

“Strum”

Program Notes

Canarios..... *Gaspar Sanz*

“Canarios” is a fast dance found in the method book *Instrucción de Música sobre la Guitarra Española* by **Gaspar Sanz** (1640-1710). The title refers to the dances of the Canary Islands off the coast of northwest Africa. These folk dances alternated 6/8 with 3/4-time signatures, a challenging rhythmic pattern sometimes known as “hemiola.” The first volume of the method was probably first published in 1674, and two more volumes were added later. The whole method contains 90 works and is Sanz’s only contribution to the guitar repertoire. Sanz was well-educated, and studied music, theology, and philosophy at the University of Salamanca in Salamanca, Spain. He was a composer, guitarist, poet, writer, and priest, and later became a Professor of Music at the same University. For a time in Italy, he studied with the choirmaster at the Vatican and with the organist of the Royal Chapel of Naples. Upon returning to Spain, he was a guitar teacher to Spanish royalty.

Montagne *Salvatore Seminara*

Salvatore Seminara is an Italian guitarist, composer, and teacher. Extensive performances have led him to South America, Mexico, Europe, and Russia. He frequently gives masterclasses and has served as a juror at international competitions. As a chamber musician, he has collaborated with guitar, cello, flute, clarinet, and accordion. He is the artistic director of the Ossola (Italy) Guitar Festival now in its 28th year. The Ossola Valley is also the home of the second-highest mountain in the Alps at 15,203 ft, Monte Rosa. Perhaps this is the inspiration for the composition.

String Quartet Op. 2, No. 2 in D, Hob III:8..... *F.J. Haydn arr. Karl Scheit*

This arrangement has come through several plot twists. The original **F.J. Haydn** String Quartet Op. 2, No. 2, for two violins, viola, and cello, written between 1757 and 1759, was in the key of E major. This version for lute/guitar, violin, viola, and cello, was transposed by an unknown eighteenth-century musician and then the manuscript was edited and published in 1924 by Hans Dagobert Brugger. Austrian Joseph Haydn is known as the Father of the String Quartet. He composed 68 of them, and his attention to this instrument combination led many subsequent master composers to use this genre to hone their craft.

Serenade Op. 12 for Two Violins and Viola, Movt. I *Zoltán Kodály*

Along with his nationalist composer friends Béla Bartók and Ernst von Dohnányi, **Zoltán Kodály** committed much of his life to compiling and editing more than 3,000 Hungarian folk songs. His compositions are rich in original melody but influenced by this heritage of Hungarian folk music. Kodály was a skilled music educator, and the “Kodaly Method,” used extensively today in music classrooms, teaches children folk songs and exercises to develop their musicianship. Kodály called this piece a Serenade, not a Trio, leaning into its purpose as a work for entertainment in several movements. Composed in 1919-1920, the piece, with two violins and the viola, has unusual instrumentation. In the opening stomping theme, the viola’s open bottom string adds greatly to the richness of the ensemble. The lyrical second theme is set against *pizzicato* in the violins. The two violins take up a repeated strumming over the third theme, played by the viola. It is notable that in 1922 in Salzburg, Austria, the Serenade was first performed with Hindemith on viola. The piece was written during a time when Kodály was struggling with loss of his reputation. As it happened, the Hungarian Soviet Republic (HSR) was established in 1918, and Kodály was appointed Deputy Director of the National Academy of Music in Budapest. Then, when the government was shortly overthrown, Kodály lost his job and was accused of crime against the state. Bartok spoke highly of the piece and worked to restore Kodály to public grace. (What are friends for...)

Maombi Asante (Prayer of Thanks) *Valerie Coleman*

The composer **Valerie Coleman** (b. 1970) first came to prominence as a flutist, performing widely as a recitalist and with the Imani Winds Quintet, of which she is a founding member. Her steady but gradual pivot to composition has been remarkable – She was named one of the “Top 35 Women Composers” by The Washington Post, and she was Performance Today’s “2020 Classical Woman of the Year.” Coleman describes her short work “Maombi Asante” as “an anthem of joy.” In the original Swahili, its title literally means “prayer of thanks,” and the work borrows from traditional African dance rhythms. An infectious groove takes over the violin and cello, while the flute radiates pure and exultant happiness and gratitude. (*program notes by David Kaplan*)

The piece was commissioned in 2006 by Blackledge Music, Inc., a non-profit consortium of musicians and performing artists dedicated to presenting interesting and unusual mixed chamber music at museums, local cultural venues, landmarks, and community events.

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“Strum”

Program Notes (continued)

Strum for String Quartet *Jessie Montgomery*

“Strum,” says the composer, “is the culminating result of several versions of a string quintet I wrote in 2006. It was originally written for the Providence String Quartet and guests of Community MusicWorks Players, then arranged for string quartet in 2008 with several small revisions. In 2012, the piece underwent its final revisions with a rewrite of both the introduction and the ending for the Catalyst Quartet in a performance celebrating the 15th annual Sphinx Competition.

“Originally conceived for the formation of a cello quintet, the voicing is often spread wide over the ensemble, giving the music an expansive quality of sound. Within Strum, I utilized texture motives, layers of rhythmic or harmonic ostinati that string together to form a bed of sound for melodies to weave in and out. The strumming pizzicato serves as a *texture motive* and the primary driving rhythmic underpinning of the piece. Drawing on American folk idioms and the spirit of dance and movement, the piece has a kind of narrative that begins with fleeting nostalgia and transforms into ecstatic celebration.” (*Strum program notes by Jessie Montgomery*)

Jessie Montgomery, Musical America’s 2023 Composer of the Year, is a GRAMMY-winning acclaimed composer, violinist, and educator whose music interweaves classical music with elements of vernacular music, improvisation, poetry, and social consciousness, making her an acute interpreter of twenty-first century American sound and experience. Her profoundly felt works have been described as “turbulent, wildly colorful and exploding with life” (*The Washington Post*) and are performed regularly by leading orchestras and ensembles around the world. In July 2021, she began a three-year appointment as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s Mead Composer-in-Residence. (*composer bio from www.jessiemontgomery.com*)

- Notes by Rhonda Gowen

CHRIS ARGENZIANO, *Guitar*



Chris Argenziano, a native of Reynolds, North Dakota, has been an active performer and educator in the Midwest since 2002. Versatile in a variety of styles, Argenziano specializes in classical, jazz, country, rock, and acoustic guitar. Throughout his musical career, Argenziano has been a featured performer with the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony Orchestra, as well as master classes with Christopher Parkening, Michael Chapdelaine, Phillip Rukavina and the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet.

Argenziano regularly performs on solo classical guitar and in both original and cover bands. He is currently involved in the jazz and classical duo Twelve Strings as well as the acoustic duo, A Gentleman and A Scholar. A guitar instructor since 2008, he maintains an active private studio in Fargo, ND. Argenziano is currently a member of the faculty in the Music Department at Valley City State University as Instructor of Guitar.

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