

New Music Concerts presents

Cuarteto
Latinoamericano

Sunday, January 11, 2004 • The Music Gallery

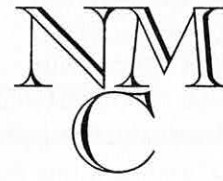
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New Music Concerts
Robert Aitken, director

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33rd season | 273rd event

Sunday January 11, 2004 • 8:00 pm
Illuminating Introduction at 7:15

The Music Gallery at St. George the Martyr

New Music Concerts presents

Cuarteto Latinoamericano

Saul Bitrán and **Aron Bitrán**, violins

Javier Montiel, viola, **Alvaro Bitrán**, cello

with **Robert Aitken**, solo flute

Programme:

José Evangelista (Spain/Canada 1943)

Spanish Garland (1993)

Carlos Sánchez Gutiérrez (Mexico 1964)

Cinco para Cuatro (2002) *

Gabriela Ortiz (Mexico 1964)

La Calaca (finale from *Altar de Muertos*) (2001)

— *Intermission* —

Mario Lavista (Mexico 1943)

String Quartet No. 4 "Sinfonias" (1997) *

Alex Pauk (Canada 1945)

Flute Quintet (2003) ** (World Premiere) §

Diego Luzuriaga (Ecuador 1955)

Yaravi & Yumbo (2002/3) ** §

Estreno Mundial (2003) ** (World Premiere) §

* Dedicated to Cuarteto Latinoamericano

** Dedicated to Robert Aitken and Cuarteto Latinoamericano

§ Commissioned by New Music Concerts

New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, c.m., Artistic Director

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This evening's concert is generously supported through Arts Presentation Canada, a program of the Department of Canadian Heritage/Patrimoine canadien.



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The **Cuarteto Latinoamericano** was founded in Mexico in 1981, and two years later was awarded the top prize from that country's National Music Critics Association. Since then the group has risen to the ranks of the world's most esteemed chamber music players through their many recordings and through their concerts in North and South America, Central Europe and Scandinavia. In concert the group has collaborated with such international figures as flutist Julius Baker, cellist Janos Starker, guitarist Narciso Yepes and conductor Eduardo Mata. The Cuarteto Latinoamericano has recorded most of the existing string quartets by Mexican composers, as well as the traditional repertoire by Ravel, Dvorak, Borodin, Gershwin, and Puccini. Their first digital recording of quartets by Heitor Villa-Lobos, Alberto Ginastera and Silvestre Revueltas was selected as "Critic's Choice for 1989" by The New York Times. The Cuarteto Latinoamericano has been quartet-in-residence at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania since 1987. They are also the quartet-in-residence at the San Miguel de Allende Chamber Music Festival in Mexico. Their teaching has influenced a whole generation of Mexican string players. Cuarteto Latinoamericano has recorded the most important string quartet literature by Latin American composers, and currently has 25 CDs available, with New Albion, Dorian and Elan labels. The Cuarteto has recorded the entire cycle of Villa Lobos' 17 string quartet in six volumes, for Dorian Records, with Vol. 6 receiving a Grammy Award nomination.

Born in Canada, **Robert Aitken** studied with Nicholas Fiore and Marcel Moyse and for shorter periods with Jean-Pierre Rampal, Severino Gazzelloni, André Jauvet and Hubert Barwahser. At the age of 19 he became principal flute of the Vancouver Symphony and at age 24, the Toronto Symphony. In 1970 he left the TSO to pursue a solo career that has taken him to virtually every corner of the globe. From 1985-89 he directed the Banff Centre's Advanced Studies in Music Programme and is at present professor for flute in Freiburg, Germany. He is the recipient of many awards including the Order of Canada and Chevalier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France) and prizes at the international flute contests in Paris 1971 and Royan 1972. He has more than 40 recordings to his credit and such notable composers as George Crumb, John Cage and Elliott Carter have dedicated works to him. As a composer, he holds Bachelor and Masters degrees from the University of Toronto and all of his works are published by Universal Edition, Salabert, Ricordi and Peer Music. Robert Aitken was founder and artistic director of Music Today, Music at Shawnigan and co-founder of New Music Concerts, Toronto, which he continues to direct today.

III. Waves

A kindling, a birdcall, ropes of hair
Clean straw, bell-chimes, day's end,
Force through the blood, a body's memory of flight
Too close, too close

IV. Meditation

It comes in the morning with robes, white vestments
And as day passes, turns its back,
This wash of gold is
And I am, by nightfall
Dim, and away

V. Ostinato furioso

I came for gold and found it-
All around, my blessing and my curse

— Carlos Sánchez-Gutiérrez



Gabriela Ortiz (Mexico 1964)
La Calaca (finale from *Altar de Muertos*) (2001)

Gabriela Ortiz Torres was born in Mexico City, where she studied composition with Mario Lavista at the National Conservatory of Music, and Federico Ibarra at the National University of Mexico. In 1990 she was awarded The British Council Fellowship to study in London with Robert Saxton at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama. In 1992 she received the University of Mexico Scholarship to complete Ph.D. studies in electroacoustic music composition with Simon Emmerson at The City University in London. She currently teaches composition at the Mexican University of Mexico City. Her music has been broadcast by the BBC, National Radio of Spain, Swedish Radio, and Mexican Radio and Television, and can be heard on some labels such as Cenidim (Mexico), Dorian Recordings (USA), Urtext Classics and Quindecim recordings. Her music is published by Universal Edition.

