



EL MILAGRO DE MARCELINO PAN Y VINO is a March, 2014 LVCA dvd donation to the Hugh Stoupe Memorial Library of the Heritage United Methodist Church of Ligonier, Pennsylvania.

Mexico 2010 color 92 minutes subtitled live action feature drama
Quality Films / LOB Films / EFD / Petrasanta Films Film Producers:
Agustin Perez Santiago, Mikel Garcia Bilbao, Georgina Arbona,
Jaime Arbona, Monica Gorbea, Jose Antonio Hernandez

10 of a possible 20 points

1/2 of a possible ***

Key: *indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance

(j) indicates juvenile performer

Points

1 Direction: Jose Luis Gutierrez Arias

0 Editing: Mayra Mendoza Villa

2 Cinematographer: Ignazio Prieto*

2 Lighting

0 Screenplay: Mikel Garcia Bilbao, very loosely based on the novel by
Jose Maria Sanchez-Silva

1 Music: Felipe Perez Santiago

1 Art Direction: Ana Magis

2 Sound: Antonio Diego*

1 Acting

0 Creativity

10 total points

Cast: Alejandro Tomassi (Father Garden), Teresa Ruiz*

(Cruz, Eleuterio's mother), Mark Hernandez Mosqueda (j) (Marcelino), Gaston Peterson (Brother Trick), Justo Rodriguez (Father of Eleuterio), Guillermo Larrea (Brother Baptism), Gerado Moscoso (Brother Door), Waldo Facco (Brother Garden), Jorge Lavat (Brother Mean), Arturo Diaz de Sandy (Brother Ding-Dong), Omar Alexis Ramirez (j) (Eleuterio, Jr.), Angeles Cruz* (Petra), Orlando Moguel (Photographer), Andres Fierro (Musician)

EL MILAGRO DE MARCELINO PAN Y VINO is a Mexican color remake of the classic family film from Spain titled MARCELINO PAN Y VINO (English title: THE MIRACLE OF MARCELINO). It resets action to the Mexican Revolution. Additionally, the newer film introduces a band of revolutionaries led by Eleutherio. Three more non-original characters are also featured: Eleutherio's wife, his wife's friend, and a son named Eleutherio, Jr. There's a modest attempt to depict a close friendship between Marcelino and Eleutherio, Jr. When that is disrupted by the latter's death from a government soldier's bullet, Marcelino becomes fixated upon deceased individuals who have preceded him into Heaven, namely his mother and Eleutherio, Jr. He wishes to join them there, preferably sooner than later. This sets in motion a series of mysterious encounters which will facilitate his aspiration. Provided the outcome is not altered by a belligerently interfering Eleutherio, Sr., who with macho hubris is more than willing to dynamite a monastery to forcibly acquire a replacement for his lost heir. Objections of monks mean nothing to this grief-blinded individual. Nor are his spouse's pleadings for moderation heeded. Confrontation between man and God is inevitable. What will be the outcome? Watch the film and find out.

Other aspects of EL MILAGRO adhere closer to details of the original plot. Marcelino in both film versions is an orphan, left by party unknown on the doorstep of a Catholic monastery. He's adopted by twelve Franciscan friars within as a kind of holy mascot and catechized by them between episodes of mischief-making. The titular miracle in both presentations is identical.

Turning to technical aspects of the Mexican production, color cinematography has replaced the original black-and-white. Producing no

greater clarity, it does have the virtue of supplying a familiar format for younger viewers. Nature is presented more dramatically in general by the more recent film, though the scorpion in Spain's drama is considerably more menacing than its counterpart snake in Mexico. But Mark Hernandez Mosqueda's performance in the lead falls far short of that delivered by predecessor Pablito Calvo. Mosqueda is more reserved, far too introspective, not especially committed to childish practical jokes. That character disposition is much better showcased in both Calvo's Marcelino and the prototype created by author Jose Maria Sanchez-Silva. War imagery predominates in EL MILAGRO, whereas it's merely inferred in the Spanish film by shots of monastery ruins. Neither revolution nor combat is a concern of the latter. It's not social justice being pursued in Sanchez-Silva's novel, but the soul's attraction to its creator.

What future consequences will result is a prime consideration of the Spanish motion picture, but secondary in the Mexican one. In fact, authentic-looking piety of villagers in Spain makes a sharp contrast to largely indifferent or flippant attitudes of touring Mexican children. Since the newer film is both more graphically violent and less pious, it's of greater interest to cinephiles than to audiences concerned with religious transformation. Christian principles are much more clearly displayed in the older film.

As was also true for the first version, lighting is outstanding, vivifying oppressive heat and blanketing dustiness of Marcelino's geographically arid environment. Architecture is more strikingly photographed in the older version. Whereas nature is more panoramically depicted by the newer. Which offers superior cinematography? Your call.

Unlike the Spanish film, in which an adult performer dubs Pablito Calvo's voice, the Mexican version preserves the speech of its child performers. However, it lacks color, conviction and volume range in Marcelino's utterances. Otherwise, sound recording of EL MILAGRO is superbly engineered, with full dynamics captured adroitly and sound effects tightly correlated to screen actions.

Though both films claim origination from the same novel, EL MILAGRO's screenplay wanders far too much from the text. It lacks MARCELINO PAN Y

VINO'S charm, an attractiveness largely due to a screenplay collaboration of author Sanchez-Silva and Hungarian-born director Ladislao Vajda.

Among performers, there's no match in the Mexican version for Fernando Rey's troublesomely self-serving mayor of the local village in Spain's. Disconcertingly, the strongest performances in Mexico's drama are delivered by two females portraying wives of revolutionaries. Surely that is not what the book's author would have desired.

With regard to production design, Mexico provides a realistic modern setting. Spain offers timeless ambience, skillfully transporting viewers to a world of legend. The rebuilt farmhouse which comprised a monastery in the Sanchez-Silva book is faithfully represented in 1955's filmization. Not so, the 2010 remake. It seems the Mexicans felt compelled to transform their ecclesiastical building into a fortress with inner and outer defenses more appropriate to a medieval castle. There seems entirely too much stuff present in the 21st century motion picture, particularly in the attic. These are supposed to be poor clergy, not miserly hoarders or antiquities collectors.

Neither presentation is gifted with a classic music score. Both are accompanied by suitable melodic background, engaging, but bland.

EL MILAGRO DE MARCELINO PAN Y VINO is suitable for teens and adults, with images of desecration, cynical language, and a penchant for violence that make it inappropriate for preteen viewers. Worth seeing, but not essential cinema. Parents of younger children should introduce them to this story via the original Spanish movie, or through an English translation of the Sanchez-Silva novel, once upon a time available as a Scepter Book, published in Chicago and presumably still obtainable second-hand through the Internet.