**Benavente, Jacinto (1866-1954)**

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| Jacinto Benavente y Martínez was a Spanish dramatist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Author of more than 170 plays, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1922. His selection raised controversy, since many argued that the *Generación del 98* and modernist writers such as Miguel de Unamuno, Ramón del Valle-Inclán, and Rubén Darío had greater merits. Nevertheless, Benavente had a significant and revitalizing influence on Spanish drama, ushering in a shift from melodramatic verse to prose comedy and favoring subtle dialogue over the impulsive action typical of the dramas of José de Echegaray. | **Jacinto Benavente seated at his work desk**  **Available at:**  [**http://www.biografiasyvidas.com/biografia/b/benavente.htm**](http://www.biografiasyvidas.com/biografia/b/benavente.htm) |

Known primarily for his comedies set in urban locales, he also authored several successful rural dramas, one of which, *Señora Ama,* was said to be his favorite work. His most famous plays are *Los intereses creados* [*The Bonds of Interest*, 1907], a brilliant satire of the business world and hypocritical human nature that combines the Italian commedia dell’arte style with classical drama, and *La Malquerida* [*The Passion Flower*, 1913], a rural tragedy on the theme of incest. The latter was his most successful play.

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| **An image showing Benavente (left) with Ramón del Valle-Inclán (right)**  **Available at:** [**http://www.foroxerbar.com/viewtopic.php?t=8922**](http://www.foroxerbar.com/viewtopic.php?t=8922) | Inspired by André Antoine’s *Théâtre Libre* in Paris, Benavente founded the *Teatro Artístico* in Madrid in 1899, working in collaboration with the modernist writer Ramón del Valle-Inclán in an effort to renovate dramatic production*.* The writers had a falling-out after an argument at a literary gathering, which led Benavente to organize his own gatherings, separate from those of Valle-Inclán. |

Politically, Benavente’s life was marked by contradictions: he first supported the Republican cause during the Civil War but later favored the dictatorial regime of Francisco Franco, which facilitated the staging of his works. Benavente’s waning renown after his death is directly related to the disappearance of the audience he once targeted: the bourgeoisie.

**List of key works**

(1903) *La noche del sábado [Saturday Night]*

(1905) *Los malhechores del bien [The Evil Doers of Good]*

(1907) *Los intereses creados [The Bonds of Interest]*

(1908) *Señora Ama*

(1913) *La Malquerida [The Passion Flower]*

(1924) *Lecciones de buen amor*

(1926) *La mariposa que voló sobre el mar*

(1928) *Pepa Doncel*

(1947) *La infanzona*

(1954) *El alfiler en la boca*

**References and further reading**

Dougherty, D. and Vilches de Frutos, M. F. (1990) *La escena madrileña entre 1918 y 1926. Análisis y documentación,* Madrid: Fundamentos.

Dougherty, D. and Vilches de Frutos, M. F. (1997) *La escena madrileña entre 1926 y 1931. Un lustro de transición.* Madrid: Fundamentos.

**Iulia Sprinceana, Centre College (Kentucky)**



**A scene from the 1992 staging of *Los intereses creados* (Centro de Documentación Teatral)**

<http://teatro.es/en/catalogues/integrated-catalogue#prettyPhoto[img]/1/>

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**Scene from the 1992 staging of *Los intereses creados***

<http://teatro.es/en/catalogues/integrated-catalogue#prettyPhoto[img]/2/>