SMU Meadows School of the Arts
Division of Theatre

presents

La Discreta Enamorada

By Lope de Vega
Trans. by Vern G. Williamsen

November 15 – 19, 2006 (presented in English)
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Greer Garson Theatre

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Assoc. Producer/Choreographer
Scenic Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
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“...clever man; but it needs a very clever woman to manage a fool.”
~ Rudyard Kipling

It is a time in Spain when image is everything, and Belisa wants her young daughter, the beautiful Fenisa, to appear as proper and honorable as possible. Fenisa, as clever as she is lovely, has plans of her own. She is in love with the young and handsome Lucindo, even though she is supposed to marry his old father, the Captain. Through intricate and discreet manipulations, Fenisa tricks everyone around her – from her mother to her fiancé – and wins the heart of Lucindo all at the same time. Those who are in love, but discreet, may have their cake and eat it, too!

CHARACTERS:

The Women
Fenisa: A young lady, around 20
Belisa: Fenisa’s mother, a widow, around 40
Gerarda: A young woman, a cabaret singer of free-living reputation
Beatriz: Maid servant to Fenisa and Belisa

The Men
Lucindo: A young gallant in his mid-20s
Captain: Lucindo’s father, a widower, 46
Hernando: Companion and protector of Lucindo
Doristeo: A young gallant, in his mid-20s
Finardo: A young friend of Doristeo
Balenciaga: Famous haute couture fashion designer in Paris

TIME & PLACE:
1950s Madrid; Spain during the dictatorship of Francisco Franco
(See pages 3-4)

SETTING:
A street in Madrid; later El Prado, a popular hangout; also the home of Fenisa & Belisa
(See pages 5-6)

COSTUMES:
Dress of the period blended with Belisa’s fantasies of Balenciaga in Paris
(See pages 7-9)

Lope de Vega

The life of Lope de Vega is one filled with war, love, political exile, infidelity, bitter enemies, and religious piety. His life in the theatre of the Siglo de Oro, or Spanish Golden, Age began in 1562 and ended in 1635. His dramatic works are estimated at approximately 1,500 commedias (such as La Discreta Enamorada) – of which only about 500 remain in existence today – along with hundreds of auto sacramentales. His non-dramatic compositions ranged from prose to sonnets to epic verse. In sheer quantity, no playwright in Western Europe has produced as much as Lope de Vega.

Lope de Vega was born Nov. 25, 1562 in Madrid. His father was a basket maker, though many claim he was of noble heritage. At this time, nobility was not thought to be a virtue; rather, people “sought to pose as a hidalgo, and – as a corollary – avoid work.” As a child, Lope allegedly began to compose verses before he knew how to write, and he often would share his breakfast with those older than him in order to have them transcribe his compositions. By the age of 12, Lope claimed to have written his first play. However, this may be little more than a boast on his part.
At the age of 10, Lope was sent to a local preparatory school of mediocre reputation. His disciple and first biographer, Juan Pérez de Montalván, claims that Lope and a close friend ran away from their studies only to be captured by the police and promptly returned to Madrid. His studies brought him to the University of Salamanca where the young playwright met the woman many would call his first muse, Elena Osorio, in 1583. Elena was the daughter of Jerónimo Velázquez, an actor of some repute for whom Lope de Vega began his professional playwriting career. He began composing sonnet after sonnet for Elena as Petrarch had done for Laura 300 years before in Italy.

While he pursued the young Elena, Lope also joined the Spanish Navy. In 1585, he met Miguel de Cervantes, and served with him in the Azores. While serving together, both young men would write in their spare time.

(continue this article on our website)

by Samuel Hicks (B.F.A. ’08)

**Glossary**

_Alojero_: A box near the back of the theatre where refreshments were served.

_Auto Sacramental_: A dramatic representation of the mystery of the Eucharist, often depicting allegorical characters such as Faith or Sin.

_Cazuela_: The gallery known as the “stew pot.” Located at the back of the theatre, this was where respectable women sat and watched the shows.

