, various romantic ballads by Álvaro Dávila are included as well.

El día de los albañiles spawned several sequels, and probably inspired numerous other "working class" sexy-comedies (as well as dramas and regular comedies) such as *Los hojalateros*, *Los verduleros*, *Los maistros*, and *Los plomeros y las ficheras*.



Los lavaderos [The Washers] (Prod. Mazateca, 1986) *Exec Prod:* Arturo Gutiérrez; *Prod:* Gustavo Bravo Ahuja; *Dir:* Javier Durán E.; *Scr:* Gustavo Bravo Ahuja, Rosario Coss; *Story* [novel?]: Rosario Coss; *Photo:* Armando Castellón; *Music:* Regín Antonio; *Prod Chief:* Ignacio Huerta; *Co-Dir:* Román Hernández; *Film Ed:* Federico Landeros; *Script Clerk:* Javier Vera; *Camera Op:* Agustín Meza; *Makeup:* Victoria Celis; *Sound Op:* Roberto Martínez; *Union:* STIC

Cast: Lyn May (*Nora*), Ana Luisa Peluffo (*Virginia*), Polo Ortín (*Nicanor*), Roberto Guinar (*Luis*), Rosella (*Lupe*), Blanca Estela Roth (*Petrita*), Isa Azcárate (*doña Pancha*), Lina Santos (*Rosa*), Arturo Albo (*Lalito*, "*La Chaquira*"), Corzo Duarte (*Panchito*), Germán Barot (?*Raulito*), Arturo Gutiérrez, Vicky Bravo (?*Vicky*), Los Infieles (*band*), Jorge Ortín (*man in cabaret*)



Notes: Gustavo Bravo Ahuja became involved in the Mexican film industry as a producer in the 1970s, working with the Almada brothers on *El valle de los miserables* and *El hechizo del pantano*. The latter movie, the only theatrical feature directed by Fernando Almada, starred Germán Barot, who—eleven years later—had a role in *Los lavaderos*. This movie was apparently successful since it spawned a sequel, *Los lavaderos 2*, this time directed by Bravo Ahuja himself.

Los lavaderos is an interesting and entertaining comedy set in a Mexico City *vecindad*, a particular type of multi-family dwelling which can be seen in many Mexican films from the 1930s to the present: generally there is an outer door which leads to an inner courtyard, and all of the apartments face this courtyard. Depending upon the origins of the building (some are old, converted "mansions"), the apartments may be large, small, have separate bathrooms, or not (in this film, they don't, and the communal bathrooms play a part in the plot). This picture was actually shot on location in an old *vecindad* (identified by address in a printed credit!).

The residents of the *vecindad* include blonde Lupe, shoe repairman Nicanor, snooty Virginia, Petrita and her teenage daughter Rosa, exotic dancer Nora and her gay "sister" Lalito, young man Raulito, and the irascible doña Pancha and her downtrodden husband Panchito. Lupe also has a live-in boyfriend, Luis. The landlord is a Middle Eastern/Jewish stereotype (he has an Amish-style beard, dresses in a black suit and hat, speaks with a Middle Eastern-accent and is accompanied by "funny" Middle-Eastern music) named "Señor Shoton" (I'm guessing at this).



One day Lalito, on his way to an audition, asks doña Petrita to pick up a prescription for his sister. When she asks what it's for, Lalito says "to prevent headaches." Petrita gets the medicine and brings it back to the *vecindad*, but accidentally drops it. The bottle is picked up, kept for a while, and then deliberately "dropped" by various residents, until finally it's handed over to Lalito.

The various interpersonal conflicts and relationships come to a head one night. Virginia sleeps with the younger Raulito; Nicanor with Lupe; Luis with Rosa; and Petrita with Pancho.

Time passes, and Nora, Lupe, Rosa, Lalito, and Petrita are doing their laundry at the communal fountain in the center of the courtyard. One confession leads to another:

months before, Virginia found the bottle of pills Petrita dropped. They were birth-control pills. Virginia switched them for aspirin (or candy) as did Lupe, Rosa, and Petrita in turn, each keeping the "real" birth control pills for themselves. As it turns out, Lalito got the birth control pills, which he took, thinking they were aspirin! Nora, Rosa, Petrita, Lupe, and Virginia are all pregnant!

But everything works out for the best: Pancho leaves his abusive wife for Petrita; Luis returns to marry Rosa; Lupe will move in with Nicanor; Virginia and Raulito will become a couple. Nora is left alone, but Sr. Shoton appears and asks her to marry him, since he's a lonely widower (he's also presumably the father of her child, since Nora earlier had slept with him in lieu of paying rent). Even Lalito corners the (very odd-looking) emcee of the nightclub where Nora works (he comes looking for her) and has his way with him.

Los lavaderos has a fair amount of nudity (May, Rosella, Peluffo) and there are some sexy situations (in one scene Lupe and Pancho are hiding in the *vecindad*'s toilet, which has a door that exposes the feet of the person inside; his feet get tangled in her panties, and their efforts to separate themselves make it appear--to people outside--that they are having sex) but the movie is really not in bad taste or smutty. The characters aren't given a lot of depth but they aren't dull stereotypes either (even the flaming gay character has a distinctive personality). There aren't any "interpolated" comic interludes (Guinar does a couple of songs, though) to break up the pace. The direction is unobtrusive but professional, and the acting, although broad at times, is generally satisfactory.

The cast is pretty good. Lyn May doesn't have much to do, opening the movie with a dance and later doing a striptease in the *vecindad*, but Rosella (another dancer) has much more dramatic footage (and does a private striptease for Polo Ortín). Lina Santos gets an "introducing" credit, but I'm not really sure if this was her first movie or not. Roberto Guinar, who had starred in some films prior to this, has a supporting role here and is satisfactory, as are the veterans Peluffo and Ortín. The rest of the cast is also good.

Overall, not a bad little picture, unpretentious and entertaining.



Duro y parejo en la casita del pecado [Hard at Work in the House of Sin] (Prods. Cinetelmex © 1987) *Dir:* Jesús Fragoso Montoya; *Scr:* Fernando Galiana; *Photo:* Fernando Colín; *Music:* Gustavo C. Carrión; *Prod Mgr:* Jorge Beltrán; *Asst Dir:* Roberto Marroquín; *Film Ed:* Rogelio Zúñiga; *Art Dir-Decor:* Raúl Cárdenas Resendiz; *Camera Op:* Febronio Tepozte Gaeta; *Makeup:*

Victoria Celis; *Sound Op*: Manuel Rincón Venegas; *Re-rec*: Ricardo Saldívar; *Union*: STIC

Cast: Olivia Collins (*Lucy*), María Cardinal (*Irene*), Alejandra Peniche (*Carmen*), Diana Ferreti (*Queta*), Rosario Escobar (*Susi*), Yira Aparicio (*Sonia*), Sergio Ramos "El Comanche" (*Honorato Ballesteros*), César Bono (*Chato; the Devil*), Polo Polo (*José Luis Estrada*), Chicho Che y la Crisis (*band*), Rossy Mendoza (*Lucy's mother*), Charly Valentino (*man with blowup doll*), Pepe Magaña (*client*), Pancho Muller (*judge*), Oscar Fentanes (*gay customer of farmacia*), Gerardo Zepeda "Chiquilín" (*pimp*), María Luisa Alcalá (*Jovita Ballesteros*), Alejandra Meyer (*prostitute #1*), Patricia Martínez (?*prostitute #2*), Anabel Limón, Jorge Noble (*client*), Luis Guevara (*Lucy's client*), Lolita Robles, Ana Berumen, María Coronel, María Elena García, Alberto Valenzuela, Emilio Calderón, Bernabé Palma (*cabaret tough*), Alfredo Rosas, Alfredo Bustamante, José Luis Carreño, Oscar Flores, Carlos Gómez, Eduardo Lugo, Ángel Domínguez



Notes: this is a reasonably coherent sexy-comedy, although it curiously "back-loads" most of the nudity into the second half and has a few loose ends in the plot. The performances are satisfactory, but beefy comedian Polo Polo is not particularly deft in the lead.

As the movie begins, José Luis is on trial, accused of immorality by Honorato Ballesteros. [Curiously, there is a jury in this trial. Jury trials no longer exist in Mexico, as far as I know, although there may be some exceptions; the jury plays no role in the plot so I am at a loss why they were even mentioned.] José Luis tells his story in flashback...

He was the owner of a pharmacy in a small town in the provinces. Raised by a strict and religious mother, José Luis is still a virgin and believes sex is a sin. This makes him more attractive to the town's women, including high school girl Lucy, who comes to the shop one night and tries to seduce José Luis. They are interrupted by her mother, who also tries to get the pharmacist into bed. Somehow (it isn't clear) he manages to retain his virtue.

Chato, José Luis's assistant, says his boss has to lose his virginity because people are starting to think he's gay. A double-date with two prostitutes concludes with a brawl in the local cabaret instead of the expected bedroom encounter.

José Luis learns he has inherited a house in Mexico City from an aunt. He has to compel the current tenants to leave before he can sell the property, which is worth 70 million pesos. Arriving in the capital, José Luis discovers the house is a failing brothel occupied by prostitutes Irene (*norteña*), Carmen (Argentine?), Queta, Susi, and Sonia (Cuban). They can't afford to



buy the house themselves, so José Luis decides he has to take over and make the business a success. He also has sex with all of the women, numerous times, completely shedding his puritan image. In order to renovate the brothel, José Luis apparently tells Chato to sell the pharmacy and come to Mexico City; Lucy rides along. They are both put to work in the house (although Lucy is used only as bait and doesn't actually sleep with any of the clients).

Honorato Ballesteros and his wife Jovita live next door to the brothel. The amorous antics of José Luis and the prostitutes--viewed through a telescope--titillate them for a time, but when the whorehouse becomes popular once more and large numbers of clients arrive, Honorato calls the police. José Luis and his women are arrested.

Lucy, posing as a new servant, tricks Honorato into some compromising positions and photographs are taken (the other women commandeer a telephone company crane outside). Honorato makes a surprising about-face in front of the court, asking for José Luis's freedom. The judge agrees but orders the house shut down "forever." As the film concludes, Honorato and the judge are the first two customers of José Luis's new mobile brothel, a recreational vehicle (in every sense of the word)!

