

LORCA and NERUDA: Love Letters

By Namaya

Dedicated to Joan Jara

Fearless standing against Fascism

LORCA and NERUDA: Love Letters

Act 1: Scene 1

Characters: Performers

LORCA: Age 30's

NERUDA: Portly Man in his sixties in 1973

Flamenco Dancer on Stage

Flamenco Guitarist

Cantores: Singer

Opening Stage:

LORCA in one Corner of the stage, at a Café table. Stage right front, a portly NERUDA Above the stage, photograph of NERUDA and LORCA from their first meeting in Buenos Aires, to Granada, and Madrid.

Prelude:

Dance – Figure dance in black mesh fabric. The three sisters of fate that weave fate. Spin it and cut it.

Music: Aranjuez – First movement

Video

[Idea of a video with photos and music](#) of Lorca and Neruda during this time, (Only a reference! Do not use.

Video 2

Slides of Guernica – the painting by Picasso.

The march of the troops of Franco and the slide to Fascism

Cantores

Cantores is singing a song about LORCA.

Video: Slides with photos of NERUDA, LORCA.

Our beautiful LORCA

You were the flower

You were the genius

 You poet who made us weep

You our artist

You made theater, music,

And all was golden when you were here

Beautiful flower

Rare exotic orchid
You killed
by the fascists
You killed
for your beauty

Our beautiful NERUDA
You are the flower
You are the genius
You are the poet
and soul of
100 songs of Love

Killed
by the fascists
you refused to bow
before the tyranny.

You are our genius
You are our precious
Poet who made us weep
You our artists

You are our soul
This land
This water.

We drink and live
from you words

You are our soul
This land
This water.

Dancer & Music:
Solea

NERUDA

Direction: Neruda – Arises from his desk and speaks to the audience. Stage right.

Poetry: (Spoken over this dance) Neruda's poem

[I Do Not Love You Except Because I Love You](#)
I do not love you except because I love you;
I go from loving to not loving you,

From waiting to not waiting for you
My heart moves from cold to fire.

I love you only because it's you the one I love;
I hate you deeply, and hating you
Bend to you, and the measure of my changing love for you
Is that I do not see you but love you blindly.

Maybe January light will consume
My heart with its cruel
Ray, stealing my key to true calm.

In this part of the story I am the one who
Dies, the only one, and I will die of love because I love you,
Because I love you, Love, in fire and blood.

Guitarist:
Solea

Act I
Scene 2
Letters from LORCA

NERUDA

Direction: NERUDA reaches above and pulls down a metal box. Slowly he opens it and takes out the letters and photos.

My beautiful Federico. In 1970 with Salvador Allende in power, I was sure freedom would endure. Nixon, Kissinger and the CIA wanted to destroy our country. Pinochet at the bidding of the Americans came to power and ripped out the soul of Chile. When the soldiers ransacked my home here in Bella Vista I feared they would find and destroy your letters and photos

I read these letters and poems, so worn, as I had gently opened them many times in the forty years since I had last seen you. Ah, the photographs when we were young. You are always remembered as the poet. The cruelty of a long life is that I am remembered as a fat old balding poet. You are remembered as the handsome angel who could make grown men and women weep with your poetry,

Alas, like Walt Whitman, our poetic father, he was remembered as an old man with a long gray beard. I wish all poets were remembered for their young sexy beautiful selves. Perhaps, that is why your poems and plays were so much more beautiful. You often spoke of the Spirit of Death as always near.

LORCA

Direction: He rises from his desk and comes to the center stage and embraces NERUDA

Hermano! I had no wish for death. But I feared that death had a wish for me.

As I had written in my book Poet in New York,

Then I realized I had been murdered.
They looked for me in cafes, cemeteries and churches
...but they did not find me.
They never found me ?
No. They never found me

I knew that death was shadowing me.

I had no desire for immortality like Byron or Shelley. Do you remember those moments before the end? We were to meet in Madrid, but everything was falling apart. Yet, the forces for Republic had thrown out the King Alfonso. Spain was exploding with hope and fear.

Franco and the fascists. Abetted by the Nazis and Italians, had seized Madrid and had their claws around the throat of Spain. How could this horror devour our country? This was our blood wedding.