_Commedia_: One of Lope’s more popular genres of playwriting, _commedia_ was a style of comedy whose plot tended to revolve around disguises, mistaken identities and misunderstandings.

_Corrales_: The public theatres in Spain. _Corral del Príncipe_ was one of the most famous theatres in Madrid.

_Courtesan_: A high-status prostitute, usually because of her upper-class clientele.

_Desvanes_: Located on the fourth level of the theatre, these were cramped boxes with low ceilings.

_Discoeet_: In this play, _discretion_ is a quality coming from Fenisa’s extreme cleverness. She uses careful judgment to manipulate the people around her, and they completely fall for it, never suspecting her games.

_Entremeses_: Interludes.

_Gradas_: Raked, elevated benches that ran along both sides of the theatre.

_Haute couture_: Literally means “high dressmaking.” These fashions are made with luxurious fabrics and usually hand sewn with great attention to detail. When the term was first coined it was used only to describe French fashions but currently it is used to describe all high-fashion clothes that have been custom-made.

_Hidalgo_: A member of the lower nobility of Spain.

_Manto_: In Lope’s time, ladies of Madrid would not appear in public without a headcovering that hid nearly all of their faces; it was considered proper. In original productions, Gerarda did not wear a _manto_, implying that she is a courtesan.

_Mosqueteros_: Literally “Musketeers,” the theatregoers who stood on the ground closest to the stage. The equivalent to groundlings in the English theatres.

_Prado_: In Lope’s time, the _Prado_ was located on the outskirts of Madrid. It was a long promenade, or walkway, and was the place to see and be seen.

_Rejas_: Boxes on the second and third levels, located over the _gradas_. They had grilled windows through which the audience watched.

_Spoken décor_: A theatre convention where the dialogue indicates locale, time, set dressing, etc.

_Taburetes_: A row of stools or benches set up near the stage.

*Costume designs in this show are inspired by Balenciaga. All sketches for the show are the work and designs of Claudia Stephens.*
Lope de Vega’s life had it all: romance, passion, honor, exile, combat, religion, comedy, tragedy – and his plays were exciting, too. Lope bridged the gap between drama and reality, living a life full of contrasts: while he was rumored to be a lifelong womanizer, Pope Urban VIII made him an honorary doctor of theology. His plays and philosophies mirror this disparity. Cherished by audiences and demonized by academics, de Vega’s writings defined a captivating dramatic style founded on extreme contrasts, which turned him into a hero of his time.

While William Shakespeare was defining Elizabethan drama in England, Lope was simultaneously creating the styles, genres, and subject matter of popular theatre in Spain. In fact, both of them published crucial works in 1609; Shakespeare, his sonnets, and Lope, a dramatic treatise called *The New Art of Making Plays in This Epoch*. This document shows how Lope changed the course of Spanish theatre and provides an important look into the mechanics of his works. In *The New Art*, Lope attacked what theatre historian Henryk Ziomek, in his *History of Spanish Golden Age Drama*, has called “the pseudo-Aristotelian precepts that were being propagated in Spain.” Ziomek explains how Lope’s contemporaries, citing Aristotle’s theatrical directives found in *The Poetics*, condemned the popular playwright’s use of a tragicomic form, a style that consistently blends comedy and tragedy within a single work.

Lope, however, did not back down from his ideals. He attacked his critics and replaced their sense of tradition with a popular and crowd-pleasing style. Referring to Lope’s *New Art*, historian Vera Mowry Roberts writes, “In this famous document he claims… that he is perfectly aware that the division of playwriting into tragedy and comedy does not meet the tastes of the Spanish public. He writes plays, he says, that will please his audiences.” Lope recognized that his audiences wanted to see the contrasts of light and dark, comedy and tragedy, next to each other in a single work. He was more interested in pleasing the public than in the rules established by academies and critics.

by Travis Acreman (B.F.A. ’09)

“I am a nationalist… My native soil is the theatre.” ~ Cyril Cusack

**Franco’s Spain: 1950's**

**Francisco Franco**: Effective dictator and later formal head of state of Spain from October 1936 until his death in 1975. He presided over the government of the Spanish State following victory in the Spanish Civil War.

