

**La Revolución
&
Moctezuma!**

M. Stefan Strozier

Published by World Audience, Inc.
(www.worldaudience.org)
303 Park Avenue South, Suite 1440
New York, NY 10010-3657
Phone (646) 620-7406; Fax (646) 620-7406
info@worldaudience.org
ISBN 978-1-935444-79-4

© 2011, M. Stefan Strozier

Copyright notice: All work contained within is the sole copyright of its author, 2011, and may not be reproduced without consent.

World Audience (www.worldaudience.org) is a global consortium of artists and writers, producing quality books and the journal *Audience*.

Our periodicals and books are edited by M. Stefan Strozier and assistant editors.

Dedicated to the Mexican people.

And, as always, to my children, Jay and Carolyn.

The world premiere of *La Revolucion* and *Moctezuma* was at Mint Theater (311 West 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036), April 6-23rd, 2011. The cast and crew: Reanna Muskovitz (stage manager), Rebecca Love (costume designer), Alexandra Turshen (choreographer).

La Revolución

Dramatis Personae:

Martin Guzman	Angelko Mar
Susanna Flores Brier	Alexandra Turshen
Chorus Leader	Carolina Santos Read
Pascal Orozco	Daniel Ramos
Francisco Madero	Alex Montaldo
Gustavo Madero	Ash Goldeh
Emiliano Zapata	Ronnie Armani
General Huerta [offstage]	
General Blanquet [offstage]	
General Alvaro Obregon	Ash Goldeh
Maria Pistolas	Marlene Villafane
Francisco “Pancho” Villa	Gustavo Heredia
Isabel [telegraph operator]	Jennymar
Quetzalcoatl	Suellen Romani
Pablo Gonzales	Suellen Romani
Vendor	Suellen Romani
Jose de Leon Toral	Suellen Romani

Act 1
Scene 1

Setting: A café in Havana, Cuba. Martin Guzman, working for General Villa, is on his way to Chihuahua City to rally up with Villa's army. Guzman is being pursued by Diaz's spies. He meets Susanna Flores Brier, a beautiful Diaz spy from an established, Mexican family of German descent.

Guzman: Can I borrow your broach?

Susanna: Are you a hairdresser?

Guzman: I am a poet.

Susanna: A poet!

Guzman: What is your name?

Susanna: Susanna Brier.

Guzman: I am Martin Guzman. Put this letter inside of it. It is to General Francisco Villa from the US State Department. Are you Mexican?

Susanna: Yes.

Guzman: Francisco Madero's Plan of San Luis Potosi says that the Revolution will start November twentieth. The people are with Madero!

Susanna: Can you read me one of your poems?

Guzman: Yes. This poem is one that I am composing. 'Who we are does not matter to the universe. Actions that we take; moving through the years and days and dark nights, are all that seals our fates. It is the shock in your eyes, between words, that moves my soul. Mexico is love. The Revolution is love.'

Susanna: Thank you. I want to leave this place. There are too many spies in Havana. And the food is not very good. The coffee is fine. I want to return to Mexico.

Guzman: Then I will take you to Vera Cruz.

Susanna: 'The Jewel of the Gulf of Mexico'. If I return to Mexico, will you keep me safe?

Guzman: I give you my word, if you swear your heart to the Revolution.

Susanna: I swear to it.

Guzman: Come, my ship will depart any minute.

[Brier and Guzman exit.]

Act 1
Scene 2

Setting: Enter Chorus Leader, singing La Adelita.

Chorus Leader:

*En lo alto de la abrupta serranía
acampado se encontraba un regimiento
y una joven que valiente los seguía
locamente enamorada del sargento.*

*Popular entre la tropa era Adelita
la mujer que el sargento idolatraba
y además de ser valiente era bonita
que hasta el mismo Coronel la respetaba.*

*Y se oía, que decía, aquel que tanto la quería:
Y si Adelita se fuera con otro
la seguiría por tierra y por mar
si por mar en un buque de guerra
si por tierra en un tren militar.*

*Y si Adelita quisiera ser mi novia
y si Adelita fuera mi mujer
le compraría un vestido de seda
para llevarla a bailar al cuartel.*
[Exit Chorus Leader.]

Act 1
Scene 3

Setting: Enter Francisco and Gustavo Madero. Battle for Ciudad Juarez, May, 1911.

Madero: Flores Magon is fighting the Federals in Baja California.

Gustavo: Fighting has broken out across the country.

Madero: Magon should return to writing his newspaper, *Regeneración*.

Gustavo: You've removed the muzzle of the wolf, now it bites your hand.

[Enter Orozco and Villa.]

Madero: What news do you bring, Señor Orozco?

Orozco: We have won the Battle of Ciudad Juárez! We fought the Federals in hand-to-hand combat, street by street. Pancho Villa, my captain, led a charge to take the Capitol Building.

Gustavo: Then march to Mexico City with your new power.

Madero: Díaz's envoys are here in Juárez, ready to negotiate peace. Pancho Villa, will you enjoy a drink with my brother?

Villa: I do not drink alcohol.

Madero: We have that in common.

Orozco: I will have a drink!

Villa: Oscar Creighton hurls his sticks of dynamite like toys.

Orozco: The Revolutionaries are winning! I agree with Gustavo, let's take Mexico City in the name of the Revolución! Díaz must die!

Madero: Porfirio Díaz has been the president of Mexico for over 3 decades. Haciendas are American slave plantations, and Díaz protects the landowners. You have been pursued by the rurales.

Villa: My sister was raped by Don Agustín López Negrete.

Madero: Now hunt them!

Villa: I shot him. Los rurales threw me in jail and sentenced me to death under ley fuga. My life has been hard, señor, fighting with Ignacio Parra and Refugio Alvarado, never enough food, or water, and only enough bullets to do the job. I made a lot of money. I gave it all away to the poor. It was easy to bribe the judges; they are corrupt, like the Catholic priests.

Madero: We have all become slaves to Porfirio Díaz, his government, the Catholic Church, and hacienda rulers.

Villa: How can a good man change his views so easily, Mr. President?

Madero: If I understood why men's hearts change the same way a snake sheds his skin, there would be no need for a Revolution.

Villa: My soldiers fight for President Francisco Madero!

Gustavo: Why do you stand there, speechless?

Orozco: While you sipped your Hennessey, I was killing men with my knife.

Madero: This battle began without my authorization.

Orozco: We demand that you turn Federal Officer Navarro over to be court-martialed for bayoneting my soldiers!

Gustavo: I thought that was standard practice for Revolutionaries. General Orozco, we are so close to Texas and so far from God that our country feels pity for us.

Orozco: I did not inherit my wealth like you two did.

Villa: I follow the orders of General Orozco.

Orozco: I want a key position in your administration!

Gustavo: Certain people have captured your intrigue, Senor Orozco. Brother, please, a word.

Madero: The troops have gathered outside the door.

Orozco: I should be minister of war and not a stranger from Coahuila, Venustiano Carranza.

Gustavo: He is old. Revolutionaries are all young.

Orozco: I want land reform!

Gustavo: We want it too.

Orozco: In your Plan of San Luis Potosi, you do not address land reform!

Villa: Who is Senor Carranza?

Gustavo: He is rather tall, wears plain clothes and has a distinguished air about him. He has a long beard that he frequently combs with his lanky fingers. None of us can agree about Carranza. He has a way of keeping power without effort.

Madero: We are an obstinate family.

Villa: My soldiers have not been paid.

Orozco: You have sold the Revolution for your family's gain!

Gustavo: Put down your pistol, General Orozco!

Madero: I am your chief.

Villa: Do not play politics with the soul of Mexico.

Madero: I am the soul of Mexico, Pancho Villa.

Villa: We will win the Revolution for the people, the farmers, and take back our lands. I will fight to the end!

Madero: If you dare kill me, shoot. I order you to seize them, Gustavo!

Orozco: Don't just stand there, Pancho!

Madero: I am Francisco Madero, the legal President of Mexico! Are you men traitors to your chief? I started the Revolution that you fight! Would you fight for nothing, for ideals without a vision? Will you follow Diaz the Jackal? Or will you let me lead you to victory with honor! You might as well be bandits. I hold no rancor toward Diaz. I offer him my hand as a

brother. I order you all to bring me every captain in this army, here to my headquarters, within the hour.

Orozco: There is no point in creating a rebellion within our army, Pancho.

Villa: I have committed a black crime and my heart is between two stones. I am sorry, my chief.

Madero: Get out of my sight.

[Orozco and Villa exit. Lights fade to black.]

Act 1 Scene 4

Setting: Madero meets with Zapata June 8th, 1911, at the Madero family mansion on Berlin Street. Enter Zapata.

Madero: Welcome, Senor Zapata. You may lean your carbine in the corner, with the barrel facing toward the ground.

Zapata: No, Senor Madero. Let us talk about reallocating land from the gachupines of the haciendas to the people?

Madero: That is my goal.

Zapata: The Federal army is still intact; and you have disbanded the armies of the Revolution. The Army of the South will keep fighting the Revolution, until our goals have been achieved. General Huerta is attacking our forces. He hangs my soldiers under a fire, burning their feet while they die. And Orozco is attacking from the north.

Madero: I will be sending General Huerta to fight the Orozco Rebellion.

Zapata: Why have you left Diaz's man Leon de la Barra as interim president? The election is not until the fall.

Madero: I strongly encourage you to form a government with the Figueroas in Morales.

Zapata: I do not seek office, only land reform. Why did you start the Revolution?

Madero: My goal is to hold a free and fair election.

Zapata: 'Workers: listen! Today's calm conceals the violence of tomorrow's insurrection. Revolution is the logical consequence of the thousand crimes of despotism. Your hands will grasp the gun...'

Madero: That is Flores Magon's *Regeneración*?

Zapata: These are the words of Kropotkin, Bakunin, Marx. Pay attention! 'The Revolution must come, irrevocably. By blood and fire it will come to

the den where the jackals who have been devouring you for thirty-four years, are holding their last feast, Proletarians! Go to the fight. Knock resolutely on the doors.' Land and Liberty!

Madero: Hasta Belem, Senor Magon.

Zapata: Look, Senor Madero, if I, having advantage of being armed, robbed you of your gold watch and kept it, and then some time later we met again but with both of us equally armed, wouldn't you have the right to demand the return of your watch?

Madero: Of course, General, and I would have the right to ask for payment for your use of it.

Zapata: The hacdados have taken land belonging to villages. Your Plan of San Luis Potosi does not address land reform!

Madero: Can we meet again, Senor Zapata, in Morales?

Zapata: Yes. A revolution is a series of predictable events, is it not?

Madero: My secretary, Venustiano Carranza, will set the date.

Zapata: If we do not abandon our principles, we do not dishonor Revolution.

Madero: Goodbye, Senor Zapata.

Zapata: Goodbye.

[Exit Zapata.]

Madero: Brother!

[Enter Gustavo.]

Madero: General Huerta must finish Zapata and then quell the Orozco Rebellion in the North, with Pancho Villa.

Gustavo: The bandit?

Madero: Villa has a secretary named Martin Guzman, who is a poet. There are many Revolutionary journals, each one controlling a secret army. I understand he travels with a woman that is close to Diaz named Brier.

Gustavo: Words are powerful.

[Gustavo and Madero exit. Lights fade to black.]

Act 1
Scene 5

Setting: Decena Trágica, Sunday Feb 9th, 1912. National Palace, Mexico City. Enter Gustavo and Madero.

Gustavo: There is a game afoot, brother.

Madero: That is nonsense. I have returned from Morales where General Huerta so aggressively attacked Zapata that I was nearly killed. Place General Huerta on the inactive list.

Gustavo: He was already on it once for stealing. You reactivated him to fight Zapata.

Madero: Put him back on it! Zapata has sided with the Orozco Rebellion and declared the Plan de Ayala as his!

Gustavo: General Angeles reports that while fighting with General Huerta against Zapata, he uncovered a plot to overthrow you. General Angeles gave me this letter, detailing the coup de tat and listing the conspirators: Bernardo Reyes, Felix Diaz, General Blanquet and the 29th Battalion, General Manuel Mondragon, troops at Tacubaya, and General Huerta. There are others. I add nearly 14,000 troops ready to rebel.

Madero: Let me see that. Bernardo Reyes and Felix Diaz would be on such a list, but many you listed are loyal, such as General Blanquet. Look: there is a question mark next to Huerta's name.

Gustavo: I am postponing my trip to serve as Japanese ambassador.

Madero: Do as you wish.

Gustavo: Major Rafael Izquierdo witnessed a meeting between and General Huerta and Felix Diaz. The American Ambassador Wilson is plotting with them.

Madero: But how is that possible if Felix Diaz is in prison?

Gustavo: Huerta will send Federal troops to slaughter, in an attempt to stage a rebellion and sequester you here in the National Palace.

Madero: You are paranoid! There is no end to the Revolution. It moves too quickly.

Gustavo: Then use it as a chance to root out your enemies.

Madero: I am not a dictator. I am here by mandate of the Mexican people and I will leave the National Palace only by death or the will of the people.

[Lights fade to black.]

Act 1
Scene 6

Setting: Enter Chorus Leader, singing La Golondrina.

Chorus Leader:

A donde irá
veloz y fatigada
la golondrina
que de aquí se va
por si en el viento
se hallara extraviada
buscando abrigo
y no lo encontrara.
Junto a mi lecho
le pondré su nido
en donde pueda
la estación pasar
también yo estoy
en la región perdido
OH Cielo Santo!
y sin poder volar.
Deje también
mi patria idolatrada
esa mansión
que me miró nacer
mi vida es hoy
errante y angustida
y ya no puedo
a mi mansión volver.

Ave querida
amada peregrina
mi corazón
al tuyo acercare
voy recordando

tierna golondrina
recordare
mi patria y llorare.

The Swallow

Where will it go
Swift and weary
The swallow
that's gone away from here,
If in the wind
she finds herself astray
Seeking shelter
and doesn't find it?

Beside my bed
I'll put her nest
where she can pass the season.
I am also
in the lost region
Oh, Holy Heaven!
and unable to fly.

I too left behind
my adored homeland
that abode
that saw me born
my life is today
errant and distressed
and no more can I
to my mansion return.

Cherished bird,
beloved pilgrim,
I will bring my heart
close to yours.

I go remembering,
Tender swallow.
I will remember
my fatherland and cry.
[Exit Chorus Leader.]

Act 1
Scene 7

Setting: Enter Madero and Gustavo.

Gustavo: Two columns of troops march to Santiago Tlaltelolco prison. They will free Felix Diaz and Bernardo Reyes and attack the National Palace.

Madero: I order General Angeles to take command of the army and guard the National Palace.

Gustavo: But he is junior to Huerta.

Madero: Huerta is now on the inactive list!

Gustavo: You ordered him activated! We must summon more forces, from the military academies of Tlalpan, San Juan Teotihuacán, Chalco and Toluca.

Madero: The immediate problem is feeding our troops, and those of the other side, and the populace. I have a telegraph from President Taft, swearing America will not interfere in these tragic days.

Gustavo: General Huerta is luring the Americans into our fight. I have a message from General Huerta and General Blanquet: General Manuel Rivera and his troops arrived from Oaxaca and have immediately rebelled against the government. I must accompany the president to a safer place.

Madero: I do not believe that. I am certain of General Rivera's loyalty to me! I am the President of Mexico.

Gustavo: You ordered four thousand troops from the 29th Battalion to this National Palace. General Blanquet left the force outside the city, at Tlaxpana. He took a week to accomplish this deployment. Blanquet replaced the Carabineros of Coahuila, at the National Palace, with the 29th.

Madero: The Carabineros are loyal to me.

