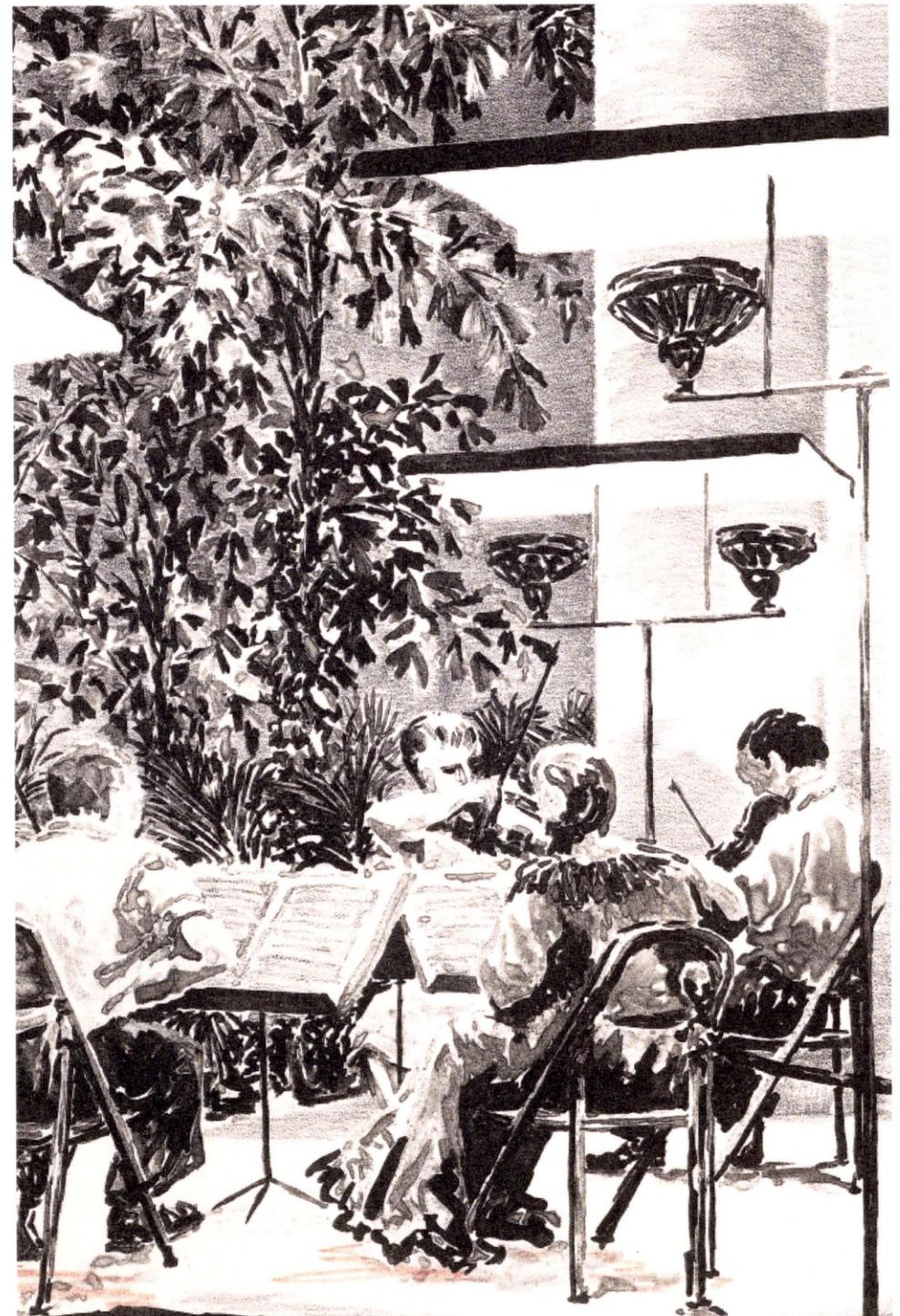


75TH SEASON OF CONCERTS

JANUARY 29, 2017 • NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



JANUARY 29

3:30 • West Building, West Garden Court

Cuarteto Latinoamericano

Saúl Bitrán, violin

Arón Bitrán, violin

Javier Montiel, viola

Álvaro Bitrán, cello

Dan Román (b. 1974)

"Montuna Fever" from *Sonora Complejidad*

George Gershwin (1898 - 1937)

Lullaby for String Quartet (c. 1919)

Leo Brouwer (b. 1939)

Quartet no. 3 (1997)

Ritual Voice for New Year's Eve

Through the Body of the Wind

Impossible Dance

The Rhythm of the Night Changed

Intermission

Aaron Copland (1900 - 1990)

Two Pieces for String Quartet (1928)

Lento molto

Rondino

Alberto Ginastera (1916 - 1983)

String Quartet no. 2, op. 26 (1958)

Allegro rustico

Adagio angoscioso

Presto magico

Libero e rapsodico

Furioso

The Musicians

Cuarteto Latinoamericano is one of the world's most renowned classical music ensembles and for more than thirty years, the leading proponent of Latin American music for string quartet. Founded in Mexico in 1982, the Cuarteto has toured extensively throughout Europe, North and South America, Israel, China, Japan, and New Zealand. The group has premiered more than a hundred works written for them and continues to introduce new and neglected composers to the genre. The Cuarteto has won two Latin Grammy Awards for best classical album, including their 2016 release *El Hilo Invisible* (The Invisible Thread), featuring ten Sephardic songs, performed with Mexican singer Jaramar Soto. The ensemble also received the Mexican Music Critics Association Award and on three occasions the Most Adventurous Programming Award from Chamber Music America/ASCAP.