Duro y parejo en la casita del pecado is reasonably amusing. About half the film takes place in the provincial small town where José Luis has his shop, and a fair amount of this footage--establishing his personality--is redundant. Furthermore, when he arrives in the capital, José Luis fairly quickly discards his "morals" and becomes a libertine, at one point informing Chato--who claims to be in love with Carmen--"remember all of the women in this

house, this city, and this country are mine." This section also contains all of the movie's nudity, with most of the featured actresses (except Olivia Collins) having topless scenes (Alejandra Peniche appears in a wet t-shirt shower sequence but doesn't show any bare skin). The brothel sequences also contain the only really extraneous scene in the film, a cameo of Charly Valentino, who brings his own



blow-up doll ("Marilyn") to the house, only to have it "molested" by another client. This has no bearing on the plot, isn't that amusing, and seems to be

pure padding as far as I can tell. There are a couple of musical numbers by Chico Che y la Crisis but these are mostly intercut with action and dialogue so they don't slow down the film's pace.

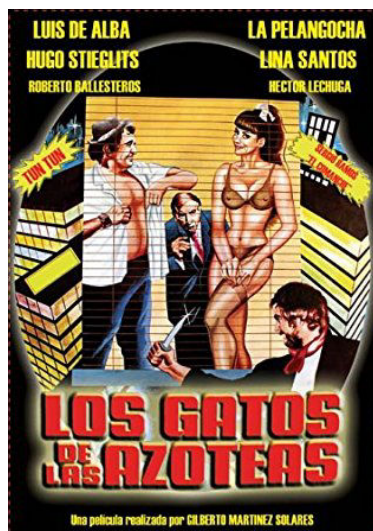
As mentioned earlier, Polo Polo is adequate but not especially charismatic as José Luis. He doesn't bring anything special to the role and--typical for a sexy-comedy--is depicted as irresistible to women although he's physically unimpressive. Olivia Collins is cute but she's seen to better effect in other movies. César Bono is good in a dual role (Chato and the Devil, who appears from time to time to urge José Luis to become sexually active), while Sergio Ramos, Pepe Magaña, and Oscar Fentanes have relatively little to do.

The production values are generally good. This could have been paced better but it's not too bad.



Los gatos de los azoteas [The Cats on the Roof]

(Frontera Films ©1987) *Exec Prod:* Adolfo Martínez Solares; *Prod:* Gilberto Martínez Solares, Adolfo Martínez Solares, Alejandro Soberón, Santos Soberón; *Dir:* Gilberto Martínez Solares; *Adapt:* Gilberto Martínez



Solares, Adolfo Martínez Solares; *Story:* Jorge Rubio, Emanuel Olea; *Photo:* Fernando Colín G.; *Music:* Ernesto Cortázar [Jr.]; *Assoc Prod:* Jorge Rubio Salazar; *Prod Mgr:* Agustín Gómez; *Asst Dir:* José Amezcuita; *Film Ed:* José J. Munguía; *Camera Op:* José Luis Lemus; *Action Coord:* Bernabe Palma

Cast: Luis de Alba (*Juan Camaney*), Héctor Lechuga (*Julio González de la Concha*), Hugo Stiglitz (*Akenatón*), Maribel Fernández (*La Pelangocha*) (*Maribel la Pelangocha*), René Ruiz (*Tun Tun*), Lina Santos (*Sara*), Sergio Ramos (*El Comanche*) (*Orozco*), Rossy Mendoza (*Aurora*), Yirah Aparicio (*maid*), Roberto Ballesteros (*Lorenzo*), Alfredo "Pelón" Solares and José Magaña (*cops*), Alejandra Meyer (*Sra. Orozco*), Carlos Bravo "Carl-Hillos" (*delegado*), Carlos Yustis (*mechanic*), Gastón Padilla (*Timoteo, bldg. superintendent*), Alicia Camps, Angélica Ruiz, Laura Tovar, Rubén Moya, Memo Muñoz y sus 9 de Colombia (*band*)

Notes: yet another bizarre sexy-comedy from the Martínez Solares team that mixes slapstick and off-color jokes with murder and graphic violence. Thanks to some amusing performances the picture is mildly entertaining but rather slipshod and disjointed.

Juan Camaney works as the delivery boy for the liquor store (*tienda de abarrotes*) owned by Sara and operated by her philandering husband Lorenzo. Juan is courting Maribel, who



works as a maid for the lecherous Sr. Orozco. A tenant in the same building is middle-aged architect Julio González, who spies on his fellow tenants with binoculars and is obsessed with Maribel. Another tenant is palm-reader Akenatón, who dresses like an ancient Egyptian (Juan refers to him as "Kalimán") and schemes to make women his hypnotic slaves (which sometimes involves murdering them).

The balance of the movie goes like this, more or less: Julio and Orozco try to seduce Maribel, Lorenzo has repeated affairs that he hides from his wife (who controls the family money), Juan



has confrontations with Julio and Orozco, Akenatón hypnotizes and kills women, Julio spies on Akenatón, and so forth. Sara nearly becomes a victim of the murderous fortune-teller but is rescued and Akenatón plunges out of a window to his death. Julio makes an assignation with a former "slave" of Akenatón only to learn she is into sado-masochism, with Julio as her victim. Julio and Orozco are



tricked into undressing and getting into bed with each other, and are then exposed as "homosexuals" and "perverts" to the other residents (Juan calls them

"carriers of AIDS"). Lorenzo's infidelity is exposed to his wife; she beats him and they reconcile but he is still unable to restrain himself in the presence of other women. And so on.

Héctor Lechuga is good as the lecherous Julio and de Alba is his usual amusing self as Juan Camaney (although they share few scenes together). De Alba, who sings two songs during the course of the picture, wears a "Wisconsin Special Olympics" t-shirt in one scene!

In addition to the general incoherence of the film's multi-faceted "plot," *Los gatos en los azoteas* is harmed by a rather slapdash attitude. The killer Akenatón leaves his apartment door unlocked and murders women in (virtually) full view of the hallway, to name one example. As mentioned above, the movie features a bit of graphic gore, as Akenatón slits the throat of one of his female clients. In another oddly disquieting scene, Akenatón catches Julio listening at the door of his apartment and slaps him, giving him a bloody nose. There is some female nudity, although Maribel Fernández and Lina Santos are, as usual, exempt (after all, that's what Yirah Aparicio is here for, right?). Rossy Mendoza (looking, sad to say, rather worn) appears in one tacked-on sequence, as a customer who tries to seduce deliveryman Juan Camaney only to have her husband come home unexpectedly.

The production values are adequate but, as often occurred with the Martínez Solares films of this era, a fair amount of the dialogue appears to have been post-dubbed for unexplained reasons.

Mediocre.



Un macho en el salón de belleza [A Macho in the Beauty Salon] (Prods. Esme-Alianza Cin.-Hermes Films, ©1987) *Exec Prod:* Abraham Cherem; *Prod:* Carlos

Vasallo; *Dir:* Víctor Manuel "Güero" Castro; *Scr:* Carlos Martín, Víctor M. Castro; *Story:* Carlos Martín; *Photo:* Raúl Domínguez; *Music:* Alejandro González Iñárritu; *Assoc Prod:* Ramón Félix Curto de la Calle; *Prod Mgr:* Rafael Arrillaga; *Asst Dir:* Alejandro R. Todd; *Film Ed:* Jorge Peña; *Camera Op:* Guillermo Bravo; *Makeup:* Lilia Palomino; *Union:* STIC

Cast: Alberto "El Caballo" Rojas (*Nacho*), Pedro Weber "Chatanuga" (*Próculo Carnes*), Manuel "Flaco" Ibáñez (*Fabricio*), Diana Ferreti (*Mireya*), Charly Valentino (*Nacho's friend*), José Magaña (*Nacho's friend*), Gloriella (*Ana*), Polo Ortín (*police inspector*), Patricia Santos (*singer*), Rosalinda España, Lizbet Oliver, Adriana Rojas, Adriana Fierro, Liliana Castro, Blanca Lidia Muñoz (*ugly client*), Jorge Ortín (*vendedor*), Guillermo Inclán (*man who wants to buy bra*), Gonzalo Sánchez (*police agent*), Roger Oropeza (*police agent*)



Notes: this is a reasonably entertaining sexy-comedy albeit one with an overly-familiar premise. It also has one major plot flaw, and another plot device in poor taste. One trivia note, the music score (including a rock arrangement of "La Bamba") is by Alejandro González Iñárritu, who then had to wait more than a decade to make his directorial debut with *Amores perros*.

Nacho sells lingerie in the Xochimilco market; he loves Mireya, the daughter of butcher Próculo, but the older man wants her to marry a wealthy (but old and nerdy) lawyer. A blonde *gringa* runs into the market one day, pursued by the police—she tries to get Nacho to help her, spills a bag of smuggled gems on the floor, and escapes. Nacho is arrested as her accomplice but manages to flee. He takes refuge in a beauty salon run by the gay Fabricio, posing as another gay man, "Bicho."

Since the police have the market and his apartment staked out, Nacho is forced to continue the masquerade. Fabricio, smitten, hires him as a masseur. To avoid Fabricio's advances, Nacho tells his new employer he has AIDS and the police want to put him in quarantine. [For

most of the film, every time Nacho touches Fabricio, the latter immediately pours disinfectant on himself.]

Nacho is assigned to massage various nubile women, but his heterosexuality is soon discovered by his clients and fellow workers (but not Fabricio). While making a "house call" to the home of Ana, he is nearly caught in the act by her husband--one of the policemen who has been searching for him--but his gay act saves Nacho's skin.

Learning Mireya is scheduled to marry the lawyer in two weeks, Nacho visits her (in disguise) and convinces her to have a massage; he reveals his true identity and they make love on a regular basis, until they're discovered by don Próculo and Mireya's fiancé. The engagement is broken but Próculo still refuses to allow his daughter to marry the penniless fugitive from justice.

Nacho tells Fabricio a cure for his illness has been discovered in Europe, and convinces his boss to sell the hot gems for him, promising Fabricio that they can then consummate their relationship. Fabricio gets the money and Nacho runs out on him, buying a fleet of sausage trucks for Próculo and earning the right to marry Mireya. (The real smuggling ring has been smashed so Nacho is also clear on that score.)

The major plot flaw mentioned earlier is only obvious at the conclusion: in the market, the bag of gems dropped by the *gringa* is CLEARLY picked up by the police and pocketed by their leader (Polo Ortín, looking quite fit and slim and playing his role very straight). But later, Nacho has a handful of the jewels, worth "millions." Where did he get them? I actually went back and watched the market sequence twice, and there is no indication he kept some of the gems, or picked the police inspector's pocket, or anything of that sort. But I guess he must have.

