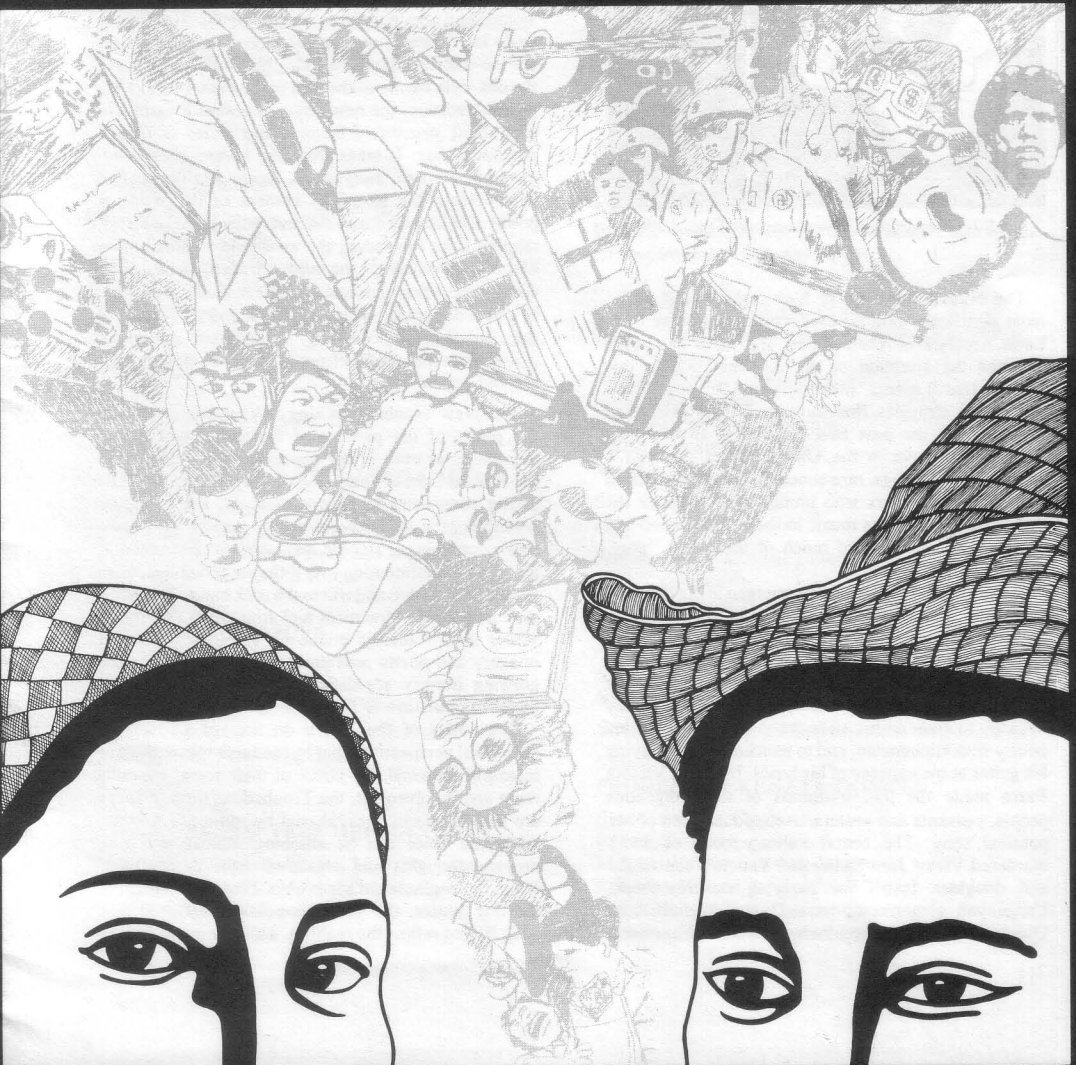


SILVIO RODRIGUEZ

RABO DE NUBE •

• TAIL OF A TORNADO

songs of the new cuba



the new cuban song

photo by Benmayor



Silvio Rodríguez, street concert Dec. 1980

The Nueva Canción, or New Song, is one of the most significant cultural expressions to emerge from Latin America in recent times, and yet it has never received the attention or the dissemination in this country that it merits. Intimately tied to the political and social struggles that have swept the American Continent in the past two decades, it is still only marginally known in the United States, through a handful of recordings, rare concerts, or the enthusiasm of returning travelers who immediately contrast the depth and vigor of this music to the homogenized and commercial character of much of their own "pop" culture.