NERUDA

Federico, my dear beautiful friend. *Blood wedding* that is how I want to remember you. You arrived in October 1933 in Buenos Aires, and I went to the first performance of *Blood Wedding*. I was humbled! I was wonderstruck by your poetry, your piano playing. All of Buenos Aires was at your feet. What a glorious time it was in 1933. You were the young prince and then you welcomed me into the tent. You treated me as a brother from the first moment. You were the celebrated Andalusian prince in Buenos Aires.

Direction: (Faces the direction of LORCA: Who is seated in the back left)

Federico, you remember,
 from under the earth,
 do you remember my house with balconies on which
 the light of June drowned flowers in your mouth?
Hermano, hermano!

And one morning everything was burning
 and ever since then fire,
 gunpowder ever since,
 and ever since then blood
 Bandits with airplanes and with Moors,
 bandits with finger-rings and duchesses,
 bandits with black friars making blessings,
 ... kept coming from the sky to kill children,
 and through the streets the blood of the children
 ran simply, like children's blood.

You will ask why his poetry
 doesn't speak to us of dreams, of the leaves,
 of the great volcanoes of his native land?
 Come and see the blood in the streets,
 come and see
 the blood in the streets,
 come and see the blood
 in the streets!

LORCA

My beloved brother Neruda. I wish we could have danced and laughed through a long life together. We knew our time was brief. Dear brother how joyful it was to watch you from afar and see people ecstatic for your poetry. I cherished your poetry, and your thirst for justice. I loved how you embodied the poet revolutionary. Sadly, the fascists instigated by USA, rose to power in Chile, ransacked your home, and strangled freedom for decades. Pablo, heaven mourned at your death and the angels wept.

NERUDA

Direction: (Reaches over and touches Lorca on the shoulder.)He sits down and faces the audience

Beautiful Federico! My brother! Mi hermano. Mi carino. In our brief time I came to love you as dearly as a lover. I speak this name of our love, in some ways, more dear, more passionate and tender than the love I have had with women. Though we did not share a bed, we shared the same dreams, we breathed the same breath of poetry and fire, and we loved life with the same passion. When we met we knew our time was temporary and fragile. Destiny was unfolding and the Spanish Civil War would soon explode.

LORCA

(Bursts out Laughing) The first time we were alone I touched your leg, you almost jumped out of the window.

NERUDA

(Laughs) Sadly, my dear brother, I hold ever embrace, every moment and laughter together. You, with such courage and love, were fearless till the end.

Direction: Neruda and Lorca return to their desks. Lights focus on the guitarist center stage.

Music: Alegria

Lights: Fade

Act 2
Scene 1
Buenos Aires

Dancer: (A tango done in a flamenco style. An acknowledgement of Buenos Aires as this is the capital of tango.) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYgPJbkCb2A> (sample only)
(Armik -) - The tango flamenco music will be used in this section

LORCA

Direction: (Lorca – Addressing the audience and moving forward from this desk.)
I was astonished by the sexy Tango dancers in La Boca. Every street corner had a Tango club and each was vibrant! Perhaps, after *Blood Wedding*, I could write a tango play?

Ah, I had never imagined that poets could be as welcomed as I was in Buenos Aires! Surely there is not a more refined or cultured city in the world, and *Blood Wedding* played to sold out audiences. Never in Spain had I ever been so honored. And, if I may be so forward, the women were lovely, and the men quite handsome

NERUDA

I had come to Buenos Aires as a diplomat, but I left as a poet. Though my work was known in Chile, it wasn't until I met you at the Pen Club in October 1933 that I fully understood what it was to truly be a poet. Like many there in the Pen club, my heart began to beat. Your dark eyes were filled with light. Even before you uttered a word the crowd roared and not to be trite, woman young and old swooned. The newspapers were flooded with the news of your performances on the piano, performances of *Blood Wedding*, the receptions and galas. Everyone was reading Lorca's poetry. You were the Adonis who came down from heaven. One reviewer said, "What a poet I have never seen grace and genius, the winged heart and the crystalline waterfall gathered together like in him."

