

# REVUE DE PRESSE

>Théâtre

## *La vida es sueño*

Texte **Calderón de la Barca**  
Mise en scène **Helena Pimenta**



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## REVIEWS

### ***We Are Only Shadows. Juan Ignacio García Garzón, in ABC, Madrid (3-10-2012)***

“Before talking about the play target of this review, allow me a suggestion: if you love theatre in capital letters, do not, under any circumstances, miss it! I cannot recall any other approach to *Life is a Dream* where the lines of action and the trains of thought of the Calderonian drama are elucidated in such a deep, clear, touching and interesting way as in this one signed by Juan Mayorga, directed by Helena Pimenta, in her first work as head of the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico, and starred by the formidable Blanca Portillo (...). It has delighted me and moved me both times I’ve seen it (...). Each of the staging elements conspire to achieve a greater play: the scenic design (...) the exquisite wardrobe (...) the prodigious lighting by Gómez Cornejo (...) Juan Mayorga’s version, clear, concise, intense (...) and the wise, vehement and brilliant direction by Helena Pimenta, who maintains high-flying from the beginning to the end, always harmonising the general pulse and the specific detail. (...) Performances are the jewels in the crown, set in such a sovereign foundation. (...) Everything adds up in this complex, gripping, perfect performance”.

### ***Calderon’s Everlasting Dream. Jesús Rodríguez Lenin, en Metrópolis, Madrid (14-9-2012)***

“A masterpiece of our Theatre (...) which has given rise to numerous versions (...) One of those that has tried harder to achieve this category is the one which now comes to Teatro Pavón, opening the season for the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico, directed for the past year by Helena Pimenta. The arrival of this prestigious director to the Institution couldn’t have been more eloquent (...) no one will be able to forget this setting. (...) To the initial surprise generated when it became known that Blanca Portillo would be playing the role of Segismundo, multiple signs of admiration have followed for a performance that, sure enough, will be burned into the collective memory forever”.

### ***The powerful version of “La vida es sueño (Life is a Dream)” directed by Helena Pimenta arrives in Madrid. Miguel Ayanz, in La Razón, Madrid (14-9-2012)***

“After the play had its premiere in Almagro, this key text by Pedro Calderón de la Barca arrives in Madrid; a text that Helena Pimenta addresses with an unusual aesthetic (...) that refers to central European monarchies from the XVII century. She bet hard in her institutional debut: a classic that tests oneself and an actress, Blanca Portillo, for the role of Segismundo”.

***Wonderful production. Dolores Guerrero, in El Correo, Andalucía (8-2-2013)***

“A wonderful production and a first-rate cast, is the foundation of this new performance of *La vida es sueño* (Life is a Dream) (...) The text has been versioned by a contemporaneous playwright famous for his talent: Juan Mayorga (...) Blanca Portillo plays her role brilliantly, she gives her character a complex and powerful personality (...) at the end of the well-known monologue the public interrupted her with a strongly felt ovation (...) Pimenta awards a very fluid pace to the story”.

***A Segismundo brimming with soul conquers Almagro. M. Sierra, in La Tribuna, Ciudad Real (8-7-2012)***

“Blanca Portillo manages to extract from the main and key character of *La vida es sueño* (Life is a Dream), every ounce of feeling, no matter which: hate, love, compassion or power (...) It was the most awaited for premiere (...) where a theatre duel was going to take place between two major women in the theatre world, Helena Pimenta as new head of the CNTC behind the scenes and on stage, a multitalented Blanca Portillo, playing the role of Segismundo, never before played by a woman. The result, as was expected, the full seating capacity in a standing ovation (...) Performances like this show that, for the theatre, it might still be time to dream”.

***A platinum and gold staging. Javier Vallejo, in El País, Madrid (24-9-2012)***

“This staging, driven by Helena Pimenta at cruising speed (...) keeps us in suspense. Everything adds up on this occasion: live music, version by Juan Mayorga, cathedral light by Cornejo... It is difficult to choose a scene. The great face-to-face between hurricane-like Rosaura by Marta Poveda and her father (a Clotaldo carved with pure emotion by Fernando Sansegundo)? The operatic trio of scorned characters constituted by Rosaura, Estrella (Pepa Pedroche) and Astolfo (an amazing Rafa Castejón)? (...) If prodigious is the prince’s monologue from Portillo’s mouth, the stakes rise with a really amusing Clarín (David Lorente), the emotional pandemonium caused by Poveda when she shoots without respite her overwhelming monologue (...). We’ve needed a woman to show us how fragile and life-ignorant is this prince (...). We had never before seen such a nuanced Segismundo nor such a colossal performance by a great actress”.

