

Columbus: an Opera

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Cast *not yet in order of appearance*

4

5

Cantinero *Joaquín, owner of the bar, plays a "stage manager" role in speaking directly with the audience and moving along the action*

6

7

8

Hector *a beautiful youth, helper in the bar*

9

Truck Driver *Christophoro Vega, a campesino*

10

Mega Fruit President *William W. Williamson the Third, a stuffed suit*

11

Priest *Archbishop Oscar Romero*

12

la Madre *Maria, the mother of a child killed in an accident*

13

la Desaparecida *a woman seeking her "disappeared" husband, who is herself a "disappeared" person*

14

15

el Desaparecido *a man seeking his "disappeared" wife, la Desaparecida*

16

17

Angelina *a lovely young girl, works in the market*

18

Drunk *an North American tourist*

19

Stoned *a German tourist*

20

Market woman

21

Old woman at market

22

Spirit of Painting *may sing, but mostly just wears a projection screen suit*

23

24

Espiritu de la Danza *Spirit of Dance*

25

Espiritu de la Musica *Spirit of Music*

26

General William Shafter *325-lb. U.S. General who led invasion of Cuba in 1898*

27

28

Bartolomeo de las Casas *monk/priest*

29

King Ferdinand or Phillip *Spanish King*

30

Queen Isabella *Spanish Queen*

31

President of the United States *in the costume of the Mega Fruit President*

1 Scenes Overview

2

Act	Scene	Action/notes
IV √	1. La Cantina al Fin del Mundo	exposition; male paradise; blunt racist PC criticism. Need to insinuate an undercurrent of dolor here, so that the following scene isn't such an abrupt change.
√	2. La Madre	death of a child; mourning; vengeance
√?	3. Amores juvenes	flirtation
√	4. Buscando	los Desaparecidos miss one another
√?	5. Dos Gringos	prejudices and guilt exposed; Spirit of Latino Art appears
√	6. Las Mujeres en la Cantina	male bastion violated; guilty truck driver fingered.
	Intermission	
II √	1. La Noche oscurissima del Alma	confession of Madre becomes crisis for priest (Archbishop Romero)
√	2. Consuelo	priest goes to cantina; there is a fight with a Yanqui; Desaparecido sings his fate; priest closes with a kind of mass of hope.
√	3. El Borracho lagrimoso	gringos discover Latino music
√	4. Muerte della Esperanza	funeral procession of dead child
	5. Justicia	historical blame game
	6. Hombres sinceros	it's the audience's turn

3

Act I**Scene 1****La Cantina al Fin del Mundo**

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5 *Set: The stage is sparsely arrayed, with the bare minimum of furnishings needed*
6 *to suggest a bar in a Latin American country — at least one picture on the wall*
7 *(which is in reality a video projection of steadily changing artwork images), a few*
8 *tables with wooden chairs, and a long bar with some bottles behind it. Above the*
9 *entire stage is an arching, almost half-round video projection screen upon which*
10 *images and text are "rising in the East and setting in the West," arcing across the*
11 *image plane like the stars at night. These images and texts support and clarify*
12 *the action on the stage.*

13 *Upstage left and center are mannequins and racks of costumes which are used*
14 *to represent various characters; singers walk back there and slip on this or that*
15 *costume as needed. The orchestra is upstage right with a clear path to center*
16 *stage, as some members will be called upon to participate in some scenes. A*
17 *scrim might visually separate them from the action, if desired.*

18 *A market scene and a church scene will also be employed; with some clever*
19 *design, the bar furniture can be transformed or stacked to stand for the market*
20 *barrows and the confessional.*

21
22 *As the opera opens, we see the cantina, empty save for the Youth, Hector, who*
23 *is sleeping on top of the long bar. The upper video projection displays the name.*
24

25 **Cantinerero** *enters from rear* This is my cantina, la Cantina al Fin del Mundo,
26 a cozy little bar — (*hesitates*) where sometimes some unusual things happen.

27 — I don't ask questions, they're all my customers, and welcome, every one.

28 We get along, although we don't always agree, because everyone comes here
29 for one thing: to drink! *He goes to downstage right and appears to open doors.*

30 *A stream of men shuffle in for their first drinks of the day. Cantinerero greets them*

31 *with handshakes, slaps on shoulder. Yes, yes, buenos días, come in, Jorge;*

32 hello, Señor Ambassadore; hola, Luis — (*with hand gesture for throwing up*)

33 going to keep it down today, no?; buon giorno, Cris (Columbus figure);

1 *buenos días, señores. All take a spot at a table or at the bar. Cantinero goes to*
2 *the bar to wake up the sleeping Youth, Hector, who then helps him serve the*
3 *customers. The orchestra could enter at this time and take their places as a*
4 *barroom band. As Cantinero and Hector are delivering drinks, and the*
5 *customers are taking their first, precious gulps, all sing the song of " La*
6 *Hermandaz de la Cerveza."*

7 **Cantinero** Out on the street, these men when they meet,
8 May not tip their hats or say even, '¡Hola!'
9 But here in my bar, you can look near or far,
10 And all you see are 'brothers in beer' —
11 ¡Todos hermanos en la cerveza!

12 **All** We step out of our lives, forget about our wives,
13 all here is quiet and simple.
14 Look me in the eye, I can't tell a lie,
15 In beer, all men are as brothers.
16 ¡Somos hermanos en la cerveza!

17 **Cantinero** Some here work hard, some just sit on their lard,
18 While others, they kill for a living.
19 There are managers and drivers, scavengers and survivors,
20 And some whose vocation is forgiving.

1 We've got explorers and generals, vegetarians and cannibals,

2 Presidents and sometimes a king.

3 They all come to my bar, whoever they are,

4 and soon they're all ready to sing:

5 **All** We step out of our lives, forget about our wives,

6 all here is quiet and peaceful.

7 Look me in the eye, you can't tell a lie,

8 In beer, all men are as brothers.

9 ¡Somos hermanos en la cerveza!

10 *There is now an interval of barroom chatter. A mess of phrases, laughing at*
11 *jokes, pounding on the tables to make a point, etc. Could also use the*
12 *exaggerated Mexican radio commercial style here. Cantinero hands some coins*
13 *to Hector, who leaves on an errand, then Cantinero walks to front of stage and*
14 *addresses audience.*

15

16 **Cantinero** Now I look out at you, and I see quite a few,

17 Who're knitting their eyebrows in frowns.

18 'These clowns are all gringos, and playing Latinos,

19 who the hell do they think they are?'

20 Well, you'd be surprised, if you just shut your eyes

21 And lay each hand on another man's heart *Cantinero does this with*

22 *2 men, one of them being the character Drunk and the other a" local."*

23 You'll feel life in your hands, and you'll understand

1 That you know them both deep in your heart!

2 **All** We all fight for our lives, get along with our wives,

3 Yearn for a place that is peaceful.

4 Look me in the eye, quick! before we die,

5 In death, all brothers are equal.

6 ¡Son hermanos de todo corazon!

7 *As the song concludes, all rise and gather into a semi-circle for a toast, shouting:*

8 ¡Arriba, abajo, al centro, adentro! *They drink.* ¡Hermanos!

9

10

Act I

11

Scene 2

12

La Madre

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14 *The lights suddenly go dark, during which time la Madre positions herself at*
15 *extreme downstage right; a spot comes up on her. In the dim light, the bar*
16 *patrons help change the set into that of the market. In the spotlight, la Madre is*
17 *leaning over an (invisible?) "child," kissing it, stroking its hair, holding it to her*
18 *breast. (Maybe use a blood-stained article of clothing?) When the stage change*
19 *is complete, she is alone on stage. She sings "La Cancion de la Pérdida*
20 *horrible."*

21

22 *She throws back her head, and from her throat issues a long, long beautiful,*
23 *rending wail of pain, a cry of Nature. After wailing, she is calmer, spent, and*
24 *proceeds to mourn, singing gently. As she sings, people enter the market set*
25 *quietly and take up positions at the barrows.*

26

27 Little one.

28 How can it be that you're not there?

29 Little one ... Pedrito.

1 I hold you — my arms find only air.

2 My precious little one. My baby.

3 I look for you, look for you.

4 How can it be you've gone away?

5 *sobbing, la Madre slumps over in agony. She is approached by a*

6 *woman from the market, which has formed in the background.*

7 **Market woman** Maria, what is wrong?

8 **Madre**, *incoherently*: Pedrito ... ran out ... a truck ... he's gone.

9 **Market woman** Oh no! *clasps Madre's shoulders* Maria, you must

10 turn to God, He is strong.