She is considered one of the best young Mexican composers, with a particular interest in building a personal musical language that combines musical tradition and the avant-garde, juxtaposing high art, folk music or jazz in novel, sometimes precious and highly personal ways. Her music strives to be both entertaining and immediate as well as profound and sophisticated, achieving a balance of highly organised structure and improvisatory spontaneity.

ALTAR DE MUERTOS

*Written for the Kronos Quartet and dedicated
to the memory of those close to them.*

The tradition of the Day of the Dead festivities in Mexico is the source of inspiration for the creation of a work for string quartet whose ideas could reflect the internal search between the real and the magic, a duality always present in Mexican culture, from the past to this present.

Altar de Muertos is divided into four parts, each of these describe diverse moods, traditions and the spiritual worlds which shape to the global concept of death in Mexico, plus my own personal concept of death.

Fourth part: *LA CALACA*

Syncretism and the concept of death in modern Mexico reflect the chaos and the richness of multiple symbols, in which the duality of life is always present: the sacred and profane; good and evil; night and day; joy and sorrow. This movement reflects a musical world full of joy, vitality and a great expressive force.

At the end of *La Calaca* I decided to quote a melody of Huichol origin, which attracted me when I first heard it. That melody was sung by Familia de la Cruz. The Huichol culture lives in the State of Nayarit, Mexico. Their musical art is always found in ceremonial and ritual life.

— Gabriela Ortiz



Mario Lavista (Mexico 1943)
String Quartet No. 4 "*Sinfonias*" (1997)

Mario Lavista was born in Mexico City in 1943; he studied composition there with Carlos Chávez, Rodolfo Halffter, and Ernesto Quintanar, in Paris with Jean Etienne Marie and Henri Pousseur, and in Germany with Karlheinz Stockhausen. In 1987, Lavista was named a member of the Mexican Academy of Arts and was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to compose an opera, *Aura*. His works have been performed by the American Composers Orchestra and Pittsburgh and Dallas Symphonies, and in 1991 the San Antonio Symphony commissioned his *Clepsidra*. Recent commissions include *Dance of Degas's Dancers*, for flutist Jill Felber; *Five Brief Dances*, for the Mexico City Woodwind Quintet; *Missa ad Consolationis Dominam Nostram*, for choir a capella, for the Contemporary Vocal Ensemble; *String Quartet No. 3* for the Kronos Quartet; *String Quartet No. 4* for Cornell University and the Cuarteto Latinoamericano, and *String Quartet No. 6*, for the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and the Cuarteto Latinoamericano. Mr. Lavista presently teaches composition, analysis, and 20th-century music at the National Conservatory of Music in Mexico City.

STRING QUARTET NO. 4 "Symphonies"

I wrote "Symphonies" for string quartet in 1996 on a commission from Joan Niles Sears, who asked me to compose a piece of music that could eventually accompany her soul after the death of her body. Having this rather unusual but indeed fascinating request in mind, and with the personal belief that there is some kind of music which the soul itself is able to hear, I undertook to compose music destined to be part of a sacred ritual. I did not intend to write funeral music, but rather a work of religious character meant to glorify God.

There are in the piece some contrasting musical events that give the impression of blending with each other as if in a dream, where one cannot foresee what is coming next. One of this musical events is based on an ancient melody taken from the *Scolica enchiridis de musica*, a ninth-century treatise, in which it appears as an example to illustrate "symphonies", i.e. the relationship between two or more voices lying an octave, fifth or fourth apart. The text of this melody is as follows:

Nos qui vivimus benedicimus Dominum ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum
(We who are living bless the Lord from this moment forever and ever).

The piece consists of a single movement lasting approximately 17 minutes. It was premiered by the Cuarteto Latinoamericano in Ithaca, NY on April 15, 1997, and is dedicated to Joan Niles Sears.

— Mario Lavista



Alex Pauk (Canada 1945)
Flute Quintet (2003)

Alex Pauk is a prominent and influential conductor/composer on the Canadian music scene with a growing international profile. He is also a leading figure in the field of film music scoring, conducting and production. In 1999, he received the Musician of the Year award from The Toronto Musicians' Association.

In 1983, he founded Toronto's award-winning Esprit Orchestra and continues to develop Esprit as a concert organization, and an orchestra involved with film, television, music theatre, visual arts, dance, CD and DVD recording and multimedia events.

Pauk has been engaged to write music for all the above-mentioned disciplines in addition to being commissioned to compose music for every type of musical ensemble. The scope of his music composition for film covers a wide range of styles and genres. In 2002, he and his film-composing partner, his wife Alexina

Louie, won the prestigious Louis Applebaum award for excellence in musical composition for a wide array of films.

In 1999, Alex Pauk made his debut European tour with Esprit Orchestra, conducting five Esprit Orchestra concerts in Holland (Gaudemus International Music Week) and France. He has also organized three Canadian tours for Esprit.

