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LA CATRINA QUARTET

Daniel Vega-Albela, 1st violin
George Anthony Figueroa, 2nd violin
Eric Koontz, viola
Alan Daowz, 'cello

2:30 PM, Sunday, March 16, 2008

Morris Chapel

In cooperation with University of the Pacific
Conservatory of Music
Stockton, California

Program

Sonoralia, Op. 3 “La Zacatecana” (1994)

Danza
Jarabe

Emmanuel Arias y Luna
(b. 1935)

String Quartet in D Major, Op. 64, No. 5

Allegro moderato
Adagio cantabile
Menuetto
Vivace

Franz Joseph Haydn
(1732–1809)

Huapango (1941)

José Pablo Moncayo
(1912–1958)

—intermission—

Metro Chabacano (1991)

Javier Alvarez
(b. 1956)

Quartet in F Major, Op. 96 “American”

Allegro ma non troppo
Lento
Molto vivace
Finale: Vivace, ma non troppo

Antonín Dvořák
(1841–1904)



La Catrina Quartet appears by arrangement with Lisa Sapinkopf Artists
www.chambermuse.com

The Artists

Young, talented, and passionate, Mexico's renowned La Catrina String Quartet is rapidly earning a reputation as a world-class ensemble. The quartet has a triple mission: commissioning music by Hispanic composers, promoting Mexican and Latin-American art music in Mexico as well as in the United States, and performing the masterworks of the string quartet repertoire.

Currently the Quartet-in-Residence of the Western Piedmont Symphony, the La Catrina String Quartet has received important awards and recognitions, such as Western Michigan University's All University Research and Creative Scholar Award. They have premiered works by composers Thomas Janson and John Ferrito at the Kent Blossom Music Festival and Zae Munn at the Chicago College of Performing Arts.

Some of this year's highlights included their participation in the highly competitive Association of Performing Arts Presenters 2007 convention in New York City, which concluded with a performance in Carnegie Hall and their appointment as the new Quartet-in-Residence of the WPS and of the Conservatorio de Las Rosas' summer quartet program. In the summer, they will conduct a two-week residency in San Miguel de Allende, where they will also collaborate with the Brentano Quartet.

The Program

Arias y Luna—Sonoralia

Emmanuel Arias y Luna's musical output as a composer shows the evolution of the Mexican style through diverse epochs: from the baroque, classic, romantic, impressionistic to the contemporary periods. Having always been interested in Mexican culture and folklore, Arias y Luna has traveled through the country collecting ideas from the people, observing the living traditions of Mexican expression. A speaker of Nahuatl, the Aztec language, he was a member of the Sociedad Folklorica Mexicana, an organization that has done extensive research on the artistic life and expression of Mexican folklore.

In 1972, Arias y Luna received an award from the Government of the State of Mexico for his symphonic poem *Juarez*. His works have been performed in Mexico, Spain, Japan, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, Switzerland, France, Canada, Hungary,

Portugal and the United States. Mr. Arias y Luna is a member of the Mexican Society of Authors and Composers (SACM), and is currently on the music faculty of the Universidad Veracruziana in Xalapa, Veracruz.

Sonoralia Opus 3, "La Zacatecana"—meaning from the Mexican state of Zacatecas—was originally composed for string orchestra but is now widely performed in its string quartet version by many ensembles throughout Mexico, the US and Europe. Its two movements, *Danza* (dance) and *Jarabe* (a relatively fast paced dance in 6/8 time that features traditional Mexican clogging) are written in an absolutely tonal style, with clear Mexican influences that nonetheless refrain from lapsing into stylistic excesses, always keeping closer to the neoclassical tradition and sometimes even borrowing from Mozartian textures, especially in the second movement. The slow, initial *Danza* draws upon the sounds one might have heard in a Mexican salon at the turn of the 19th century. By contrast, the *Jarabe*, an already popular dance form throughout all of Mexico by the beginning of the 19th century., draws its influence from the earlier *Seguidilla* (a Spanish popular dance and song), the *Zamba* (a couples' dance which features the use of handkerchiefs), and the *Fandango* (a couples' dance accompanied by castanets). The *Jarabe* is characterized by its spontaneous, improvisatory nature.

