

# El Compañero Pregonero y La Señora Trovadora –

Excerpt from *Echoes del Nuevo Mundo*  
by Ric Oquita, music by Cristian Amigo  
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PLACE: A plaza in Santiago, Chile

TIME: July 24, 1783

(Two Troubadours, LA SEÑORA TROVADORA and EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO, vie for the audience's attention and for a prime performing spot on the plaza.)

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

*Vete al carajo!*

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

*Rete!*

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

*Nunca!*

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

*Basta!* (Pause) This is a public plaza and I have work to do.

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

So do I. Your wig is crooked.

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

*Desgraciado!* (LA SEÑORA TROVADORA glares at her brother and then turns to the audience.) *Bienvenidos.*

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

*Bem-vindo.*

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

... which means ...

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

*Bon Bini, Byenvini, Purintaxa, Xicalaquican, ...*

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

*Welcome to The History of Latin America.*

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

(overlap)The Real History of Latin America ...

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

(overlap) The Revisionist's History of Latin America ...

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

(overlap) The Colonialist's History of Latin America ...

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

*América Latina.*

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

*Y el Caribe.*

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

*Caribe? Carribean?*

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

Is there an echo in here?

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

*Ecos ... del Nuevo Mundo. Les Échos du monde nouveau. Ecos do mundo novo.*

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

(aside) Echoes from the New World?

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

(aside) That's the name of my amusement.

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

(aside) Clever title. What's amusing about it?

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

Latin America is a region rich in paradox, displaying startling contrasts –rich and poor, urban and rural, learned and illiterate. We will take you backward and forward through more than 500 years of our family history. On this travel through time you will meet our grandparents, our aunts and uncles, brothers, mothers and fathers, nephews and nieces and our great-nieces, Cecile and Juana, two sisters from your day who are just about to open their Grandmother's trunk.

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

No previous knowledge of Latin American history is required for this trip. Just hum *La Bamba*, spell Cantinflas, shake like Shakira, whip up a plate of *huevos rancheros* and you'll be on your way.

### LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

Look into the wonderful history of Latin America to understand not only what happened but where it is going.

### EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

Slavery, machismo, , political revolutions, economic transformations, U.S. intervention, *La Migra* ...

### LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

(aside) Shoo! You're scaring away my customers. (to the audience) Hey you! In the year 2020 which Chilean will cross El Rio Grande and become the first female *presidente* of *los Estados Unidos*? Maybe it's you! (LA SEÑORA TROVADORA curtsies to the audience, elegantly displaying her fan.) Esteemed audience, I am pleased and most delighted to bring you this elegant entertainment, which has been favored by Kings and Queens, nobles and royals ...

### EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

(Interrupting her, EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO mimics her bow, spinning a tattered kerchief.) Honest *campesinos*, my ragtag sideshow has given joy and pleasure to paupers, beggars and whores.

### LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

Gentle public, I am a Troubadour, a traveling balladeer, who has come a great distance to embroider the past with dulcet melodies and sentimental sonnets. (She catches the audience's eyes and winks.) Your time with me, La Señora Trovadora, will be poetically sweet and enchantingly fanciful, God willing. I hope to delight your company with vignettes of love, chivalry and honor.

### EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

(Overlapping) Simple commoners, I am a *Pregonero*, an unadorned herald pulling my cart from ghetto to barrio, peddling my wares while singing the praises of untold histories and unrecognized heroes. My news is to the point. Time is precious and I won't waste yours. I hope to inspire you with anthems of oppression, injustice and revolution. ¡*Ojala que sí!*

(*Background RENNAISSANCE MUSIC begins.*)

### LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

I play Mayan Gods. (as Mother Sky) "Who is there to praise me?" (to the audience) Conquistadors. (as Francisco Pizarro) "I laugh in the face of death!" (to the audience) and Queens! (as Queen Isabela) "I'm the Queen of the Prom! I'm the Queen of the World!"

### EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

(aside) Why don't you just be yourself? Or have you forgotten who that is?

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

(Curt) Enough. All you can play is victims. "Poor me. Mixed-up Mestizo." (To the audience with charm.) I am a Criolla not a Mestiza. I have pure Spanish blood.

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

Ha! Take a good look at yourself!

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

I speak the romance languages as well as English.

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

The language of colonizers, *Señora*.

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

So is Spanish, *Compañero*.