11 **Madre** *angrily* Where was God? ... *shakes her fist at the sky* Where

12 were You?

13 *sarcastically* Where was your almighty, loving hand?

14 Tell me how You think this should be good! *spits out last word*

15 How, how could you let my Pedro die!?! *sobs, doubles up in grief,*

16 *then, less angrily* I've looked for You, always looked for You,

17 *almost pleading* Are you hiding up there in the clouds?

18 You're hiding when we need you down here.

19 **Market woman** *scolds her gently* Maria, you must never doubt

20 the love of God.

1 *La Madre is not listening to her, but looks up past her to a mist forming*
2 *above the stage. In the mist appears a video projection of a little boy's*
3 *face, above which appears the Virgen de Guadalupe; gradually, her*
4 *whole form is revealed, then the little boy re-appears in front of her. La*
5 *Virgen lowers her hand to his head and inclines her head slowly. La*
6 *Madre is dumbfounded, shakes her head as if to clear her senses.*

7 **Madre** What is this? What is this that I see?

8 **Market woman** turns, but the vision is gone. What do you say?

9 **Madre** This can't be ... It's not real ... No!

10 Things like that don't really happen! (*?vision returns?*)

11 But my boy is dead! ... Yes, that's real!

12 And now I'm going to find out who — (*coldly*)

13 I'll have them jailed, or I'll have them killed!

14 Their life shall be made a hell like mine!

15 *Madre storms off, leaving dismayed Market woman, who says, "Dio*

16 *mio!" and crosses herself and returns to her barrow. Lights come up,*

17 *people become more animated, the buzz of the market becomes*

18 *louder.*

19

20

21

Act I
Scene 3

Amores juvenes

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3 *Market scene. There is a buzz of the sellers hawking wares, with occasional loud*
4 *cries. We hear a rhythmic play of words bouncing off one another:*

5

6 ¡Naranjas! ... ¡pollos! ... ¡melanzanas! ... ¡cafe! ... gaseosas heladas, etc.

7

8 *(Could use a drive-by audio pan of a sound truck here, advertising something*
9 *that is quite the opposite of the wholesome fruit in the marketplace.)*

10

11 *After some time, the Youth **Hector** struts in, quite aware of his attractiveness.*
12 *All female eyes take notice of him, particularly those of the young girl,*
13 ***Angelina**, who is working at one of the stands. She busily re-arranges the fruit*
14 *on her stand until he is nearby, then knocks an orange off the stand so that it*
15 *rolls past his feet. He gallantly picks it up and returns it to her. They skirmish.*

16

17 ***Angelina** sweetly Gracias, Hector. He only smiles, smugly aware of her trick.*

18

What do you need today? Limones?

19

20 ***Hector** I'll take a dozen limones. ... That was a really dumb trick with the*
orange.

21

22 ***Angelina** flustered Trick?! It rolled off! Gravity is no trick, even you can*
use it!

23

24 ***Hector** Yeah, yeah — you just wanted me to stop here. You're just like all*
the other 'helpless' girls! *mimics girl's voice and flutters his eyelashes in*
25 *mockery of her. 'Oh, Hector, can you help me open this jar?' She lunges over*
26 *the market stand and digs him in the ribs, tickling, and he recoils.*

27

28 ***Angelina** I don't sound like that! Humph! I got you to spend your money*
here, didn't I? What's so dumb about that, huh?

1 **Hector** *stays out of her reach and sings in a falsetto*

2 Oh, Hector! You're oh —so strong!

3 Oh, Hector! Won't you dance with me?

4 Won't you buy me an ice cream, Hector?

5 You're so handsome, so smart, so – so – everything!

6 Oh, oh, oh Hector!

7 **Angelina** *scoffing and imitating his lower, male voice*

8 Hey, look at me, I'm so great!

9 You girls are just dummies, it must be tough.

10 Me, I got it all figured out.

11 When I call I want you to just come sighing,

12 *switches to her normal voice, very high, with ridicule in her tone*

13 'Oh! oh! oh! Hector!'

14 **Hector** *laughs in appreciation of her imitation* You're really funny. *There is a*
15 *little embarrassed silence as she waits for him to make his move.* Say, you want
16 to meet for an ice cream when you're done here?

17 **Angelina** Well, I don't get paid until Friday...

18 **Hector** Neither do I. So why don't we just go for a walk by the river?

19 **Angelina** *looks down* I'd have to ask my mother.

20 **Hector** You know what she'll say -- just meet me by the bridge at 2.

1 **Angelina** handing him a paper bag of limes I don't know ...

2 **Hector** OK — see you there! He saunters off, too cool.

3 *Angelina looks after him; once he's gone, she does a little hop of joy.*

4

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9 *As the market buzz continues, **La Desaparecida** comes in at upstage left,*
10 *showing a small photo and quizzing every other seller, beginning with the first*
11 *one. Later in this scene, **El Desaparecido** does the same, but beginning with*
12 *the second seller.*

13 *As **La Desaparecida** continues back and forth towards downstage, the music*
14 *and market chatter grow softer so that we can hear her questions:*

15

16 **La Desaparecida** Have you seen him? ¿No? ¿Lo ha visto?

17 *She passes from one to another, all shaking their heads or saying no. Then La*

18 *Desaparecida comes to an old lady downstage left who is hard of hearing, and*

19 *almost needs to be shouted at.*

20 **La Desaparecida** ¿Lo ha visto, Abuelita? Holds out photo, old woman

21 *ignores it.*

22 **Old Woman** Eh? Do I have a bistro?

23 **La Desaparecida** Louder and with emphasis: No, no -- ha -- lo -- visto?!

24 ¿Este hombre!

25 **Old Woman** You don't have to shout! ... squints very hard at the small photo

26 *for a long time, raising hopes, then suddenly No! ... Who is it?*

1 **La Desaparecida** *crestfallen* It is my husband — he disappeared five years
2 ago.

3 **Old Woman** Ah, yes, so did many, many others. All gone. Forever.

4 **La Desaparecida** *animated* But I have had a letter from him — last year
5 — he sneaked it out of the camp, maybe he got away, too.

6 **Old Woman** So, so. Then there is hope.

7 **La Desaparecida** Yes, I shall never give up! *Sings the song of" El Amor*
8 *inolvidabile". (unforgettable love)*

9 Once there was a time

10 I would wake next to you,

11 feel caresses from your breath,

12 Kiss your face as you slept.

13

14 Once there was a time

15 We shared both dawn and night

16 We two danced and sang our hope,

17 Our love could never die.

18

19 Suddenly that time,

20 Those loving days with you,

1 Have been lost, *pause* stolen.

2 No chance to say goodbye.

3

4 Ever since that time

5 I always look for you,

6 Seek your eyes in every face,

7 I'll never give you up.

8 **Old Woman** And what was his "crime"?

9 **La Desaparecida** He laughed.

10 **Old Woman** What?

11 **La Desaparecida** He laughed at a joke someone else told — he overheard
12 it as he was walking by. His friends who got away told me later. Troops took
13 him off the street, rounded up everyone they could catch.

14 **Old Woman** ¡Buena suerte! *turns to go back to working on her stand.*

15 **La Desaparecida** ¡Muchas gracias, Abuelita! *Exits as she accosts*

16 *Angelina, who is also leaving the stage. Shows her the picture as they exit, says,*

17 "Have you seen him?"

18 *Market buzz resumes for a short time, then El Desaparecido enters upstage*
19 *right, asking the market people whom his wife did not ask, flashing them a photo.*
20 *We hear his voice punctuating the buzz, "Have you seen her?" Then he reaches*
21 *the Old Woman, asks, "La ha visto, Abuelita?" She strains her eyes to see the*

1 *small photo, then shakes her head. He tucks the photo away and exits opposite*
2 *where his wife left the stage.*

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Act I

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Scene 5

6

Dos Gringos

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8 *Meanwhile, back in the cantina: the beer has been flowing and a few of the*
9 *patrons are getting pretty well on, in particular, a pair of gringos seated at a table.*
10 *One of them beckons to the Cantinero, who comes to their table.*

11

12 **Cantinero** Yes, sir?

13 **Drunk** Hey, what I wanna know -- I been sitting here for a while, but I'm

14 not that drunk -- what I wanna know is why does that big canvas up there

15 keep changing?

16 **Cantinero** Why shouldn't it? Don't you like the pictures?

17 **Drunk** Well, yeah, but ... paintings usually stay the same.