Gustavo: Yes. And now we are of the same mind. General Blanquet was a member of the firing squad that killed Maximilian at Queretaro in 1867. The city is lit by candles. The dark hours are here. This candle is a light

through that darkness. The senate advises you to relinquish power. You will not consider other outcomes. I have met Huerta's spies and they do not impress me. Huerta drinks Hennessy and smokes cannabis but what of our people, who are fighting and dying for the Revolution? Please give me your gun, because I must go outside on the dangerous streets and make a phone call and I have forgotten my gun. Thank you. Yes. How can you do this to me? We are all one family! We are the nation of Mexico!

General Huerta [offstage]: You are not my brother! You are nothing!

Gustavo: Please, I beg you, do not make me suffer! Take them away!

General Huerta [offstage]: I will answer! We hate you, *brother!* You are a worthless soul that must die on the street, consumed by the forces of nature and man, destitute, a useless hull.

Gustavo: Show me mercy, please!

[Gustavo's glass eye rolls back on stage. Gunshots are heard.]

General Blanquet [offstage]: Drop your weapon, General Angeles! Senor Madero, President of the Fatherland, you are my prisoner!

Madero: I am unharmed. Colonel Riverroll has been killed while trying to take the President of Mexico captive! I am the president and you are a traitor.

[Bells begin to ring slowly, marking the end of the Ten Tragic Days. Madero does not exit the stage until the dancers in the next scene have entered. The bells pick up their pace and then they are ringing joyously, high-pitched in tone.]

Madero: The Little Madman has won. They have turned the mares loose. Let us see who can corral them again. Now they will be convinced, by hard experience, that the only way to govern the country well is the way I did it, with loving compassion, respect for the people, and force only when necessary, Porfirio Diaz said, before exile, a fate worse than death; to never again see one's land and people. I am the president! Oh, God, my brother. The last words of a president. I want what is best for the people. I love my country. The people love me. I wanted to help the people, and return the land. My enemies are strong. I have become a weak man. In a Revolution you must choose sides carefully or a side is chosen for you. They are here at my palace gates. To run is too cowardly, a disgrace to my family. This I can do. I can face my end. I love you, my Mexico! Goodbye to you!

[Madero exits. Lights fade to black.]

Act 2
Scene 1

Setting: Bells ring end of 10 Tragic Days. As the bells ring, there is a dance scene with Guzman and Susanna Flores Brier, and Villa and his mistress, Maria Pistolas. The dancing starts while the church bells are ringing, and then the bell ringing fades as the music rises. Brier and Guzman are talking as they dance. The song is Vera Cruz by Agustin Lara, sung by Chorus Leader.

Brier: Tell me a poem about the stars.

Guzman: The stars signal your eyes. The light dances in your eyes and answers the stars.

Brier: And the moon?

Guzman: The moon controls the night and this song. Our love is stronger than the pull of the moon.

Brier: And the night sky?

Guzman: In the nighttime sky, shooting stars travel like will-o-wisps seeking a new home. We have to be quiet, and listen, and whisper about love in gentle voices.

Brier: And this music?

Guzman: Can you hear each note of the piano clearly? It sounds like singing angels or fey nymphs in a dark forest chanting strange songs.

Brier: I am very much in love with you.

Villa: I escaped jail in Mexico City. Gustavo Madero saved me from General Huerta's firing squad. The Usurper Huerta is now our President.

Guzman: The American Marines are occupying Vera Cruz.

Villa: Yes, the Americans. Eight of us got through Texas. We had ten pounds of sugar, one pound of coffee, a pound of salt, flour, beans; five pounds of rice; water; and, a large container of dried strips of meat, some potatoes and 500 rounds of ammunition. General Huerta threw Abraham Gonzales under the wheels of a train. I miss him dearly.

Guzman: General Obregon marches on Mexico City from the Northwest, as we speak. He fights with Carranza.

Villa: Carranza is no general. We must return to Chihuahua and gather our forces. I am going to become governor of Chihuahua. Come, let's join the dancing ladies! [Lights fade to black.]

Act 2
Scene 2

Setting: Pancho Villa and his troops are marching toward Juarez. Villa has just captured a federal supply train, and has loaded it with his own troops. He is in his special, private caboose. Villa wears blue pajamas. The windows have chintz curtains and the cars are painted grey. “Whistling Rufus” perhaps plays on a fife. The trains are an amalgamation of humanity, with livestock, soldiers and their wives and children riding on top of the train cars. Action shifts to Villa’s train car. Silent pauses are occasionally broken by the ‘Tiqui-tick-tick’ of the telegraph. Enter Chorus Leader, who sings La Cucaracha. Villa and Maria Pistolas dance.

Chorus Leader:

The cockroach, the cockroach
Can no longer walk
Because it needs
Marijuana to smoke
The cockroach has already died
They are taking it to be buried
Between four buzzards
And a sacristy mouse,
With Carranza’s beard
I’m going to make a scarf
And put it on the Sombrero
Of your father, Pancho Villa
A baker went to Mass
Not resting there to pray
But to ask the pure Virgin,
For marijuana to smoke,
One thing makes me laugh
Pancho Villa without a shirt
The Carrancistas have already gone
Because the Villistas are coming
For serapes, Saltillo;
Chihuahua, for soldiers;
For women, Jalisco

For love, all the little ways

Villa: Send this wire to the commander of the federal base in Juarez, General Castro: Engine broken down at Juarez. Send another engine and five cars. Sign it as Colonel Velasquez.

Isabel [offstage]: Yes, sir. He is now answering. 'Will send the cars at once.'

Villa: Good. If he really sends the cars, I can march straight into Juarez without firing a shot!

Brier: Martin! I must tell you something important.

Guzman: What? I have to join General Villa. We are late.

Brier: I love you.

Guzman: I love you, too.

Brier: Do you remember what you said when we first met?

Guzman: No.

Brier: You said the Revolution is love.

Guzman: Yes, I did.

Brier: What did you mean?

Guzman: I meant that the Revolution must be fought for love of country, honor to the family, and respect for humanity.

Brier: I thought you said that if I came with you to fight the Revolution, I would find love. And I have.

Guzman: We are fighting to show the world what happens when you must fight to change things. We must succeed.

Brier: Does our love matter more than the Revolution?

Guzman: We don't have time to talk about love in the middle of the Revolution.

Brier: But I love you!

Guzman: And I love you too. Come.

[Guzman and Brier enter Villa's train car.]

Villa: Guzman, welcome. I care about my soldiers, not politics. We Mexicans can never agree on who will be president and conflict forms our government. Forty hospital cars, well-lined and insulated, operating tables, all equipped with the latest surgical appliances, and there are at least 100 doctors and nurses to take care of my soldiers!

Guzman: It's impressive, General Villa. Here is your letter from Washington.

Villa: General Obregon is advancing fast to Mexico City. We will send loco loco trains full of dynamite to ram them into trains carrying Federal troops, and I have cannon mounted on flatcars: El Nino and El Chavalito.

Guzman: Very good, General Villa. Perhaps you should lead us and not Carranza?

Villa: It is enough to be governor of Chihuahua and print counterfeit money to keep the economy functioning. Don't try and understand Mexican politics, Guzman. You might as well try and understand a woman.

Guzman: Then who will lead us?

Villa: Senor Angeles, my general, will lead our nation!

Guzman: Senor Angeles is a splendid man, but as a candidate he won't do. He is a general, after all.

Villa: What? You should write about your adventures and keep your mouth shut.

Guzman: The disagreement with you and Venustiano Carranza could be fixed up by sending him your pistol.

Villa: That's not such a bad idea. Just tell Senor Carranza to be careful with it, as it's a very flunky pistol. I am unarmed.

Guzman: You can have the pistol I carry, General Villa, but it's very small and besides it's an automatic, and you don't know that kind very well.

Villa: What kind of pistol don't I know? Say something to me.

Guzman: Something good or bad?

Villa: Whatever comes out of your heart.

Guzman: I hope my pistol is not flunky like yours.

Villa: You are as brave as a soldier.

Isabel: Mi amor, shall I cook you dinner?

Villa: What are you cooking?

Isabel: We have no rice, but some refried beans. I have chilies. I can make chimichangas or there are tamales.

Villa: I will have tamales!

Isabel: I will make coffee.

[Gunshots area heard offstage. Villa carefully aims Guzman's gun and shoots his soldier. Maria Pistolas runs onstage.]

Maria Pistolas: You murderer! You killed my brother!

Villa: He was wasting my bullets.

Maria Pistolas: You evil murderer!

Villa: I regret that I have lost one soldier.

Maria Pistolas: May your soul burn for this crime!

Isabel: How dare you curse my husband!

Villa: Bury him. Do it, now!

Isabel: You are nothing more than a rich widow. Pancho Villa killed your husband and now your brother. You follow him out of fear. I am his most important wife!

Maria Pistolas: May God have mercy on your souls!

Isabel: God? What do you know about God or the Church? I was born and raised in Guadalupe, Durango. My father was a butcher. We went to church every Sunday!

Maria Pistolas: I pray that you do not lose La Revolucion, Pancho Villa! We followed you from Aguascalientes because we believe in La Revolucion.

Villa: It is a good pistol. I will keep it.

Maria Pistolas: You are a cruel man, Pancho Villa.

Villa: Sing a song, woman!

[Exit Isabel.]

Maria Pistolas:

De la Sierra Morena,
Cielito lindo, vienen bajando,
Un par de ojitos negros,
Cielito lindo, de contrabando.

Ay, ay, ay, ay,
Canta y no llores,
Porque cantando se alegran,
Cielito lindo, los corazones.

Pájaro que abandona,
Cielito lindo, su primer nido,
Si lo encuentra ocupado,
Cielito lindo, bien merecido.

Ese lunar que tienes,
Cielito lindo, junto a la boca,
No se lo des a nadie,
Cielito lindo, que a mí me toca.

Si tu boquita morena,
Fuera de azúcar, fuera de azúcar,
Yo me lo pasaría,
Cielito lindo, chupa que chupa.

De tu casa a la mía,
Cielito lindo, no hay más que un paso,
Antes que venga tu madre,
Cielito lindo, dame un abrazo.

Una flecha en el aire,
Cielito lindo, lanzó Cupido,
y como fue jugando,
Cielito lindo, yo fui el herido.

Guzman: I am very tired. We have traveled from Vera Cruz.

Villa: My pal Urbina and I were running from the Mounties, through a heavy woods and thicket to a cliff.

Isabel: I made your coffee.

Villa: We could see the whole plain below. We unsaddled. We fed the horses. 'Look pal,' I said. 'I guess there's no danger now. I'll watch first.' 'All right, pal,' was all Urbina said and went straight to sleep. On the other side of the plain, a little white speck was moving. It was the Mounties! I jumped up and shook Urbina. 'Hey pal, wake up, the Mounties are after us!' I took out my pistol and fired two shots right beside his ear. He was asleep.

[Exit Isabel.]

Villa: I picked up my pal and threw him face down over his horse, and tied him tight. I found the worst path to throw off the Mounties, and I doubled back on my trail. I found a place. I pulled my pal off his horse and his face was black and purple and filled with dust. We slept. To sleep is death, each morning a little weaker, until no more, dust of the Aztec Gods. There is no God, no church. Revolucion is chaos. It is time to embrace the night, and sleep in darkness. Mexico must wake from its violent dreams.

Isabel [offstage]: Pardon me, General. The train cars have arrived from Juarez.

Villa: Wire General Castro in Juarez: 'Wires cut between here and Chihuahua City. Large force of rebels approaching from South. What shall I do?' Sign it as Colonel Velasquez.

Isabel: Yes, my general. Return to base at once.

Villa: Let's take Juarez for the Army of the North! Move my great army, start the engines!

Act 2
Scene 3

Setting: Obregon has entered Mexico City and claimed it for Carranza. Carranza will enter 5 days later. Obregon visits the grave of Madero and he has many other revolutionaries reburied: Belisario Dominguez, Serapio Rendon, Adolfo Basso. Obregon gets the remaining clothes of Madero and Suarez, has them examined and starts an investigation into the deaths of Pino Suarez and Madero. Obregon is kneeling at grave of Madero. Enter Maria Pistolas, carrying a candle. Obregon stands.

Obregon: Who are you?

Maria Pistolas: I am Maria Arias.

[Maria Pistolas places her candle at Madero's grave.]

Maria Pistolas: I am a schoolteacher, General Obregon. Thank you for bringing security and safety to Mexico City before that bandit Pancho Villa arrives, and keeping Zapata's army away.

Obregon: Pancho Villa is an imbecile. His army destroyed Zacatecas. My Army of the Northwest has arrived first to Mexico City. Without General Angeles' artillery and military expertise, Villa's Army of the North would be nothing.

Maria Pistolas: We Soldatas fought in his army. I escaped after he killed my brother. I am not a traitorous Mexican like Dona Marina. I believe in La Revolucion!

Obregon: The Revolution is won. The Usurper, General Huerta is defeated. He and General Orozco have fled. I return to my chickpea farm now in Sonora.

Maria Pistolas: And here lies our first president, Francisco Madero.

Maria Pistolas: We weak women, unable to bear arms could only give our sighs, our tears, and our flowers on the grave of the martyr.

Obregon: Soldatas of the Army of the Northwest do much more. They fought bravely at key battles, and serve as the logistical backbone of the force. It's the same for all the armies of the Revolution. None of them could exist without the Soldatas. The soldiers would not travel but with their women.

[Obregon gives his pistol belt to Maria Pistolas.]

Obregon: Maria Pistolas. Will you join me?

Maria Pistolas: Thank you, General Obregon. Yes, I will fight and die for you. But how many millions of Mexicans will be dead by the time of this Revolution's end? We are a great big family with many quarrels and only honor can settle our disputes. It seems we all agree more than we want to admit. Who is in charge of the family? That is what causes us to fight the hardest, is it not? One man loses and he seeks vengeance. Another man wins and he is the victor; but only for a day, and another city falls before him, and always the people suffer. Action causes suffering, and tragedy. We Mexicans are not making wise decisions. We must change that. The most successful people always take the right actions. It seems like they are very lucky; but it is simply because they are taking the right action when faced with a choice. Instead of doing nothing, they change things. If people choose incorrectly, they suffer. But because people make the right decisions, they are happy in their lives. Women make good decisions, like men. Senor, there will always be wars. You leaders of the Revolution fight for noble purposes; but now the Revolution turned on its own people. Now must the people again act to correct things?

Obregon: You are a very wise woman, Maria Pistolas. The Revolutionary leaders are meeting for a convention in Aquascalientes to settle their disputes. Will you join us?

Maria Pistolas: Yes.

Obregon: Come with me.

[Obregon and Maria Pistolas exit. Lights fade to black.]

Act 2 Scene 4

Setting: Jail in Mexico City where Martin Guzman is being held.

Guzman: All of the young Revolutionaries in Mexico City do not fear you, First Chief Carranza! Pancho Villa will take Mexico City for the Revolution!

[Enter Susanna Brier.]

Brier: Martin, I have the keys. I am here to free you!

Guzman: How did you get in here?

Brier: Hurry, we have to run.

Guzman: I want to know how you were able to get me free!

Brier: I have contacts.

Guzman: Carranistas?

Brier: No.

Guzman: Then who? Tell me!

Brier: They are Diaz agents.

Guzman: But Diaz is in Spain.

Brier: Yes, my father is a German army officer. Germany seeks to aide Mexico and wants America distracted. Martin! Please, please, come with me and leave Mexico. Please come back to Germany with me. Leave the Revolution behind. It has become too dangerous. You will be killed. Carranza is only moments from having all of you executed by firing squad.

Guzman: No! I will not abandon my country!

Brier: You don't understand everything. I love you!

Guzman: I must go to the Convention at Aquascalientes. Mexico must find a way for all parties to agree and bring stability to the nation and its people. Diaz will never undermine Mexico's government from Europe. You are a fool to follow him!

Brier: I am telling you the truth because I love you!

Guzman: I am going to Aquascalientes. I hope that you can come with me. If not, then stay here.

I do not care.