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

Let us speak so that we can be understood.

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

Very well.

(LA SEÑORA TROVADORA and EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO dance a minuet.)

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

*Señora*, shall we brush up on our history before we begin?

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

Trivia is not my favorite past time, *Compañero*.

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

J Lo is in the audience.

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

*Azucar!*

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

Name three significant Women in Latin American History.

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

Me ... uh ... La Malinche and ... JLo!

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

Who are Cécile Fatiman and Sor Juana Inez de La Cruz?

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

I have never heard of them.

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

You will. (They dance, circling each other) Tell me, what is the date today?

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

July 24, 1783. What does that have to do with history?

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

Who was born today in Caracas, Venezuela?

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

How would I know? I live in Santiago, Chile. I'm tired of these riddles.

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

This newborn will make history, fight for the liberation of Latin America, have a country named after him and die of tuberculosis, poor and hated.

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

I am an artiste, not an academic. (LA SEÑORA TROVADORA whisks her fan and gestures grandly.) You're standing in my light.

(They dance a Cha-cha as EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO mischievously circles LA SEÑORA TROVADORA like a Matador.)

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

What year in Mexico will this sound be heard? (EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO lets out the cry of Mexican independence, *el grito de Dolores*.)

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

Please, don't ever do that in public again.

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

(They dance a Merengue.) Did you know the word *Ojalá* meaning "I hope" has roots in the Arabic word *Inshallah* or "May Allah Grant"? 800 years of Muslim rule in Spain, *Señora*. 710 to 1492. An Islamic echo.

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

Who cares? This dance is over. (She moves towards the audience with a flourish.) It gives me pleasure to lift these lace curtains and guide you on a pageant through time. Three cheers for entertainment! *Olé!*

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

(overlapping) Did you know the word *Olé* is also an entreaty to Allah? (LA SEÑORA glares at her brother. He continues to the audience.) I present the truth hidden behind these lace curtains. Bravo for education!

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

A salute to magic and mirrors! I bow to a glorious past.

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

I pray for a promising future.

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

I beg you not to judge the past, *hermano*. I beg you.

EL COMPAÑERO PREGONERO

It's time to go forward, *hermana*. Are you ready?

LA SEÑORA TROVADORA

*Sí.*

BOTH

OJALÁ! OJALÁ! VOILA!  
OJALÁ! OJALÁ! VOILA!  
OJALÁ! OJALÁ! VOILA!

(During the following the Troubadours reveal an old and heavy trunk, which they push downstage center. *MUSIC begins. CONTEMPORARY BEATS mixed with MEDIEVAL CHRISTIAN MUSIC.*)

BACK IN A FLASH: SONG

(an invocation)

PUSH 'EM BACK, PUSH 'EM BACK  
WAY BACK  
PUSH 'EM BACK, PUSH 'EM BACK  
WAY, WAY BACK  
PUSH 'EM BACK, PUSH 'EM BACK  
WAY, WAY  
WAY, WAY  
WAY, WAY ...

## TRANSLATIONS

*El Compañero Pregonero y La Señora Trovadora* (Spanish)– The Fellow Herald and the Lady Troubadour

*Ecos del Nuevo Mundo* (Spanish), *Les Échos du monde nouveau* (French), *Ecos do mundo novo* (Portuguese) – Echoes from the New World

*Vete al carajo!* (Spanish)- Go to hell!

*Rete!* (Creole) - Stop!

*Nunca!* (Spanish) – Never!

*Basta!*(Spanish, Italian) – Enough!

*Desgraciado* (Spanish)- Despicable person

*Bienvenidos* (Spanish), *Bem-vindo* (Portuguese), *Bon Bini* (Papiamentu), *Byenvini* (Creole), *Purintaxa* (Aymará), *Xicalaquican* (Náhuatl)- Welcome

*Huevos rancheros* (Spanish) – “Rancher’s” or “Country-style” eggs, Mexican breakfast dish

*La Migra* (Spanish)– Immigration Police

*Presidente of los Estados Unidos* (Spanish)– President of the United States

*Campesinos* (Spanish)– country folk, farmers

¡*Ojala que sí!* (Spanish)- Hopefully so!

¡*Azucar!* (Spanish) – Sugar! (an expression popularized by Celia Cruz)

*Hermano* (Spanish)- brother

*Hermana* (Spanish) - sister