Cuarteto members are the three Bitrán brothers, violinists Saul and Arón and cellist Álvaro, and violist Javier Montiel. The Cuarteto has performed and recorded a discography of over seventy recordings, including most of the Latin American repertoire for string quartet. Volume 6 of their complete Villa-Lobos cycle of seventeen quartets for Dorian received 2002 nominations for both a Grammy Award and a Latin Grammy for Best Chamber Music Recording. Cuarteto won the 2012 Latin Grammy for Best Classical Recording for their CD *Brasileiro: Works of Migone*. The group's recording with Manuel Barrueco, *Inca Dances*, by Gabriela Lena Frank, won the 2009 Latin Grammy for Best New Latin Composition.

The Cuarteto has performed as soloist with important orchestras, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Seattle Symphony, the Dallas Symphony, Ottawa's National Arts Center Orchestra, Orquesta Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México, and the Simón Bolívar Orchestra of Venezuela. They debuted with the Miami Symphony in April 2016 with the premiere of a new work by Orlando Garcia. On tour the Cuarteto plays in the world's most distinguished halls and festivals, including the Concertgebouw, La Scala, the Esterhazy Palace, the Kennedy Center, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and the Ojai Festival.

The Cuarteto has collaborated with many celebrated artists over the years, including cellists János Starker and Yehuda Hanani, pianists Itamar Golan, Cyprien Katsaris, and Rudolph Buchbinder, tenor Ramón Vargas, clarinetist Paul Meyer, and guitarists Narciso Yepes, Sharon Isbin, David Tanenbaum, and Manuel Barrueco, with whom they have performed extensively in some of the most important venues of the United States and Europe.

Program Notes

Dan Román has developed a compositional style integrating elements of the folkloric music from the Caribbean, in particular that of his native Puerto Rico, with the mechanics of minimalism and the aesthetics of postmodern art. His music has been performed in Puerto Rico, South America, Spain, France, Austria, Italy, and throughout the United States. He has received commissions to write new pieces for the Alturas Duo, the New World Trio, The Irrelevants, the Connecticut Children's Choir, and the "Hartford Commissions" project. At Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, Román teaches music of the twentieth century and post-colonial Latin America, and music technology. The composer writes: "The title of this piece is split in two terms: 'Sonora' meaning aural but also referring to the names of two famous Afro-Caribbean musical ensembles, Sonora Matancera from Cuba, and Sonora Ponceña from Puerto Rico. 'Complejidad' is a lingual morphing between Spanish and English and refers to the inherent metric, harmonic, and structural complexity of the piece. This first movement, 'Montuno Fever,' relies on the recognizable pattern of the montuno accompaniment used in the music of the Afro-Caribbean, while a twelve-tone row makes a few appearances, riding the rhythm of the 'montuno' in multiple and diverse ways."

The *Lullaby for String Quartet* was written in 1919 while George Gershwin was still a student, although he had already had several successes. His first musical, *La La Lucille*, was produced on Broadway that same year. Contrary to the "Hollywoodized" image of him, Gershwin was devoted to studying music throughout his short life. He was constantly seeking to expand his knowledge and refine his technique. He used the opening theme of the *Lullaby* as part of an aria ("Has Anyone Seen My Joe?") in his unsuccessful one-act opera of 1922, *Blue Monday*. Despite its failure, the music prompted Paul Whiteman to commission a work for his upcoming Aeolian Hall concert. This work became *Rhapsody in Blue*. Gershwin's *Lullaby* manuscript sat on his shelf for years until he showed it to harmonica virtuoso Larry Adler, who transcribed it for harmonica and string quartet and later presented it at the Edinburgh Festival in 1963. It was then transcribed for harmonica and orchestra. The work was not premiered in its original form until October 28, 1967. It is often heard in a version for string orchestra.