***A creative genius. Javier Paisano, in Diario de Sevilla, Sevilla (7-2-2013)***

“Helena Pimenta has started her career as head of the CNTC measuring her weapons with the classic play ‘par excellence’, *La vida es sueño* (Life is a Dream) (...) Undoubtedly, she has tried to make clear her self-worth and she has succeeded (...) she’s had the intelligence of uniting herself with a great group of artists (...) it shows that she has tried to make a play that will go down in history and she has succeeded. (...) I have left to the end the immensity of that great actress named Blanca Portillo, who has already taken up the baton of those who’ve been great in our [Spanish] theatre”.



***Pure theatre*, by Marcos Ordóñez. Babelia, Madrid (13-10-2012)**

La vida es sueño (Life is a Dream) (...) has a very high standard of excellence and offers a lot to admire. For a start it is a terrific beginning of a road. And a high risk that is applauded, as choosing a title of this importance might be considered, at first sight, easy, when it is just the opposite (...) Pimenta has seized the best (great text, a team of the highest order, noble lure of the brilliant Blanca Portillo) in order to accomplish two aims, to bring people to the theatre and to convey the text as sharply as possible: clear direction, clear intentions, clear emotions (...)

The first thing we see is the impressive staging of Alejandro Andújar and Esmeralda Díaz. They wouldn't have been able to create those spaces and those images without the extraordinary and pictorial lighting of Gómez Cornejo in one of his best jobs: a true gift for the sight. (...) Four excellent musicians interpret pieces selected by Ignacio García: lovely. (...) It is hard to find words to describe the extraordinary performance of Blanca Portillo. Eloquence would be the most accurate term (...) It goes far beyond her beautiful voice and the perfection of her technique: she has something thaumaturgical, because she has such a power of conviction that she achieves the miracle of taking your breath away (...) The richness of her nuances and register is absolute: she elevates and performs a complete Segismundo, the most complete I've ever seen (...) La vida es sueño (Life is a Dream) is filling the Pavón. And it will fill more: time will tell".

***Blanca Portillo triumphs with her role of Segismundo. Julio Bravo, in ABC, Madrid (8-10-2012)***

"Blanca Portillo seems to be willing to break the limits of interpreting (...) She plays the role of one of the most deep and emblematic characters of the Spanish theatre. Her performance in the staging directed by Helena Pimenta has received unanimous praise from the public and the critics".

***Princess Segismundo. Rocío García, in Babelia (30-6-2012)***

"There are masterful male roles in the history of theatre, vetoed to women. Blanca Portillo, under the direction of Helen Pimenta, breaks with convention playing the role of Segismundo in *La vida es sueño* (Life is a Dream), that opens the Festival of Almagro".

***Blanca Portillo and La vida es sueño (Life is a Dream). Julio Bravo (Blogspot, 09-2012)***

"In the future, I'll be able to boast that I saw Blanca Portillo playing the role of Segismundo in «La vida es sueño» (Life is a Dream), by Calderón de la Barca; hers is, undoubtedly, one of the most wonderful performances that I have ever seen on stage. (...) On this staging, signed by Helena Pimenta, the masculinity of the character isn't avoided. But Blanca Portillo doesn't "pretend to be" a man, she doesn't strain her voice (she does work on it) nor does she try it with her gestures. It's her attitude, the subtlety of her movement and words, what gives credibility. As do the deepness in her diction, the serious and dramatic echo with which she tinges each monologue and dialogue, the fury in her sharp look and the vigour in her actions. Blanca isn't a man, nor is it necessary, but her Segismundo is, and a man that moves, frightens, impresses. (...) On a perfect version by Juan Mayorga (...) Helena Pimenta signs an impeccable show. The staging is practically bare, where sounds and images contribute to highlight the text, where every element favours the play and defines a piece full of magnetism and electricity. (...) Interpretations, brilliant and balanced, also have it; I specially liked Marta Poveda, moving, hurting and furious at the same time; Joaquín Notario, majestic; Fernando Sansegundo, full of compassion; and the funny David Lorente".

***An unforgettable dream. Miguel Ayanz, in La Razón, Madrid (8-7-2012)***

"Pimenta signs a great version of the Calderonian classic (...) After the premiere (...) Pimenta can boast about having signed an unforgettable show (...) Empty, majestic, opera-like staging. (...) Illuminated, thanks to the outstanding job of Cornejo. (...) Company with no fissures".