

LIBRETTO

The
Oath of Monte Sacro
a pocket-epic



22 April 2010
Bolivar Hall of
The Venezuelan Embassy
54 Grafton Way
London W1T 5DL

The Oath of Monte Sacro
a pocket-epic

by Leandro Cardoso

music composer: Greg Vamvakas

narrator: Sunao Vagabond

singer: Nicolas Nestoret

Acto 1 - RODRIGUEZ

Narrativa concreta

Bolívar y yo,
en estrecha compañía y en íntima amistad,

Después de la coronación de Bonaparte viajábamos

Unas veces íbamos a pie y otras en diligencia

En Roma. Un día

nos sentamos sobre un trozo de mármol blanco
resto de una columna destrozada por el tiempo

Yo tenía fijo mis ojos (sobre la fisonomía del adolescente)

percibía cierto aire de
preocupación y concentrado

Bolívar, con cierta solemnidad que no olvidare jamás

se puso en pie
su mirada fija y brillante

(se lo) ¡Juro!

Act 1 - RODRIGUEZ

Concrete narrative

Bolivar and I travelled
at close quarters and in intimate friendship

After Bonaparte's coronation

At times we would go on foot and at times by diligence

In Rome One day

we sat down upon a block of white marble
the remains of a time-worn column

I was absorbed (by the young man's posture)

I could perceive in it a certain air
great preoccupation and deep thought

Bolivar, with a solemnity that I will never forget

stood up and his gaze
bright and penetrating

I vow before you!

Sword
&
Quill

Acto 2 - BOLIVAR

Aria (baritono)

¿Conque este es el pueblo de

}	Romulo y Numa,
	los Gracos y los Horacios,
	Augusto y Nerón,
	Cesar y Bruto,
	Tiberio y Trajano?

Aquí todas las grandezas han tenido su tipo
y todas las miserias su cuna.

Octavio se disfraza con el manto de la piedad pública para ocultar la suspicacia de su carácter y sus arrebatos sanguinarios; Bruto clava el puñal en el corazón de su protector para reemplazar la tiranía de Cesar por la suya propia; Antonio renuncia los derechos de su gloria para embarcarse en las galeras de una meretriz, sin proyectos de reforma; Sila degüella a sus compatriotas, y Tiberio, sombrío como la noche y depravado como el crimen, divide su tiempo entre la concupiscencia y la matanza.

Cincinato	hubo cien	Caracallas
Por un Trajano	. .	Calígulas
Vespasiano	. .	Claudios

Este pueblo ha dado para todo:

severidad para los viejos tiempos; austeridad para la República; depravación para los Emperadores; catacumbas para los cristianos; valor para conquistar el mundo entero; ambición para convertir todos los estados de la tierra en arrabales tributarios; mujeres para hacer pasar las ruedas sacrílegas de su carruaje sobre el tronco destrozado de sus padres; oradores para conmovier, como Cicerón; poetas para seducir con su canto, como Virgilio; satíricos, como Juvenal y Lucrecia; filósofos débiles, como Seneca, y ciudadanos enteros, como Caton.

>>

Act 2 – BOLIVAR

Aria (baritone)

So this is the city of Romulus and of Numa,
of the Gracchi and the Horaces, of Augustus and of Nero,
of Caesar and of Brutus, of Tiberius and of Trajan?

Here all greatness has had its mould, and all misery its cradle.

Octavian dons the mantle of public piety to hide
his suspect character and bloodthirsty rages;
Brutus cleaves the heart of his protector with a dagger
in order to replace Caesar's tyranny with one of his own;
Anthony renounces the rewards of his glory
to cast off in a harlot's galleys, with no word of reform;
Silus slits the throats of his countrymen, and Tiberius,
dark as night and depraved as sin,
divides his time between concupiscence and slaughter.

For every Cincinnatus there were one hundred Caracallas.
For every Trajan one hundred Caligulas and
for every Vespasian one hundred Claudiuses.

This city has provided for every eventuality;

severity for the old times; austerity for the Republic,
depravity for the Emperors; catacombs for the Christian;
courage to conquer the whole world;
ambition to make vassals of all the states on earth;
women to drive over their parents' mangled bodies in chariots;
orators like Cicero to incite;
poets like Virgil to seduce with verses;
satirists like Juvenal and Lucretia;
weak philosophers, like Seneca,
and upright citizens, like Cato.

Este pueblo ha dado para todo,
menos para la causa de la humanidad:

Mesalinas corrompidas, Agripinas sin entrañas,
grandes historiadores, naturalistas insignes, guerreros ilustres,
procónsules rapaces, sibaritas desenfrenados, aquilatadas
virtudes y crímenes groseros;

pero para la emancipación del espíritu, para la extirpación de
las preocupaciones, para el enaltecimiento del hombre y para la
perfectibilidad definitiva de su razón, bien poco, por no decir nada.

La civilización que ha soplado del Oriente,
ha mostrado aquí todas sus faces,
ha hecho ver todos sus elementos;
mas en cuanto resolver el gran problema del hombre en libertad,
parece que el asunto ha sido desconocido
y que el despejo de esa misteriosa incógnita
no ha de verificarse sino en el Nuevo Mundo.