Brier: I've saved your life and freed you from prison and this is how you treat me?

Guzman: I must think of my country first.

Brier: And what about love? What about our love? You call yourself a poet!

Guzman: Goodbye, Susanna.

Brier: You will pay for this one day!

[Exit Martin Guzman. Lights fade to black.]

Act 3 Scene 1

Setting: The Convention at Aquascalientes. Enter Obregon.

Obregonista Maria Pistolas: Long live the Army of the Northwest!

All: Long may it live!

Obregon: Thank you. I fight for the honor of Mexico.

Obregonista Maria Pistolas: Long live the Victors of the West!

All: Long may they live!

Obregonista Maria Pistolas: Long live the Revolution!

All: Long may it live!

Villista Martin Guzman: Long live the Division of the North!

All: Long may it live!

Villista Martin Guzman: Long live the Army of the South!

All: Long may it live!

Carranzista Chorus Leader: Long live the First Chief!

All: Down with the First Chief!

Carranzista Chorus Leader: How dare you! We all hailed Generals Villa and Obregon and Zapata but you cannot respect me by letting me shout support for my First Chief!

All: Down with the First Chief!

Obregon: Carranza has freed the revolutionaries in Mexico City! Let us now sing the National Anthem!

[Enter Chorus Leader. All stand and sing the National Anthem.]

Chorus Leader and all in attendance:

Coro:

Mexicanos, al grito de guerra
el acero aprestad y el bridón.
Y retiemble en sus centros la Tierra,
al sonoro rugir del cañón.
¡Y retiemble en sus centros la Tierra,
al sonoro rugir del cañón!

Chorus:

*Mexicans, at the cry of war,
make ready the steel and the bridle,
and the earth trembles at its centers
at the resounding roar of the cannon.
and the earth trembles at its centers
at the resounding roar of the cannon!*

Estrofa I:

Ciña ¡oh Patria! tus sienes de oliva
de la paz el arcángel divino,
que en el cielo tu eterno destino
por el dedo de Dios se escribió.
Mas si osare un extraño enemigo
profanar con su planta tu suelo,
piensa ¡oh Patria querida! que el cielo
un soldado en cada hijo te dio.

First Stanza:

*Let gird, oh Fatherland, your brow with olive
by the divine archangel of peace,
for in heaven your eternal destiny
was written by the finger of God.
But if some enemy outlander should dare
to profane your ground with his step,
think, oh beloved Fatherland, that heaven
has given you a soldier in every son.*

Coro:

Mexicanos, al grito de guerra
el acero aprestad y el bridón.
Y retiemble en sus centros la Tierra,
al sonoro rugir del cañón.
¡Y retiemble en sus centros la Tierra,
al sonoro rugir del cañón!

Chorus:

*Mexicans, at the cry of war,
make ready the steel and the bridle,
and the earth trembles at its centers
at the resounding roar of the cannon.
and the earth trembles at its centers
at the resounding roar of the cannon!*

Guzman: My name Martin Guzman. A state of anarchy must exist in Mexico! We Villaistas and Zapatistas want all the power to the land-owners. If you go to war for your nation, then you are an idiotic fool and a coward. General Zapata says that if ‘somebody’ tries to distribute the fruits of his labor, he will fill him full of bullets. You must never ask, holding a hat in your hand, for justice from the government of tyrants, but only pick up a gun. Revolution is Mexico’s gift to eternity! Benito Juarez said, ‘The people and the government must respect the rights of all. Among individuals, as among nations, peace is respect for the rights of others.’ Overthrow Carranismo! General Ignacio Zaragoza and 5,000 Zacapoaxtlan en el cinco de Mayo, 1862, defeated the great French army in the city of Puebla. Emperor Maximilian was executed, saying, “I die in a just cause. I forgive all, and pray that all may forgive me. May my blood flow for the good of this land. Viva Mexico!”

[Guzman pulls the Mexican flag.]

Obregon: Stop, Senor Guzman! We will now watch what the Americans in Hollywood say is a motion picture movie.

[There is a loud cheer quickly followed by silence. Lights fade to black. A gunshot is heard in the dark.]

Act 3 Scene 2

Setting: Villa and his army have marched triumphantly into Mexico City, while Zapata’s army still lies at its southern boundary, but inside of Mexico City proper. Villa and Zapata meet. Dec. 2nd, 1914. If shown, the soldiers around Villa are his Dorados or “gilded ones” because their uniforms have various gold trinkets on them and Zapata’s forces are very poor and likely drunk on tequila. Zapata wears a short black jacket, lavender shirt, blue neckerchief, pant seams lined with silver buttons, Spanish-style boots, sharp-toed and high-heeled, two gold rings, gaudily-colored handkerchiefs that emanate from his pockets and a wide-brimmed sombrero. Villa wears an artilleryman’s helmet, heavy brown sweater with a roll collar, khaki trousers stuffed into worn leggings and heavy, scuffed shoes. Villa and Zapata hug in an abrazo.

Villa: Senor General Zapata, today I realize my dream of meeting the chief of the great Revolution of the South. I came to meet the true man of the people.

Zapata: And now I realize the same dream regarding the Chief of the Northern Division. I congratulate myself for meeting a man who truly knows how to fight.

Villa: I've been at it for twenty-two years.

Zapata: And I since the age of eighteen.

Villa: I had an obligation to the Revolution. Carranza is shameless, taking over the Revolution. But now I govern Chihuahua with my army.

Zapata: I have said to all of you, always, this Carranza is an imbecile. My army is in Mexico

City and found that Carranza has taken all the money out of the mint, along with horses, ammunition and treasure. He pulled up the train tracks in his flight to Vera Cruz. He was able to get Woodrow Wilson's Marines to leave Vera Cruz on Nov. 23rd. Will Wilson support Carranza?

Guzman: Now is the time to strike Carranza and General Obregon. Only the winless General

Gonzalez and his army of the northeast guard them.

Zapata: General Gonzales is a bandit with a necktie.

Guzman: Senors, the other chiefs are hats, hanging on a rack. The rack is Carranza, and the best use of our forces is not to pick off the hats one by one but to topple the rack. Then all the hats will fall.

Villa: What will Interim President Gutierrez do about things?

Zapata: Let's have some cognac!

Isabel: Yes, General Zapata. Here is your cognac. Do you want the cognac, Pancho? Okay, here you are.

Villa: I will have water.

Isabel: I told you, Pancho. You never listen to me.

Villa: Our armies come from the people!

Zapata: The people love the land. They still don't believe it when I say, 'This land is yours.' They think it is a dream.

Villa: Now all will see that it is the people who rule, and if not, I have forty thousand Mausers, seventy-seven cannon, and sixteen million cartridges.

Zapata: Here is to our great armies!

Villa: Wouldn't you like a glass of water?

Zapata: No, you go ahead and drink it.

Villa: Yes, thank you.

Zapata: Let us talk in private.

Villa: Yes.

Zapata: Please, leave us.

Villa: Senor Guzman, give me the paper and pencil of Senor Martinez.

Guzman: Here you are.

Villa: Thank you.

Zapata: Tell me, General, in the Battle of Juarez, your entire army was in the trains that took the Federals by surprise?

Villa: That's right. It was in newspapers around the world!

Zapata: I could not move my entire army on trains.

Villa: But that is the way to do it. It makes your army far more powerful.

Zapata: No, my army does not move like that.

Villa: That is too bad. With General Angeles, my Army of one-hundred-thousand took Torreon twice, Chihuahua City, Zacatecas, and everything down to Mexico City. All of the north is mine up to the Sierra Madre Mountains, and General Obregon's Army of the Northwest is on the other side of the mountains.

Zapata: General Obregon disbanded the Federals in Mexico City but left a rear guard, harassing my Army of the South. In Mexico City, my army pays in silver pieces.

Villa: At Zacatecas, Huerta's Federals blew up the arsenal before routing. We cut them to shreds. That city was in chaos.

Zapata: Jungle trails are my railroad. What about the Convention's demand that you resign?

Villa: It's better to speak with my General Zapata first.

Zapata: I fight for the land and the people. When we have won, I will go back to farming.

What will you do, General Villa, after the Revolution is won? Will you go back to your pastures in Chihuahua?

Villa: To handle the bulls of Tepehuanes, the horses of Tepehuanes are best.

Zapata: You are my brother.

Villa: You are my brother too.

Zapata: Mexico is our nation.

Villa: Mexico is our family.

Zapata: It is better to die on your feet than live on your knees. But for now we endure the hardships of war.

Villa: I have slept on the ground all my life.

Zapata: We cannot be sure the fast-changing events are finished. But Paulino Martinez takes notes for history, and his newspaper.

Villa: Do you always wear that kind of hat?

Zapata: I never wear any kind but this.

Villa: I always used to wear that kind of hat, made of palm fiber, but for the past three years I've been wearing these.

Zapata: From the Villistas, I want Guillermo Garcia Aragon. He was a Zapatista.

Villa: But he is vice-president of the Convention, and named by Gutierrez as Superintendent of the National Palace.

Zapata: My brother, Eufemio, was Superintendent of the National Palace.

Villa: I agree. I want General Juan Andres Almanzan.

Zapata: But he is, at present, my guest. I am his host, in my home. It is dishonorable to treat one's guests with disrespect. This is the Law of Man.

Villa: I understand, my brother.

Zapata: Will you take, instead, Paulino Martinez, the journalist who is outside?

Villa: The journalist who owns this famous pencil and paper? That is acceptable. He wrote critically of President Francisco Madero in "La Voz de Juarez" that is published in Cuernavaca.

Zapata: He wrote poorly of President Madero?

Villa: Don't you read the newspapers, General Zapata?

Zapata: I read when I can.

Villa: You must read the papers carefully, my friend.

Zapata: I agree with you.

Villa: But Martinez will die for writing lies!

Zapata: And drinking all of my tequila! It is almost gone!

Villa: And for writing poorly of dear Francisco Madero!

Zapata: My brother, we must form an alliance between our two armies, as our envoys discussed at the Convention.

Villa: The Revolution moves fast. Our alliance must be dedicated to defeating Carrancismo.

Zapata: Yes, and dedicated to the poor. But I do not have forty thousand Mausers, seventy-seven cannon, and sixteen million cartridges.

Villa: I will commit to keeping you armed.

Zapata: It is simply a lack of ammunition that prevents Zapatistas from fighting.

Villa: I get much ammunition from the United States. Woodrow Wilson is my friend. Guzman travels to Washington for me every month.

Zapata: Mexico must have a constitutional government and president who is a civilian.

Villa: But not Carranza.

Zapata: No, not him.

Villa: We will enter Mexico City triumphantly together, and sit in the National Palace. What day do you want to do that?

Zapata: December 6th is a good day.

Villa: That is good.

Zapata: Let us call our guests back.

Villa: Yes, General Zapata.

Zapata: Come! We are finished.

Villa: Senor Guzman, give Mr. Martinez his famous paper and pencil back. Guard it with your life, many generations depend on it.

Guzman: Thank you, General Villa.

Villa: Wait a moment. I need that piece of paper with my notes.

Guzman: Here you are.

Villa: Here are the great journalist's famous words. Listen! 'This date should be engraved with diamonds in our history. It is the first day of the first year of the redemption of the Mexican people. It is the dawn of their happiness because two pure men, born of people, know their grief and fight for their happiness. The God of Nations shall guide you in the great roles you play in the grand undertaking of destiny. The journalist changes his skin like a rattlesnake. Pancho Villa will not be bitten!

[Lights fade to black.]

Act 4 **Scene 1**

Setting: Battle of Celaya. Apr 13th 1915. Costumes for Villa soldiers: rope for belt, khakis, leather slab for a shoe and sombrero. The Chorus Leader sings center stage, and then the scenes alternate between Villa's and Obregon's camps.

Villa: Muchachos! Before it gets dark we will burst into Celaya in blood and fire! We are the best cavalry in the world!

Chorus Leader:

De Los Combates De Celaya
El dia trece de abril
Los combates principiaron
En la ciudad de Celaya,
Los carrancistas triunfaron.

Villa: I am exhausted from dancing all night. When will this battle start?

Guzman: Obregon has sent a large force into El Guaje Ranch.

Villa: He does not realize that we are already there. Cut him to shreds.

Chorus Leader:

Los carrancistas adentro,
Los villistas les ceyeron,
Les empiezan a hacer fuego
Y los de adentro corrieron.

Obregon: Fall back, behind the barbed wire! Let Villa send in his cavalry.
Fall back, now!

Chorus Leader:

Les decia Alvaro Obregon:
—Ahora lo vamos a ver,
Hoy me matan o los mato
O me quitan el poder.

Villa: Send in another wave of cavalry!

Guzman: The horses are unable to stand. The ground is too bloody and littered with dead horses and soldiers. Obregon has trapped us in barbed wire. His machine guns are precisely placed.

Obregon: He is running low on ammunition.

Maria Pistolas: Do we attack, senor?

Obregon: Wait to see if he attacks in the morning. Then we will launch our cavalry.

Maria Pistolas: Will Villa attack again?

Obregon: He is Villa. He will attack.

Maria Pistolas: I have counted 30 cavalry charges. They have nearly broken our line.

Obregon: The line will hold.

Maria Pistolas: One charge has taken Silao. He cut the rail lines and we are surrounded.

[A cannonball blows off Obregon's right arm.]

Obregon: Ah! My arm!

[Obregon takes out his pistol and attempts to shoot himself.]

Maria Pistolas: General, no!

Obregon: Oh, my God, the pain! Why won't my pistol fire?!

[Obregon and the Maria Pistolas struggle.]

Maria Pistolas: I cleaned your pistol and I did not replace the bullets.

Obregon: You must shoot me! I order you to shoot me!

Maria Pistolas: I will not shoot you!

Obregon: Give me your pistol! Give me your pistol!

Maria Pistolas: No, general! You will not get my pistol!

Chorus Leader:

Por el lado de Apaseo
Entro el general Urbina,
Les ha quitado fortines
A tiro de carabina.

Por el lado Santa Cruz
Estaban posesionados,
Alli fue donde acabaron
Casi todos los *rayados*.

Villa: I can take the waiting no longer. How many weeks have we been here?

Guzman: It is better to wait and force General Obregon to attack. Otherwise, he will rout us again, back to Irapuato.

Villa: The heat is unbearable, swarming flies. My soldiers live among lice, and rats are devouring the corpses. Why won't he attack in the open field? We must lure him. What kind of fighter is General Obregon!?

Guzman: He will not abandon his defenses.

Villa: We must attack! Send in another wave of cavalry!

Chorus Leader:

Les decia Alvaro Obregon:
– Vamonos a pecho a tierra,
Vamos a ver a ese Villa,
Que dicen que es la pantera.

Decia Alvaro Obregon,
En su combate en Celaya:
– Entrale, Francisco Villa,
A dirigir la campana.

Maria Pistolas: Let me help you with that, señor.

Obregon: Thank you.

Maria Pistolas: Villa is returning with his cavalry.

Obregon: If it rains, we will be very lucky this time.

Maria Pistolas: I think that it is going to rain.

Chorus Leader:

Llegaron las avanzadas
Desde El Guaje hasta La Venta,
Nomas se oia el tronadero
De mausser y treinta treinta.

Obregon: Villa's infantry is finally attacking. Marvelous, like a golden field in the sunlight. Villa has finally quit.

Maria Pistolas: He has quit, señor?

Obregon: A rare and beautiful sight. They will all fall. Now we will attack.

Chorus Leader:

Entrale, Francisco Villa,
No que eres tan afamado?
En la hacienda de Sarabia
Corriste como un venado.

Si no les corro me alcanzan,
Me tumban el pantalon
Y me llevan de la cola
Como se fuera raton.

Guzman: General Angeles reports that our ammunition is nearly gone.

Villa: It has stopped raining. We can attack again.

Guzman: Perhaps we should retreat.

Villa: We have come very close to breaking his line several times.