**Spanish Civil War**: July 17, 1936 to April 1, 1939. The conflict was between the Nationalists, led by General Francisco Franco, and the Loyalists or Republicans of the Second Spanish Republic, who were led by Manuel Azaña, Francisco Largo Caballero and Juan Negrín. Franco’s forces defeated the Republicans.
Trade Union: A continuous association of wage earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their employment. The immediate objectives and activities of trade unions vary, but may include provision of benefits to members, collective bargaining, industrial action and political activity.

Vertical Syndicate: Also known as The Spanish Trade Union Organization, it was the only legal trade union organization in Franco’s Spain; previous unions were outlawed and driven underground.

Spanish Blue Division: A unit of Spanish volunteers that served on the German side of the Second World War, mainly on the Eastern Front, until Franco pulled them out in 1943.

The Co-operation Agreement: An agreement between the United States of America and Spain that provided for the establishment of military bases in Spain for joint use by both countries.

Ifni: A Spanish province on the African coast in what is now Morocco. During Franco's dictatorship, the colony was made a province to stop U.N. criticism of decolonization. Spain returned Ifni to Morocco Jan. 4, 1969.

ETA: A paramilitary Basque nationalist organization listed as a terrorist organization both by the European Union and the United States in their watchlists on the matter. ETA’s goal is to create an independent socialist state for the Basque people in the Basque Country, independent from Spain and France. It has committed approximately 900 killings and dozens of kidnappings since its creation.

Luis Carrero Blanco: A Spanish admiral and statesman. He briefly served as Prime Minister of Spain and was thought to be the likely successor to Francisco Franco. His assassination may have facilitated Spain’s move to democracy, since Franco died without an ideologically similar successor.

by Jaime Bell (B.A. ’07)
In his frisky and perceptive play *La Discreta Enamorada*, Lope de Vega uses the young and clever Fenisa as a comical foil to social norms of his era. Lope was an expert at taking a conventional moral play, in this case about women’s role in society, and bringing it to life with humor and cynicism. Some have argued that as a social critic and satirist, Lope attacked many of the institutions of his country – especially aristocracy, chivalry, and rigid morality. True to this form, *La Discreta Enamorada* makes fun of so-called “honorable” behavior between the sexes and challenges what was then thought to be appropriate behavior, especially for women. In a patriarchal or male-dominated country such as Spain, there was good reason for Lope to compose such a satire, putting the woman in a position to control and manipulate everyone else, including the men, to get what she wants. *La Discreta Enamorada* presents us with the witty young woman Fenisa, who uses her incredible charm and discretion to expertly finesse her way out of an arranged marriage with a powerful Captain, and to mastermind her marriage to his young, handsome son instead – all under the nose of her watchdog mother and in spite of a rigidly moral Spanish society. While the play entertains, it also comments on its milieu – in other words, it says something about the cultural environment in which de Vega lived: the Spanish Golden Age. Could such a scheme ever have taken place or been acceptable in reality? Would the social norms have been less strict in an era closer to our own time? In order to consider such questions, one must first examine what life was like for women of the ages.

The Spanish Golden Age, also called the *siglo de oro*, was a period in which the country flourished artistically, from about 1580 to 1680. During this time, in addition to de Vega’s plays such as *La Discreta Enamorada*, Cervantes also wrote his famous novel *Don Quixote*, and El Greco painted his masterpieces. In the late 1500s, Spain was thriving in the wake of discovering the New World, but by 1600 the country was in decline economically, stirring some social unrest. In response to this, the strict morality of Christianity – particularly Catholicism – was impressed on Spain’s citizens. Everywhere in 16th-century Europe, it was asserted that religious unity was necessary for political unity, but only in Spain was there such a sense of urgency in enforcing religious conformity and obedience. Women were already under the
confines of a patriarchal society; in both families and institutions, men carried a disproportionately large share of the power. Women were expected to be chaste and obedient, religiously pious and subservient to male figures, especially if they were to maintain their family’s honor.

