



HOPKINS CENTER

presents

## Cuarteto Latinoamericano

Saul Bitran *violin*

Aron Bitran *violin*

Javier Montiel *viola*

Alvaro Bitran *cello*

*with special guest*

Sally Pinkas *piano*

Spaulding Auditorium's Hamburg Steinway concert grand piano was purchased with generous gifts, from the Friends of Hopkins Center and Hood Museum of Art; the Class of 1942, in memory of Allan Dingwall '42; and anonymous donors.

Cosponsored by Vermont Public Radio.



This performance is made possible in part by generous support from the Frank L. Harrington 1924 #3 Fund.

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Friday, January 30, 1998 at 8:00 p.m.

SPAULDING AUDITORIUM • DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

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### PROGRAM

- Quartet No. 4 *Musica de Feria* Silvestre Revueltas (Mexico, 1899-1940)  
Reflejos de la Noche\* Mario Lavista (Mexico, 1943)  
Quartet No. 1 Alberto Ginastera (Buenos Aires, 1916-1983)  
Allegro violento ed agitato  
Vivacissimo  
Calmo e poetico  
Allegramente rustico  
Divertimento, for piano and quartet Gonzalo Castellanos Yumar  
(Venezuela, 1926)

### INTERMISSION

- Piano quintet in E Flat, Op. 44 Robert Schumann  
Allegro brillante (Germany, 1810-1856)  
In modo d'una marcia  
Scherzo, moto vivace  
Allegro ma non troppo

Guest pianist: Sally Pinkas  
\*dedicated to Cuarteto Latinoamericano

The Cuarteto Latinoamericano is represented by  
Ann Summers International, Toronto.

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### CUARTETO LATINOAMERICANO

Described as "first rate ensemble of passionate temperament" by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Cuarteto Latinoamericano has distinguished itself with performances on radio, television and in concert on three continents.

Comprised of three brothers, violinists Saul and Aron and cellist Alvaro Bitran, with violist Javier Montiel, it has been hailed as "a gem of a string quartet" by the *Pittsburgh Press*.

Cuarteto Latinoamericano was formed in Mexico in 1981 and two years later was awarded the prize of the Music Critics Association in Mexico. Since its founding, Cuarteto Latinoamericano has become a unique voice in classical music, bringing the works of Latin American composers to the world. Highlights of the quartet's recent seasons include performances in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, Pittsburgh, Mexico City, Toronto, Madrid, Boston and London. Cuarteto Latinoamericano has been described by *The Times of London* as "playing of a richness, an unanimity and instinct that surely places it in the first division of string quartets."

Despite a busy concert schedule, the quartet is credited with having taught an entire generation of Mexican string players, and presently holds two residencies: at the Centro Nacional de Artes in Mexico City and at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Mellon University (USA), where they celebrate their 10th season as quartet-in-residence. In addition to this, the quartet teaches seminars regularly at many conservatories and universities in the USA and Latin America, in 3-day and seasonal residencies. The 1997-1998 season marks the first of a seasonal residency in Washington.

Cuarteto Latinoamericano has recorded the most important string quartet literature by Latin American composers. They record for the New Albion, Dorian and Elan labels; their first CD for Elan (2218) was selected as Critic's Choice for 1989 by *The New York Times* and was highly praised by *Music and Musicians*, *American Record Guide*, *HPR*, *Schwann* and *Fanfare* magazines, and by *Le Monde de la Musique*. A premiere recording of Julian Orbon's *Concerto Gross*, with the Orquesta Sinfonica

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Simon Bolivar (Venezuela) under the direction of Eduardo Mata was released by the Dorian label. The Cuarteto has performed this work with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the San Antonio Symphony, the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Canada and the National Symphony in Mexico, among other orchestras.

Presently the Cuarteto is recording for Dorian the entire cycle of Villa-Lobos' 17 string quartets. Three volumes are now available.

Cuarteto Latinoamericano has been featured in most of the leading musical magazines, such as *The Strad*, *Chamber Music American*, and received the 1997 "most adventurous programming" award from ASCAP.

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#### PROGRAM NOTES

##### QUARTET NO.4 *MUSICA DE FERIA*

Silvestre Revueltas

The string quartet as we know it today developed along more or less parallel lines in Austria, Germany, Italy, and France during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Composers from Spain and Latin America were notably absent from the list of early contributors to this genre. In the twentieth century, however, several composers from Latin American countries have emerged whose contributions to the string quartet literature, though perhaps not yet fully recognized, are of major importance.