New Song in Latin America emerged in the late '50s and early '60s as music of protest and resistance to class oppression, military regimes, and imperialist domination with its counterpart of cultural penetration. In Argentina, Atahualpa Yupanqui, a forerunner of the New Song Movement, has been forced for decades to disguise his attitudes in enigma, to fill his poetry with euphemism, and to concentrate on playing his guitar at the expense of his lyrics. In Chile, Violeta Parra made the folk traditions of the indigenous people, peasants and proletariat the foundation of her political song. The brutal military coup of 1973 murdered Victor Jara and exiled Violeta's son Angel and daughter Isabel for carrying on this work. Uruguayan singer/composers Daniel Viglietti and Quintín Cabrera carry on their work from France and

Spain. In Brazil, the musical and metaphorical artistry of Chico Buarque, Milton Nascimento and others has elevated song to new creative heights in opposition to the social oppression and exploitation of the military dictatorship.

Cuba is a different case. The Nueva Canción, or as it is called in Cuba, Nueva Trova, is an institutionally supported and recognized art form. It travels worldwide as a powerful ambassador of the Cuban Revolution, jamming concert halls in Mexico and Spain, but also in Sweden, Italy, France, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The immense popularity of the singers and composers of Nueva Trova, both at home and abroad, is based on far more than their formidable artistic qualities; they are seen as living representatives of the Revolution, and their songs as documentaries of the problems and struggles, loves, dreams and victories of that profound social process.

These troubadours (singers and composers) now number more than 500 throughout the island. Professionals and amateurs work together in the *Movimiento de la Nueva Trova* organization. Their basic tools are the voice and guitar, harking back in this respect to the old-style *trovas* at the turn of the century. Like the parent tradition, the new *trova* embraces a variety of traditional structures, themes, and styles of Cuban popular music. It takes from the *bolera*, *guaracha*, *canción*, *guajira*, *guaguancó*, *punto guajiro*, and of course from the *son*. The content of the songs is political in the same way that everyday life is political, ranging from love song, the evocation of small-town life, to expressions of the humor, tragedy, gaiety, and commitment that characterizes life in Cuba. But, there is a new dimension added by the country's leap from the isolation imposed by colonialism and neo-colonialism into the forefront of internationalist struggle and solidarity.

The New Troubadours sing of Vietnam or Angola, the plight of the peoples of Central America and elsewhere, or even of the oppressed and exploited in the United States. Their global perspective also leads young composers to eagerly seek out and integrate contemporary and international sounds into their music, combining electric and acoustic instrumentation, and experimenting with different groupings, from the traditional duo and trio to the rock band. The lyrics seek new poetic structures and struggle to free themselves from romantic cliché by employing abstract imagery and poetic references that correspond to the growing literary sophistication of the now highly-literate population of Cuba.

The songs of the Trova do not reflect isolated individual perspectives, but by the same token they are intensely personal. By virtue of their social commitment and involvement, the Troubadour's experiences are also common ones, shared by millions. And so, while the voice can be autobiographical, the song projects thoughts and objectives held in common. From the beginning of the Nueva Trova movement in the late sixties, the young composers believed that song should reflect the realities, aspirations, as well as



Nueva Trova open air concert/photo by Benmayor

the feelings of the audience; they should also strive to inspire positive attitudes along with critical thinking, to speak to problems as well as victories, and to achieve an artistic quality that satisfies while it raises people's tastes, expectations, and standards for music production. In this way the communicative powers of song could be part of the process of shaping new values in the new society. With the age of electronic media, the private and intimate relationship of singer to listener could expand to a far wider audience, and not only speak to the experience of growing up in the Revolution but help to further the revolutionary process.

The singers of the Nueva Trova appear on stage in street clothes, without stage make-up, rejecting the nightclub glitter and superstar behavior. They also object to song as simple political rhetoric. On questions of esthetics and the role of art in revolution they often turn to the example and thoughts of Brecht. For poetic inspiration, as well as for setting texts to music, they draw on the works of the Revolution's intellectual author, Jose Marti, on Nicolás Guillén's use of musical expression, on the avant-garde poetic conceptualization of the Peruvian Communist poet, César Vallejo, on Pablo Neruda's materialist verse, or on the artistry and political expressions of García Lorca and Miguel Hernández, victims of the fascists in the Spanish Civil War. With Cuba's own young lyricists, Victor Casás, Guillermo Rodríguez Rivera, or Luis Rogelio Noguerras, to name a few, the *trovadores* share generational as well as poetic ties.

More than any other musical figures from outside Latin America, Bob Dylan and The Beatles left a lasting imprint on the young Cuban songwriters. The early Dylan provided the archetype of folksinger as social critic and poet; the Beatles' expansion of parameters in popular music opened a variety of lyrical and musical possibilities for young composers. In keeping with their vanguard cultural role, the com-

posers of the Nueva Trova consistently experiment with their own traditional musical forms, contemporizing and adapting them to the requirements of new song, and even fusing them with jazz, blues, rock, and Brazilian *samba*. They have revolutionized Cuban song, set new artistic standards for the genre, and have provided a lasting alternative to the barrage of commercial music beamed from Miami's stations, just 90 miles away.

