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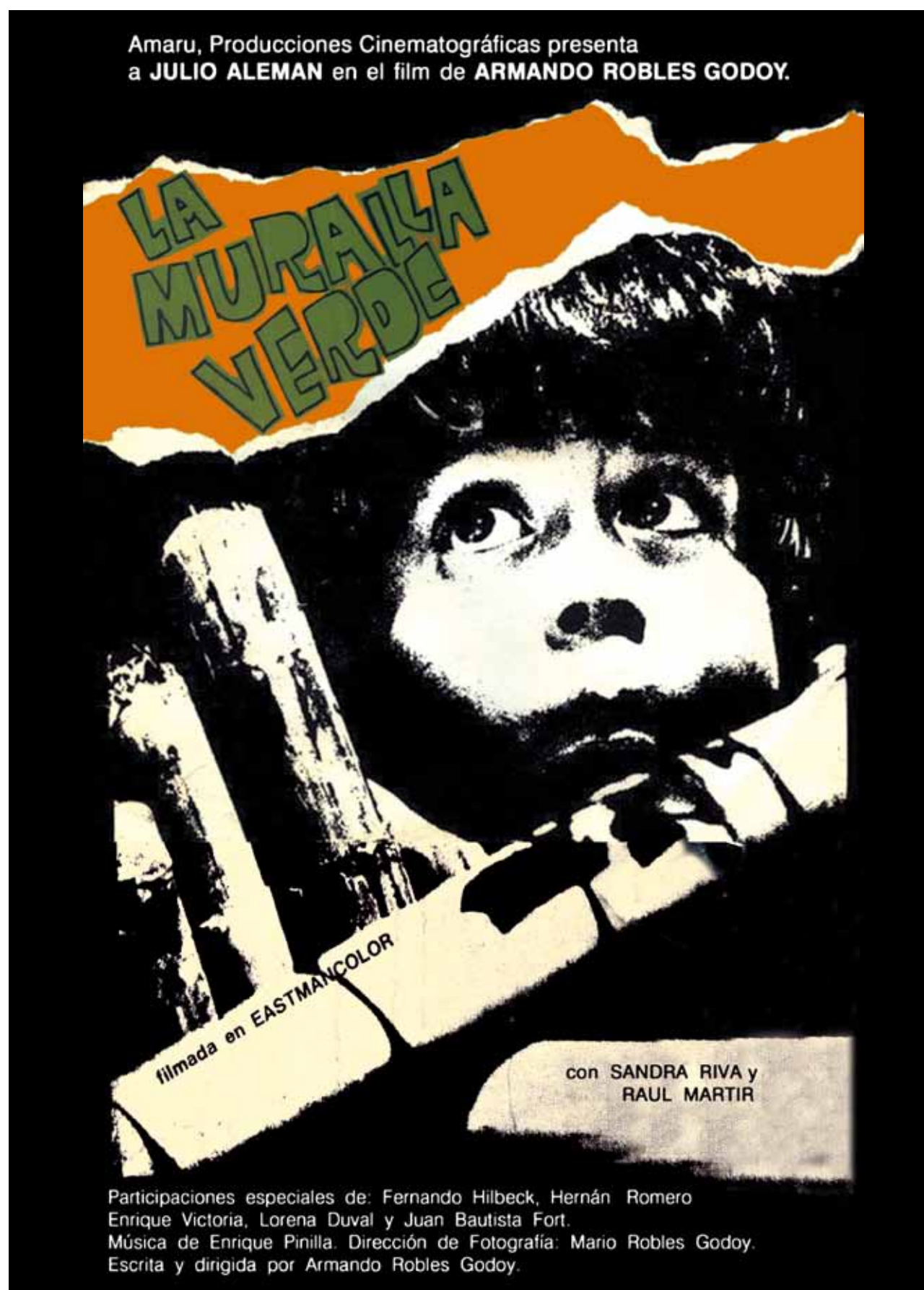


## PERUVIAN MAIL

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La Muralla Verde [The Green Wall], 1970.

THE FILMS OF ARMANDO ROBLES GODOY/ A PANORAMA OF PERUVIAN CINEMA/  
CÉSAR CALVO: PASSION AND THE WRITTEN WORD / CHICHA, A HERITAGE BEVERAGE/  
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# HOMAGE THE IMPOSSIBLE FILMS OF ARMANDO ROBLES GODOY

Andrés Mego\*

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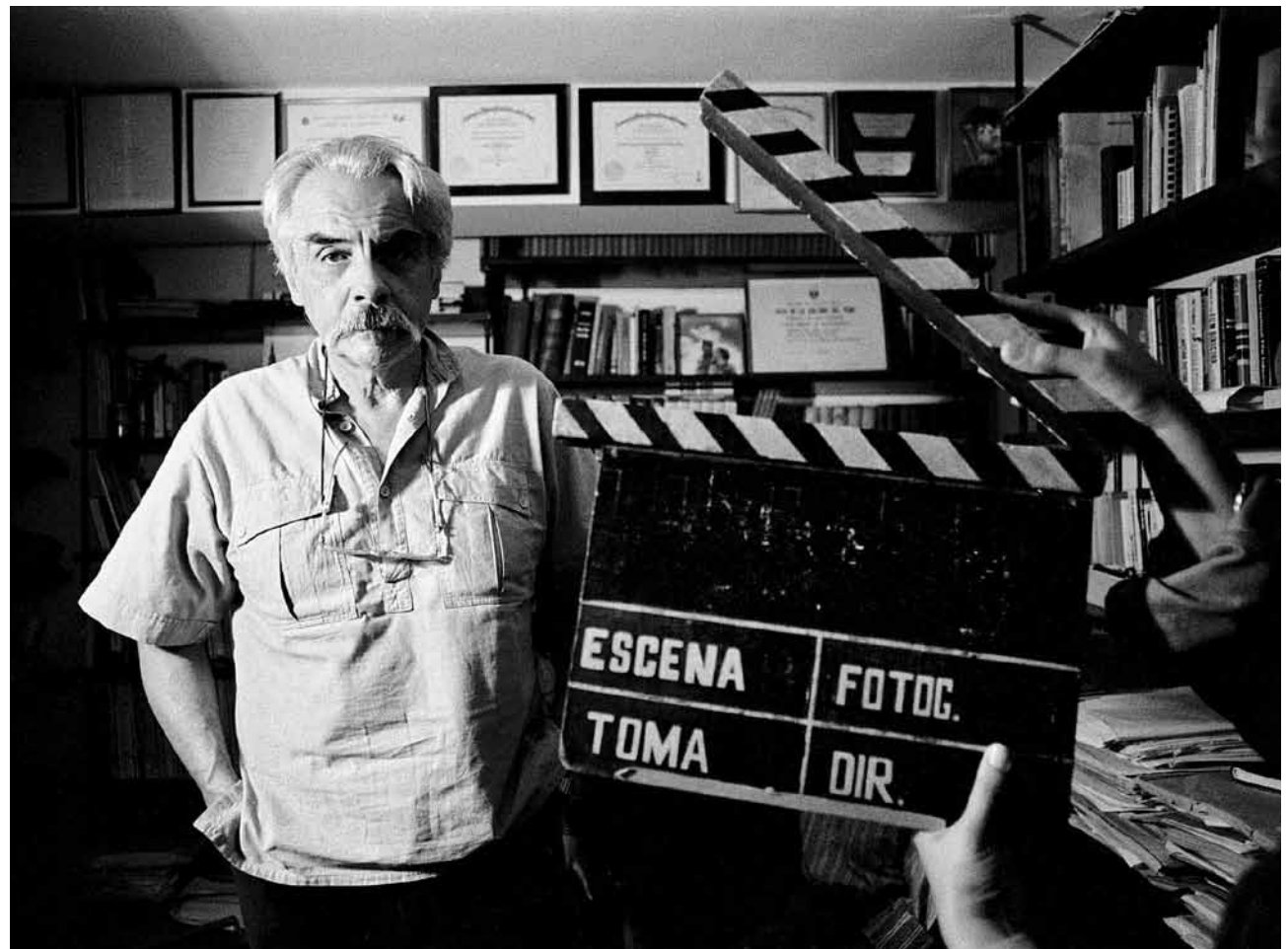
The case of Armando Robles Godoy is an exceptional one in the agitated panorama of Peruvian filmmaking. Cultural promoter, writer, and adventurer Robles Godoy films exclusively to explore his own artistic preoccupations.

Few on the Peruvian cultural scene are familiar with the films of our most legendary director: Armando Robles Godoy, who is to this day consulted when some new cultural policy is unveiled, or when changes to laws supporting the seventh art are proposed—laws which were applied in the past due in large part to Robles' initiative. Many of the filmmakers currently involved in the art were students of Robles Godoy in one or another of the many workshops he taught. It was in these workshops that they learned to work with the “mysterious language,” Robles' term for cinematic expression. Unfortunately, until fairly recently it was virtually impossible to see his films, with sporadic screenings confined to specialty theaters and the like.

At eighty-seven years of age, having given up on undertaking another cinematographic project, Robles Godoy continues to work on his first artistic discipline: literature, which he had never left aside, and from which his best films have been created. “I have an amount of material that even Balzac would be ashamed of,” he said on one occasion. While young critics reclaim his films (or, rather, cinematic criticism is reclaimed) and proclaim *La muralla verde* [The Green Wall] to be the greatest film in the history of Peruvian filmmaking, Robles Godoy can do no more than laugh and reply, “But Peruvian filmmaking means nothing!” Within this insignificance, the films of Robles Godoy are the closest Peruvian cinema has come to “cinema d'auteur,” films that pursue no goal beyond that of expressing the artistic concerns of their director, regardless of what anyone else thinks.

## The writer who learned to make films

Robles Godoy repeats, at times, To remember is to discover what really happened.” During his childhood, which he spent in New York, he discovered cinema at his father—the composer Daniel Alomía Robles'—side, the latter often translating the dialogue for him. Years later, tired of the authoritarianism and



Armando Robles Godoy (New York, 1923 - Lima, 2010).

mediocrity emanating from the Odría dictatorship's home base in Lima, Robles Godoy commenced an adventurous chapter of his life as a settler in the Amazon jungle along the Huallaga River. According to the director himself, both events were experiences which finally acquired real meaning when transformed into literary, and later, cinematographic inspiration; but he had no way to know this at the time.