In La Discreta Enamorada, Belisa and Fenisa have no patriarch to speak of, but spend the entirety of the play conniving to acquire one – even two. Here are two independent women, yet they each recognize an urgent need for a benefactor and protector. Marriage, it seems, will affirm their economic and social status. Fenisa pleads with her mother to “let me be the one to marry / and the burden would be my man’s to carry,” showing that marriages often occurred simply to procure such stability, rather than a loving partnership. Indeed, later on Fenisa tells the Captain that “Having accepted [your marriage proposal], I belong to you.” In order to be suitable for courtship, first the women must demonstrate their virtue through the ultimate modesty and discretion, in both behavior and appearance. For example, the mantos that Belisa and Fenisa wear are head coverings that, during the time the play was written, were required of any decent woman; these garments covered the head and face almost completely. Since she is a courtesan, Gerarda does not cover her head at all. Early in the play, Lucindo’s servant Hernando must convince him that Fenisa is far more worthy of his admiration than Gerarda, who is little more than a prostitute with high standards. Hernando advises his master that “Loose women, it seems, get the most love / but without honor, they’re really lost.” Lucindo replies, understanding that “That’s why / Love for a loose woman disappears fast / love for a good one will always last,” and he later admits that Fenisa is “more respectable / than almost any other!” In the first act of the play, a great deal of importance is laid on the modest and respectable behavior of women, in order for them to prove their worth. According to the time when Lope de Vega wrote the play, this can certainly be attributed to the strict religious adherence required by Spanish society and politics of the Golden Age. De Vega uses Fenisa’s friskiness and wit to challenge the effectiveness of patriarchal control; although she pursues a husband, she manipulates everyone in the play – both men and women – to have her way and get the man that she wants.

by Elizabeth Wiedner (B.A./English ’07)
The clothes we wear mean something to us as well as to the people who see us. Clothing changes the way we move and feel. How different do your feet feel when you wear high heels or tennis shoes? Flip-flops or lace-up boots? How different do you feel in your favorite flannel pajama pants and worn t-shirt rather than a tuxedo?

Fashion helps us to define our individual self. It also aids us in presenting a certain kind of persona to the outside world. The clothes we wear every day are different from haute couture fashion and from theatrical costumes. While high fashion and costumes help the wearer project a certain image, the reasons we choose any of the three are very specific. The clothes we wear every day must be practical: they cover our body for warmth, modesty and purpose. Self-expression is a by-product, often welcome but not necessary. Models wear a particular designer’s fashions to demonstrate his or her creative talent. They may wear a designer’s less comfortable garment only long enough to walk down the runway and back or in a photography session, but students going to school or business people, teachers, or construction workers likely want to dress in clothes they can wear all day and multiple times that are suited to the tasks of their lives. These people will not want to worry, for example, about ultra-wrinkly fabrics creasing every time they take a step or sit down during the day. Fashions, especially in haute couture, must be bigger and brighter than life, because designers want to make an artistic or aesthetic statement. In the same way, everyday clothes would not be appropriate for the fashion runway, because most of us wear jeans to school or suits to work, neither of which makes much of a bold aesthetic statement — but which are comfortable and useful and express our personalities.

Costumes on the stage bridge the gap between the fashions on the runway and everyday clothing. If everyday clothing reflects our self-expression, then costume design reflects the creative expression of the combination of the designer and the production. Actors, like models and unlike the rest of us, usually don’t get to choose what they wear or have a say in the
design, beyond expressing difficulties in movement, breathing, or fit. Costumes, like fashion, seek to make a statement; costumes express the production and the play, while fashion expresses the creativity of the individual designer.

