

DANIEL CATÁN  
MARCELA FUENTES-BERAIN

# Floren<sup>c</sup>ia

# en el Amazonas

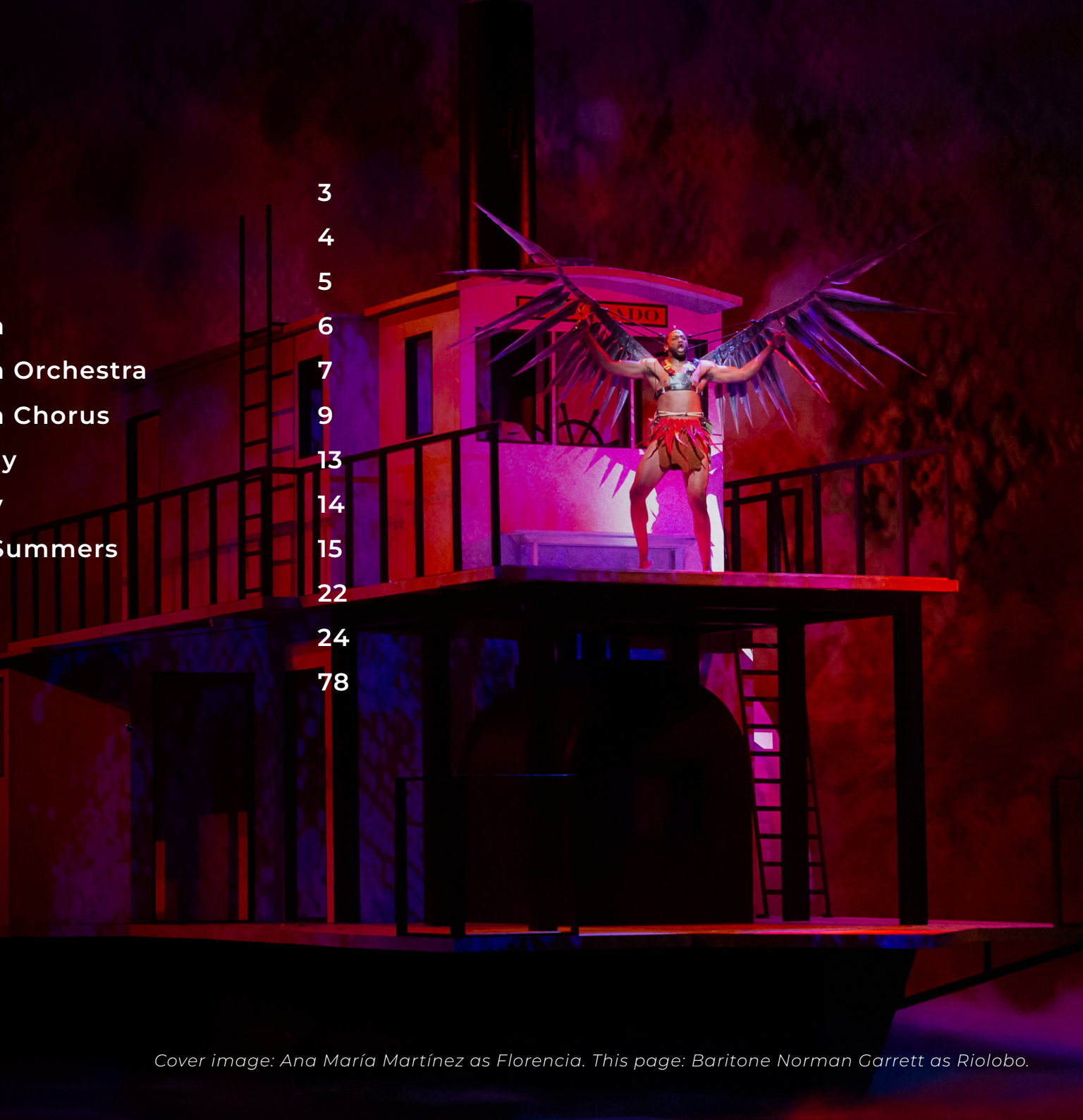


Houston  
Grand  
Opera

Houston Grand Opera  
Patrick Summers,  
Conductor

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Cover image: Ana María Martínez as Florencia. This page: Baritone Norman Garrett as Riolobo.

# FLORENCIA EN EL AMAZONAS

An Opera in Two Acts

Music by Daniel Catán

Libretto by Marcela Fuentes-Berain

Co-commissioned by Houston Grand Opera, Los Angeles Opera, and Seattle Opera

**Patrick Summers**, Conductor

**Francesca Zambello**, Director

**E. Loren Meeker**, Associate Director

**Robert Israel**, Set Designer

**Catherine Zuber**, Costume Designer

**Mark McCullough**, Lighting Designer

**S. Katy Tucker**, Projection/Video Designer

**Eric Sean Fogel**, Choreographer

**Richard Bado**, Chorus Director

**Nicolas Shumway**, Diction Coach

**Kirill Kuzmin**, Musical Preparation

**Kyle Naig**, Musical Preparation

**Blair Salter**, Musical Preparation

**Damien Sneed**, Musical Preparation

**Christopher Staub**, Stage Manager

**Joshua Horowitz**, Assistant Director

*Houston Grand Opera thanks the supporters who made this recording possible.*

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*Commissioned by: Cullen Trust for the Performing Arts, Nancy and Rich Kinder, Sarah and Bill Morgan, Shell Foundation, and Nelda and H.J. Lutcher Stark Foundation.*

# CAST

**Florencia Grimaldi**

**Rosalba**

**Arcadio**

**Riolobo**

**Paula**

**Alvaro**

**Capitán**

Ana María Martínez

Alicia Gianni

Joshua Guerrero

Norman Garrett

Nancy Fabiola Herrera

Thomas Glass

David Pittsinger

**Houston Grand Opera Chorus**

**Houston Grand Opera Orchestra**

*Joined by Maestro Patrick Summers (center), the cast takes a bow.*



# FLORENCIA EN EL AMAZONAS

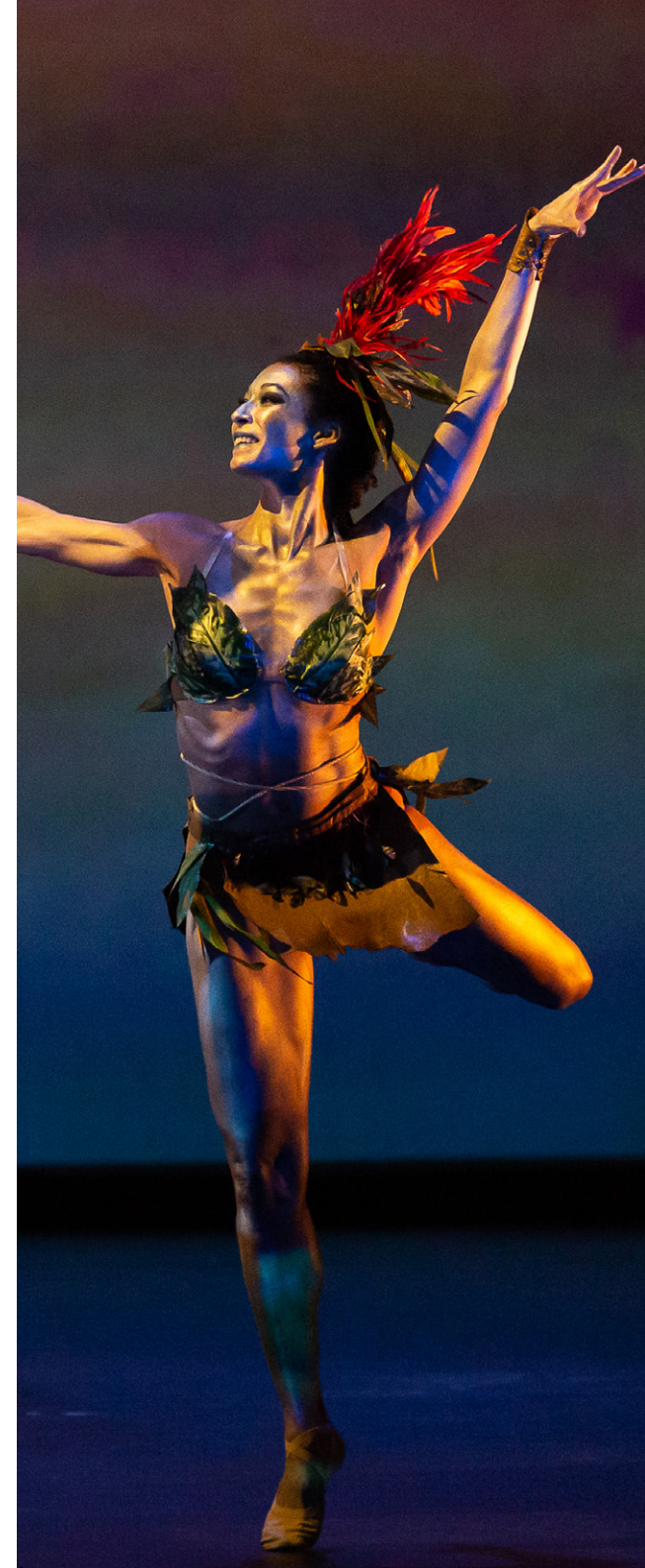
## CD 1 / ACT ONE

1	Scene 1, ¡Eh! ¡Jarabe para el amor!	9:27
2	Scene 2, ¡Qué bueno que llegó!	7:29
3	Scene 3, ¡Mi vida debe cambiar!	4:31
4	Scene 4, Londres, Tahití, Sierra Nevada	7:15
5	Scene 5, ¿Dónde deseas sentarte?	5:49
6	Interludio	2:22
7	Scene 6, Buenos días. Despierta usted temprano	5:59
8	Scene 7, ¡Un as de corazones!	5:56
9	Scene 8, ¡Riolobo! ¡Riolobo!	4:30
10	Scene 9, ¡Amazonas de este río!	2:18
11	Scene 10, ¡Mantengan la calma!	0:41

## CD 2 / ACT TWO

1	Scene 11, Cristóbal, Cristóbal	5:53
2	Scene 12, ¿Arcadio? ¿Arcadio?	4:56
3	Scene 13, ¡Alvaro! ¡Dios!	4:06
4	Scene 14, Interludio	0:41
5	Scene 15, ¡Amazonas!	7:11
6	Interludio	1:15
7	Scene 16, ¡Ya! ¡Quite esa cara!	4:35
8	Interludio – Scene 17, ¿Lo ves, Rosalba?	4:58
9	Scene 17, ¿Dónde estás, Cristóbal?	7:30

**Total run time** 97:22





*The Wortham Theater Center in Houston.*

# HOUSTON GRAND OPERA

**Khori Dastoor**, General Director and CEO

*Margaret Alkek Williams Chair*

**Patrick Summers**, Artistic and Music Director

Houston Grand Opera (HGO) is one of the most innovative, most highly acclaimed opera companies in the United States. Khori Dastoor assumed leadership as the company's fourth General Director in 2021. In 2025, HGO launched the Houston Grand Opera label in partnership with LSO Live, London Symphony Orchestra's pioneering label, to share American operatic works with a broad international audience. The

company's first recording on its new label—of Jake Heggie, Gene Scheer, and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar's HGO-commissioned opera *Intelligence*—was released in August 2025 and subsequently won the 2026 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording. Following the spring 2026 release of Daniel Catán and Marcela Fuentes-Berain's beloved HGO-commissioned opera, *Florencia en el Amazonas*, the company will release the first-ever recording of Missy Mazzoli and Royce Vavrek's *Breaking the Waves*.

With an artistic legacy dating to 1955, HGO stands as a leader in the operatic world. The company was the only American finalist for Opera Company of the Year in the 2025 International Opera Awards, and the only American company to be nominated three times. Committed to advancing the art form, serving the Houston community, and shaping the future of opera, HGO has commissioned and produced 76 world premieres as of 2025. The company is also a trailblazer in nurturing the next generation of artists and administrators through acclaimed training programs. HGO has toured extensively and has won a Tony Award, three Grammy Awards, and three Emmy Awards. It is the only opera company to win all three honors.

# HOUSTON GRAND OPERA **ORCHESTRA**

## **VIOLIN**

Denise Tarrant\*, *Concertmaster*  
Rasa Kalesnykaite, *Acting Assistant Concertmaster*  
Natalie Gaynor\*, *Principal Second Violin*  
Carrie Kauk, *Assistant Principal Second Violin*  
Hae-a Lee Barnes\*  
Miriam Belyatsky\*  
Chavdar Parashkevov\*  
Anabel Ramirez\*  
Mary Reed\*  
Erica Robinson\*  
Linda Sanders\*  
Oleg Sulyga\*  
Sylvia VerMeulen\*  
Melissa Williams\*  
Stephanie Bork  
Andrés Gonzalez  
Kana Kimura  
Maria Lin  
Mila Neal  
Sylvia Ouellette  
Rachel Shepard  
Emily Zelaya

## **VIOLA**

Eliseo Rene Salazar\*, *Principal*  
Lorento Golofeev\*, *Assistant Principal*  
Erika C. Lawson\*  
Suzanne LeFevre\*  
Gayle Garcia-Shepard\*  
Dawson White\*  
Matthew Carrington  
Elizabeth Golofeev

## **CELLO**

Barrett Sills\*, *Principal*  
Erika Johnson\*, *Assistant Principal*  
Wendy Smith-Butler\*  
Ariana Nelson\*  
Steven Wiggs\*  
Steve Estes

## **DOUBLE BASS**

Dennis Whittaker\*, *Principal*  
Erik Gronfor\*, *Assistant Principal*  
Carla Clark\*  
Deborah Dunham