18 **Stoned** *has a German accent, not too strong* Hey, mann, you shouldt haff

19 smoked more vweed before we left the hotel. — I like it changing.

20 **Drunk** Yeah, it's cool, it's cool. But it makes me feel kind of rotten-like,

21 'cause I see stuff up there by Diego Rivera, and Frida Kahlo, and I'm like,

22 boy did they have it rough! Henry Ford was really down on Rivera, you

23 know, those murals in Detroit with the exploited workers, and Frida all sick

24 and in pain, you know. We really treated them bad, man.

1 **Cantinero** We? You were there?

2 **Drunk** *ignoring his objection, and turning weepy* Oh, man, we were really
3 awful. And her in the hospital, and him being so mean... And everybody
4 here's so nice to us, and we were all such bastards. *He starts to sob quietly.*

5 *Cantinero and Stoned look on, somewhat incredulous at Drunk's emotional*
6 *outburst.*

7 **Stoned**, *by way of embarrassed explanation* He's from New York.

8 **Cantinero** I know what you need, hombre. *Lays his hand on Drunk's*
9 *shoulder, then calls out in a loud, sung bravura* ¡Llamo al Espiritu de la
10 Pintura!

11 *At stage rear, a character has donned a squarish suit covered with tiny glass*
12 *beads (i.e., it's a projection screen) and now waddles slowly to midstage center.*
13 *As the music takes off, video projections of colors and famous Latino artworks*
14 *emblazon the canvas-like coat. The character opens his/her mouth as if to sing,*
15 *but no sounds come out. The music is going furiously, however. (Alternately,*
16 *character sings no words, just sound -- scat.*

17 *In a lull in the music:*

18 **Stoned** Why doesn't she/he say anything?

19 **Cantinero** Listen with your eyes. Listen with your eyes.

1 *Music continues, but stops abruptly as the following scene begins with the*
2 *eruption into the cantina of Angelina, the young girl. The Youth Hector ducks*
3 *behind the bar to avoid being seen.*

4

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Act I

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Scene 6

7

Las Mujeres en la Cantina

8

9 *As Angelina bursts in, the lights go up suddenly, burning out the video projection*
10 *on the Spirit of Painting, who waddles back out of the scene and hangs up the*
11 *costume. All eyes are upon Angelina, as much for her beauty as because of her*
12 *anger. The fury of her accusations is underscored by flights of notes. The mood*
13 *of this scene should darken with each subsequent "invasion" by the women,*
14 *culminating in the very troubling appearance of la Madre.*

15

16 **Angelina** trumpets shrilly Where is he?

17 **All** a bit bemused at her youthful fury, and taken by her beauty; they respond not

18 *in unison, but by singing a shaped staccato of many repetitions* Who? ¿Quién?

19 **Angelina** Hector, the faithless one! He stood me up!

20 **All** buzz Have you seen Hector? Who's Hector, anyway? He went away a

21 while ago, didn't he?

22 **Angelina** in unbridled fury, intimidating the bar patrons a bit

23 Men! They tell us any old lie!

24 They want us faithful 'til we die!

25 But they, they never keep their word!

1 They want to flit about, free as a bird!

2 Oh! It's just as Mother said

3 The only peace you'll have with men

4 is when you're dead.

5 Vagabonds! Egoists! Silk-tongued liars!

6 *Angelina looks around in disgust, searching for a word to destroy them all:*

7

8 ¡Borrachos!

9 *She storms out; a vocal buzz goes on for a time. Hector rises slowly from behind*
10 *the bar, peering to see whether she's gone.*

11

12 **Stoned** *awkwardly attempting to lighten up the mood, roars Drrrinks for*

13 everybody!

14 **Cantinero** *likes this idea* On you?

15 **Stoned** Yeah, man -- a drink for every man in the house! *The customers are*

16 *gradually returning to their places.*

17 **All** ¡Hurra! ... *someone in the crowd starts up the refrain from Act I, scene 1,*

18 *and others gradually join in:*

19 We step out of our lives, forget about our wives,

20 all here is quiet and peaceful.

21 Look me in the eye, you can't tell a lie,

22 In beer, all brothers are equal.

23 ¡Somos los Hermanos ...

1 *At this point, the song and music are interrupted by la Desaparecida, who*
2 *strides into the bar, holds up the photo of her husband and, a little afraid of*
3 *her own courage at invading this male bastion, sings/cries:*

4 ***Desaparecida*** *bravely, demanding* Who has seen him?

5 *Various customers come forward to peer at the photograph; nobody knows him.*

6 ***All*** What? Who's this? ¡Demasiadas mujeres aquí! No, never seen him. Do
7 you know him? I don't. This bar's getting too busy for me, I'm leaving.

8 ***Desaparecida*** *frustrated* But you should know him! You are his brothers!

9 Look at you! Every one with his red nose in his beer!

10 You cannot see, you cannot hear,

11 You know nothing but your beer, beer, beer!

12 You don't care about anyone but yourselves,

13 You don't see the hurt you give as you dive into your glass

14 Brothers and sisters are all strangers to you!

15 *spits out the word* Borrachos!

16 *Desaparecida turns on her heel and storms out before anyone can reply. All look*
17 *around at each other, some tap their heads, the mood is again disturbed, a little*
18 *more than last time. The music of the song " Hermanos de la Cerveza" starts up,*
19 *but just enough to be recognizable, when la Madre bursts in.*

20
21 ***Madre*** Where is he?!

1 **All** *not in unison, but as a shaped staccato of many repetitions, sung* Who?
2 ¿Quien? Who is it this time? *The mood should be darkening through this*
3 *scene, and be really apparent here.*

4
5 **Madre** Christophoro Vega — the one who drives a truck for Mega Fruit!

6 Where is he?

7 **All** *again, the voices sweep around the room like a swarm of sounds* I don't
8 know. Have you seen him? Do you know? No, I haven't seen him. Was he
9 here? ¿No se!

10 **Madre** He killed my boy! *This strikes them silent for an instant.*

11 **All** What? How can that be? What did he do? What did she say? ¿Que pasa?

12 **Madre** Yes, my Pedrito! *Her fury weakens as she says the name. Trembling*
13 *with emotion and rage* He hit him with his truck. And now my baby is dead.

14 **All** *more buzz as all question each other.*

15 *La Madre, shaking, runs out as suddenly as she came in. All are really cowed*
16 *this time, the fun mood is definitely gone. The band starts up the bar's theme*
17 *song, but the Cantinero waves them off with his hands and they awkwardly stop.*
18 *Hector carries out some more beer anyway.*

19
20 *A ramshackle guy in work clothes shuffles in, leans heavily on the bar, and takes*
21 *a beer that was standing ready. As he comes in, it is quiet, and the Cantinero*
22 *follows him intensely with his eyes.*

23
24 **Cantinero** Hey, man. *He is ignored.* Cris ... there was a woman here looking
25 for you. She says you ran over her boy.

26 *Truck driver doesn't look at him, flails behind him in a gesture that says, buzz off!*
27 *All are looking at the Truck Driver as a spot narrows down to a point on him and*
28 *goes out.*

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End of Act I
Intermission

Act II
Scene 1
La Noche oscurissima del Alma

The set has been changed by re-stacking the bar furniture so that we see a church with a confessional at stage left and some rows of benches where the absent congregation would sit. The entrances and exits will be made at stage right. A votive candle is burning above the priest's compartment, indicating a confessor is inside. The confessional is facing the audience, and is curtained with gauze or scrim, both on the confessor's side, and around the lay person's compartment, so that it is enclosed, although the audience is privileged to see through to the inside. A light down on these characters may be necessary to let us see them.

The young girl, Angelina, comes striding quickly into the church, her face still set in a frown. She is muttering to herself, perhaps in short, intense, flights of song:

Angelina Oh, how I hate him! But it is a sin to hate, though we must hate sin. And yet I love him and want to be near him – can this be a sin, too?

Preoccupied, she nears the confessional and reaches for the curtain to enter; just then, a voice arises from within — Angelina jumps back, noiselessly, startled.

She stands nearby during the scene, so that we assume she hears all.

*The troubled voice of la **Desaparecida**, singing*

Father, forgive me, for I have sinned.

It has been one day since my last confession.

1 *From within, the voice of the **Priest** You may begin, my child. His voice starts*
2 *out as a strong bass, but, as his emotions rise during the scene, he becomes*
3 *more agitated until he ends a sobbing wreck.*

4 ***Desaparecida*** sings

5 In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

6 I confess that I have felt envy in my heart.

7 ***Priest*** Of whom and for what cause?