LORCA

Pablo, you exaggerate. It was a celebration of poetry, theater, dance, music! And of course meeting you dear Pablo was a great joy for me

NERUDA

I loved your laughter and how it filled the room with joy. When I got closer your eyes were luminous, and around you a circle of admirers. You were truly Apollo!

NERUDA

Direction: Reading: From the newspapers, “A storm has arrived in Andalucía! Visiting Tigre! LORCA at the banquet. And one editor said, “Buenos Aires will succumb to the multiple gifts and sympathy of the Spanish poet.”

I was touched by your warmth and generosity. When we first met you said, “Mi hermano poeta!
And you stood up and started reciting poems of mine

LORCA

Again, you are too generous in your praise. Though I stayed for six months, far longer than I had intended. This was our baptism in innocence. In Buenos Aires poets and artists, were respected and cherished. Do you remember we would go down to the fountain and public parks and pretend to be government officials, and drunk we would make up poems for all to hear? I would pretend to speak in your sonorous voice, and you spoke like you were from Granada!

NERUDA

Direction: Puts his arms around Lorca’s shoulders.

Then the police stopped us, and the soldier recognized you. “Perdonme, Senor Poeta!” Spain was in turmoil with the Republican government. But they still respected a poet. We poets are cynics by nature, but innocents in reality. How could we have known how our return to Spain in 1934 would be the start of the revolution?

Direction: They open a bottle of wine, and sip it while watching the dancers

Dance: A continuation of <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYgPJbkCb2A>

Act 2
Scene 2

Dark Poems: Love that dares not speak its name

Direction: They are sitting together sharing wine, when the music *La Cumparista* is playing

NERUDA

Old friend, I loved your honesty. You were fearless in your poetry, though by necessity you had to hide your true self.

Our friend, Vicente said this, “Lorca was tender as a beach shell. Innocent in his tremendous brown laughter. Fiery in his desires, like a being born for freedom. I have seen him, the highest nights, suddenly, leaning over mysterious railings, when the moon corresponded with him and silvered his face. I have felt that his arms rested in the air, but that his feet sank in time, in the centuries, in the remote roots of the Hispanic land. *Sonnets of Dark Love* is prodigy of passion, of enthusiasm, of happiness, of torment, pure and ardent monument to love.

LORCA

Direction: Speaking to the audience

Ah, yes. *The Dark Love*, the love that dares not speak its name. In those times, we were forced to live in the shadows. The great loves and lights of my life, who to this day I dare not speak their names, these were my joy and passion. In Catholic Spain, few dared to whisper this hidden love.

Directions: He rises from his desk with the poems of the *Dark Love* and reads

Music: *Romancia* on Guitar – while the poem is read

Photos: Lorca with his male friends/ Companions.

Sonnet of the sweet complaint

Don't let me lose the wondrous sight
of your sculpted eyes, or the way you have
of placing on my cheek at night
the solitary rose of your breath.

I fear being left like a limbless tree
on the shoreline; and even worse
not having for my worm of agony
wood pulp or potter's clay or flowers.

If you are my buried treasure,
if you are my cross and wet tears,
if I am your dog and you my master,

then don't let me lose what I've won
and adorn the branches of your river
with the leaves of my estranged autumn.

DANCE:

Dance of the Dark Night:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6TaZpjOSAg> Armik the guitarist

Then it builds up in intensity. The two dancers LORCA removes his bow-tie, his jacket and shirt
The dancers are swaying embracing.
And then, a RIFLE SHOT and the lights shut off.

Act 2
Scene 3
War is coming

Music: Solea

Directions: *Neruda* reciting this poem *the War*.

Spain, wrapped in sleep, waking
like hair among wheat-spikes,
I saw you born, perhaps among brambles
and darkness, peasant,
saw you rise among oaks and mountains
and travel the air with your open veins.
But I saw you attacked in the corners
by the ancient bandits. They walked
masked, with their crosses made
of vipers, with their feet mired
in the glacial swamp of the dead.
Then I saw your body freed
from thickets, broken
on the bloodied sand, open,
abandoned, goaded in agony.
Still today the water of your stones
flows among the dungeons, and you endure
your crown of thorns in silence,
to see who lasts longer, your silence
or the faces that pass without looking at you.
I lived with your dawn of rifles,

and I long for people and gunpowder
to shake the dishonored branches again
till the dream trembles and the divided fruits
are reunited in the earth

Music and Dance: Solea.