# HOUSTON GRAND OPERA **ORCHESTRA**

## **FLUTE**

Susan Kang, *Acting Principal*  
Henry Williford

## **OBOE**

Elizabeth Priestly Siffert\*, *Principal*  
Stanley Chyi

## **CLARINET**

Sean Krissman\*, *Principal*  
Eric Chi\*

## **BASS CLARINET**

Molly Mayfield

## **BASSOON**

Amanda Swain\*, *Principal*  
Michael Allard\*

## **FRENCH HORN**

Sarah Cranston\*, *Principal*  
Kimberly Penrod Minson\*  
Spencer Park\*

## **TRUMPET**

Dominic Derrasse, *Acting Principal*  
Randal Adams\*

## **TROMBONE**

Thomas Hultén\*, *Principal*  
Mark Holley\*

## **TUBA**

Mark Barton\*, *Principal*

## **HARP**

Joan Eidman\*, *Principal*

## **TIMPANI**

Nancy Nelson\*, *Principal*

## **PERCUSSION**

Richard Brown\*, *Principal*  
Christina Carroll  
Karen Slotter

## **PIANO**

Kyle Naig

\* HGO Orchestra core musician

# HOUSTON GRAND OPERA **CHORUS**

**Richard Bado, Chorus Director**

Ofelia Adame  
Christopher Childress  
Patrick Contreras  
Esteban Cordero  
Justin Dunkle  
Stacia Morgan Dunn  
Ashly Evans  
Frankie Hickman  
Austin Hoeltzel  
Jon Janacek  
Nicole Keeling  
Wesley Landry

Lindsay Lymer  
Alejandro Magallón  
Alisa Magallón  
Natasha Monette  
Jammieca Mott  
Cristino Perez  
Geoffrey Peterson  
Ardeen Pierre  
Brian Shircliffe  
Elizabeth Vickers  
Riley Vogel  
Jennifer Wright

**“I set out to write beautiful music for a story of the journey to transcendent love; it concerns all of us who have lived love with all its intricacies, subtleties, wretchedness, and glorious happiness.”**

**—Daniel Catán, on *Florencia en el Amazonas***

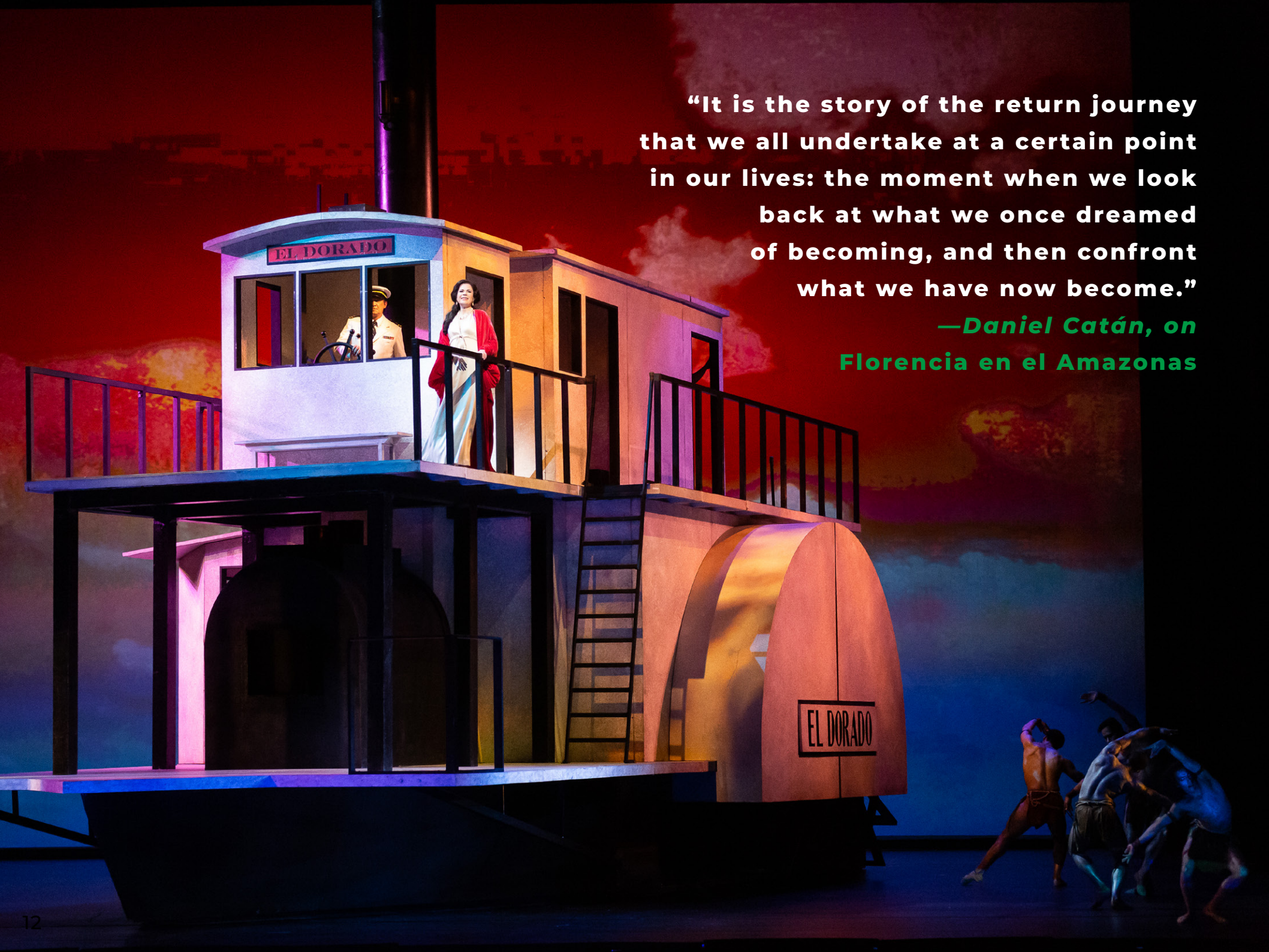


**“I have inherited a very rich operatic tradition. In my work, I am proud to say, one can detect the enormous debt I owe to composers from Monteverdi to Alban Berg. But perhaps the greatest of my debts is having learnt that the originality of an opera need not involve the rejection of our tradition (which would be like blindly embracing the condition of an orphan), but rather the profound assimilation of it, so as to achieve the closest union between a text and its music.”—Daniel Catán, on his wide spectrum of influences**



**“It is the story of the return journey that we all undertake at a certain point in our lives: the moment when we look back at what we once dreamed of becoming, and then confront what we have now become.”**

**—Daniel Catán, on  
Florenxia en el Amazonas**





## DANIEL CATÁN, COMPOSER

Daniel Catán, whose sudden death in April 2011 shocked the opera world, composed in a lyrical, romantic style that lends itself particularly well to the human voice, which features prominently in the majority of his works. Born in Mexico, Catán received degrees from the University of Sussex (in philosophy), University of Southampton, and Princeton University before returning to his home country to take up the post of music administrator at Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes. There, apart from establishing himself as an essayist writing about music, he came to love opera. In 1994, the San Diego Opera gave the U.S. premiere of his symbolist

opera, *La hija de Rappaccini (Rappaccini's Daughter)*, written in collaboration with librettist Juan Tovar. Catán wrote *Florencia en el Amazonas*, the first Spanish-language opera commissioned by a major American company, in collaboration with Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez and his protégée, Marcela Fuentes-Berain. Loosely based on García Marquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*, *Florencia* taps deeply into the novelist's world of magical realism. Since its premiere at Houston Grand Opera in 1996, it has been performed by major companies including LA Opera, Seattle Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Washington National Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera, where it was presented in a new production in 2024. *Florencia's* European premiere took place in 2006 in Heidelberg, Germany, and was performed at the opera house in Manaus, Brazil, in 2018. Catán's HGO-commissioned opera *Salsipuedes: A Tale of Love, War, and Anchovies*, premiered in Houston in 2004, and the composer's *Il Postino*, based on the Oscar-winning film and commissioned by LA Opera, debuted in 2010 in Los Angeles with Plácido Domingo. *Il Postino* was broadcast on PBS and released on DVD with Sony Classical in 2012. At the time of his death, Catán was at work on his next opera, *Meet John Doe*, commissioned by the University of Texas at Austin. Catán is the recipient of a Plácido Domingo Award and a Guggenheim Fellowship. His music is published exclusively by Associated Music Publishers.



## **MARCELA FUENTES-BERAIN, LIBRETTIST**

Marcela Fuentes-Berain is a screenwriter, poet, essayist, and opera librettist from Mexico. She holds a degree in Philosophy from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, graduating with honors. She studied screenwriting with Syd Field and Gabriel García Márquez, eventually becoming García Márquez's assistant. In 1995, García Márquez asked her to write the libretto for *Florencia en el Amazonas*. Fuentes-Berain has written more than a dozen telenovelas and seven films, notably collaborating with Tony Scott on the movie *Man on Fire* starring Denzel Washington. She was a member of the Sundance Lab Mexico for 20 years and participated in the

Huelva Co-Production Forum in Spain for 10 years. She has taught courses at the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica and the Televisa Writers' Center, and delivered masterclasses in Zaragoza (Spain), Seattle, Los Angeles, Bogotá, Medellín, and Cuba at the International Film School of San Antonio de los Baños, among others. In 2016, Fuentes-Berain was honored with the Luis Espinel Award in Bolivia, and since 2021, she has been a consultant at the Televisa Writers' Workshop, specializing in dramatic structure and content development. She is currently writing scripts for film, television, musical theater, and opera across various Ibero-American countries.

# I AM NOT MY NAME

A REMEMBRANCE OF COMPOSER DANIEL CATÁN By Patrick Summers

On April 9, 2011, Daniel Catán, the composer of *Florencia en el Amazonas* (Florence in the Amazon), died unexpectedly. If your life ever touched his, you know what a ray of light he was as a man and an artist, and the two were not separated in him as they so often are in others.

Daniel was both a Mexican and an American composer, and he loved all of the meanings of those distinctions. He was born in Mexico City in 1949 and died at only 62 in Austin, Texas, where he was working on a commission for the Sarah and Ernest Butler School of Music at the University of Texas.

He had been in Houston a few days earlier to attend rehearsals of his opera, *Il Postino*, an opera he had written a few years before for Plácido Domingo. He was planning a trip back to Houston for the performances, and we were meant to lunch together at Hugo's when he was discovered, the victim of a heart attack. He is so alive in his operas that it is still difficult to imagine him gone.

It is especially poignant for anyone who knew Daniel to imagine that his heart would carry him off, for he had the largest heart imaginable. You could hear it in his music, of course, but you could also hear that he started life as a philosopher. He understood the soul and the psyche as few musicians ever do.

The love of his life, Andrea, knows full well what he meant to so many. He had so much left to compose. There was the opera he left incomplete, *Meet John Doe*, based on the famous Frank Capra film, but there was so much more. His music was daring and truthful, and his imagination was cinematic and boundless—and though he was primarily interested in opera, he wrote a large amount of music for other genres and forms, and all of it has his vein of optimism and spiritual power. Daniel was an epic soul, completely unique among the many artists I've been blessed to know.

One of Daniel's most magical operas, *La hija de Rappaccini*, (*Rappaccini's Daughter*)—based on

*HGO's 2019 production of Florencia en el Amazonas was choreographed by Eric Sean Fogel.*



Octavio Paz's play, adapted from Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story—premiered 35 years ago in Mexico City. A Spanish-language play by a Mexican diplomat based on an American short story remains the perfect metaphor for Daniel himself, as he was the embodiment of both his native and adopted nations, representing the best qualities of both.

Daniel wrote two operas for Houston Grand Opera, the second of which, *Salsipuedes: A Tale of Love, War, and Anchovies*, premiered in 2004. It suffered the fate of so many new operas: too many cooks with too many points of view, and Daniel's original vision for it got subsumed in his attempts to please everyone.

His first HGO commission, *Florencia en el Amazonas*, revealed the deepest parts of him, and it is an opera of amazing depth, sonic and dramatic beauty, and endless symbolism. From its first notes to its gorgeous and ethereal finale, it sounds like Daniel's soul opening to the world. The libretto is infused with magic realism by Marcela Fuentes-Berain, who was mentored by the Colombian novelist, one of the most significant literary figures of the last century, Gabriel García Márquez.

For many patrons, opera is “about the singers,” and this is as admirable as it is understandable: it is un-

questionably a singer's art. But without the works of composers, singers have nothing with which to show their gifts. Every great singer who has thrilled an audience with Verdi's “Sempre libera” at the close of the first act of *La traviata*, owes their success to the notes and emotions Verdi wrote.

Maria Callas was once asked if she had researched the source materials of *La traviata*, such as the novel *La Dame aux Camélias* or Greta Garbo's performance of the great role in George Cukor's film, *Camille*. She replied that she felt no need to research anything, because whatever she needed as an actress or a singer was provided for her by Verdi. Callas would have made an extraordinary Florencia, since it is also a role in which everything you need as an actress is already there.

The opera takes place on a boat sailing down the Amazon River towards the opera house in Manaus, where the great diva Florencia Grimaldi is to return to her home to sing one final concert before retiring. We discover, though, that Florencia has another purpose for being on that boat: to find the love of her life, Cristóbal, whom she left years before to pursue her career.

In her youth she chose singing over love, but now she is moved to reverse course, another metaphor, to find him. Her choice of career over love came at a price,

*Left to right: Ana María Martínez (Florecia), Thomas Glass (Alvaro), Nancy Fabiola Herrera (Paula), Joshua Guerrero (Arcadio), and Alicia Gianni (Rosalba).*



but it also came with lessons, for she found that love and singing were synonymous. Where we meet her in the opera, she can no longer tell them apart.

Love hardly feels like a groundbreaking subject for an opera, does it? But *Florencia en el Amazonas* is not simply an opera about love, it is love. The surface of the plot tells one simple story, but beneath what seems superficially obvious, Daniel's opera unfolds with constant undercurrents of meaning that take us towards unseen emotional whirlpools, as deep as we are willing to go. It has magic and mystery. It isn't an opera for curmudgeons, as cynics are usually unlikely to bother searching for mysteries, while romantics won't be able to ever forget them. I know of no other opera like it.

Daniel Catán's *Florencia* was a wild departure when it was written in the last years of the 20th century, shortly before the word "Amazon" took on commercial meanings: it was the first notable opera to be commissioned by an American company in Spanish, the native language of over a third of the residents of Houston, Texas, where it premiered in 1996.

The opera is tonal, richly orchestrated, and soaringly tuneful, all qualities that had been long forbidden in modern musical circles, in which the critical lode-star for generations was solely post-WWII European

modernism. *Florencia* and a handful of other works opened the floodgates for sophisticated melodic beauty to flow back into the opera house, greatly pleasing audiences, and mystifying a few definers.

The river of this opera knows all. It flowed long before us and will be flowing for millennia after we are forgotten, and the opera has that feeling of having long existed, something we simply join for a moment as it continues. Daniel's Amazon is gorgeously illuminated with one of the most colorful orchestrations you'll ever hear, and the vocal writing is infused with his musical and theatrical imagination. "Evocative," "lush," and "atmospheric"—three words most often used to describe *Florencia*—barely touch what is beneath the surface of his sound world, as you will hear.