The "poor taste" I mentioned is the AIDS reference, and Fabricio's reaction to it. Fabricio shuns any physical contact with Nacho for fear of contagion, but allows the "infected" Nacho to work as a *masseur* for female clients (thereby suggesting gays hate women and want them to die). Curiously, when Fabricio learns of the alleged AIDS "cure," he urges Nacho to have sex with him right away, even if this means he will contract AIDS (and then have to undergo the treatments himself). Nacho clearly and shamelessly manipulates Fabricio, playing on his infatuation and then--at the end--telling him to go into the massage room, undress, and wait for him (and then departs forever).

The basic plot of *Un macho en el salón de belleza* is essentially a variation on *Some Like It Hot*, and in fact is even more reminiscent of *El rey del masaje* (1986), in which an unemployed ex-con (Carlos Monden) poses as a gay man to get a job as a masseur and then provides heterosexual services to his female clientele. Alberto

Rojas gets to indulge his penchant for dressing in outrageous costumes and disguises (and to use effeminate mannerisms), and is amusing enough, although his standard role as super-stud is a little hard to believe, given his goofy features and spindly body. Flaco Ibáñez is a gay stereotype who actually invests his part with a certain dignity, but Pedro Weber, Charly Valentino, and Pepe Magaña are mostly wasted (the latter two have little or nothing to do and no bearing on the plot). There is a lot of nudity in this movie, including Rojas (no frontal though), Ferreti, Gloriella, and a host of other women.

Un macho en el salón de belleza is a little better-paced than many films of this type, although it loses focus around the half-way point and a few time-wasting and irrelevant scenes find their way into the picture as padding (a song by Patricia Santos is one such sequence, but she's nice to look at and the song is catchy so we'll let this one slide). On the whole, satisfactory entertainment.



Dando y dando * (Prods. Cinetelmex, ©1988) *Exec Prod:* Jesús Fragoso Montoya, Alberto Pedret, Jorge Rojas Alvarez; *Dir:* Víctor Ugalde; *Scr:* Víctor Romero**;
Photo: Fernando Colín; *Music:* Armando Manzanero;
Music Arr: Fernando Ledezma; *Asst Dir:* José Medina Hernández; *Film Ed:* Rogelio Zúñiga; *Camera Op:* José Luis Lemus Sánchez; *Makeup:* Mayra Anel Acosta; *Sound Op:* Manuel Rincón Venegas; *Re-rec:* Ricardo Saldívar;
Union: STIC

*the Condor video release label gives the title as "Dando y dando...pajarito volando" and "The Roller Coaster of Love," but these do not appear on the film itself. The main title on the print is *Dando y dando* and each "episode" has its own title (and copyright notice, etc.).

** Víctor Ugalde and Víctor Romero are the same person.

Cast: "Palo como a las piñatas"--Polo Polo (*Roberto Zamora*), Olivia Collins (*Patricia*), Sergio Ramos "El Comanche" (*Lic. Zendejas*), Noé Ladrón de Guevara "Condorito", Toño Infante (*Patricia's boss*), Jacaranda Alfaro (*Roberto's assistant and mistress*), Rosangela Balbó (*Sra. Tijerina, secretary*), María Luisa Coronel, José Luis Carreño, Fernando Corona Gómez, Fernando Pérez Gutiérrez, Gustavo Aguilar "Manotas" (*?Frankenstein monster*), Laura Baque, Federico González (*gluttonous client*), José Viller, Gerardo Soublete, Alfredo Rosas, Alberto Valenzuela, Darwin Solano, Oscar Peredo, Mónica Castro, Irma del Carmen Aviña, Ricardo Alcalá

"Dando y dando"--Manuel "Flaco" Ibáñez (*Ignacio Reyes "El Embragues"*), Polo Ortín (*don Teodoro*), Guillermo Rivas "El Borrás" (*maitre d'*), [Raúl Padilla] Chóforo (*El Regulador*), Arturo Cobo "Cobitos" (*Servín*,

customer), Diana Herrera (*La Güera*), Blanca Nieves ("black" dancer), Hilda Aguirre (*Aurora*)

Notes: this moderately amusing sexy-comedy is unusual for several reasons. First, the multi-story format was not popular in the 1980s (although it had been in the 1960s). Second, both stories were remakes or later remade: "Palo como a las piñatas" strongly resembles an episode in another 1988 Cinetelmex production, *Solo para adulteros*, while "Dando y dando" is an uncredited remake of part of *Chile picante*.

In "Palo como a las piñatas" (about 50 minutes long),



ad executive Roberto criticizes his wife Patricia for her (allegedly) poor housekeeping, cooking, and child-rearing abilities (they have two sons), but refuses to participate actively as a father

or husband himself (he is also having an affair with his assistant). Returning early from a trip, Patricia catches Roberto in their home with his mistress, and demands a divorce. Her sons remain with Roberto until she can get a good job to support them. Roberto's work suffers since he now has to run the household, and he has little or no time to spend with his mistress; in contrast, Patricia accepts a position as an artist



with a rival ad agency and a campaign she supervised wins an award. Zendejas, the head of Roberto's company, offers Patricia a job but she says she won't work in the same company as her husband. As the story ends, Roberto gets a fateful phone call from his soon-to-be former employer...

Comedian Polo Polo is quite unpleasant as the selfish Roberto, who eventually becomes a better father (for otherwise never really changes his personality (for example, when Patricia visits he repeatedly tries to lure her into bed--playing on her loneliness and physical needs--although he has just finished having sex with his mistress in the afternoon!). Olivia Collins is cute as always, and the movie definitely takes her side in the dispute, although U.S. viewers may find it odd that she is the one who moves out of the house and leaves the children behind, since this would rarely occur in a divorce in the USA. The

rest of the cast is satisfactory, although only Alfaro and Ramos have much to do (Alfaro, rather sympathetic in her role, has several topless scenes).

The script is efficient and even contains a couple of unusually good bits of dialogue. In an early scene, Patricia admonishes one of her sons, who is feeding cereal to the family's pet parrot: "Don't feed that garbage to Lorenzo! It's for you to eat!" And when Roberto's mistress emerges from the closet where he has tried to hide her from his wife, she dissimulates, asking "Does the bus to downtown stop here?" before walking out.



Trivia notes: apparently both of the ad agencies in this picture are involved with motion picture promotion (although they also create campaigns for other products), since Roberto's office contains posters for various (real) movies like *Te quiero*, and Patricia wins the award for her poster for *Ulama*. Also, the film opens with Roberto having a nightmare in which he is being chased through dark woods by the Frankenstein monster (wearing a commercial rubber mask). Roberto says "don't kill me!" but the monster (who speaks) apparently has amorous, not murderous intentions!

"Dando y dando" (about 40 minutes) is also moderately amusing. It is an uncredited remake of "Los compadres," part of *Chile picante* (written and directed by René Cardona Jr.). Aside from changing the protagonists from bureaucrats to auto mechanics, the plot is remarkably similar. Flaco Ibáñez, Chóforo, and Hilda Aguirre replace Héctor Suárez, Lalo "El Mimo," and Patricia Rivera in the major roles.

El Embragues is a lazy auto mechanic married to Aurora. However, he spends all of his time drinking, chasing women, and dreaming about forming a union.

Don Teodoro, the owner of the repair shop where El Embragues works, confesses that his wife--fed up with his gambling and carousing--is



asking for a divorce. El Embragues suggests his *compadre*, fellow mechanic El Regulador, might talk to Teodoro's wife: he did that for Aurora, and she has since stopped criticizing El Embragues for his failures as a husband and father.

What El Embragues doesn't know is that El Regulador is having an affair with Aurora. While El Embragues spends his money on bargirls at a cabaret, El Regulador sneaks out to sleep with Aurora. El Embragues knows El Regulador is having an affair with a married woman, but he doesn't know he is the "poor jerk" being cuckolded. El Regulador confesses he's even spending his own money to help support the woman and her children (it is also suggested that El Embragues is not the father of the boys).



El Embragues is arrested and sent to prison for shoddy workmanship that caused an auto accident, but his *compadre* visits him and says he'll look after Aurora and the children. He does mention, however, that he won't be able to visit El Embragues on Friday, because he is going to "help" don Teodoro with his wife, just like he is doing for El Embragues!

"Dando y dando" is actually a little more amusing than its model "Los compadres": the earlier version was played broader (although most of the situations and even some dialogue are virtually identical) and Flaco Ibáñez is a bit



more likeable than Héctor Suárez was in the first film. The scenes in which El Embragues and El Regulador talk about the latter's affair are funny, since the former keeps

making comments about how stupid and useless the cuckolded husband (i.e., himself) must be, and El Regulador agrees! Chóforo is fine in his role, as is Polo Ortín playing it almost straight for a change. Hilda Aguirre has a topless scene or two, while Diana Herrera and Blanca Nieves do topless "exotic" dances in the cabaret scenes.

Both episodes of *Dando y dando* have satisfactory production values, the acting is fine, and the scripts are economical and to the point, with sharp dialogue. I am not sure why the producers decided to make two short films and combine them into a feature, but this actually works.