Robles Godoy is indeed the Peruvian filmmaker who has won the most literary awards, and vice-versa. During the eight years he spent in the Amazon with his wife and her brother's family, he divided his time between toiling away at agricultural tasks on his plot of farmland and writing. He wrote the short story and novel that would later become his best films, *En la selva no hay estrellas* [There are No Stars in the Jungle] and *La muralla verde*, respectively. He also sent articles to be published in *La Prensa* newspaper, and texts that returned instantly

and triumphantly as the winners of literary awards. He started to make a name for himself as a writer, and his estrangement from Lima became an obstacle. A few years later, he was appointed director of the entertainment section of *La Prensa*, and reserved all film reviews for himself. At that time, in the early 1960's, there was no Peruvian cinema as such. The government had created the Filmadora Peruana S. A. corporation, which in practice only produced light melodramas in cooperation with Mexican filmmakers, backed up by the *star system* in both countries. In this context, a friend from abroad asked Robles Godoy to spearhead the filming of a documentary on labor in Peru. Despite his purely theoretical knowledge of filmmaking, Robles Godoy left *La Prensa* to embark on this new adventure. Not a single surviving copy of *Ganarás el pan* [You shall earn your bread] (1964), has been found, but it is known that it had a certain amount of success at the box office and that the thread of

the main plot was the journey of a young upper class man who, in order to receive an inheritance, had to spend two years travelling the width and breadth of Peru, learning how Peruvians earned a living. Robles Godoy does not seem too worried about the loss of the film, but it must have been a magnificent learning experience, in which he was even able to deepen his understanding during post-production in Buenos Aires.

## The Amazon and the Mysterious Language

Having learned technical skills obtained in shooting *Ganarás el pan*. Robles Godoy began to develop his own manner of self expression using cinematographic language. He soon discovered that the written word—particularly a text with a high esthetic value—was an obstacle or a limiting factor compared to the immeasurable expressive power of film. The language of filmmaking, according to Robles Godoy, is more akin to music than to literature. Rather,

Photo: Archive, *Caretas* Magazine.



Robles feels that film is the articulation of elements, the decodification of which does not correspond to previously established meanings, as happens in verbal language. The reading of a film is not conclusive, but rather highly subjective, and escapes even the intentions of its authors. This fascination with this “mystery” is present throughout his work, which is why his critics consider him to be “modern,” pointing to ambitions similar to those that pursued Antonioni or Resnais in European film, and also the reason for which audiences never connected with his films, finding them too distant from Hollywood’s narrative style.

Robles’ next film, *En la selva no hay estrellas* (1966), was lost for thirty-nine years. Luckily, after years of fruitless searching, Robles Godoy finally located a copy of the film in 2005 in Moscow, where it had been shown on television at some point. It was then brought back for a brief screening at the Cinematógrafo de Barranco theater.

The idea behind *En la selva no hay estrellas* was based on a rumor that its director heard during his stay in the Amazon. A man goes deep into the jungle in search of an old lady who has spent years hoarding the gold that the members of an indigenous community she befriended extracts from the river. Once he has stolen the gold, and stolen his ingenious guide, the man tries to return home, at which point the fragments of his past are interspersed. We see him as a hit man in the Andes, and a manipulative lover in Lima. His goal is to get rich at any cost and move up in society, an ambition that led to this journey.

The sound treatment in this film is also based on real-life experience. The director was once lost in the jungle, and “I did the only thing I could do: I walked further in search of running water; as little as there might be, it would have to take me to the river, which, as I knew, couldn’t be too far away. I walked for hours, sharpening my ears as I had never done before. And, as is natural, the jungle filled with sounds in a way that I had never experienced. The aural dimension was as solid as the trees around me, as rich and varied as the visible realm.” This sensation is brought to life on film through the use of a soundtrack that haunts the protagonist in his travels.

#### A divided nation

*La muralla verde* is now considered to be his best executed work. Though at the time it was poorly received by local critics; it enjoyed success



On location for the filming of *En la selva no hay estrellas* (1967), which won second prize at the Vth Moscow film festival.

Photo: Archive Conacine.



*La muralla verde* (1970).

Photo: Archive, Carretas Magazine.

at international film festivals as no Peruvian film ever had before. *La muralla verde* furthered its director’s ambitions to create a film unconventional in form, and at the same time transmitted a personal experience, since it was inspired by his years as a settler in the Amazon. Though a fragmented narrative, with constant flashbacks, Mario, his wife, and son take advantage of a government program promoting settlement in the Amazon. Mario is forced to struggle against layer upon layer of bureaucracy in order to be granted a plot of virgin land; but is fed up with his grey life in the capital and tries to start anew in an opposite word, in a space in which he can feel rooted in nature through his work. The central theme of the work is this effort, man’s struggle to tame nature.

*La muralla verde* is marked by opposing pools which reveal themselves in detailed plans and evocative editing. We go from repression to liberation, from darkness to light, and from life to sudden death. In a greater sense, *La muralla verde*

also presents Peru as a nation split in two, between two irreconcilable geographic spaces.

Though criticized as excessively stylized, *La muralla verde* is one of the most original works in Peruvian cinema and the last its director based mainly on personal experience.

#### Last Words

Robles then made *Espejismo* [Mirage] (1973), the director’s favorite film, and that which enjoyed the largest production budget. Even more unconventional than *La muralla verde*, *Espejismo* presents, jumping back and forth in time and in parallel with other characters, the story of a child born into a landowning family in Ica, the victim of his family’s feudal past. Years earlier, the vineyard’s owner discovered his wife was having an affair with the foreman, and punishes the latter by abandoning him in the middle of the desert, with no way for him to get his bearings. The boy slowly understands his parentage and destiny through this story. The film is one with a demanding narrative, full

of visual metaphors, and made with a masterful handling of the resources of expression native to cinema.

From this moment on, the difficulty in finding financing for new films, particularly those without commercial possibilities, forced Robles Godoy to take a long break from filmmaking. It took until 1987 for him to be able to undertake another full-length film, filmed on 16 millimeter film, as the result of a workshop he taught at the University of Lima. *Sonata soledad* [Soledad Sonata] is more hermetic than his previous films (or more open, if you will, since its meaning is less precise than his earlier works), made up of three parts, or movements, which propose a specific interaction with the music. Though the first of the fragments has an underlying personal element, and Robles Godoy himself appears on screen, as a whole it projects itself as a calculated exercise in experimentation, distant, and even self-indulgent.

Several years later, Robles directed the first full-length Peruvian film shot on digital video: *Imposible amor* [Impossible Love] (2000) which is also his last work. He again proposes parallel stories based on the impossibility of loving. Unfortunately, the film was screened for a very short time, and was harshly criticized as being poor in terms of technical quality.

That his last films have been met with incomprehension is without importance, and is even to be expected, given that Robles Godoy is a director who has become more irreverent with each passing year. He has always resisted creating fleeting, easily digested art, art created only to distract the public, and he has achieved this goal. Robles Godoy was not content only to obey his own artistic authenticity, but instead struggled to achieve the cultural development of Peru.

Armando Robles Godoy passed away on August 10th, 2010. His innovative and non-conformist spirit remains with us in his films, writings, and teachings, a legacy for generations to come. It is our wish to honor his memory through this note, and to reaffirm that his oeuvre will live on. ●

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# AN OVERVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY PERUVIAN CINEMA

Ricardo Bedoya\*

Until recently, it would have been a difficult task to indeed come up with an overview of Peruvian cinema, due to the difficulties involved in the production and exhibition of most of the movies produced in the country. This task is now by a different factor entirely hampered: the diversity of film production.

In the last two years, Peruvian films have been present at some of the most important international film festivals: *La teta asustada* ["The Milk of Sorrow"], by Claudia Llosa, won the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 2009, in addition to being nominated for Best Foreign Film in the Hollywood Academy's Oscar ceremony; that same year, *Paraíso* [released worldwide as "*Paraíso*", paradise in Spanish], participated in the Horizons category of the Venice Film Festival, and, in 2010, *Octubre* [released as "*October*", *Miracles Come True in October*], by Daniel and Diego Vega, won the Jury's Choice Award for the "Un Certain Regard" category at the Cannes Film Festival. In turn, *Contracorriente* [Undertow], by Javier Fuentes, was shown at a number of film festivals around the world prior to its commercial release in Peru, and won a plethora of prizes and mentions. Except in the case of Claudia Llosa, each of these films were the first feature-length film directed by their respective filmmakers, which is indicative of the emergence of a generation of promising filmmakers who are aware of the importance of being connected to international production and distribution circuits in cinema today. These prizes, however, cannot lead us to believe that Peru is currently living a boom in filmmaking. There is no film industry in Peru to speak of, and behind each film made in the country, there is a specific story, and each also possesses its own unique production method.

## A Tentative typology

The current panorama is multiple in scope and made up of titles varying widely in terms of production level, narrative forms, expressive ambitions, and distribution methods used to reach their audiences. There are also abysmal differences in terms of quality. The existence of up to three types of feature-length films could be argued.

The first type is made up of films whose commercial debut takes place at multiplex theater chains in Lima and a few other cities around the country. These films are projected on film even when they were recorded digitally, which allows their screening at these theaters. This is the case of *Madeinusa* and *La teta asustada*, by Claudia Llosa; *Un cuerpo desnudo* [A Naked Body], by Francisco Lombardi; both installments of *Mañana te cuento* [Released worldwide as "*Mañana te cuento*"], by Eduardo Mendoza; *El delfín* [The Dolphin], an animated film by Eduardo Schuldt; *Días de Santiago* [Days of Santiago] and *Dioses* [Released worldwide as "*Dioses*"], by Josué Méndez; *Cu4tro*, by Frank Pérez Garland, Sergio Barrio, Christian Buckley and Bruno Ascenzo; *El premio* [The Prize], by Alberto Durant; *Tarata*, by Fabrizio Aguilar; *Illary*, by Nilo Pereira del Mar; *Paraíso*, by Héctor Gálvez, and a number of other films made over the last few years. Six full-length Peruvian films debuted at multiplex cinemas in 2009.