Chorus Leader:

Senores, tengan presente
Lo que en Celaya paso:
Que el ejercito villista
Casi todo se acabo.

Obregon decia a los yaquis:
No tengan miedo que mueran;
Muchachos, les aconsejo,
Reviviran en su tierra.

Guzman: General Obregon has launched his cavalry.

Villa: We are finished.

Chorus Leader:

Respondio un soldado de ellos:
No es cierto, mi general,
Le escribi a un hermano muerto,
No me ha vuelto a contestar.

Todos los carabineros
Y tambien la artilleria
Peleaban toda la noche
y tambien todito el dia.

Maria Pistolas: We have won, General Obregon!

Obregon: Villa is routed!

Maria Pistolas: We have captured cannon and ammunition.

Obregon: Villa will hobble through the mountains to Agua Prieta.
Carranza will return to Mexico City. Woodrow Wilson will recognize
Carranza. Carranza will deal with Zapata. And I will kill First Chief of the
Constitutionalist Army, Carranza.

Maria Pistolas: The Division of the North has begun defecting to our
side. Villista officers are hiding among the common soldiers.

Obregon: Tell them they will have amnesty if they admit they are officers.
Then execute the officers.

Maria Pistolas: Yes, general. Congratulations on your victory, Senor
Obregon.

Obregon: Thank you for not giving me your pistol.

Chorus Leader: We are defeated, General Villa. How do we escape?

Villa: We must regroup.

Chorus Leader: Can you grow your army again?

Villa: The Americans have fortified the border. The ass, President Wilson will turn against me, preventing ammunition crossing. Obregon will chase me to Aqua Prieta. My army will invade America at Columbus, New Mexico!

Chorus Leader: We believed that you were invincible, General Villa. We left our families and fought hard for the Revolution.

Villa: My army is destroyed. There is no God in the skies. The Americans will pursue me, a fifty thousand pesos reward: so much reward and so little head.

It's a long way to Tipperary,

It's a long way to go.

It's a long way to Tipperary

To the sweetest girl I know!

Goodbye Piccadilly,

Farewell Leicester Square!

It's a long, long way to Tipperary,

But my heart's right there.

Chorus Leader:

Ya con esta me despido,

Antes de que yo me vaya,

Ya les cante a mis amigos

Los combates de Celaya.

Act 4 Scene 2

Setting: Zapata is killed by Pablo Gonzales. Enter Chorus Leader. It is dusk and Zapata is at a ranch. Pablo Gonzales is in the shadows.

Zapata: I can see the stars. The night is dark. What is beyond the night? My thoughts are not clear. I fear nothing, not even death. I feel the dust in my hands, dry, sifting in my fingers. It is dust of my ancestors. The ancient gods live in the dirt, worshippers of the sun, a civilization destroyed by the Spanish. The people live and the land must again belong to the people!

Valentina, Valentina,
Yo te quisiera decir
Que una passion me domina
Y es la que me hizo venir.

Dicen que por tus amores
Un mal me van a seguir,
No le hace que sean el Diablo
Yo tambien me se morir.

Si porque tomo tequila
Manana tomo jerez,
Si porque me ven borracho
Manana ya no me ven.

Zapata: I lead an army. I am alone on this black night. My goals have not been met. I can see devils in my path. I am a man. There is nothing before me that I fear.

Valentina, Valentina,
Rendido estoy a tus pies,
Si me han de matar manana
Que me maten de una vez

Zapata: The fight for land rights must never end until the Mexican people have ownership of their land and there is peace and justice in all of Mexico! Land and Liberty! Land and Liberty! I cry aloud in a clear voice for all of the peoples of the earth: Land and Liberty forever! And Revolution until all humans own their lands! I grow tired. Mexico is my land, my country. Mexico is my home.

[A flash of light and a gunshot.]

Zapata: Mexico!

[Zapata falls, dead. Lights fade to black.]

Act 4
Scene 3

Setting: Enter Chorus Leader, Pancho Villa, Isabel, and Guzman. A Vendor, his face obscured by a hat, is on the other side of the stage.

Chorus Leader:

Yo soy rielera, tengo mi Juan
El es mi vida, yo soy su querer
Cuando le dicen que ya se va el tren
Adios mi rielera ya se va tu Juan.

Cuando dice el conductor
Va a salir para San Juan
Con la que va a refinar
Le llevo su canastita.

Yo soy rielera...

Guzman: General Villa, there is a rumor that here in Parral assassins are lurking.

Isabel: That is not possible. General Obregon is not as strong as my Pancho.

Villa: There is not a man alive that can lay a hand on Pancho Villa!

Isabel: And what about a woman?

Villa: Women do not know how to shoot a gun.

Isabel: You should be careful of Mexican women, my husband. We have been changed by La Revolucion.

Guzman: Do you think the assassins have been sent by President Obregon?

Villa: My men have turned into cowards. We have been away from the battlefield too long.

Chorus Leader:

Tengo me par de pistolas
Con su cacha de marfil
Para darme de balazos
Con los del ferrocarril.

Yo soy rielera...

Tengo mi par de pistolas
Con su parquet muy cabal
Una para mi querida
Y otra para mi rival.

Yo soy rielera...

Adios muchachos de Lerdo
De Gomez y de Torreon
Ya se van los garroteros
Ya se acabo esta funcion.

Yo soy rielera...

Guzman: We only want your safety, my general.

Isabel: I will give my life for you, Pancho! I love you. I know that you will succeed.

Villa: We have lost so many men. General Fierro could not free himself from quicksand because his pockets were full of gold. Poor, ignorant Mexico. Until she has education nothing much can be done for her. I was twenty-five before I could sign my own name. I fought for ten years so that poor men could live like human beings, have their own land, send their children to school and have human freedom.

Isabel: Pancho Villa is a good man! He has changed Mexico!

Guzman: Viva Villa!

[The vendor takes out a handkerchief and wipes his brow and then motions above him with it.

Sounds of gunshot and lights flash. The three men fall dead. The vendor runs away.]

Villa: Don't let it end like this.

Isabel: What do you want me to do?

Villa: Tell them I said something.

Isabel: What?

Villa: La Revolucion had a purpose, meaning. We fought for mankind.

Chorus Leader: Viva Villa! Viva Villa! Viva Villa! Viva Villa!

Guzman: Viva Villa! Viva Villa! Viva Villa! Viva Villa!

Act 5
Scene 1

Setting: Guzman and Brier in a bar. Enter Chorus Leader.

Chorus Leader:

The sun sets on Revolution,
Lovers are dead and gone;
People return to their farms, millions dead;
Through talking and battles,
No leader came to change a nation;
What a waste it all is.
Poets forever search for words for love,
For men and women are very different from each other,
And yet close and trying to understand
The ways of their mate.
Why has God formed lovers like this?
Might He have made things easier?
Sadly, all love must someday die, somehow,
As must Revolution, with its romance, valor, heroism,
Fade into memory and the history books—
The leaders must face their tragic fates.
And someday, if we hope enough,
The story will be told again.

Guzman: Can you pour me a drink?

Brier: I don't like to pour your drinks. If we are alone, it's okay. But when we're in a place like this, I would rather you pour your own drinks. I have a reputation to maintain. You can understand that?

Guzman: That's fine.

Brier: Do you want some wine?

Guzman: I want some whiskey.

Brier: You better make it a double. You have a long trip ahead of you.

Guzman: How do you know where I am going?

Brier: You are going to Washington. This one time I will pour your drink. Don't make it habit. I'll go get your drink.

Guzman: Thank you.

Brier: I am not going to miss you.

Guzman: What does that mean?

Brier: It may be time to say goodbye.

Guzman: Goodbye, as in forever?

Brier: Yes, forever, my love.

Guzman: That is sad. I don't know what is worse: sadness or losing love.

Brier: Losing love is awful. Sadness is a passing whim.

Guzman: Sadness through suffering is the hardest thing to take, because man is prone to mistakes. Love can always be found again. Perhaps this is what makes men different from women?

Brier: You are the poet.

Guzman: Sadness cannot be helped, sometimes.

Brier: I would have thought that you cared more about love.

Guzman: One can always act to save love and love lives forever even if it is not saved.

Brier: You have given me life and shown me love. You have helped me to understand the meaning of love. I am grateful for that, more than you can ever understand.

Guzman: I understand.

Brier: Do you?

Guzman: Yes, I hear what you are saying. And your words have meaning. But love is beyond understanding, just as the Revolution is love. And Mexico is love. We had love. I understand the meaning of love. Do not think that you are going to explain to me the meaning of love.

Brier: Martin, I will always love you.

Guzman: It's you who does not understand love.

Brier: That is saying a lot. But I believe you, I suppose.

Guzman: Your heart is cold.

Brier: How can you say that to me?

Guzman: Your words have little meaning, like flashes, thunder and purpose and no light.

Brier: You make it sound so cruel.

Guzman: This is not easy for me.

Brier: And what about me?

Guzman: The Revolution will live, despite you or me. Though it falters, the ideals of the Revolution will exist forever, and others will take up the fight.

Brier: Revolutionaries will not fight anymore.

Guzman: Villa is dead; but won't Pascal Orozco fight?

Brier: General Orozco is dead too. He was killed by Texas Rangers in Lobo, Texas. He was a good man.

Guzman: I did not hear that he had been killed.

Brier: He escaped from jail. Huerta died in jail in El Paso too. The Americans killed him.

Guzman: What of counter-revolutionaries now?

Brier: Do not mock me with your sly smile!

Guzman: Lower your voice, woman; I have said nothing to cause alarm. You said you do not like this place.

Brier: Do not talk to me like that!

Guzman: I think that you should control your emotions.

Brier: I do not like it here. I do not like you! You still do not know who I am! I have many very strong friends and you should think twice before you push me around!

Guzman: Will you have a drink too?

Brier: No. Why are you not drinking your whiskey?

Guzman: I have a Revolution to fight! You do not care about the Revolution or its ideals. Your cause is dead. Our love is dead. Leave me alone. The Revolution will never die!

[Lights fade to black.]

Act 5

Scene 2

Setting: Obregon is assassinated. Obregon speaks at a political function, held outside. An artist named Jose de Leon Toral enters, painting a sketch of Obregon. Enter Chorus Leader.

Obregon: 23 April, 1920, my Plan of Agua Prieta is removing Carranza from power. One, that national sovereignty resides in the original people. Carranza replied that the gold and silver bullion and the dies from the mint and the horses and cushioned chairs shall be removed from his Expeditionary Column of Legality fleeing Mexico City for Vera Cruz!

Chorus Leader:

Carranza's horse was shot

The President fled into mountains

Pursued by assassins.

Obregon: Let me tell you a story. A new minister from Spain arrived. Carranza honored him with a banquet at Chapultepec. The minister discovered his watch was missing. He looked to me on his left but I have no right arm. He looked to his right; and there was Candido Aguilar, his left arm paralyzed. 'This is no government but a den of thieves,' the minister shouted! Carranza, sitting across, produced the watch and said, 'Take it and be quiet.' You see, here we are a little inclined to thievery but I only have one arm!

Chorus Leader:

Carranza was shot dead in a tent

Eating breakfast of eggs and weak coffee.

Obregon: Mexico has undergone great change in my administration. We have implemented land redistribution. My Minister of Education, Vasconcelos, began the mural project that has become an artistic movement with Diego Rivera and his Dieguitos, Roberto Montenegro, Gerardo Murillo, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Jose Clemente Orozco. There is fighting between certain groups and the Catholics. Recently, there was an incident when the socialists raised their red and black flag on the tower of the cathedral in Morelia. The Catholic Church is the scourge of Mexico. The Catholic Church must support the Revolution with its great amount of money now! Priests must submit to my government and any powers or rights that they had under previous administrations are gone. Forever! In some cases, priests have been executed, such as Father Pro, Segura Vilchis, Juan Tirado. Let this be a lesson! We are the New Mexico! We are the Revolutionaries! The men that I ordered executed were nothing more than militants fighting for the Catholic Church.

[Jose de Leon Toral shoots Obregon in the face. Lights go black.]

Act 5

Scene 3

Setting: Guzman and Brier are in the same bar.

Guzman: I will leave you with two more lines. Here, I write them on your hand. It's a message to something poets know well.

Brier: You say such strange things.

Guzman: Read it.

Brier: ‘When you get to hell, ask the devil if it is wise to cut the heart of someone who loves you.’ Why do you write something like that for me? You are not drinking your drink. That is not like a poet.

Guzman: I will drink in a minute.

Brier: I rather that you don’t drink. You are different when you drink. I guess all poets drink a lot. But now it is okay. This is our goodbye, so drink.

Guzman: I have to sign my poem on your hand. Here.

Brier: Ow! Your cut me with your pen.

Guzman: And you cut my heart, the heart of the poet. Now curl up your hand because I want you to carry my poem with my signature in your blood to the devil. And when you meet him, unravel my poem for him.

Brier: Drink your whiskey, you fool. I want to end this and leave.

Guzman: End what?

Brier: End you. End our relationship. And end the Revolution! It’s dead and gone. You are not worth my time. Oh!

Guzman: What’s the matter? Is it your stomach?

Brier: Oh, Martin, is there no mercy in this world? It hurts.

Guzman: It hurts the same way you knew I was going to Washington with a letter from General Villa to the State Department in Havana. If you are trying to be a spy then you are very bad at it.

What saved you this long is my love of you. And I do not love you anymore! You are nothing to me! You are now dead! You have betrayed the Revolution and our love! Forever! You are a

Diaz spy trying to kill me!

Brier: Oh, make it stop, Martin! What is it?

Guzman: It is a gift from the Zapatistas in the jungle and from me to you.

Brier: I am unafraid of your pain. I love you!

Guzman: I love you too. I am sorry to see you leave me. I will always love you.

Brier: The pain is awful. Help me! Why are you doing this to me?

Guzman: It is dangerous to cut the heart of a poet.

Brier: I don’t want to die!

Guzman: Goodbye, Susanna.

Brier: How can I fix our love back together? Give me the antidote! If you saw that I was not who I said I was, then why did you continue to hold on to me? Was it torture? Are you that cruel? You fool! I may die, but it is you who are dead! I lived for love! And the Revolution never filled my

heart with love. The Revolution will die too! Even in Havana, you could not satisfy me and the Revolution could not fill me with love! I die now, happy in my own love that is in my soul and it will exist for all eternity!

Guzman: Viva, La Revolucion!

[Guzman drinks his whiskey. His drink is poisoned. Guzman dies. Lights fade to black.]

Act 5
Scene 4

Setting: A machina a deux with the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl. Quetzalcoatl wears a mask and a full costume. His voice may be a recording played loudly over a sound system, in a deep voice with rolling thunder in the background.

Quetzalcoatl: I am Quetzalcoatl, Aztec feather-serpent God. I devour your bones, eat your pulsating heart, and drink your blood. I am living, forever! I am heaven and oblivion and abyss. I am the universe! I am a god!

[Lights fade to black. Curtain falls.]

The world premiere of *La Revolucion and Moctezuma* was at Mint Theater (311 West 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036), April 6-23rd, 2011. The cast and crew: Reanna Muskovitz (stage manager), Rebecca Love (costume designer), Alexandra Turshen (choreographer).

Moctezuma!

Dramatis Personae

The Magician	Alexandra Turshen
The High Priest	Marlene Villafane
Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras	Daniel Ramos
Bernal Díaz del Castillo	Ash Goldeh
Moctezuma II	Louis Martinez
Teotlalco, a princess from Tula	Carolina Santos Read
Quetzalcoatl	Carolina Santos Read
Octle	Angelko Mar
Human Sacrifices	Angelko Mar
Hernan Cortes	Ronnie Armani
La Malinche	Suellen Romani

Act One
Scene One

Setting: Quetzalcoatl and chorus of masked gods. Smoke Machine.
Curtain opens slowly, revealing Quetzalcoatl, center stage.

