

Los Angeles Guitar Quartet
William Kanengiser ~ John Dearman ~ Scott Tennant ~ Matthew Greif

Sheridan, WY
Friday 19 November 2010

7:30 PM

GIACOMO ROSSINI (1792 – 1868)

Overture to “*Il Barbiere de Siviglia*” (arr. J. Dearman)

PETER WARLOCK (1894 – 1930)

Capriol Suite (composed 1926, arr. W. Kanengiser)

Basse-Danse

Pavane

Tordion

Bransles

Pieds en L’Air

Mattachins

“Music from the Time of Cervantes” (arr. W. Kanengiser)

ANONYMOUS (17TH CENTURY)

Jácaras

LUYS de NARVÁEZ

Diferencias sobre Guárdame las vacas

ANTONIO MARTÍN y COLL

El Villano

ALONSO (16TH CENTURY)

La Tricotea Samartín

ANTONIO MARTÍN y COLL

Diferencias sobre las folias

DIEGO ORTIZ

Romanesca

ALONSO MUDARRA

Fantasia Que Contrahaze La Harpa en la Manera de Ludovico

ENRIQUE DE VALDERRÁBANO

Romance de Calaynos

JUAN ARAÑÉZ

Chacona (“La Vida Bona”)

LUYS MILAN

Con Pavor Recordó el Moro

JUAN de ENCINA

Oy comamos y bebamos

~ INTERMISSION ~

LEO BROUWER (1939-)

Paisaje Cubano con Lluvia

CARLOS RAFAEL RIVERA (1970 -)

*Cumba – Quín (2000)**

**commissioned by the LAGQ for Sony Classical*

GEORGES BIZET (arr W. Kanengiser)

“Carmen Suite”

Aragonaise

Habanera

Seguidilla

Toreadors

Entr'acte

Gypsy Dance

****PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE****

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Program Notes

The Los Angeles Guitar Quartet begins tonight's program with Giacomo Rossini's **Overture to "Il Barbiere di Siviglia"**, one of the most popular of his uniformly brilliant opera overtures, and one which has taken on a life of its own apart from the opera it introduces. The work has become a staple of the symphonic repertoire, as well as a frequent sound-track to cartoons, most notably in the classic Bugs Bunny adaptation. It has been arranged for a variety of genres, and a version for guitar quartet has a natural affinity due to the Andalusian setting of the action. John Dearman's realization is an excellent example of the rather "democratic" philosophy of arrangement that LAGQ frequently employs. The four members of the quartet are treated as equal voices, and nearly all prominent melodies are distributed antiphonally within the ensemble.

The **Capriol Suite** was written by British historian and musicologist Peter Warlock (born Phillip Heseltine) in 1926. Fascinated with the music and culture of the Renaissance, Warlock based it on dances from the Arbeau's 1598 treatise "Orchésographie". Although written for string orchestra, the piece retains much of its color and charm in this setting for guitar quartet. As in Stravinsky's "Pulcinella", the settings begin in a straightforward way, with only small hints that it was in fact written in the 20th century. It begins with the playful *Basse-Danse*, followed by the haunting *Pavane*. The jaunty *Tordion* gives way to a frantic and capricious *Bransles*, which sets up the achingly lovely *Pieds en L'Air*. The suite concludes with the sword-dance *Mattachins*, where Warlock's strikingly modern harmonies assure us that we are back in the present day.

This set of "**Music from the Time of Cervantes**", sprung out of a project LAGQ developed with the British actor/comedian John Cleese. In March 2009, Los Angeles Guitar Quartet with Cleese premiered a one-hour presentation of excerpts from Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote de La Mancha* with recitations from the book accompanied by arrangements of music that Cervantes could have heard in his lifetime. The project has been further developed over the past few seasons and continues to tour throughout the US and Canada with Firesign Theatre member Philip Proctor. Some of this rich and varied repertoire from the Spanish Renaissance was originally penned by vihuela composers, while others were scored for organ or vocal ensemble.

Jácaras, ("*No hay que decir primor*"), is an anonymous *canción* from the 17th century. The jácaras form was common in theatrical settings, such as *entremeses*, and they frequently depicted picaresque

characters engaged in rowdy and lascivious behavior. This particular setting sings the praises of a certain woman of ill repute whose beauty “*se rompe el aire*” (loosely, “she knocks you out”). **Diferencias sobre Guárdame las vacas**, by the vihuelist Luys de Narváez, is a *romanesca*, one of many pieces based on this popular tune (“watch my cows for me”). Found in his important publication *Los seys labors del Delphin de Música de cifra para tañer vihuela* (1538), it is generally regarded as the first printed version of a variations form in music history. **El Villano** (“The Rustic”) is a country dance from the anthology “*Flores de Música*” collected by Antonio Martín y Coll, an 18th century keyboardist and musicologist. Although published in the mid-1700s, this work features many selections that would have been extant in the early 17th century.