Claudia Llosa receiving the Golden Bear, the highest award offered at the Berlin International Film Festival (2009).

The second type of full-length films can be characterized as "alternative" films, shot digitally, integrating elements of "cinema d'auteur", and are made by young urban filmmakers from Lima or regional capitals, and are shown only in cultural spaces, which is the case for films such as *Los actores* [The Actors], by Omar Forero, or *Detrás del mar* [Behind the Ocean] by Raúl del Busto.

The third type, which includes most of the films made in Peru, is made up of feature-length films shot digitally throughout the country, but especially in the Andes Mountains, and has its own systems of distribution and exhibition, largely in geographical areas close to where the films were made. The average level of polish achieved by these regional films has increased greatly when compared to the previous decade.

This typology is, of course, tentative, and perhaps even precarious, as there are a number of exceptions. There are digitally recorded films—few, truth be

told—which are shown in commercial theaters with multimedia projectors, and may have been made in Lima or the provinces (*Flor de retama*, *Juanito el huerfanito*, *Vedettes al desnudo* and a few others).

It should not be believed that there is homogeneity within the film types. Dividing these films into groups does not make them level with one another, nor does it make them similar in nature. *La teta asustada*, for example, has characteristics quite different from—if not, in fact, opposed to—those of *Illary*, by Nilo Pereira del Mar, despite the fact that both were shown at multiplex theaters. Claudia Llosa's film was a Spanish-Peruvian co-production, with a budget well over one million dollars and received the support of international funding and benefited from Spanish film promotion laws, as well as a prize from the Consejo Nacional de Cinematografía (Conacine). *Illary*, in contrast, was produced by its own director, filmed on a very low budget, and won

a Conacine prize for post-production. Results for the two films at the box office were also quite contrasting: *La teta asustada* attracted close to 250 thousand viewers, while *Illary* was only shown at major theaters for a week.

This heterogeneity is also found between feature length films made by young filmmakers who have graduated from university Communications departments and similar institutes. The link between these films is that they were made without the resources contributed by international production funding, and were not awarded prizes by del Conacine, the official body charged with administering Peruvian film legislation. This is the case of films such as *1, 2 y 3*, by Eduardo Quispe Alarcón; *Detrás del mar*, by Raúl del Busto Maldonado; *Los actores*, by Trujillo-based Omar Forero; *Encierro*, by Fernando Montenegro and *Alienados* and *Kasa Okupada*, by Rafael Arévalo. These films are exercises in style, betting on narrative forms and treatment outside the canon of traditional narrative, nurtured by the influence of classic and contemporary directors, ranging from Robert Bresson to Aki Kaurismäki, but also by the new films coming from the La Plata Region [Argentina and Uruguay], including *Pizza, birra y faso* and *25 Watts*, in addition to the intense observation of the films of Lucrecia Martel and Lisandro Alonso. Films with young characters who, depending on the film, are characterized by de-dramatization, contemplation, the observation of minimal behaviors, and the recording of spontaneous dialogue or allusion to science fiction, as exemplified by the films of Rafael Arévalo. These films create their own exhibition circuit in cultural center auditoriums and universities.

An intense and fruitful diversity characterizes the domain of regional filmmaking. In the past decade, over a hundred feature length films were made in Ayacucho, Puno, Cajamarca, Junín, Loreto, La Libertad, and a number of other regions. This phenomenon is unparalleled in the history of Peruvian cinema. The only filmmaking activity to take place outside of Lima was in the 1930's, in which Antonio Wong Rengifo made a number of films in the city of Iquitos, and in the mid-1950's, in which a number of documentary films were made by what has become as the Cuzco school of filmmaking, in the city of the same name.

Regional films are recorded digitally and have no ambition to be screened at multiplex cinemas. They are shown in their regions of origin and in nearby localities, in which their producers rent old, abandoned movie theaters, parish multipurpose rooms, municipal venues, or event halls in which they then install a multimedia projector and invite the local population. These films are also distributed through an informal market of "pirated" copies, or shown on inter-provincial bus journeys. This type of production brings to mind the filmmaking

## COOPERATION BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND CONACINE

Through the founding of the National Council for Cinematography (Conacine). The contribution of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the comprehensive development of Peruvian cinema has taken on a significant level of importance. Ibermedia supports audio-visual production, promotes the integration of Ibero-American audio-visual companies into supranational networks, increases the distribution and promotion of Ibero-American films, and fosters the education and exchange of audio-visual industry experts. Every single one of these benefits is the direct consequence of the annual contribution the Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes to the Ibermedia Fund. The links between Conacine and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs go yet further still: in 2006, an inter-institutional cooperation agreement to promote Peruvian cinema abroad. The agreement establishes that—in accordance with the Overseas Cultural Policy—the Ministry of Foreign Affairs promotes the participation of domestic films and videos in international festivals, as well as their screening abroad. Likewise, through diplomatic and consular missions abroad, it organizes showings and screenings of fictional and documentary films and videos about Peru. Further, it promotes the creation of videos and films by foreign producers on subjects and scenarios relating to Peru.

Rosa María Oliart  
President of CONACINE



experience in countries such as Nigeria, Ghana and Pakistan.

These regional films belong to a number of genres, such as melodrama, with a noted influence from films made in Bombay, or complaints regarding social and environmental issues, but the quotient of horror films is prolific, and has been the most successful or popular genre of regional filmmaking. Horrific tales from oral Quechua storytelling traditions and macabre legends from certain areas of the Andes are recreated in these films. *Jarjacha, el demonio del incesto* [Jarjacha, the Demon of Incest] (2002), directed by Ayacucho resident Mélington Eusebio; *Incesto en los Andes: la maldición de los jarjachas* [Incest in the Andes: The Curse of the Jarjachas] (2002) and *La maldición de los jarjachas 2* [The Curse of the Jarachas 2] (2003), by Palito Ortega Matute, in addition to many other films, illustrate the Andean belief in a monstrous being, a fusion of man and llama, caused by the committing of incest. In turn, *El Misterio del Kharisiri* [The Mystery of the Kharisiri] (2003), by Puna based filmmaker Henry Vallejo, recreates regional legends of characters who harass their victims and then ritually sacrifice them.

Legendary characters such as the Pishtaco [A Caucasian man who roams the Andes looking for indigenous people to kill, and then boils them down to extract their fat for sale on the commercial market] and the Jarjacha [see above] revive ancestral fears and expose latent violence. Threatening, and within view of Andean trails, these films express traditional worldviews which have been altered as a consequence of dynamics driven by the violence of the recent past, with isolated rural areas of the Andes mountains, and by a fast-paced modernity which encompasses the influx of the informal economy.

Regional films tend to create bridges between local audiences, the canon of ancestral tales, and new technologies. Despite the imperfection of technical polishing in these films, or perhaps because of this very factor, and due to the appropriation of narrative structures from non-local sources, these films aim towards difference and roughness, leaving behind the requirements and quality standards demanded by international cooperation funds and multiplex theaters.

The surge in a current of documentary cinema must also be noted, and is progressively consolidated into short, medium, and feature-length films, with titles such as *La espera de Ryowa*, [Ryowa's Wait] by Raúl del Busto and Cyntia Inamine; *De ollas y sueños* [Of Pots and Dreams], by Ernesto Cabellos; *La travesía de Chumpi*, by Fernando Valdivia; *Requecho*, by Humberto Saco; *Lucanamarca*, by Carlos Cárdenas and Héctor Gálvez; *Away, Ausencias y Conversaciones II*, by Marianela Vega. The experiences of the Independent Peruvian Documentary Caravan (Docu Perú), headed by José Balado, which travels throughout the country giving workshops on documentary filmmaking and offering production services for films made by workshop attendees, must be taken into account. Of these films, only *De ollas y sueños* has been shown on the commercial circuit.

#### Looking towards the future

As has been seen, this is a panorama of films directed by young filmmakers. Their activities owe much to their own persistence and practice of techniques and



Francisco Lombardi (Tacna, 1949).



Josué Méndez (Lima, 1976).

resources which are quickly changing. As such, Peruvian cinema requires continuity. The small size of the film marketplace perhaps rules out a feature-length film industry, as it is unable to guarantee a return on a large investment, but does require continuous, varied, and multiple activities, capable of stimulating the exercises of different, and even conflicting, styles, spaces for traditional and brand new elements in long films, but also in the field of shorter films.

Since 1994, Law number 26370 has been in effect, in order to stimulate film production through a system of cash prizes,

for which the best feature-length film and short film projects are eligible. This law, however, has not been applied as foreseen due to a lack of economic resources. Full compliance with this legal tool would allow Conacine to conduct the annual competitions stipulated in the law, with funding granted to six feature length films and forty-eight shorter films each year. But even this would be insufficient. Incentivizing education is a task to be carried out in parallel to the above. For example, providing training in production methods. The recent international success of Peruvian films is not due only

to their intrinsic qualities. It has been the result, rather, of the application of "visibility" strategies at international film festivals and screenings. The films having found success in these forums arrived aligned to the zeitgeist, trying to explore methods of representation which characterize the face of current cinema. That is, their directors are harmonized to the "scriptures" of current films, but also with new forms of image distribution. Education which would allow the formation of technical capacity (screenwriters, photographers, editors, sound technicians, lighting technicians, and other technical skills) is also needed, since filmmaking is a collective art. This is even more necessary since the technologies being used are replaced at high speed. High definition digital cameras are perfected on an ongoing basis, and require specialists who are able to operate them and take full advantage of their capabilities. But not only the tools of production are undergoing rapid change. Methods of mass distribution of images and sounds are also changing. Films are no longer confined to the big screens of movie theaters. There are films in different formats, mediums, and durations, designed for consumption on a number of different screens, ranging from cellular phones to the iPod. This entails the creation of new viewers and the expansion of auditoriums. The fields of feature-length and short films are an open horizon for Peruvian cinema.

