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Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

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The Sixty-ninth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,829th Concert

Wilhem Latchoumia, pianist

Presented in honor of *Gauguin: Maker of Myth*
and in collaboration with the Embassy of France

March 2, 2011
Wednesday, 12:10 pm
East Building Auditorium

Admission free

COVER: Paul Gauguin, *Musique barbare* (*Barbaric Music*), 1893,
Kunstmuseum Basel, Kupferstichkabinett, Gift of Richard Doetsch-Benziger

Program

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

From *Images*, Book I

Reflets dans l'eau (1905)

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959)

Prole do bebê (1er Cahier) – Baby's Family (Set I) (1918)

Branquinha (A Boneca de louça)

Little White Doll [The Porcelain Doll]

Moreninha (A Boneca de massa)

Little Brunette Doll [The Paste Doll]

Caboclinha (A Boneca de barro)

Little Mestiza Doll [The Clay Doll]

Mulatinha (A Boneca de borracha)

Little Mulatta Doll [The Rubber Doll]

Negrinha (A Boneca de pau)

Little Black Doll [The Wooden Doll]

A Pobrezinha (A Boneca de trapo)

The Poor Little Doll [The Rag Doll]

O Polichinelo

Punch

A Bruxa (A Boneca de pano)

The Witch [The Cloth Doll]

Reynaldo Hahn (1874–1947)

Deux Etudes pour le piano (1927)

Jorge "Lobito" Martínez (1952–2003)

Juegos de los niños

André Boucourechliev (1925–1997)

Archipel IV (1970)

Debussy

Six Épigraphes antiques (1914)

Pour invoquer Pan, dieu du vent d'été

Pour un tombeau sans nom

Pour que la nuit soit propice

Pour la danseuse aux crotales

Pour l'Égyptienne

Pour remercier la pluie au matin

Ignacio Cervantes (1847–1905)

Ilusiones perdidas (c. 1880)

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

From *Miroirs* (1905)

Alborada del grazioso

This concert is made possible in part by support from La Maison Française at the Embassy of France, the French American Cultural Foundation, and EDF

The Musician

Born in Lyon in 1974, Wilhem Latchoumia performs regularly in recitals and chamber music concerts and as a concerto soloist with orchestras. He has performed at the Cité de la Musique and the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the Gubbio Summer Festival in Italy, Retour au Pays Natal in Martinique, the Xeraciòn Festival in Spain, and the Young Euro Classic Festival in Berlin. He has given concerts in Belarus, China, Estonia, Lebanon, Poland, South America, Turkey, and the United States. A passionate extoller of contemporary music, Latchoumia collaborates with composers, conductors, and musicians including Gilbert Amy, Pierre Boulez, Jonathan Harvey, Michael Jarrell, Pierre Jodlowski, Frédéric Kahn, Karl Naegelen, José Manuel López-López, and Frédéric Pattar.

Program Notes

The early twentieth century was a period of rigorous innovation and iconoclasm in France, as artists such as Paul Cézanne, Odilon Redon, and Henri Rousseau and composers Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel expanded the aesthetic concepts that had been formulated by nineteenth-century symbolist authors and poets such as Charles Baudelaire, Stéphane Mallarmé, and Paul Verlaine. Paul Gauguin (1848–1903) lived only three years into the twentieth century, but his later work set the stage for what was to come in the post-Impressionist and early modern periods. The exhibition *Gauguin: Maker of Myth* examines the artist's use of religious and mythological symbols to tell stories, reinventing or appropriating narratives and myths. Drawing from the symbolism in his European cultural heritage and from Maori legend, Gauguin invested his art with deeper meaning, ritual, and myth—a fusion that continues to mesmerize viewers of his works. The exhibition remains on view in the East Building until June 5, 2011.

In honor of the exhibition, pianist Wilhem Latchoumia has selected music by composers who accomplished a similar synthesis. The Latin-American composers featured today brought together rituals, myths, and sounds from

their own ethnic cultures. Debussy and Ravel drew deeply from the symbolist tradition of fusing visual and aural images, while at times also recalling ancient archetypes and legends.

Debussy composed three sets of *Images*, the first published in 1905. According to the composer, *Reflets dans l'eau* (Reflections on the Water), the first piece in volume one, represented “the most recent discoveries of harmonic chemistry.” Inspired by the sea, it is one of his most popular and evocative pieces. He imagined it as the musical equivalent of a pebble being tossed onto calm water to create ever-widening ripples. At its most sonorous, it mirrors the powerful sea music of his opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*.