Let your imagination run wild with its quirky set of characters. Do these seven eccentrics just happen to find themselves on a boat together sailing up the Amazon to hear the renowned Florencia Grimaldi sing one last time in Manaus? Is it a floating passionate comedy that turns magical? Is it the story of an opera singer? Is the plot real or the whole thing absurd? Are we seeing Florencia at three stages of her own life simultaneously? Florencia herself, once in each act of the opera, presciently warns us, "I am not my name." Who, then, is she?



*Paula (Nancy Fabiola Herrera) and the Capitán (David Pittsinger) watch in horror as Alvaro (Thomas Glass) is carried away by the Amazon River.*

Is she, possibly, on the boat alone with the ship's captain? The young lovers Rosalba and Arcadio could simply be her remembrance of the butterfly hunter Cristóbal (a name meaning "Christ-bearer," a reminder of someone meant to show the world how to love), and they dramatize the very same conflicted passion that sent Florencia off to sing decades before. The older couple is possibly a warning, what she and Cristóbal might have become had she not given voice to her career, yet their constant bickering settles in the sweetness. Riolobo and the Capitán are opposing sides of one mysterious presence: God and guide, hunter and hunted, protector and warning, magic and pragmatism. Are they, perhaps, Cristóbal?

The answers to these questions don't matter because the journey of Florencia, not the destination, is the story. Indeed, there is danger at the destination, so Florencia transforms herself into the rarest of butterflies in order to be with Cristóbal for eternity. Is her transformation real? For that matter, was Cristóbal himself a phantom?

In this opera, the line between chrysalis and butterfly is very thin. *Florencia en el Amazonas* occupies a rare imaginative liminal space in an operatic world that seems increasingly obsessed with the literal. Every character in Florencia may or may not be who they

are, but they are most certainly all versions of Daniel Catán, the man.

Daniel's too-brief life was infused with love, ignited by nature, filled with a childlike wonder of things larger than him. Ana María Martínez as Florencia is surely one of the great unions of brilliant artist to a beloved role in memory. Of the many operas I have been privileged to bring to life at Houston Grand Opera, as conductor or impresario, *Florencia* lives in a special place in my memory.

Those of us blessed enough to have known Daniel well, and Ana María and I gratefully count ourselves among them, remember a man of profoundly balanced heart and intellect, generosity and intensity. He inspired everyone he encountered. For generations ahead who make the journey into the pulsating heart of this very special opera, he will continue to do so.

# SYNOPSIS

**Setting:** *Aboard the El Dorado, a steamboat sailing down the Amazon from Leticia, Colombia, to Manaus, Brazil, in the early 1900s.*

## ACT ONE

On the riverbank, Riolobo, a mystical character who can assume many forms, excitedly announces that the El Dorado is bound for the opera house in Manaus. There, the legendary opera diva Florencia Grimaldi, who has not set foot in her native South America for 20 years, will give a concert to reopen the theater. From among the crowds lining the riverbank and selling their local wares, we glimpse the ship's passengers coming aboard: a young journalist, Rosalba, who is working on a biography about Florencia Grimaldi; Paula and Alvaro, a middle-aged couple journeying to hear Grimaldi in hopes of rekindling their marriage; and the diva herself, traveling incognito. As the Capitán steers the ship out of the busy port, Florencia reflects on the emptiness of her life and her desire to rediscover herself and find her long-lost lover, Cristóbal, a butterfly hunter in search of the rare Emerald Muse.

Rosalba accidentally drops her notebook into the river; she is distraught because it contains all her notes for the biography, but it is rescued by the Capitán's nephew, Arcadio; the two exchange confidences about their longings and desires. Alvaro and Paula attempt to dine on deck, but misunderstandings about the exotic menu lead only to bitter exchanges. Florencia, awakened by the sounds of the jungle, learns from the Capitán that the butterfly hunter disappeared into the jungle without a trace. Later, a tempestuous game of cards contrasts the growing affection between Rosalba and Arcadio and the escalating tension between Paula and Alvaro. A violent storm quickly develops, and the ship is carried helplessly in the rushing currents in a downpour of pink rain. Alvaro saves the boat from being crushed by tree trunks but is knocked overboard. With the Capitán unconscious, Riolobo appears in the guise of a river-spirit and implores the mercy of the gods of the river. Arcadio ably takes the helm but is unable to stop the forces of nature as the ship runs aground.

## **ACT TWO**

In the quiet after the storm, Florencia wonders whether she is alive or dead. Arcadio and Rosalba rejoice to find they have survived the storm, but, frightened by the intensity of their feelings for each other, they vow not to fall in love and risk disillusionment. Paula laments the loss of Alvaro, recognizing that the wall between them was pride—not a lack of love. Riolo once again calls upon the mystical and transformative powers of the Amazon. Suddenly Alvaro is returned to the boat, explaining that Paula's voice called him back from the brink of death. On behalf of all the passengers, Florencia thanks him for saving their lives, and they resume their journey to Manaus.

Rosalba discovers that her precious notebook has been ruined in the storm. She is distraught by the loss of two years' work, but Florencia tells her she has lost nothing irreplaceable. The two women begin to argue about the source of Grimaldi's talents, and when Florencia passionately declares that the diva's gift sprang from her love for a man, Rosalba suddenly realizes the woman standing before her is the singer herself.

Both pairs of lovers are reconciled to their need for each other by the time the ship nears Manaus, but no one is allowed to disembark because of a cholera outbreak. In despair at being unable to fulfill her search, Florencia allows her spirit to drift toward Cristóbal's in a mystical reunion.

# LIBRETTO

## PRIMER ACTO

### 1 Escena 1

*(Muelle en Leticia, Colombia. Río Amazonas. Principios del siglo XX)*

*(Llega FLORENCIA, cubriendo su rostro con una mascarada de seda)*

*(Los PREGONEROS ofrecen su mercancía, rica en texturas y colores; granos, frutas, verduras, animales; polvos y aceites; ópalos, esmeraldas y plata)*

#### **CORO DE PREGONEROS**

¡Jarabe para el amor!  
¡Compre usted este caimán!  
¡Grosellas, grosellas!

¡Las cocadas de piña!  
¡Dulces, dulces para la niña!  
¡Aguardiente, aguardiente  
para darle lustre al diente!

#### **NAVIERO COJO**

Para darle lustre al diente  
para ser mas complaciente  
para ver lo que se siente  
¡Un traguito de aguardiente!

*(Todos ríen incluyendo a RIOLOBO que ha entrado a cubierta)*

#### **RIOLOBO**

¡Hace años que esperábamos este momento!  
Una llave de plata: la voz luminosa de Florencia Grimaldi

## ACT ONE

### 1 Scene 1

*(A dock on the Amazon in Leticia, Colombia. Early 20th Century)*

*(FLORENCIA arrives, covering her face under a silk scarf)*

*(The STREET VENDORS offer their wares, rich in textures and colors; grains, fruits, vegetables; animals; powders and oils; opals, emeralds and silver)*

#### **CHORUS OF VENDORS**

Potions! Potions! Love potions!  
Buy this cayman!  
Berries! Berries!

Pineapple candy!  
Sweets, sweets for the little girls!  
Moonshine, moonshine  
come and get some toothshine!

#### **A LAME SAILOR**

To make my teeth shine  
to make things more pleasant  
to see what it feels like  
A small sip of moonshine!

*(Everyone laughs including RIOLOBO who has come on deck)*

#### **RIOLOBO**

For years we have waited for this moment!  
A silver key: Florencia Grimaldi's dazzling voice

reabrirá la cerradura dormida del teatro  
Una llave y un canto  
Aquí están sus ropajes  
su manzanilla, sus perfumes  
Pero cuando Florencia llegue  
nadie podrá reconocerla  
Dicen que sólo el escenario la materializa  
Desde hace tiempo  
nadie la ha visto  
antes o después de que suba o caiga el telón  
En cada función aparece distinta  
Quimera, fantasía mujer misterio  
como una Amazona de este río  
*(RIOLOBO gritándole al CAPITÁN desde el muelle)*  
¡Ea, Capitán, querido viejo!  
*(El CAPITÁN le responde con un gesto de la mano)*  
*(RIOLOBO al público)*  
Es un amante fiel  
Su novia, la vida, corresponde su amor  
y se le entrega en cada viaje  
en juego de sol, salto de pez que goza la corriente  
*(ARCADIO, el sobrino del CAPITÁN, entra a escena)*  
Arcadio: ¡un hombre condenado!  
El sobrino del capitán siempre desea estar en otra parte, otro sitio, otro lugar, otro sino familiar  
*(Entra ROSALBA. Abraza contra sí una libreta. Ve el cartel que anuncia "Florencia Grimaldi en Manaus")*

will reopen the theater's dormant lock  
A key and a song  
Here is her wardrobe  
her chamomile and her perfumes  
But when Florencia arrives  
no one will recognize her  
They say only the stage brings her to life  
It has been a long time  
since anyone has seen her  
before or after the curtain rises or falls  
At every performance she appears different  
A fantasy, an illusion? a mystery woman  
like an Amazon of this river  
*(RIOLOBO shouting to the CAPTAIN from the dock)*  
Hey, Captain, old friend!  
*(The CAPTAIN waves back at RIOLOBO)*  
*(RIOLOBO to the audience)*  
He is a faithful lover  
Life, his bride, returns his affections  
She gives herself to him on each and every voyage the  
glitter of sun, the leaping fish enjoying the current  
*(ARCADIO, the CAPTAIN'S nephew, enters the scene)*  
Arcadio: a man condemned!  
The captain's nephew, always wishing he were elsewhere  
in another spot, another place, with a different fate  
*(ROSALBA enters, clutching a notebook. She sees a billboard that announces "Florencia Grimaldi in Manaus")*

**ROSALBA**

Florencia Grimaldi: una mujer libre

*(A RIOLOBO)*

¿El vapor a Manaus?

**RIOLOBO**

El Dorado es su nombre

Viaja al corazón de la selva

centro del universo a la orilla de un río

Bajo el agua

una grieta profunda como una herida de amor

**ROSALBA**

Agradable manera de hablar

pero si quiere que le diga la verdad

creo que al amor lo invento un ocioso

**RIOLOBO**

Un ocioso alegre y muy creativo

¡Dios en el día de su cumpleaños!

**ROSALBA**

¿Llegaremos a tiempo para escuchar a la diva?

**RIOLOBO**

A eso vamos, allá iremos

**ROSALBA**

Cuestión de vida o muerte que lleguemos

**RIOLOBO** *(Al público)*

Rosalba Montealbán: escritora

no sabe que tiene lo que añora

¡Pero, cuidado, muchacha

**ROSALBA**

Florencia Grimaldi: a free woman

*(To RIOLOBO)*

The steamship to Manaus?

**RIOLOBO**

El Dorado is its name

It sails to the heart of the jungle

the center of the universe at the river's edge

Under the water

a deep crevice like a wound of love

**ROSALBA**

What a pleasant way of speaking

but if you want the truth,

I believe love was invented by an idler

**RIOLOBO**

A happy idler and a very creative one

God on his very first day!

**ROSALBA**

Will we arrive in time to hear the diva?

**RIOLOBO**

That's our goal

**ROSALBA**

It's a matter of life or death that we arrive

**RIOLOBO** *(To the audience)*

Rosalba Montealban: a writer

she doesn't realize she already has what she longs for

Beware, dear girl

porque un día encuentras lo que buscas!  
La vida te concede tu deseo y hasta más  
¡Cuida lo que pides a un Dios tan generoso!  
¡Y ocioso también! ¡No cabe duda!

*(Entran a PAULA y ALVARO)*

**PAULA** *(A ALVARO)*

Sí o no

**ALVARO**

Paula, cariño, ya dije que sí

**PAULA**

Alvaro, cariño, yo escuché que no

**ALVARO**

¡Dejemos ya eso!  
¡Por fin podremos oír a la Grimaldi!

**PAULA**

Dicen que su voz tiene poderes

**ALVARO**

Que convierte el cansancio ...

**PAULA**

... en fuerza pura

**PAULA Y ALVARO**

¡Arder de nuevo!

**RIOLOBO** *(aparte)*

Paula y Alvaro: el brillo de un amor que se opacó

**PAULA**

¿Te acuerdas del primer día?

because someday you'll find what you seek!  
Life grants your wish and more  
Beware what you ask of such a generous God!  
And an idle one, too! No doubt about it!

*(PAULA and ALVARO enter)*

**PAULA** *(To ALVARO)*

Yes or no

**ALVARO**

Paula, dear, I already said yes

**PAULA**

Alvaro, dear, I heard you say no

**ALVARO**

Let's stop this!  
At last we will be able to hear Grimaldi!

**PAULA**

They say her voice has magic powers ...

**ALVARO**

... of transforming fatigue ...

**PAULA**

... into pure strength

**PAULA AND ALVARO**

Ah! To be consumed again!

**RIOLOBO** *(aside)*

Paula and Alvaro: the luster of a love long since dulled

**PAULA**

Do you remember the first day?

**ALVARO**

No. Lo he olvidado

*(PAULA y ALVARO abordan)*

**RIOLOBO** *(Al público)*

Mi nombre es Riolobo

Y soy una criatura de este río

*(El CAPITÁN se adelanta y grita)*

**CAPITÁN**

¡Todos a bordo!

**CORO**

¡Todos a bordo!

**RIOLOBO**

¡La diva no ha llegado!

**CAPITÁN**

¡Leven las anclas!

**CORO**

¡Leven las anclas!

**RIOLOBO**

¡La diva no ha llegado!

**CAPITÁN**

¡Zarpamos! ¡Suelten las amarras!

**CORO**

¡Suelten las amarras!

**RIOLOBO**

¡La diva no ha llegado!

**ALVARO**

No. I've forgotten

*(PAULA and ALVARO board the boat)*

**RIOLOBO** *(To the audience)*

My name is Riolobo

and I am a creature of this river

*(The CAPTAIN steps forward and shouts)*

**CAPTAIN**

All aboard!

**CHORUS**

All aboard!

**RIOLOBO**

The diva has not arrived!

**CAPTAIN**

Weigh anchor!

**CHORUS**

Weigh anchor!

**RIOLOBO**

The diva has not arrived!