Short films are a central aspect of any film support policy. The promotion of short films is always fruitful, as this is a training ground for filmmakers. Though Peru's film promotion policy specifies financial support for forty-eight notable short films per year, this stipulation has not been complied with. Stable channels of distribution are required for short films, for which there is no guaranteed market, since they are not the product of corporate efforts. Short films are the result of academic activities or the desire to approach the profession of filmmaking. The majority of short films are made by students at universities and institutes in Lima and around the country. The value created by the production of a short film is intangible because they are the proceeds of a formative process, regardless of the subject matter chosen by the director: fiction, documentary, or animation. The task at hand is to create the conditions needed to distribute short films, above all to ensure the ability of their directors to create feature length films. ●

\*Mr. Bedoya is considered to be one of the most influential Peruvian film critics. He hosts and directs the *El placer de los ojos* [Pleasure of the Eyes] program, on TVPerú. He is also the film critic for the «Lucas» section of *El Comercio*, a leading daily newspaper. He has published the following books: *100 años de cine en el Perú. Una historia crítica* [100 Years of Cinema in Peru. A Critical History] (Lima, Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana and Universidad de Lima, 1992 and 1995); *Entre fauces y colmillos* [Between Jaws and Fangs] (Huesca Festival de Huesca, España, 1998); *Ojos bien abiertos, el lenguaje de las imágenes en movimiento* [Eyes Wide Open, the Language of Moving Images] (in collaboration with Isaac León Frías, Lima, Universidad de Lima, 2003); *Breve encuentro* [Brief Encounter] (Huesca, Festival de Huesca, España, 2005); *El cine silente en el Perú* [Silent Movies in Peru] (Lima, Universidad de Lima, 2009), *El cine sonoro en el Perú* [Talkies in Peru] (Lima, Universidad de Lima, 2009). He is also a professor at the Universidad de Lima.

Photo: Archive, Caretas Magazine.

Photo: Archive, Caretas Magazine.



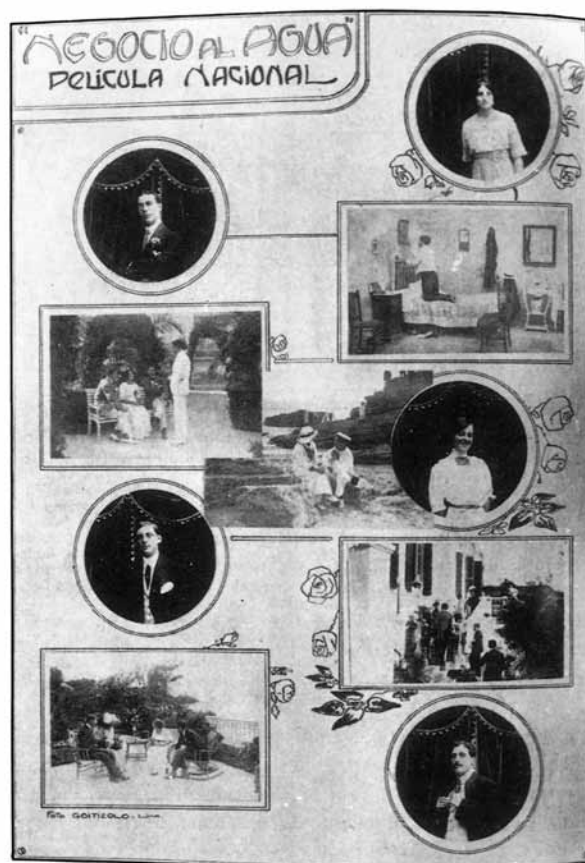
# CINE PERUANO



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## A TIMELINE OF PERUVIAN CINEMA

Claudio

- 1897 The arrival of the Vitascope, patented by Thomas Alva Edison in 1896, allows the first film screening in Peru, at the Jardín Estrasburgo (Plaza mayor de Lima).
- 1899 Projection of the first moving images recorded in Peru. These images are the Cathedral of Lima, the road to La Oroya, and Chanchamayo.
- 1909 The Cinema Teatro, the first public space specifically designed for the screening of films, is opened in Downtown Lima.
- 1913 The debut of the first two fictional Peruvian films: *Negocio al agua* [Business in the Water] and *Del manicomio al matrimonio* [From the Madhouse to Marriage].
- 1926 The first case of censorship in Peruvian cinema takes place in the editing of *Páginas heroicas* [Heroic Pages], a nationalist work imbued with a strong anti-Chilean sensibility.
- 1929 *La Perricholi* becomes the first Peruvian film shown abroad, and is screened at the Exposición Iberoamericana in Seville.
- 1934 Seven years after their implementation in the United States, talking films reach the Peruvian production circuit. The documentary *Inca Cuzco* and fiction film *Resaca* [Hangover] are the pioneering films of this new era.
- 1937 Amauta Films, the most daring attempt to date to create a Peruvian film industry, commences operations. This company found rousing success with such films as *La bailarina loca* [The Crazy Dancer] (1937), *Gallo de mi galpón* [Rooster from my Henhouse] (1938) and *Palomillas del Rímac* [Children of the Rimac River] (1938).
- 1940 *Barco sin rumbo* [A Directionless Boat], the last film to be created by Amauta Films arrives in cinema. From this point on, fewer feature-length films are produced in Peru, and appear only sporadically.
- 1955 Cine Club Cuzco commences operations, around which a group of local documentary filmmakers begins to form. This group is later called the "Cuzco School" by French historian Georges Sadoul. The short films of Manuel Chambi are recognized at a number of international festivals for their faithful representation of the world of the Andes.
- 1961 *Kukuli*, the first Peruvian feature-length fiction film in Quechua, is filmed. For this reason alone, in addition to the esthetics of its color images, the film is considered a milestone in Peruvian cinema. *Kukuli* was created through the collaboration of no less than three directors: Eulogio Nishiyama, Luis Figueroa and César Villanueva, all members of the Cuzco School.
- 1965 *Hablemos de Cine* [Let's Talk About Film], magazine, in which future filmmakers such as Francisco J. Lombardi, Augusto Tamayo and José Carlos Huayhuaca, commences publication.
- 1965 The debut of *Ganarás el pan*, the first film by Armando Robles Godoy, the first Peruvian director who conceives of his work as an artistic project. His next film, *En la selva no hay estrellas* (1966), confirms his status as Peru's first "cinema d'auteur" filmmaker.
- 1970 Armando Robles Godoy completes *La muralla verde*, his most ambitious work to date, considered by some critics to be the greatest Peruvian film of all time.
- 1972 The military junta headed by Juan Velasco Alvarado passes the Law For The Creation of the Peruvian Cinematographic Industry law, better known as



# DO: AYER Y HOY



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## PERUVIAN CINEMA 1897-2010

Cordero\*

Law Number 19327. This regulation made possible, until 1992, the sustained production of sixty feature-length films and one-thousand two hundred short films.

- 1977 The first films by directors Francisco J. Lombardi and Federico García appear, *Muerte al amanecer* and *Kuntur Wachana*, respectively. Both films are inspired by real life, but then take different paths: Lombardi seeks to identify with an urban public, while García embraces the restrictive discourse of the indigenous movement.
- 1978 The commercial success of *Cuentos inmorales* [Immoral Tales] creates a wave of episodic films. Audiences tire of this format after *Aventuras prohibidas* [Forbidden Adventures] (1980) and *Una raya más al tigre* [One More Stripe on the Tiger] (1981).
- 1982 The Chaski cultural and filmmaking group releases the documentary “*Miss Universo en el Perú*” (1982). This film marks the debut of a group that will have a noted influence its era, with films such as *Gregorio* (1984) and *Juliana* (1989), both of which were widely seen by filmgoing audiences.
- 1988 *La boca del lobo* [The Mouth of the Wolf], by Francisco J. Lombardi, becomes one of the first films to present the horrors of the guerilla war between the Peruvian Armed Forces and the Shining Path.
- 1992 The Alberto Fujimori government annuls Law 19327 as part of its economic policy, entirely abandoning the incipient Peruvian film industry. A new statute for filmmaking, Law 26370, is not passed until 1994.
- 1996 The new State policy for promoting film production enters into force. The newly created Consejo Nacional de Cinematografía (Conacine) is responsible for providing a foundation for the development of Peruvian cinema.
- 2004 *Días de Santiago*, by Josué Méndez, becomes the most awarded se opera prima in the history of Peruvian cinema. Critics begin referring to a “New Peruvian Cinema” which includes, in addition to Mendez, Claudia Llosa (*Madeinusa*, 2006), Gianfranco Quattrini (*Chicha tu madre*, 2006), Fabrizio Aguilar (*Paloma de papel*, 2003) and Raúl del Busto (*Detrás del mar*, 2005).
- 2005 Festival de Cannes. Peru is invited to the «Tous les Cines du Monde» category. The selection presented at Cannes includes *Días de Santiago* (2004), by Josué Méndez; *Bajo la piel* (1998), Francisco J. Lombardi; *El destino no tiene favoritos* (2003), Álvaro Velarde; and *El caudillo pardo* (2004), by Aldo Salvini.
- 2009 *La teta asustada* [The Milk of Sorrow], the second feature-length film created by Claudia Llosa, wins the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival, the highest honor bestowed on a Peruvian film to date.
- 2010 Twelve months after its success in Berlin, *La teta asustada* is nominated for an Oscar for Best Foreign Film, the first Peruvian film so nominated.

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- 1.- Concession Stand, Jardín de Estrasburgo.
- 2.- *Negocio al agua*, produced by the Teatro film company, debut held on April 14th, 1913.
- 3.- The premiere of *La Perricholi*, at the Colón theater. Produced by Empresa Cinematográfica Peruana, based on a story by Carlos Gabriel Saco.
- 4.- Filming of *La bailarina loca*, directed by Ricardo Villarán.
- 5.- Judith Figueroa in *Kukuli* (1961).
- 6.- *Juliana* (1989).
- 7.- Gustavo Bueno in *La boca del lobo* (1988). Peruvian-Spanish co-production. Photo: Filmoteca de Lima (PUCP).
- 8.- *El caudillo pardo*, documentary by Aldo Salvini.
- 9.- *Días de Santiago*, the award-winning opera prima by Josué Méndez.
- 10.- *La teta asustada* (2009), with lead actress Magaly Solier.