In the words of Silvio Rodríguez, one of Nueva Trova's leading artists: "Our work is not a fad. We are trying to be something deeper. Ours is a conscious work, directed toward the enrichment of human culture and attempting to make better human beings. . . . We know that we are part of a complex set of gears working to produce, one day, the humankind of the future. . . . At the beginning, we talked a lot about what role song would be able to play in a society like ours. What role should music play? Commercialism had relegated song to being a commodified, pseudo-art, but song had or could have artistic qualities, and could be seen and treated as great art forms like painting, poetry, or a symphony. . . . This was the spirit of our work, committed as we were to the revolutionary process. We felt there was no way to evade the lights that had been turned on in our heads. Troubadours sprang from under the rocks. All were identified with this new way of creating. It wasn't only a new way of creating, but a new way of *being*."

"I am a privileged person—privileged in a number of ways. The person who is given the opportunity to stand in front of a microphone and say all that s/he thinks, the person who is brought into focus by the TV camera and speaks to the entire world, is a privileged human being. Our country is one that has many economic difficulties, many. So many things that in other contexts would be normal are "privileges" here. But I understand that my work is important and that my work

serves the Revolution, that my work serves the human being that we are seeking to create. I understand that my work is not for my own personal benefit or for my own profit."

Rabo de Nube is, in its social and political vision, a "great wrath rising in the sky." The songs, written between 1977 and 1979, foreshadow events of the Spring of 1980, the Mariel exodus of thousands of Cubans. The song, *Rabo de Nube* has become symbolic of the feelings of millions of Cubans who remained loyal to the Revolution, characterizing the exodus as a "sweeper of sorrows/a downpour of vengeance/and when it clears it looks like our hope." Songs of solidarity, love, personal and political struggle make up this collection—a revolutionary and

romantic expression in one. Here, some of Silvio's most accomplished musical and poetic pieces express an unshakeable dedication to art that serves the Revolution, that inspires, educates, and satisfies; an unshakeable conviction to be a chronicler of the times who speaks from within history, from within the process; an unshakeable commitment to art as a weapon and a tool of the Revolution.

—Rina Benmayor

(quotes excerpted from interviews by R. Benmayor with Silvio Rodríguez, 1980).

© Rina Benmayor, May 17, 1982



Anti-Imperialist March, Havana, May 1980/photo by Benmayor

cuba: an introduction

Cuba is an island nation located 90 miles from the southern tip of Florida. After a prolonged war of liberation, Cuba achieved its independence from Spain in 1898. An expansionist U.S. quickly intervened militarily and established a neo-colonial relationship which was to dominate the political, economic and social life of the island for the next 60 years. The miserable living conditions of the vast majority of the population were a direct result of exploitation by North American corporations backed by U.S. military might. When the July 26th movement, led by Fidel Castro, overthrew the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista on January 1, 1959, Cuba established itself as the first territory of the Americas to free itself of U.S. imperialist domination. In 1961, Cuba declared itself a socialist nation. The U.S. response was a military invasion at the Bay of Pigs (Playa Giron) where it suffered a quick and humiliating defeat.

Since 1959 the history of relations between Cuba and the U.S. has been characterized by the repeated attempts of various administrations to isolate Cuba politically, economically and militarily from the rest of the Western Hemisphere. This small nation of nine million people has been portrayed as constituting either a direct military threat to the region or of acting as instigator of revolutionary struggles not only in Latin America but (at certain junctures) in Asia and Africa as well. The U.S. propaganda campaign, combined with a continued economic, diplomatic and cultural blockade, is one aspect of a concerted effort to preserve imperialist domination of Latin America. The discrediting of Cuba as a revolutionary example is one of the main goals of this well orchestrated offensive.

Aside from a brief "thaw" in the mid-'70s which culminated in the opening of diplomatic interest sec-

tions in Havana and Washington, successive U.S. administrations have brandished the constant threat of military invasion and promoted numerous assassination attempts directed against Cuban leaders. Cuban livestock and crops have been poisoned in acts of economic sabotage directed and supported by the United States. U.S. responsibility in these actions has been amply documented in hearings held before the U.S. Senate itself.

As revolutionary gains have been made in Nicaragua and Grenada, and as liberation struggles have intensified in El Salvador and Guatemala, Washington has reacted by attempts at Chile-type destabilization and subversion in the former and by increasing military and economic aid to the repressive governments in the latter countries. Portraying Cuba as bearing primary responsibility for the revolutionary upheavals in Central America, the U.S. has tightened its economic sanctions and is attempting to further restrict travel to and from the island. The CIA has renewed its covert operations in the Caribbean, while millions of dollars have been dedicated to the setting up of *Radio Marti* with the intention of broadcasting material hostile to the revolution directly to the island.

All of these actions and threats have been accompanied by an increase in U.S. military maneuvers in the area unparalleled since the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic. Admiral Harry Vain was quoted as saying, "The main threats to security and stability in Latin America are Cuba and the USSR." This exercise in cold war rhetoric has been challenged by Cuba, which has called upon the U.S. to furnish proof of its allegations. As of this writing, no evidence which can withstand close examination has been produced. What has been clearly established, however, is that the cold war hysteria previously initiated by the Carter administration and escalated under Reagan does represent a genuine threat to world peace.