Leo Brouwer is a Cuban composer, conductor, and guitarist, grandson of Cuban composer Ernestina Lecuona y Casado and great-nephew of composer Ernesto Lecuona. In his music, Brouwer employs a variety of languages in a seamless and coherent blend of Cuban traditional music with the most avant-garde musical trends. Very prevalent are the complex rhythmic patterns of Afro-Cuban music. His Quartet no. 3 relates to his earlier 1983 trio for violin, cello, and piano and to the 1984 *Canciones Remotas* for chamber orchestra, even sharing some of the same movement titles. The first movement, Ritual Voice for New Year's Eve, opens with a lyrical introduction in which Brouwer presents the main thematic motif — an augmented fifth followed by three major seconds. Later on in the movement, these five notes become the rhythmic unit underlying several dance-like sections. The second movement, Through the Body of the Wind, outlines the ideas previously suggested but through a more melodic treatment, interrupted by brief, cadenza-like outbursts of the first violin. The third movement's title, Impossible Dance, alludes to the

complex and intricate rhythms of the opening and closing sections (the movement is on an A-B-A form). The middle section contains two separate lines, one on the viola and cello playing fast, syncopated, drum-like rhythms, and the other, where the two violins play a plaintive African-inspired song, on a simpler 4/4 meter. The fourth movement, *The Rhythm of the Night Changed*, also on an A-B-A form, is a veritable perptetuum mobile, where the viola maintains fast eight notes and the other three instruments intersperse syncopated and accentuated short motives. The middle section, a bit slower, is written as a chain of individual syncopations, where each instrument completes another's intervention in order to create a single, chained line. After this trio-like section, there is a condensed da capo. Quartet no. 3 premiered in 1998 in Cordoba by the Cuarteto de Cuerdas de La Habana, to whom it is dedicated.

Aaron Copland's *Two Pieces for String Quartet* consists of *Lento molto* and *Rondino*, composed in 1928 and 1923, respectively. *Rondino* was originally the second movement of *Hommage à Fauré*, and contains a theme spelling out "Gabriel Fauré" in solfège syllables. *Rondino* is Copland's first completed work for string quartet. The other movement, later withdrawn, was an arrangement for string quartet of *Prelude IX* from Fauré's *Preludes pour piano*, op. 103. *Lento Molto* was not originally intended as a companion piece to *Rondino*, but was too brief to stand on its own. Copland paired the two movements, and *Two Pieces for String Quartet* was first performed on May 6, 1928, in New York at the second of the Copland-Sessions concerts. In summer 1928, Copland was in residence at the MacDowell Colony and transcribed the two movements for string orchestra. The resulting work was premiered in December of that year by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitzky.

Alberto Ginastera was born in Buenos Aires and began his musical education at an early age. He gained national recognition before completing his musical studies after the Teatro Colón performance of an *Orchestral Suite* from his *Ballet Panambí* (1937). He gained international acclaim with the performance of his *Second String Quartet* by the Juilliard Quartet in Washington, DC, in 1958. His *String Quartet no. 2*, op. 26 (1957), marks the beginning of Ginastera's neo-expressionist period. He makes use of polytonality — common in his earlier compositions — and micro-intervals. The fast outer movements (*Allegro rustico* and *Furioso*), alike in their vitality and energy, suggest a brilliant and animated *malambo*. The slow movements (second and fourth) are contemplative and introspective, conveying Ginastera's feelings for the solitude and mystery of the endless pampas through the use of desolate, abruptly broken melodies and free recitatives. The fourth movement (*Libero e rapsodico*) is written as a theme with variations in the form of cadenzas in which each player has solo opportunities. The rhapsodic intensity of this movement contrasts with the deep sadness and anguish of the second (*Adagio angoscioso*). The tempo indication for the third movement (*Presto magico*) conjures visions of the supernatural and fantastic and makes the most obvious use of modern techniques such as *sul ponticello*, *col legno*, and harmonics to create a brilliant array of sounds and aleatoric effects.

Program notes by the Cuarteto Latinoamericano

Upcoming Events of the Seventy-Fifth Season of The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin Concerts

Marcolivia, violin and viola duo
"Washingtonians on Wednesdays"
From Bartók to Bebop
February 1, 12:10
West Building Lecture Hall

The Chamber Ensemble of the American Youth Philharmonic Orchestras
Music by Samuel Barber and Ned Rorem
February 4, 2:00
West Building, East Garden Court

Mendelssohn Piano Trio
Complete Piano Trios of Schubert
February 5, 12:00 and 3:00
West Building, East Garden Court

Edvinas Minkstimas, piano
"Washingtonians on Wednesdays"
February 8, 12:10
West Building, East Garden Court

Eya
Florence: The Cultural Crucible
Presented in honor of *Della Robbia: Sculpting with Color in Renaissance Florence*
February 11, 12:00 and 2:00
West Building, West Garden Court

Blue Heron
Music of DuFay for Florence and the Medici
Presented in honor of *Della Robbia: Sculpting with Color in Renaissance Florence*
February 12, 12:00 and 2:00
West Building, West Garden Court

General Information

Admission to the National Gallery of Art and all of its programs is free of charge, except as noted.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that all portable electronic devices are turned off.

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Cover Prentiss Taylor, *Feldman Quartet Rehearsing, National Gallery (detail)*, 1967, Corcoran Collection (Gift of Roderick S. Quiroz in Honor of John Zeigler and Father Joseph Haller, S. J.)

Back cover *West Building, Constitution Avenue entrance, viewed from Sixth Street NW*, 1941, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gallery Archives