

APPENDIX 1

The Text of Ecuatorial

In 1932, Varèse was given a book titled Legends of Guatemala by the Guatemalan poet and novelist Miguel Angel Asturias. The book included texts from the Popol-Vuh, the sacred book of the ancient Guatemalan Indian tribe Maya-Quiché, which documents the activities of this tribe dating back as far as the 8th century A.D.. One of these texts was an "invocation of the tribe lost in the mountains, having left the 'City of Abundance,'"¹ from which Varese extracted portions for his text to Ecuatorial.²

In it, the tribe passionately appeals to their gods with prayers for protection from moral and physical peril, for fertile land, for offspring, and for peace. The poem maintains a simple and direct style of address, while its tone is both impassioned and incantatory. Like Varèse's description of the music itself, the poem has "something

¹Varese's prefatory note to the score of Ecuatorial.

²The complete poem, without omissions, may be found in Fernand Ouellete's biography of Varèse, Edgard Varèse, New York: The Orion Press, 1968, pp. 232-233 (footnote no. 13).

of the same elemental rude instensity of those strange, primitive works [of] pre-Colombian art."³

Invocation from the Popol-Vuh translated from the Spanish

O Builders, O Moulders! You see. You hear. Do not abandon us, Spirit of the Sky, Spirit of the Earth. Give us our descendants, our posterity as long as there are days, as long as there are dawns. May green roads be many, the green paths you give us. Peaceful, very peaceful may the tribes be. Perfect, very perfect may life be, the existence you give us. O Master Giant, Path of the Lightning, Falcon! Master-magi, Powers of the sky, Procreators, Begetters! Ancient Mystery, Ancient Sorceress, Ancestress of the Day, Ancestress of the Dawn! Let there be germination, let there be Dawn.

Hail Beauties of the Day, Givers of Yellow, of Green! Givers of Daughters, of Sons! Give life, existence to my children, to my descendants. Let not your power, let not your sorcery be their evil and their misfortune. May it be happy, the life of your upholders, your providers before your mouths, before your faces, Spirit of the Sky, Spirit of the Earth. Give Life, Give Life! Give Life, O All-Enveloping Force in the Sky, on the earth, at the four corners, at the four extremities, as long as dawn exists, as long as the tribe exists!

³Score to Ecuatorial, op. cit.