NERUDA:

Direction: Addressing LORCA

My beautiful LORCA. I wish there was an infinity of time before us, but in those years of 1934-1936 our time was brief. I recall the words of Yeats in the, “Second Coming,”

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;

The king deposed, and the Republic declared. Hitler came to power in 1933 and evil started to devour Europe. Mussolini the strutting buffoon who shamed Italy and Europe, with his wars in Libya and Ethiopia. The center could not hold, anarchy was loosed upon the world, and everywhere the ceremony of innocence was drowning. Generalissimo Franco was preparing to devour Spain with airplanes of the Nazis. .

You my beautiful Lorca in the poems you shared the “Dark Poems: The Secret Love” we spoke of those poems. Certainly, I knew of your secret loves. Don’t we all have secret loves?

You said, “Everywhere else, death is an end. Death comes, and they draw the curtains, Not in Spain. In Spain they open them it is the only country where death is a national spectacle, the only one where death sounds long trumpet blasts at the coming of spring Now in the hot summer of 1936, death had spilled out of the *plaza de toros*—the bullfighting arena—into the plazas of cities and villages, where the Nationalist uprising left bodies rotting in the streets.

Video: Guernica – the painting and the slides

Music: Adagio in G Minor Albinoni

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_I0ZL2sF2c

ACT 3
Scene 1
The Death of LORCA

Music: Soledades
Cantores

Cantores:

Lyrics: Como el agua with Paco De Lucia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3KZyy8Oc1QA>

He cleaned the water of the river. Like the morning star I was cleaning up my affection The spring of your clear fountain Oh, like water, oh, like water, oh, like water. Like clear water That comes down from the mountain That's how I want to see you Day and night Oh, like water, oh, like water, oh, like water. I put my arm on your shoulder. Small moonshine Illuminated your eyes I want the heat from you For you my body if you want it we both have fire running us both Oh, like water, oh, like water, oh, like water. If your eyes were green olives all night long I'd be grinding Light of the soul knows me That my heart lights me up My cheerful body walks, because it carries the illusion of you Oh like water, oh like water, oh like water Oh like water, oh like water, oh like water Oh like water, oh like water, oh like water

From Blood Wedding: Blood Wedding

Cantores: Singing

Our beautiful LORCA
You were the flower
You were the genius
You were our precious
You poet who made us weep
You our artist
You made theater, music,
And all was golden when you were here

Beautiful flower
Rare exotic orchid
You killed
by the fascists
You killed
for your beauty

Our beautiful LORCA

You were the flower
You were the genius
You were our precious
You poet who made us weep
You our artist
You made theater, music,
And all was golden when you were here

NERUDA

We were to meet in mid- August. I was in Madrid. You needed you to leave Spain. I looked everywhere, but no one knew where you were. I should have known. Your family had left for their country home. Your brother in law, the Mayor of Granada could not find you and then he was arrested. The fascist soldiers were burning your books in the plaza. You Federico the brilliant light, Spain's greatest poet, and the barbarian thugs tried to destroy all that was beautiful!

LORCA

Direction: Speaking to Neruda and the audience

Yes, though I died in 1936. Yes, I am sure I would've had scores of plays, books of poetry, music, art and my creative world in front of me. As Emily Dickinson reminds us, "I could not stop for death, so death kindly stopped for me." My work and art, like all artists, is an affirmation. As long as we create poetry art and the expression of the soul then we shall survive. Yes, I knew death was near.

NERUDA

Alas, dear Federico, they will remember you as a handsome man. But (tapping his round belly) they will remember me not as I was in 1936 with a full head of hair, thin, instead they will remember me as this fat balding old poet. Nevertheless, my poems and stories, still inspire young lovers. And yes in those bitter evil days of September 1973 in Chile, I died as the fascist powers of puppet took Pinochet and the USA endeavored to destroy our country. LORCA I remember you in those glory years of the 1930s. I also remember the words of the young singer and poet Victor Jara who said, "Nos Vencemos" we will prevail.