Haydn—Op.64, No. 5

Haydn's string quartets represent the pinnacle of this chamber music form. Only Beethoven and, in a very different manner, Bartók, would equal or surpass Haydn's achievement. The six quartets of Opus 64 present Haydn at his most witty, inspired and inventive, and the "Lark" quartet (no.5 of the opus 64 set) has long been one of the composer's most popular works.

The 1780s for Haydn were filled with quartet writing; he finished at least nineteen before he began his Opus 64, and these compositions are of the same high quality as the symphonies. The two sets of "Tost" quartets, Op. 54 and Op. 64, carry the Classical quartet to a peak. His work at this time was in the 'popular' style—folk-like tunes alternating with learned contrapuntal developments and pert Austrian minuets leading to finales in the new sonata rondo

form (basically: rondo form with a development section). Op. 64 contains exquisite diversity. It is believed that the Johann Tost of the dedication was violinist in the Esterhazy orchestra from 1783 to 1788.

The Op. 64 quartets were written at the end of Haydn's employment with the Esterhazy family. Prince Nicholas Esterhazy died in September of 1790 and his successors did not have his enthusiasm for music. They pensioned off the musicians and Haydn was treated generously and required to write only the occasional ceremonial piece. He was set free to follow his musical career as he wished and wrote to a friend "...how sweet this bit of freedom really is! I had a kind Prince, but sometimes I was forced to be dependent on base souls. I often sighed for release and now I have it in some measure." He set out for his first London trip that year and the quartets of Op. 64 were published there.

From 1787 to 1790 Haydn composed 12 quartets (including the opus 64 set) for Johann Tost, principal second violin in Haydn's orchestra at the Esterhazy court. The renowned musicologist and Mozart and Haydn scholar H. C. Robbins Landon wrote: "Opus 64 is perhaps Haydn's greatest single achievement of the period—six flawless masterpieces which . . . can be compared in unity of purpose, perfection of execution, and profundity only with [the] Opus 20 [quartets]."

The staccato chords of the second violin, viola, and cello at the beginning of the *Allegro moderato* (first movement) are answered by a soaring, vibrant melody in the first violin which gives the score its name (an allusion to the call of a lark). The double recapitulation at the end of the movement is one of Haydn's many musical innovations. The *Adagio cantabile* is a simple, eloquent songlike theme that continues almost uninterrupted in the first violin. The rousing third movement minuet features a chromatic trio in D minor. That key appears again in the fugal episode of the lively finale. Haydn's capacity to explore and reinvent thematic material is on full display in this masterwork.

Moncayo—Huapango

José Pablo Moncayo was a Mexican composer of nationalistic classical music. Born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, Moncayo studied piano as a boy and entered Mexico City Conservatory where he continued piano, harmony and composition studies. He also studied for a short time in 1942 with American composer Aaron Copland. One of Moncayo's first professional jobs was as a percussionist with the Mexican Symphony Orchestra (later renamed the National Symphony Orchestra (Mexico)), of which he was conductor from 1949-1954.

As a member the "Grupo de los Cuatro" ("Group of Four"), formed in 1934, Moncayo (along with three other composers, Blas Galindo, Salvador Contreras, and Daniel Ayala) aimed to promote the nationalistic spirit of Mexican music. Much of his music used melodies, rhythms, and harmonies drawn from the folk music of Mexico.

Moncayo's best-known work continues to be the colorful orchestral fantasy *Huapango* composed in 1941. The huapango is the name of a Mexican musical style and the accompanying lively dance of Spanish origin that is especially popular in the lands along the Gulf of Mexico. It has alternating rhythmic patterns and both major and minor keys are used. Listen for the use of fast and "busy" violin passages for the musical introductions and interludes. Performed by singers and instrumental ensembles ranging from a duo of guitars to a full mariachi band, it is characterized by a complex rhythmic structure mixing duple and triple meters echoing the intricate steps of the dance. The huapango is danced by men and women as couples where the men sing but the women do not. One of the distinctive characteristics is the use of a falsetto by the vocalists.