8 ***Desaparecida***

9 I envy other women who have husbands,

10 For mine has been taken away —

11 Soldiers took him off the street and

12 Now I am alone.

13 ***Priest*** It is our duty to accept the life our Lord gives us.

14 ***Desaparecida*** Oh, yes, I try to accept, but I

15 Go everywhere to look for him.

16 And as I've gone, I've ,, I've...

17 Seen terrible things.

18 ***Priest*** What do you mean? What sort of things?

19 ***Desaparecida*** I have seen babies, too many babies

20 Sucking at dried up teats.

1 I have seen young men lying in heaps,
2 shot down by troops, and left rotting in the heat.
3 I have seen them digging, ... digging long, deep holes
4 And from the woods, I peered out and saw their bodies fall.
5 They shot campesinos, one by one,
6 For the crime of wanting a better life.
7 I have seen riches — got with the blood of children,
8 Mines that swallowed up thousands and
9 Vomited gold and tin and lead into one man's hand.
10 I have seen armies come, some with guns,
11 Some with briefcases, sometimes both.
12 I have seen them murder many, many people,
13 With bullets, and with hunger, and with work,
14 While the murderers, they gorge upon a feast.
15 **Priest** *weakly* My child, we must not question the ways of the Lord.
16 **Desaparecida** Yes, Father. But I have not only seen.
17 As I have wandered, seeking my husband,
18 I, too, have suffered many things.
19 **Priest** Tell me: I am listening.

1 **Desaparecida** They have beaten me,
2 Broken my hands, whipped my back,
3 For asking where my husband has gone.
4 And then ... the soldiers came at night...
5 One of them, I could fight, but not four...
6 I am so ashamed, I don't want to live any more!

7 That is my sin!

8 I have lost hope,

9 I have lost honor,

10 I have lost love,

11 I have learned to hate,

12 I have lost faith!

13 I want to end this suffering,

14 I ... I ... I...

15 *She falls silent. Angelina is horrified at what she has heard. In the silence, we*
16 *hear the Priest sobbing.*

17 **Desaparecida** Father? *She draws back her curtain and steps to the front of*
18 *the confessional. Angelina has moved swiftly and silently towards the door,*
19 *wanting to escape detection, yet she continues to look. La Desaparecida*
20 *hesitantly draws back the curtain of the confessor's box. His face is cradled in his*

1 *hands as his body is racked by incontrollable sobbing. La Desaparecida lays her*
2 *hand on his shoulder. As the lights go down, Angelina crosses herself.*

3 **Angelina** *Oh! How alone I am! She dashes out of the church. The stage goes*
4 *dark.*

5 **Act II**
6 **Scene 2**
7 **Consuelo**

8
9 *The stage is once again set up as the Cantina. There are many men at the tables*
10 *and the bar. Priest enters.*

11
12 **Cantinero** *surprised* Padre, welcome! What brings you to our cantina?

13 **Priest** *dragged out emotionally* I feel like the name of your place. Set me a
14 beer on the bar, will you?

15 **Cantinero** ¡Hector! ¡Una cerveza fria por el Padre!

16 **Hector** *also surprised, scurries to obey* ¡Si, señor!

17 **Cantinero** *faces the Priest across the bar as Hector respectfully slides him a*
18 *beer.* So how are you doing these days, Padre?

19 **Priest** Joaquín, I am very disturbed. The government is not helping the
20 people, they are poorer than ever. Our neighboring countries are fighting
21 "civil wars" against guerillas supported by the United States; the only reason
22 we are not at war here, is that the U.S. already controls our government, or at
23 least, the Mega Fruit Company does.

1 **Cantinero** looks around a bit, becomes gradually louder as he grows more
2 impassioned You are right, Padre. All of the evils that plague our people,
3 they come from the North Americans! It started when they invaded Cuba
4 after their battleship blew up! That was just an excuse to take over!

5 **Gen. Shafter** roars from the back of the bar, having just put on the inflating fat
6 suit. I resent that! We came to avenge our dead and liberate Cuba from the
7 Spaniards!

8 **Cantinero** to Padre Oh, Oh, Oh, I forgot he was here. *shakes head.*

9 **Priest** Who is he?

10 **Cantinero** It's General William Shafter -- he was the one who commanded
11 the invasion of Cuba. Now we're in for an earful.

12 **Gen. Shafter** to nobody in particular, since nobody really wants to listen to him
13 Yes! We came to that miserable island bringing liberty and civilization!
14 Freedom from foreign rule! We saved country after country South of our
15 borders, saved them from civil war, saved them from foreign domination!
16 *(As he blusters, his costume grows and grows, making him fatter and fatter,*
17 *revealing red-and-white striped underwear as the shirt no longer covers his belly.*
18 *Dollars stick out of his pockets or beltline.)* And I was not alone! Though he got
19 far too much credit for what he did, — I was the general, after all — let me
20 mention Theodore Roosevelt, builder of the Panama Canal, one of the

1 greatest engineering achievements of man! And what a President! No, I was
2 not the first, nor the last to come down to these latitudes, to do good works
3 here. Ollie North! A real patriot! And Ronald Reagan, another great
4 President who benefitted your southern lands, liberating Nicaragua, ...

5 **Cantinero** *aside* Yes, liberating it from an elected government!

6 **Gen. Shafter** ... helping the Guatemalans rise up out of the pit in which
7 they found themselves ...

8 **Cantinero** Ha! — they helped put tens of thousands of Guatemalans into a
9 pit, dead!

10 *As the Gen. Shafter goes on, el Desaparecido rises up from his table at one side*
11 *and begins to move towards him.*

12 **Gen. Shafter** *hearing more than the Cantinero realizes* So what?! So what if
13 some campesinos disappeared — such is the price of Progress! You can't
14 make an omelette without cracking some eggs! *As he says this (Mao quote), el*
15 *Desaparecido knocks him down. It would be swell if the Gen. Shafter could*
16 *bounce like a beach ball without hurting the actor.*

17 **Desaparecido** Enough! Enough of your lies! Your filthy money has
18 blinded you to anything like the truth. Your greed distorts all that you see!
19 Scum! *spits at him, and moves threateningly closer. There arises a general*

1 *hubbub. Some in the crowd move to restrain el Desaparecido, while others help*
2 *roll the Gen. Shafter upright again.*

3 **Priest** *Let him speak! Bar patrons release el Desaparecido, who paces in front*
4 *of Gen. Shafter and grills him. As el Desaparecido speaks, the costume deflates,*
5 *leaving Gen. Shafter looking pretty silly and droopy.*

6 **Desaparecido** *It's not just you, disgusting as you are! The love of money*
7 *corrupts anyone who gets too much of it! Look at our governments! It's not*
8 *only the Yanquis who murder and steal and plunder our people. It's also our*
9 *own, often working with the North Americans. It's:*

10 **Anastasio Somoza García Anastasio Somoza¹**

11 **Rafael Leónidas Trujillo²**

12 **General Jorge Ubico³**

13 **John Fitzgerald Kennedy**

14 **Augusto José Ramón Pinochet Ugarte General Augusto Pinochet⁴**

15 **Harry S. Truman**

16 **Richard M. Nixon**

17 (This list is going to be expanded and re-arranged rhythmically.)

18

¹ dictator in Nicaragua 1937-1956

² dictator in the Dominican Republic 1930-1961

³ dictator in Guatemala in 1930's

⁴ dictator in Chile 1973-

1 Like a huge wave, like a big truck or a tank, they roll over our people,
2 crushing out their lives, breaking their spirits — all because some egoists
3 love money more than life!

4 *At the conclusion of this harangue, Gen. Shafter hurriedly waddles toward stage*
5 *rear, where he hangs up the costume.*

6 **Priest** *grasps the hand of el Desaparecido in both of his* I have never, myself,
7 given such a fine sermon condemning the evils of lucre. You spoke from the
8 heart, and truly.

9 **Desaparecido** *only looks down, barely acknowledging the Priest. Then he*
10 *turns to the Cantinero* I am sorry for fighting in your cantina. I could not
11 restrain myself when he said that about disappeared persons.

12 **Cantinero** *nods and slaps his shoulder gently.*

13 **Desaparecido** I am myself "disappeared" — soldiers dragged me off the
14 street, beat me, put me into a camp. But I escaped, crossed the border, and
15 came to this place. I have only one wish — to find my wife, if she be alive.