LORCA

The forces of fascism dressed in business suits rule the land. Their fortresses on Wall Street, the London stock exchange, their penthouses, their currency is the blood and tears of the people they steal from. They destroy the planet to justify their wealth.

NERUDA

Direction: Addressing Lorca and the audience
From: "Ode to Federico Lorca"

If I could cry out of fear in a lonely house,
if I could take out my eyes and eat them,
I would do it for your mournful orange tree voice
and for your poetry that comes out screaming.

When you fly away dressed as a peach,
when you laugh the laugh of hurricane-thrown rice,
when you sing you make teeth and arteries tremble,
throat and fingers,

I would die for the dulcet thing that you are,
I would die for the red lakes
where you live in the middle of autumn
with a fallen steed and a blood-soaked God,

If I could at night, hopelessly alone,
amass oblivion and shadow and smoke
above railroads and steamboats,
with a black funnel,
chewing the ashes,
I would make the tree in which you grow,
the nests of golden water that you gather,
and the vine that covers your bones
communicating the secret of the night.

If I could fill the city halls with soot,
and, sobbing, tear down clocks,
I would be there to see when summer comes
at your house with broken lips,
What do verses serve if not for this night
in which a bitter dagger finds us, for this day,
for this twilight, for this broken corner
where the battered heart of man prepares to die?

Especially at night,
at night there are many stars,
all within a river
like a ribbon next to the windows
of the houses full of poor people.

Federico,
you see the world, the streets,
the vinegar,
and the farewells at the stations
when the smoke raises its decisive wheels
toward where there is nothing but some
separations, stones, tracks.

There are so many people asking questions
everywhere.
There is the bleeding blind man, and the irate, and
the downhearted,
and the miserable, the tree of fingernails,
the bandit with envy on his back.

Thus it is life, Federico, here you have
the things that my friendship can offer you
from a melancholic, manly man.
Already you know many things for yourself.
And you will know others slowly.

Act 3
Scene 2
The Crime was in Granada

NERUDA

We did not know what happened. Were you in prison? Soon the rumors flew and we came to believe they killed you

My Old friend LORCA who was flame and inspiration. LORCA you were the lion of poetry. You touched my soul. And, sadly I had to continue on without you.

Then I heard how the cowards came for you one hundred soldiers surrounded the house on the 16th of August. No trial. Simply because you were Lorca. Or because you loved men? On that night at 3 a.m. in the pitch black of night, dressed in night shirt, stars daring to break through the black, chained together two bullfighters, and an old school teacher with a wooden leg taken them to a field. The cowardly soldiers shot you, my dear Lorca had this premonition of death. You wrote to me in a letter once, "Everywhere else, death is an end. Death comes, and they draw the

curtains, Not in Spain. In Spain they open them. Spain is the only country where death is a national spectacle, the only one where death sounds long trumpet blasts at the coming of spring.”

As we were later to find out on that night the soldiers killed you my beloved friend, the old school teacher and the bullfighter.

NERUDA

DIRECTON: Steps to Center stage.

Music: Aranjuez:

The Crime was in Granada: to Federico Garcia LORCA Antonio Machado

1. The crime

He was seen walking between rifles,
down a long street
and out into the cold countryside,
under a few dawn stars.
They murdered Federico
when the sun rose.
The firing squad
didn't dare to look him in the face.
They all closed their eyes;
they prayed: not even God saves you!
Federico fell dead,
with blood on his brow and lead in his guts?
... You know the crime was in Granada,
poor Granada!? In his Granada.

2. The Poet and Death

He was seen walking alone with Death,
not scared of her scythe.
Was the sun already on the towers, the hammers
on anvils? The anvils, the anvils of the forges.
Federico was speaking,
flirting with Death. She was listening.
"Because in my poetry yesterday, my dear friend,
the slap of your dry palms rang out,
and you gave ice to my singing, and gave an edge
to my tragedy with your silver sickle,
I will sing of the flesh that you don't have,
the eyes that you don't have.
your tresses tossed in the wind,

your red lips where they kissed you...
Today like yesterday, my gypsy girl, my death,
it's so good to walk alone with you,
through the air of Granada, my Granada!"

3.