Cuba's progress in the face of relentless U.S. hostility is exemplified by the astonishing gains made in the past 23 years toward resolving problems of health, education, cultural and economic development. Revolutionary Cuba provides free education and health care for all its people; it has the lowest infant mortality rate and the lowest level of unemployment in Latin America. The Cuban standard of living, which includes the most vigorous flowering of cultural life to be found in the hemisphere, presents a startling contrast to even the most advanced societies of Latin America. Illiteracy has been eliminated and there are no hungry, homeless or barefoot children in today's Cuba.

By contrast, the large majority of Latin America's people face conditions of unemployment, substandard housing and illiteracy, coupled with totally inadequate health care that translates into scandalously high infant mortality rates and premature deaths from hunger and preventable disease. These conditions, though well documented, are shocking. They are the direct result of a system of imperialism that drains the economy and exports the fruits of the labor of all these people. Cuba is the living proof that only complete political, economic and cultural independence from U.S. imperialism and the abolition of the profit system can meet the needs of Latin America's hungry and exploited millions. Cuba's international



photo by Benmayer

Silvio Rodriguez, street concert June 1980

prestige rests on this example of a future with dignity, free of the restraints on development imposed by U.S. corporate interests. It is *this* reality which poses such a threat to U.S. imperialism and its partners, the oligarchies and military dictatorships of Latin America. . . and the world.

The people of the U.S. have a direct interest in supporting normalization of relations with Cuba. The threat of Cuban "aggression" is one of the reasons cited by the Reagan administration for its unprecedented military build-up. These accelerated war preparations have had a devastating impact upon the most oppressed and exploited sectors of U.S. society itself because their counterpart is the roll-back of economic, political and social advances made by minorities, women and the working class over the last 50 years. And the fact that both military intervention abroad and economic cut-backs at home impact most directly on peoples of color should not escape our notice.

The struggle for social justice in the United States is but one aspect of an international struggle against the same forces which are now attempting to subvert Cuba's revolution and intensify their exploitative grip on Latin America's people. The campaign against Cuba is but one element in a coordinated domestic and international offensive directed against all people who struggle to end their oppression and for a better life. In this context the Cuban example offers the people of the U.S. an opportunity; by actively opposing the U.S. blockade of Cuba we can materially advance our own struggles for a future free of exploitation.

RESOLUTION OF THE ARTISTS AND WRITERS OF CUBA

In response to the escalation of international tensions by the present U.S. administration headed by Ronald Reagan, we, the artists and writers of Cuba issue the following communique:

We, the writers and artists of Cuba, members of the National Cultural Union (UNEAC), the Hermanos Saiz Brigade, the members of the Nueva Trova movement, the Raul Gomez Garcia Brigade, and others, reaffirm before the people of Cuba our determination to struggle for the continued sovereignty of our nation and the principles of our Revolution with the written word, with the instruments of our creative work, with the gun, and with our entire lives.

We will remain faithful forever to the spirit of dignity and heroism which has characterized our workers, farmers and students. If the bourgeois conception of culture is that intellectuals be maintained in an ivory tower, the Marxist-Leninist conception of culture teaches us, and we have learned it well, that only *labor* makes possible the creation of this second nature called culture. We cannot be considered truly cultured if we are not willing to defend with our art, with our tools, and with our weapons, this glorious society of workers. The Revolution is the highest expression of our cultural development. To defend it is to defend culture!

We are all too keenly aware of the grave dangers which menace humanity at this moment. We understand how blind the forces of Imperialism can be. But we also know that our watchword "*Patria o Muerte*" ("*Country or Death*") is not mere rhetoric, but rather expresses the irrevocable will of our whole people.

In the event of aggression, we, the artists and writers of Cuba, will not be left weeping over the ruins. The words of our teacher, Jose Marti, go with us every day: "*Let the troubadours of the monarchy weep over the statues of its kings, broken under the hooves of the horses of the Revolution; let the bards of the old society mourn for the broken scepters, the ruined monuments, the lost virtue, the terrifying weakness... We (revolutionaries) have heroes to be eternalized, heroines to be exalted, astonishing power to be eulogized!*"

Here we will not lose our virtue or lack in courage. The writers and artists are integrated into the Territorial Troops Militia, and we will continue to develop a plan for patriotic cultural activities throughout the country which will allow us to take part, with our free time and as voluntary work, in these new armed forces of the Revolution. As Marti's art of words was able to aid in gathering the necessary funds while at the same time illuminating the consciousness of the people, so too our art can help raise the needed economic support for the Territorial Troops while at the same time uplifting the spirit of the Revolution.