16

17 Once there was a time

18 We shared both dawn and night

19 We two danced and sang our hope,

20 Our love could never die.

1

2 Suddenly that time,
3 Those loving days with you,
4 Have been lost, *pause* stolen.
5 No chance to say goodbye.

6

7 Ever since that time
8 I always look for you,
9 Seek your eyes in every face,
10 I'll never give you up.

11

12 *sneering* So, Padre, will you now tell me that this is the will of God, that I
13 must simply turn the other cheek, and bear this suffering?

14 **Priest** No, my son — perdon, you are not my son, but my brother — I will
15 not tell you to do that. I might have yesterday, but no longer.

16 **Desaparecido** *very surprised* What do you say, then?

17 **Priest** I say ...

18 that we must all have faith.

19 But a faith that is not naïve,

1 A faith that is humane, that loves,
2 Yet fights the good fight for what is right
3 And does not connive with power.
4 We must have a faith that listens –
5 To the heart, and to the needs of the people/el pueblo,
6 A faith that holds out hope, yes, but
7 That will act, and join in when it counts!

8 **Desaparecido** Hermano, I am with you there! *They clasp hands*
9 *energetically as they meet each other's gaze.*

10 **Priest** Let me buy you a beer! *They turn and go to the bar. As they turn, they*
11 *are surprised to hear the chorus sing, and turn around to face them.*

12 **All**

13 We fight hard for our lives, we give thanks for our wives,
14 wish all were quiet and simple.

15 Look me in the eye, I can't tell a lie,

16 In truth, all men are as brothers.

17 ¡Somos hermanos a decir verdad!

18

19

20

Act II
Scene 3

El Borracho lagrimoso

1
2

3 *As the Cantinero brings Drunk another beer, Drunk grabs his sleeve to retain him*
4 *and begins another guilt-ridden lament.*

5 **Drunk** Man, you gotta forgive me! I can't just sit here and drink your beer
6 without telling you how bad I feel for all the terrible things my country has
7 done to you, all the thousands of people who were killed, the kids — we
8 should all be wearing black to show our respect!

9 **Cantinero** *rolls his eyes and hoists his eyebrows to the others, but to the Drunk*
10 *he says, solemnly* I agree. You are right. If we think only of those horrible
11 acts, we could only cry, the whole day. We need some music to go with
12 what we feel. *shouting* Llamo a los Espiritus de la Musica y de la Danza!

13 *A statuesque Mercedes-Sosa-like woman enters from rear, wearing a long, white*
14 *robe (sparkles?) that picks up colors of light well and lends her a monumental*
15 *presence as she stands erect and proud upon a platform. Moments later, as the*
16 *music begins with an unexpected bravado and flourish, a female dancer comes*
17 *swirling in (doing this on a trapeze from above the stage would be swell, but an*
18 *earth-bound dancer would be ok, too, if we have to make a concession to*
19 *gravity.) wearing many, many diaphanous layers of colored cloth, like a cloud,*
20 *with a strong suggestion of her body beneath -- this character should be*
21 *feminine, seductive, strong, so powerful that everywhere she moves on the*
22 *stage, the men move back out of her way, but then are drawn in her direction*

1 *when she moves away. Her movements are rhythmic and infectious; soon she*
2 *has everyone on stage moving, however awkwardly, with her. If this costume*
3 *could change colors over time, perhaps from lights within it, that would be most*
4 *appropriate.*

5 *The Spirit of Music sings a sinister-sounding tango, while the Spirit of Dance,*
6 *never touched by the men, "tangos them," drawing and repelling them, they*
7 *helpless to resist, across the stage. Just before the last verse of the song begins,*
8 *a figure of Death, dressed (à la Día de los Muertos) in a black costume with*
9 *crudely painted skeletal bones upon it and a skull head, enters and tangos with*
10 *the Spirit of Dance. Could use blacklight here to make the bones glow well, or*
11 *light them from within.*

12 ***Espiritu de la Musica***

13 Now listen to my so-ong, men!

14 I sing of joy and your life's end!

15 All things you know will cease then!

16 You never even kno-ow when!

17 All of you here — yes you! — will pass away!

18 *gestures at a man, who jerks away in fright.*

19

20 You feel my beat, my living heart!

21 There's life in the musician's art.

1 I lift your drooping he-ad, man!

2 I know that you're not de-ad, man!

3 Meat and bones men — rise up! — and dance along!

4

5 Money, food, and hope may seem forever to be gone!

6 And you think for days that you can't manage to go on!

7 That life's not made for you, but only for the very strong!

8 But then you hear some sweet, seductive strains of song,

9 Your troubles grow distant and surrender seems so wrong!

10 *last line with verve*

11 You jump up ... and live yet ... another day!

12 *Musical interlude here. All begin to move with the music more and more. Eclat!*

13 *— sudden entrance of Day of the Dead figure — All jump back — Espiritu de la*

14 *Danza recoils before the DoD figure who dashes over to dance with her; during*

15 *the next, final verse, however, they dance an energetic, aggressive tango, with la*

16 *Danza repulsing Death, then Death drawing la Danza after him. The crowd ebb*

17 *and flow around them. Finally, with the last phrase of the song, Death, without*

18 *touching la Danza, makes a dragging or tugging gesture and they both flit off the*

19 *stage.*

20 Now dance! Oh, yes! But don't be fooled!

21 You laugh, but life is somewhere cruel.

1 Ten thou-sands die and millions cry,
2 Each day brings its own do or die!
3 But when you see your lover smile
4 Don't die now ... Oh! dance yet ... a little while!

5
6 **All** shout ;Viva la Musica! whereupon the Spirit of Music retreats majestically
7 *off-stage as the Espiritu de la Danza whirls once more across the stage,*
8 *sweeping with an embracing gesture pass the orchestra, who begin to play as if*
9 *possessed. Espiritu de la Danza leaves the stage, or stays there to do a bunch of*
10 *improv, depending on the dancer we have. The orchestra plays more music:*
11 *rambling phrases, accelerating, quoting, mocking, layering over top of one*
12 *another, threatening to blow apart, a tornado of sound, rousing everyone to*
13 *move, then ends spectacularly with a flourish and a dramatic finish. All are*
14 *panting. Drunk and Stoned are awe-struck. The Priest is smiling beatifically.*

15

16

Act II

17

Scene 4

18

Muerto de la Esperanza

19

20 *Hardly have the men on stage stopped panting, than the lights go down*
21 *suddenly, in a way similar to the earlier transition from the jovial bar scene to la*
22 *Madre wailing. This time, the spotlight falls, a tiny circle of light, onto a small*
23 *coffin of light-colored wood being borne in from stage right, extreme front. One*
24 *man carries it on his shoulder, moving very, very slowly, with downcast eyes. La*
25 *Madre is walking behind him, with one hand on the coffin. All onstage remove*

1 *their hats, move forward "into the street," and stand quietly. (Perhaps they should*
2 *"exit" through an invisible door so as to make the separation of interior and*
3 *exterior more apparent?) Downstage left, la Desaparecida and the Youth Hector*
4 *stand together, while at downstage right, the Young Girl Angelina stands next to*
5 *the Desaparecido. Only the Truck Driver remains hunched over at the bar,*
6 *tossing down another drink. During the course of the song following, he shuffles*
7 *over to the back of the crowd, trying to see, but remain unseen.*

8

9 ***La Madre*** (English translations are not sung.)

10 ¡Tu estas muerto, mi esperanza! *You are dead, my hope!*

11 Tu vida frágile – ¡apagado! *Your fragile life – crushed!*

12 No se como vivir, sin corazón. *I know not how to live, without a heart.*

13 Lo entierro contigo. *I bury it with you.*

14 ¿Por qué? Por qué me abandonas, Pedrito? *Why? Why have you left me, little*

15 *Pedro?*

16 ¡Estas muerto, mi esperanza! *You are dead, my hope!*

17 ¡Todos esta muerto para mi! *All is dead to me!*

18 *She staggers on behind the coffin, always keeping one hand on it. She looks up*
19 *to the sky, then back down, and as she does so, she sees the Truck Driver in the*
20 *crowd. Suddenly furious, she jabs her finger at him. If it were an arrow, he would*
21 *be dead. He cringes, looks down. Despite her anger, she doesn't take her hand*
22 *off the coffin, and follows it slowly off the stage.*

23 *The crowd remains standing, lost in thought and emotion. No-one moves for*
24 *some time. The crowd at center stage should press forward a bit after the exit of*
25 *the coffin, so that a human shield prevents the pairs Desaparecida/Hector and*

1 *Desaparecido/Angelina from seeing one another. In addition, some improbable*
2 *figures are mixed in with the crowd -- a baseball player, for instance. Maybe*
3 *others -- who?*

4 **Angelina** *steps forward a little and sings*

5 ¡O Esperanza!