One of the best known of this group is the Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas (1899-1940), whose compositional life began just ten years before his death. Revueltas was born in Durango, Mexico, and began violin studies at the age of eight. At twelve he entered the Juarez Institute in Durango, and at the age of fourteen, while continuing his violin studies, also began composition under Rafael Tello. Further studies, while Revueltas was still a teenager, were at Saint Edward College in Austin, Texas, and at the Chicago Musical College. His first violin recitals were in Mexico in 1920. From 1924 to 1926 he gave a series of recitals of modern music with pianist Carlos Chavez. For the next two years he conducted orchestras in the United States and Mexico, then returned to live in Mexico City and devote himself primarily to composition.

Despite a fairly conventional musical upbringing, Revueltas acquired a distinctive personality as a composer that was characterized by spontaneity and reflected the temperament of contemporary Mexican life. Although his music does not directly quote Mexican folksong, his melodies and harmonies reflect the shrill colors of the people and the landscape, the festivities of the marketplace, and the raw vitality of popular street music. For Revueltas it was more natural to express faithfully the remains of Mexico's primitive culture still extant in many parts of the republic and in the mixture of different races and civilizations than to try to resurrect the "pure roots of strictly native elements." Despite an almost constant dissonance Revueltas' melodies are tuneful, repetitive, and full of sardonic humour.

All four of Revueltas' string quartets date from the beginning of his professional career as a composer, the first three from 1930-31, and the fourth (*Musica de Feria*) from 1932.

*Musica de Feria* (Music of the Fair), the fourth quartet, is in one continuous movement. A variety of colors and ideas are presented in contrasting sections by the generous use of double stops, harmonics, and pizzicati. The texture is thick; at times all four instruments play in unison, but more typical is a complete rhythmic and melodic independence of at least two of the four voices. The concluding *coda* (*presto; frenetico*) leads to a bombastic climax which ends the piece, another feature typical of Revueltas.

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Mario Lavista was born in 1943 in Mexico City, where he currently lives. Lavista is currently Professor of Composition and Analysis of Musical Language of the 20th century at the National Conservatory of Music in Mexico City.

"In *Reflejos de la Noche* (Reflections of the Night) for string quartet, I have wanted to eliminate any real sounds and use exclusively harmonic sounds: those 'magic dusts,' audible reflections of each of their generators, which have been only used in music in a very sporadic way. The technical difficulties that these sounds imply for the performers are enormous; hence the use of a simply and easily apprehensible musical form, both for performers and listeners.

The title of the piece refers to a poem by the Mexican poet Xavier Villaurrutia called *Echa*:

'La noche juega con los ruidos,  
copiandolos en sus espejos de sonidos'  
(Night plays with noises/copying them in its sound mirrors)."

\**Reflejos de la Noche* is dedicated to the Cuarteto Lationamericano.

—Mario Lavista.

#### DIVERTIMENTO, FOR PIANO AND QUARTET

Gonzalo Castellanos Yumar

Gonzalo Yumar composed *Divertimento* in 1961 in Siena, Italy, when he was studying with Bitto Frazzy. Two years later, at the request of the Venezuelan ensemble, Collegium Musicum, the piece was arranged for piano and double quintet (strings and winds). This second version won the 1963 *Premio Nacional de Musica* (National Music Award) in Venezuela. Castellanos regards this piece as an attempt to reconcile the Venezuelan national style and international influences.

The formal structure of the work is an exposition embodying two themes, a *divertimento* and a *recapitulation*. The first theme of the exposition is characterized by its rhythmic impetus and jumps from one instrument to another. The second theme, performed mainly on the cello, is more lyrical in character. The contrasting middle segment, which Castellanos denotes as a *divertimento* section, features a solo by the cello with accompaniment by the ensemble. The last section restates the first two ideas presented in the exposition, then concludes with a *coda*.

Even though this structure resembles that of a *sonata* form, the composer has stated that the piece "only employs some elements" of that form. "It would be erroneous to consider the middle section a development, since this section presents absolutely new material: there are not themes or motives being developed." Castellanos believes in the primacy of melody. The melodic designs in this composition, especially the cello passage, evoke the *canción romantica venezolana* (Venezuelan romantic song), particularly the Spanish influenced *serenata* (serenade) which, Castellanos believes, had been influenced by the melodic contour of the Gregorian chant.

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