He was seen walking...
My friends, carve
from stone and dream in the Alhambra,
a memorial to the poet,
over a fountain where water weeps,
and forever say:
the crime was in Granada, in his Granada!

CANTORES

Federico you were our light
You were our brilliant cherished light
How could they kill you?
How could they kill poetry?
How could they kill art?
How could they kill such beauty?

Poets! Artists! Dancers!
Our brilliant cherish light.
How could they kill you?
How could they kill poetry?
How could they kill art?
How could they kill such beauty?

Direction: NERUDA and LORCA come to the Center of the stage together. They embrace.

LORCA

Direction: Addressing the audience

We have come back tonight to celebrate our friendship and love. Those moments of the 1930's that heralded WWII. The rise of the fascists that devoured Spain and brought the monster Franco. Today as we speak, the voice of the fascists, that you now call capitalists, which are fascist in suits. Pinochet the puppet of the American government that devoured Chile.

Yes, to celebrate our love, friendship, and the supremacy of art & poetry. Pablo, let us dance. We will celebrate our love for each other, for our families,

NERUDA

Federico, one last dance!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGkBDDCFn1Q> The Zorba piece on Flamenco guitar

Directions: LORCA and NERUDA step to the center stage and dance the Zorba piece and laugh.

NERUDA

We must leave now, but I hope the legacy we offer is our words of fire and inspiration. We the poets and revolutionaries leave our gifts to you. The gift is love. It is now more urgent and vital that each one of you before us becomes the revolutionary.

LORCA

Direction: Turns to the audience:

Campaneros, this is not the tale or story of yesterday. This is the story of now. How are we even more vigilant in our fight against tyranny and fascism? Art is the soul of a culture. If we dare to lose our souls, what will we be left of us?

The theatre is a school of weeping and of laughter, a free forum, where men can question norms that are outmoded or mistaken and explain with living example the eternal norms of the human heart.

A nation that does not support its theatre and art is—if not dead—dying; just as a theatre that does not capture with laughter and tears the social and historical pulse, the drama of its people, the genuine color of the spiritual and natural landscape, has no right to call itself a theatre, but only a place for amusement.

The artist, and particularly the poet, is always an anarchist in the best sense of the word. He must heed only the call that arises within him from three strong voices: the voice of death, with all its foreboding, the voice of love, and the voice of art.

NERUDA

My friend, Victor Jara sang this song: Venceremos! When the executioner came for him they asked him for a song. Victor Jara bruised, with broken hands and beaten cried out “Venceremos” We will prevail and they shot him

[Venceremos - Chile](#)

Venceremos

Video and Slides: Of Chile during the first days of Pinochet

Here comes Unidad Popular
Peasant, student, worker
All our comrades join us in song.

Underneath our banner
The women have joined in our call
Victory for the Unidad Popular
Will be the defeat of the Yankee oppressor

Chorus:

We shall prevail, we shall prevail
With Allende in September we'll prevail
We shall prevail, we shall prevail
Power to the Unidad Popular

With the power that comes from the people
We must make a better homeland
Together and united we must strike
At power, at power, at power.

If the Right wants to ignore
Allende's just victory,
All the people, resolute and courageous
Will rise up as one.

Chorus

Aquí va todo el pueblo de Chile
Aquí va la Unidad Popular
Campesino, estudiante, y obrero
Compañeros de nuestro cantar

Consabiente de nuestra bandera
La mujer ya se ha unido al clamor
La Unidad Popular vencedora
Será tumba del yanqui opresor

Coro:

□ Venceremos, venceremos
Con Allende en septiembre a vencer
Venceremos, venceremos
La Unidad Popular al poder. □

Con la fuerza que surge del pueblo,
Una patria mejor hay que hacer,
A golpear todos juntos y unidos,
Al poder, al poder, al poder

Si la justa victoria de Allende
La derecha quisiera ignorar

Todo el pueblo resuelto y valiente
Como un hombre se levantará.

Nos Vencements

We will prevail
Justice
truth
human rights
love
poetry
arts

As long as this human spirit shall speak truth will endure

Song or Music:

The Male Dancers:

Final dance of Lorca and Neruda as a flamenco dance

Cantorea:

Singing Lorca

Direction:

Lorca and Neruda leave the stage together.