Tacos, tortas y enchiladas [Tacos, Sandwiches and Enchiladas] (Prods. Cinetelmex, ©1988) *Exec*

Prod: Alberto Pedret, Jorge Rojas A.; *Dir:* Jesús Fragoso Montoya; *Scr:* Fernando Galiana; *Photo:* Fernando Colín; *Music:* Armando Manzanero; *Music Arr:* Fernando Ledezma; *Asst Dir:* Roberto Sala Blanco; *Film Ed:* Rogelio Zúñiga; *Camera Op:* José Luis Lemus; *Makeup:* María Eugenia Luna; *Sound:* Sammy Ovilla; *Re-rec:* Ricardo Saldívar; *Union:* STIC

Cast: "Tacos, tortas, y enchiladas"--Sergio Ramos "El Comanche" (*Pedro*), Polo Ortín (*Simón*), Arturo Cobo "Cobitos" (*Valentín*), Susana Cabrera (*Carmen*), Alejandra Meyer (*Susana*), Begoña Palacios (*Lucila*), Martha Elena Cervantes (*comadre*), Lucy Cantú (*neighborhood tramp*), Socorro Albarrán (*torteria customer*), Jorge Ortín (*torteria customer*), Alfredo Rosas C., Eduardo Baños Lugo, Lupita Perroyero, Laura Montalvo, Manolo Cárdenas (*torteria customer*), Carina Mendoza, Gustavo Aguilar "Manotas" (*torteria customer*), José Luis Avendaño (*torteria customer*), Baltazar Ramos E., Raúl Mayorcal, Raúl Martínez, Chelito López

"La rifa"--Manuel "Flaco" Ibáñez (*Pepe Punzón*), Olivia Collins (*Virginia*), Sergio Ramos "El Comanche" (*El Charrascas*), Diana Ferretti (*Pepe's girlfriend the dancer*), César Bono (*Héctor*), Conjunto Africa (*band*), Blanca Nieves (*Pepe's other girlfriend*); *dancers*--Silvia Valencia, Katy Rodríguez, Josefina Tovar, Edna Rosas; Manuel Benítez (*henchman of El Charrascas*), José Luis Fernández (*billiard hall man in cowboy hat*)

Notes: like several other Cinetelmex sexy-comedies of the late 1980s (such as *Dando y dando*), *Tacos, tortas y enchiladas* consists of two unrelated stories presented separately (each "episode" even has its own title card and cast listing). Given the failure of many sexy-comedies to maintain narrative coherency for 90 minutes, this was

probably a good decision. In this case, each story runs about 45 minutes in length.



"Tacos, tortas, y enchiladas"--Carmen, Susana, and Lucila run a lunchroom (*tortería*), while their husbands (respectively)--lazy Pedro, womanizing Valentín, and alcoholic Simón--do nothing constructive. [In keeping with the sexy-comedy generic depiction of men as either super-machos or completely sexually inept, the audience sees Simón, Pedro, and Valentín each flee the amorous advances of other women--two of these episodes provide the only nudity in this sequence.] One day, the three women discover an abandoned baby on the doorstep of their apartment building: a note says the mother cannot care for the child, whose father is "your husband." Since the note isn't addressed to anyone in particular, Carmen, Susana, and Lucila each quiz their husband to determine if the baby is theirs. The three men all heatedly deny it.

Nonetheless, Carmen, Susana, and Lucila decide to adopt the child. And for good measure, they decide to divorce their husbands, feeling the three men would be bad examples for their new son. The men don't want to lose their meal ticket, so they promise to do anything if their wives will give them another chance. As the story concludes, Simón, Valentín, and Pedro are (ineptly) running the lunchroom, as their wives contentedly care for the infant.

"Tacos, tortas y enchiladas" is mildly amusing, mostly due to the snappy repartee among the women, and the occasional good line delivered by one of the men. [Simón says he "drinks to forget," and Valentín replies "You must have a really good memory then, because you've been drinking a long time."] Palacios, Cabrera, and Meyer also take the acting honors: Sergio Ramos barely moves or speaks (because his character is so lazy, get it?), Arturo Cobo's character isn't very well defined, and a little bit of Polo Ortín's drunk act (and funny faces) goes a long way (and we get a lot more than a little bit in this episode). However, this episode is mildly entertaining.

"La rifa" [The Raffle]--Pepe Punzón lives off the money contributed by his girlfriends, a nightclub performer and a hairstylist, but he also has a "decent" girlfriend, aptly named Virginia. Pepe's constant, admiring companion is Héctor, who accompanies him on his nightly round of dancehalls, cabarets, and billiard parlors. One day, Pepe loses five thousand dollars (everyone gasps when the word dollars is mentioned, because that's a lot more than 5,000 new pesos) playing pool with gangster El Charrascas. If he doesn't pay up in 48 hours, he'll be killed. Pepe tries to get more money from his two girlfriends, but when he attempts to make love to them he hears El Charrascas (in voiceover) saying "if you don't pay in 48 hours, you'll die," and his performance in bed suffers. This in turn causes his girlfriends to reject him. Finally, Héctor suggests a plan: they will hold a raffle, with the grand prize being the chance to sleep with Pepe's "decent" girlfriend Virginia. Virginia isn't happy with the idea, but agrees to do it to save Pepe's life. She bitterly criticizes Héctor for his idea when they are alone, and Héctor confesses he loves her.



The raffle tickets sell out--even El Charrascas buys one--and Pepe is able to pay off his debt to the gangster. The winning ticket is drawn by...Héctor! He turns down an offer of \$2,000 from El Charrascas for the prize. The gangster is so impressed by this--and by Pepe's humiliation--that he prevents the losers in the contest from beating up Héctor when it is learned the raffle was rigged (all of the tickets in the glass bowl had Héctor's number!). Pepe watches them go, turns to the audience, and says [in what I believe to be a spoof of a series of public service TV spots of the era starring Manolo Fábregas]--"to have a friend like that, or be a friend like that, is...[expletive deleted]!"

"La rifa" seems somewhat longer than it is, probably because there are several musical numbers (the "Pepe Punzón" theme played in its entirety as people dance in the California Dancing Club, a cabaret dance by Diana Ferreti and some chorus girls, and a song by Olivia Collins--which she also co-wrote, apparently). Flaco Ibáñez is good as the self-confident Pepe, a typical sexy-comedy



macho who (despite his unprepossessing physical appearance) drives all women mad. César Bono is sort of an annoying nerd as Pepe's sidekick but suddenly gets a big dramatic scene when he reveals his love for Virginia, and straightens up thereafter. Ramos is OK as the gangster El Charrascas.

On the distaff side, Olivia Collins is cute (although her face seems a little thinner than usual) and both Ferreti and Blanca Nieves



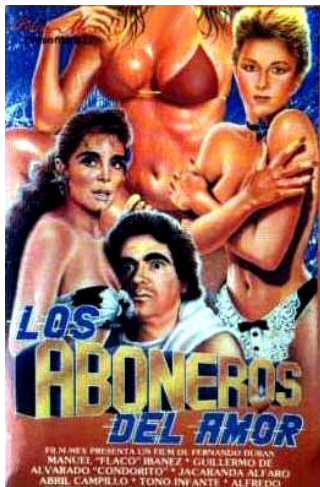
are satisfactory. The only nudity in this story comes from Blanca Nieves, who takes it all off in a sequence with Pepe (Ferreti is apparently nude in one of her scenes, but it is so dark only her silhouette can be seen). Overall, this episode is modestly amusing but seems a bit padded.

The production values in *Tacos, tortas y enchiladas* are satisfactory. It was shot entirely on location, including real businesses like the California Dancing Club and the Afro Casino cabaret. The sound is a little rough a times (and some dialogue seems to have been post-dubbed in each story) but it's not bad enough to be noticeable and the photography is serviceable without being stylish.

Nothing special but not an unpleasant 90 minutes.



Los aboneros del amor [Love on the Installment Plan] (Prods. Gallo--Cine Prods. Tritón,



©1989) *Exec Prod:* Ernesto Fuentes; *Dir:* Fernando Durán Rojas; *Scr:* Tomás Fuentes; *Photo:* Manuel Tejada; *Music:* Tino Geiser; *Prod Mgr:* León Ocampo; *Co-Dir:* Francisco Guerrero; *Film Ed:* Max Sánchez; *Makeup:* Mayra Acosta; *Union:* STIC

Cast: Manuel "Flaco" Ibáñez (*Gustavo*), Guillermo de Alvarado "Condorito" (*Poncho*),

Jacarando Alfaro (*Gustavo's wife*), Abril Campillo (*Josefina*), Rafael Buendía (*mechanic*), "Las Kúkaras" [Hortensia Clavijo, Lucha Palacios], María Elena Jasso "La Fronteriza" (*ranchera singer*), Alfredo Gutiérrez "El Turco" (*don Alfredo*), Toño Infante (*Jimmy*), María Prado

(*mother-in-law*), Clarisa Ahuet (*mother of kidnaped child*), Alejandra Sáenz, Viky Palacios, Roberto Brondo, Andrea Aguirre, Viviana Olivia, Ana Berumen, Morris Grey (*Yolanda*), Rocío Muñoz, Eva Marín, Naty Samperio, Los Tremendos Sepultureros (*band*), Los Campaneros (*band*), Raúl Padilla "Chóforo" (*Chóforo*), Angélica Brillanty, Fabiola Delgado, Félix Casas, Patricia Alvarado, Príncipe Judas, Eugenia de la O, "El Guaraní," Guillermo Alcazar, Deodato Almeida (*boy*)

Notes: this is a real mess of a film, but not without some entertainment value. The script seems to have been stitched together from bits of various stories, since it jumps from one topic to another with little or no plan or direction.

In the film's first section, we are introduced to Gustavo, a womanizer who works for the "Carnival" clothing factory (a real company). When the seamstresses go on strike for improved working conditions and a raise, don Pablo the owner refuses to give in. Eventually, the factory closes and Gustavo--who is married and has two young sons--is given 5 million pesos "indemnity" (note: these are "old pesos," not the current monetary unit which is worth about 10 cents). He spends most of this on a vacation with his wife and some new furniture, but as his funds dwindle, Gustavo unsuccessfully tries to find a new job.

His cousin Poncho offers a solution. Poncho is an *abonero*, who sells clothing door-to-door on the installment plan. Gustavo invests his remaining money in a stock of clothing and joins the ranks of the



aboneros. This gives him ample opportunity to seduce housewives as he goes about his rounds collecting each week's payment, and his escapades in this endeavor consume the middle portion of the movie.

The final section of the film goes off on another tangent. Josefina and her brother Jimmy (and another guy) kidnap young children and sell them to *gringos*. Josefina is slightly conflicted about this, rationalizing that "the children will have better lives in the United States than they would in the poor neighborhoods where they live." The child-stealers move into Gustavo's *colonia* and Gustavo strikes up a romantic relationship with Josefina, over Jimmy's objections. One day, Jimmy catches Gustavo in the house with Josefina, and works him over. Later, when one of the women in the neighborhood bursts in with news that her child has been abducted, Gustavo remembers he had seen Jimmy bring a toddler into the

house that day. Gustavo manages to delay Josefina and Jimmy from escaping, while Poncho rounds up a mob of angry neighbors who capture the criminals (and then the police arrive).

Everyone is celebrating with a party, and Gustavo is dancing with one of his girlfriends, when his wife, mother-in-law, and his wife's combative sisters burst in and a brawl breaks out!