**CAPTAIN**

Cast off! Release the ties!

**CHORUS**

Release the ties!

**RIOLOBO**

The diva has not arrived!

*(FLORENCIA corre al barco)*

**CAPITÁN**

¡Zarpamos! ¡Leven el puente!

**CORO**

¡Leven el puente!

**RIOLOBO**

¡Espere, Capitán!

*(El barco ya se ha separado unos centímetros del muelle)*

*(FLORENCIA toma la mano de RIOLOBO para dar el brinco hacia el barco)*

**CORO**

¡Zarparon! ¡Ya zarparon!

**2 Escena 2**

*(Segundos más tarde)*

*(El barco se aleja del muelle)*

*(ROSALBA se acerca a FLORENCIA)*

**ROSALBA**

¡Qué bueno que llegó! Nos retrasaba  
El tiempo apremia para llegar a ver a la Grimaldi

*(FLORENCIA se aparta como si temiera)*

¿Cómo? ¿No viene usted a verla?

*(FLORENCIA mueve la cabeza asintiendo)*

¡Para volver al teatro de Manaus

*(FLORENCIA runs toward the ship)*

**CAPTAIN**

Cast off! Raise the ramp!

**CHORUS**

Raise the ramp!

**RIOLOBO**

No, Captain, wait!

*(The steamship has already pulled away a few inches from the dock)*

*(FLORENCIA takes RIOLOBO's hand to jump and lands on board as it leaves)*

**CHORUS**

They're off!

**2 Scene 2**

*(Moments later)*

*(The steamship leaves the dock)*

*(ROSALBA approaches FLORENCIA)*

**ROSALBA**

Good thing you made it. You were delaying us.  
We are pressed for time to arrive to see Grimaldi

*(FLORENCIA steps away as if afraid)*

What? You're not traveling to see her?

*(FLORENCIA nods her head in agreement)*

In order to return to the Theater of Manaus

nuestra diva canceló en La Scala de Milán!  
¡Ama su tierra!  
Florenca Grimaldi: una aparición  
en la profana selva de apariencias

*(ROSALBA sale)*

**FLORENCIA**

Florenca Grimaldi  
¡No sólo soy mi nombre!  
Aquí, hace veinte años  
te conocí, Cristóbal  
Enseñaste a mi cuerpo a sentir la pasión  
y mi alma tomó forma entre tus manos  
De la pasión brotó mi voz  
Cristóbal  
como aquella mariposa  
que buscabas en la selva  
  
Me ofreciste esto  
Lo desprecié  
Quería seducir con mi canto a multitudes  
Prometí volver cuando triunfara  
en Europa, en América y en Asia  
Eso era el mundo  
Este río, un lodazal de anacondas  
humedad asfixiante  
  
Dijiste que me esperarías siempre  
que el amor liberaba y no me detendrías  
  
Me fui, triunfé  
y olvidé mi promesa  
Entre oropeles me perdía

our diva canceled La Scala in Milan!  
She loves her homeland!  
Florenca Grimaldi: an apparition  
in the vulgar jungle of illusions

*(ROSALBA exits)*

**FLORENCIA**

Florenca Grimaldi  
I'm more than just a name!  
Here, twenty years ago,  
I met you, Cristóbal  
You taught my body to feel passion  
and my soul took shape in your hands  
From this passion, my voice was born  
Cristóbal  
Like that butterfly  
you sought in the jungle  
  
You offered me your life  
and I scorned it  
I wanted to win the crowds with my voice  
I promised to return after I'd triumphed  
in Europe, America and Asia  
That was the world  
This river was a quagmire of snakes  
a suffocating atmosphere  
  
You said you would wait for me forever  
that love sets one free and you would never hold me back  
  
I left, I triumphed  
and I forgot my promises  
Amongst the pretenses I started to lose myself

¡No sólo soy mi nombre!  
¡No, no soy mi nombre!  
La fama es un desastre  
si dejas que te engañe  
Yo lo permití  
Ya no sabía quién era Florencia Grimaldi  
si aquella que el público aclamaba  
o ésta que aquí se enamoró  
Y ambas soy

Traté de olvidar a la Florencia de antes  
y destruí parte de mi alma

Nunca había estado tan sola  
y tan rodeada de mentiras  
Supe que no podía seguir  
Tenía que regresar  
Florencia era parte de ti  
de este paisaje, de esta luz  
Esta luz me hace libre  
Me da alas  
Me transforma en mí

### **3 Escena 3**

*(Cuarto de máquinas. Tarde)*

*(El CAPITÁN y ARCADIO están revisando válvulas)*

#### **ARCADIO**

¡Mi vida debe cambiar!

#### **CAPITÁN**

¿Presión?

I am not just my name!  
I am not just my name!  
Fame is a disaster  
if you allow it to deceive you  
I let it happen  
I no longer knew who Florencia Grimaldi was  
the one who the audiences acclaimed  
or this one, who fell in love here  
I am both

I tried to forget the old Florencia  
and I destroyed part of my soul

I had never been so alone  
and so surrounded by lies  
I knew I could not go on  
I had to return  
Florencia was part of you  
of this landscape, of this light  
This light makes me free  
It gives me wings  
This light transforms me into my true self

### **3 Scene 3**

*(The engine room. Afternoon)*

*(The CAPTAIN and ARCADIO are checking the valves)*

#### **ARCADIO**

My life must change!

#### **CAPTAIN**

Pressure?

**ARCADIO**

Ciento veinte

Navegante mi padre, navegante mi abuelo  
¡Navegante no sera mi hijo!

**CAPITÁN**

¿Cuántos nudos?

**ARCADIO**

¿Qué piensa, tío?

**CAPITÁN**

Dos o tres

**ARCADIO**

No, ¿que piensa de mi vida?

**CAPITÁN**

¿Qué pienso? Nadie puede pensar la vida de otro

**ARCADIO**

¿Se conforma usted con lo que tiene?

**CAPITÁN**

No me conformo. Soy feliz  
El Dorado es el barco más leal  
que jamás flotara en estas aguas

**ARCADIO**

Habla del barco como si estuviera vivo

**CAPITÁN**

Lo está ¿no lo oyes respirar?

*(Se escucha el resoplido del vapor)*

**ARCADIO**

One hundred twenty

A sailor my father, a sailor my grandfather  
My son will be no sailor!

**CAPTAIN**

Speed?

**ARCADIO**

What do you think, uncle?

**CAPTAIN**

Two or three knots

**ARCADIO**

No, what do you think about my life?

**CAPTAIN**

What do I think? No one can think about another man's life

**ARCADIO**

Are you satisfied with what you have?

**CAPTAIN**

I am not satisfied, I am happy  
El Dorado is the most loyal ship  
that ever sailed on these waters

**ARCADIO**

You speak of the ship as if it were alive

**CAPTAIN**

It is, can't you hear it breathe?

*(The puffing of the steam is heard)*

**ARCADIO**

Estoy agobiado  
aburrido de este ir y venir de un muelle a otro  
No puedo más  
Este será mi último viaje

**CAPITÁN**

Te equivocas, Arcadio, no hay tal ir y venir  
Se avanza, siempre se avanza  
En la vida no hay retorno  
No hay paso que sea igual  
ni vuelta que equivalga a un regreso

**ARCADIO**

No me entiende usted por más que le explique  
Este será el último viaje que yo haga  
sólo por oír a la Grimaldi

**4 Escena 4**

*(Cubierta. Tarde)*

*(ARCADIO canta mientras trapea la cubierta)*

**ARCADIO**

Londres, Tahití, Sierra Nevada

*(ROSALBA está en segundo plano escribiendo en su libreta)*

La nieve del Everest, las estepas argentinas, el sol de  
África

*(ROSALBA tira accidentalmente su libreta)*

**ROSALBA**

¡Dios mío!

**ARCADIO**

I feel oppressed,  
fed-up of this to-ing and fro-ing from one port to another  
I can't go on  
This will be my final trip

**CAPTAIN**

You are wrong, Arcadio, there is no back and forth  
Things always move forward  
In life, there is no going back  
No one step is ever the same  
no turn ever a turn back

**ARCADIO**

However much I explain it, you don't understand me  
This will be the final trip I make  
and only to see Grimaldi

**4 Scene 4**

*(On deck. Afternoon)*

*(ARCADIO sings while he mops the deck)*

**ARCADIO**

London, Tahiti, Sierra Nevada

*(ROSALBA is in the background writing in her notebook)*

The snows of Everest, the plains of Argentina, the  
African sun

*(ROSALBA accidentally drops her notebook)*

**ROSALBA**

Dear God!

*(ROSALBA, sin pensarlo, se desliza por un costado del vapor)*

**ARCADIO**

¿Qué pasa, señorita?

¡No! ¡No haga eso!

¡Las pirañas!

**ROSALBA**

No temo morir más que por desesperación

**ARCADIO**

Ya la veo

**ROSALBA**

¡Mi trabajo de dos años!

**ARCADIO**

¿Esa libreta?

**ROSALBA**

¡Sí!

**ARCADIO**

¡Dios mío!

**ROSALBA**

¿Ya la tiene?

**ARCADIO**

Se me cae

**ROSALBA**

¿Qué importa morir?

**ARCADIO**

Ya casi ... ¡no!

*(ROSALBA, without thinking, reaches over the side of the steamship)*

**ARCADIO**

What's the matter, Miss?

No! Don't do that!

The piranhas!

**ROSALBA**

I am not afraid of anything but despair

**ARCADIO**

I see it

**ROSALBA**

Two years' work!

**ARCADIO**

That notebook?

**ROSALBA**

Yes!

**ARCADIO**

My God!

**ROSALBA**

Do you have it?

**ARCADIO**

It's slipping away

**ROSALBA**

I'd rather die!

**ARCADIO**

Almost ... No!

**ROSALBA**

¡No!

**ARCADIO**

Ya casi

**ROSALBA**

Casi

**ROSALBA Y ARCADIO**

¡Ya!

*(ARCADIO se la entrega con una sonrisa)*

**ROSALBA**

¡Gracias! Me ha salvado usted la vida

**ARCADIO**

¿No exagera?

**ROSALBA**

No exagero; mi sueño máspreciado

**ARCADIO**

¿Un atado de papel?

**ROSALBA**

Es un libro

Muy pronto será un libro sobre la Grimaldi

Es una mujer dedicada en cuerpo y alma al canto

**ARCADIO**

¿La conoce?

**ROSALBA**

¡Como la palma de mi mano!

**ROSALBA**

No!

**ARCADIO**

Almost

**ROSALBA**

Almost

**ROSALBA AND ARCADIO**

At last!

*(ARCADIO gives her the notebook with a smile)*

**ROSALBA**

Thank you! You have saved my life

**ARCADIO**

Aren't you exaggerating?

**ROSALBA**

No, I'm not. It is my most precious dream

**ARCADIO**

A bundle of papers?

**ROSALBA**

It is a book

Soon it will be a book on Grimaldi

She is a woman dedicated in body and soul to singing

**ARCADIO**

Do you know her?

**ROSALBA**

Like the palm of my hand!

**ARCADIO**

¡Afortunada!

¿Su izquierda o su derecha?

**ROSALBA**

En Manaus lograré una entrevista

**ARCADIO**

Nadie lo ha logrado

**ROSALBA**

Cuando vea este libro no se podrá negar

**ARCADIO**

En cambio en mi vida nada pasa

**ROSALBA**

¿En el Amazonas no pasa nada?

**ARCADIO**

Le juro que no miento, señorita

Condenado estoy

**ROSALBA**

¿Una enfermedad mortal?

Lo siento tanto

**ARCADIO**

Cadena perpetua en este laberinto

**ROSALBA**

¿Por qué en esta libertad se siente así?

¿Prisionero de quién?

**ARCADIO**

Del destino

Yo quiero ser piloto

**ARCADIO**

How lucky!

Your left or right?

**ROSALBA**

In Manaus I will get to interview her

**ARCADIO**

No one has managed that

**ROSALBA**

When she sees this book, she will not be able to refuse

**ARCADIO**

In my life, on the other hand, nothing happens

**ROSALBA**

Nothing happens in the Amazon?

**ARCADIO**

I swear to you I am not lying

I am condemned

**ROSALBA**

A terminal illness?

I am so sorry

**ARCADIO**

A life sentence in this labyrinth

**ROSALBA**

How can you feel like that in this freedom?

What holds you back?

**ARCADIO**

My fate

I want to be a pilot

Volar, sentir en el pecho  
el empuje de los vientos  
el retumbo de los truenos  
Como el aura en la tormenta  
En la bóveda suspensa  
que cobija tierra y mar  
Volar sin rumbo, volar

Volar venciendo el vértigo  
Girar sobre el planeta  
Vagar como una estrella fugaz

Volar sin rumbo  
perderme en la noche  
lanzarme al fin  
y con un simple roce  
el alba entera incendiar

### **ROSALBA**

Quisiera seguir...  
Pero debo volver a mi trabajo

### **ARCADIO** *(En un tono distinto)*

Londres, Tahití...

### **5 Escena 5**

*(Cubierta. Noche)*

*(PAULA y ALVARO salen a cubierta elegantemente  
vestidos para cenar)*

### **ALVARO**

¿Dónde deseas sentarte?

To fly, to feel  
the wind on my chest  
and the crashing of thunder  
To feel like the aura of the storm  
in the dome of the sky  
that cloaks the earth and sea  
To fly without direction, to fly

To fly defeating vertigo  
To circle the planet  
and burn like a shooting star

To fly without direction  
to lose myself in the night  
to reach the world's edge  
and with a simple touch  
to set the skies on fire

### **ROSALBA**

I would love to continue this ...  
But I must return to my work

### **ARCADIO** *(In a different tone)*

London, Tahiti

### **5 Scene 5**

*(On deck. Later that evening)*

*(PAULA and ALVARO appear on deck elegantly dressed to  
dine)*

### **ALVARO**

Where do you wish to sit?

**PAULA**

Escoge tú

**ALVARO**

Me da igual

**PAULA**

Todo te da igual últimamente

**ALVARO**

Trato de ser cortés

**PAULA**

Y resultas indiferente  
¿Qué tienes?

**ALVARO**

Ya te dije que nada

**PAULA**

Te pedí que estuviéramos contentos

**ALVARO**

El Amazonas, la Grimaldi  
Yo estoy muy bien

**PAULA**

¡Mientes!

