

# Corral de Comedias

by Kimberly Mays

The public playhouse of Spanish Golden Age Theater

Objective:

Students should be able to:

1. Name the major parts of a *corral de comedias*.
2. Discuss how this layout would make viewing and producing a play different from modern theater.

Materials needed:

Vocabulary list

Picture or drawing of a *corral de comedias*

Short scene

Paper coins and/or tomatoes

| Suggested time       | Activity   |
|----------------------|--|
| 5 min.               | Discuss what the modern theater experience is like for an audience member. For example, do we sit or stand? When they turn down the lights, what does that mean? When is it appropriate to clap? How often and why do they open and close the curtain?   |
| 10 min.              | Introduce the <i>corral de comedias</i> . Using the vocabulary, outline the basic design and function of the space. Consider the following discussion ideas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Because <i>comedias</i> were enjoyed by all classes of people, the <i>corrales</i> provided a cross-section of society. Seating (or lack thereof) was arranged by class and gender.</li><li>2. The audience expected to be entertained and reacted noisily to pleasure or boredom. When displeased, they would boo and throw rotten produce at the actors. When entertained, they would cheer and throw money.</li><li>3. The interaction between actors and audience worked the other way, too. <i>Rampas</i> led down to the audience and allowed the actors to stand in the middle of the <i>mosqueteros</i> at times.</li><li>4. There was also no curtain, so from the time the <i>comedia</i> began until it ended, the audience could see, from every angle, everything happening on stage.</li></ol> |
| 10-15 min.           | Act out a scene in a mini <i>corral de comedias</i> . Select a provided scene or one you are already working with. While the actors prepare, have the remaining students arrange their desks in a U-shape. Have the boys stand in the middle and the girls stand on one side (outside the U). Make a select few “nobles” and allow them to sit. Give the audience members paper coins or tomatoes to throw at the feet of the actors. Instruct the actors to speak directly to an audience member or two.  |
| 5-10 min. or at home | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <i>Corrales</i> had no roofs and were exposed to daylight and weather. How could an actor portray nighttime without the stage being dark?</li><li>2. Describe where the following patrons would sit in the <i>corral</i>: a noblewoman, a peasant man, and a peasant woman. Why were they seated this way?</li><li>3. In what ways did the actors interact with the audience throughout the <i>comedias</i>?</li></ol>  |

## ***Corral de Comedias***

The public playhouse of Spanish Golden Age Theater

### **Vocabulary:**

el patio

el escenario

las tramoyas

el escotillón

los mosqueteros

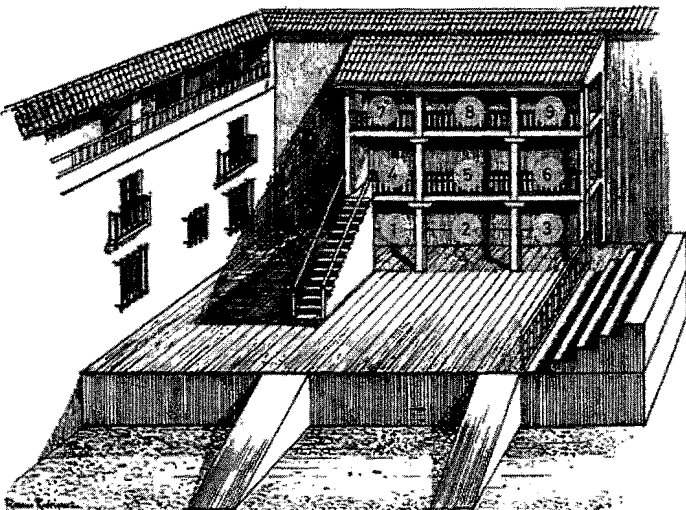
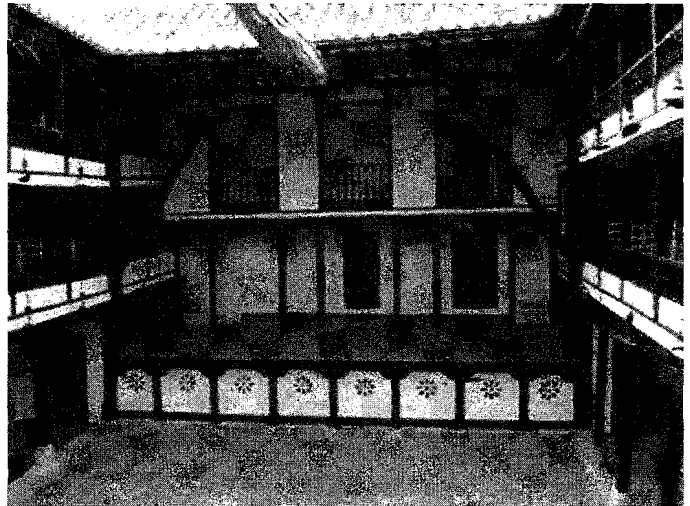
los bancos

los aposentos

la cazuela

la tertulia

el toldo



### **Resources:**

*Reconstruction of a Spanish Golden Age Playhouse:* John Jay Allen

*El Teatro Cervantes de Alcalá de Henares: 1602-1866: Estudio y documentos:* Miguel Angel Coso Marín, Mercedes Higuera Sánchez-Pardo, Juan Sanz Ballesteros

### **Online:**

[http://webs.uvigo.es/mcande/corrales\\_de\\_comedia](http://webs.uvigo.es/mcande/corrales_de_comedia) (online diagrams)

<http://parnaseo.uv.es/Ars/ARST6/documentacion/loci.html> (image database)