¡Juro
delante de usted,
Juro
por el Dios de mis padres,

juro por ellos;
juro por mi honor y
juro por la Patria,

que no daré descanso a mi brazo
ni reposo a mi alma,
hasta que no haya roto las cadenas
que nos oprimen por voluntad
del poder (Español)!

This city has served all causes, all but that of humanity:

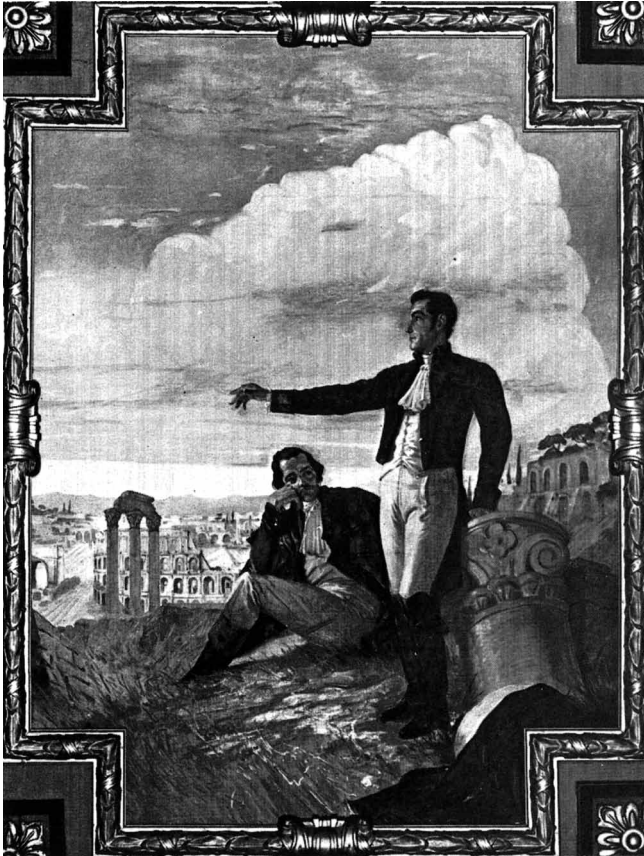
corrupt Messalinas, stomachless Agrippas, great historians,
distinguished naturalists, illustrious warriors, rapacious
proconsuls, unbridled sybarites, cheap virtues and low crimes;

but for the emancipation of the spirit, the quitting of worries,
the edification of man and the definitive refinement of
his reason, very little, if not nothing at all.

The civilisation that has blown from the East,
has here shown all its facets,
has demonstrated all its elements;
but as for resolving the great problem of man's liberty,
it seems that the subject has been forgotten,
and that the resolution of that mystery can only be attained
in the New World.

I vow before you,
I vow before the God of my forefathers,
I vow before them;

I vow by my honour and I vow by the fatherland,
that I will not let my arm nor my soul rest
until I have smashed the chains with which
the will of the (Spanish) sovereign holds us down!



The Liberators
"fathers of the nation
and teachers of the people"

The oath of Monte Sacro represents The Liberator's highest stance. The Liberator merges with a classical landscape and its political history only to break away from it and rip open a horizon of liberation

*

Self-appointed representative of the oppressed, Simón Bolívar embodies the heroic struggle (embodies a continent!) and inaugurates a paternalistic discourse of change for the masses engendered by the few 'capable' - *a rhetoric that has war as its principle*

*

Simón Rodríguez - eyewitness, narrator and creator of history; emitter of the universal social cause; in defence of The Liberator; *la voz absoluta de la voluntad general*; renders the oath of Monte Sacro the voice of truth

*

And yet, Simón Rodríguez - the minor poet; a language and a voice; renders the oath of Monte Sacro an ambiguous text-event-monument

*

The oath of Monte Sacro announces the coming of a parusaic figure, a saviour-liberator who will strike down the enemy with a thunderbolt (a sword, actually) and give shape to a people that is 'lacking' and to a new land - *Nuestra America*

*

A people is only lacking when the means of representing it are completely inoperative. The 'voice of the people' is always cacophonous. It forms a fragmentary and discontinuous discursive history that The Liberators attempt to converge and give (their) sense to

**‘The Oath of Monte Sacro,
a pocket-epic’ is part of an
ongoing investigation
by Leandro Cardoso about
narratives of liberation
and reinvention of Latin
America.**

**It was originally presented
in April 2010 to coincide/
conflict with the official
commemorations of the
200th anniversary of the
independence of ‘Nuestra
America’ (a constantly
re-imagined place).**

Acknowledgments

Design: Caetano Carvalho and
Vilmar Pellisson
Music composer: Greg Vamvakas
Narrator: Sunao Vagabond
Scenic painting: Joseph Richards
Singer: Nicolas Nestoret
Translation: Lily Ford (English);
Juliane Debeusscher (French);
Paolo Gerbaudo (Italian)

Special thanks to
Yaruma Rodriguez and Alberto
Fuentes in the Venezuelan
Embassy.

Also special thanks to
Parveen Adams, Tristan Platt,
Julian Molina, Luciana Mugayar
and many others for asking
important questions.