On the stage, it is usually necessary that the costumes be interesting to look at; however, actors have different physical and aesthetic demands than fashion models. Models need to be able to walk up and down the catwalk for a minute or two and make the *haute couture* fashion displayed (and thus the designer) look good, while actors may need to be onstage for up to two or three hours, speaking and moving the entire time. The actor must be able to breathe comfortably, so that he or she can project the dialogue. Actors must be able to walk around the space, or crawl, dance, do jumping jacks, fight with a sword, or any number of other physical activities, so costumes must not hinder an actor’s movement.

The costume designer’s role in designing the clothing for a play is different from that of a fashion designer. A fashion designer considers only his or her ideas or, if making a gown for a specific customer, what that patron wants. Generally, the designer’s line will be reproduced by manufacturers using his or her original ideas. On the other hand, a costume designer will design each costume in a production as a one-time only outfit, worn by a specific character and tailored to a specific actor’s body. The costume designer cannot simply put costumes on the stage because they are pretty or well-made or came from his or her ideas about clothes. The costume designer must analyze the playwright’s script in order to know the characters.

by Brittany Janiece Foster (B.F.A. ’08)

(continue this article on our website)

Haute couture designer Cristobal Balenciaga used draping techniques inspired by Renaissance painter Francisco de Zurbarán to produce some of the most influential and significant fashion designs of the 20th century. Balenciaga was very well known for his sculptural designs using stiff, expensive fabrics that created distinctive silhouettes. When defining a successful *couturier* Balenciaga was quick to say that “A couturier must be an architect for design, a sculptor for shape, a painter for colour, a musician for harmony and a philosopher for temperance.” Balenciaga’s work exudes all of these characteristics, which is the reason that he was both successful and influential.

Balenciaga was born in 1895 in Guetaria, Spain. Between 1895 and 1918, Balenciaga was educated in fashion by his mother and eventually by a tailor in San Sebastian. In 1918, he opened his first *couture* house in San Sebastian, where he sold the clothing he designed, and in 10 years he
opened two more houses, one each in Madrid and Barcelona. During the mid-1930s, the Spanish Civil War began and forced Balenciaga to close all three shops. In despair, Balenciaga moved to London. He finally moved to Paris in 1937 to open his new couture house at 10, Avenue George V. The first of Balenciaga’s Paris collections occurred in the fall season of 1938; the critics and clients made it an immediate success. After his first showing, Balenciaga reopened his three Spanish houses. During the 1950s, Balenciaga’s reputation flourished as the designer introduced many new looks to the fashion world. The most famous new look was the Baby Doll dress that entailed a lace shift and a tight sheath worn underneath the shift (see illustration).

Balenciaga was called “a sculptor for shape.” He was well known for using the female body as a living sculpture upon which he built his fashions. When he created a dress, he approached the process as an architect, firmly believing that “if the framework is good, one can build what one wants.” He used this philosophy to create innovative designs that remain the basis for many leading designers’ collections today. For example, he was famous for his use of mathematics to make the perfect sleeve. He had a reputation for never allowing an imperfect sleeve to leave his shop and he was also known to improve the sleeves on the coats of visitors entering his salon.

Balenciaga always sought to make all of his garments appear both simple and feminine. He insisted that a designer must “be natural, in order that everything may truly come from within you.” This idea of simplicity projected greatly into his choice of colors. Black was his favorite color to use, followed by browns, pinks, blues and greens. Balenciaga kept the other elements of his designs simple to showcase the silhouette of the gown.

Balenciaga was a master of innovation. Unlike his fellow designers, he made use of new fabrics that were man-made as well as combining natural and man-made fabrics in order to create a look that surprised through contrast. He disliked using printed fabrics and instead added elaborate embroidery or sequins. He was well known for layering fabrics to create a unique look. Even though he used new, synthetic fabrics he always returned to his favorites: silk, stiff satin and lace. This attention to the details of haute couture could create problems, however: the multiple layers of fabric in one dress and the stiff fabrics used could add the appearance of weight on the customer.

