

Dragon Dance Theatre

The 10th Pan-American Puppetry Arts Institute
July 15-August 15 2005

Chapter 6: The fourth and last performance,
Frida and Diego, Two Weddings and an Assassination.

Performed in Queretaro, Queretaro, Mexico
in the Parque del Jardin Guerrero
August 14, 2005 beginning at 8:30 PM.

Finally there was the performance in Queretaro, the capital city. It was three pm, before we were all, ready and on the bus, in front of the Hotel Rio, in Tesquisquiapan. The trip was longer than we thought. We could see the big rain clouds hanging over the city. Sunday afternoon and there was too much traffic. Raul got our bus as close as he could but the streets near the park, where we were to perform, were too narrow for the bus. We arrived, or at any rate we parked, just off the Zocalo; in a downpour.

The show was to be at eight. We had a real, "responsible", Louis Zuñiga, he was a city employee, he had come to the show in Tequis the previous night, so he would know what we needed to produce the show in Queretaro, and he arranged for the city hall to be opened, so we had changing rooms and bathrooms. Parque Guerrero, is the same place we played, the Twin Towers show, in 2001. Nice space, protected but in the city center. The gutters were filling with rain water we had to jump over puddles.

Everyone went their own way. Katah and I met with Junipero at the Archangel restaurant and talked about what we could do together, next. Junipero was quite emotional about the show at Tilaco and had obviously been moved by the flight of the hot air balloon. He wanted to propose a tour of the indigenous Otomi towns, starting in Jalpan, then to, Peña Miller, San Joaquin, Toleman and Amealco. We talked about the possibility of doing such a tour in October of 2006.

Roberto appeared crossing the plaza, I went out to talk to him. He was going to a meeting near by but he would come for the show. It rained right up till 7 pm. Then the whole company walked the six blocks, back and forth carrying the puppets and the masks through the city streets. Devils and large heads of

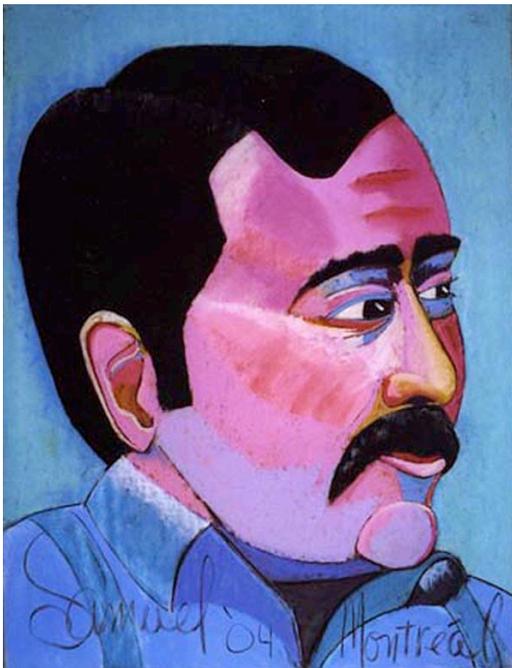
Diego and Frida and Trotsky, women's bodies and heaps of cloth, all askance and cockeyed, it was a droll procession. We used the same performance plan as at Tequis, putting all the scenes behind a low wall and bringing them out one at a time.

Carlos's cousin had come along for the trip and now Carlos assigned him to watch all of our personal stuff, he stood back stage and we all hung our bags and cloths and jackets on him.

Everyone was in good humor. The sound and light people arrived and again they had no lights. Louis and Junipero tried to fix it, going over to the Conaculta offices (the local art council) where Junipero had the right to borrow a light system, but there was no one there and the guard would not let them in. There was less interference than in Tequis. No crowds, no outrageous noise. The plaza was not dark, it was just deeply shadowed and badly lighted.

I remembered the time we invited François Bruneau to direct, *Antoine Tassé*, in Vermont. We did publicity, but it rained all the day of the show and finally there were only 8 people at the outdoor performance. François was discouraged, understandably.

Roberto had not done any of the usual publicity, we saw no posters, and we did no interviews, we assumed there was no radio or tv publicity. Roberto said, *oh* a public will gather once you start setting up, and so they did. Not a big public like we had had here in 2001, for the twin towers show, but at least a hundred people.



Roberto Villaseñor,
Pastel painting by Sam Kerson, 2004

The show started at 8 pm on Sunday night during a lull in the rain. The sound truck was parked on one side of the stage. Sylvia with the cd player hooked to the cities' amplifier controlled the sound. The Russian Army Chorus sang the Volga Boat song in honor of Trotsky. It was not cold. There was no wind.

The performance went well; a bit slow, since we had to strike each scene and then bring in the next one. Everyone knew their parts and everyone was happy to be doing the show, they had plenty of energy for this, the last show, plenty of high spirits and camaraderie.

After an hour our audience began to thin. During the last two scenes the rain began again. Slowly, lightly, like a warning. Now as we came to the second wedding, in a light rain at nine thirty on Sunday night, we could see what Roberto had done. We still had a small enthusiastic audience, and as we came out for our bows and faced them directly we realized that it was all theatre people. They were very enthusiastic about the show and cheered the scenes as we came around the bend and headed into the home stretch. They shouted with enthusiasm as the rain came down, they joined the actors and danced to celebrate Diego and Frida's wedding and they jumped and clapped and howled as we came out for our bows. Roberto had brought people from his two theatre companies and from the national ballet and a few other notorious theatre personalities. Victor Osorio, actors from Eco Rodante, Ricardo and his wife Barbara and her mother, Roman and his wife and daughter. Victoria the producer from Tequis was in the audience. Some people who had worked on our last show in Queretaro, the horse trainer for example. Our audience was made up entirely of Actors, dancers, puppeteers and directors.

When the rain came in buckets the audience and the actors grabbed arm loads of masks and puppets, Louis Zuñiga ran ahead and the security people from city hall swung wide the great doors and we all, audience and actors, ran into the domed atrium. The thunder clapped and the rain splashed in the plaza. We stood in the shelter of the entryway, surrounded by our puppets and masks, Diego and Frida and Trotsky and the Stalinists ringed by the Devils and the Skeletons and Diego's Women. I talked with Victor Osorio Torres, known for doing Camus', Caligula, in '79, and, Junipero tells me, currently working as a titerritero doing kids shows all over the Republic. Victor suggested that B. Travens' stories would work well in the format we are using? I enjoyed talking with him, he was at least my age, and very bright eyed and warm.

The sound truck backed right to the great doors and we loaded the show into the dry cube and the truck took all the material back to where the bus was parked. We re-packed onto the bus and the company got ready to return to Tequis for the night and then back to Jalpan de Serra in the morning. It was the last show and there was a lot of departing, and final words, and hugging and reorganizing. Some of us hanging out the windows of the bus some of us standing on the sidewalk, in the yellow of the street lights, looking up. Norman and Oscar would stay in Queretaro. Tomas and Vicente returned with us but we did not see them again. Roberto was quite pleased with the entire project and smiled and waved as we pulled away.

It was well after twelve when we got back to our room at Las Cavas.

*Written by Sam Kerson
Edited by Katah
September 12, 2005*