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## The Arts

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Review/Theater

### *Not a Pair to Go Shopping Together or Out to Tea*

By STEPHEN HOLDEN

The one constant image in "The Flash and Crash Days," the Brazilian playwright and director Gerald Thomas's surreal evocation of a stormy mother-daughter relationship, is a miniature volcano at the center of the stage. During the 80-minute drama, which had performances on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings at Alice Tully Hall as part of Lincoln Center's Serious Fun festival, the volcano cone intermittently spews smoke and becomes a receptacle for one woman's severed head and the other's ripped-out heart.

The volcano is a typically blunt symbol of inexhaustible fury in a play that uses few words and offers many

#### **The Flash and Crash Days**

Created and directed by Gerald Thomas; set and costumes by Daniela Thomas; lighting and soundtrack by Mr. Thomas; lighting supervisor, Wagner Pinto; technical director, Michael Blanco; stage manager, Domingos Varela. Presented by Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, in association with I.P.A./International Production Associates. At Alice Tully Hall.

WITH: Fernanda Montenegro, Fernanda Torres, Luiz Damasceno and Ludoval Campos.

flashy and violent images of mother-daughter strife done in highly expressive pantomime. It is all underscored by a prerecorded soundtrack of thun-

derclaps, feverish string quartet music, Billie Holiday singing "Solitude" and, in the final scene, orchestral music from Wagner's "Ring" cycle.

The combatants in the primal emotional battle are Fernanda Montenegro, one of Brazil's most revered actresses, and her real-life daughter, Fernanda Torres. Their conflict is an endless duel in which both parties play vicious card games and act out fantasies of murder, mental torture and incest. Interacting with the women are a pair of archangels, who serve alternately as guards and referees.

Stylistically, Mr. Thomas's play suggests a Samuel Beckett clown show washed with Latin American surrealism. In one of the more spec-

tacular entrances to be seen on a New York stage this year, Miss Torres, who bears a marked resemblance to the young Giulietta Masina, appears with an arrow piercing her throat. That image is matched later in the performance when, after poisoning her mother, she plucks out her mother's heart and devours it while deliriously skipping around the stage.

For all the psychic violence on display, "The Flash and Crash Days" has the raucous humor of a Punch and Judy show. Try as they might, the mother and daughter simply cannot do away with each other. By the end of the performance, when the two are mugging and furiously throwing playing cards at each other through a window, their connection seems almost loving.