Heitor Villa-Lobos wrote three sets, or *cahiers*, of short piano pieces called *Prole do bebê* (Baby's Family). The “family” in this suite is the baby's collection of dolls of various materials, and the eight dolls in this suite are symbolic of the racial diversity of Brazil. Villa-Lobos treats the racial or symbolic identity of each doll as its name, and, except in one instance—“A Bruxa”—attaches a diminutive. The diminutive carries a sense of sweetness and tenderness in the Portuguese language. The suite is dedicated to the composer's wife, and it is said that Villa-Lobos was inspired by listening to her play Schumann's *Kinderszenen* and *Album for the Young*. Difficult and often virtuosic, *Prole do bebê*, while inspired by reflections of childhood, is by no means intended for children to play.

Born in Venezuela to parents of German and Venezuelan extraction, Reynaldo Hahn and his family moved to Paris when he was three years old. Though he was not French, he became imbued with the French nationalistic style due to his French music education and a life spent in cosmopolitan Paris. Best known as a composer of songs, which he wrote in the classic tradition of the French *mélodie*, Hahn also composed several works for the stage and solo piano works.

Jorge “Lobito” Martínez was born in Asunción, Paraguay's capital, the son of singer, guitarist, composer, and folklorist Eladio Martínez and Aida Ayala. He studied piano with Margarita Morosoli de Picardo, Nelly Jimenez, and Pedro Burian, and enrolled in Leonor Aranda's High Pianistic Studies Institute. Martínez later received a Fulbright grant to study at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. His harmony teachers were Luis Cañete and

Carlos Schwartzman. From 1974 to 1983, he was in the group Los Aftermad's, with whom he recorded many of his own compositions. In the 1980s he performed classical solo piano recitals and played with the jazz group Opus 572. In *Juego de niños* (Children's Game), one can hear that Martínez was a precursor to the world music movement, fusing jazz with Paraguayan folk music.

André Boucourechliev started his musical career as a pianist, studying at the Sofia Conservatory and the École Normale de Musique in Paris. In 1951 he earned a *licence de concert* and began his career as a concert pianist, teacher, composer, music critic, and musicologist. Boucourechliev composed primarily with tape recorders and indeterminate elements, such as electronic filters and envelopes. The series *Archipels*, written between 1967 and 1972, enhanced his reputation as a composer. The score for *Archipel IV* resembles a large navigational chart that contains an "archipelago" of musical structures, designed as possibilities for the performer to employ.

Debussy's *Six Épigraphe antiques* is actually a reworking of incidental music he wrote for a single performance of a staged recitation of twelve of Pierre Louÿs' (1870–1925) *Chansons de Bilitis* (Songs of Bilitis). In reworking the score (for two flutes, two harps, and celesta) for solo piano, Debussy retained only about half of the original music. As might be expected with music originally intended to accompany a theatrical presentation, all of the *Épigraphe*s are highly atmospheric. "Pour invoquer Pan, dieu du vent d'été" (For Invoking Pan, God of the Summer Wind) depicts a languid summer day. "Pour un tombeau sans nom" (For a Tomb without Name) is a highly chromatic and subtle elegy. "Pour que la nuit soit propice" (So That the Night May Be Propitious) is an expressive nocturne in a condensed sonata form. "Pour la danseuse aux castagnettes" (For the Dancer with Castanets) evokes its eponymous instrumentation with harp-like keyboard figuration. "Pour l'Égyptienne" (For the Egyptian Lady) is marked by a particularly improvisatory character. The etude-like "Pour remercier la pluie au matin" (For Thanking the Morning Rain) is dominated by rapid chromatic figuration accompanied by a wide variety of melodic material.

Ignacio Cervantes is generally regarded as the leading Cuban composer of the nineteenth century. His output was varied and included orchestral and stage works, but he is best known for piano music, particularly *Danzas cubanas* and other salon pieces, such as *Ilusiones perdidas* (Lost Illusions). From 1859 to 1861, he was a pupil of Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829–1869), whose lighter, folk-inspired keyboard music became a major influence on his own compositions. Cervantes enrolled at the Paris Conservatory in 1865 and studied piano with composer and virtuoso pianist Charles-Valentin Alkan (1813–1888), as well as with piano pedagogue Antoine François Marmontel (1818–1898). Cervantes returned to Havana in 1870 to present piano recitals and conduct operas. He soon got into political difficulties, however, and was expelled. During his exile, Cervantes toured the United States extensively (1875–1879), and began composing his *Danzas cubanas*, a process that continued for twenty years (1875–1895).

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Maurice Ravel was one of the leading figures in the most extensive expansion of the piano's technical and expressive possibilities since the music of Liszt, and he incorporated many innovations into his suite *Miroirs* (Mirrors). As its title suggests, it is a group of reflections on various scenes, moments, or personalities. *Alborada del grazioso* (The Courtier's Serenade) is the fourth of five pieces in the suite, in which Ravel develops Spanish themes into complicated melodic figures.

Program notes by Wilhem Latchoumia