Pauk often performs the Canadian premieres of works by leading international composers such as Takemitsu, Ligeti, Berio, Adams, Penderecki and Lindberg, and regularly invites outstanding soloists such as Robert Aitken, Richard Stoltzman, Maurice Bourque, Richard Margison, Maureen Forrester, and Jon Kimura Parker to perform with Esprit. In addition to conducting the Esprit Orchestra, Pauk has conducted the Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony, CBC Vancouver Radio Orchestra, Hamilton Philharmonic, and the Winnipeg Symphony, among others.

FLUTE QUINTET

The *Flute Quintet* represents a departure from the style of other recent works of mine in that it is not programmatic but rather focuses entirely on aspects of its formal structures. In three movements, the piece is actually a flute concerto in miniature. It is "minimalist" in that each movement relies on one or two simple concepts that in themselves utilize a very limited number of compositional materials.

The first movement begins with the flute, violins and viola combining and playing off one another in a rippling, effervescent motif which is underpinned by the cello playing a distinctly different kind of material which, never-the-less, binds the players together. A more lyrical coda links to the mood and nature of the last movement and helps create a sense of ABA form (slow, fast, slow) for the quintet.

The second movement demands that the "soloist" plays a vigorous, high speed, non-stop barrage of tricky cellular patterns almost without taking a breath. The flute line is traced and enhanced by the first violin part while the other instruments add to the mix playing jagged, piercing chords.

More romantic in nature, the last movement has string chords building on the melodies of the flute line, then dissolving in and out of each other as though temporary in nature compared to the flute material. The *Flute Quintet* was commissioned with the assistance of the Ontario Arts Council, and is dedicated to Robert Aitken, a friend and colleague with whom I've shared many musical paths.

— Alex Pauk



Diego Luzuriaga (Ecuador 1955)
Yaravi & Yumbo (2002/3)
Estreno Mundial (2003)

Ecuadorian **Diego Luzuriaga** is one of the most original voices among Latin American composers. The force and uniqueness of his music spring mainly from his Andean folk melodies, the use of French post-impressionistic sound color, and from his unapologetic South American lyricism.

He was born in 1955, in Loja, a small agricultural Ecuadorian town, into a family of twelve children. He studied in Paris at the Paris Ecole Normale and later at Manhattan School of Music and Columbia University in New York. He has been taught by, among others, Gerardo Guevara, Yoshihisa Taira and Mesias Maiguashca.

He has received several international awards, including, in 1993, the Guggenheim Fellowship from New York. His music is regularly performed in numerous international events. The recent recording of *Once Canciones de Diego Luzuriaga* was released by soprano Dana Hanchard in New York and is receiving rave reviews. He now freelances in Philadelphia, USA, where he lives with his wife and three children.

YARAVI & YUMBO

for flute (doubling alto flute) and string quartet

Yaravi is a music genre sung and played by Indians and Mestizos in the Ecuadorian Andes, characterized by a slow, pentatonic, prayer-like melody. *Yaravi* is said to come from the southern Inca Civilization several centuries ago, where it was played as religious music. (In Ecuador it is still often used in religious contexts).

I called the first movement of this piece “*Yaravi*” because when I was composing it, I realized that with its sad, slow, repetitive character I was unwittingly invoking the folk *Yaravi* genre of my country. This *Yaravi* is, therefore, a nostalgic, unconscious trip back to my culture, rather than a true, folk *Yaravi* with its real rhythmic patterns, pentatonic melodies and music textures. *Yumbo* is a dance practiced by Ecuadorian Indians. Written in six-eight meter, it is lively and fast in character. My *Yumbo* (second movement of the piece) – while keeping the six eight meter – tries to venture into some “foreign” asymmetric rhythms. The melodies are modal, although not necessarily pentatonic (unlike the original folk *Yumbos*).

This piece is dedicated to Robert Aitken and the Cuarteto Latinoamericano, and was commissioned by the H.C. Aitken Musical Fund for New Music Concerts of Toronto. It was premiered in Pittsburgh in January 2003.

ESTRENO MUNDIAL

for flutist (who also delivers a text) and string quartet.

I have been present at the premieres of many of my pieces, and I have experienced my share of the anticipation, stress, and thrill. It is indeed a rich and unique feeling for the composer – and, ideally, for the public – to witness the intensity of a piece being delivered for the first time.

It occurs to me, however, that any performance can offer its share of such feelings. Just to see the players who, like shamans, convert a few notations into music, can evoke a sense of genesis and magic, whether the piece is a premiere or not.

Furthermore, I have slowly come to the belief (not original, I realize) that not only any performance, but any event – social or private, long or short, sacred or mundane – can be so intensely in the present, so bright and deep, that it becomes transcendent. The idea of living a life that is nothing less than a series of transcendent moments, a series of “world premieres,” appeals to me.

Estreno Mundial (Spanish for “world premiere”) aims to elucidate these ideas. It was commissioned by New Music Concerts of Toronto and is dedicated to its director, my friend, Bob Aitken.

— *Diego Luzuriaga*

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