

ROBERTO SIERRA Bayoán

AND

El Éxtasis de Santa Teresa

Two dramatic works for chamber orchestra, cherus & vocal soloists

BRONX ARTS ENSEMBLE

FIRST RECORDING



Bayoán

Peter Stewart, baritone (Bayoán)
Wonjung Kim, soprano (Marién)
Bronx Arts Ensemble Orchestra and Chorus
Guillermo Figueroa, conductor
Betty Baisch, chorus manager

El Éxtasis de Santa Teresa

Angelina Réaux, soprano Bronx Arts Ensemble Yehuda Gilad, conductor

PROGRAM NOTES......Roberto Sierra The two works in this recording use texts by two important literary figures in the Spanishspeaking world: the Spaniard St. Teresa of Avila and the Puerto Rican Eugenio María de Hostos. My first encounter with St. Teresa was not in the realm of poetry, but rather through the fantastic rendition by the Italian sculptor Bernini. It is this vision of Bernini that really inspired me in 1997 to write El éxtasis de Santa Teresa (The Ecstasy of St. Teresa). In my music I wanted to reflect both the austere nature of the character of the saint and the lushness and sensuality of her poems, which often times imply in their imagery carnal rather than religious love. In the second and fourth movements, Prayer and Ecstasy, I use fragments of two of St. Teresa's most famous poems. The plain chant-like first movement, Introit, provides a contemplative background that stands in contrast to the religious and sensual character of the prayer that follows. Visión is a musical representation of the visions that mystics were known to have

before going into a state of ecstasy. The work ends with a setting of the word Aleluya.

Eugenio María de Hostos' La peregrinación de Bayoán (The Pilgrimage of Bayoán) describes a spiritual journey in search of identity. The work was written during the time when Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic were still colonies under the Spanish crown. Although Hostos' words come from a distant past, their meaning still resonates very strongly. I selected excerpts from the novella, without intending to follow a plot and to represent all the ideas exposed in it. The search for identity and place in the world are relevant questions to me and many other people who live far away from their place of origin. In my oratorio Bayoán I wanted to explore those questions. The piece starts with Introducción (TRACK 3) and the Descarga (TRACK 4) that portray the agitated spiritual quest of Bayoán. Intermezzo (TRACK 6) is a musical representation of the playful and innocent portraval of Marién, the female character who in the next movement becomes an abstract representation both of the beloved and the homeland. To bring my own personal context I introduce in this movement (Marién, TRACK 7) music evocative of the Danza, that quintessential piano music of XIX century Puerto Rico. The Elegía (Elegy, TRACK 8) that closes the work leaves one with a sense of hope, but at the same time suggests that we are still searching for answers to Hostos' questions. La peregrinación de Bayoán is a new work composed in 2001 based on a previous work of the same title written in 1992.

Chorus

Campos, cielo, patria... Fields, sky, homeland... Bayoán

Apenas sosegado mi corazón, apenas calmadas las agitaciones que la meditación de ese otro mundo me ha causado ...y otra vez obligado a abandonarte

Just when my heart was at peace, just when the unrest caused by the thought of that other world was subdued ...and once again I am forced to abandon you. Chorus

¿Porque me asusta la soledad? Why does solitude scare me?

¡Ah! si pudiera quedarme. ¿Porque vuelvo por segunda vez a buscar lejos de mi patria lo que no encontré en mi primera peregrinación? ¿Porque me empeño en conocer el mundo v en hacerme conocer de el si toda mi felicidad consistía en vivir desconocido? Yo sé que anhelo la dicha de mi patria. vo sé que necesita de sus hijos por qué solo los hijos son desinteresadamente cariñosos. yo sé que me avergonzaba de gozar del sosiego que el suelo en que nací me da. ...y resolví alejarme de mi tranquilidad y buscar la agitación la lucha y el dolor por ser digno de mi patria por hacerme oir del mundo.

Bavoán Ah! If I could stay. Why do I return to search in faraway places, what I could not find during my first pilgrimage? Why do I strive to know the world and to make myself be known. if all my happiness consisted in being unknown? I know that I long for my homeland, I know that she needs her children since only they can love her without asking for anything in return, I know that I shied away from enjoying the tranguil peace offered by my native soil. ...I decided to abandon my peace of mind in order to struggle and suffer, to be worthy of my homeland, to be heard by the whole world, por lograr en el el puesto que hoy no tengo... to achieve in it a place today I do not have ... Chorus

> ...el viento nos acerca a tí montañosa Higüey.

...the wind draws us near you mountainous Higüey. Bayoán

...las nubes del cielo y las del tiempo no me impiden ver lo que ha pasado y te veo desierta y solitaria

...the clouds in the sky and in my mind do not keep me from seeing what has happened. and I see you deserted and lonely,

RUBERTO SIERRA In recent years the music of Roberto Sierra has received much attention and has met with particular acclaim both in North America and Europe. In 1987 Sierra came to prominence when his first major orchestral composition, Júbilo, was performed at Carnegie Hall by the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. His works have been performed by the orchestras of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Houston, Minnesota, Dallas, Detroit, San Antonio and Phoenix, as well as by the American Composers Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Kronos Quartet, Continuum, England's BBC Symphony, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and at Wolf Trap. Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Festival Casals, and France's Festival de Lille. Recent commissions include Con madera, metal y cuero for Evelyn Glennie, commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the Casals Festival (the premiere was part of the BBC 20th Century Restrospective "Sounding the Century"); Cuentos, commissioned by Camerata de las Américas: Cuatro Versos, a cello concerto commissioned by Carlos Prieto: Fanfarria, aria v movimiento perpetuo for violin and piano commissioned by the Library of Congress to celebrate Copland's centennial: Concerto for Orchestra for the centennial celebration of the Philadelphia Orchestra, commissioned by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation and the Philadelphia Orchestra; and Fandangos for the National Symphony Orchestra In Washington DC.

Roberto Sierra was born in Puerto Rico where he pursued early studies at the Conservatory of Music and the University of Puerto Rico. After graduation, Sierra went to Europe to further his musical knowledge, studying first at the Royal College of Music and the University of London, and later at the Institute for Sonology in Utrecht. Between 1979 and 1982 he did advanced work in composition at the Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg under the renowned György Ligeti. In 1982 Sierra returned to Puerto Rico to occupy administrative posts in arts administration and higher education, first as Director of the Cultural Activities Department at the University of Puerto Rico, and later as Chancellor of the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music. Throughout this period, he was vigorously engaged as a composer on the international scene.

His Salsa para vientos was a prize-winning work at the 1983 Budapest Spring Festival, and his Suite won first prize at the Alienor Harpsichord Competition. In 1987 the Almeida Festival in London devoted an entire concert to his chamber works, and the event was recorded and broadcast by the BBC. In April 2000 Continuum presented a retrospective of Sierra's chamber works at Merkin Concert Hall in New York. Roberto Sierra's music may be heard on recently-released CDs by New World Records, Newport Classic, New Albion, ADDA, VRAS Productions, Musical Heritage Society, Koss Classics, CRI, BMG, Fleur de Son, and Dorian Records.

In 1989 Roberto Sierra became Composer-in-Residence of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. In addition to advising the MSO on American repertoire, Mr. Sierra contributed to the musical life of Milwaukee with a number of new works, including pieces for local chamber and choral ensembles, and for individual musicians. Roberto Sierra is currently teaching composition at Cornell University. During the 2000-2001 season Sierra was Composer-In-Residence with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

