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ALICIA EN EL PUEBLO DE MARAVILLAS

(ALICE IN WONDER TOWN)
(CUBAN)

An ICAIC production. Produced by Humberto Hernandez. Directed by Daniel Diaz Torres. Screenplay, Diaz Torres, Jesus Diaz; camera (color), Raul Perez Ureta; editor, Jorge Abello; music, Frank Delgado; sound, Ricardo Istueta. Reviewed at Berlin Film Festival (Forum), Feb. 19, 1991. Running time: **93 MIN.**

Alice Thais Valdes
Also with: Reinaldo Miravalles, Alberto Pujols, Carlos Cruz, Raul Pomares, Alina Rodriguez, Jorge Martinez, Enrique Molina.

“Alice In Wonder Town” is a fast-paced *mélange* of jokes and surreal images. It will have a place at fests, but commercial prospects are limited.

Pic opens with credits placed around drawings based on the original Tenniel illustrations in Lewis Carroll's "Alice In Wonderland" and "Through The Looking Glass." But the film really has nothing to do with Carroll. It's a modern satire about a young cultural bureaucrat who's sent to a small town (called Maravillas, or Wonders) as part of her job.

She finds it a very strange

place indeed. The medicine chest in her hotel bathroom opens onto a room next door where a man is shaving. There's a swarm of cockroaches in the night. Camels, monkeys, snakes and other creatures seem to wander around at will in the middle of town.

Everyone Alice meets has a strange story to tell, starting with a truck driver, who helps her eliminate the roaches and who describes how he arrived in town and has somehow never left. Director Daniel Diaz Torres has some political and social comment to make here, as many of the inhabitants of Wonder Town seem to be people who've been sacked from official positions.

The jokes and allusions likely will be better understood by a Cuban audience, but the film has enough sight gags and bizarre moments to please a wider audience. This exotic comedy, featuring an appealing central performance from Thais Valdes as Alice, is visually plush and briskly paced. Technically, pic is first-rate. — *Strat.*

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