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# CHICHA, A TRADITIONAL BEVERAGE

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Chicha is a drink produced by the fermentation of a number of vegetable species, particularly germinated corn. Variations on this beverage are found throughout the Western Hemisphere. It has traditionally played a very important role in interpersonal relationships.

The role of chicha is crucial to life in the Andes. It was the drink made of corn, sacred plant par excellence, which symbolized the State and the wealth of an agricultural society. Corn, prepared in both liquid and solid forms, was the foodstuff which represented civilization, the triumph over starvation, and the overcoming of the ancestral fear of running out of food. Corn had displaced potatoes into a subordinate position, in a manner of speaking. Anyone who ate potatoes was poor, the lack of anything other than tubers to eat was considered symbolic of a lack of refinement. Only those who ate and drank grain were civilized and lived at a different level, as superior beings. It happens that untreated water has always had a bad reputation in the Andes, being associated with illnesses and all kinds of parasites. As such, people in the Andes systematically avoid drinking water. In this way, according to the wise Santiago Antúnez de Mayolo (1981), the Andean settler never drank untreated water, but rather consumed water as a component of prepared foods such as soups, herbal teas, and chicha. Above all, chicha had sanitary properties, it could be drunk without fear of falling ill. According to Antúnez de Mayolo, everyone in the pre-Hispanic world drank chicha on a daily basis.

Chicha also had nutritional properties, given that many food products were dehydrated, a procedure which was indispensable to their conservation. [...] Untreated water is not the best beverage to drink with dry foods, since the latter, in order to release their nutrients, require fermentation, which is favored by the ingestion of chicha.

There are an incredible number of varieties of chicha. Though the most famous variety is prepared through the use of jora corn—which Guaman Poma called *sura asua*—, there were in fact a multitude of different types. There were chichas made of other vegetables, and different ways of preparing corn chicha. Among the former, masato is particularly noteworthy. Masato is produced throughout the Americas, and was the first native beverage encountered by the Spanish, and was described by Christopher Columbus in his travel diary. Likewise, there were chichas made of other cereals, such as *quinoa* and *cañigua*; chicha made from fruits such as molle and carob; chicha made of tubers such as oca and apichu; as well as peanut chicha, which was possibly the second most important beverage on the Peruvian coast and in the Andes.



Mestiza woman drinking chicha (Cuzco, 1931).

Photo: Martin Chamblé

The name *chicha* is originally from the Caribbean, the Quechua word for this corn beverage being *aqa*. When Pizarro conquered ancient Peru, the Spanish had already been in the New World for forty years and had ample experience with the elements of indigenous culture in the Americas. They then adopted the first names they found and used these terms for similar products as they were encountered. Many Caribbean words travelled in this manner, for example *cacique*, became a generic term for all Indian chiefs, despite the fact that this function was referred to as *curaca* in the Andes.

Due to the geographic distribution of chicha use, in addition to its social importance, the Europeans were unable to eradicate chicha. Immediately after the conquest, however, it lost its prestige. The alcoholic beverages instilled with prestige became wine and distilled sugarcane liquor, while chicha was brushed aside and considered an “Indian Beverage”, representative of the culture which had been overthrown and dominated. Further, chicha was objected to, and, a number of times, attempts were made to ban it. In this manner, Viceroy Francisco de Toledo included chicha on his long list of prohibited activities. It happens that the Spanish were trying to battle Andean social customs, and some state employees and intransigent priests had beaten their drums against the Andean custom of drinking chicha at ceremonies, a phenomenon which was accentuated during the “*destruction of idolatries*” phase of colonization.

Though marginalized, chicha survived the colonial era through use by the indigenous population, and suddenly and surprisingly reappeared on the surface during the eighteenth century. This fate was common to cultural objects characteristic of indigenous life, such as clothing, or *queros*, which were portraits of Inca nobility. All of these symbols, despite having been relatively hidden during the sixteenth century, were widely consumed during the following century. The market for these symbols extended throughout the southern Andes and Alto Peru (now Bolivia), expressing a renaissance of forms of the Empire of Cuzco which recalled the greatness of the Inca past. In this manner, Andean culture experienced a cultural renaissance during the Enlightenment, manifesting the recuperation of a certain material wealth and the continuity of an independent indigenous elite, which felt it time to reclaim a prominent position in the imperial order, taking into considera-

## TAVERNS OF AREQUIPA

While the customers chat and laugh, eat and drink sip by sip, a new batch of chicha is boiled and matured before their very eyes in a corner of the tavern. The procedures for the preparation and manufacture of this indigenous liquor are simple and inexpensive: in a hole six square feet in area and one foot deep, a certain amount of corn taken off the cob is placed lightly moistened and covered with boards, which are weighted down with heavy stones; in eight days’ time, the heat and moisture have combined to cause the grain to germinate, which is called *guñapo*. The latter is then taken out of the pit, dried in the sun, and then sent to a mill, where coarse milling stones grind the substance without crushing it. From the mill, it is sent back to the chichería, where women throw it into large vats filled with water, and boil it for an entire day. At dusk, the distillers filter this thick liquid through a cloth which has been tied on both sides, and let it cool off until the next morning, at which point it is ready for drinking.

This local beer is not only consumed by commoners, but also by the aristocracy of the area, who, while they repudiate chicha as a vile beverage, drink it in secret as a delicacy, just as occurs with our Spanish creoles in the Antilles, who disdainfully disparage grilled codfish or Angolan *calalou de gombauds et de pois* as “food for Blacks” but then enjoy these dishes behind closed doors. Peruvian bourgeoisie, more forthcoming in this matter than the aristocracy, will proclaim their affection for chicha out loud, and even bestow the beverage with the humorous diminutive *chichita*. If they are to be believed, the most wonderful times of their lives and the best spent are those spent below the lemon trees of a rural chichería, with a spicy dish of fried guinea pig and hot peppers, accompanied by a jug of chicha fermented the night before. ●

In Paul Marcoy (2001). *Viaje a través de América del Sur*, Lima: volume I, Instituto Francés De Estudios Andinos (IFEA), Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP), Banco Central de Reserva (BCR), Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica (CAAP), 567 pp.



## STREET CHICHA SALESWOMEN, OR CHICHERAS

Chicheras were old, skinny Afro-Peruvian women, who in the past would carry corn chicha, also known as “*chicha de Terranova*”, in huge earthen jugs. This beverage was, according to popular legend, a powerful medicine comparable, only the *elixir de longa vita*. As they walked through the city, the chicheras would sing the following song:

*Ay, que rica chicha [Oh, what delicious chicha]  
del día de hoy... [I've got with me today]  
naide me llama [Nobody is asking for any]  
Que ya me voy [So I'll just be on my way]*

The street chicha saleswomen have disappeared entirely, though in the middle of the last century there was still an eighty year old chichera who still sold her wares on the streets of Lima. In their place, the number of stands selling chicha have augmented considerably throughout the entire city, both in the downtown area and outside the city walls, due to the fact that the populace attributes a thousand healthful qualities to this beverage. These stands are particularly present when religious

festivals are celebrated. Chicheras set up around the corresponding churches, with a well stocked and adorned table, which give an appetite to even the least hungry churchgoers. In those days there were a number of different kinds of chicha, but the most common were those made of jora corn, chickpeas, pineapple, and purple corn. All were served in large glasses, but the latter had the particularity that none were in good shape, ranging from lacquered glasses to those mended with tin cans. ●



Afro-peruvian chichera selling her wares in Lima. Engraving by Manuel Atanasio Fuentes (1860)

In Rosario Olivas Weston (1999). *La cocina cotidiana y festiva de los limeños en el siglo XIX*. Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Universidad de San Martín de Porres, 183 pp.

tion that the latter was being reformed by the new Bourbon dynasty.

Over the course of the last two hundred years, chicha has progressively shed its links with its original environment. In ancient Peru, everything was tied together in an organic manner; there were different varieties of corn, and more than one was developed especially for the production of chicha. Likewise, production and conservation were based on local conditions, and unique solutions were the result. This was a world in which food products were part of nature, and nutrition was the art of making the environment flourish for subsequent consumption. As explained by Fernando Cabieses (1996), in the ancient world, foods were part of a sanitary system, in which the whole society was understood to be part of the cosmos. Today, all of this preparation is fragmented into different, separate units, with no sense of connection between them whatsoever, though these connections were clear to the societies of yesteryear. As such, chicha has lost its natural points of reference.

Finally, it must be considered that chicha is the liquid soul of *picanterías*<sup>1</sup>. Chicha and snacks, spice and smoothness, are the wise, harmonious, and complementary dichotomy which may be found and enjoyed to an equal degree in *picanterías* in Piura and Arequipa, Chiclayo and Cuzco. *Picanterías* have been the spaces in which our regional culinary identities have

been cooked, marinated, and slowly germinated, from the images of the Afro-Peruvian women on the streets of old Lima, baskets on their heads, offering spicy stews for sale through spicy, irreverent sales pitches.

Today, we must confront the paradigms which have been imposed on us and which have governed us for centuries, in which we have constructed a poor, marginal, and undervalued image of our *picanterías* and their emblematic beverage, chicha. With their spicy stews and emblematic dishes, and chicha as a standard-bearer, these should not be far-away modest spaces, reserved for the weekend visits of nearby families, rather, they should present themselves with dignity as an achievement and cultural patrimony, as the generous expression of the culinary identity of regional Peru. ●



Excerpted from Rafo León (editor) (2008). *Chicha peruana, una bebida, una cultura* [Peruvian Chicha, a beverage, a culture], Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Universidad de San Martín de Porres, 237 pp. Photos: Billy Hare. Website: [www.usmp.edu.pe/fondoeditorial](http://www.usmp.edu.pe/fondoeditorial).

1 Traditional restaurants serving spicy stews.

## RECIPES

### Fresh Corn Chicha\*

**Ingredients** (for twenty-four servings): 1.5 kilograms (3.3 lbs) of fresh giant white corn, 12 liters of water, 0.5 kilogram (1.1 lbs) sugar in the raw. 1 tablespoon of clove, 1 large shaving of cinnamon.