Quetzalcoatl: I am Quetzalcoatl, feather serpent,
Wandering the Universe in exile on a raft of snakes!
Sent by my twin, the evil Tezcatlipoca
My mother is the Virgin, Coatlicue.
I created mankind from my blood, in the underworld, Mictlan.
I formed the present, fifth-world, for humans.

Chorus of Masked Gods:

Quetzalcoatl flying serpent, God of Wind
God of fiery red planet in black night
Your sky is reborn again at dawn
Mountains shake in fear and terror
You are returned to Earth again!
You are returned to Earth again!

Quetzalcoatl:

I no longer walk the white streets of Tenochtitlan
Or climb my magnificent temples in the center
Of that jewel of a clean city;
The causeways and canoes of Lake Texcoco,
My people working on chinampas.
The Golden Age of artistic expression
Ended when Tezcatlipoca tricked me;
Drunk on pulque, I made love to my sister
And left in shame across the Eastern Ocean

Chorus of Masked Gods:

Quetzalcoatl flying serpent, God of Wind
God of fiery red planet in black night
Golden eagle on the cactus eating nochtli
The site of your Holy City, Tenochtitlan
You are returned to Earth again!
You are returned to Earth again!

Quetzalcoatl:

It is the year one-reed in my calendar
The day my exile ends and I return home
Tezcatlipoca's line of Kings has ruled Tenochtitlan
Ever since I left my City.
King Moctezuma Two Tlatoani of Tenochtitlan is now King
I will appear as a man, arriving from the Eastern Sun.
I will be in disguise and wear a beard and white skin.

Chorus of Masked Gods:

Quetzalcoatl flying serpent, God of Wind
God of fiery red planet in black night
Send messages ahead of your ship
The flower wars of summer have begun
You are returned to Earth again!
You are returned to Earth again!

Quetzalcoatl:

Past will be reconciled with future
Tezcatlipoca will pay for his cruel games
I will destroy Moctezuma!
His Kingdom and people will end.
And Tenochtitlan will be brought to ruin!
[Exit Quetzalcoatl.]

Chorus of Masked Gods:

Quetzalcoatl flying serpent, God of Wind
God of fiery red planet in black night
Send messages ahead of your ship
The flower wars of summer have begun
You are returned to Earth again!
You are returned to Earth again!
[Lights fade to black.]

Act One
Scene Two

Setting: 1519. Moctezuma's Court, Tenochtitlan. Enter Teotlalco, singing.

Teotlalco:

Causeways gleaming white
In the shining morning sun
Babies stir in mothers' arms
Fresh breath of morning air
Awakens a city from night.

[Enter Moctezuma, Magician, Teoctlamacazqui.]

Teoctlamacazqui: Emperor Moctezuma, a strange gray bird crashed into a fishermen's boat on Lake Texcoco.

Moctezuma: I saw the same bird last night in a dream in the House of Darkness. I saw the Land of the Gods in a mirror that was inside the bird's head, Serpent Woman, Teoctlamacazqui Tlillancalqui. And above the Gods are many bright stars. Men are riding deer, approaching our great city, Tenochtitlan, bringing war and death with them. The men have hair on their faces.

Magician: When I went to the shores of the great sea, I saw a mountain range floating in the middle of the water, moving around without touching the shore. Men come out of the towers to fish in a small boat. There were about fifteen people, with blue or red jackets, and very light skin and long hair.

Moctezuma: Are they gods?

Magician: They appeared from the eastern sun.

Moctezuma: Keep watch on the shore at Nauhtla and Tuztlan, and wherever the strangers appear.

Teotlalco:

A red flower floats on the lake
Never falling below the waves
Bobbing and tossing here and there
Maybe the pedals ride forever?
Sun beginning its setting in the sky

Teoctlamacazqui: Tongues of fire are appearing in the sky every night of this year, one reed. Suddenly, the roof on the temple of Huitzilopochtli

caught fire. A noiseless thunderbolt destroyed the temple of Xiuhtecuhtli, God of Fire. A rock fell from the sky and divided into three parts. The rock created sparks in the sky and fell into the lake, causing the water to violently foam without warning, drowning many houses. I have cut my ears and my blood flowed upon my obsidian knife, to understand these messages of the Gods.

Moctezuma: What have you learned?

Teoctlamacazqui: Nothing, Moctezuma.

Magician: Moctezuma, we have taken sacrifices to continue the sun's light and blessing. A strange woman is still crying every night, 'O my beloved sons, you are going to die! Where shall I hide you?'

Teoctlamacazqui: Two-headed people appeared and were taken to your zoo. They mysteriously vanished.

Moctezuma: Portends come before the fall of great empires. Nezahualpilli, King of Texcoco, predicted doom to the Mexican empire and the Triple Alliance. He has proposed a game of Totoloque and bet his kingdom against 3 turkeys. It is his lack of faith in our Triple Alliance that is destroying it. My nation lives or dies on my every word.

Teotlalco:

Then in the darkness

Left-handed hummingbird

Fights the evil moon and stars;

Sacrifice fresh hearts to Huitzilopochtli

Give him strength to fight!

Moctezuma: It is the god! This is the year one reed, the year Quetzalcoatl is to return to Earth as a man from the Eastern sun. I must protect my people. Bring me a sacrifice for Huitzilopochtli. Awaken my Jaguar and Eagle Knights. Call my council: Cuappiatzin, chief of the house of arrows; Quetzalaztatzin, keeper of the house of chalk; Hecateupatiltzin, chief of the refugees of the South. We will learn what the God has to say. Take great gifts to the strangers, worthy of gods. Listen to what He tells you, and remember it!

Magician: Yes, Moctezuma.

[All exit. Lights fade to black.]

Act One
Scene Three

Setting: Cortes arrives on the beach, greeted by Magician and Teoclamacazqui, who try to determine if Cortes is Quetzalcoatl or human.

La Malinche: Greetings, Spaniards! Praise be unto God, Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the Holy Ghost!

Cortes: How do you know Spanish?

La Malinche: I learned it from Geronimo de Aguilar.

Cortes: Aguilar must have sailed with Juan de Grijalva in 1518, and was lost.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: Or Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba before. Aguilar was a Franciscan Friar. He must have learned the native tongue and taught Spanish to this woman.

Cortes: Pedro de Alvarado, have the weapons and cannon and horses brought on shore! Fortune favors the bold!

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: Yes, compadre. You there! Take action!
[Exit Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras. La Malinche gestures with her hands, hereafter, to indicate she is interpreting.]

Magician: This woman is one of your gifts, from King Moctezuma. We have been expecting you, O Lord.

Teoclamacazqui: We followed your ship as it traveled up the coast.

Cortes: I speak Spanish to God, Italian to women, French to men, and German to my horse, as Bernal Díaz del Castillo will attest.

La Malinche: Malinche, praise be unto King Charles the Fifth, Holy Roman Emperor.

Cortes: What did you call me?

La Malinche: Malinche. That is they name they have given you.

Cortes: Tell them I am grateful for your assistance. You will be very useful.

Magician: We have come from the City of Mexico, Tenochtitlan.

Cortes: Perhaps you tell the truth or you may lie to me.

Magician: If the god will deign to hear us, your deputy, Moctezuma, has sent us to render you homage.

Teoclamacazqui: Moctezuma has the City of Mexico in his care. He says, 'The god is weary.' This is the year one-reed. It is the year that

Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent, will return with white skin from the Eastern Sea, and bring an end to the Aztec civilization. Moctezuma has brought you many great gifts, O Lord: a collar of fine shells to cover the breast; a headdress made of feathers from the sacred quetzal bird; ornaments, in the form of serpents; a collar of chalchihuites, woven in the petatillo style; a diadem made of jaguar skin and pheasant feathers and with a green stone and much more. All of these are divine adornments.

Cortes: Where is this treasure?

Magician: Do you mean the gifts of Moctezuma, Great One?

Cortes: Yes. Why have you not brought them to me?

Teoctlamacazqui: They are on shore. We only feared losing these great gifts in the boat, my Lord.

Cortes: And is this all, your gift?

[Enter Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras.]

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: Caudillo, the weapons and horses are on their way to shore. Some Indians have gathered to meet our ships.

Magician: Are you not happy, Our Lord? We have brought you some food to eat.

Cortes: Is this how you welcome people to your land?

Magician: Please, this food was carefully prepared by our King.

[Cortes smells inside a bag and then throws it away.]

Cortes: Sweet Jesus, Mother Mary! Disgusting! There is blood sprinkled on this food! Is this human blood?! Oh my God!

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: Kill them!

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: Be calm, Pedro, they are not yet Christians.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: Are they trying to poison us? Captain, throw that abomination overboard into the water.

Teoctlamacazqui: Does the god not like the taste of human blood?

Cortes: What? God?

Magician: Malinche, will you come ashore and take your gifts and your sacred calendar, one in silver and one in gold?

Cortes: Gold! These calendars are made in gold?

Magician: Yes.

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: And silver!

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: It's true, we are in the land of El Dorado! Let's march to this city, Tenochtitlan, and take all of the gold and treasure for our glory and The King!

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: We will scour these lands day and night and kill every one of these disgusting creatures in our path!

Cortes: Enough! Do you have more gold?

Teoctlamacazqui: Why do you ask, Lord?

Magician: Yes, we have much gold in Tenochtitlan.

Cortes: I and my conquistadors suffer from a sickness of the heart that can only be cured with gold.

Teoctlamacazqui: Gold cures your heart? We will cure your heart with much gold, Malinche.

Cortes: That is good! My heart is filled with much strength! If I give you a helmet, can you fill it with gold dust for me?

Magician: Yes, we can do that for you.

Cortes: Here are some green glass beads for the King.

Teoctlamacazqui: My Lord, these are beautiful beyond belief, and the green of the Quetzal bird.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: Look how valuable they regard these simple, green glass beads.

Magician: What a precious gift, Lord! I thank you, on behalf of King Moctezuma.

[A bell rings.]

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: Gentlemen, it is the hour of Ave Maria.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: We must pray.

[Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras, and Cortes fall to their knees before a log tied together in a cross and sign Ave Maria.]

Ave Maria

Gratia plena

Maria, gratia plena

Maria, gratia plena

Ave, ave dominus

Dominus tecum

Benedicta tu in mulieribus

Et benedictus

Et benedictus fructus ventris

Ventris tuae, Jesus.

Ave Maria.

Ave Maria
Mater Dei
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus
Ora pro nobis
Ora, ora pro nobis peccatoribus
Nunc et in hora mortis
Et in hora mortis nostrae
Et in hora mortis nostrae
Et in hora mortis nostrae
Ave Maria

Teoctlamacazqui: Why do you humble yourselves before a log cut in that fashion?

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: Caudillo, we have the chance of explaining our faith to these savages. We must force them to understand.

Cortes: Emissaries of Moctezuma, this is the cross of our Great Lord, Jesus Christ, who gave His life on Earth, in order for us mortals to achieve everlasting life in His Kingdom of heaven, and God and the Holy Ghost.

Teoctlamacazqui: We will report to our Great King about your three gods.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: There is one God in Heaven, not three. Perhaps, these pagan heathens are not capable of understanding our religion.

Cortes: Now we shall show you the fire of a dragon and the roar of thunder, from the King who lives on the Eastern Sun! Chain them to the deck, about their necks and ankles! Wake up, Sweet Mary! I have heard that Mexicans are very great warriors, brave and terrible. But I am not convinced; I want to see for myself. Give them swords and we will fight at daybreak on the beach!

Teoctlamacazqui: Oh Lord, we are simple emissaries, not fit for battle with great warriors such as you and your men. We are ordered to report back to King Moctezuma. If we do not obey, we will surely be put to death.

Cortes: No! It must take place! Even in Castile they say Mexicans are brave warriors. I want to see. Therefore, eat an early meal. I will eat too. Good cheer!

Magician: Oh great God, please do not do this to us!

Cortes: Fire the cannon!

[There are sounds of cannon and Teoctlamacazqui and Magician are mad with fear.]

Cortes: Take the cavalry and ride the horses on the beach until nightfall! Fire muskets! Cry songs of War!

[Teoctlamacazqui and Magician run away]

La Malinche: Will you chase them and kill them, Malinche?

Cortes: No. I want my helmet of gold. Let them report to Moctezuma that I am this god, what is His name?

La Malinche: Quetzalcoatl. I will tell you about Him.

Cortes: Yes, Quetzalcoatl. Come, we will go ashore.

La Malinche: Yes, Malinche.

[Lights fade to black.]

Act Two Scene One

Setting: Moctezuma's court. Enter Moctezuma, Magician, Teoctlamacazqui.

Teoctlamacazqui: They ate bread called cassava and drank wine and prayed to a fearful female god called The Virgin Mary.

Moctezuma: Did they eat the prepared food?

Magician: The god spit it out, my Lord.

Moctezuma: That is strange.

Teoctlamacazqui: The strangers caused us deafness from what is called cannon. A thing like a ball of stone comes out shooting sparks and raining fire. The smoke that comes out with it has an odor like rotten mud that painfully penetrates into the brain. If the cannon are aimed against the mountain, the mountain splits and cracks open.

Magician: The strangers dress in iron armor and wear iron casques on their heads, and carry swords of iron. They ride the deer you saw in visions; but these deer are as tall as a house! These beasts are part man and part divine creature, from the world of Acolmiztli, of Mictlan, dragons. Only the faces of the men can be seen, white like lime, with yellow and some with red and long beards.

Moctezuma: They are gods! What must I do? I am powerless before them and yet I must save my kingdom. Every step I take is uncertain. Who can I call on for advice?

Teoctlamacazqui: Some of the men are black. And the strangers have dogs that eat men, with flat ears and long, dangling tongues, with eyes like fire that flash and shoot off sparks. These monster dogs wear armor and have hollow bellies, flanks long and narrow, bounding here and there, all-powerful, panting, spotted like an ocelot.

Moctezuma: I pray for your mercy, Quetzacoatl! I am merely your caretaker! Serpent Woman! You must cast a horrible spell on these gods and send them back into the sea!

Magician: My Lord, please rise off the ground. I am to cast a spell on a god?

Moctezuma: How can you cast a spell on a god, Magician? Tell me!

Magician: I do not know, Lord. Perhaps with your guidance, I can?

Moctezuma: Liar!

Magician: I am confused by your words, my Lord.

Moctezuma: And your cowardice makes me want to turn you into a sacrifice to the gods before the morning!

Magician: No, Moctezuma. I will prepare the spells and dances to ward off these strangers.

Moctezuma: Go now!

[Magician Teoctlamacazqui exit. Lights fade to black.]

Act Two Scene Two

Setting: Malinche and Cortes in Cortes' camp.

[Enter Octli, who is blind, led by Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras and Bernal Díaz del Castillo.]

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: This man was found wandering the battlefield, stealing from our dead soldiers. He tried to cast spells on us.

Cortes: Hurry up and bury the dead.

Octli: Get your hands off of me! Release me, now!

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: He is blind, Caudillo. He has much knowledge of the savages' religion.

La Malinche: Be careful with this one, Malinche.

Cortes: Do you know him?

La Malinche: He is the prophet, Octli, named for the hallucinogenic drink of the maguey plant given to sacrificial victims to help them travel to the other side.

Cortes: He is harmless. Leave us now.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: Yes, my lord.

Octli: Is this the God, La Malinche?

Cortes: How does he know your name? Only I have called you by that name.

La Malinche: Listen, Malinche. Yes, Octli. It is Quetzalcoatl.

Octli: Ah ha! Yes, it is the great Quetzalcoatl to walk the Earth again. Five great ages have past: the first of Lord of Darkness, Texcatlipoca; the second to that of Quetzalcoatl; but He left us on a raft of snakes. He missed the third age of rain god Tlaloc, and the fourth of Chalchiuhtlicue. But Quetzalcoatl created the fifth age! Yes, he did! And it is for humans and ruled by the fire God, Xiuhtecuhtli.