Los aboneros del amor is quite episodic but is fairly



well-paced and entertaining regardless. Even the songs aren't bad, although Rafael Buendía's musical number suffers from obvious lip-synching ("playbacks" were used for all of the

songs but this is the only one that doesn't take place in a nightclub or party setting, so the "invisible" band in Buendía's number is the most noticeable). The film is actually rather interesting in its depiction of working-class life in Mexico City (buying clothes from a door-to-door salesman and paying weekly installments isn't something most *gringos* would be familiar with), and the location shooting helps with the verisimilitude.

Curiously, although the film makes a big deal about the sexy goings-on, there is only one very brief bit of nudity (Jacaranda Alfaro, who otherwise wears some of the ugliest outfits ever seen) and a couple of suggestive cheesecake bits. As usual, when one sees female impersonator Morris Grey's name in the credits, expect a scene in which one of the protagonists (Gustavo in this case) is tricked into intimate contact with the transvestite, only to receive a sudden shock. Raúl Padilla "Chóforo" makes an odd cameo appearance, just bumping into the protagonists on the street and saying hello!



Flaco Ibáñez is pretty good in this movie (in some of his films he is intolerable) and has a good rapport with Condorito, in one of the latter's more prominent roles. The rest of the cast is adequate, although as mentioned earlier, Jacaranda Alfaro seems to be trying to look as *unattractive* as possible, and Abril Campillo is cute but shows up too late.

On the whole, moderate fun despite its structural flaws.



Objetos sexuales [Sex Objects] (Filmica GM, ©1988) *Dir.*: Benito Alazraki; *Scr.*: J.P. Tercero; *Photo*: Mariano García; *Music*: Pedro Plasencia S.; *Prod Mgr*: Jorge Jiménez; *Prod Chief*: Alfredo Chavira; *Asst Dir*: Elvia Casillas; *Film Ed*: Carlos Savage; *Makeup*: Raúl Sarmiento; *Choreog*: Mario Bezares; *Sound Ed*: Alejandro Liho; *Re-rec*: René Ruiz Cerón; *Union*: STPC

Cast: Roxana Chávez (*Toto's girlfriend*), Gina Morett (*Rita*), Sergio Ramos "El Comanche" (*Patricia's husband*), Irving Montaña (*Cuaco*), Roberto Cobo "Calambres" (*club owner*), Wanda Seux (*Patricia*), Anaís de Melo (*Toni*), Roberto Montiel (*Toto*), Memo de Alvarado "Condorito" (*short insurance investigator*), Eleazar García Jr. (*tall insurance investigator*), Paco Sañudo (*Gerardo*), Edna Gabriela Ramírez, Mayka Montalvo, Perla Pantoja, Lindsay

Notes: this is a mediocre sexy-comedy which not only has a sketchy script but also some uncharacteristic production sloppiness (visible boom mikes, the top of a crew member's head appearing in one shot!). The movie itself more or less wraps up at about the 70-minute mark, so about 10 minutes of "flashbacks" are added before and during the end credits.

Toto is a young man who lives in a mansion with his domineering and lecherous aunt Rita. After the sudden death of Toto's parents, Rita took control of the family fortune and uses the money to keep her nephew under her

thumb. The only thing she allows him to do is visit the local gym and work out. Some young women move into the house next door, and Toto is attracted to one of them, but his jealous aunt nearly catches the young couple in bed.

So Toto can earn enough money to become independent, Toto's workout friend Cuaco suggests he get a job as a male stripper in the club where he works. But first, Toto's neighbor (now girlfriend) hires him as a male prostitute in the establishment where she works. Toto's session with his initial client is interrupted when her jealous husband (Sergio Ramos, in a one-scene cameo despite third-billing) bursts in with a pistol. The young man then decides to take Cuaco's advice, but on his first night in the strip club, he is mobbed by the women in the audience and a brawl breaks out.

Toto's girlfriend says she knows a high-class private club where Toto can dance. Wearing a black wrestling mask and a cape, Toto appears as "La Sombra" and is a big hit. Toni, the club manager, introduces him to the real owner--Rita! Rita doesn't recognize her nephew (because of the mask), but she is attracted to him. Toto utilizes her lust to force his aunt to open her safe where she keeps the documents necessary for him to recover his inheritance. He prepares to thrash his aunt but is interrupted by two men who have been following him through the whole movie--they are insurance investigators who were trying to determine if Toto or Rita was the swindler. They arrest Rita and take her away. Toto and his girlfriend can now be happy.

Objetos sexuales is sporadically amusing and throws in a few scenes of (female) nudity to keep the audience awake, but the basic premise--Rita's lust for her nephew--is a little distasteful and the believability of the plot is very weak. Roberto Montiel does not look like an ingenuous young man who would allow himself to be dominated by a middle-aged woman (although he gives it a good try), and the rest of the movie is just variations on the same theme: Toto becomes a sex worker and this doesn't work out. The filmmakers throw in some lesbianism (Toni, who had an affair with Rita but is discarded when the older woman sets her sights on La Sombra), and a couple of gay characters (Roberto Cobo and, presumably, Irving Montaña as Cuaco, who reveals his attraction to Toto in the final scene), incest (or at least, Rita's desire to commit incest), infidelity, and the "humorous" spectacle of women (including one senior citizen) going crazy over male strippers.

On the positive side, Roxana Chávez (whose character name is perhaps mentioned once or twice but I could not catch it) does a good job as the perky girlfriend who helps Toto, and while Condorito and Eleazar García Jr. aren't

really funny as the Mutt and Jeff insurance detectives, at least they *look* funny.

Short enough to be inoffensive but not really that good.



Las calenturas de Juan Camaney II [Juan Camaney's Hot Flashes, Part 2] (Zyanya Prods., ©1989) *Prod:* Juan Garrido, Oscar Fentanes; *Dir:* Alejandro Todd; *Scr:* Oscar Fentanes, Juan Garrido; *Photo:* Xavier Cruz Ruvalcaba; *Music:* Marcos Lizama; *Prod Mgr:* Alfonso Granados Ayala; *Asst Dir:* Rubén González; *Film Ed:* Enrique Puente Portillo; *Camera Op:* Javier Cruz Osorio; *Makeup:* Graciela Muñoz; *Union:* STIC

Cast: Luis de Alba (*Juan Camaney*), Oscar Fentanes (*El Tobillo*), Gabriela Goldsmith (*Paty Garza*), Jorge Arvizu "El Tata" (*El Cepillo*), Charly Valentino (*Moby Mascarne*), Diana Herrera (*African woman*), Gerardo Zepeda (*head gangster*), Armando Ramírez, Pedro Orozco "Pedrin" (*El Retaches*), Lorena Herrera (*Moby's bride*), Puck Miranda (*hotel mgr*), Wendolyn Lozano, Carlos Bonavides, Tito Guillén and Charly Hauptvogel (*gangster's henchmen*), Juan Alanis, José Luis Caro (*dirty old man*), Andrés Maqueda y su grupo (*band*)

Notes: the films Luis de Alba made in the late 1980s for Zyanya Producciones share one major trait: they are all narratively incoherent, with plots that make no sense and scripts pasted together of brief bits

that have little or no relevance to the "plot," such as it is. Some of these movies are funny, or it would be more accurate to say that some parts of some of these movies are amusing, but the films as a whole are poor examples of the motion picture art.

Las calenturas de Juan Camaney II is a shining example of the Zyanya problem. Juan steals a car that belongs to a gang of thieves specializing in pre-Colombian artifacts. He takes a sack of the stolen figurines and hides out in the (real-life) Hotel del Prado, where his pal Tobillo (a handyman there) gets him a job. The rest of the movie consists of various "comic" interludes in the hotel (although somehow an amateur soccer game is also shoe-horned in), without much concern for consistency or logic. Juan rescues a young woman who is being coerced into having sex with her much older boss--he even whips her



with his belt when she refuses to have sex with him--then she vanishes, only to reappear in the film's last scene. Halfway through the movie Paty Garza is introduced as a dancer in the hotel's floor show, and there is a bizarre, pointless sequence in which she is hit by a car and slightly injured. The "big show" at the film's climax is supposed to feature Paty and some dancers, but her regular chorus quits so Juan and his three pals disguise themselves as "Arab women" and dance with her, ha ha.

One sequence that is actually mildly amusing concerns an "international symposium on the film industry," in which Luis de Alba (in drag) makes a speech criticizing "garbage" movies (posters for de Alba's *Metiche y encajoso* and *AR-15, Comando implacable*--starring Juan Garrido, who co-produced and co-wrote *Las calenturas de Juan Camaney II*--are prominently displayed) and insisting that the cinema should produce works of art. However,



this leads to two later sequences featuring female "delegates" to the symposium: in one, the African delegate turns out to be a savage "cannibal" who tries to eat Juan, and in the other, Juan promises to teach the Brazilian delegate and a friend to rollerskate (although he doesn't know how), with predictable mayhem at the roller rink.

Do you see where this is going? Correct--nowhere. There is also a running gag about a newlywed couple (Valentino and Lorena Herrera)--the wife doesn't want to have sex, ha ha. The final confrontation between Juan and the groom (who is pretending to be sick to trick his wife into having sex) is reasonably funny--Juan calls the rotund groom "Keiko" (after the famous orca) and ogles the sexy bride. When Juan and the bride emerge from the bathroom together (the bride giggling and Juan zipping up his pants), the groom becomes enraged. He says "I know what you were doing in there, something very personal, something that belongs to me and me only..." (Juan and the bride look guilty) "...and I don't like you combing your hair with my toothbrush!" (he snatches the offending item away from Juan)

There are also a few scenes (including the aforementioned soccer game) which highlight Juan's pals, the moronic hotel handymen, Tobillo, Retaches, and

Cepillo (played by Jorge Arvizu, wearing a fake nose). Although some of the bits are marginally amusing--they are lowbrow slapstick, mostly--they are all just padding.

Luis de Alba is pretty good in his recurring role of Juan Camaney ("Bailo tango, masco chicle, pelo duro, tengo chavas de a montón, too roo roo!"), but the movie is too much of a mess to be consistently entertaining.



Virtually the entire movie was shot on location in the Hotel del Prado, so the picture doesn't look cheap, and director Todd does an adequate job with the individual sequences, but they don't add up.