**ALVARO**

¿Cómo puedes saberlo?  
¿Estás dentro de mí?

**PAULA**

Antes decías que te leía el pensamiento  
Que lo sabía todo de ti

**PAULA**

Why don't you choose

**ALVARO**

It doesn't matter to me

**PAULA**

Nothing matters to you lately

**ALVARO**

I try to be polite

**PAULA**

But you seem to be indifferent  
What is the matter with you?

**ALVARO**

I've already told you: nothing

**PAULA**

I asked that we be happy

**ALVARO**

The Amazon, Grimaldi  
I'm perfectly fine

**PAULA**

Liar!

**ALVARO**

How do you know?  
Are you inside me?

**PAULA**

You used to say I could read your thoughts  
That I knew everything about you

**ALVARO**

¿Cuándo dije eso?  
(*Cambia el tema*)  
¿Qué quieres comer?

**PAULA**

Me da igual  
(*RIOLOBO se prepara para tomar la orden*)

**RIOLOBO**

Estoy a sus órdenes, señores  
Una especialidad de la región  
un platillo delicado lleno de poderes  
para nuestros viajeros:  
iguana expuesta innumerables días al sol  
y luego marinada

**PAULA**

¡Qué horror! ¡Iguana!

**ALVARO**

¿Se bebe vino tinto o blanco?

**RIOLOBO**

Rosado

**PAULA**

¡Sólo eso me faltaba!

**ALVARO**

Dos órdenes, vino y más champagne  
(*RIOLOBO hace una inclinación y sale*)

**PAULA**

¿No me oíste?

**ALVARO**

When did I say that?  
(*He changes the subject*)  
What do you want to eat?

**PAULA**

I don't care  
(*RIOLOBO prepares to take the order*)

**RIOLOBO**

I am at your service, sir and madam  
A specialty of the region  
a delicate dish and full of powers  
for our travelers:  
iguana exposed innumerable days to the sun  
and then marinated

**PAULA**

How awful! Iguana!

**ALVARO**

Does it go with red or white wine?

**RIOLOBO**

Rosé

**PAULA**

That's all I needed!

**ALVARO**

Bring us two orders, the wine and more champagne  
(*RIOLOBO bows and exits*)

**PAULA**

Didn't you hear me?

**ALVARO**

¿Qué?

**PAULA**

¡Que no quiero eso!

**ALVARO**

No te alteres, no te alteres  
Es un buen rosado

**PAULA**

No habla del vino  
Escúchame, dije que no

**ALVARO**

Y yo escuché que sí

**PAULA**

¡Así somos: la mezcla amarga de un mal vino!

**ALVARO**

¿Cómo puedes decir eso?

**PAULA**

Lo digo

**ALVARO**

Abre los ojos. Mira el Amazonas  
¿No querías esto?

**PAULA**

Tú lo querías

**PAULA Y ALVARO**

¡Cuánto hartazgo!  
¡Qué desencuentro!

**ALVARO**

What?

**PAULA**

I said I didn't want that!

**ALVARO**

Don't get angry  
It is a good rosé

**PAULA**

I am not speaking of the wine  
Listen to me, I said no

**ALVARO**

And I heard yes

**PAULA**

That's what we are: a bitter blend of bad wine!

**ALVARO**

How could you say that?

**PAULA**

I've said it

**ALVARO**

Open your eyes. Admire the Amazon  
Isn't this what you wanted?

**PAULA**

You wanted it

**PAULA AND ALVARO**

I'm so fed up with this argument!

**PAULA Y ALVARO**

¡No vinimos tan lejos a pelear!

*(PAULA echa la argolla matrimonial al fondo de la botella de champagne)*

**ALVARO**

¡No te atrevas!

**PAULA**

¡Ya no la quiero!

*(ALVARO se quita también su argolla y la echa a la botella)*

**ALVARO**

¡Yo tampoco!

**PAULA**

¡No te atrevas!

**ALVARO**

¡Estoy harto!

**PAULA**

No lo puedo perdonar

¿Por qué hacerme algo que no puedo perdonar?

**ALVARO**

No la puedo perdonar

¿Por qué hacerme algo que no puedo perdonar?

**PAULA Y ALVARO**

¿Por qué hacerme algo que no puedo perdonar?

*(La botella se cae al río)*

*(Entra RIOLOBO. Ellos miran la botella flotando abajo.)*

**PAULA and ALVARO**

We didn't come this far to fight!

*(PAULA throws her wedding ring to the bottom of the champagne bottle)*

**ALVARO**

Don't you dare!

**PAULA**

I don't want it anymore!

*(ALVARO removes his ring as well and throws it in the bottle)*

**ALVARO**

Me neither!

**PAULA**

Don't you dare!

**ALVARO**

I am fed up!

**PAULA**

I can't forgive him

Why do something to me I can't forgive?

**ALVARO**

I cannot forgive her

Why do something to me I cannot forgive?

**PAULA AND ALVARO**

Why do something to me I cannot forgive?

*(The bottle falls overboard)*

*(RIOLOBO enters. They look at the bottle as it floats away.)*

*RIOLOBO pone los platos sobre la mesa)*

**RIOLOBO**

Disfrutarán sus bocas de este platillo  
¿Qué miran?

*(RIOLOBO ve la botella)*

Ah, aquí está otra

**PAULA Y ALVARO**

Queremos esa

**RIOLOBO**

Si se fue al río, se fue

**6 INTERLUDIO**

**7 ESCENA 6**

*(Cabina. Amanecer)*

*(El CAPITÁN está frente al timón)*

*(FLORENCIA sale de su camarote)*

**CAPITÁN**

Buenos días. Despierta usted temprano

**FLORENCIA**

Casi nunca. Pero oí el griterío de aves

**CAPITÁN**

Se lo dedican al sol

Dicen que es un canto de amor

**FLORENCIA**

No. Es seducción pura

*RIOLOBO places the dishes on the table)*

**RIOLOBO**

This dish will tickle your tastebuds  
What are you looking at?

*(RIOLOBO sees the bottle)*

Ah, here is another

**PAULA AND ALVARO**

We want that one

**RIOLOBO**

What's gone into the river, is gone

**6 INTERLUDE**

**7 SCENE 6**

*(On deck. The next morning)*

*(The CAPTAIN is at the helm)*

*(FLORENCIA comes out of her cabin)*

**CAPTAIN**

Good morning. You rise early

**FLORENCIA**

I hardly ever do, but I heard the squawking birds

**CAPTAIN**

It is their hymn to the sun

They say it's a love song

**FLORENCIA**

No. It's pure seduction

**CAPITÁN**

¡Coincidencia!

Hace años escuché decir lo mismo a un joven cazador de mariposas

**FLORENCIA**

¿Cazador de mariposas?

Extraña profesión

**CAPITÁN**

Para mí todas lo son  
menos ser navegante de un vapor

**FLORENCIA**

¿Y el joven cazador?

**CAPITÁN**

Buscaba la Musa Esmeralda  
Mariposa única en el mundo

**FLORENCIA**

¿Y la encontró?

**CAPITÁN**

Encontró algo mejor:  
el corazón de una joven hermosa

**FLORENCIA**

¿Usted la conoció?

**CAPITÁN**

No sé si ahora la reconocería  
pero tuve el honor de llevarla en mi ruta

**FLORENCIA**

Aquí cualquiera se enamora

**CAPTAIN**

What a coincidence!

Years ago I heard a young butterfly hunter say the same

**FLORENCIA**

Butterfly hunter?

A strange profession

**CAPTAIN**

They all are to me  
except being a sailor

**FLORENCIA**

And the young butterfly hunter?

**CAPTAIN**

He was in search of the Emerald Muse  
The rarest butterfly in the world

**FLORENCIA**

And, did he find it?

**CAPTAIN**

He found something better:  
the love of a beautiful young woman

**FLORENCIA**

Did you meet her?

**CAPTAIN**

I don't know if I would recognize her now  
but I had the honor of taking her on my route

**FLORENCIA**

Anyone would fall in love here

**CAPITÁN**

El río tuvo que ver  
pero aquello era más que paisaje

**FLORENCIA**

¿Qué era entonces?  
¿Tuvieron hijos? ¿Vivieron muy felices?

**CAPITÁN**

Aquel amor era otra cosa

**FLORENCIA** *(Trémula)*

¿Lo ha vuelto a ver?

**CAPITÁN** *(Señala la selva)*

Escuché decir  
que Cristóbal Ribeiro da Silva  
se perdió allá adentro  
Ella se convirtió en la famosa Grimaldi

**FLORENCIA**

¿Pero hace cuánto tiempo  
que no tiene noticias del cazador?

**CAPITÁN**

Hace mucho  
Quien se interna en la selva ...

**FLORENCIA** *(Aterrada)*

¿Quiere decir que tal vez murió?

*(FLORENCIA se desmaya)*

**CAPITÁN**

Un desmayo de amor  
El recuerdo de un amor feliz

**CAPTAIN**

The river had a lot to do with it  
but their love was much more than just the setting

**FLORENCIA**

What was it, then?  
Did they have children? Did they live happily?

**CAPTAIN**

Their love was different

**FLORENCIA** *(Hesitant)*

Have you seen him again?

**CAPTAIN** *(Pointing to the jungle)*

I heard  
that Cristóbal Ribeiro Da Silva  
Was lost in there  
And she became the famous Grimaldi

**FLORENCIA**

But, how long has it been since  
you have heard news of the hunter?

**CAPTAIN**

It has been a long time  
He who goes into the jungle ...

**FLORENCIA** *(Terrified)*

Do you mean that he may have died?

*(FLORENCIA faints)*

**CAPTAIN**

A lover's swoon!  
The recollection of a happy love

no la ha dejado en paz  
Desmayo de amor: sales azules

*(El CAPITÁN toma una botellita con sales azules y la pone debajo de la nariz de FLORENCIA)*

**FLORENCIA**

¿Dónde estoy?

**CAPITÁN**

Despierta usted: un desvanecimiento

**FLORENCIA**

Ahora recuerdo

*(Fingiendo)*

Sufrí un mareo

*(Hablado)*

Estaré en mi camarote. Gracias, Capitán

*(FLORENCIA sale y el CAPITÁN vuelve al timón)*

**CAPITÁN**

¡Pobre Florencia!

Pensaste que mientras viviera en ti  
como un recuerdo

existiría Cristóbal

Nadie sabe de él

Nadie lo ha vuelto a ver

## **8 ESCENA 7**

*(Cubierta. Mediodía)*

*(ROSALBA, ARCADIO, PAULA y ALVARO están*

has given this woman no peace  
A lover's swoon: Blue smelling salts

*(The CAPTAIN takes a small bottle of blue smelling salts and places it under FLORENCIA'S nose)*

**FLORENCIA**

Where am I?

**CAPTAIN**

You're awake. You fainted

**FLORENCIA**

Now I remember

*(Pretending)*

I had a dizzy spell

*(Spoken)*

I will be in my cabin. Thank you, Captain

*(FLORENCIA exits and the CAPTAIN returns to his helm)*

**CAPTAIN**

Poor Florencia!

You thought that as long as he lived in you  
as a memory

Cristóbal would continue to exist

No one has seen him

for many, many years

## **8 SCENE 7**

*(On deck. Mid afternoon)*

*(ROSALBA, ARCADIO, PAULA and ALVARO are*

*frente a la mesa jugando cartas)*

*(ROSALBA tira una carta a ALVARO)*

**ARCADIO**

¡Un as de corazones!

¡Qué hermosa carta!

Se parece a Rosalba

*(ALVARO tira una carta a ARCADIO)*

**PAULA**

¡Un tres de espadas!

¡Decapita a mi rey!

¿Lo hace por molestarme?

**ROSALBA**

La reina de diamantes

¿Cómo lo adivinó?

¿Puede leerme el pensamiento!

**ARCADIO**

¡Un as de corazones!

*(PAULA tira a ROSALBA)*

**ALVARO**

El seis de trébol

¿Para qué rayos un seis de trébol?

¿Cómo he podido durar casado tantos años?

**ROSALBA**

El pozo es mío

**ALVARO (A PAULA)**

¿No tenías otra carta que tirar?

*at a table playing cards)*

*(ROSALBA discards to ALVARO)*

**ARCADIO**

An ace of hearts!

What a beautiful card!

It looks like Rosalba

*(ALVARO discards to ARCADIO)*

**PAULA**

A three of spades!

It beats my king!

Does he do it to annoy me?

**ROSALBA**

The queen of diamonds

How did he guess?

He can read my mind!

**ARCADIO**

An ace of hearts!

*(PAULA throws to ROSALBA)*

**ALVARO**

The six of clubs

Why on earth a six of clubs?

How could I have stayed married all of these years?

**ROSALBA**

The pack is mine

**ALVARO (To PAULA)**

Didn't you have anything else to discard?

**PAULA**

¡No y ya ganaron!

*(Para sí misma)*

¿Cómo tira un tres de espadas?

**ROSALBA** *(Para sí misma)*

¿Qué será este temblor?

**ARCADIO** *(Para sí mismo)*

¡Una reina!

**ALVARO** *(Para sí mismo)*

¡Una fiera!

**PAULA** *(Para sí misma)*

¡Nada más por molestarte!

**ROSALBA** *(Para sí misma)*

¿Es acaso luna llena?

**ARCADIO** *(Para sí mismo)*

¡Qué mujer!

**ALVARO** *(Para sí mismo)*

¡Qué mujer!

**ROSALBA Y ARCADIO**

La suerte está de nuestro lado

**ARCADIO**

¡Me mira! ¡La siento cerca de mí!

**PAULA**

¡Alvaro!

¡Qué día tan caluroso!

**PAULA**

No, and they have won

*(To herself)*

How could he discard a three of spades?

**ROSALBA** *(To herself)*

Why am I trembling?

**ARCADIO** *(To himself)*

A queen!

**ALVARO** *(To himself)*

Ferocious!

**PAULA** *(To herself)*

Just to annoy me!

**ROSALBA** *(To herself)*

Could it be a full moon?

**ARCADIO** *(To himself)*

What a woman!

**ALVARO** *(To himself)*

What a woman!

**ROSALBA AND ARCADIO**

Luck is on our side

**ARCADIO**

She's looking at me! I feel her close to me!

**PAULA**

Alvaro!

It is such a sweltering day!

**ALVARO**

¡Qué agobio! ¡Insufrible!

**PAULA**

¡Qué aire irrespirable!

**ALVARO**

¡No respire!