La Malinche: Go away! Drink your alcohol and go to sleep!

Octli: Ometeotl. Ometeotl. The Supreme One.

Cortes: Wait. Why does Quetzalcoatl return to Earth?

Octli: My Lord, only you can answer that.

Cortes: I am beginning to believe that I am Quetzalcoatl.

Octli: It is as the prophesy says.

Cortes: What prophesy? It's the same thing they said on the beach.

La Malinche: I told you to ignore what he says. If you listen too long, you will go mad like he is.

Octli: That you will end the of line of Kings.

Cortes: Does he read my thoughts? You are right, it is best not to listen. Go away. Take some glass beads.

Octli: Long ago, ships came from the stars and landed of Earth. Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli, Tonatiuh, Metzli, Xolotl walked the Earth. Now the Gods come from the Eastern Sea. In the deep caves, the serpent crawls the earth, his scales scraping the dirt, his sinuous muscles twisting, tightening, power of all imagination. Feather serpent! Feather serpent! From the egg of eternity, breeding man in your broods of slithering yoke. Bending the forces that trick the mind with a staff of Kings!

La Malinche: Go away! Go away!

Octli: And then the Gods were not gods anymore; but merely confused and lost, wandering, forever wandering. Wandering the Earth. There are many stories to tell in the Universe. There are few listeners to the ancient tales.

[Octli exits.]

Cortes: Come, to my tent. Do not fear this fool.

[Cortes and La Malinche enter Cortes' tent.]

Octli: You will pay for your crimes, Malinche, and not taste victory! The old ways are dying. The game is over, it is finished.

[Octli exits.]

Cortes: With my army of Tlaxcalans and Tlaxcalteceans, I now have a force to pit against Moctezuma's army!

La Malinche: Moctezuma's warriors have conquered these armies for ages.

Cortes: Yes, but now these nations are rebelling against the King, and I and my men fight with them against Moctezuma!

La Malinche: If the Tlaxcalans fight against the warriors of Tenochtitlan and the Triple Alliance, they will fight weakened, still afraid of the Aztecs.

Cortes: Who is this God, Quetzalcoatl? Why am I called this God's name?

La Malinche: If you are thought to be a God, then you have great power as a man on Earth. Use that power to trick Moctezuma. I will tell you a story.

In depths of darkness of Earth
Live skeleton God Mictlantecuhtli
And his wife, wearing a dress of snakes;
Mictecacihuatl is her name,
She is smiling for all of Time;
Warriors who die in battle,
Enter Tonatiuhichan:
The eastern paradise,
As Eagle Companions named Cuauhteca,
Joining the sun as hummingbirds.

Cuauhteca are the force
Causing Sun to rise,
After its battles.

But five men are spared
For the great ritual,

Tlacaxipehualiztli,
The Flaying of Men
The captured warriors fight
Jaguar and Eagle Knights
With a club of feathers
Called obsidian Macahuitl

The victims fall fast,
Blood feeds the Earth;
Jaguar and Eagle Knights
Feast on the flesh.
And wear the body parts

Quetzalcoatl separates Time
And travels between
Earth and sky,
And He is King of priests.

Cortes: That was very beautiful, like you.

La Malinche: Thank you.

Cortes: It is a strange New World, inhabited by a cruel race of men. I want to hear a new story every night.

La Malinche: I will do that for you.

Cortes: Good. Come with me.

La Malinche: Yes, my lord.

Act Two Scene Three

Setting: Enter Cortes, La Malinche. Moctezuma is in tableau, sleeping. There is a cry offstage.

Cortes: What is that?

La Malinche: Moctezuma's emissaries have returned. The Magician will try to send you away with her power and magic charms.

Cortes: How do you know that?

[Enter Magician.]

Magician:

Quetzalcoatl, fly away into the night
Go back to your exile and the unknown

Moctezuma: I am a worm in the desert. Darkness is a blanket I wear. I shiver, fearful of tomorrow.

[Smoke machine. Enter Quetzalcoatl.]

Quetzalcoatl: Have you guarded my Kingdom well, Moctezuma?

Moctezuma: The shadows move. Who is there? Answer me! I am Moctezuma!

Magician:

I beg of the god to summon mercy
And allow life to continue
The merchants travel forth
Harvests have begun
Warriors wear their cotton armor
To fight for prisoners to Huitzilopochtli

Quetzalcoatl: What have you prepared for me, Great King? Have you welcomed me into your lands once again? I am here, returned as the God of my great Tenochtitlan.

Moctezuma: The walls move like mountains.

Magician:

Blood of the male infant
Has been spilled for Quetzalcoatl.
In a high temple on Mount Tlaloc,
High walls and no roof
The Eagles' cries
Echo off the mountains

Quetzalcoatl: There are strangers in your land.

Moctezuma: Yes, what should I do?

Quetzalcoatl: You must trick them and pretend to be their friends.

Moctezuma: What if they are the Gods?

Quetzalcoatl: If you believe in the Gods, then the Gods will save you.

Moctezuma: The strangers attack with the ferocity of Gods.

Quetzalcoatl: Perhaps they are Gods.

Magician:

I call on Seven Macaw of the South;

The Holy Jaguar of the Night;
Zotz, Bat God of Madness;
The Monkey-man Gods:
Hun Batz and Hun Chouen,
Carry this message to the Great Gods,
Above the fiery red planet of Quetzalcoatl
In the heavens where the sun lives
I command the High Gods to rule;
Condemn Quetzalcoatl
To float away back into exile
Across the Eastern Sea,
And never return to these lands.
Tezcatlipoca sent Quetzalcoatl into exile,
And Tezcatlipoca rules Mexico today!

Quetzalcoatl: Do you question the prophesy that Quetzalcoatl is to return this very year, One-reed?

Moctezuma: No! No, I do not question it! Even the day of Quetzalcoatl on His calendar approaches, just as the strangers get near.

Quetzalcoatl: The line of Kings of Tezcatlipoca has grown weak!
[Exit Quetzalcoatl.]

Moctezuma: Help me, please, someone! Where are my guards? Where is The Keeper of the House of Darkness? Why are the walls moving in on me? Please, my god, save me from oblivion! Who could conquer Tenochtitlan? Who could shake the foundations of heaven?

Magician:

I summon Great Tezcatlipoca
God of Night and Destiny
Destruction, deception and war!
To swoop down upon Quetzalcoatl
And destroy Him!
And destroy Him!
Flay his Holy skin and wear it,
For all of Time.

La Malinche: We must leave before she makes us suffer from one of her evil spells!

Cortes: Moctezuma's Magician is powerless. Let her dance all night. We leave at first light for Cholula.

[Exit Cortes, La Malinche. Magician is dancing. Lights fade to black on Magician and Moctezuma.]

Act Three

Scene One

Setting: Cortes and Moctezuma meet. The two parties enter on opposite sides of the stage in tableau.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: Look at that city below built in the water!

Cortes: That must be Tenochtitlan.

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: Other towns are on dry land around the lake.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: The city's streets are designed in perfect order. There are canals running through the entire city.

Cortes: It is like Venice.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: There are three straight causeways leading to Tenochtitlan from the land.

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: The City must hold a million people.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: It is the biggest city on earth!

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: Is this a dream?

La Malinche: Look below, Malinche, do you see that procession of people on the causeway?

Cortes: Yes.

La Malinche: That is Moctezuma coming to greet you.

Cortes: Let us go greet the King!

Magician: The strangers are accompanied by a woman, who speaks the Nahuatl tongue. They call her La Malinche. She is from Teticpac.

Moctezuma: She is the one you delivered to Malinche?

Teoctlamacazqui: Yes, my Lord, on your orders.

Magician: These gods have been inquiring about you, O Lord, they want to know if you are vigorous, old, thin, and so forth.

Moctezuma: Where are they now? I am not ready.

Magician: They are at your gate, Xoloco, just there. There is still time for you to run away, to the Temple of Cintli, across the lake. I will pretend to be you.

Moctezuma: No, I must greet the God to his face.

Magician: The strangers have fought like gods to reach your city, O Lord. At Cholula, they massacred the entire populace and destroyed all of the statues of our gods.

Moctezuma: My heart burns, as if it has been washed in chilies. Our most Holy City of Cholula!

Magician: My Lord, these gods await your presence.

Moctezuma: Yes, you are right.

Teotlamacazqui: Our warriors hurled darts and arrows at the gods but the gods kept marching to Tenochtitlan. Now an army of thousands of Tlaxcalans fights with them.

Moctezuma: Traitors!

Teotlamacazqui: Many nations under our control have begun rebelling against you, My Lord, and they fight with Malinche. Today is the day of one wind, the day of Quetzalcoatl, and the day of robbery, deception, and deceit.

Moctezuma: What help is there now? Is there a mountain for us to climb or should we run away? We are Mexicanos. Would escaping bring any glory to the Mexican nation? Pity the old men, women, and children. We will be judged and punished. We can do nothing but wait.

[Enter Cortes, La Malinche, Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras, Bernal Díaz del Castillo.]

Cortes: Are you King Moctezuma?

Moctezuma: Yes, I am Moctezuma.

Cortes: I am Hernan Cortes.

Moctezuma: Lord, you are weary. You have graciously come to Earth, understanding pain. You have approached your High Palace of Mexico, coming down to your throne that I have briefly held for you. The kings Itzcoatl, Motecuhzoma the Elder, Axayacatl, Tizoc and Ahuitzol rules for you in the City of Mexico. The people were protected by their swords and shielded by their shields.

Cortes: I am here, on behalf of Charles the First, King of the Holy Roman Empire. Our God is Jesus Christ, praise be unto He, and His Mother is the Virgin Mary.

[La Danza de la Pluma by Moctezuma, Teotlamacazqui, and Magician.]

Teotlamacazqui: My Lords, we have more gifts for you, they are stacked over here.

Cortes: Look at all of these gifts they lavish us with. There are precious jewels, solid gold, and intricate beadwork and feathers. I can only wonder at how much more wealth these Aztecs hold in their city. These people are weak before us.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: Perhaps they are trying to bribe us? Why else would they give us such value, even after we have fought so many battles to get here?

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: I sense a trap. Are you sure this is the King or is he an imposter?

Teoctlamacazqui: Virgin Mary is the female god I told you about, Moctezuma. Be wary of her great power. She is first among them.

Moctezuma: I welcome such valiant gentlemen as you and your men to my house and kingdom. Two years ago, I received news of a captain that arrived in Champoton. And a year ago, I heard another captain arrived with four ships. This is the first time I am able to greet my guests. I share with you all that I own. You men must truly be whom our ancestors prophesied, Quetzalcoatl, who will return from the direction of the Sunrise and rule these lands.

Cortes: We thank you, great king, for your kindness. We have arrived from the East, as vassals of the Great King Charles. He sent us here to beg you and your people to become Christians.

Moctezuma: I have finally met you face to face! I was in agony for five days. And you have come out of the mists to sit on your throne again, as foretold. Now it takes place. Welcome to your land, my lords!

Cortes: We are your friends. You have nothing to fear.

Moctezuma: What is the name of this great prince?

Cortes: Pedro de Alvarado.

Moctezuma: His face looks like the sun. I shall therefore call him Tonatio, the sun.

Cortes: Thank you.

Moctezuma: Do you speak, Tonatio?

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: What? Do I speak? What is he asking, Caudillo?

Cortes: Be humble, Pedro, before this Great King. Say something simple of our native land in Medellin.

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: My city was named after Quintus Caecilius Metellus Pius, a Roman General.

Moctezuma: It is an honor to welcome such great men into my city.

Cortes: May we enter Tenochtitlan, Moctezuma?

Moctezuma: Yes, come with me, Malinche.

[All Exit.]

Act Three
Scene Two

Setting: Temple of Huitzilopochtli. Hearts are burning in braziers.

[Enter Cortes, Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Teoctlamacazqui, Magician, Moctezuma.]

Teoctlamacazqui:

Awaken, great spirits to the Holy Rite
This is our dream and our blood

Magician:

Grasp fleshy hearts and taste human blood
Touch the burning gods in this sacred place!

Moctezuma: Enter the Temple of Huitzilopochtli, Malinche. You are my privileged guest at this Holy Place.

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: There are human hearts burning in these braziers, Caudillo! They insult our God! Will you stand for this?

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: The walls are covered in human blood. My God, the stench is horrible! We must leave this den of demons before we burn in hell forevermore!

Cortes: No! We must face evil directly.

Teoctlamacazqui: My Lord!

Cortes: Great prince, I do not understand how an intelligent prince could think that these idols are gods. They are called devils! This place is vile and ruled by Satan!

Magician: Who is Satan? Is that a dark Lord of yours?

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: Who is Lucifer? The Morning Star? Satan is not one of our gods! This is madness, Caudillo!

Cortes: I would like your permission to attach a cross and a picture of the Virgin Mary here in this temple.

Moctezuma: Malinche, if I thought you were going to be offensive to our Gods, I would never have brought you into our Holy Shrine of Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipoca. We hold these things to be good. They bring us health, excellent harvests, and rain. We must sacrifice to the Gods that rule the Earth and the heavens. War must continue each season to appease the sun and war god Huitzilopochtli. It is Huitzilopochtli who fights a battle every night against the moon and stars, to rise again in the morning. We have no natural resources, Malinche. Our city was built on Lake Texcoco and our causeways are the only connection to land by foot.

Every male is born a warrior. My army spreads war and terror to far away lands, and returns with substance and tribute for Tenochtitlan to prosper. My Jaguar and Eagle Knights bring captives to sacrifice to great Huitzilopochtli. It is the great circle of life, Malinche. Never mention this again in my presence.

Cortes: It is time for your majesty and us to depart.

Moctezuma: Yes, it is. You will retire in the guest quarters I have provided.

Cortes: We will first hold our rites in this temple of yours, to purify it.

[Cortes puts up a picture of the Virgin Mary and a crude cross of wood. Cortes pours wine and breaks a wafer.]

Cortes: Drink this Blood of Christ. Eat this Body of Christ.

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: May Jesus Christ have mercy on our souls.

Cortes: Drink this Blood of Christ. Eat this Body of Christ.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: Body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ. May the most Precious Blood which flowed from the most Holy wounds of our loving Lord Jesus Christ pour over us, to wash, cleanse, purify, heal, guide, and protect us from all evil, harm, sickness, and bless and make us as Holy as we can be.

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: We ask this in the Holy name of Jesus and through His most Precious Blood and His most Holy wounds. Amen.

Cortes:

Drink this Blood of Christ. Eat this Body of Christ.

Blood of Christ, Incarnate Word of God, save us. Body of Christ.

Blood of Christ, of the New and Eternal Testament, save us. Body of Christ.

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras:

Blood of Christ, falling upon the earth in the Agony, save us. Body of Christ.

Blood of Christ, victor over demons, save us. Body of Christ.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo:

Blood of Christ, bringing forth virgins, save us. Body of Christ.

[Cortes, Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras, and Bernal Díaz del Castillo sing Ave Maria before the cross and picture.]

Cortes:

Ave Maria

Gratia plena

Maria, gratia plena
Maria, gratia plena
Ave, ave dominus
Dominus tecum
Benedicta tu in mulieribus
Et benedictus
Et benedictus fructus ventris
Ventris tuae, Jesus.
Ave Maria.
[Lights fade to black.]

Act Three Scene Three

Setting: Cortes and La Malinche in Cortes' Tenochtitlan headquarters.

Cortes: These Papal Bulls arrived from the coast.

La Malinche: What is a Papal Bull, a form of sacred writing?

Cortes: Signed forgiveness from Pope Leo the Tenth for our sins in fighting this Conquest against Moctezuma. We pay for them with gold.

La Malinche: Your lust for gold is shared by the Pope?

Cortes: Oh, yes. There is a monk rebelling against the pope. He speaks like you, accusing the Pope of lusting for gold. He will be put on trial.