We pledge that here the instruments of work and the arms of combat will have the warm and faithful companionship of the book and the instruments of art. The writers and artists of Cuba, like all our people, call out to Commander-in-Chief Fidel: We await your orders! *Patria o Muerte! Venceremos!*

(Spanish original may be found in CASA de Las Americas No. 126 May-June 1981)
(translation: Barbara Dane)

Side 1, Band 1: (3:55) VAMOS A ANDAR

*Vamos a andar
en verso y vida tintos
levantando el recinto
del pan y la verdad*

*Vamos a andar
matando el egoismo
para que por lo mismo
reviva la amistad*

*Vamos a andar
hundiendo al poderoso
alzando al perezoso
sumando a los demás*

*Vamos a andar
con todas las banderas
trenzadas, de manera
que no haya soledad*

*Vamos a andar
para llegar a la vida.*

LET US WALK TOGETHER

*Let us walk together,
Steeped in poetry and life,
Building the domain
Of bread and truth!*

*Let us walk together,
Leaving selfishness behind,
And in that way
Give new life to friendship!*

*Let us walk together,
Toppling the mighty,
Lifting up the lazy,
Drawing in the rest!*

*Let us walk together
With all our banners braided
Leaving no-one
To stand alone!*

*Let us walk together,
So that we can arrive at life!*

Side 1, Band 2: (3:21)

RABO DE NUBE

*Si me dijeran pide un deseo
preferiría un rabo de nube
un torbellino en el suelo
y una gran ira que sube*

*un barredor de tristezas
un aguacero en venganza
que cuando escampe parezca
nuestra esperanza*

*si me dijeran pide un deseo
preferiría un rabo de nube
que se llevara lo feo
y nos dejara el querube*

*un barredor de tristezas
un aguacero en venganza
que cuando escampe parezca
nuestra esperanza.*

Side 1, Band 3: (3:54)

EL DÍA FELIZ QUE ESTA LLEGANDO

*Se está arrimando un día feliz
como hace un barco tras sus meses
se está arrimando un día de abril
un día de abril se va a arrimar
a los finales de noviembre*

*y yo me apego más al mar
me hermano doble de los peces
yo enciendo leña en el hogar
que vio brillar la tempestad
que guía el curso de estos meses*

*se está arrimando un día de sol
un día de duendes en añejo
se acerca un pájaro feroz
zumbando al goce de tu olor
se acerca un tiempo de conejos*

*y a mí me escarba la ansiedad
me escarba hondo acá en lo blando
me escarba simple de escarbar
como para que se hunda más
el día feliz que está llegando.*

Side 1, Band 4: (3:28)

TE AMARÉ Y DESPUES

*Te amaré, te amaré como al mundo
te amaré aunque tenga final
te amaré, te amaré en lo profundo
te amaré como tengo que amar*

*te amaré, te amaré como pueda
te amaré aunque no sea la paz
te amaré, te amaré lo que queda
te amaré cuando acabe de amar*

TAIL OF THE TORNADO

*If they asked me to make a wish
I would ask for the tail of a tornado.
A whirlwind on the ground,
A great wrath rising in the sky,*

*A sweeper of sorrows,
A downpour of vengeance,
And when it clears it will look like
Our hope.*

*If they asked me to make a wish,
I would ask for the tail of a tornado,
That would carry off all ugliness
And leave us the cherub.*

*A sweeper of sorrows,
A downpour of vengeance,
And when it clears it will look like
Our hope.*

THE DAY OF HAPPINESS THAT DRAWS
NEAR

*A day of happiness is drawing near,
Like a ship after months at sea,
An April day is drawing near,
There will be an April day
Toward the end of November.*

*And I cling more firmly to the sea,
I am twin brother of the fish,
I kindle wood in the hearth,
A witness to the flashing storm
That guides the course of these months.*

*A day of sunshine now is near,
A day of ancient elves,
A wild bird approaches,
Buzzing with joy at your fragrance.
A time of rabbits is upon us.*

*And now anxiety gnaws at me,
Digging deep into the softness within me,
Digging simply to dig
As if to bury deeper
The day of happiness that is drawing near.*

I WILL LOVE YOU AND THEN

*I will love you, love you like the world,
I will love you, though it may end.
I will love you, love you deeply,
I will love you the way I must love.*

*I will love you, love you as I can
I will love you, though not always in peace,
I will love you, love what remains,
I will love you when my love has ended.*

*te amaré, te amaré si estoy muerto
te amaré al día siguiente además
te amaré, te amaré como siento
te amaré con adiós, con jamás*

*te amaré, te amaré junto al viento
te amaré como único sè
te amaré hasta el fin de los tiempos
te amaré, y después te amaré.*

*I will love you, love you even if I die,
I will love you the next day as well,
I will love you, love you as I feel,
I will love you with good-bye and never again.*

*I will love you, love you along with the wind,
I will love you the only way I know how,
I will love you till the end of all time,
I will love you, and then, I will love you.*

Side 1, Band 5: (5:41)

