

Torrejón y Velasco □ – La púrpura de la rosa [The Blood of the Rose] (1999)

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CD1: El amor de Venus y Adonis 1 *Loa* 2 *Loa* 3 *Loa* 4 *Loa* 5 *Baylete* 6 *Baylete*
7 *Baylete* 8 *Venus & Adonis* 9 *Venus & Adonis* 10 *Venus & Adonis* 11 *Venus &*
Adonis 12 *Venus & Adonis* 13 *Marte & Belona* 14 *Marte & Belona* 15 *Chato & Celfa*
16 *Chato & Celfa* 17 *En Los Montes* 18 *En Los Montes* 19 *En Los Montes* 20 *En Los*
Montes 21 *En Los Montes* 22 *En Los Montes* 23 *Amor* 24 *Amor* 25 *Amor* 26
Amor 27 *Amor* CD2: *La venganza de Marte* 28 *Amor*
Y Los Soldados 29 *Amor Y Los Soldados* 30 *Amor Y Los Soldados* 31 *Amor Y Los*
Soldados 32 *La Gruta Del Desenganjo* 33 *La Gruta Del Desenganjo* 34 *La Gruta Del*
Desenganjo 35 *La Gruta Del Desenganjo* 36 *La Gruta Del Desenganjo* 37 *La Gruta Del*
Desenganjo 38 *Xácara* 39 *Xácara* 40 *Xácara* 41 *En Los Montes* 42 *En Los Montes*
43 *En Los Montes* 44 *La Muerte De Adonis* 45 *La Muerte De Adonis* 46 *La Muerte De*
Adonis 47 *La Muerte De Adonis* 48 *La Muerte De Adonis* 49 *La Muerte De Adonis* 50
La Muerte De Adonis 51 *Fin De Fiesta* 52 *Fin De Fiesta*
Mezzo-soprano Vocals [Adonis] – Judith Malafronte Soprano Vocals [Marte] – Maria del Mar
Fernández Doval Soprano Vocals [Venus] – Ellen Hargis The Harp Consort Andrew
Lawrence-King - conductor

Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco, born in Spain in 1644, worked in Peru from 1667 until his death in 1728. The New Grove lists among his many significant achievements the composition of the memorial vespers for Charles II in 1701, and, later the same year, the performance of this opera in celebration of Philip V's eighteenth birthday. *La Purpura de la Rosa* is, in fact, the New World's first opera, a setting of a colourfully allusive, opulent verse play by Pedro Calderon. The flavour of the piece is more akin to that of the formal *Intermedii* of late sixteenth century Florence than to fully-fledged opera. That's due not least to the fact that there's no recitative to carry the narrative along, although the story – of Venus (Judith Malafronte) and Adonis (Ellen Hargis) – does have a beginning, middle and end. Instead Torrejón y Velasco infuses his florid drama with a variety of forms, using learned and unlearned folk forms to represent in turn gods and peasants. An infectious spirit of improvisation is apparent throughout Andrew Lawrence-King's beautifully coloured realisation of an edition made by him and Louise K. Stein for the recording. Indeed, from the opening sounds of the *chinfonia* - a dance in the form of a

chaconne, with violin and gently plucked strings alternating and combining in successive variations – this release counts as one of the most beguiling revelations I have ever heard on disc. ---Stephen Pettitt, BBC Music Magazine

La púrpura de la Rosa was originally a play written by the Spanish author Pedro Calderón de la Barca. It is written in lush, polymetric verse, filled with mythological imagery, and sets the Ovidian tale of the loves of Venus and Adonis. Extremely erotic and very popular at the Spanish court, this play was produced as a semi-opera, with music by Juan Hidalgo, in 1660. Calderón and Hidalgo worked closely together to create the new genre which later became known as the Spanish zarzuela. The work was originally produced to help celebrate the dynastic alliance between the Bourbons and the Hapsburgs, when Maria Teresa of Spain was wed to the young Louis XIV of France. This alliance helped to solidify the Peace of the Pyrenees between the two countries, which had been being negotiated for several years. La púrpura de la Rosa was produced as a fully sung opera, in order to compete with the opulence of the French court at Versailles. The premiere took place in the Coliseo of the Buen Retiro palace of Madrid, on January 17, 1660. Venus is depicted in the music and the poetry as an insistently erotic goddess, while the beautiful Adonis is given lyrical, yearning melodies. Marte is a burlesqued character who blusters his way through the drama, inflamed with jealousy yet unable to do anything about it.

In 1701, Hidalgo's work became the first opera to be performed in the New World. Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco revived Hidalgo's opera to help celebrate the accession to the throne of Spain and Peru of King Philip V, and to celebrate the king's 18th birthday. Torrejón had come to the Americas with his patron, the Count of Lemos, when the count was named Viceroy of Peru. Torrejón may have studied music with Hidalgo before leaving Spain. It is unknown how much, if any, of the music from this version of the opera is Torrejón's. It may all be Hidalgo's writing, and Torrejón may have just put it together for the court production in Peru. The score makes use of a variety of Spanish song types, and the simple, lyrical forms leave the intense eroticism of the text in high relief. Dance rhythms, musical repetitions, and sensual and ornamental writing set this tale of seduction and love with carnal energy. One of the highlights occurs when Adonis tells Venus of his dream of the hunt. In "No sé, que a sombra me dormí," he tells her of his thoughts during slumber that have brought him to this waking state next to her. Their scene together is intimate and equivocal, as the harmonies waver between major and minor, and chromatic alterations weave in and out of the vocal lines. In Venus' garden the two are accompanied by a double choir of nymphs, singing "No puede Amor / hacer mi dicha mayor," as they converse and make love to ornate, sensual music. ---Rita Laurance, allmusic.com

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