6 Do not leave us now

7 There is so much life;

8 So much living, not only dying.

9 Our eyes can laugh, not only cry!

10

11 **Desaparecido** *steps up next to her*

12 ¡Mi esperanza!

13 Love will keep you strong!

14 Remembered moments

15 Of sharing life, and thoughts unspoken.

16 Our hope will last, and never die!

17

18 **Hector** *steps forward, looks at the baseball player who has stepped into the*
19 *center of the crowd*

20 Me, I hope in you! // You are my ho-ope!

1 You so strong and good!

2 You are my hero,

3 I hope to win, as you fought and won.

4 You were a boy, one just like me. *touches his own chest*

5 ***Desaparecida*** *steps forward*

6 Hope glows ever true!

7 Though all be darkness

8 I've a light that burns

9 Sometimes faintly, still it does revive!

10 Hope lifts me up to try again.

11

12 ***All four***, joined by the ***Priest***

13 ¡Ah, Esperanza!

14 The light of our days!

15 Through death and sorrow,

16 Broken promise and shattered dreams — aieeee!

17 Hope, you carry us through our days.

18 *(the following tag lines could be a cappella and like a chant in church)*

19 Hope, never leave us.

20 Hope, you sustain us.

1 ¡Esperanza!

2 *El Desaparecido and la Desaparecida leave at opposite sides of the stage;*
3 *Hector returns to the bar as the crowd breaks up and the men go back inside,*
4 *and Angelina remains alone on the stage, moving closer to center. She sings,*
5 *gently, beautifully*

6 ¡O Esperanza!

7 Do not leave us now

8 *The lights go down on her as she leaves, and come up on the bar shortly*
9 *thereafter.*

10

11

12

13

14

Act II
Scene 5
Justitia

15 *The men have formed a clump at stage right, facing the Truck Driver, who is*
16 *much distressed and is shaking. The Priest is at stage left, near the bar. The*
17 *Truck Driver, after a bit of indecision, falls to his knees before the Priest and begs*
18 *forgiveness.*

19

20 ***Truck Driver***

21 Father, you must forgive me, 7

22 the boy in that tiny coffin 8

23 goes to the grave because of me, 8

24 yet I feel I have not sinned! 7

- 1 **Priest** *indignant* What do you mean? All who live have sinned! 9
- 2 **Truck Driver** Sin is a darkness over the heart 9
- 3 That even bright sunlight cannot lift 9
- 4 I see no shadow upon my heart 9
- 5 Though my eyes are filled with tears. 7
- 6 **Priest** *indignant* Why should you cry, if your heart be pure!? 9
- 7 **Truck Driver** That little boy – God rest his soul! – 9 (with pause)
- 8 ran out – I could not stop in time. 9
- 9 Panic drove me, I went on – a fool. 9
- 10 Lord, have mercy on me now! 7
- 11 **Priest** *angry now* How should the Lord have mercy on you? 9
- 12 How can you tell me you have not sinned? 9
- 13 While this lie lives on within your heart, 9
- 14 I cannot excuse your sins! 7
- 15 **Truck Driver** *stands up, angry at being rebuffed*
- 16 *to the Priest* If your Lord has no mercy for me, 9
- 17 (*turning and gesturing to All*) then I beg all of you, my brothers, 9
- 18 show me mercy for killing this child! 9
- 19 I never meant to harm him! 7

1 **Priest** shakes his head; mutters half to himself, a bit ironically Kyrie eleison....

2 Led by the **Cantinerero**, **All** respond, surprising the Priest Have mercy on us,

3 as we live! 8

4 **Priest** feels challenged, not sure whether to be indignant or to accomodate

5 them. What? How can you side with this man?! 8

6 He has killed yet he takes no blame! 8

7 **Truck Driver** To bear each day is hard enough, 8

8 to bear this blame is far too much! 8

9 **All** So we may live and breathe, have mercy on us! 10 (better to repeat same

10 phrase each time? The length is also different.)

11 **Truck Driver** The pain of days gives no rest, 7

12 Even nights bring no comfort, 7

13 Our sleep is hounded by fears 7

14 And want clutches at our hearts. 7

15 **All** Have mercy on us, you who see our pain! 10

16 **Truck Driver** But no, I can feel no sin — 7

17 How could I, who's numb with pain!?! — 7

18 I must fight through every day, 7

19 Is that the only way? 6

- 1 Is that all of life? 5
- 2 **All** As we bear our lives, have mercy on us! 10
- 3 **Priest** *who has been backing down from his initial indignation*
- 4 Whosoever has the power 8
- 5 To ease another's daily pain, 8
- 6 Yet stands idly by, oh brothers, 8
- 7 or, worse yet, inflicts even more — 8
- 8 That person, *shakes head* how much they should cry: 8
- 9 **All, with Priest and Truck Driver** Lord, have mercy on us! 6
- 10 **Priest** *alone, emphatic* Kyrie eleison! 7
- 11 **All, emphatically, with Priest** Kyrie eleison! 7
- 12 **Priest** *alone, pleading* Kyrie eleison! 7
- 13 *Hardly has the aria concluded, than the Madre bursts in, a tornadic fury of*
- 14 *vengeance. She whirls towards the Truck Driver, who is scrambling to get behind*
- 15 *the Priest, and sings in a voice like a spear,*
- 16 **Madre** You! Murderer! *pointing at him, as if to pierce him. She has to be*
- 17 *restrained by some of the men in the cantina.*
- 18 **Truck Driver** What am I? An honest man ... 7
- 19 **Madre** A murderer! You killed my Pedro! 9
- 20 **Truck Driver** I work to feed my family. 8

1 Then your poor, poor little boy 7

2 chased his ball into the street. 7

3 Don't blame me, Maria, no – 7

4 Blame Mega Fruit Company 7

5 All day they push us so hard — 7

6 Faster, faster, more, more, more! 7

7 I have parked their curs-ed truck, 7

8 I will be pushed no more! 6

9 **All** react with surprise. How will you live? How will you feed your family?

10 **Truck Driver** I will find some way to get by.

11 **Madre** undeterred Blame Mega Fruit!?! Who is that? There is no-one!

12 **Cantinerero** ¡Pero sí, Señora! Let us call upon Mr. William W. Williamson
13 the Third, el Presidente de Mega Fruit Corporation! *A suit comes walking to*
14 *the front, with nobody in it, apparently; alternately, roll a dressmaker's dummy in*
15 *with the suit on it. There is a white dummy head where the head should be, with*
16 *no face on it. A loudspeaker inside the dummy could play the voice of the*
17 *characters. On the overhead video at stage rear, one may see a montage of*
18 *people scurrying around at the NY Stock Exchange, as well as a moving line on*
19 *a graph that creeps up and down, indicating share price.*

20 **Madre** You! You are responsible for the death of my little boy!

1 **Mega Fruit President** *talks like a machine, or a rule book.*

2 The collateral death of a small 9

3 Indigent indigenous person 9

4 Is not my responsibility; 9

5 our acts of incorporati-on 9

6 Demarcate my liability. 9

7 My attorneys will help you see-ee. 9

8 To investors in the company 9

9 Is my responsibility-y 9

10 Mega Fruit's presence in this "country" 9

11 Results from a solemn treaty-y 9

12 With the United States government. 9

13 *(spoken)* I refer you to our Ambassador, if you please.

14 **Cantinero** ¿Señor Ambassador?! Is he still here? No? He left?

15 **Mega Fruit President** In that case, I may safely speak for him.

16 *Assumes a lofty tone.*

17 Our illustrious, venerable 9

18 tripartite system of federal 9

19 government of all the people-le 9

20 With a distribution of powers 9

1 Lays the chief responsibility 9
2 for making foreign policy-y 9
3 With the executive branch, you see 9
4 Duly elected by the people, 9
5 and whose international treaties 9
6 Must be ratified by the Senate. 9

7 **Madre** What does all that mean? Who is responsible?

8 **Mega Fruit President** *flatly* The President of the United States of
9 America.

10 **Madre** Where is he? He must answer!

11 **Cantinero** I call upon el Presidente de los Estados Unidos de Norte
12 America! *The figure of the Mega Fruit President is spun around three times (or,*
13 *if motorized, spins itself or its head around 3 times!), and a video projection is*
14 *shone upon its face that is a constant morphing of the faces of the presidents*
15 *since Monroe.*

16 **Truck Driver** ¡Carramba!