FABULA DE LOS TRES HERMANOS

- 1) *De tres hermanos el más grande se fue
Por la vereda a descubrir y a fundar
Y para nunca equivocarse o errar
Iba despierto y bien atento a cuando iba a pisar.*

*De tanto en esta posición caminar
Ya nunca el cuello se le enderezó
Y anduvo esclavo ya de la precaución
Y se hizo viejo queriendo ir lejos con su corta
visión.*

*Eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh,
Ojo que no mira mas alla no ayuda al pie.
Uh, uh, uh, uh, uh, uh,
Oyeme esto y dime, dime lo que piensas tú?*

- 2) *De tres hermanos el del medio se fue
Por la vereda a descubrir y a fundar
Y para nunca equivocarse o errar
Iba despierto, y bien atento al horizonte igual.

Pero este chico listo no podía ver
La piedra, el hoyo que vencia a su pie,
Y revolcado siempre se la pasó,
Y se hizo viejo queriendo ir lejos a donde no llegó.*

*Eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh,
Ojo que no mira mas aca tampoco fue.
Uh, uh, uh, uh, uh, uh,
Oyeme esto y dime, dime lo que piensas tú?*

- 3) *De tres hermanos el pequeño partiò
Por la vereda a descubrir y a fundar,
Y para nunca equivocarse o errar,
Una pupila llevaba arriba, y la otra en el andar.

Y caminò vereda adentro el que más
Ojo puesto en todo ya ni sabe lo que ve,
Y cuando vino el tiempo de resumir,
Y su mirada estaba extraviada entre el estar y el
ir.*

*Eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh,
Ojo puesto en todo ya ni sabe lo que ve.
Uh, uh, uh, uh, uh, uh,
Oyeme esto y dime, dime lo que piensas tú?*

THE FABLE OF THE THREE BROTHERS

- 1) *Of three brothers, the eldest set off
Upon the road, to discover and to build,
And so as never to falter or err,
He kept his eyes open wide and travelled with care,
Watching each step that he took.*

*From travelling so long in this position,
He never could straighten his neck again,
And he became a slave to precaution
And he grew old, wanting to go far with his short
vision.*

*Eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh,
The eye that doesn't look ahead is no help to the
feet.
Uh, uh, uh, uh, uh, uh,
Listen to this and tell me, tell me what you think.*

- 2) *Of three brothers, the middle one set off
Upon the road, to discover and to build,
And so as never to falter or err,
He stayed alert, eyes fixed on the horizon.
But this eager young man wasn't able to see
The rock, the hole that conquered his foot,
And thus, he forever stumbled,
And he grew old, wanting to go far, to the place
where he never arrived.*

*Eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh,
The eye that never looks down also cannot go far.
Uh, uh, uh, uh, uh, uh,
Listen to this and tell me, tell me what you think.*

- 3) *Of three brothers, the youngest set off
Upon the road, to discover and to build.
And so as never to falter or err,
He kept one eye looking up and the other to the
ground.*

*And he travelled the farthest of the three,
One eye on the road, the other gazing ahead,
And when it came time to take stock,
His vision had become scattered between the being
and the becoming.*

*Eh, eh, eh, eh, eh, eh,
The eye that looks everywhere knows not what it
sees.
Uh, uh, uh, uh, uh, uh,
Listen to this and tell me, tell me what you think.*

Side 2, Band 1: (2:56)

QUE YA VIVI, QUE TE VAS

*Dejé pasar unas horas
Por si se huía tu sueño
Durmiendo la veladora
Tu tiempo se entró en mi tiempo
Y en fin la guitarra sola
Gira contigo en el centro*

*Creo que la luna ya es muy alta,
Y en la caricia falta un viaje a la humedad.
Creo que de noche me despierto
Con frío, al descubierto tanteando oscuridad.
Creo que la lluvia está cayendo
Y no voy sonriendo dejándome mojar.*

*Creo que me va a quitar el sueño
Un dedo aquí, un labio allá,
Que te perdí, que ya no estás,
Que ya viví, que te vas.*

*Dejé pasar algunas horas,
Pupila veladora por si me daba igual,
Tu tiempo se metió en mi tiempo,
Momentos y momentos que no quieren pasar,
Y he aquí que la guitarra vuelve a soltar amarras
Canta y gime al volar.*

Creo que me va a quitar. . .

