

A Celebration of *La Coronela*

By Asa Zatz

In 1956, Diego Rivera wrote of Waldeen: "It behooves Mexico to love her...in each of her dances she has offered our country a jewel." *La Coronela*, then, could be considered one of the crown jewels of the great post-revolutionary period of upsurge of artistic creativity in the country. She devoted almost her entire adult life to developing a modern dance movement that would be authentically, not merely folklorically, Mexican.

Having done the lighting for all of Waldeen's choreographies since 1948, I was familiar with the history of her landmark Mexican ballet of 1940 which was a brilliant recreation of the life and mores of the epoch of the Mexican Revolution.

Its kinship with the three great Mexican muralists is noteworthy. The ballet has Rivera's exuberance, sense of color and historical immediacy, Siqueiros's power, and Orozco's passion plus the satirical bite of all three. And how wonderfully Revueltas caught and expressed all of this in his score and Waldeen in her choreography.

Having done the lights for the revival of *La Coronela* in 1977 it is hard to describe my emotions on seeing its episodes being danced in full costume to the Revueltas music played by a live orchestra. Simply, I felt myself transported to that re-creation of a world I never expected to see and privileged to have participated in a unique and wonderful theatrical event.

And now, in concluding, it is hard for me to avoid the cursillería sentimental that I feel building up-which I will do my best to subdue-in expressing my enormous pleasure at having been invited to introduce this new version of La Coronela in a new century, reunited with dear old friends. The twenty years since I left Mexico have vanished and I feel for a moment that I am reliving the great adventure of my life that began in 1948 with Waldeen, Mexico, and, in no small measure La Coronela (who counts for more than I realized till now). I have no doubt that she will live on as a symbol of Mexico's great history and its invaluable contributions to the artistic treasures of world civilization.