17 **Priest** *passionately* Account for your actions, you who are so powerful!

18 There is much for which you have to answer!

19 **President of the United States** *very matter-of-factly, kind of bored. This*
20 *could be spoken in a "folksy" sort of way over a medley of patriotic-sounding*

1 *tunes (but not the Star Spangled...), or heck, over a guitar strumming or banjo*
2 *picking. A banjo playing a slow "Hail to the Chief"? Just something to provide a*
3 *continuo and maybe make it sound like a campaign sound bite. We're likely to*
4 *pre-record this, if it's coming out of the dummy anyway, right? What do you*
5 *think? Well, first of all, let's get this straight: I was elected by the American*
6 *people, not by anyone here. And when you think about it, long and hard, the*
7 *President is, in a way, you know, finally responsible only to History, that's*
8 *with a capital "H." We have to make decisions that only History can judge.*
9 *So, you see, as much as people like to blame the President of the United*
10 *States for everything, they're really misunderestimating the situation. The*
11 *real bad guy you're after is much closer to home. We had him into the White*
12 *House for tea a couple of times. He wanted big bribes from Mega Fruit all*
13 *the time, really ate into the profits, but he kept the Commies down. Can't*
14 *remember his name. Something really, really long.*

15 **Cantinero** *Was it Generalississississimo Trujillo de Pinochet y Somoza de*
16 *Duvalier y Alba-bla-bla-bla?*

17 **President of the United States** *glad to be off the hook Yeah, he's the one*
18 *I mean!*

19 **Generalissimo** *struts in from stage rear as the President of the United States*
20 *is rolled/walks to stage rear. The Generalissimo is clad in a white suit jacket, with*

1 *medals, epaulets, a Panama hat, smoking a cigar, but wearing army fatigue*
2 *pants, a bandillero of bullets, and jack boots, with a pistol poking out of his belt.*

3 Who has called my name? — What do you want with me?

4 **Priest** *recognizing an adversary*

5 You, I accu-use!!! 5

6 **Generalissimo** *laughs*

7 **Priest** Of murder! 3

8 **Generalissimo** *amused, spoken with irony*

9 Is that all? Only one? 6

10 **Priest** Of enslaving our country! 7

11 **Generalissimo** Of saving it from mob rule? 7

12 **Priest** Of betraying el pueblo! 7

13 **Generalissimo** Your "rag-tag" pueblo voted 7

14 For a bunch of communists! 7

15 **Priest** You killed -- they simply voted! 7

16 **Generalissimo** I prevented cha-os! 7

17 Do I not stand accused of ... 7

18 **Priest** Of plundering our country!

19 **Generalissimo** contributing to progress! 7

20 **Priest** Of letting foreigners steal! 7

- 1 Their dollars stuff your pockets, 7
- 2 you feast while our people starve! 7
- 3 **Generalissimo** *stepping closer to Priest, bullying*
- 4 Accuse me of modernity, 8
- 5 efficient exploitation 7
- 6 of nat-u-ral resources! 7
- 7 Do I not stand accused ... 6
- 8 **Madre** Killer!
- 9 **Generalissimo** *looking her over* Ah, yes, that. It has been said that I'm quite
- 10 the lady killer.
- 11 **Madre** *recoils from him in disgust.* Baby killer!
- 12 **Generalissimo** *angry now* Listen, chica, you want to see 8
- 13 a real baby killer now, 7
- 14 just turn your pretty little frown 8
- 15 to that old man in brown! *indicates the Priest* 6
- 16 **Priest** How dare you say such a thing! 7
- 17 **Generalissimo** Aha! — a little sensitive 8
- 18 about Church crimes, eh, padre? 7
- 19 **Priest** You miscreant!

- 1 **Generalissimo** You all preach piety, 6
2 *folds his hands in mock prayer, looking up*
3 submission, and humility — 8
- 4 **Priest** The blood on your hands will never dry! 9
- 5 **Generalissimo** ... while your beloved "pueblo" 7
6 is drowning in babies ... 6
- 7 **Priest** Hypocrite! You let them die! 7
- 8 **Generalissimo** ...while you oh-so "celibate" priests 8
9 make the rules for a game you don't play. 9
- 10 **Priest** Blasphemer!
- 11 **Generalissimo** Your dear "Mother" Chu-urch 7
12 Serves herself fi-irst! — oh yes! 7
- 13 **Priest** You know nothing of our works! 7
- 14 **Generalissimo** —"working" with aristocrats 7
15 or with godless communists! 7
16 Serving the power of the day 8
17 Has ever been the Church's way! 8
- 18 **Priest** Thousands of poor priests spend their lives 8
19 attending to the pueblo! 7

1 **Cantinero** *could be spoken* But Padre, forgive me, 6
2 Was it not once truly so 7
3 That the hands of the priests 6
4 were themselves filled with gold?! 6
5 **Priest stung** Not all were seduced 5
6 by earthly riches! 5
7 *loudly* I call upon Bartolomeo de las Casas! *an old monk in a brown habit*
8 *toddles in, with a thick, very old, book in his hand.* Welcome, Brother
9 Bartolomeo!
10 *At this point, non-living historical figures enter the picture, moreso than up to*
11 *now. Perhaps a lighting change could reinforce this?*
12 **de las Casas** Thank you, Brother Romero. Why am I called here?
13 **Priest** Brother, to help me argue 7
14 a deep, deep question of guilt. 7
15 **de las Casas** Guilt? Whose?
16 **Generalissimo** The guilt of the Church for spreading chaos, poverty, and
17 ignorance!
18 **Priest with authority** Silence! Let him speak to us! 7
19 Please tell us of Mother Church 7
20 In the time you walked the Earth. 7

1 Tell us of your many good works! 8

2 **de las Casas**

3 In my earthly lifetime 6

4 spent serving Mother Church, 6

5 I marveled at the many 7

6 Branches of God's children 6

7 Who lived in the new lands. 6

8 I came to know them, studied them — 8

9 I respected them though they were heathens. 10

10 It's true, I, too, once had slaves, 7

11 But this I renou-ounced, 6

12 And became their defender. 7

13 All that I learned of these gentle people, 10

14 I preserved in my history. 8

15 I sent it to the King — who burned it!

16 *We see some facts about de las Casas on the overhead video; facsimile?*

17 **Priest** Brother Bartolomeo — 7

18 whom do you hold responsible 8

19 for the killing in the Americas? 10

20 **Madre** ... and my poor Pedrito!? 6

1 **de las Casas** If you seek one guilty of all, 8

2 That is very hard to say. 7

3 Many hands did the horrible deeds. *thinks....* 9

4 I will say this: 4

5 In all the murdering and looting, 10

6 In the extinguishing of whole nations, 10

7 In all the grabbing of gold of which **I** know — 11

8 There was one mind that willed the terrible acts, 11

9 One mouth that spoke to order them do-one, 10

10 All set in motion by one brain — 8

11 Beneath the crown of Spain! 5

12 *He gestures boldly towards the King, who is already rolling regally through the*
13 *crowd, which parts to let him pass. The King is a purple robe draped over a*
14 *mannequin like the one which earlier represented the presidents. A crown is on*
15 *top of the "head." Faces from portraits of monarchs of Spain may be projected*
16 *onto the dummy head.*

17

18 **King** *snippish and effete, without, however, being a parody of a homosexual:*

19 Your accusations are baseless and unworthy. Our mission in the Americas

20 brought the light of civilization to benighted millions.

1 **de las Casas** And gold to your treasury!

2 **King** The ignorant natives knew not what to do with the gold that lay in the
3 streams for the taking! It repaid our labors on their behalf. Besides, the
4 kingdom had need of it — to repay the greedy Fugger in Augsburg! They
5 insisted on having their filthy interest, and soon!

6 **Cantinero** Repay the greedy Who?!!

7 **de las Casas** The Fugger were German bankers who lent him money to go
8 to war. They were about to come after him with armies to get back their
9 blood money when he found he could take all the gold he needed in
10 America.

11 **Madre** What? You expect me to believe that? That you killed all those
12 people and robbed them because you owed money to a bunch of German
13 bankers with a funny name? *furious and shrill* That my Pedrito is dead
14 because you had to pay up your account?

15 **King** *looks at her, perplexed* Why are We being vexed by this impudent
16 person? *Looks around the room, sees Queen Isabella coming, says* Ah! It is
17 she who launched the ships, Isabella!