*(PAULA ignora a ALVARO y se dirige a ROSALBA)*

**PAULA**

Señorita Rosalba, tiene usted suerte  
El sobrino del capitán es un buen jugador

*(ALVARO ignora a PAULA y se dirige a ARCADIO)*

**ALVARO**

Rosalba es una joven llena de talento  
Esa es la diferencia

**PAULA**

Esa es la diferencia

**TODOS**

Esa es la diferencia

**ARCADIO Y ALVARO**

Esa es la diferencia

**ROSALBA Y PAULA**

Esa es la diferencia

**TODOS**

Esa es la diferencia

**PAULA**

¡Alvaro!

**ALVARO**

It is so oppressive! Insufferable!

**PAULA**

The air is unbreathable!

**ALVARO**

Well, then don't breathe!

*(PAULA ignores ALVARO and she addresses ROSALBA)*

**PAULA**

Miss Rosalba you are in luck  
The Captain's nephew is a great player

*(ALVARO ignores PAULA and addresses ARCADIO)*

**ALVARO**

Rosalba is a young woman full of talent  
That is the difference

**PAULA**

That's the difference

**ALL**

That's the difference

**ARCADIO AND ALVARO**

That's the difference

**ROSALBA AND PAULA**

That's the difference

**ALL**

That's the difference

**PAULA**

Alvaro!

**ALVARO**

¡Qué aire irrespirable!

**PAULA**

¡Qué agobio! ¡Qué calor!

**ALVARO**

¡Qué cosa insoportable!

**PAULA**

¡Sólo mira!

**ALVARO**

Me retiro. Veré el paisaje

**PAULA**

¿Qué paisaje?

**ALVARO**

¡Ese!

**PAULA**

¿Cuál?

**ALVARO**

¡Ese!

**PAULA**

¡Moscas!

**ARCADIO** (*A ROSALBA*)

Con los ojos puede uno tocar.

**ROSALBA**

¿Es peligroso?

**ARCADIO**

Sólo si nadas a contracorriente

**ALVARO**

The air is unbreathable!

**PAULA**

It is so oppressive! It is so hot!

**ALVARO**

It is intolerable!

**PAULA**

Just look!

**ALVARO**

I am leaving. I'm going to enjoy the scenery

**PAULA**

What scenery?

**ALVARO**

That one!

**PAULA**

Which one?

**ALVARO**

That!

**PAULA**

Flies!

**ARCADIO** (*To ROSALBA*)

You can caress with your eyes

**ROSALBA**

Is it dangerous?

**ARCADIO**

Only if you swim against the current

**PAULA**

Es peligrosísimo. Puedes morir ahogada

**ALVARO**

Atrapado para siempre

**ROSALBA** *(Para sí misma)*

¿Qué siento?

Peligroso no parece

**ARCADIO** *(Para sí mismo)*

¿Qué siento?

No parece peligroso

**ROSALBA**

¿Por qué me siento así?

¿Por qué siento este temblor?

¿Será el río? Esa es la diferencia

**ARCADIO**

Esa es la diferencia

**PAULA Y ALVARO**

Esa es la diferencia

**TODOS**

Esa es la diferencia

*(Salen PAULA y ALVARO)*

**ARCADIO**

Rosalba, yo ... No sé como decirlo

**ROSALBA**

Quisiera detener este vaivén

**PAULA**

It is extremely dangerous. You can drown

**ALVARO**

Trapped forever

**ROSALBA** *(To herself)*

What's this sensation?

It does not seem dangerous

**ARCADIO** *(To himself)*

What's this sensation?

It does not seem dangerous

**ROSALBA**

Why do I feel this way!

Why do I feel this trembling?

Could it be the river? That's the difference

**ARCADIO**

That's the difference

**PAULA AND ALVARO**

That's the difference

**ALL**

That's the difference

*(PAULA and ALVARO leave)*

**ARCADIO**

Rosalba, I ... I don't know how to say this

**ROSALBA**

I wish I could stop this swaying

**ARCADIO**

Rosalba, yo ... No sé como decirlo

**ROSALBA**

Arcadio, quiero detener este vaivén

*(ROSALBA y ARCADIO salen)*

**9 ESCENA 8**

*(Cubierta. Tarde)*

*(Se ilumina la figura del CAPITÁN frente al timón)*

**CAPITÁN**

¡Riolobo! ¡Riolobo!

¡Relámpagos en un mes seco!

¡Vivir para ver!

Pero este río nunca ha necesitado motivos ni razones

*(Caen sobre el uniforme blanco del CAPITÁN goterones color cereza)*

Amazonas de este río ¡guíen mis manos!

¡Tropel, tropel! ¡Sonido de tropel!

¡Riolobo! ¡Riolobo!

¡Cuánta arena carga la corriente

Espiral de presagios la crecida

y el barco sobre ella en torbellino

¡No vencerán!

¡El Dorado sabrá luchar!

*(Entra ROSALBA)*

**ROSALBA**

Perdemos velocidad, Capitán

**ARCADIO**

Rosalba, I ... I don't know how to say this

**ROSALBA**

Arcadio, I want to stop this swaying

*(ROSALBA and ARCADIO exit)*

**9 SCENE 8**

*(On deck. Afternoon)*

*(The CAPTAIN at the helm)*

**CAPTAIN**

Riolobo! Riolobo!

Lightning in a dry month!

I never thought I'd see it

But this river has never needed reasons

*(Cherry-colored droplets of rain fall on the CAPTAIN'S white uniform)*

Amazons of the river, guide my hands!

Rumbling! Rumbling! Sounds of rumbling!

Riolobo! Riolobo!

There is so much sand in the current

Like a spiral of omens

and over it, the ship in a whirlwind

They shan't defeat us!

El Dorado will make it through!

*(ROSALBA enters)*

**ROSALBA**

Captain, we're losing speed.

**CAPITÁN**

¡Y fuerza, que es peor!  
¡Busque a Riolobo y a Arcadio!

**ROSALBA**

¡Arcadio! ¡Riolobo!

**CAPITÁN**

¡Tropel, tropel!  
¡Sonido de tropel!

*(Entran PAULA y ALVARO)*

**PAULA**

¡Capitán! ¡Alvaro tiene la salud muy quebrantada!

**ALVARO**

¡Y a Paula le ha dado el mal del río!

**CAPITÁN**

Son las corrientes que se contradicen  
pero ya buscarán serenarse  
Del vientre de la tierra  
el agua saldrá purificada

**PAULA**

Ven, Alvaro cariño, cúbrete

**ALVARO**

Paula, cariño, cúbrete

*(Caen enormes relámpagos)*

*(Entra FLORENCIA)*

**FLORENCIA**

¿Qué pena sufre el cielo para descargar

**CAPTAIN**

And power, which is worse!  
Go find Riolobo and Arcadio!

**ROSALBA**

Arcadio! Riolobo!

**CAPTAIN**

Rumbling, rumbling!  
Sound of rumbling!

*(PAULA and ALVARO enter)*

**PAULA**

Captain, Alvaro is very weak!

**ALVARO**

And Paula is seasick!

**CAPTAIN**

The currents fight each other  
but they will simmer down  
From the womb of the earth  
the water will emerge purified

**PAULA**

Come, Alvaro dear, cover up

**ALVARO**

Paula, darling, cover up

*(Huge lightning bolts strike)*

*(FLORENCIA enters)*

**FLORENCIA**

What suffering the sky must bear to discharge its

así su furia?

**CAPITÁN**

Señora, no debe de estar en cubierta.  
Resguárdese

**FLORENCIA**

Capitán, yo tengo que llegar a cantarle  
a aquel cazador de mariposas  
Decirle cuánto lo he amado  
Quiero cantar para él  
Y reencontrar la luz  
Esa luz me hizo libre  
Me dio alas  
Esa luz iluminó mi voz

**ROSALBA** *(Para sí misma)*

Quisiera conocerla  
Es mi ilusión escucharla  
y realizar mi más preciado sueño  
Escuchar su voz  
Conocer la emoción  
de una mujer como ella  
Quisiera poderla encontrar  
y escuchar su voz

**PAULA** *(Para sí misma)*

Cariño, Alvaro, cuídate  
Quiero llegar junto a ti  
Alvaro, cuídate, escucha  
quiero llegar junto a ti

**ALVARO** *(Para sí mismo)*

Paula, cariño, cúbrete

fury in such a way?

**CAPTAIN**

Madam, you should not be on deck.  
Take cover

**FLORENCIA**

Captain, I must arrive to sing to that  
butterfly hunter  
I want to tell him how much I've loved him  
I want to sing to him  
And find the light again  
That light freed me  
It gave me wings  
That light lit up my voice

**ROSALBA** *(To herself)*

I wish to meet her  
That is my dream  
Hear her and make my greatest dream come true  
Hear her voice  
Understand the feelings  
of a woman like her  
I want to find her  
and hear her voice

**PAULA** *(To herself)*

Dear Alvaro, take care  
I want to arrive by your side  
Alvaro, take care, listen to me  
I want to arrive by your side

**ALVARO** *(To himself)*

Paula, dear, cover up

Quiero llegar junto a ti  
Paula, junto a ti

**CAPITÁN**

¡Cuidado señora! Resguárdese  
No se preocupen  
¡Llegaremos con bien!  
¡Llegaremos con bien!

*(Entra ARCADIO)*

**ARCADIO**

¡El fogón pierde su soplo!  
¡No tenemos equilibrio!

**ROSALBA**

Arcadio, siento el terror ahogando mis sentidos

**ARCADIO**

Lo sé, Rosalba  
Daría la vida por usted

**CAPITÁN**

¡Los troncos! ¡Alejen los troncos!

**PAULA**

¡Tú no, Alvaro!

**ALVARO**

¡Yo sí, Paula!

**CAPITÁN**

¡Cuidado!

*(ALVARO aleja los troncos haciendo una palanca.*

*El barco da un giro y ALVARO cae el al río.*

*El agua lo cubre)*

I want to arrive by your side  
Paula, by your side

**CAPTAIN**

Be careful, Madam! Take cover  
Don't worry  
We will arrive unharmed!  
We will arrive unharmed!

*(ARCADIO enters)*

**ARCADIO**

The furnace is losing its breath!  
Can't get the ship in balance!

**ROSALBA**

Arcadio, fear is choking my senses

**ARCADIO**

I know, Rosalba  
I would give my life for you

**CAPTAIN**

Those logs! Push the logs away!

**PAULA**

Not you, Alvaro!

**ALVARO**

Yes, me, Paula!

**CAPTAIN**

Be careful!

*(ALVARO pushes the log away.*

*The ship swirls and ALVARO disappears into the water)*

**PAULA**

¡Alvaro!

*(En ese momento cae un rayo sobre el barco. El CAPITÁN, descalabrado, cae inconsciente)*

**10 ESCENA 9**

*(Aparece RIOLOBO sobre el río con alas enormes)*

**RIOLOBO**

¡Amazonas de este río!

¡Piedad! ¡Piedad!

¡No destruyan el mundo!

¡Piedad! ¡Piedad!

*(RIOLOBO está en medio de una alucinación)*

En el principio fueron el caos y la manigua  
La grandeza eterna del desorden

Este río

mordedura sobre la tierra

Las serpientes lo esculpieron a su paso

Sus dientes marcaron vados y riberas

Los pantanos, la huella de su baba

¡Yorurás! ¡Yorurás!

*(Se escuchan las voces del coro, como si hubieran sido invocadas por RIOLOBO)*

**CORO**

¡Yorurás! ¡Yorurás!

**RIOLOBO**

¡No destruyan el mundo!

**PAULA**

Alvaro!

*(At that moment, a bolt of lightning strikes the boat. The CAPTAIN falls unconscious)*

**10 SCENE 9**

*(RIOLOBO appears on the river. He has enormous wings)*

**RIOLOBO**

Amazons of this river!

Have mercy, have mercy!

Do not destroy the world!

Have mercy, have mercy!

*(RIOLOBO is hallucinating)*

In the beginning there was chaos and delirium  
The eternal greatness of natural disorder

This river

a gash on the land

carved by passing serpents

shaping fords and shores

leaving marshes in the tracks of their saliva

Yorurás! Yorurás!

*(The voices of the chorus can be heard, as if called up by RIOLOBO)*

**CHORUS**

Yorurás! Yorurás!

**RIOLOBO**

Don't destroy the world!

¡Piedad! ¡Piedad!

**CORO**

¡No destruyan el mundo!

¡Piedad! ¡Piedad!

**11 ESCENA 10**

*(Cubierta. Segundos después)*

*(ARCADIO ha saltado al timón para controlar el barco)*

**ARCADIO**

¡Mantengan la calma!

**TODOS**

¡A la deriva estamos!

**ARCADIO**

¡Calma!

**PAULA**

¡Alvaro!

**TODOS**

¡A la deriva!

¡Estamos a la deriva!

*(FIN DEL PRIMER ACTO)*

Have mercy! Have mercy!

**CHORUS**

Don't destroy the world!

Have mercy! Have mercy!

**11 SCENE 10**

*(On deck. Seconds later)*

*(ARCADIO jumps up to the helm to take over the ship)*

**ARCADIO**

Stay calm!

**ALL**

We are adrift!

**ARCADIO**

Stay calm!

**PAULA**

Alvaro!

**ALL**

Adrift!

We are adrift!

*(END OF ACT ONE)*

## SEGUNDO ACTO

### 1 ESCENA 11

*(Camarote de Florencia. Noche)*

*(El barco aparece varado en una orilla del río con un gran mosquitero que lo cubre)*

#### FLORENCIA

Cristóbal, Cristóbal

¿Es esta luz la muerte?

¿Estaré viva?

¿Y él? ¿Estará vivo?

Cristóbal, Cristóbal

apiádate de mi alma

Sólo he venido a cantar para ti

¿Es éste mi cuerpo

o mi espíritu que vagará eternamente solitario?

¿Dónde estoy?

¿Por qué soñé que todavía podías oírme?

¿En qué momento era ya tarde?

Cristóbal, Cristóbal

sólo deseaba que escucharas de mis labios  
que tu amor fue el impulso de mi vida

Sé que estás cerca

pero no sé si en la vida o en la muerte

¿Es éste tu recuerdo o eres tú?

Por piedad, Cristóbal

muerto o vivo

¡Escúchame!