Balenciaga’s lack of consideration for and connection to the appearance of the average woman was one major reason for his swift fall in popularity during the 1960s. As the fashions of France pushed forward and changed with the introduction of prêt-a-porter, or ready-to-wear, Balenciaga became disillusioned and closed his house in 1968, to the dismay of the public. It is rumored that the “Countess Mona Bismark lamented the event by locking herself indoors for three days.” Cristobal Balenciaga died March 23, 1972 in Spain. Shortly after his death his house was reopened and eventually sold to the Gucci Group. In 1997, Nicholas Ghesquière took over as the creative director. The house still produces evening wear, as well as ready-to-wear fashions, perfumes, and accessories.

Cristobal Balenciaga is looked at as one of the most influential men in the fashion industry. His creative outlook and use of fabrics made him a pioneer during his time and he influenced many fashion styles used today. He used the female body as a canvas for his art and his creations were truly one in a million. As Elsa Schiaparelli said during an interview: “Balenciaga was the only couturier who dared to do what he wanted.”

By Jenny Hulse (B.F.A. ’09)
Between 1500 and 1700, theatre in Spain flourished. This has become known as the Siglo de Oro or Spanish Golden Age. It is comparable to the Elizabethan theatre between 1585 and 1642, the time of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. It is especially interesting that not only was theatre flourishing as an art and entertainment form during this same period in both countries, but the type of theatres actors performed in also were very similar in structure and organization. The first permanent theatre in London was called The Theater, and it was completed in 1576, while the Corral del Principe, Spain’s first permanent theatre, was built only a few years later. By comparing the Corral del Principe and the Elizabethan theatres, we can see the similarities and the differences in these playhouse structures.

The Corral del Principe was one of the most famous theatres of the Spanish Golden Age. Located in Madrid, the theatre was opened to the public in 1583. It and another theatre, the Corral de la Puente, were commissioned and built by charitable brotherhoods of the Catholic Church. The Corral del Principe was an open-air, four-story building. The ground level contained the platform on which the stage was situated, some 10 feet above the ground. Benches for the groundlings to sit on were on the first level, as was part of the women’s seating area, or cazuela. Because the stage was on a platform, those who sat on the ground level would have looked up onto the stage the entire time. There were two ground-level boxes, as well, one of which scholars assume was a counting house and the other perhaps a refreshment stand. Seats for men and women were separated, and the separation was marked by a gate. It’s very interesting to note that men and women had to sit separately, but women could be actresses on the Spanish stage. In the Elizabethan theatres, men and women could sit together, but there were no female performers allowed; male apprentices under the age of 18 performed women’s roles.

The second level of the Spanish theatre had the second level of the women’s boxes, the cazuela alta, at the back. The cazuela alta had a grilled railing across the front, and gradas on the sides of the theatre. Theatregoers paid extra money to sit in the boxes rather than on the ground floor. These seats would have been at eye level with the raised stage. Most of the theatre was open to the sky, but the back of the theatre over the first level of the cazuela was roofed. The cazuela alta had an awning that could be raised in case of rain. There were open balconies with benches on the third and fourth levels of the theatre. These balconies were not as cramped as the boxes on the second floor, although it is thought that the fourth story was only six feet high.

The first Corral del Principe could hold an audience of 1,047. By 1635, with multiple expansions, the seating had increased to hold 1,937 spectators. The Corral del Principe flourished until 1735, when it was torn down to begin a new, updated theatre on that site. Today, Madrid’s Teatro Español stands on the same ground where the original Corral stood, maintaining a historical link with Spain’s glorious theatrical past.

By Amy Distel (B.F.A. ’07)

(continue this article on our website)
IN THE TIME OF LOPE DE VEGA

It is a given that the origins of Spanish theatre lie in the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church. The texts, ubiquity of music, vestments, coordinated movements, the spectacular (or otherwise) spaces, all provided for an experience diverting the public from the drudgeries of everyday life. Above all, this theatre was the unique means of teaching and of maintaining a kind of discipline for a public whose communal life did not often offer much hope. Music, with its ability to promote different moods, played an essential role.