**Preparation:** Dry the fresh corn in the sun for one day; the next day, grind and boil on low flame for four hours with the cinnamon and clove, stirring regularly. Strain, let cool, and put in a large earthen vessel in a cool room and cover with a tablecloth. Strain again the following day, add sugar, cover, and let ferment for three days. Serve, sweetening if desired.

### Quinoa Chicha\*

**Ingredients** (for twenty-four servings): 10 liters of water, .75 kilogram (1.6 lbs) quinoa, 1 bundle of fennel, 1 cup ground rice, ½ cup roasted ground peanuts, 4 shavings of cinnamon, 2 tablespoons toasted ground sesame seeds 1 tablespoon of anis, 5 kilograms refined sugar, ¼ liter leftover chicha and guñapo

**Preparation:** Soak the quinoa for one day, then let germinate for three days on cabbage leaves placed on wet hay. Remove, dry, and toast when dry. Boil the quinoa on low flame with the fennel, sesame seeds, and two cups of sugar, stirring regularly. Cover with a tablecloth and let ferment for three days in a cool room. Serve, sweetening if desired.

### Peanut Chicha\*

**Ingredients** (for twenty-four servings): 10 liters of water, 1 kilogram (2.2 lbs) raw shelled peanuts. 0.5 kilogram (1.1



Quero. Engraving by Paul Marcoy.

lbs) ground white corn, 400 grams (0.88 lb) brown sugar. 1 tablespoon clove, sugar in the raw.

**Preparation:** Grind the peanuts and clove, mix with the corn, and boil for two hours with the brown sugar, on low flame, stirring regularly.

Strain, let cool, and put in a large earthen vessel in a cool room, cover with a tablecloth, and let ferment for three days. Serve, sweetening if desired.

### Jora Corn Chicha\*\*

**Ingredients:** 1 1/5 kilograms (2.6 lbs) jora corn, 1 kilogram (2.2 lbs) barley, 10 liters of water, 1 tablespoon clove, Sugar (to taste)

**Preparación:** Toast the barley and jora corn in a clean, ungreased frying pan. In a large pot, boil the water, barley, jora corn, and clove. Stir continuously to avoid thickening. When half the water has boiled off, add 5 more liters of water, boiling for another hour and a half. Let cool, then add sugar and strain. Place in an earthen (if possible) pitcher, and let ferment for several days. This chicha should be stirred at least once a day. ●

\* In Alonso Ruiz Rosas (2008). *La gran cocina mestiza de Arequipa*, Arequipa: Gobierno Regional de Arequipa, 453 pp.

\*\* [www.yanuq.com](http://www.yanuq.com).

## CHICHERÍAS [CHICHA BARS] AND PICANTERÍAS

Every afternoon, after work and before going home, a large number of Cuzco residents head for their neighborhood “Chichería” or the one closest to their workplace, to have a glass or two of chicha with their friends and discuss the day’s events. This is a very old custom. The origin of these “Chicha Taverns” or “chicherías” dates from the first years of the colonial era. They were established throughout the cities, towns, and roads of the land. Chicha was the beverage most drunk by Indians, Mestizos, and the Spanish alike, because it was thought to be the elixir for a long life. Every chichería in the city of Cuzco was characterized as being the meeting place for a given social or professional group (lawyers, judges, artisans, or intellectuals). They would gather at their chichería to share ideas and thoughts, and to discuss the events of everyday life, culture, and politics. Those located in small towns and in the outskirts of Cuzco, more modest in appearance, were frequented by peasant farmers and travelers. They had hay and water for customers’ animals. At some, people from a given would gather. For example, those who came on foot or on horseback from the Anta region would rest at the chicherías in Santa Ana or Poroy. There are still hundreds of chicherías in business. In the city, they are located in old mansions, and have very modest furniture: long tables and benches. All of these chicherías are run by Indian or Mestiza women. Chicha is not kept, but drunk fresh- as established in colonial times- and is announced with a flag, a can of flowers, a poster, or a chalkboard. The glasses used to drink chicha are called “caporales” and hold a half liter of the beverage. In Inca times, cups made of gold, silver, wood, and gourds were used. Wooden cups, known as “quero” (*qiro*), were recommended, because you could tell if the chicha within had been poisoned. ●

In Rosario Olivas Weston (1999). *La cocina cotidiana y festiva de los limeños en el siglo XIX*. Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Universidad de San Martín de Porres, 183 pp.



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# CÉSAR CALVO

## PASSION AND THE WRITTEN WORD

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Arturo Córdova\*

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If there is a way to summarize the poetry of César Calvo it would have to be its ominous vitality, a solitary and plural poetry, a poetry made of nerves and pulse, of voyages, forgetting, memory, and passion. Almost ten years after his death, his voice (one of the most powerful of what is known as the Generation of 1960) still sounds fresh and resonates with his readers.

In the early 1960's, it was announced that a literary contest, called "The Young Poet of Peru" would be held, commissioned by the Trujillo-based magazine *Cuadernos Trimestrales de Poesía* [Quarterly Notebooks of Poetry]. The prize was shared by two poets: Javier Heraud, for *El viaje* [The Voyage], and César Calvo, for *Poemas bajo tierra* [Poems Under the Earth]. The two also shared a close friendship, which even led them to write a book together, called *Ensayo a dos voces* [An Essay in Two Voices], a collection of poems cut short by the early and deeply felt death of Heraud.

Calvo made his debut on the Peruvian poetry scene with *Poemas bajo tierra* (1961). Even when the stylistic changes proposed by the poets of the Generation of 1960 such as Antonio Cisneros, Rodolfo Hinostroza, Luis Hernández, and Juan Ojeda, to name just a few are quite evident—these in turn having been influenced by the intellectualist poetry of Pound and Eliot, exploring the narrative form in poetry, the colloquialism, wordplay, and humor—there are still links with some of the most prominent poets of the 1950's. These links are felt particularly in the poems in Calvo's first book: a strong affinity for rhythm and musicality, in addition to the simplicity used in the way the poems are expressed. In this first work published by Calvo, certain affinities with the poetry of Cesar Vallejo should also be noted, such as the subject of provincial life, poverty, or a nostalgic gaze towards the family environment.

Calvo's poetry is intimate and lifelike, dealing with absence and the recollection of lost elements—be these childhood, the father, on love— "Nada pudo diciembre contra el semestre tuyo. / Nada el sol silencioso contra tu sombra hablada. / Desde el fondo de todo / lo que tengo, / me faltas

("Dan las campanas tu recuerdo en punto") ["December could do nothing against your semester / And the Sun nothing against your spoken shadow / From the bottom of / all I have / I miss you / ("The bells ring out your memory on the dot").] Despite his youth, Calvo being barely twenty years of age when the book was published, the poet expresses in this work a precocious longevity, a life criss-crossed with experience; perhaps this causes the sensation of decadence and loss offered by the passage of time, as Calvo expresses so strongly in one of his most successful poems, "Aquel bello pariente de los pájaros" ["That beautiful relative of the birds"] ("Tu niño preferido —si lo vieras!— / es el alma de un ciego que pena entre los cactus, / rabioso jardinero de otoños enterrados" ["Your favorite child— if you saw him now! — / is the soul of a blind man hurting between cacti, / an angry gardener of buried autumns."]) (Meta) physical deterioration then takes charge of the poet's personal and social reality: "Afuera las vendimias transcurren todavía / y son huertos de polvo adentro de mis ojos. / Porque ya las palabras, ya las noches, ya el cielo, / ya los claros castillos transmutados en pozos /... / se apagan / en la luz / del otoño" ("En la luz del otoño") ["Out there the grapevines are running still / and are orchards of dust within my eyes. / Because already words, already nights, already the sky, / already light colored castles transmuted into wells... / turn off / in the autumn / light."]) That said, there is a tenacious resistance in these poems to the absence that the passage of



César Calvo (Iquitos, 1940 - Lima, 2000).

time brings with it. Thought this may be love or memory, here the distance and solitude that the poet himself assumes predominate. From this relegated space, he announces poetic labors as a gift which is also a stigma (and vice-versa): "Poesía no quiero este camino / que me lleva a pisar sangre en el prado / cuando la luna dice que es rocío / y cuando mi alma jura que es espanto" ("Aquel bello pariente de los pájaros"). "Poetry, I don't want this path / which brings me to step in blood on the fields / when the moon says all is dew / and when my soul swears it is horror" ("Aquel bello pariente de los pájaros") ["That beautiful relative of the birds"] Or in the poem "Venid a ver el cuarto del poeta" [Come one, come all, and see the poet's room], in which he positions himself in a marginal environment, impoverished, though not without a certain subtle irony: "Venid a ver el cuarto del poeta. / Desde la calle / hasta mi corazón / hay cincuenta peldaños de pobreza. Subidlos. A la izquierda" [Come one, come all, and see the poet's room / From the street / to my heart / there are fifty steps of poverty. Climb up them: First door on the left"]. The poem then concludes with a suggestion of terrible privilege, vital ardor, and danger: "(If you don't find me / then / asketh me / where I am burning the bonfires)". *Poemas bajo tierra* is followed by other books which confirm Calvo's quality and poetic particularity. Among these, *Ausencias y retardos* [Absences and latenesses] (1963), *El último poema* de Volcek Kalsaretz [The last poem of Volcek Kalsaretz] (1965) and *El cetro de los jóvenes* [The scepter of the young] (published

in Havana in 1967), which reverberates with an intense vitality—battling between memory and forgetfulness, between death and love—and a great commitment to life and society. Calvo had strong socialist ideological convictions, the 1960's were a period of revolutions, utopias, and student revolts, years of political repression and fevered resistance, which brought Calvo to Bulgaria and Cuba. An indomitable traveler, he loved as many cities as he had lovers (there are many legends told of his infallible seductive powers.) He also made incursions into popular music: he recorded a record album of songs with Reynaldo Naranjo and Carlos Hayre, collaborated with the Afro-Peruvian dance group Perú Negro, and was also a close friend to the singer-songwriter "Chabuca" Granda. His presence, recall many of his closest friends, was captivating, and from his early youth he had dressed up as a dandy to go read his poems aloud as a student at the Universidad de San Marcos. The poet Arturo Corcuera remembers him in the following manner: "There were always two profiles in Calvo's inner face. That of bright, effusive moments, sweet and affectionate, decadent, roaring with talent and fantasy; a Cesar who was exalted by so much love, gregarious and generous, keeping our spirits up, forever full of joyous laughter and causing us to crack up. But there was also a hidden Cesar known only to his closest friends, one who lived through solitude and pain, omens and the dark, dark night, an achingly sad and defenseless Cesar." This existential tension hits on a number of dark images which make up the poems in

Photo: Archives, Caretas Magazine.