## ACT TWO

### 1 SCENE 11

*(Florencia's cabin. Night)*

*(The disabled ship, beached by the side of the river, is covered by a large mosquito net)*

#### FLORENCIA

Cristóbal, Cristóbal

Is this radiance Death?

Am I alive?

And he, could he be alive?

Cristóbal, Cristóbal

have mercy on my soul

I have come only to sing to you

Is this my body

or my spirit that will forever wander in solitude?

Where am I?

Why do I dream you can still hear me?

When did it become too late?

Cristóbal, Cristóbal

I only wished that you could hear from my lips  
that your love was the driving force of my life

I know you are near

but, I don't know whether in life or death

Is this a memory or is it you?

Have mercy, Cristóbal

dead or alive

Hear me!

*(FLORENCIA da un golpe muy fuerte al espejo que se rompe en mil pedazos. Su mano comienza a sangrar profusamente)*

**FLORENCIA**

¡Sangro! ¡Estoy viva!  
Y mientras viva  
seguiré buscándote

## **2 ESCENA 12**

*(Cubierta. Amanecer)*

*(ROSALBA y ARCADIO se buscan uno al otro)*

**ROSALBA**

¿Arcadio?

*(ARCADIO la escucha a lo lejos)*

**ARCADIO**

¿Rosalba?

**ROSALBA**

¡Arcadio!

**ARCADIO**

¡Rosalba!

*(Se descubren)*

**ROSALBA**

¡Pensé que habías muerto!

**ARCADIO**

¡No era el momento!

**ROSALBA**

¡Hablaré con la Grimaldi!

*(FLORENCIA strikes the mirror hard breaking it into a thousand pieces. Her hand begins to bleed profusely)*

**FLORENCIA**

I'm bleeding! I'm alive!  
And as long as I live  
I will keep searching for you

## **2 SCENE 12**

*(On deck. Daybreak)*

*(ROSALBA and ARCADIO are on opposite sides of the boat.)*

**ROSALBA**

Arcadio?

*(ARCADIO can hear her from a distance)*

**ARCADIO**

Rosalba?

**ROSALBA**

Arcadio!

**ARCADIO**

Rosalba!

*(They find each other)*

**ROSALBA**

I thought you had died!

**ARCADIO**

It wasn't yet time!

**ROSALBA**

I'll get to talk to Grimaldi!

**ARCADIO**

¡Yo sentiré lo que es volar!

**ROSALBA**

¡Veo en ti una pasión que desconozco!

**ARCADIO**

¡Tu boca, tu boca! Eres mágica

**ROSALBA**

¡Tus manos, tus manos!

¡Arcadio!

**ARCADIO**

Si alguna vez me llego a enamorar  
será de ti

*(ROSALBA sonrío y se separa nerviosamente)*

**ROSALBA**

Esa vez será nunca

**ARCADIO**

Dije “si alguna vez”

**ROSALBA**

El amor es una tumba segura

**ARCADIO**

Tampoco subiría a ese cadalso

**ROSALBA**

Allí crece la mandrágora

**ARCADIO**

Las serpientes anidan

**ARCADIO**

I'll feel what it's like to fly!

**ROSALBA**

I see a passion in you I hadn't seen before!

**ARCADIO**

Your lips! Your lips! You are magical

**ROSALBA**

Your hands, your hands!

Arcadio!

**ARCADIO**

If I ever fell in love  
it would be with you

*(ROSALBA smiles at ARCADIO and nervously moves away)*

**ROSALBA**

That ever will be never

**ARCADIO**

I said, “if ever”

**ROSALBA**

Love is a certain end

**ARCADIO**

I wouldn't climb onto that hangman's scaffold, either

**ROSALBA**

It's where the deadly nightshade grows

**ARCADIO**

Where snakes nest

**ROSALBA**

Una infección

**ARCADIO**

Incurable, incontrolable

**ROSALBA**

Te apresa

**ARCADIO**

Te atrapa

**ROSALBA**

¡Frío!

**ARCADIO**

¡Caliente!

**ROSALBA**

¡Ardiente!

**ROSALBA Y ARCADIO**

¡Ardiente como...!

**ARCADIO**

Si llegásemos a enamorarnos todo terminaría mal

**ROSALBA**

Hemos visto a los amantes arrancarse el alma

**ARCADIO**

Jirón a jirón

**ROSALBA**

Todo terminaría mal

**ARCADIO**

Yo no soy quien tú imaginas

**ROSALBA**

An infection

**ARCADIO**

Incurable, uncontrollable

**ROSALBA**

It ensnares you

**ARCADIO**

It traps you

**ROSALBA**

Cold!

**ARCADIO**

Hot!

**ROSALBA**

Scalding!

**ROSALBA AND ARCADIO**

Scalding like...!

**ARCADIO**

If we were ever to fall in love, it would all end badly

**ROSALBA**

We have seen lovers tear each other's souls apart

**ARCADIO**

Piece by piece

**ROSALBA**

It would all end badly

**ARCADIO**

I am not who you think I am

**ROSALBA**

Yo no soy mágica

*(Con mucha fragilidad)*

Hemos visto a los amantes arrancarse el alma

**ARCADIO**

Sí, yo también los he escuchado

**ROSALBA**

Yo también los he escuchado  
y he tocado la piel  
de quienes ya no se aman  
pero duermen juntos

**ARCADIO**

Sí, yo también lo he visto  
Finísimas navajas en su lengua

**ROSALBA Y ARCADIO**

¡Ay de las almas que sufren por amor!

**ROSALBA**

¡Dios, ayúdame!

¡No quiero la infelicidad del odio!

**ROSALBA Y ARCADIO**

¡Adiós para siempre!  
¡Adiós a la infelicidad!

**ROSALBA**

¡Adiós! ¡Adiós al amor!

*(ROSALBA y ARCADIO salen de escena)*

**ROSALBA**

I am not magical

*(With great fragility)*

We have seen lovers tear each other's souls apart

**ARCADIO**

Yes, I have heard them too

**ROSALBA**

I too have heard them  
and I have touched the skin  
of those who share a bed  
but no longer love each other

**ARCADIO**

I too have seen it  
Razor blades on their tongues

**ROSALBA AND ARCADIO**

Oh, the souls that suffer because of love!

**ROSALBA**

Help me, God!

I do not want the unhappiness of hatred!

**ROSALBA AND ARCADIO**

Good-bye forever!  
Good-bye unhappiness!

**ROSALBA**

Good-bye, farewell to love!

*(ROSALBA and ARCADIO leave)*

### 3 ESCENA 13

*(Ribera. Día)*

*(PAULA busca a ALVARO)*

#### PAULA

¡Alvaro! ¡Dios!

Lo único que pido es morir

Alvaro, cariño ¿qué haría sin ti?

Alvaro, hace cuánto que no te digo que te quiero

Cuando estamos juntos pronunciamos

sólo las palabras desdichadas

No es desamor, ahora lo sé

No es desamor, Alvaro

Se llama orgullo

Ninguna muralla es tan alta

Tuve miedo, Alvaro

Temía perderme en ti

Quise entonces controlarte

Dejé que el orgullo me venciera

Ataqué, herí

Me volví infeliz para dañarte

Oh, Alvaro, si pudiéramos salvar nuestro amor

¿Cómo podremos derribar este muro de orgullo?

Alvaro, escúchame, quiero salvar nuestro amor Alvaro,

cariño, quiero estar a tu lado

para siempre

A tu lado

para siempre

### 3 SCENE 13

*(The river bank. Morning)*

*(PAULA is looking for ALVARO)*

#### PAULA

Alvaro! Dear God!

All I ask is to die

Alvaro, my love, what would I do without you?

Alvaro, how long has it been since I told you I loved you

When we are together

we utter only angry words

It is not lack of love, I know now

It is not lack of love, Alvaro

It is pride

No other wall is so high

I was afraid, Alvaro

I feared losing myself in you

I tried to control you

I let my pride take over

I attacked; I wounded

I became unhappy just to hurt you

Oh, Alvaro, if we could only save our love

How can we tear down this wall of pride?

Alvaro, listen to me, I want to save our love

Alvaro, dear, I want to be by your side

forever

By your side

forever

**4 ESCENA 14**

(Interlude)

**5 ESCENA 15**

*(Cubierta. Día)*

*(RIOLOBO está en cubierta)*

**RIOLOBO**

¡Amazonas de este río!

¡Reciban mi canto en agradecimiento!

¡Salvaron al mundo de su destrucción  
por millonésima vez en este día!

¡Amazonas!

¡Vírgenes morenas!

¡Tambores!

¡Hagan cimbrar de nuevo al mundo!

Este río

Serpentina de color sobre la tierra

¡Bailen, bailen, bailen!

*(Entra ARCADIO)*

**RIOLOBO**

¡Arcadio, estamos vivos!

**ARCADIO**

Riolobo, ¿qué te hiciste en la tormenta?

**RIOLOBO**

Quería que tomaras el timón

**ARCADIO**

¡Y lo lograste!

**4 SCENE 14**

(Interlude)

**5 SCENE 15**

*(On deck. Day)*

*(RIOLOBO is on deck)*

**RIOLOBO**

Amazons of this river!

I offer you my song in gratitude!

You saved the world from destruction  
for the millionth time today!

Amazons!

Dark virgins!

Drums!

Make the world beat again!

This river

Serpentine of color over the land

Dance, dance, dance!

*(ARCADIO appears)*

**RIOLOBO**

Arcadio, we are alive!

**ARCADIO**

Riolobo, where were you during the storm?

**RIOLOBO**

I wanted you to take the helm

**ARCADIO**

And you managed it!

*(Entra el CAPITÁN)*

**ARCADIO**

Tío, ¿está usted bien?

**CAPITÁN**

Feliz de ver cómo controlaste el barco

*(ARCADIO se enorgullece pero pronto vuelve a entristecerse)*

Y dime ¿por qué sufres así?

**ARCADIO**

Es el mareo

**CAPITÁN**

Es el amor, dirás

**ARCADIO**

Lo que sea

Pero nunca las entrañas  
me habían ardido así

**CAPITÁN**

Los síntomas son claros  
hidrofobia, desvelo, necesidad de nada  
y mucha angustia  
Gusto por hablar en otras lenguas  
jergas de idólatra, blasfemias

**ARCADIO**

No me entiende usted  
por más que le explique

**CAPITÁN**

Arcadio, el verdadero idioma del amor es habla en señas

*(The CAPTAIN enters)*

**ARCADIO**

Uncle, are you all right?

**CAPTAIN**

Overjoyed to see how you handled the ship!

*(At first ARCADIO is very proud of himself, but soon he returns to his sadness)*

And tell me, why do you suffer so?

**ARCADIO**

It is seasickness

**CAPTAIN**

It is love, you mean

**ARCADIO**

Whatever

But my entrails  
have never burned like this

**CAPTAIN**

The symptoms are clear  
Hydrophobia, lack of sleep, the need for nothing  
and much anguish  
Desire to speak in other tongues,  
idolatrous gibberish, blasphemies

**ARCADIO**

However much I try to explain it  
you simply do not understand

**CAPTAIN**

The true language of love is felt, not spoken

Hay que fluir con la cadencia

**ARCADIO**

No me entiende usted  
por más que le explique

**CAPITÁN**

Arcadio, recibe este amuleto

*(El CAPITÁN le da el amuleto a ARCADIO)*

**RIOLOBO** *(Aparte)*

¡A la de ángel!

**CAPITÁN**

¡Zarpamos!

**RIOLOBO Y EL CAPITÁN**

¡Zarpamos!

*(Entran a escena ROSALBA y FLORENCIA)*

**FLORENCIA**

Capitán, ¿está usted bien?

**CAPITÁN**

Feliz de verla

*(Entra PAULA completamente cabizbaja)*

**PAULA**

¡Debo darles la noticia de una desgracia!

**RIOLOBO**

No será necesario

*(ALVARO sube a cubierta)*

You must flow with its rhythm

**ARCADIO**

However much I try to explain it,  
you just don't understand

**CAPTAIN**

Arcadio, take this amulet

*(The CAPTAIN gives an amulet to ARCADIO)*

**RIOLOBO** *(Aside)*

An angel's wing!

**CAPTAIN**

We sail!

**RIOLOBO AND THE CAPTAIN**

We sail!

*(ROSALBA and FLORENCIA enter the scene)*

**FLORENCIA**

Captain, are you all right?

**CAPTAIN**

Happy to see you

*(PAULA enters with her head down)*

**PAULA**

I have terrible news to tell!

**RIOLOBO**

That will not be necessary

*(ALVARO comes on deck)*

**PAULA**

¡Alvaro!

**TODOS**

¡Alvaro!

*(FLORENCIA se acerca a ALVARO)*

**FLORENCIA**

A nombre de los viajeros de El Dorado  
le agradezco la salvación de nuestras vidas

A través de su astucia renacimos de nuevo

**ALVARO**

Lo hice sin pensarlo

**ROSALBA**

Creí que estaba muerto

**ALVARO**

Lo estaba

**RIOLOBO**

Es cierto

**ARCADIO**

Creí que estaba muerto

**ALVARO**

Lo estaba

**RIOLOBO**

Es cierto

**ROSALBA**

¿Regresó de la muerte?

**PAULA**

Alvaro!

**ALL**

Alvaro!

*(FLORENCIA approaches ALVARO)*

**FLORENCIA**

On behalf of the passengers of the El Dorado  
we thank you for saving our lives

Through your courage we are reborn

**ALVARO**

I did it without thinking

**ROSALBA**

I thought you were dead

**ALVARO**

I was

**RIOLOBO**

It is true

**ARCADIO**

I thought you were dead

**ALVARO**

I was

**RIOLOBO**

It is true

**ROSALBA**

Did you come back from the dead?

**RIOLOBO**

Así es, regresó

**PAULA**

¿Qué te hizo volver?

**ALVARO**

Una voz me llamó  
Brotó del amor

**PAULA**

Lo hice sin pensarlo, cariño

**ALVARO**

Paula, cariño

**PAULA**

Alvaro, cariño

**ALVARO**

¡Era tu voz! ¡Tú!

**PAULA**

¡Tú! ¡Yo!

*(ROSALBA descubre su libreta completamente mojada en el piso)*

**ROSALBA**

¡No!

**RIOLOBO**

¡La libreta de Rosalba!

**ROSALBA**

¡La suerte se burla de mí!

**RIOLOBO**

Indeed, he did

**PAULA**

What made you come back?