One curious point--the video version I have seen of this movie has no nudity at all, and there are no obvious cuts. Given the mildly raunchy nature of the dialogue and some "adult" situations, one might have expected some exposed skin, but frankly it isn't missed. Bet you never thought you'd see me writing *that*.



Comezón a la mexicana [The Mexican Itch]

(Grupo Cine*, 1989) Exec Prod:

Manuel Pérez

Cárdenas; Dir:

Alfredo B.

Crevenna; Scr:

José Loza; Photo:

Antonio de Anda;

Music: Ernesto

Cortázar [Jr.];

Prod Mgr: Isabel

Samperio; Asst

Dir: Raymundo

Calixto; Film Ed:

Max Sánchez;

Decor: Juan

Araiza; Camera

Op: José Luis

Vera; Sound Engin: Víctor Rojo; Makeup: Victoria Celis;

Re-rec: Ricardo Saldivar; Sound Ed: Enrique Contreras;

Union: STIC

*the only production company credited on-screen is Grupo Cine; however, the Filmoteca database also credits Cine Prods. Internacionales, Gazcón Films, and Prods. EGA



Cast: Carmen Salinas (*Satanita*), Charly Valentino (*husband 1*), Guillermo Rivas (*husband 2*), Jesús González "Chis Chas" (*don Cacique*), Rebeca Silva (*prostitute*), Claudia Guzmán (*Cristina*), Rafael Amador (*Pancho "Panchín" Cabrera*), Pancho Muller (*"Panchón" Cabrera*), Alfonso Munguía (*Dr. Héctor Ignacio Santos López*), Martha Elena Cervantes (*wife of don Cacique*), María Prado (*doña Bonachona*), Alfredo Gutiérrez "El Turco" (*priest*), Marisol Cervantes (*Priana*), Ana Laura Espinoza (*Alegrita*), María Margarita "Gioconda" (*Amantina*), Elizabeth Villagómez, Manolo Cárdenas "Agapito" (*El Segregato*), Blanca Nieves (*gringa 'punk'*), Lizbeth Olivier, Vianey Franco, Jesús "Güero" Gómez (*don Jimmy*), Luis Guevara (*sacristan*), Marilú Quintana, Luz Ma. Alvarez, Georgia Pozos, Margarita Valencia, Isaías Martínez, Benjamín Berrospe, Salvador Prieto Mora, Bertha Espinoza, Francisco Pérez C., Laura López, Grupo Los Cordero, Banda San Miguel, Martín Chávez (*singer*)

Notes: an infestation of crab lice (*ladillas* in Spanish) hardly seems like a promising topic for a feature film, but *sexy-comedies* were not known for their conventionality, and *Comezón a la mexicana* depicts what happens when a small town (the movie was shot in Manzanillo de la Paz, Jalisco) falls prey to the voracious insects who live in the "personal spaces" of the townspeople.

This review is based on the Platinum Pictures' DVD version, which may or may not be complete. The first half of the movie contains almost no full nudity and in fact some scenes (such as Rebeca Silva's strip-tease and Gioconda's *al fresco* seduction by Chis Chas) end rather abruptly, as if nude footage had been trimmed. However, the last third of the picture is loaded with nudity, suggesting either (a) the censor got tired, (b) the first part of the movie is a deliberate "tease," or (c) ...who knows? It is curious, however, that Rebeca Silva has no nude scenes at all, but it is possible she was becoming more sensitive about such things by 1989.

Comezón a la mexicana unfolds in flashback, as two married men take leave of their wives to go on a "spiritual retreat," which actually means a weekend at a rural brothel run by Rebeca Silva's character (whose character name I could not discern). The madame insists on relating the tale of the small town where she formerly worked, and how the hypocrisy of the "decent" people was exposed.

Don Cacique is the town's municipal president, and is currently trying to seduce the youthful Amantina (at the same time, Cacique's wife is having an affair with El Segregato, Cacique's assistant). However, the lecherous political boss views the womanizing *charro* "Panchín" as competition, and decides to award him a "scholarship" to study in the USA. Cacique actually sends Panchín to stay with his *compadre* don Jimmy--who runs a bar--and tells

Jimmy to keep the young man there as long as possible. Meanwhile, the wives of the town's influential citizens complain to Cacique about the brothel operated by Satanita, forcing him to evict the prostitutes.

Panchín gets bored and makes his way back to Mexico, where he is welcomed by his sexy cousin Priana, the hot-to-trot Alegrita and Amantina, and even the formerly-virginal Cristina. Unbeknownst to them, Panchín caught crab lice from a liaison with a blonde punk *gringa* in the USA, and passes the insects on to his lovers. The young women, in turn, spread the infestation to others (Panchín's father has sex with Priana, the sacristan rapes the drunken Alegrita after she's brought home by the town priest, etc.), and the new victims infect others (Panchón has sex with his wife, for example). Soon everyone is visiting the amused Dr. Santos López for relief, but he has to wait for a shipment of disinfectant powder to arrive from the city. Meanwhile, the only group of people who are completely untouched are Satanita and her whores, who refuse to have any contact with the "decent" citizens. Eventually, the medicine arrives and the afflicted people get relief.



Comezón a la mexicana is mildly amusing. The cast is solid, with some of the performers playing (somewhat) against type (not Rebeca Silva and Carmen Salinas, however!). Claudia Guzmán and Ana Laura Espinoza are especially cute, and Jesús González and Manolo Cárdenas are veteran troupers. Cárdenas does have to endure a cringe-worthy scene where he is anally raped (with a candle) by the prostitutes when he tries to arrange their eviction. This sequence is painful and unfunny and rather at odds with the tone of the rest of the picture, but *sexy-comedies* were noted for their forays into bad taste.

One odd thing about the film is the framing story, which is totally unnecessary and could very well have been added just to pad out the running time (and to add the "star" names of Guillermo Rivas and Charly Valentino to the cast).

The production values are satisfactory (thanks to the authentic location shooting) and although director Crevenna was pretty much cruising at this point in his long career, the picture is professionally put together.



Dos nacos en el planeta de las mujeres [Two Nerds on the Planet of Women] (Cin. del Prado-Hermes Film Internacional-Alianza Cin., ©1989) *Exec Prod:* Abraham Cherem; *Prod:* Carlos Vasallo; *Dir:* Alberto Rojas; *Scr:* Alejandro Licona; *Photo:* Raúl Domínguez; *Music:* Alejandro Giacomán; *Prod Mgr:* Javier García Mata; *Asst Dir:* Román Hernández; *Film Ed:* Jorge Peña; *Art Dir:* Alberto Villaseñor; *Sound:* Noé Rincón; *Union:* STIC

Cast: Alberto Rojas (*"El Caballo"* (*Caralampio*), César Bono (*Ambrosio Peláez*), Lorena Herrera (*Elisa*), Jacaranda Alfaro (*Queen*), Lucero Reinoso (*Toribia*), Adriana Rojas (*?Consuelo*), Blanca Nieves (*Agata*), Azela Robinson (*Tacha*), Bárbara Ferrer (*?Nacha*), Alejandra Meyers [sic] (*Elisa's mother, the High Priestess*), José Luis Caro (*Engineer Luna*), Metzli Adamina, Alejandra [sic] Castillo, Carina del Sol, Josefina Tovar, Silvia Ibáñez, Perla Mariana, Claudia Toledo, Liliana López, Elena Martínez, Nayelli, Conni Chávez, Raymunda Arechau, Fernando Nesme, Mónica Castro, Rosa Olaya, Adrián Rojas, Margot Shaw, Rafael Horta, Juan Imperio, Beatriz Arroyo

Notes: this is a mildly amusing sexy comedy-science fiction film, a rare Mexican genre movie set on another planet (among the others, *Conquistador de la luna*, *El planeta de las mujeres invasoras*, and *Gigantes planetarios*), even if the "other planet" is represented by the Mexican desert (and "Rujem," the city of women, is a motley collection of tents and ramshackle buildings in said desert).

The low budget of the picture is evident not only in the spartan art direction and "sets," but also in the lack of special effects of any kind. Space travel is represented by stock footage of a rocket taking off, then an image of a

triangle on a "radar" screen. The planet of women is one of those sci-fi movie societies (like *Flash Gordon's* Mongo) which mixes archaic weaponry (bows and arrows, spears) with high-tech scientific equipment (golf carts used as "autos," and a machine which extracts sperm from unwilling donors, for example).

It's interesting (and a bit disheartening) to note that there's relatively little nudity on display here (particularly since the opening credits are superimposed over a scene of full-frontal nudity!), with Lorena Herrera, Azela Robinson, and Jacaranda Alfaro keeping their clothes on at all times (unsurprising in the first two cases--since I don't think either actress did nudity in movies--but kind of a shock with regards to Alfaro, since she usually wasn't shy about disrobing on screen). There are also at least two mildly graphic deaths shown (a woman has her throat cut, and another is crushed by a death-trap concealed in a bed), which tend to mitigate the light-hearted tone of the rest of the picture.

Four Mexican rockets have successfully launched but all have vanished into space. The fifth ship contains astronauts Caralampio and Ambrosio, but it too disappears when it enters the "blue zone." When the rocket malfunctions, Caralampio parachutes to safety. He discovers a talking parrot that he dubs "Viernes" (Friday) and tries to make the best of his new life on the unknown planet (with three suns) where he now resides.

Meanwhile, in the city of Rejum, inhabited solely by women, the Queen is disturbed to learn the supply of "fertilizing liquid" has been stolen. She doesn't know it's been taken by Toribia (a female astronaut from a previous space mission who has somehow become part of the all-woman society of Rejum) and her henchwomen Tacha and Nacha. An anonymous note demands a large ransom for its return. Otherwise, the society will perish. The High Priestess of Rejum prays for a miracle so her daughter Elisa can become pregnant. Suddenly, Ambrosio plummets to the ground, crashing into their home! The two women discover he's a "man," a being who can impregnate women "naturally," and



Ambrosio is "convinced" to have sex with Elisa so she can have a child.



However, his presence is discovered and he is imprisoned. Toribia, who recognizes her former colleague, orders him murdered, but the Queen saves his life and orders

Ambrosio to produce the "fertilizing liquid" (by hooking him up to a machine which forcibly extracts it from him--probably an idea borrowed from Harlan Ellison's *A Boy and His Dog*). The Queen also sends Agata and Consuelo into the desert to find the aged seeress Manuela, who may be able to discover the thieves who took the city's supply of liquid.