*Ausencias y retardos*; revealing a romantic spirit in texts evoking the tearing of forgetting, of love lost and the distance with allows the poet to fill this emptiness with luminous images: "Me han contado también que allá las noches / tienen ojos azules / y lavan sus cabellos en ginebra. / ¡Es cierto que allá en Vermont, cuando sueñas / el silencio es un viento de jazz sobre la hierba? / ¡Y es cierto que allá en Vermont los geranios / inclinan al crepúsculo / y en tu voz, a la hora de mi nombre, / en tu voz, las tristezas?" ["They have told me, too, that the nights up there / have blue eyes / and wash their hair in gin. / Is it true that when you dream up there in Vermont / the silence is that of a wind of jazz in the grass? / And is it true that up there in Vermont the geraniums / tilt toward the twilight / and in your voice, at my name's time / in your voice, the sadness?"] ("Nocturno de Vermont") ["Vermont Nocturne"]. It is also this distance which allows him to affirm his condition as an inexhaustible lover in wait, recreating absence with promises and complaints: "Porque en barcos de nieve, diariamente, / tus cartas / no me llegan. / Y como el prisionero que sostiene / con su frente lejana / las estrellas. / chamuscadas las manos, diariamente / te busco entre la niebla" [Because every day, on boats of snow, / your letters / do not arrive. / And like the prisoner who holds up / with his distant forehead / the stars: / with scorched hands, every day / I search for you in the fog.]

The passion with which Calvo writes about love is converted into an act of resistance against time and his voracious condition, reducing all to a remnants, remains, and oblivion. Calvo's voice rises like a painful lament, not only individual, but rather historic-social, in poems such as "Diario de campaña" [Campaign journal] and "Reloj de arena" [Hourglass], one of the most prominent poems in his following publication, *Pedestal para nadie* [A pedestal for no one] (1970). In this book, Calvo explores new forms: dialogue and narrative poems, rhythmic ellipses, the continual presence of questioning and repeating thoughts, etc. The expansion of solitude and skepticism seems unstoppable in these poems: "En el instante en que él abrió los brazos / al mundo, lo enterraron. /... / En el circo vacío, bajo los reflectores / moribundos / es un trapecio que persiste a solas. / Dale la mano, súbelo, protégelo / ya que es su propia madre, la caricia / que olvidó el primer día, al retornar / de un viaje que no pudo emprender nunca" [At the same instant he opened his arms / to the world, he was buried. /... / In the empty circle, below the moribund / reflectors / there is a trapeze which goes on all alone / Take it in your hands, go up on it, protect it / since it is its own mother, the caresses / it forgot about the first day, on returning / from a trip it was never able to undertake.".] The presence of paradoxes illustrates the pain for what never was, and is perhaps linked to the memory of his great friend Heraud, slain in the Peruvian Amazon in 1963 while returning from a trip to Cuba on which he was trained as a guerilla fighter. This is the chant to the memory of a lost friend and for unconcluded collective reams: "él es el río, el puente, la pareja / que se inclina por última vez: / él es un ruido apenas por el agua que pasa. / Dale la mano, súbelo, protégelo /... / Concédete un instante para que abra los brazos / al mundo, que está muerto" [He is the river, the bridge, the couple



## NOCTURNO DE VERMONT

Me han contado también que allá las noches  
tienen ojos azules  
y lavan sus cabellos en ginebra.

¿Es cierto que allá en Vermont, cuando sueñas,  
el silencio es un viento de jazz sobre la hierba?

¿Y es cierto que allá en Vermont los geranios  
inclinan al crepúsculo,  
y en tu voz, a la hora de mi nombre,  
en tu voz, las tristezas?

O tal vez, desde Vermont enojado de otoño,  
besada tarde a tarde por un idioma pálido  
sumerges en olvido la cabeza.  
Porque en barcos de nieve, diariamente,  
tus cartas  
no me llegan.  
Y como el prisionero que sostiene  
con su frente lejana  
las estrellas:  
chamuscadas las manos, diariamente  
te busco entre la niebla.

Ni el galope del mar; atrás quedaron  
inmóviles sus cascos de diamante en la arena.

Pero un viento más bello  
amanece en mi cuarto,  
un viento más cargado de naufragios que el mar.

(Qué luna inalcanzable  
desmadejan tus manos  
en tanto el tiempo temporal golpeando  
como una puerta de silencio suena).

Desde el viento te escribo.  
Y es cual si navegaran mis palabras  
en los frascos de nácar que los sobrevivientes  
encargan al vaivén de las sirenas.

A lo lejos escucho  
el estrujado celofán del río  
bajar por la ladera  
(un silencio de jazz sobre la hierba).

Y pregunto y pregunto:

¿Es cierto que allá en Vermont  
las noches tienen ojos azules  
y lavan sus cabellos en ginebra?

¿Es cierto que allá en Vermont los geranios  
otoñan las tristezas?

¿Es cierto que allá en Vermont es agosto  
y en este mar, ausencia...?

De *Ausencias y retardos* (1963)

## VERMONT NOCTURNE

They have told me, too, that the nights up there  
have blue eyes  
and wash their hair in gin.

Is it true that when you dream up there in Vermont  
the silence is that of a wind of jazz in the grass?

And is it true that up there in Vermont the geraniums  
tilt toward the twilight  
and in your voice, at my name's time  
in your voice, the sadness?

Or maybe, from a Vermont bejeweled by autumn,  
kissed afternoon by afternoon by a pale language  
you plunge your head into forgetting.  
Because every day, on boats of snow, your letters  
do not arrive.  
And like the prisoner who holds up  
with his distant forehead  
the stars:  
with scorched hands, every day  
I search for you in the fog.

Neither are you in the gallop of the sea; left behind  
Immobile are your diamond helmets in the sand.

But a more beautiful wind  
threatens my room  
a wind more full of shipwrecks than the sea.

(What an unreachable moon  
tangled in your hands  
hitting in temporal time  
like a silent door sounds).

From the wind I write to you.  
And is which if my words sail  
in the mother-of-pearl jars which the survivors  
entrust to the coming and going of the mermaids.

I hear from afar  
the cellophane crumpling of the river  
go down the slope  
(a jazz-like silence in the grass).

And I ask and ask:

Is it true that up there in Vermont  
the nights have blue eyes  
and wash their hair in gin?

Is it true that up there in Vermont the geraniums  
are sadness all autumn?

Is it true that up there in Vermont it is August  
and in this sea, absence?

Taken from *Ausencias y retardos* (1963)

/reaching over for the last time / he is barely  
a sound in the passing water. /Give him your  
hand, bring him up, protect him /.../give him  
an instant to open his arms / to the world, he  
is dead"] ("Reloj de arena") [(Hourglass)].  
In his poems, Calvo appears to have been  
mortally wounded by time. The poet is apt at  
maintain his balance, a star breaking apart, lu-  
minous, on the edge of a cliff, but this interior  
desolation appears to bind him further to life;  
paraphrasing the verses of Cesar Vallejo, "hoy  
me gusta la vida mucho menos, pero siempre  
me gusta vivir..." [I like life much less today,  
but I always like to live], which may summarize  
the life and work of the boy who wrote poetry  
in his house on jirón Carabaya in downtown  
Lima, when he assaulted the city with his  
brilliant poems and his elegant, borrowed suit,  
stitched together by his grandfather, a tailor,  
who—according to the poet himself—was  
the one who caused his initiation into poetry  
when he found him sleeping one day, which  
his white, aged head. He then wrote, wrote  
desperately, so he wouldn't get any older.  
Calvo's oeuvre, however, is wider than this. He  
explored the mythic novel and poetic essay in  
*Las tres mitades de Ino Moxo y otros brujos de la Amazonía* [The Three Halves of Ino Moxo  
and other Sorcerers of Amazonia] (1981) and  
*Edipo entre los incas* [Oedipus among the Inca]  
(2001). That said, he never gave up being a  
poet, and never gave up being a desolate little

boy; a dazzling lover and furious friend who left  
friendships behind in so many cities. Friends,  
loves, and places became ghosts in his life:  
"Porque escribo estas líneas no solamente con  
mi vida / sino con el jadeo de todos los fantas-  
mas / que me amaron, / de todos los fantasmas  
que murieron y renacieron / con el rostro  
vuelto a una feroz desolación, / culpándome"  
[Because I write these lines not just with my  
life/ but with the panting of all the ghosts / who  
had loved me, / of all the ghosts who died and  
were reborn / with their faces turned towards  
a fierce desolation, / blaming me.] ("Para Elsa,  
poco antes de partir") [(For Elsa, just before  
leaving.)] Or perhaps not, perhaps he died  
full of life and affection, as he once wrote, "El  
columpio de un niño / y la saga suicida en el  
árbol que tiembla / se mecen con su misma  
dulzura / inexplicable" [A child's swing / and  
the suicide noose in the trembling tree /swing  
with the same inexplicable/ sweetness.] His  
poetry, ten years after his death, still proves  
him to be throbbing affectionate. ●

\* Mr. Cordoba holds a degree in Latin American  
Literature from the Universidad Nacional Mayor de  
San Marcos. He has published a book of poems, *Iti-  
nerario* (Lima, Santo Oficio, 2007). He is a member  
of the editorial committee of the literary publishing  
and research journal *Tinta Expresa*, in addition to  
contributing to a number of scholarly publications.