**ALVARO**

A voice called to me  
It sprang from love

**PAULA**

I did it without thinking, dear

**ALVARO**

Paula, dear

**PAULA**

Alvaro, dear

**ALVARO**

It was your voice! You!

**PAULA**

You! Me!

*(ROSALBA finds her ruined notebook on the ground)*

**ROSALBA**

No!

**RIOLOBO**

Rosalba's notebook!

**ROSALBA**

Fate mocks me!

**ARCADIO**

¡Su trabajo de dos años!

**ALVARO**

¡Es una tragedia!

**FLORENCIA**

¡Algunas páginas aún pueden leerse!

**ROSALBA**

¡No se las podré enseñar!

**FLORENCIA**

¿A quién desea mostrarlas?

**ARCADIO**

Es un libro sobre la Grimaldi

**FLORENCIA**

¡Extraño!

Nadie conoce su historia

**ROSALBA**

¡Todo está perdido!

**PAULA Y ALVARO**

¡No se dé por vencida, señorita Rosalba!

**ARCADIO**

¿Y si secáramos las páginas al sol?

*(ROSALBA, desolada, oculta la cabeza entre sus manos)*

**6 Interludio**

**7 ESCENA 16**

*(Cubierta. Mediodía)*

**ARCADIO**

Two years' work!

**ALVARO**

It is a tragedy!

**FLORENCIA**

Some pages are still legible!

**ROSALBA**

I won't be able to show them to her!

**FLORENCIA**

Who do you want to show them to?

**ARCADIO**

It is a book on Grimaldi

**FLORENCIA**

How strange!

No one knows her story

**ROSALBA**

All is lost!

**PAULA AND ALVARO**

Don't give up, Miss Rosalba

**ARCADIO**

What if we were to dry the pages in the sun?

*(ROSALBA, heartbroken, hides her face in her hands)*

**6 Interlude**

**7 SCENE 16**

*(On deck. Midday)*

*(Se han quedado solas FLORENCIA y ROSALBA)*

**FLORENCIA**

¡Ya! ¡Quite esa cara!

**ROSALBA**

¡Si usted supiera lo que acabo de perder!

**FLORENCIA** *(Intrigada)*

Nada que no encuentre en su memoria  
o en su experiencia

La escuché decir que conoce a la Grimaldi

**ROSALBA**

Soy la más fiel de sus admiradoras

Fue tan difícil

Nunca se muestra

Pregunté, hurgué, busqué

**FLORENCIA**

¡Inventó también!

**ROSALBA**

¿Qué podía hacer?

La Grimaldi tiene miedo de la gente

**FLORENCIA**

No de la gente

De la fama

que atrofia el alma

*(Señala una línea en el texto)*

Esta, por ejemplo, es verdad a medias

**ROSALBA**

¡Verdad absoluta y total!

*(FLORENCIA and ROSALBA alone)*

**FLORENCIA**

Come, wipe those tears from your face!

**ROSALBA**

If you knew what I've just lost!

**FLORENCIA** *(Intrigued)*

Nothing you can't recover from memory  
or your own experience

I heard you say you know Grimaldi

**ROSALBA**

I am her most faithful admirer

It was so difficult

She never shows herself

I asked, I probed, I searched

**FLORENCIA**

You invented too!

**ROSALBA**

What else could I do?

Grimaldi is afraid of people

**FLORENCIA**

Not of people

Of fame

that atrophies the soul

*(Pointing at a page)*

This, for example, is only a half-truth

**ROSALBA**

Complete and absolute truth!

**FLORENCIA**

Sí, recibió un don  
Pero fue en la intimidad con un hombre  
cuando la voz creció desde su tallo  
Eché ramas y hojas  
Brotó del fondo

**ROSALBA**

Ella nunca cedió a las tentaciones del amor  
¡Florencia Grimaldi es una mujer libre!

**FLORENCIA**

Atada de pies, manos y cabeza  
al recuerdo de un amor feliz

**ROSALBA**

¿Lo sabe usted?

**FLORENCIA**

Probó el amor

**ROSALBA**

¡Yo acabo de salvarme!

**FLORENCIA**

Nadie se salva del amor  
aún en el desamor...

**ROSALBA**

Es verdad  
Yo trato de ocultarlo  
pero siento que el alma se me seca  
¡Quisiera amar a Arcadio!

**FLORENCIA**

Yes, she was gifted  
But it was not until her intimacy with a man  
that her voice grew from its stem  
sprouted branches and leaves  
It sprung from her innermost depth

**ROSALBA**

She never succumbed to the temptations of love  
Florencia Grimaldi is a free woman!

**FLORENCIA**

Bound by her feet, hands and head  
to the memories of a happy love

**ROSALBA**

You know this?

**FLORENCIA**

She tasted love

**ROSALBA**

I have just managed to escape!

**FLORENCIA**

Nobody escapes love  
not even when out of love...

**ROSALBA**

It is true  
I try to hide it  
but I feel my soul drying up  
I want to love Arcadio!

**FLORENCIA**

...porque un día, mucho después  
estalla y nada puedes hacer

**ROSALBA**

Pero el amor aprisiona

**FLORENCIA**

El amor no aprisiona  
es un inmenso mar  
Nada lo contiene  
Es como un fuego  
que derrite las rejas del corazón  
Deja que entre ese fuego  
y serás la escritora  
  
que has soñado ser

**ROSALBA**

¿Lo cree?

**FLORENCIA**

Lo sé  
Para cantar  
Florencia Grimaldi tuvo que olvidar  
la infelicidad del miedo

**ROSALBA**

¿Por qué lo afirma?  
¿Por qué tan segura?

**FLORENCIA**

Porque aún Florencia evoca con la voz  
su amor por Cristóbal

**FLORENCIA**

...because one day, much later on  
it bursts out and nothing will stop it

**ROSALBA**

But love is a prison

**FLORENCIA**

Love is not a prison  
It is as immense as the ocean  
Nothing will stop it  
It is like a fire  
that melts the iron bars of our hearts  
Let that fire enter  
and you will become the writer  
  
you have dreamed of being

**ROSALBA**

You think so?

**FLORENCIA**

I know it  
To sing,  
Florencia Grimaldi had to forget  
the unhappiness of fear

**ROSALBA**

How can you say that?  
How can you be so sure?

**FLORENCIA**

Because Florencia still evokes with her voice  
her love for Cristóbal

**ROSALBA**

¡La diva! ¡Usted es ella!

**FLORENCIA**

¡No sólo soy mi nombre!

(ROSALBA y FLORENCIA se abrazan)

**CAPITÁN**

¡Manaos! ¡Manaos!

## **8 Interludio**

### **ESCENA 17**

*(Cubierta. Tarde)*

**ARCADIO**

¿Lo ves, Rosalba?

Llegaremos a tiempo para ver a la Grimaldi

¿Cómo? ¿No te alegras?

*(ROSALBA se aproxima a ARCADIO y lo besa)*

**ROSALBA**

¿Y si juntos buscáramos ser libres?

**ARCADIO**

¿Amarnos sin temor?

**ROSALBA**

Le darás sentido a lo que escribo

*(ARCADIO la besa)*

**ARCADIO**

¡Guiarás mi vuelo!

**PAULA** *(Aparte)*

**ROSALBA**

The diva! You are she!

**FLORENCIA**

I am not just my name!

(ROSALBA and FLORENCIA embrace)

**CAPTAIN**

Manaus! Manaus!

## **8 Interlude**

### **SCENE 17**

*(On deck. Afternoon)*

**ARCADIO**

Do you see it, Rosalba?

We will arrive in time to hear Grimaldi

What? Aren't you happy?

*(ROSALBA comes up to ARCADIO and kisses him)*

**ROSALBA**

And what if we tried to be free together?

**ARCADIO**

To love each other without fear?

**ROSALBA**

You will give meaning to my writing

*(ARCADIO kisses her)*

**ARCADIO**

You will guide my flight!

**PAULA** *(Aside)*

¡Es el paisaje más hermoso que he visto!

**ALVARO**

¡Claro que recuerdo!

**PAULA**

¿De qué hablas?

**ALVARO**

Nuestro primer día  
Llevabas un vestido de lino blanco  
y un pañuelo azul

**PAULA**

Tal vez sea posible

**ALVARO**

Tal vez sea posible

**FLORENCIA** (*Aparte*)

¡Manaos!

Vengo a ti a cantarte mi verdad de amor

**PAULA Y ALVARO**

¡Se cumplirá nuestro sueño!

**ROSALBA**

Le darás sentido  
Sin temor

**ARCADIO**

Guiarás mi vuelo  
Sin temor

**CAPITÁN**

¡Manaos!

¡El Dorado en Manaos!

This is the most beautiful scenery I have ever seen!

**ALVARO**

Of course I remember!

**PAULA**

What are you talking about?

**ALVARO**

On our first day  
You wore a white dress  
and a blue handkerchief

**PAULA**

It could be possible

**ALVARO**

It could be possible

**FLORENCIA** (*Aside*)

Manaus!

I return to you to sing my true love song

**PAULA AND ALVARO**

Our wish will come true!

**ROSALBA**

You will give it meaning  
without fear

**ARCADIO**

You will guide my flight  
without fear

**CAPTAIN**

Manaus!

El Dorado in Manaos!

*(RIOLOBO interrupts)*

**RIOLOBO**

¡Cólera! ¡Cólera! ¡Cólera!  
¡Fiebre, delirio y condena!

**CAPITÁN**

¡Maldita enfermedad!

**ROSALBA** *(Asustada)*

¡Tengo miedo!

**ARCADIO**

¡Ven!

**ALVARO Y PAULA** *(Se abrazan asustados)*

¡Cólera! ¡Cólera!

**FLORENCIA**

¿Y Manaus, capitán?  
¿Morirá?

**RIOLOBO**

La muerte intransigente  
en forma de escorbuto  
lepra, rabia, beriberi

¡Inmunda cólera!  
Fiebres se ensañarán  
con nuestros cuerpos

**TODOS**

¡Moriremos! ¡Moriremos!

**CAPITÁN**

¡Calma! ¡Calma! ¡Estaremos a salvo si no  
desembarcamos!

*(RIOLOBO interrupts them)*

**RIOLOBO**

Cholera! Cholera! Cholera!  
Fevers, delirium and death!

**CAPTAIN**

Cursed disease!

**ROSALBA** *(Frightened)*

I am afraid!

**ARCADIO**

Come here!

**ALVARO AND PAULA** *(Afraid, they embrace)*

Cholera! Cholera!

**FLORENCIA**

And Manaus, Captain?  
Will it die?

**RIOLOBO**

Intransigent death  
that comes as scurvy,  
leprosy, rabies, beriberi

Filthy cholera!  
Fevers will ravage  
our bodies!

**ALL**

We will die! We will die!

**CAPTAIN**

Stay calm! Stay calm! We will be safe if we do not  
disembark!

**FLORENCIA**

¡No!

*(FLORENCIA, devastada, se retira)*

**TODOS**

¡Cólera, cólera!

**ROSALBA**

¿Y la diva?

¿No la escucharemos?

**ARCADIO**

No la escucharemos

**CAPITÁN**

Lo siento

¡Miren!

*(El CAPITÁN señala un punta en el río. Flotan ataúdes)*

**RIOLOBO**

¡La muerte flota sobre el río!

**CAPITÁN**

¡Ataúdes!

**RIOLOBO**

¡El último abrazo!

*(FLORENCIA aparece en la cubierta)*

**9 FLORENCIA** *(En voz muy baja)*

¿Dónde estás, Cristóbal?

¿Vine hasta aquí para perderte de nuevo?

¿Te arrebató otra vez la selva voraz?

¿Por qué te siento cerca?

**FLORENCIA**

No!

*(FLORENCIA, devastated, exits)*

**ALL**

Cholera! Cholera!

**ROSALBA**

And the diva?

Will we not hear her sing?

**ARCADIO**

We will not hear her sing

**CAPTAIN**

I am sorry

Look!

*(The CAPTAIN points to caskets floating down the river)*

**RIOLOBO**

Death floats on the river!

**CAPTAIN**

Coffins!

**RIOLOBO**

The final embrace!

*(FLORENCIA appears on deck)*

**9 FLORENCIA** *(Very softly)*

Where are you, Cristóbal?

Did I come all this way just to lose you again?

Has the voracious jungle taken you from me once more?

Why do I feel you close?

*(FLORENCIA se levanta y empieza su última aria)*

Escúchame, Cristóbal  
mi voz vuela hacia ti  
como un ave y se cierne  
sobre el amor del mundo  
De ti nació mi canto  
De entre tus manos  
que en sueños y despiertas  
veneran mariposas

Sé que estás escuchándome  
porque vuela mi canto  
Si tú no la escucharás  
mi voz no volaría

De ti nace mi canto  
por ti puede cruzar  
el río tumultuoso de los días  
o el río sereno de las noches  
y allá, en la otra ribera  
detenerse a escuchar  
su propio rumor de agua enamorada  
Sé que me escuchas  
en la vida o la muerte  
Si no lo escucharas no sonaría mi canto

Te siento palpitar  
en las alas  
de cada mariposa  
y en cada brillo verde  
en el viento  
en el agua

*(FLORENCIA raises herself and begins her last aria)*

Hear me, Cristóbal  
My voice soars toward you  
like a bird and spreads its wings  
sheltering the world's love  
My voice was born in you  
from your hands  
which asleep or awake  
dream of wondrous butterflies

I know you can hear me  
because my song soars high  
If you weren't here to cherish it  
my voice would not glide

My song is born in you  
because of you it can cross  
the turbulent waters of the morning  
or the still river of the night  
And there, on the other bank  
stop to listen  
to its own fluid murmur  
I know that you hear me  
in life or in death  
If you were not listening my song would cease

I hear the beating of your heart  
in the wings  
of every butterfly  
in every green splendor  
in the wind  
in the water

en el fondo de la selva  
en la vida o la muerte  
Te siento palpitar  
en el vuelo de mi canto  
en el aire suave  
Te siento  
en el aire  
¡Cristóbal! ¡Cristóbal!  
Te siento palpitar  
en el aire suave  
de mi canción  
Aquí, aquí, aquí  
en mi canto

in the depths of the jungle  
in life or in death  
I hear your pulse  
In my song's soaring flight  
In the soothing skies  
I feel you  
In the air  
Cristóbal! Cristóbal!  
I feel the beating of your heart  
In the gentle air  
of my song  
In here  
In my song

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