Side 2, Band 2: (7:11)

CON DIEZ AÑOS MENOS

*Si fuera diez años más joven qué feliz
y qué descamisado en tono de decir:
cada palabra desatando un temporal
y enloqueciendo la etiqueta ocasional*

*los años son, pues, mi mordaza oh mujer
sé demasiado, me convierto en mi saber
quisiera haberte conocido años atrás
para sacar chispas del agua que me das
para empuñar la alevosía y el candor
y saber olvidar mejor*

*esta mujer propone que salte y me estrelle
contra un muro de piedras que alza en el cielo
y como combustible me llena de anhelo
de besos sin promesa y sentencia sin leyes
esta mujer propone un pacto que selle
la tierra con el viento, la luz con la sombra
invoca los misterios del tiempo y me nombra
esta mujer propone que salte y me estrelle*

*solo para verle, solo para amarle
solo para serle, solo y no olvidarle*

*con diez años de menos no habría esperado
por sus proposiciones y hubiera corrido
como una fiera al lecho en que nos conocimos
impúdico y sangriento, divino y alado
con diez años de menos habría blasfemado
con savia de su cuerpo quemaría los templos
para que los cobardes tomaran ejemplo
con diez años de menos hubiera matado*

*solo para verle, solo para amarle
solo para serle, solo y no olvidarle.*

I HAVE LIVED, AND YOU ARE LEAVING

*I let some time go by,
To see if my dream of you would pass.
I fell asleep on guard,
Your time entered my time,
And then nothing but my guitar
Spins with you in the center.*

*I think the moon is high now,
And the caress needs a trip to the humid zone.
I think at night I awaken
Shivering, uncovered, touching darkness.
I think the rain is falling,
And I am not smiling as I let it soak me.*

*I think it is waking me from my dream.
A finger here, a lip there,
I've lost you, you're gone,
I have lived, and you are leaving.*

*I let some time go by,
Eyes on guard, in case I no longer cared.
Your time entered my time,
Moments and moments that don't want to pass.
And once again my guitar breaks loose,
Singing and moaning in flight.*

I think it is waking me from my dream. . .

TEN YEARS YOUNGER

*If I were ten years younger, how happy,
How frank and carefree would be my voice,
Each word unleashing a storm
That would drive casual formality mad!*

*So the years are my muzzle, dear woman,
I know too much, I become my own knowledge;
If only I had met you years ago,
I would draw sparks from the water you give,
I'd get a grip on treachery and candor,
And know better how to forget.*

*This woman wants me to leap and crash
Against a wall of stones she builds high in the sky.
And for fuel she fills me with hopes,
Kisses without promises, and edicts outside the law.
This woman proposes a pact that will seal
The earth and the wind, the light and the shadow,
She invokes the mysteries of time and calls my name.
This woman wants me to leap and crash!*

*Just to see her, just to love her,
Just to be for her, just her, and not forget her.*

*If I were ten years younger I wouldn't have waited
For her proposals, and I would have run
Like a wild animal to the bed in which we met,
Immodest and bloody, winged and divine!
If I were ten years younger I would have blasphemed,
With the sap of her body I would have burnt temples,
So that cowards could take example.
If I were ten years younger I would have killed
Just to see her, just to love her,
Just to be for her, just her, and not forget her.*

Side 2, Band 3: (2:27)

IMAGINATE

Imagine
que desde muy niño
te llevaba flores
te daba mi abrigo

imagine
que soy el amigo
de tu mismo grado
que lleva tus libros

imagine
que soy de tu calle
que siempre pasé
por donde miraste

imagine
que hasta mi perro
me busca en tu puerta
cuando me le pierdo

imagine
que eres me dama
mi último sueño
mi más roja flama

imagine
que somos nosotros
tú y yo para siempre
que no eres de otro.

IMAGINE

Imagine
That since I was a little boy
I brought you flowers,
I offered you my coat.

Imagine
That I am the friend
From your same classroom
Who carries your books.

Imagine
That I live on your street,
That I always walked by
Whenever you were looking.

Imagine
That even my dog
Comes straight to your door
When he can't find me.

Imagine
That you are my lady,
My ultimate dream,
My most red-hot flame.

Imagine
That we are us,
You and me forever,
That you belong to no other.

Side 2, Band 4: (5:33)

SUENO CON SERPIENTES

"Hay hombres que luchan un día y son buenos.
Hay otros que luchan un año y son mejores.
Y queines luchan muchos años y son muy buenos.
Pero hay los que luchan toda la vida:
Esos son los imprescindibles." Bertolt Brecht

Sueño con serpientes, con serpientes de mar,
Con cierto mar, ay de serpientes de mar.
Largas, transparentes, y en sus barrigas llevan
Lo que puedan arrebatarle al amor.

Oh, la mato y aparece una mayor.

Oh, con mucho mas infierno en digestion.

No quepo en su boca, me trata de tragar
Pero se atora con un trebol de mi sien.
Creo que esta loca: le doy de masticar
Una paloma y la enveneno de mi bien.

O, la mato. . .

Esta al fin me engulle y mientras por su esofago
Paseo, voy pensando en que vendrá:
Pero se destruye cuando llego a su estomago
Y planteo con un verso una verdad.

Oh, la mato y. . .

DREAM WITH SERPENTS

"There are men who struggle for a day,
and they are good.
There are others who struggle for a year,
and they are better.
There are those who struggle many years,
and they are better still.
But there are those who struggle all their lives:
These are the indispensable ones." Bertolt Brecht

I dream of serpents, serpents of the sea,
A certain sea, oh, of serpents I dream.
Long, transparent, and in their bellies they carry
All that they can snatch away from love.