Alvarez—Metro Chabacano

Born in Mexico City and voted the most interesting Mexican musician born in the 50's by musicologist Yolanda Moreno Rivas, Javier Alvarez is currently a freelance composer in London and Mexico City. The seminal idea for *Metro Chabacano* came from an earlier piece. Alvarez had presented to his parents as a Christmas gift in 1986, "Cancion de Tierra y Esperanza." In 1990, the sculptor Marcos Limenez approached Alvarez to use this piece to accompany one of his kinetic installations that was to be displayed in one of Mexico City's busiest

subway stations for three months. Alvarez then reworked this piece, renaming it "Metro Chabacano" for the subway station where the dedication ceremonies took place in 1991. Javier Alvarez' *Metro Chabacano* dates from the latter half of the 20th century and incorporates native rhythms to lend a nationalistic flair and drive to the music. *Metro Chabacano* has a continuous eighth-note movement of moderately driving speed from which short melodic solos emerge from each instrument. The repeated notes give a false sense of simplicity: although the piece is brief and in a single movement, the rhythms, accents and melodic fragments that emerge from the "perpetual motion" background are intricately playful.

Dvorak—Op. 96

Dvořák was invited, as an international figure, to be the Director of the New Conservatory of Music in New York. Reluctant to leave his native land, the salary offered his was a small fortune, and with the increasing demands of his large family, he accepted the post for two years. In September of 1892, he took up his post and during his three hours of teaching per day that his timetable allowed, he tried to free his students from European domination which he felt was stifling originality, urging them to search out folk songs, plantation music and Indian music, finding therein the simplicity of fresh melody.

Dvořák had pursued this direction in Czechoslovakia. He had had to learn the great classic forms of German music, aided by his friend, patron, and mentor, Johannes Brahms. His chamber works of 1870 show clarity of compositional technique but the music is somewhat impersonal. Discovering the music of his native Bohemia, he developed his own individual musical language. From their unspoiled rhythms and melodies, he developed a combination of folkloristic idioms and a rather more personal style combined with his sense of formal structure. Works like the Slavonic Dances of 1878, with rhythmic verve, local color, and stylistic polish brought him international fame. He brought this same indigenous character to his chamber music.

Dvořák's first American work was his ninth symphony, *From the New World* (1893). Various influences of American folk idioms have been traced by devotees of the

work, true to the advice he gave his pupils; in general, however, it is a European work, signified, as the composer pointed out, by the title emphasizing that the work was "from" the new world, a Bohemian looking back to his native land. The American quartet was written after a restorative vacation in Spillville, Iowa, a Czech community. Dvořák reproduced those features he had developed in other genres in his homeland, impressions of Bohemia, except that here we have impressions of North America, Indians and Blacks notably, achieving a certain "American" language, combined with his own style and European musical tradition.

The opening theme presented by the viola, with a rapid folk-like rhythmic, is a rising melody that offers the material for the other themes of the work. The violins provide a carpet of sound, and the cello is used for percussive rhythmic effects. The melody, like others in the work, is pentatonic, using a five-note scale that contains a minor third but no semitones, the scale of the majority of folk songs. A folk like melody makes the round of the instruments with the cello especially notable. Intermittent strident passages are heard and after a pensive presentation of the slow melody, the movement concludes with a raucous statement.

The Lento continues the pentatonic melody given to the viola, above an underpinning six beat ostinato. The melody ends in the low ranges of the cello and viola, the underlying rhythm changed to two beats stroked followed by a pause and two beats plucked.

The Scherzo: Molto vivace uses a repeated strong fanfare, alternating with a softer passage and strident passage followed by the melodic.

The tempestuous finale is built on rhythmic passages, the first reiterated in the lower strings, and suggests a Copland-like folk ballet. Smooth polyphonic passages with song-like melodies are interspersed with the rhythmic interludes, and the movement ends in a tutti-type dance, lively, fresh, and vigorous. Thematic links between the movements transcend the wealth of ideas, characters and structures of the composition.

FIFTY-SECOND SEASON

2007-2008

*Presented in Cooperation with
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William Hipp, Interim Dean*

The Biava Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, October 7, 2007
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
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Chatham Baroque

2:30 PM Sunday, November 4, 2007
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7:30 PM Saturday, February 16, 2008
Faye Spanos Concert Hall

La Catrina Quartet

2:30 PM Sunday, March 16, 2008
Morris Chapel
RECEPTION FOLLOWING

Stanford Woodwind Quintet

2:30 PM Sunday, April 6, 2008
Faye Spanos Concert Hall
RECEPTION FOLLOWING

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- Concert programs are subject to change without notice.
- Seating is unreserved for the 2007-08 Season.
- Contributions, including memorials, are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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