

# Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth

presents

## Cuarteto Latinoamericano with Sally Pinkas, piano

Saul Bitran, violin

Aron Bitran, violin

Javier Montiel, viola

Alvaro Bitran, cello

**Wednesday, February 23, 7:30 pm**

Spaulding Auditorium • Dartmouth College • 2022

---

*Generously supported by the Aires Family Fund for the Performing Arts, the Frank L. Harrington 1924 Fund No. 3, the C. Henry Hathaway 1907 Memorial Fund No. 3, the Nathan W. Pearson 1932 and Sons Fund, and Linda and Frederick A. Roesch '60, T'61, P'88, P'90*

*Spaulding Auditorium's Hamburg Steinway concert grand piano was purchased with generous gifts from Members of the Hopkins Center and Members of the Hood Museum of Art; the class of 1942, in memory of Allan Dingwall '42; and anonymous donors. Its New York Steinway concert grand piano was restored with a generous gift by Huntley Allison '42 P'74.*

# Program

Approximate Duration: *90 minutes*

Miguel del Águila (b. 1957).....Boliviana

1. Alegre
2. Returning Home Under the Rain
3. Lost My Way in Darkness
4. And the Sun Came Out

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)..... Two Fantasias, arr. for string quartet

Miguel del Águila.....Tamboreño\*

## Intermission

Leo Brouwer (b. 1939) ..... String Quartet No. 3

- La voz Ritual para el Comienzo del Año*
- Por el Cuerpo del Viento*
- La Danza Imposible*
- Cambió el Ritmo de la Noche*

Miguel del Águila..... Concierto en Tango

\* World premiere, a Hop commission, dedicated to Sally Pinkas and the Cuarteto Latinoamericano

# Program Notes

## **Boliviana** World premiere of quintet version

Written in 2020, it was originally commissioned by Cuarteto Latinoamericano as a guitar and strings quintet and premiered in 2009 by the quartet and by Manuel Barrueco. In 2020 the composer wrote the piano quintet version which premiered today. The four movements are highly descriptive. As their titles suggest, there is a protagonist and a physical Space: The Bolivian “altiplano.”

“As I was writing this music I could actually see, get acquainted with, and relate closely to this specific person wandering in the desolated landscape of Bolivia’s highlands. I never met this person and have no idea why it was there. In the music, this protagonist’s voice becomes that of the guitar.

### 1. Alegre

This first movement serves as a short introduction to the work, setting the place and time in the South American Altiplano. This theme will later return in an expanded form to close the work in the fourth movement. The mood is bright and cheerful. It’s the beginning of a new day and a new journey.

### 2. Returning Home Under the Rain (Regresando a casa bajo la lluvia)

The Traveler is on his long journey home. He is tired and lonely as he walks under freezing rain. The music portrays here the general mood, the landscape. The listener sees the action from a distance.

### 3. Lost My Way in Darkness (Me perdí en la oscuridad)

Now, the entire ensemble becomes the travelers’ own intimate feelings, his own voice (still mainly played by the piano). The sky becomes dark and he loses his way. He feels that in the same way, he has lost his way in life and that this is the reason that made him undertake this long journey home: to find himself again.

### 4. And the Sun Came Out (Y el sol salió)

Finally the clouds dissipate and the sun comes out brighter than ever. He can now see home in the distance. The music/journey is filled with optimism and excitement as the travelers know that everything will be fine now that he is back home where he is anxiously expected.

The musical language in this work uses elements from Andean folklore and the string instruments are often imitating some traditional Latin American instruments like Quenas, Charangos, Bombos and other percussion instruments.

*Miguel del Águila*

## **Two Fantasias**

Over the course of about two weeks in the summer of 1680, as he was just 21 years old, Henry Purcell produced an astonishing set of Fantasias for viol consort, composed in three, four and five parts. These remarkably intricate pieces dazzle listener and player alike with virtuosic counterpoint, surprising harmonic shifts, pangs of pleading dissonance, and cascading fugal material. Moments of poetic homophony are also interspersed amidst these endlessly inventive episodes. Purcell manages to invert, reflect, augment and superimpose thematic material in a way that expands all previously known limits. Some speculate that these Fantasias were a set of compositional exercises, an extension of Purcell’s enthusiastic study of English and Italian counterpoint. It is highly unlikely that these works were related to Purcell’s activities at court; by this time, consort music was falling out of fashion, and many would have thought Purcell’s fixation on the idiom to be rather backward-looking. If the Fantasias of Purcell were performed at all during his lifetime, it would have been in private, under highly personal circumstances.

*Elise Groves and Shirley Hunt*

## Program Notes *continued*

**Tamboreño** (Like Drums) for string quartet and piano  
- World Premiere

Commissioned by the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth College for Cuarteto Latinoamericano and pianist Sally Pinkas.