Agata and Consuelo instead meet Caralampio, who introduces them to live sex. They learn Manuela is long



dead, so Caralampio disguises himself as the old witch and returns to Rejum with his two new friends. Toribia tries to assassinate "Manuela" but is

exposed as the thief, bitten by a tarantula (intended for Caralampio) and dies. Caralampio and Ambrosio think they are home free, but the Queen says their presence is disruptive to the all-woman society and orders them executed. Before this can occur, rockets from Earth arrive (off-screen, of course), bringing dozens of men who hunt down the women of Rejum to take as wives (or mistresses, or whatever). Caralampio has to console the lovely Elisa, since Ambrosio has forsaken her for his new "love"--the extraction machine!

Dos nacos en el planeta de las mujeres doesn't deliver any belly laughs, but the picture has a mildly amusing tone. Rojas goes through his usual routines (if he did not dress up like a woman in one of his starring films, I'd be shocked) in confident style; Bono and Meyer also turn in professional performances, while Lorena Herrera and Azela Robinson (despite their failure to do nudity) are attractive in their skimpy costumes.

As mentioned earlier, the picture was probably made very cheaply, but the photography is fine and Alejandro Giacomán's music score is almost too good for the film. The script has a lot of glaring holes (how long has Toribia

been in Rejum, why do spaceships always crash there, where did the original supply of "fertilizing liquid" come from, what's up with the mix of primitive weapons and scientific devices, why do the women on this planet--and the parrot--speak, read, and write Spanish, etc.) but if one doesn't try to apply any sort of logic or common sense to *Dos nacos en el planeta de las mujeres*, the movie can provide 90 minutes of inoffensive and mild entertainment.



ALMA DELIA FUENTES FILMS



El río de las ánimas [The River of the Spirits]
(Productora Fílmica "México", 1963) *Prod*: Enrique Rosas Priego; *Assoc Prod*: Francisco Gómez G., Alfonso Morones A.; *Dir-Scr*: Juan J. Ortega; *Photo*: Ezequiel Carrasco; *Music Dir*: Antonio Díaz Conde; *Prod Chief*: Enrique Morfín; *Asst Dir*: Jesús Marín; *Film Ed*: Alfredo Rosas Priego; *Art Dir*: Francisco Marco Chillet; *Decor*: Raymundo Ortiz; *Lighting*: Mariano García; *Camera Op*: Leobardo Sánchez; *Makeup*: Felisa L. de Guevara; *Music Rec*: Grabaciones Bel-Art; *Re-rec*: Enrique Rodríguez; *Sound Ed*: Abraham Cruz; *Dialog Rec*: José B. Carles; *Union*: STPC

Cast: Joaquín Cordero (*Leonardo Moncada*), Alma Delia Fuentes (*Mari Carmen Bermúdez*), Andrés Soler (*Cándido Fonseca*), Germán Robles (*René Fonseca*), Carmen Montejo (*Angelina*), Antonio de Hud (*José Bermúdez*), Ramón Bugarini (*Pedro*), Nora Veyran [sic] (*Lola Bermúdez*), Manuel Dondé (*Tuerto*), Guillermo "Lobo" Hernández (*henchman*), Leopoldo Salazar (*Carlos*), Faustino Brindis de Sala [sic, Salas] (*Dámaso Gayosso*), Carlos Suárez (*man in crowd*), Carl-Hillos (*cantina waiter*), Armando Gutiérrez (*cantinero*), José Loza (*local man*), Vicente Lara "Indio Cacama" (*henchman*), Jorge Arriaga (*big man in cantina*), Pompín Iglesias Sr. (*don Anselmo*), Hermanos Michel (*musical group*), Palmira Arzubide (*cantina singer*)

Notes: “Leonardo Moncada” was a Cuban radio character whose adventures began in 1948 and continued for many years, achieving fame throughout Latin America. Five “Leonardo Moncada” film adaptations were made in the early 1960s: *La moneda rota* and *La pantera de Monte Escondido* (1960), *La herencia maldita* and *El río de las ánimas* (1963) and *Los murciélagos* (1964). All featured Joaquín Cordero in the leading role, although his radio-series sidekicks “Bejuco” and “Pedro” did not appear in every entry.

The final “Leonardo Moncada” film was *Los murciélagos* which—despite the advertising, its title, and the presence of two former Mexican-movie vampires in the cast (Germán Robles and Guillermo Murray)—had



nothing to do with vampires and was not even a fantasy film at all. *El río de las ánimas*, on the other hand, has a mysterious and never-explained flaming “spirit” which flies

through the air at various points (it’s pretty impressive in fact) to foretell evil events approaching. Sadly, this is the most memorable part of the whole film and it’s buried in a clumsy melodrama plot with little action and no particular “Western” elements (it could easily have been a *ranchera* or even a conventional “civilian” drama).

Leonardo and his friend Pedro arrive at the drought-stricken town of Pueblo Viejo. They stop henchmen of don Cándido from beating the elderly Dámaso. Leonardo learns that Cándido controls the local dam, and withholds water (or releases it, causing floods) to punish the other residents of the area. A flaming ball of fire, known as the “Spirit of the River,” flies by, allegedly forecasting bad luck. After winning a fight with Cándido’s foreman Tuerto, Leonardo earns the right to drive cattle owned by the local farmers through the rich man’s ranch to be sold. The money will be used to help the farmers survive the drought and rebuild their flood-ravaged homes.

Leonardo is abducted by Cándido’s men, but the villainous rancher merely wants to hire the newcomer. Leonardo postpones making a decision, but as he leaves the house, Cándido’s invalid sister Angelina asks him to take the job (he later accepts, but for no apparent purpose). Meanwhile, doña Lola’s son José loses the cattle money to René, Cándido’s wastrel son, in a card game. Leonardo wins it back in a shooting contest. René loves Mari Carmen, doña Lola’s adopted daughter, but is exposed by Leonardo as having ill intentions.

Lola and Mari Carmen visit Angelina, and the plot unravels. 20 years before, Cándido murdered Angelina’s

husband Mingo; Angelina secretly gave birth to Mari Carmen, who was raised by doña Lola to protect her. Dámaso, Mingo’s father, kills Cándido. Leonardo exposes the workings of Cándido’s dam and releases the water for the use of all in Pueblo Viejo. He departs for future adventures.

El río de las ánimas has a lot of familial drama: Mari Carmen knows Lola isn’t her mother, but Lola won’t tell her who it is; Cándido has disowned his son René; Cándido’s sister hates him (and has feigned being an invalid for 20 years as part of some sort of plot to avenge herself on him); Dámaso avenges his dead son; and so on. Exposure of the big secret—Angelina is Mari Carmen’s mother and Cándido killed her father—doesn’t really resolve anything, except that it gives Dámaso the impetus to shoot Cándido, which does eliminate the problem of Cándido and the water. Leonardo Moncada doesn’t do much at all to save the town, although I suppose one could say he was the catalyst that put the *denouement* in motion. There’s some suggestion that Leonardo is romantically



interested in Mari Carmen, but this goes nowhere: in the first place, she loves René, and in the second place she considers Leonardo a traitor after he takes the job as Cándido’s foreman.

One interesting point which is never brought up in the film is the revelation that Mari Carmen is of mixed race. Dámaso is black (in fact, given his accent, he sounds Cuban) and presumably his son Mingo was as well. It’s possible this was Cándido’s objection to his sister’s relationship with Mingo (their marriage was secret, but Cándido knew of their romance), but it’s never really clear.

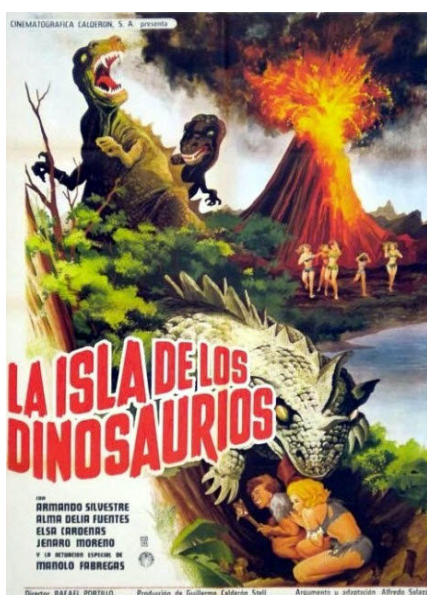


No explanation is given for the presence of Dámaso and Mingo in a rural Mexican town (no other people of colour are seen at all).

It's also interesting but certainly not unique that *El río de las ánimas* is a contemporary film but there are almost no "modern" aspects: no cars, telephones, etc., although Cándido's remote-controls for the dam are fairly modern in appearance (but not really moreso than the dials and knobs on a 19th-century train or steamship, I guess).

As often happens in Mexican cinema of this era, the cast of what was essentially a low-budget "B" genre movie features many familiar faces. Perhaps the most surprising is the presence of Carmen Montejo, who was in a transition period in her career, moving from leading lady/love interest into character roles (and later, grandmotherly roles). Everyone else falls into the category of "hard-working performer," who'd appear in everything from a cheap Western to a big-budget production: Andrés Soler, Joaquín Cordero, Alma Delia Fuentes, Germán Robles, and so on. Fausto Brindis de Salas was the nephew of famous Cuban violinist Claudio Brindis de Salas Garrido: apparently lacking the family's musical ability, Faustino instead worked in various Mexican films as an actor.

A final note: the flaming *ánima* is seen several times in the film and is always impressive (however, despite the poster art, it doesn't have a face). Some sort of practical effect (as opposed to a lousy superimposition), the fiery ball was probably on a wire but the final result is extremely well executed. The *ánima* itself is left a mystery—when Leonardo asks Angelina if it was part of her scheme, she cryptically replies "no one will know who the solitary spirit (*ánima solitaria*) was, so that it won't lose it's symbolic meaning." Oh well, it looked good on screen, that's for sure.



