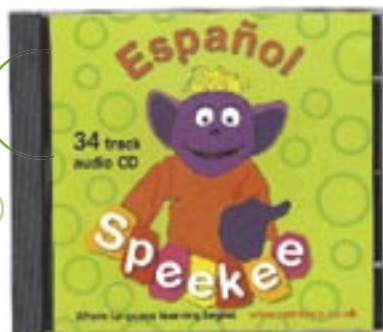
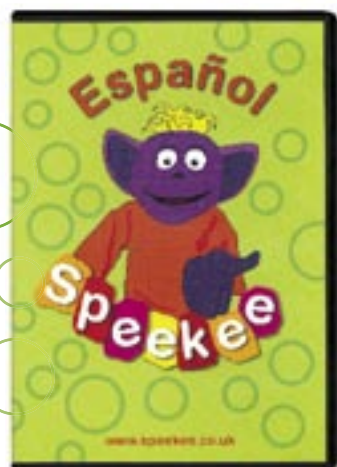


This issue, books about luxury travelling to Spain and a rather rougher way to see the country, a historical novel and a scary yet brilliant film – all that and Spanish for the kids too!

# Spanish recommends



## SPEEKEE ESPAÑOL

£95 Lingua4 Ltd  
www.speekee.co.uk

Whether you have small children yourself or just have some you can borrow for the day, this pack of four DVDs plus a 34-track CD is an fantastic way to ensure that the Spanish you learn sticks.

Speekee is aimed at children aged from two upwards, designed by professional educators. The key characters are Speekee herself, a creature who resembles a purple gremlin, Jim, a friendly expat Brit, plus sock puppets Dino and Lupi and a crowd of cheerful Spanish children. Each of the ten episodes involves an excursion to a new setting, from the park to the zoo, with key vocabulary explained by a series of visual devices, repetition and songs. You can play the DVDs with Spanish or English subtitles on

show, while the 34-track audio CD of relentlessly catchy songs is ideal for journeys in the car. The accompanying booklet which gives outlines of each episode with key vocabulary, lyrics for the songs in Spanish and English and a mini English/Spanish dictionary, as well as directions on how to make your own sock puppets.

The course covers a good range of useful Spanish words and phrases that children are encouraged to listen to and repeat, with lots of praise words following each request for interaction, ranging from "Fenomenal!" to "Perfecto!" This is a lovely positive way to learn, and the sock puppets are especially vivacious, aptly demonstrating the Spanish verve for life, as do the Spanish children when introducing their bothers and sisters.

Judy Darley 

## 10-SECOND CV



Name: Paz Vega

Born: Seville, 2 January 1976

Early life: As a girl, Paz wanted to be an athlete. When she was 16 she went to see a theatre production, after which she founded a theatre group at her school. She was part of the Andaluz Theatre Centre while she studied journalism, but in 1995 left it to move to Madrid to work in television.

I know the name: In 1999, director Mateo Gil asked her to work on his first film *Nobody Knows Anybody*. After that Julio Medem offered her the lead in *Sex and Lucia*, for which she won a Goya. In the following years she worked with Pedro Almodóvar on *Talk to Her* and had one of the main roles in the comedy *The Other Side of the Bed*.

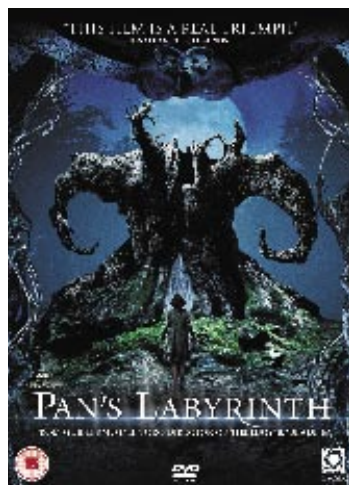
Typical style: While she has played risqué roles like *Carmen*, Paz is more than a pretty face. Recently she has filmed *Teresa*, *Death and Life* about a Spanish Roman Catholic mystic and reformer. Where will we next see her? In 2005 Paz starred in the American comedy *Spanglish*, which is available on DVD. Last year she filmed *Fade to Black*, directed by Oliver Parker, which is soon to be released.

¡Es verdad! Paz is currently filming *Memoirs of Hadrian* with Antonio Banderas. It's a biography of the Spanish-born Roman emperor Hadrian.

## DVD RELEASE

### PAN'S LABYRINTH

DIRECTOR: GUILLERMO DEL TORO • IVANA BAQUERO, DOUG JONES, SERGI LOPEZ, ARIADNA GIL • RATING 18



The many different stories combine to make Pan's Labyrinth a magical, if somewhat brutal, film

In a multilayered movie immersed in myth, beauty and horror, Guillermo del Toro has created a fairytale that will stay in your mind long after you turn off the DVD. The story is accessible on many levels, from the simple story of a young girl facing her mother's marriage to violent man, to the portrayal of Spain in the aftermath of World War II, to the fantasy world that provides much of the haunting imagery.

The relationship between Ofelia and her mother has a warmth that makes the characters believable, a vital quality in such an imaginative story. However, the key character of this piece is the Faun himself, played by Doug Jones. Far from the perky version so beloved by Disney and Warner Brothers, he seems to have

grown in the forest along with the trees, and to be as ambivalent.

One favourite scene takes place deep within an enormous fig tree, where 11-year-old Ofelia, played by Ivana Baquero, encounters an immense toad, provokes him into prolapsing his guts and retrieves a magic key from his gooey remains. Other brutal scenes include Ofelia's narrow escape from the grotesque Pale Man, also played by Doug Jones, though this monster is nothing compared to the cruelty of her fascist stepfather.

Del Toro calls Pan's Labyrinth "a game of interpretation" that reveals more with each viewing. Definitely a DVD to watch again and again.

Judy Darley 