The eight-minute long work for string quartet and piano is the composer's Op. 125, written in 2020.

The title, a made-up word related to Tambor, Spanish for drum, illustrates the highly rhythmical nature of this piece which conveys a group of drummers first warming up and then improvising together on different Latin inspired rhythms. The piece contains no improvised sections; its goal is to give the impression of a spontaneous jam session among friends which slowly turns into music. As the work progresses the music becomes a more intense and dramatic finale triggering a joyous, upbeat ending where music and musicians seem stuck in their own frenzy.

*Miguel del Águila*

### **String Quartet No. 3**

Leo Brouwer (born March 1, 1939 in Havana) 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 String Quartet No. 3 (1991-97) relates back to his 1983 trio for violin, cello and piano and to the 1984 Canciones Remotas for chamber orchestra, even sharing some of the same movement title. The first movement, *Ritual para el Comienzo del Año*, 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, *Por el Cuerpo del Viento* (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, *La Danza Imposible* (The 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 another where the two violins play a plaintive African-inspired song, on a simpler 4/4 meter. The fourth movement, *Cambió el Ritmo de la Noche* (Night's Rhythm changed), also on an A-B-A form, is a veritable perpetuum mobile where the viola maintains fast eighth 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 was premiered in 1998 in Cordoba by the Cuarteto de Cuerdas de La Habana, to whom it is dedicated.

*Saul Bitran*

**Concierto En Tango:** World Premiere of quintet version

Originally commissioned as a cello concerto by the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, it was premiered at Kleinhans Hall, Buffalo on May 2014 by BPO, conducted by JoAnn Falletta and cellist Roman Mekinulov. The premiere received "the longest and loudest rounds of applause I can recall" (Mary Kunz, *The Buffalo News*, May 11, 2014) and "The audience showed overwhelming enthusiasm for the work, and applauded until conductor, soloist and composer had returned at least a dozen times to acknowledge their enthusiasm." (Robert Plyler, *The Post-Journal*). Months later, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra performed it with cellist Joseph Johnson, Earl Lee conductor. Within two years

Concierto en Tango would be performed over 25 times by orchestras worldwide to great critics' and audiences' acclaim: "a robust masterpiece" (Chris Morgan, *Scene Magazine*, London). Recorded the same year by the BPO, Concierto en Tango was nominated 2015 for a Latin Grammy Award for Best Classical Contemporary Composition. A second version for string quartet and orchestra was written for Cuarteto Latinoamericano as well as this piano quintet version.

"While most people associate Tango with the 1920s Valentino films or the Tango Nuevo of Piazzola, to many of us who grew up in Montevideo or Buenos Aires in the 50s and 60s, Tango has a very different connotation. It is associated with childhood memories of happy and prosperous times and with happy family gatherings where we as children often just enjoyed watching everyone dance. In that context, Tango carries a special nostalgia from that time and place in a society that no longer exists. Those were the times before the economic collapse of the 70s and the horrors of the 'Guerra Sucia' of the military dictatorships that followed. The imagery of these events is portrayed within the music of Concierto en Tango.

"Rather than limiting myself to this style, I also included idioms from earlier Tango styles, including the 19th-century Spanish Tango-Habanera, the Brazilian Tango/Maxixe, and the early Milongas of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in which the African influence was still

evident in its syncopations and fast beat. However, Concierto en Tango has a rhythmic complexity beyond any of these dances, and it represents my abstraction of those rhythms as they fuse with my own personal style. "The harmonic language is conservative. It relies mainly on major/minor modes and 7th or 9th chordal harmonies, as they are used in Tango. I deliberately tried to avoid a 'classical' sound and especially the overly intense romantic style of many cello concertos, which combined with the melodrama of Tango would have resulted in a very dark work. Several humorous and light hearted passages add a joyful side to the tango genre which is traditionally deprived of such positive emotions. "The overall form is ABA— fast-slow-fast. The middle, slow section features the traditional cantabile and expressive qualities of the cello while the outer fast sections require an outmost rhythmic precision, bow control and accuracy of intonation in the highest registers of the instrument. Some of these fast sections challenge the performers with constant time signature shifts. (At times we can find almost one hundred consecutive bars where each one has a different and irregular time signature). The most used meters are 7/16 + 9/16 + 11/16 + 5/16. Some of these passages are played by a quintet of soloists comprising the cello, violin, double bass, piano and conga drums. Concierto en Tango was written to honor the memory of my brother, Nelson del Águila (1964-2012)."