Of special interest were, of course, the feast days of the year. It was around Corpus Christi in the mid-16th century that the first autos, that is non-liturgical acting out of the message of beliefs, are first recorded in Spain. Originally presented in a street “parade,” with actors and musicians transported atop decorated floats, the autos formed the basis of a theatrical celebration. From the streets such popular events moved to plazas, which over time took on the character of theatres, called corrales in Spanish; these were open to the sky, but enclosed by surrounding buildings, where, in addition to the paying customers, neighbors could view the spectacle.

Just as had been the case with the liturgy, music and dance were central to the autos. Initially, a guitar and a couple of singers might provide welcoming music and entremeses between acts, but also accompany some actions on stage or the singing or dancing of the actors.

The current production was conceived by Gustavo Tambascio with live music as you will hear it in this performance, but in the Madrid production, most of the instrumental accompaniment was in recorded form. This Dallas production goes a step further in Grover Wilkins’ hands to bring all the music to the stage in live form, as would have been the case in the original production of 1608 – with the music of the time of the production.

Thus, the works to be heard in this production all can be related to music heard in post-war Madrid, whether originating in that period or not. From the fandango of Doña Francisquinta as overture, to Tambascio’s brilliant play on Hernando’s Hideaway, the production is a complete demonstration of just how rich the live stage can be – theatrically, musically and danced.

By Grover Wilkins III (www.orchestraofnewspain.org)

Gustavo Tambascio: Director

A theatre director and writer, as well as an operatic and music theatre director, Tambascio developed the early stages of his career in the Americas prior to settling in Spain in 1988. He began his theatrical work as a child actor in Argentina, then in avant-garde groups in Buenos Aires. A period with Julian Beck and the Living Theater in Brazil convinced him to abandon the stage for political commitment. He was forced into exile by the military dictatorship in 1976. He moved to Caracas in Venezuela, where he was Secretary General at the Opera Metropolitana, founder of the Municipal Symphony Orchestra and Artistic Director of the Ateneo de Caracas. He directed opera at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires and the Fundación Teresa Carreño in Caracas, and theatre in Seattle, Quebec and Montreal. In Spain he has directed at the main theatres as well as in avant-garde houses, and he has occasionally presented his own plays at Lyon, Marseille and Kiev, as well as opera in Perm and Moscow.

In theatre repertoire he has directed Shakespeare, Molière, Lope de Vega, Dumas, Thomas Bernhard, Dörst, Copi, Camus, Lorca, Chekhov, Pietri, Tremblay, and Dubois – among others. He also has an extensive body of his own plays, in addition to both standard and contemporary operatic repertoire, and specializes in Spanish works.

Tambascio has written and lectured on Baroque rhetoric, Spanish theatre, and many other subjects in Paris, Bayonne, New York, Madrid and Grenada, among other cities. He has also been a journalist for La Opinión (Buenos Aires), El Nacional (Caracas), La Vanguardia (Barcelona) and Cinco Días (Madrid). It is with great honor and enthusiasm that Southern Methodist University welcomes Gustavo Tambascio as the esteemed guest director for the ground-breaking production of La Discreta Enamorada in 2006.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Grover Wilkins, Music Director of the Orchestra of New Spain, first approached the Division of Theatre in 2005 with a proposal for collaboration on this unique project. He envisioned a production of a Spanish Golden Age drama incorporating music and dance, much as it would have been performed in the 17th century. Associate Professor Sara Romersberger, representing the Division of Theatre, traveled to Spain to meet with Wilkins and his long time collaborator Gustavo Tambascio, a highly respected international director of theatre and opera. Romersberger was very impressed with Tambascio’s Spanish production of La Discreta Enamorada and was excited by the possibility of collaboration between Tambascio, Wilkins and the Division of Theatre. Romersberger submitted a proposal to the Dean of the Meadows School of the Arts for special funding to make this production possible. The value of this project was obvious to the funding committee and, thanks to the efforts of Sara Romersberger, the Division of Theatre was provided with the necessary funding to make this production possible.