# SOUNDS OF PERU

*Chinchano.*

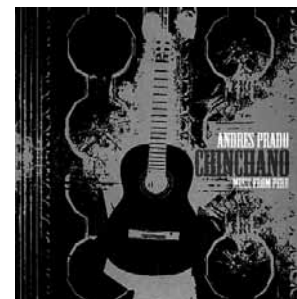
**Andrés Prado**  
(RPM Records, 2003)

Prado has it all: talent, skill, and hard work. On  
*Chinchano*, these elements come together from the  
very first song. His sensitivity to the arts of songwri-  
ting and performance are felt as if they were a spell.  
And this is no surprise, as the enchantment of cajón  
master Julio "Chocolate" Algendones (1934-2004)  
accompanies him.

This album includes nine spells that Prado has conjured up and fused together. Peruvian  
music is the protagonist of these songs, and *Chinchano* has a fine, resonating touch, perhaps  
because Prado studied classical guitar as a child, which provides a special technique, but  
the album is also influenced by genres such as Tango ("Tango Andrés") and jazz. Andrés  
Prado is a traveller, a musical nomad who has gathered the most exquisite elements of  
music from Argentina, the United States, and Great Britain. In 2002, he received three  
prestigious awards from the Trinity College of Music: the gold medal for best student  
of the year, the Montagu Cleeve prize for best guitar player, and the Founders Prize for  
musical excellence.

Of the nine instrumental tracks, only one was not composed by Prado himself, "Vivirás  
eternamente" [You Will Live On Forever], by Alicia Maguiña, in which he deploys all  
his talents for performance and arrangement. "Chocolate" Algendones appears in "Vals  
landó", and we can hear his immortal voice singing "Te reencuentro..." and then rhyth-  
mically caresses the *cajon*. Both play around sweetly in "Danza de tijeras" and "Danza  
de negritos", in which Andean and Afro-Peruvian rhythms rub shoulders. In "Gaucho  
chinchano", the fusion of Argentinean and Peruvian elements is made possible through  
the use of the *cajita*, a Peruvian percussion instrument. *Chinchano* is a never-ending  
voyage of spells and fantasies of sound, simply marvellous.

[www.myspace.com/andrespradoguitar](http://www.myspace.com/andrespradoguitar)



*Afroperuano.*

**Yuri Juárez**  
(Saponegro Records, 2008)

Yuri Juárez is a guitar virtuoso, an unsatisfied explo-  
rer who combines jazz and Peruvian Coastal Music  
with expert skill. *Afroperuano* is his first album.  
Juarez composed seven tracks for this album, using  
rhythms such as Waltz, Polka, Landó and Festejo.  
Excellent musical accompaniment is provided by  
Juan Medrano Cotito (cajón), Hugo Alcázar (drums), Pepe Céspedes (keyboard) and  
María Elena Pacheco (violin), to name just a few.

The festejo song "Cántelo usted" [You sing it] is the first song, and captures our atten-  
tion from its very first bar. On "Rosa del Mar" [Sea Rose] (another festejo), Juarez is  
accompanied to two of the finest musicians in Peru: Pilar de la Hoz and Jorge Pardo.  
On «Insistiré», composed by the masterful Carlos Hayre (guitar), Yuri takes a break  
from his musician friends to sing this Waltz with only a guitar for accompaniment.  
Granda is also present on the Waltz "Gracia" in which Yuri is accompanied by a  
string trio (violin, viola, and chello) and *cajon*. But these are not the only surprises in  
store for us, there is also a song by the Cuban composer "Chucho: Valdés: «Mambo  
influenciado», in which there is a "zamacueca" arrangement.

Yuri Juárez writes: "I want to share my point of view and my feelings regarding these  
wonderful Afro-Peruvian, criollo, rhythms, mixed with the contemporary flavor of our  
times, and with elements taken from fusion, jazz, and Latin American music as a whole."  
This album received two important awards at the Latin Jazz Corner Awards, for the  
"Best Afroperuvian Jazz Album" and "Best Latin Jazz Guitarist" categories, 2009.

[www.yurijuarez.net](http://www.yurijuarez.net)



*Piero Montaldo.*

## CHASQUI

Cultural Bulletin

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# CENTENNIAL

## JORGE CHAVEZ AND THE CONQUEST OF THE ALPS

In September, 1910, Jorge Chavez flew the first monoplane over the Alps and achieved what had been thought to be impossible: to cross the Alps from Switzerland to Italy.

Jorge Jorge «Geo» Chavez was born in Paris, 13 June 1887. Died in Domodossola, 28 September 1910. French license No. 32 the 15th of February 1910 at Mourmelon-le-Grand in a Farman biplane. Son of Peruvian parents, his father was a financier, who left a large fortune to his children. Their uncle bought a bank in Lima with a branch in Paris, where Geo Chavez worked as a partner. Chavez wanted to achieve something.

'Je n'aime pas vivre la vie bête des snobs à Paris, il faut que je fasse quelque chose' 1910, in February, he entered the flying school of Farman at Mourmelon-le-Grand. He simply took off and successfully carried out his first roll. To fly was natural for him.

19 September: first attempt to cross the Simplon. At 2300 m above Simplon-Village he gave up because of violent squalls and returned to Brig. Flying time 21 minutes 25 seconds.

23 September: flight Brig-Simplon-Domodossola in 42 minutes, via Simplon-Kulm-Zwischbergental - Gorge of Gondo. Crash at Domodossola during the landing.

He broke both legs, but was not very seriously hurt.

27 September, Domodossola: Geo Chavez died of the consequences of his traverse of the Alps.

Dr. Erich Tilgenkamp: *Historie de la aviation suisse 1941-42* (The History of Swiss Aviation 1941-1942), Aeroclub Suizo.

### Why this flight took place?

The Aero Club of Milan had offered a prize of 70'000 lire to the first man to fly over the Alps. Geo Chavez, twenty-three years old, a Peruvian already famous in the aviation world has been waiting for several days in Brig, beneath the Simplon Pass in Switzerland, for the weather to improve. Several other competitors are also waiting.

Most of the pilots are of the opinion that it is already too late to attempt the flight this year. June or July would be more suitable months. During the last five days they have made trial flights, climbing to over a thousand meters but then returning to the small field called 'Siberia' where canvas hangars have been erected. All of them have complained of the treachery of the air currents that tug at their planes as soon as they approach the entrance to the massif: all except Weymann, the American, who says about everything that you have to get used to it.

A few weeks ago, Chavez broke the world altitude record Across the



Commemorative Stamp "Pioneers of Aviation: Jorge Chávez" (Switzerland, 2010).

Alps there is no need to climb as high as he did then. Yet the mountains appear to constitute an absolute frontier. The buildings of Brig crouch low on the ground before them. The mountains induce the idea that there is nothing beyond them. To believe that Italy and Domodossola are on the far side is an act of faith, supported, It is true, by the traffic on the Simplon road and by history, for it was near here that Hannibal and Napoleon crossed the Alps with their armies.

Luigi Barzini: *Corriere della Sera*, September 23rd, 1910

### The fateful 23d of September 1910

Chavez drove to the Simplon, observed the air turbulence. On his return he met Paulhan who told him that towards the Monsera the winds were blowing too strongly. 'Wait till tomorrow'. Weymann made several trial flights, but did not reach an altitude greater than 1200 -1400 m, not enough to cross the Simplon. At noon, Chavez came to the airfield, nervous and irritated: 'Je pars, Il faut que je parte'.

The exploit of this daring pilot, the news of the success of the flight

across the Alps aroused a wave of enormous enthusiasm everywhere. In Simplon-Dorf, Gondo, Varzo, Crevola, Preglia and elsewhere people ran out into the streets. Bells announced the victorious flight. All Domodossola assembled to greet the hero, to witness his triumphal entry. A few minutes later the plane was sighted during its elegant flight path as it neared the ground, the news that Chavez the hero had reached Domodossola flashed by telegraph to the entire world. Nobody could guess what tragedy would happen during the very last few meters before landing.

Slowly the news of the crash leaked out. Soon the major newspapers announced the catastrophe in special editions, the print still humid. Jubilation turned to horrified consternation. Must the conqueror of the Alps die? Can fate be so cruel?

The skill of the doctors was insufficient, Chavez had focused his entire life-force into the 42 minutes of the flight, completely exhausted himself as others do in a normal life span. For five days he wrestled with death. His brain continued the flight with all his fears 'la hauteur...la hauteur, he gasps, quel vent! il faut...ajouter deux centimeters... d'essence le moteur... je dois m'abaisser atterir... atterrir'. For the last time he raised himself in his delirium. 'non, Je ne meurs pas, ne meurs pas'. ●

The aviation week in Brig and Ried-Brig 18th-23d of September 1910

From reports of Luigi Barzini and Dr. Erich Tilgenkamp.

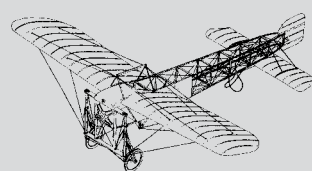


Jorge Chavez in his Blériot XI.

### THE BLÉRIOT XI MONOPLANE

Chavez flew over the Alps in a modified Blériot XI monoplane. Blériot was the private firm of the engineer Louis Blériot, one of the great masters of aviation and pilot of the epic cross-Channel flight of July 25 1909 in his monoplane Blériot XI with a 25-hp Anzani engine. He went on producing this monoplane with the 25-hp engine for flying schools, but built a new type, the XI-1910, powered with a 50-hp Gnome rotary engine for competitions. This aircraft was nearly the same but the Gnome engine had about the same weight as the 25-hp Anzani but developed twice as much power. The flying characteristics of the Blériot-Gnome were excellent. It dominated practically all airraces and competitions during the years before World War I.

The Blériot XI was soon the leading aeroplane being easy to handle and easy to fly because of its lightness and high power. It could be dismantled, was inexpensive and more efficient than other contemporary biplanes and won competitions for speed and climbing capability. Its characteristics made it possible to start on very small fields, to fly over mountains, to face difficult atmospheric conditions and also to land on very small sites. ●



A Blériot XI. Peter Wenger (2001).

Excerpted from «Geo» Chavez. *Le premier survol des Alpes. 23 Septembre 1910. The First Flight Across the Alps*; Jhon Berger, Heidi und Peter Wenger, Rotten Verlag Visp. Briga, 2001, 120 pp.

See also: [www.jorgechavezdartnell.com](http://www.jorgechavezdartnell.com)

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