*Miguel del Águila*

# About the Artists

Composed of **Saul, Aron and Alvaro Bitran** and **Javier Montiel, Cuarteto Latinoamericano**, celebrating its 40th anniversary season, is the world's leading proponent of Latin American music for string quartet. Founded in 1982, the Cuarteto has toured extensively throughout Europe, North and South America, Israel, China, Japan and New Zealand. They have premiered more than a hundred works and continue to introduce new and neglected composers to the genre. Winners of the 2012 and 2016 Latin Grammys for Best Classical Recordings, they have been recognized with the Mexican Music Critics Association Award and three times received Chamber Music America/ASCAP's "Most Adventurous Programming" Award. The Cuarteto Latinoamericano was quartet-in-residence at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh from 1988 until 2008. They have collaborated with world-class artists such as Janos Starker, Eduardo Mata, Rudolf Buchbinder, Manuel Barrueco and Itamar Golan. The group is active with teaching and mentorship activities at multiple music schools, universities and conservatories as well as numerous international festivals.

Three-time Grammy nominated American composer **Miguel del Águila** has established himself among the most distinctive and highly regarded composers of his generation with over 130 works that combine drama, driving rhythms and nostalgic nods to his South American roots. His music, which enjoys over 200 performances annually, has been hailed as "brilliant and witty" (*New York Times*) and "sonically dazzling" (*Los Angeles Times*). He is currently composer-in-residence with Denmark's Ensemble Storstrøm, following a 2020 residency with Orchestra of the Americas. New and upcoming releases of his works include CDs by Norwegian Radio Orchestra; the Louisiana Philharmonic, Augusta Symphony, Cuarteto Latinoamericano and the Eroica Trio, on Naxos, Albany, Bridge and Centaur. 2020-2021 collaborations include performances by Chicago Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Charlotte Symphony, Los Angeles

Chamber Orchestra, Brazil's Theatro São Pedro orchestra, São Paulo Dance Company, and Stavanger Symphoniorchesterer, Norway. Besides three Grammy nominations, he has received a Kennedy Center Friedheim Award, Magnum Opus Award, grants from New Music USA/Music Alive, the Copland Foundation and Lancaster Symphony Composer of the Year award. His music, recorded on 52 CDs, has been performed by over 100 orchestras and by thousands of ensembles and soloists worldwide. He graduated from San Francisco Conservatory and Vienna's Universität für Musik und Darstellende Kunst. His music is published by Peermusic Classical, Theodore Presser and self-published.

Following her London debut at Wigmore Hall, Israeli-born pianist **Sally Pinkas** has garnered acclaim for her performances as soloist and chamber musician. Among highlights are performances with the Boston Pops, the Aspen Philharmonia and New York's Jupiter Symphony, and at the festivals of Marlboro, Aspen, Rockport (USA), Pontlevoy (France), Havana (Cuba) and HCMC Conservatory (Vietnam). From a first-ever performance of Beethoven's Emperor Concerto in Bandung, Indonesia, to premieres of George Rochberg's monumental *Circles of Fire* for two pianos in Russia and Nigeria, and a revival of rarely-heard 19th-century Filipino Salon Music in its birth city Manila, Pinkas commands a wide repertoire and shares it enthusiastically with young pianists through masterclasses and workshops. Pinkas holds performance degrees from Indiana University and the New England Conservatory of Music, and a PhD in Composition from Brandeis University. Her principal teachers were Russell Sherman, George Sebok, Luise Vosgerchian and Genia Bar-Niv (piano), Sergiu Natra (composition) and Robert Koff (chamber music). Pianist-in-residence at the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth College, she is Professor of Music at Dartmouth's Music Department.

# Connecting Artists to the Community

During their time at the Hopkins Center, Cuarteto Latinoamericano engaged with Dartmouth faculty and students through several class visits in the Music Department and through a strings masterclass with students. They also took part in a string workshop with the Upper Valley Music Center. In addition, they participated in a post-show discussion with the composer Miguel del Águila and members of the Dartmouth community.

## Hopkins Center Board of Advisors

**Jim Bildner '75**  
**Anne Fleischli Blackburn '91 P'23**  
**Daniel Bryant '91 P'23**  
**Kenneth L. Burns H'93**  
**Rebecca Byrne P'20 P'22**  
**Les Chao '78 P'20**  
**Barbara J. Couch**  
**Kim Lessow Crockett '92**  
**Rachel Dratch '88**

**Claire Foerster P'18 P'21**  
**Lizanne Fontaine '77 P'04 P'09**  
**Kelly Fowler Hunter '83 Tu'88 P'13 P'15 P'19**  
**Nini Meyer P'22**  
**Hilary Spaulding Richards '92**  
**Laurel J. Richie '81**, Chair of the Board  
**Dan Rush '92**  
**Peter S. Vossball '92**  
**Sharon Washington '81**

## Hopkins Center Directorate

**Mary Lou Aleskie**, Howard L. Gilman '44 Director  
**Michael Bodel**, Director of External Affairs  
**Joshua Price Kol '93**, Managing Director/Executive Producer  
**Jan Sillery**, Director of Financial and Administrative Operations  
**Sydney Stowe**, Director of Hopkins Center Film