Oh, I kill one and a larger one appears,
Oh, with more hellfire burning inside!

I don't fit in its mouth, it tries to swallow me,
But it chokes on the trident of my temple.
I think it's gone crazy: I give it to chew
A dove, I poison it with my goodness.

Oh, I kill one. . .

This one finally devours me, and as through its
esophagus

I pass, I am thinking of what is to come.
But I destroy it when I arrive in its stomach,
And I present it with a verse of truth.

Oh, I kill one. . .

Side 2, Band 5: (2:56)

PEQUENA SERENATA DIURNA

*Vivo en un país libre,
Cual solamente puede ser libre
En esta tierra, en este instante
Y soy feliz porque soy gigante.*

*Amo a una mujer clara
Que amo y me ama sin pedir nada.
O casi nada, (que no es lo mismo
Pero es igual.)*

*Y si esto fuera poco,
Tengo mis cantos que, poco a poco
Muelo y rehago habitando el tiempo
Como le cuadra a un hombre despierto.*

*Soy feliz, soy un hombre feliz,
Y quiero que me perdonen
Por este día
Los muertos de mi felicidad.*

A LITTLE DAYTIME SERENADE

*I live in a free country,
Which only can be free
In this land, at this moment,
And I am happy because I am a giant.*

*I love a clear-minded woman,
I love her and she loves me, asking for nothing
Or almost nothing (which isn't the same
But it doesn't matter.)*

*And if this weren't enough,
I have my songs that, little by little,
I grind and remake, living time
As an alert man should.*

*I am happy, I am a happy man,-
And I ask forgiveness
For this day
From those who died for my happiness.*

MUSIC CREDITS:

All words and music by Silvio Rodriguez ©1981

Side 1, Band 1:

VAMOS A ANDAR

Silvio: voices, acoustic guitar, 12-string guitar, bass,
solina, bombo

Norberto Carrillo: bongos

Arrangement: Silvio

Side 1, Band 2:

RABO DE NUBE

Silvio: voice

Yanela Lojos: harp

Arrangement: Silvio and Yanela

Side 1, Band 3:

EL DIA FELIZ QUE ESTA LLEGANDO

Silvio: voices, guitar and bass

Frank Fernandez: spinet, clavichembalo, solina
and Hammond organ

Arrangement: Silvio and Frank

Side 1, Band 4:

TE AMARE Y DESPUES

Silvio: voice

Anabell Lopez: second voice

Frank Fernandez: piano

Alina Neira: cello

Arrangement: Frank Fernandez

Side 1, Band 5:

FABULA DE LOS TRES HERMANOS

Silvio: voices, acoustic guitar, 12-string guitar, tres,
bass, bombo and hand-claps

Juana Paz G.: hand-claps

Arrangement: Silvio

Side 2, Band 1:

QUE YA VIVI, QUE TE VAS

Silvio: voice, guitar

Frank Fernandez: solina, clavichembalo and spinet

Arrangement: Frank and Silvio

Side 2, Band 2:

CON DIEZ AÑOS DE MENOS

Silvio: voice, acoustic guitar, 12-string guitar, bombo,
quijada

Pablo Menendez: electric guitar

Jorge Reyes: bass

Norberto Carrillo: percussion

Frank Fernandez: solina

Arrangement: Silvio

Side 2, Band 3:

IMAGINATE

Silvio: voices, acoustic guitars, 12-string guitar, bass,
percussion

Frank Fernandez: spinet and MiniMoog

Arrangement: Silvio

Side 2, Band 4:

SUENO CON SERPIENTES

Silvio and Frank: all instruments and arrangement

Side 2, Band 5:

PEQUENA SERENATA DIURNA

Silvio: voice and guitar

Francisco Amat: guitar

Manuel Valera: soprano saxophone

Eduardo Ramos: bass

Frank Fernandez: piano

Norberto Carrillo and Ignacio Berroa: percussion

ORGANIZATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS DEALING WITH CUBA:

Venceremos Brigade

National Office
GPO Box 3169
New York, N.Y. 10116

Publishes a newsletter, *Venceremos*
Periodically organizes working visits to Cuba.

Brigada Antonio Maceo

National Office
P.O. Box 1125
Cathedral Square
New York, N.Y. 10025

Publishes a newsletter, *Baragua*
Represents the Cuban exiles who remain sympathetic to the Revolution and organizes visits.

Center for Cuban Studies

220 E. 23rd St.
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Publishes a newsletter, *Cuba Review*.
Maintains a research library and organizes conferences, film showings, etc. in the New York area and beyond.

Institute for Cuban Cultural Exchange

P.O. Box 4005
Stanford, CA. 94305

Organizes cultural exchange between Cuba and the West Coast.

Cuba Resource Center

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Publishes a variety of pamphlets and brochures on aspects of Cuban life, including *Cuba Times*.

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