18 **Queen** *shrieking as she approaches, her dress floating out and taking up a*
19 *substantial portion of the stage, reminiscent of the fat General.*

20 Fools! *gestures broadly over All Fools!!*

1 Have you no perception! 6

2 The good of the nation 6

3 The glory of Go - od, (God) 6

4 That is what we served 6

5 With blessings of Mother Church! 7

6 I protected the New World Indians — 9

7 We brought Christianity to millions! 10

8 **Cantinero** *aside* Yes, they sent millions of us to Heaven!

9 **Queen**

10 But if someone must complain, 7

11 If good works were all in vain 7

12 And gold was our only gain, 7

13 There is only one to blame — 7

14 *spoken loud and sharply— it is he! With an arrow-like gesture similar to the*

15 *Madre's at scene opening, she points to an old man hunched over a beer at a*

16 *stage-rear table, his back to all. The crowd parts so he can be seen. He ignores*

17 *everything.*

18 **Queen** *imperiously* Columbus, come here! *He flinches as his name is called.*

19 **Columbus** *rises slowly, answers tiredly,* Yes, your Majesty. *He shuffles*

20 *slowly to center stage, bows to her, kissing her hand, bows to the King as well,*

1 *then stands to await his accusers' words, nodding. Nobody says anything, but all*
 2 *stare at him expectantly, so he speaks first. I've been listening. ... The big*
 3 *question is: Who is to blame? Who?*

4 **All** *point to someone, some characters point to the one before them in the blame*
 5 *chain, everyone shouts "He! She!*

6 **Columbus** *standing a little taller* No, no, no. That's too easy. You didn't
 7 think very hard. Try again: Who, ultimately, is responsible? *There is a long*
 8 *delay, then they all slowly point at Columbus.*

9 **Columbus** *laughs, a shrill giggle. All are unsettled by this, some draw back a*
 10 *little, as if afraid he is nuts. You'd like that! Haha! Very fine!*

11 *start song here*

12 Columbus is to blame — for everything! 10

13 Your poor little boy's dead — blame me! 6 + 2

14 Millions were massacred — blame me! 6 + 2

15 Plundered gold Spaniards stole — blame me! 6 + 2

16 Iran-Contra, disappeared people, 9

17 Earthquakes 2 *becoming ever more excited and emphatic*

18 and fires 2

19 and floods 2

20 and hurricanes — blame me! 4 + 2

1 All — my — **fault!** 3 *Columbus is manic by now. If he seems a little*
2 *unbalanced, that's OK.*
3 *Laughs again, then becomes more serious.*
4 Look. *spoken; following is sung except where noted:*
5 I lived my little life — 6
6 From fourteen fifty one 6
7 To fifteen hundred six. 6
8 *sighs, speaks* They seemed so long... those 55 years.
9 *sings*
10 I dropped in down here, 5
11 Little pebble into a pond, 8
12 made a splash with my endeavors. 8
13 It's true, I caused some ripples — 7
14 nothing one does is ever 7
15 without ~~some kind of~~ ripples. 7 (4 without strikeouts)
16 I did some very bad things — 7
17 I'm not proud of those — 5
18 and did other things 5
19 out of ignorance 5
20 that you think very bad today. 8

- 1 You don't need to tell me. 6
- 2 I've had five-hundred-YEARS 6+
- 3 to think about it all. 6
- 4 I saw many things 5
- 5 Go very differently 6
- 6 than I had imagined. 6
- 7 But the ripples from my splash 7
- 8 Grew weak and then died out, 6
- 9 Lost amid the waves 5
- 10 Made by many, many others, 8
- 11 For instance You! hollow suit! 7 *pointing at the President dummy*
- 12 ... and You, my liege and Majesty! 8 *pointing at the King and the Queen, who*
- 13 *is shocked to be addressed thus by her subject.*
- 14 ... You! Thug and murderer! 6 *pointing at the Generalissimo, who sneers.*
- 15 *Columbus continues a rhythmic round of accusations of the major figures on the*
- 16 *stage,*
- 17 And You! And You! And You! And You!!!
- 18 *then says, Yes, and even you! pointing at Angelina or the Youth Hector,*
- 19 What you do makes ripples, 6
- 20 Even you, tiny pebble! 7

1 **Columbus** pauses, then continues

2 So, yes, I did what I did. 7

3 I own my life and my acts, 7

4 And some of the ripples, 6 shakes head

5 No, and all of the ripples, too. 8 pauses again

6 No-one forced me to make them. 7

7 spoken

8 So let me ask you again: Who is ultimately responsible?

9 *Some still point at Columbus, but in the silence that weighs on all, a few slowly*

10 *make a fist and press it to their chests, while lowering their heads. Gradually,*

11 *most of the people on stage do the same, but a few, the unrepentant bad guys,*

12 *continue to point at Columbus or some other person. The Truck Driver drops to*

13 *his knees in front of la Madre. He says nothing, but kneels with bowed head.*

14 *Then he mumbles something inaudible.*

15 **Truck Driver** repeats, speaks louder Forgive me.

16 **La Madre** fighting tears and revulsion, lays her hand on top of his head briefly,

17 then runs off the stage.

18 **Truck Driver** slowly rises, puts on his hat, and leaves at the other side of the

19 stage. The other characters begin milling about, some exiting, some sitting down

20 for a beer.

1 **Priest or Cantinero** loudly, to Columbus, who is startled out of a reverie

2 Don't you think we are forgetting someone here? Someone who is still

3 responsible for very, very much?

4 **Columbus** What do you mean? Who? *presently an "Aha!" crosses his face.*

5 *Slowly, Cantinero and Columbus point to the audience. They are joined by all on*

6 *stage, one after another, as the house lights go up very bright and the stage*

7 *goes dim. Maybe spots sweep audience. All exit the stage as it goes completely*

8 *dark, except for the Cantinero, who comes forward to address the audience.*

9

10

Act II

11

Scene 6

12

Hombres sinceros

13

14 *The Cantinero paces back and forth across the stage in the spotlight, talking to*
15 *the audience.*

16

17 **Cantinero** Ah, I guess you think that wasn't fair — was it? You all have

18 splooshed down here, into your own corners of the pond, where you ought to

19 be, made your own little splash, caused some ripples. But it's a very big

20 pond, and you've got your own problems, your own hopes. What's the rest of

21 it to you? Things go 'round, go 'round, come out this way, or that. Whose

22 fault is it if somebody gets hurt? Whether someplace far away, or not?

1 Well, look. I don't want you to go home feeling bad. Let's sing a nice, cheery
2 song together, all of us, and things will be better, OK? La musica? *Motions to*
3 *the orchestra, which starts playing.* You must know the tune — if you don't
4 know the words, just look up there. *points to the video overhead.* They're a
5 little different this time, anyway.

6
7 ¿Si soy un hombre sincero, If I am an honest man
8 de donde crece mi alma? From whence does my soul grow?
9 ¿Si soy un hombre sincero, If I am an honest man
10 de donde crece mi alma? From whence does my soul grow?
11 Y antes de morirme quiero And before I die I would like
12 Conocer las raizes del alma! to know the roots of my soul!

13

14 Guantanamera, guajira!
15 Guantanamera; Guantanamera,
16 Guajira Guantanamera.

17

18 **Priest**

19 I am an honest man

1 And my eyes have been opened.

2 I am an honest man,

3 And my eyes have been opened.

4 Now I see justice and know that

5 I will lay down my life for the pueblo.

6 Chorus

7 ***Madre***

8 I am just a loving (~~simple~~) mother,

9 Whose child has been cruelly taken.

10 I am just a loving mother,

11 Whose child has been cruelly taken.

12 But my heart must not be bitter or frozen,

13 I must let go of hurt and live now.

14 Chorus

15 ***Truck Driver***

16 I am a husband and a father,

17 Who just wants to feed all his children.

18 I am a husband and a father,

19 Who just wants to feed all his children.

1 I'll work hard in sun and heat

2 So my wife and little ones may eat.

3 Chorus

4 ***Desaparecida***

5 I am a wandering woman

6 Whose husband has been wrongly taken,

7 I am a wandering woman

8 Whose husband has been wrongly taken,

9 I hope I may ever see him

10 And end my long desperation.

11 Chorus

12 ***Hector***

13 I really don't know what or how

14 I should be or feel now

15 I really don't know what or how

16 I should be or feel now

17 So much is shifting and changing,

18 I have to find a new way of being (living).

19 Chorus

1 ***Angelina***

2 I'm here alone in the world,

3 I am a poor, shoeless girl.

4 I'm here alone in the world,

5 I am a poor, shoeless girl.

6 I need someone to help me,

7 To trust and to love me.

8 Chorus.

9