La Malinche: What is his name?

Cortes: Martin Luther.

La Malinche: And gold is why you sailed to this land, to destroy it. Why is this metal valuable to you, The Holy Roman Emperor, and the Pope?

Cortes: It is beautiful like your eye's luster, deep and pure. And it is rare.

La Malinche: I do not want gold. I fight for you. I want you to win, and destroy Moctezuma.

Cortes: I am grateful for your support.

La Malinche: In my heart I love you.

Cortes: We will settle somewhere when this is over, Dona Marina.

La Malinche: You will never settle anywhere.

Cortes: You are right.

La Malinche: You must capture Moctezuma now and take him captive in his own house.

Cortes: Why?

La Malinche: Because Moctezuma is the King and the God. He is the center of the city and holds all power in his person. If you take him captive, you will show His people that Moctezuma is but a weak man, and you are stronger.

Cortes: And then we will topple all of the evil statues in the Temple.

La Malinche: His people will rebel. One will replace him as Tlatoani, perhaps Cuitlahuac or Cuauhtemoc. Then you will have to fight hard to control the City. If they capture any of your men, they will sacrifice them on the Temple of Huitzilopochtli, by ripping their hearts out and holding them up to the sun, providing it strength to fight the moon and the stars in the nighttime, and rise again at Dawn. If you wait here too long, Moctezuma will find a way to kill you. He still believes that you are Quetzalcoatl. That is all that keeps you alive.

Cortes: Come here.

[Lights fade to black.]

Act Four Scene One

Setting: Moctezuma performs a sacrifice.

Moctezuma: Bring me a sacrifice covered in chalk to the House of the Serpent!

[Drums and flute are playing. Magician and Teoctlamacazqui drag in a victim who is placed on top of a plain block.]

Moctezuma:

Teotl mitz pahcahyohue Maria
Te temitichah in tlen cuacaultzin
In tlacatzintli cah ica tehua

Magician:

Huan ica tematzin
Ticah ica nochi zohuameh

Teoctlamacazqui:

Huan man ye ica Teotl
In xochicualli in moihtic tic pia

Moctezuma:

Jesus, mah ihquion mochihua

[Smoke machine. Enter Quetzalcoatl. Moctezuma splashes the blood of the heart on Quetzalcoatl.]

Moctezuma:

Zohua Teotl Maria

Te Nantzin in Teotl

Teoctlamacazqui:

Topan xi tlahto tlen otic huicaqueh necuil ohtli

Cuac ye ti miquizcueh

Huan cuac yo ti miqueh

Mah ihquion mochihua

Quetzalcoatl: My Lord, what have you done to me? Is this how you welcome gods to your Kingdom?

Moctezuma: We sing Ave Maria as you in performing a sacrifice. We throw blood upon you in your honor.

Quetzalcoatl: Virgin Mother Mary, I pray for Your mercy for their poor souls.

Moctezuma: Malinche, I understand your three gods and the cross and all the things you have preached in the towns outside of Tenochtitlan. Now, these people of Tlaxcala with whom you are good friends have told you that I am a God and that all I possess is gold and precious stones.

Quetzalcoatl: The Tlaxcalans simply aided me in bringing me to your presence.

Moctezuma: The lies you have heard are a joke, like the stories of thunder of Gods from you cannons and the great deer your men ride being dragons.

Quetzalcoatl: You do not believe in your gods anymore, Moctezuma?

Moctezuma: You are too intelligent to believe that I am a great king. I am simply a man, Malinche, trying to save his race and his lands from being destroyed. I am having trouble seeing you clearly, Malinche. I see an owl. I am unable to stand. It is the God! It is Him. He is beautiful. The lights in his eyes are diamonds.

[Exit Quetzalcoatl.]

Moctezuma: My Lord!

Teoctlamacazqui: Help him to stand.

Moctezuma: What does this mean, Teoctlamacazqui?

Teoctlamacazqui: What?

Moctezuma: My visions! My visions!

[Enter Cortes, Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras, and Bernal Díaz del Castillo.]

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: Your majesty, what we want you to do now, is to come over to the palace where we are lodging, with no fuss. If you raise the alarm, we will kill you.

Moctezuma: My person cannot be taken prisoner. Even if I were to allow it, my people would never accept it.

Cortes: I am very sorry to be forced to take you as my captive.

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: We have wasted too much time explaining.

Moctezuma: Malinche, please, call off you captains.

Cortes: Do not plead to me like a child!

Moctezuma: You do not understand, Malinche. I must be in control of my people and Kingdom.

Cortes: I was sent here by my king to conquer this land and even its people and find gold! I need you to cooperate with me and not to stall for time.

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: Either he comes with us now or we kill him!

Moctezuma: Malinche, I understand and appreciate your situation. I wish that I could make it better, but I cannot. I am powerless before you.

Cortes: Stop talking like that!

Moctezuma: What are you saying to me?

Cortes: My great friend, all I ask is to take you prisoner.

Moctezuma: I am happy to be your prisoner, Malinche.

Cortes: I promise you that I will explain the ways of our Great Lord and His Son, Jesus Christ, and that of our King Charles, to you and your people. Once you understand, you will be very happy with this newfound knowledge.

Moctezuma: Either your gods or Huitzilopochtli are allowing me to be captive. I want you to know, my Lord Malinche, and my Lords Captains and Soldiers, that I am indebted to your great King Charles for having sent you from such far away lands to make inquires about me, for you must be the one who is destined to rule over us, as our ancestors have told us. Take all the gold that you have collected, only your haste prevents there being more. What I have for your Emperor Charles is the whole I received from my father, which is now in your apartments. I know very well that as soon as you arrived, you opened the secret door to that chamber, inspected all the gold within, and then sealed it up again. When you send this treasure to this Emperor Charles, tell him in your papers

that this is sent by your loyal vassal, Moctezuma. I will give some very precious stones called chaalchihuites, and these holy stones must only be given to a great prince. And I will send blowpipes with their pellet-bags and moulds, and some of my own possessions.

Cortes: Moctezuma, will you please issue orders to your people through your High Priest?

Moctezuma: No, Malinche. I alone speak to my people.

Magician: Yes, my king.

Teoctlamacazqui: We will inform the people of your messages.

Moctezuma: No!

Cortes: Your two captains are guilty of waging war against my army and our Emperor, King Charles, of illegally robbing towns to provide tribute to you, and of killing any chieftains that rebel against you. Your chieftains have confessed their crimes to me. You are deeply implicated in these crimes, my Lord, and you should die.

Moctezuma: Please, Malinche?

Cortes: I founded the municipality of Vera Cruz and I report directly to King Charles. I sentence you on behalf of my Great King. But my honest and deep affection, and concern for your personal well-being, is so great that I am incapable of killing you, my Lord. I would rather forfeit my own life. I love you.

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: What is wrong with you, Caudillo?

Bernal Díaz del Castillo: Our expedition is under the orders of Governor Velazquez of Cuba.

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: We have sailed from Cuba in open mutiny with 11 ships, 500 men, 13 horses and cannon. We are all brothers, comrades, here to find gold and make ourselves better, and the fortunes of our families. You promised us, my Captain, many times in great speeches, great wealth and fame.

Cortes: Pedro de Alvarado, it was you who killed every single dancer in one of Moctezuma's festivals for no reason while I went to defeat Penfile de Narvaez.

Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras: I am sorry, Caudillo.

Cortes: You are sorry? I scuttled all of our ships at the beachhead! Are you with me or against me? Fall on your knees and show love of your King, His Majesty, through his legal vassal, Hernan Cortes!

[Pedro de Alvarado falls to his knee in supplication.]

Moctezuma: What is your captain doing on his knees before you, Malinche?

Cortes: My Lord, this is a personal matter.

Moctezuma: Should I leave?

Cortes: No. I have not released you, my Lord. Velazquez sent Penfile de Narvaez with 1,100 men from Cuba to defeat us. With half as many of my hardened veterans our army tore him and his army to shreds. I personally ripped out his left eye with my sword, while he howled in pain on his knees before me, much as you are now, and he begged me for mercy to not make him fully blind! I returned to Tenochtitlan and I must resolve the chaos of your doing. It is your action, Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras that has sent my campaign back by months! Moctezuma, I ask that you tell your people to stop resisting us.

Moctezuma: Malinche, I have become powerless. Why don't you free my younger brother, Cuitlahuac? Perhaps he can calm my people.

Cortes: I will do as you say. Take them away! Burn them to death before the royal palace.

[Exit Pedro de Alvarado y Contreras, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, The Magician, and Teoctlamacazqui.]

Moctezuma: What are you doing, Malinche? Stop this madness! Cholula was murder! My entire nobility and a populace of thousands killed by your soldiers.

Cortes: My Lord, calm your self! I have spared your life.

Moctezuma: Stop this, now! Why are cruel to me, Malinche?

Cortes: I have a duty to uphold.

Moctezuma: These two are my loyal servants. They are in charge of important parts of my Kingdom and the very heavens itself!

Cortes: I look at you as my brother. I have great affection toward you, Moctezuma. Please, stop resisting me. Even though you rule over a great many lands, I will grant you even more cities. I promise you that.

Moctezuma: Yes. Thank you, my brother. I am grateful for your kindness. But I am a King.

Cortes: Yes, my friend.

Moctezuma: Malinche, the gods are a thing of the past.

Cortes: You no longer believe in the idols?

Moctezuma: No, my Lord.

Cortes: One of Narvaez's men was deathly sick with Smallpox.

Moctezuma: What is Smallpox?

Cortes: Smallpox causes blisters and rashes, blindness and deafness, deformed limbs.

Moctezuma: And where is your soldier now?

Cortes: He has returned to Tenochtitlan.

Moctezuma: Your men will be lucky to leave Tenochtitlan alive with Chitlahuac in power.

Cortes: Your brother, Chitlahuac, and your people, will be dead soon. All of them.

Moctezuma: Then another brother will be made tlatoani, perhaps Cuauhtemoc.

Cortes: War must end some day.

Moctezuma: You sound like me, Malinche.

Cortes: Moctezuma, let us enjoy this moment in time. My love for you will never diminish.

Moctezuma: Resistance lives forever. Malinche, will you play a game of Totoloque?

Cortes: Yes.

Moctezuma: Make sure that Tonatio does not cheat for you this time.

[Moctezuma and Cortes exit. Lights fade to black.]

Act Four Scene Two

Setting: Moctezuma is captive. Teotlalco sings him a song as the battle rages.

Teotlalco:

Do you see the stars in the sky still?

They are no longer an illusion;

They shine for you still on this day.

Would you greet your people in silence?

And not hearken to their needs?

The King will always protect His people.

The golden calendar of feather serpent

Descends like the winter storms

In the night and in the day.

Moctezuma:

It is the day one serpent in the year three house.

Broken spears lie in the roads;

We have torn our hair in our grief.
The houses are roofless now, and their walls
Are red with blood.

Worms are swarming in the streets and plazas,
And the walls are splattered with gore.
The water has turned red, as if it were dyed,
And when we drink it,
It has the taste of brine.

We have pounded our hands in despair,
Against the adobe walls;
For our inheritance, our city, is lost and dead;
The shields of our warriors were its defense;
But they could not save it.

We have chewed dry twigs and salt grasses;
We have filled our mouths with dust and bits of adobe.
We have eaten lizards, rats and worms;
When we had meat, we ate it almost raw.

Teotlalco:

When Eagles and Owls no longer fly
What can be said of night?
Has Time gone to another place?

Have warriors stopped fighting?
Spears dull and heavy;
Arrows missing marks and shields breaking;

Awaken to the night
And the blood of our ancestors
Gather your arms and again fight for our City!
[Lights fade to black.]

Act Four
Scene Three

Setting: La Malinche and Cortes. The rebellion has begun.

Cortes: The populace is in open revolt. People hurl stones on my soldiers from rooftops. The only thing the people fear is the cannon. If we stay here long enough we will starve.

La Malinche: You are braver than any warrior.

Cortes: What should I do?

La Malinche: We must leave the City.

Cortes: Even if we get out alive, how can I defeat this City?

La Malinche: What about attacking in ships?

Cortes: I scuttled all my ships on the beach so my men would be forced to march inland with me, in search of gold.

La Malinche: Can you build new ones?

Cortes: Yes. Martin Lopez is a master ship builder. We might build brigantines and attack from the water.

La Malinche: You will be King of New Spain!

Cortes: I will present the King with His Fifth of all the gold we capture and the greatest items of the treasure and be made a Viceroy.

La Malinche: There is one more thing you must do, my lord.

Cortes: What is that?

La Malinche: You must kill Moctezuma.

Cortes: No.

La Malinche: The King must die.

Cortes: I have become close to him. I love him.

La Malinche: You do not love him!

Cortes: He is a great King and a kind man.

La Malinche: He must die. When you kill Moctezuma, then the people of Mexico will be in shock and that will allow us to flee, perhaps with our lives. His death will provide us with our lives. He is blocking your way to life like one of the bridges of the Causeways.

Cortes: Moctezuma is the past. The future will not start until he is dead. I have great wealth that he gave to me freely. I am a Conquistador because of him. My name will live on for all time because of this great prince. I must first kill him, this friend and my enemy.

La Malinche: You understand now.

Cortes: I will present him to his people one last time, in defeat.

La Malinche: Yes.

Cortes: It is with a heavy heart that I do this.

La Malinche: It is okay. You will be able to act.

Cortes: Goodbye.

[Cortes exits. Lights fade to black.]

Act Five Scene One

Setting: Octle encounters Teotlalco. She is singing.

Teotlalco:

Sadness fills my heart

[Enter Octle.]

Sadness fills my heart

Like water splashing on the beach

Of all time and feeling;

Pulling the sands backwards

For the disappearing past

That moves between

That moves between

What I see and know

Is all an illusion

Because the story is unspoken.

Octle: Stop singing!

Teotlalco: But why?

Octle: Shut up and stop singing!

Teotlalco: What's wrong?

Octle: Stop it, now!

Teotlalco: I have stopped singing.

Octle: Now!

Teotlalco: My songs have ended.

Octle: Good. That is just how it must become. When the god that sits by the ocean turns his head and affixes his gaze upon thou what are the words in his mouth to speak? Thou! That is a new word of the strangers.

Ha ha ha. Oh. The god has no words because he is a statue! Gaze into an obsidian mirror and see the abyss. Teotalco?

Teotalco: Yes?

Octle: There is a statue of pure black obsidian, black as the fearsome night in the Holy temple of Huitzilopochtli, within the deep recesses of the darkest part of that temple, that only a few may enter. The statue is pure as the ocean inky deep, and as still as a black leopard of the night sky, poised to capture its prey. Its eyes are shining gemstones carved to a point. It holds a spear of gold. It is many hands high, larger than a house. Many decades of secret toil and precision and human lives were spent to carve this giant statue. It is the most magnificent thing in the world, though no one knows about it. It is the statue of Tezcatlipoca, the Lord of Darkness, evil enemy of Quetzalcoatl. Do you know what that statue is doing?

Teotalco: No.

Octle: I said, 'Do you know that that statue is doing?'

Teotalco: No!

Octle: It is dying. The god is dying.

Teotalco: That is sad.

Octle: No, it is not sad. Because in death there is rebirth and life!

Teotalco: What does that mean?

Octle: Shut up, little girl! The Lord of the Smoking Mirror. Famine. He wears the black mirror in his head, like the gray bird that wore a mirror that Moctezuma gazed into to see the end of his Empire. Green distortion image. Cold death. Pass through the knives of the night of the Underworld. Tezcatlipoca gazes into his mirror within his obsidian statue for eternity to see the future and the private thoughts of humans. The two things are the same. Quetzalcoatl has returned to defeat Tezcatlipoca.

Teotalco: You are mad! I will tell my husband, Moctezuma, about you!
[Teotalco exits.]