La Tricotea Samartín is a three-voice madrigal from the *Cancionero Palacio* (c. 1505), credited to a composer simply named Alonso. In ternary form, it features the words “*Yo é clavar el molin y untar el batán*” (“I pierced the windmill and polished the lance”). This piece was used to set the famous assault on the windmill attempted by the Ingenious Gentleman, and features a tripartite form augmented by imitations of spinning sails. Martín y Coll’s **Diferencias sobre las folias** is a set of variations contrasting on the famous harmonic progression, *Folias de Espana*, one of the most frequently adapted musical sources in the history of composition. **Romanesca** was written for organ by Diego Ortiz (ca. 1510 – 1570), who served as *maestro de capilla* for the Neopltian Viceroy and later under the service of Phillip II. It follows the same harmonic structure as the aforementioned “*Las vacas*”, and is set here for guitar duo. **Fantasia Que Contrahaze La Harpa en la Manera de Ludovico** is one of the most famous vihuela works by Alonso Mudarra. This arrangement evokes the harp of the seductress Altisadora, and the sudden interpolation of the cowbells as part of the Duke’s practical joke on Don Quixote. It is set as a duet in loose canon, joined by the other two players in imitation of the cowbells.

Romance de Calaynos is a setting of the romance that tells of the Morrish warrior’s defeat at Roncesvalles, part of the Carolingian legend. It is found in the *Libro de música de vihuela intitulado Silva de sirenas* (1547) by the great contrapuntalist Enriquez de Valerrábano. It features the words “*creo yo perder la vida, que quein meure port al dama, no se llamará perdida*” (“I believe I will lose my life, but he who dies for such a lady will not count it as lost”). **Chacona**, from the *Libro Segunda de Tonos y Villancicos* (1624) by Juan Arañes, is one of the most celebrated early examples of the form. The Chacona, which by Bach’s time had become one of the most noble and profound of all dance forms, was a suggestive and prohibited *danza* in 1500’s Spain, almost their version of our *macarena*. It features the lines “*a la vida, vidita bona, vida, vamanos a la Chacona*” (“here’s to the good life, good little life: let’s do the Chacona”). **Con Pavor Recordó el Moro** (“The Moor recalled with anguish”) is a setting by Luys Milan of another ancient ballad. It features the famous words “*mi descanso es pelear, mis armas las duras peñas*” (“combat is my rest, and my trappings hard rocks”), which is directly quoted by Don Quixote in his first scene in the inn. The set concludes with **Oy comamos y bebamos**, a four-voice *villancico* from the *Cancionero Palacio* written by Juan de Encina. Raucous and earthy, its opening stanza expressed the concerns of the everyday Spaniard in the 16th century: “*Hoy comamos y bebamos, y cantemos y holquemos, que mañana ayunaremos*” (Today we eat and drink, and sing and make merry, for tomorrow we must fast”).

Paisaje Cubano con Lluvia (*Cuban Landscape with Rain*) is a one of a number of works inspired by “Cuban Landscapes” by the vastly influential guitarist/composer Leo Brouwer. Now celebrating his 70th birthday, Brouwer has become revered as one of the most innovative and creative contemporary guitar composers. This piece is among his earliest works for guitar quartet, and it received its premiere recording by LAGQ in 1987. Adding to the others in the “Landscape” series (Landscape with Rumba, with Bells, with Sadness, et cetera) this particularly evocative piece is a fine example of musical/environmental sensitivity in Brouwer’s writing. It features a rather remarkable portrayal of a rainstorm on a tropical island; starting gently, it builds, as wind, rivulets of water, and finally a hailstorm pass, ultimately receding into the final drops falling of the jungle flora.

Carlos Rafael Rivera, who spent his youth in locations as diverse as Washington DC, Miami, and Central America, naturally draws from a variety of musical sources, most prominently Afro-Cuban

music. He is presently a graduate student in composition at the USC Thornton School of Music, where his work has received awards from BMI, ASCAP, and the Guitar Foundation of America. He describes himself as a “folkloric musical essayist,” and has said of this piece, “**‘Cumba-Quin’** is an onomatopoeic title, a vocal imitation of the sounds produced by conga drums played against claves in rumba style. The guitars assume the roles of different percussion instruments – such as claves, palitos, and congas – and special wooden rings worn on the left hand help produce some of these sounds. At some point during the piece, each guitarist is responsible for playing two entirely separate and opposing rhythms simultaneously, one in each hand. The guaguancó (4/4) and Columbia (6/8) forms of rumba used make the piece pulsate with the colorful, visceral, and ritualistic aspects of the Afro-Cuban tradition.”

The oft-repeated commentary that “the best Spanish music was written by Frenchmen” could certainly find its detractors, but the justification for such a stance does gain some credence in light of the authentic Iberian character of George Bizet’s **Carmen**. In addition to being one of the most beloved and enduring operas of all time, this work has found a home on the symphonic stage, most notably with an orchestral suite of some of its most popular excerpts. In William Kanengiser’s arrangement of six movements from Carmen for guitar quartet, a special emphasis was put on retaining the distinctly Spanish sound of the music, which finds a natural home on the guitar. The current suite begins with the Aragonaise, with strumming fanfares and imitations of castanets. Next is the timeless Habanera, a sensual aria based on a melody by Sebastián Iradier that explores the lyric possibilities of a single line melody on the guitar. It is followed by the flamenco-inspired Seguidilla, which explores a wide range of articulations and colors available on guitar quartet. The ever-popular Toreadors features boisterous strummed chords and extended trills, while the delicate Entr’acte is a gradually-unfolding masterwork of lyric counterpoint. The final Gypsy Dance creates a slowly-building tension with repeated staccato figures, finally erupting in the famous and furious coda.

*Notes by William Kanengiser ©2010