La isla de los dinosaurios [The Island of the Dinosaurs] (Cin. Calderón, 1966) *Prod*: Guillermo

Calderón Stell; *Dir*: Rafael Portillo; *Scr*: Alfredo Salazar; *Photo*: Agustín Jiménez; *Music Dir*: Gustavo C. Carrión; *Prod Mgr*: Alfredo Salazar; *Prod Chief*: Jorge Cardeña; *Sub-Dir*: Manuel Ortega; *Film Ed*: Jorge Bustos; *Art Dir*: Javier Torres Torija; *Decor*: Raúl Serrano; *Makeup*: Elda Loza; *Sound Supv*: James L. Fields; *Dialog Rec*: Rodolfo Solis; *Re-rec*: Galdino Samperio; *Sound Ed*: José Li-Ho; *Union*: STPC

Cast: Armando Silvestre (*Molo*), Alma Delia Fuentes (*Laura*), Manolo Fábregas (*Professor*), Elsa Cárdenas (*Ester*), Genaro Moreno (*Pablo*), Crox Alvarado (*Buco*), Cavenario Galindo, Jesús "Murciélago" Velázquez, María Cecilia Leger (*Misha*), Xochil Flores, Reyes Oliva, July Jantzen, Victorio Blanco (*old tribe member*)

Notes: *One Million B.C.* (1940) would serve as the stock footage library for numerous films over the next 25 years (or, roughly, until black-and-white movies became obsolete). Scenes of battling "dinosaurs" (alligators and various lizards) showed up many times, but it's safe to say that *La isla de los dinosaurios* probably used more *One Million B.C.* footage than any other movie. [It was probably one of the last to do so as well, since the original black-and-white footage was no longer useful when virtually all films were being made in colour.] Armando Silvestre and Alma Delia Fuentes were costumed and made up specifically to match Victor Mature and Carole Landis's scenes in the earlier film and, frankly, the crew hired by Calderón did an excellent job in integrating the new and old footage.

The biggest mis-match actually seems to be not between *One Million B.C.* footage and new scenes, but in a sequence lifted from *Nabonga* (1944)! A fierce-looking gorilla grabs Alma Delia Fuentes and runs off, but is speared by Armando Silvestre. The gorilla suit used by the Mexican filmmakers is clearly not *Nabonga*--not even close.

The Professor (no last name) sets out to find the remains of the lost



continent of Atlantis, accompanied by Pablo, Laura, and Ester. A fierce storm blows their light plane off course and they land on an uncharted island. While the menfolks try to repair the craft, Laura and Ester go swimming. Especially Laura, who is floating around one day when she meets caveman Molo. Molo, it seems, had a dispute with Buco (moustache-less Crox Alvarado) and was cast out of the tribal cave. Pursued by a woolly mammoth (OK, an elephant wearing a fur coat), Molo climbed a tree which the mammoth promptly toppled into a river (a nice *One*

Million B.C. sequence). Molo floated downstream and eventually met Laura. He doesn't whack her with a club, but he does pull the old "toss the woman over your shoulder" trick and takes Laura back to his new cave.

After looking at a lot of stock footage (including lizards and armadillos), Molo and Laura run into Buco and a hunting party. Laura has shown Molo how to make a pointy spear (instead of the plain sticks the cavepeople had been using) and he defeats Buco. They return to his tribe, where Laura teaches the prehistoric people to be kind to



women and old people and share their food (instead of squabbling over it like dogs, as they were wont to do). She also passes along the pointy-

spear trick (in one funny bit, a dim-witted caveman is trying to assemble his spear backwards, and Molo smacks him!). Nonetheless, Laura insists Molo take her back to the river so she can find her friends.

Pablo and Ester, hunting for Laura, are nearly eaten by a dinosaur (OK, a big iguana). The island's volcano erupts, allowing for a lot of *One Million B.C.* footage, and impressive footage it is--I especially like the person getting swallowed up by a river of molten lava. Laura and Molo meet up with the others just as the plane is preparing to



take off; Molo won't go, and Laura decides at the last second to stay behind with him, as the others depart.

La isla de los dinosaurios is a fairly efficient little picture. The lizard fights are not too

exciting but are over fairly quickly, and otherwise there isn't much padding. One curious aspect is the cavepeople's almost total lack of language: including names, we only hear about 4 words ever spoken (not even grunts), which makes the tribe seem more like animals than human beings. Or, like a tribe of deaf people. Or (in the case of Molo), like a big friendly dog. Laura keeps talking (including a big speech before she leaves to rejoin her friends), but there's not much evidence that she's getting through to them.

The production values are adequate--most of the new scenes were shot on location, with the exception of the

opening sequence in the Professor's office, and a couple of cave interiors. The tribe isn't huge, but it's big enough (probably 20 people).

No great classic, but rather better than I had expected.

Reprinted from MFB 9/3 (May-June 2003)



Alerta, alta tensión [Danger, High Tension]

(Estudios América/Cima Films, 1967) *Exec Prod:*

Mauricio Walerstein; *Prod:* Antoni Matouk; *Dir:* Alfonso Corona Blake; *Scr:* José María Fernández Unsáin, Rafael García Travesí; *Story:* José María Fernández Unsáin, Mauricio Wall [aka Gregorio Walerstein]; *Photo:* Raúl Domínguez; *Music:* Enrico Cabiati; *Prod Mgr:* Jaime Alfaro, Jacobo Derechín; *Co-Dir:* Fernando Durán Rojas; *Asst to Dir:* Armando Castellón; *Film Ed:* Sergio Soto; *Art Dir:* Octavio Campos [sic], José Méndez Orozco; *Camera Op:* Roberto Jaramillo; *Makeup:* Graciela Muñoz; *Dialog Rec:* Víctor Rojo; *Music/Re-rec:* Heinrich Henkel; *Recordist:* Francisco Guerrero; *Sound Op:* Ricardo Saldívar; *Camera Asst:* Douglas Sandoval; Eastmancolor; *Union:* STIC

Cast: Jorge Rivero (*Jorge Rubio*), Alma Delia Fuentes (*Rita*), Claudia Islas (*Orquídea*), Lilia Castillo (*Ana*), Carlos Ancira (*Cero*), Jesús Casillas [aka Gregorio Casals] (*Esteban*), Antonio Raxel (*Malebrán, head of SEA*), Miguel Gómez Checa (*surgeon*), Nothanael León

"Frankenstein" (*wrestler*), Mishima Ota, Elvía Mendoza, Federico del Castillo [aka Federico Falcón] (*Zurdo*), Jesús Gómez (*henchman*), Tomás Alonso,



Reha, Mirón Levine (*Prof. Bernard*), Carlos Henning (*man in cabaret*), Rubén Márquez (*Sgt. at depository gate*)

Notes: a semi-sequel to *Operación 67* and *El tesoro de Moctezuma*, *Alerta, alta tensión* brings back Jorge Rivero as secret agent “Jorge Rubio,” although he’s now working for SEA (Seguridad de los Estados Americanos) rather than Interpol. Although slick and professionally made, *Alerta, alta tensión* is certainly low-budget and has a rather minimalist plot. Half the film is like a fetish video showing Jorge Rivero being tortured and/or seducing/being seduced. There is otherwise very little physical action, and most of the picture was shot on skimpy América studio sets.



Prof. Bernard is abducted by henchmen of mastermind Cero: Bernard invented an element called “argentium,” which nullifies the destructive power of uranium, or something. However, the world’s supply of argentium is kept in a secure location, and

Bernard commits suicide when Cero’s medical advisor administers truth serum to convince him to reveal the formula for the element’s creation. Consequently, Cero has to kidnap secret agent Jorge Rubio in order to steal the existing argentium.



Jorge is teamed with Rita, who is hired as a dancer at a border cabaret which is vaguely linked with Cero’s operation. Jorge himself is kidnapped by Cero’s men. Henchman Esteban undergoes plastic

surgery to become Jorge’s double, and successfully passes himself off to Rita as the hunky agent. Meanwhile, Jorge is beaten up, subjected to electrical shock, frozen, and whipped but won’t reveal how to penetrate the argentium depository. Cero henchwoman Ana is turned on by Jorge’s manly resistance to torture. This proves her undoing, as Jorge seduces her and knocks her out, then escapes, shooting many of Cero’s men (and Ana, when she revives and intervenes).

Fake-Jorge and Ana retrieve a box of argentium from the depository and deliver it to Cero, but it’s a trick: the box is full of sand. The real Jorge and SEA agents attack Cero’s hideout; fake-Jorge dies in hand-to-hand combat with the real Jorge. Cero locks himself in a room with his

(reluctant) girlfriend Orquídea and blows up the building. The end!

There is a fair amount of footage featuring Rita—two dance numbers, her interaction with fake-Jorge, her visits to a pet shop which is a SEA front—but these scenes don’t really advance the plot at all, and are just padding. There aren’t really many plot twists: fake-Jorge never really poses a threat even though he easily fools both Rita and the head of SEA, and the last-minute reveal of Roque (the pet shop owner) as a double-agent working for Cero is pointless, since he does nothing that helps Cero at all.

Jorge Rubio is characterised as an inveterate womaniser. However, the fact that his personal assistants, many of the employees of SEA, and various members of Cero’s group are all sexy women certainly doesn’t help him conquer his excessive lechery. Other than this, Jorge has little personality or back-story, and Jorge Rivero doesn’t have to stretch his acting ability very far (the scene in which he expresses “hunger” by repeatedly licking his lips and staring at food is sadly amusing). Claudia Islas is wasted as Cero’s girlfriend Orquídea, although she gets to chew the scenery at bit at the end as she begs the evil mastermind not to force her to die with him (she loses). Perhaps the most effective character and actress is Lilia Castillo as Ana, Jorge’s torturer and erstwhile lover. She’s cruel and ruthless, then (as noted above) develops a crush on Jorge: this doesn’t prevent her from continuing her torture, but she begs him to give in so she can stop!



Alerta, alta tensión is, somewhat surprisingly, a well-directed and –edited film. The final confrontation between fake-Jorge and real-Jorge is shot and edited quite effectively, cleverly hiding the fact that Jorge Rivero was fighting himself (and a double). Alma Delia Fuentes’ second dance number—in which she appears to be wear

the same transparent bodysuit that Ana Bertha Lepe wore in *El asesino invisible*—is also shot and edited in a kinetic fashion, a distinct improvement over the usual boring, “turn the camera on and let it roll style” prevalent in too many Mexican movies. The opening sequence (the abduction of Prof. Bernard) and the kidnaping of Jorge Rubio (he’s forced to drive his tiny little car up into the back of a moving van) are both efficient and effective scenes, if not exactly exciting, and Jorge’s gun-blazing escape from Cero’s headquarters is also decently done.

Alerta, alta tensión isn’t especially stylish, and the low budget sets and skimpy script aren’t positives, but on the whole it’s a mildly entertaining James Bond *pastiche*.



BONUS! SEXY-COMEDY GALLERY



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