



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

TAKE ME IN YOUR ARMS (Llévame en tus Brazos) (15)

Director: Julio Bracho

Starring: Ninón Sevilla, Armando Silvestre, Carlos Lopez Moctezuma, Andrea Palma
Mexico, 1954, 1 hour 51 minutes, Spanish + English subtitles

"Ninón Sevilla (1929-2015) was one of several Cuban rumberas (dancers) who flourished in the classical Mexican cinema of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Sevilla, Maria Antonieta Pons and Rosa Carmina became famous in the singularly Mexican genre of the cabaretera –a brothel melodrama/musical hybrid featuring lavish musical numbers, gritty drama and copious amounts of suffering.

"The protagonists of these films were often virtuous young women reduced to a life of sin by forces "beyond their control." They were either dancers (ficheras) paid tokens (fichas) to dance (but also sleep) with their clients or nightclub dancers (rumberas) who were also, (the narratives made clear) expected to sleep with clients. Whilst the protagonists of the fiercely patriarchal cabareteras were often defined through the sacrifice of their bodies as sexual objects for men and for their families, Sevilla (and the other Cuban rumberas), could also portray overt sexuality enjoying the dance, their bodies and shockingly their own desire.

"Although the characters Sevilla played were mostly Mexican, it was enough that as a blonde, exotic beauty, she looked, spoke and moved like she was from somewhere else, for these displays to be permissible within the boundaries of conservative classical Mexican cinema.

"And it was Sevilla's overt, sexuality that make her so exciting and the dances she choreographed and appeared in (most of which were predominantly Afro-Cuban in style) so jaw-droppingly amazing." Dolores Tierney, **Mediático**

Here, Sevilla plays a Rita, a fisherman's daughter in a small coastal village in Veracruz who sacrifices her honour, becoming the mistress of the wealthy Don Antonio, in order to wipe out her elderly father's gambling debts. As her career as a singing and dancing star ascends, Rita tries to win back her true love, José, who has spurned her on grounds of immorality.

Sevilla produced the film, uncredited, alongside brothers Guillermo Calderón and Pedro Calderón and was responsible for appointing Julio Bracho, one of Mexico's most prestigious filmmakers of the time to direct, and the renowned Gabriel Figueroa as cinematographer. Figueroa worked as cinematographer on numerous Mexican films including *Victims of Sin*, and Bunuel's *Los Olvidados*, *El* and *The Exterminating Angel*.

A new 4K restoration courtesy of Permanencia Voluntaria, presented in collaboration with Film Noir UK.

Notes compiled by Jo Comino

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ADVENTURESS (Aventurera)

Ninón Sevilla stars as Elena, an upper middle-class young woman whose life is sensationally turned upside down.

VICTIMS OF SIN (Víctimas del Pecado)

A sizzling, feverish film noir set in Mexico City's red-light district nightclubs, this explosive rumbera stars the sensationally versatile diva Ninón Sevilla, 'The Golden Venus'.