Octle: Run away, little girl, to the dead King. Death suits you so well.
[Octle exits.]

Act Five Scene Two

Setting: Moctezuma is killed.

Quetzalcoatl: Give the order to your people to stop resisting!

Moctezuma: What more does Malinche want of me? Fate has brought me here. I do not want to hear his voice again! I can do nothing to end this war. The people have already chosen another leader, my younger brother, Cutlahuac. They have made up their mind that you will not leave this place alive. We must not fight the Conquerors, Mexicanos. We are not their equals in battle. Put down your shields and arrows.

Aztec one [offstage]: Who is Moctezuma to give us orders?

Aztec two [offstage]: We are no longer his slaves!

Aztec three [offstage]: He is our king! We are being used by the attackers!

Aztec one [offstage]: Kill them! Drive them from our great city!

Aztec two [offstage]: Lift the bridges of the causeways and prevent them from escaping!

Aztec three [offstage]: Call the warriors of the Triple Alliance, in the cities of Texcoco, Tlacopan and our great Tenochtitlan, to arms!

Moctezuma: Return to your homes at once! The attackers have put your king in chains. His feet are bound with chains.

Quetzalcoatl: You are making your people madder! Make them stop and leave.

Moctezuma: Please, my people, I am in great danger!

Aztec three [offstage]: Hurls stones at King Moctezuma! Kill him!

Quetzalcoatl: You have betrayed me!

[Quetzalcoatl stabs Moctezuma in the back.]

Quetzalcoatl: The king is dead! You have killed your own king! You foolish people, what have you done? Now who will lead you?

[Quetzalcoatl drags Moctezuma to a sacrificial altar.]

Moctezuma: Malinche! This is the God! You are one and the same! It is a blessing to die in this manner! Answer me, Malinche!

[Quetzalcoatl and rips out his heart as a sacrificial victim.]

[Lights fade to black.]

Act Five
Scene Three

Setting: There are sounds of drums and thunder. Quetzalcoatl.

Quetzalcoatl: And so, human beings of this Planet Earth let this be a lesson! Fear the Gods that rule the Universe and bow before them for you are but a speck in the Universe, a tiny grain of dust, weak, powerless, pitiful. The forces in the Universe surpass your comprehension. The abyss is unknown to you! Bow before it! Bow before it! Bow before the everlasting abyss!

[Quetzalcoatl dances, laughing. Lights fade to black.]

**How to be a Great Actor
(and everything else I am doing in theater)**

by M. Stefan Strozier

It took me several years to learn how to write 5-act plays—90% of that time was spent on writing *La Revolucion* and 10% on *Moctezuma*. The amount of time has nothing to do with the result, however. Both plays are very different and achieved my goal of being the first American to write a 5-act play, and the first person to stage a 5-act play, written by an American, in New York.

No doubt to some that is a revolutionary claim. That is because in America the previous generation thought it had it all figured out all right: Post-Modernism was the end of the road; there is nothing new under the sun. I have discovered a tragic flaw to that logic. In fact, America was nothing more than a babe in the woods—and an arrogant one at that.

In theater, size does matter. A two-act play is *better* than a one-act play, a three-act *better* than a two act, and so forth—that is, if the playwright can sustain all of the parts required of an excellent play or its magnitude as Aristotle called it. If this was not a fact, common sense tells us that Shakespeare would have written a lot of one-act plays—surely he would have figured out the value of a one-act play.

It only naturally follows, then, that I am the *best American playwright in all of history*. Well, there is not much competition, after all. The closest is O’Neill, who made it to 4-act plays.

Writing a 5-act play like this was a vast undertaking. My goal was to write a Shakespearian play that adhered to Aristotle’s rules in *Poetics*. The Mexican Revolution provided me with enough material to fill 5 acts. Later, when I wrote *Moctezuma* and I saw how easily it came to me, I realized that material is not very important—but character is.

In writing *La Revolucion*, my 5-act play about the Mexican Revolution, I delved deeply into what Revolution means. Only Mexican history could provide a landscape to reveal the meaning of Revolution. The Mexican Revolution was the first revolution of the 20th century and it influenced many subsequent Revolutions in the 20th century. And of all Revolutions—even the French one that preceded it—the Mexican Revolution was the most sweeping and complete. It was carried through

to its ending, and it directly and dramatically shaped the Mexico of today. The French revolution merely returned a dictator to power.

Aristotle has many rules in *Poetics*, and I have followed nearly every one of them in the plays that I have written to date. Perhaps the primary rule is his list of what is most important in creating a play. That list is stacked in order: plot, character, rhythmic language, thought, song and spectacle. All of these things I have tried now with my plays and I am close to mastering them. With *La Revolucion*, I had the one thing that had always eluded me most: plot. It has taken me a lot of practice to write a complex plot. But with the subject of the Mexican Revolution, I had a vast plot before me, and all I had to do was arrange it and put it in order. That is what lies at the core of *La Revolucion*.

When I first started, I had no idea if when I arranged the pieces together they would make a full plot. But not only did they indeed fit, they do so precisely. And, the plot even enhanced the character itself. The main characters: Madero, Villa, Zapata, Huerta, Carranza, Obregon were all linked through the plot. And, I was able to therefore use the plot to create the character, not vice versa. What I did was plot-driven action, not character-driven action, which is all the rage in American theater departments, and I'd be hard-pressed to define what it means (because it really has no meaning). Aristotle would prefer plot-driven action. And, indeed, as I got into it, the action suddenly roared along at a clip and I nearly could not keep up with it at times. When I went to add aspects of character, it was simple. I suppose that character-driven action would have meant creating a plot based on characters' action. That is exactly the wrong way to do it. Aristotle says exactly that in *Poetics*. Plot dictates how characters will act. It does not matter who they are as characters. Character-driven action in plays destroys them and American theatre is not advancing by using it.

In writing *La Revolucion*, then, I was swept away by the action as I put the plot in place. Character took care of itself, because the plot forced the characters to take action many times. And each piece of the plot I created only created more character action for not one but several characters.

Rhythmic speech or diction is next in Aristotle's list. What this is has always been something of a mystery to me. Honestly, numbers 3 and 4 (thought) in his list are the most opaque to me. I have now mastered 1 and 2 (though character is still a challenge to clearly define), and previously I mastered 5 (song) and 6 (spectacle), which I will explain presently. But let me clarify. Nos. 3 and 4 are something that—I feel—the individual playwright must invent. The plot is a puzzle that is assembled.

If it's from a history play, then little invention is required. Characters too are based on real people and imagination. But rhythmic speech and diction come from nowhere. The way I define rhythmic speech is the structure with which I write. I am a stylist. Hemingway, for example, was a stylist. He had a unique style that was immediately recognized on the page. Shakespeare too had his style, writing in iambic pentameter. Every accomplished writer has a unique style. That is rhythmic speech. However, I go one step further than Hemingway. I consciously create no style from many styles. Sometimes, particularly in America, playwrights will write plays in slang diction. Eugene O'Neill, for example, did this a lot. It's a mistake and does not work. First of all, it limits the play's lifetime because language changes fast, and today an O'Neill play sounds very strange and simply does not work for that reason alone. Shakespeare did not do this, yet even though his plays nearly require translation, they endure for this, and other reasons. The language of the play must come from the playwright, and not be based on its characters. Like character-driven action, creating dialog based on imaginary aspects of how a character might speak is twisting Aristotle's rules to the breaking point. And, once mastered, the style of a playwright can be a powerful tool. The goal of rhythmic language is to create an effect, to make drama, simply put. By writing like O'Neill, this tool is severely blunted. O'Neill's dialog has one side to it only: that of the characters' slang. He cannot use words as weapons because his characters must follow his single rule. In other words, if an O'Neill character says, "Ya'all come back now, ya hear." That sentence must be written in that manner only; there is no other way to write it. And when an audience member hears it spoken, they do not take it seriously; but must consider its effect "in context." When I write, I am constantly moving words and sentences around for maximum impact. I play with the words. I play with the word order. Still, as I say, there is a bit more to this area that I have not yet mastered. One looks at Shakespeare, obviously, as a master in this area—or maybe all areas; although, when considering Aristotle, Shakespeare clearly did not utilize or master song, no. 5. And he lacked spectacle as well, no. 6. Perhaps he simply said to heck with the last 2 items in the list, being of the lowest priority.

Lucky for me, Aristotle didn't concern himself much with nos. 3 and 4 (he specifically said that in *Poetics*). And actually, he thought the actors had a lot to do with rhythmic speech. I will say that, having worked with many actors now, some of who went on to great things and many of whom were very talented, those among the best were the ones who mastered the rhythm of my words. It was like night and day, watching an actor who went with the flow of my rhythm versus one who ignorantly ignored it or in some cases tried to fight against my rhythm, inserting their own rhythm. And there were always those actors who would try to insert

a new word not in the text. Sure enough, that single word stuck out like a sore thumb and was the equivalent of derailing the train from its tracks. And the reason for this is because the rhythm is mine and mine alone; therefore, another actor cannot possibly understand my rhythm and his attempt to do so fails miserably and obviously on the stage. This further proved my point about Eugene O'Neill's lackluster prose. No one notices, for example, if one of O'Neill's characters says 'whatcha saying that fer, Jimmy?' instead of what O'Neill wrote: 'whatyer saying that for now, Jimmy?' In addition to rhythm, which is what I am most interested in; there are other factors to diction, like metaphor.

Number 4 is Thought. Aristotle says this is how a character's speech reveals his or her character, and the themes of the play. This would be Hamlet's 'to be or not to be' speech, I think. I do this a lot, and my characters often give lengthy speeches that reveal much. But my speeches are usually tied to the plot and I don't write them thinking primarily of the character; but rather the plot and the theme of my play. So I guess you could say I am operating within the rules here; but I am not entirely confident that I have mastered no. 4. I don't fully understand how to utilize the point of Hamlet's speech of 'to be or not to be' within the context of a play. I see what Shakespeare is doing here; but I have not yet attempted it. He has placed character at the forefront, properly placed within the plot, but the plot does not advance the character at that instant. Thought, or Hamlet's speech, does. That's not easy to do because it means the entire plot has to revolve around that one speech, given at that exact instant, and given for the purpose of revealing that character. And Shakespeare even uses it to reveal a larger theme of the play. One thinks of the speeches in *Julius Caesar*. It's not enough to have a well-written speech at a certain point in a play, which does still meet the threshold. The speech has to have poetry. The speech must be beautiful and reveal the character at the same time. It's a subtle dance.

No. 5, song, I have mastered. I like to think this is because I am American and if nothing else there is a lot of song in our theatre. I've written songs in my plays and used them in other ways. In fact, putting songs in my plays was one of the first things I did as a playwright and every play I have written has one or many songs in it. As I advance, I write more music for my plays. The idea of song seems easy to me and I make it fit well in my plays. And I made use of the chorus, which worked excellently. I have the Chorus Leader singing throughout *La Revolution* and then the action takes place between the song, which creates tension between two different rules, song and plot. I invented that, thank you very much. I used it before in other plays but this time I really took it to another level.

No. 6, spectacle, I have used extensively. I've had elaborate dances, very dramatic scenes, and even a machine a deux in *La Revolucion*, which I learned from Euripides. But Aristotle plays down the use of spectacle, so I have done the same in my plays.

In addition to these six rules, there are other things in *Poetics* that I follow, such as the use of tokens or objects, reversal of fortune, and recognition. I used all of these things in *La Revolucion*. These skills took me some time to implement, and after much practice. But they are the main point of Tragedy: to create a catharsis through showing pity and fear. In *La Revolucion*, therefore, it had to end badly. In American theatre there is a lot of nice gardening; I move with a flame-thrower and burn the place to the ground.

There are certain requirements that are needed for Tragedy to work. You need noble characters; but not too noble. Then they have to go from very high to nothing through dramatic action or the reverse can happen; but I stuck to the first one with *La Revolucion* and it works because the characters are noble but they have flaws, though not necessarily fatal flaws.

Recognition is the hardest and involves a character understanding something at the instant that the action reveals it. But in *La Revolucion*, I was able to do this too because the action was such that several of the characters were swept up in events so fast that they did not understand what was happening. And in *La Revolucion*, I have not one character who does all of these things but several. I have several Tragedies in one play. That makes it pack a real wallop and the wallops just keep coming. And I found that I could link these separate Tragedies because the characters were close in real life. I added a number of very ironic lines in *La Revolucion* as a result.

In most cases, I found actual dialog that these characters spoke in the history books and simply copied and pasted the dialog into my play. I found that the actual words were very powerful. However, I still applied my own rhythm to the actual lines. I edited them, you could say. It took a lot of time and work to find those little gems in the history books, most of history is boring and not suitable for a stage play. And I had to make the drama fit, and tell a story—not simply “be dramatic.” The Mexican Revolution provided plenty of ready drama. Much of *La Revolucion* I invented, and some of the characters. I found that the characters' discussion of events moved the action along perfectly. This is sort of the main point of how I wrote *La Revolucion*, which doesn't really apply to any of Aristotle's rules. But this fact allowed me to get very detailed and I enjoyed that a lot.

After writing *La Revolucion*, I was only interested in writing 5-act plays and I see little use in doing anything else. However, I am going to write a series of one-act plays to try and connect my countrymen and country women, because so far I am not connecting with them.

The next play I wrote was *Moctezuma* and I put both up in repertory in April, 2011. Somewhere after finishing *La Revolucion*, I realized that Shakespeare wrote 5-act plays about a single man: Hamlet, MacBeth, King Lear, Othello, etc. I noticed this because I was turning my attention to character at this point. Thus, Shakespeare mastered plot; but then focused an entire, complex plot into a single character. So, I tried to do the same in writing *Moctezuma*. And I saw that this strategy worked very well—I was surprised at how well, in fact.

Unfortunately, I am still hostage to American culture and I haven't a prayer in being successful in writing 5-act plays because I must compete with celebrities, famous actors and big movies—and all the associated detritus. I have to achieve something great to simply sell a few tickets Off-off Broadway New York. (Forget about actually making money for good work in New York Theater.)

Naturally, New York Theater does not take me seriously. And the more I work with Actors' Equity Association, the more I despise that organization. Working with any union is very frustrating; everything must be approved through several levels of bureaucratic bullshit. AEA is no different—in many ways it is far worse, because it is a bureaucracy within a world of non-profits and government grants. And theater in New York is very unique and cloistered.

Broadway AEA actors, Off and Off-off-Broadway actors, Hollywood actors—all have acted in my plays, which I directed. They are all the worst actors to work with. They rarely if ever get my lines correct, and are seemingly incapable of memorizing lines at all. Yet, they consider their talent to be god-given because they worked with some famous acting teacher who filled them with bad habits—and I am expected to be grateful for said talent. They are unwilling to lift a finger to promote plays in which they act.

Non-Union actors in New York are infinitely better than AEA actors. Non-Union actors are willing to bend over backwards to market plays in which they appear. They take chances, try new things and work in several areas at once—all without stifling rules. Non-Union actors learn my lines and act very well. Instead of trying to be Marlon Brando, non-Union actors are busy inventing the present. AEA and New York “professional” Theater is nothing more than Community Theater. Broadway—if I must make a distinction—is a criminal cesspool, full of

tax-evaders, con-artists, cheats, whores, and talent-less, maniacal, socialist scum.

I don't know where I am going next. I am stuck in America. I still can't get a passport to leave, even if I wanted. The courts and lawyers in America run the lives are people like children overseen by Big Brother—never mind that our government has, in fact, become Big Brother.

I achieve success but I am not rewarded for it. In America, one either conforms with Leftist politics and produces crappy theater—run by Unions—or one kowtows to pop-culture Hollywood and big money, and every other phrase must be, “Thank you!!” I have refused both options. I am paying a heavy price as a result.

There is no such thing as being rewarded for merit in America.



www.lamusevenale.org