FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 8:00 PM
PARAMOUNT THEATRE, OAKLAND

NOTES FROM MEXICO

SILVESTRE REVUELtas
Sensemayá

CARLOS CHÁVEZ
Piano Concerto
   I. Largo non troppo Allegro agitato
   II. Molto Lento
   III. Allegro non troppo
   Llewellyn Sanchez-Werner, piano
   (Llewellyn Sanchez-Werner’s appearance is supported by a grant from The Ross McKee Foundation)

INTERMISSION

RUBÉN FUENTES
Hay Unos Ojos
Diana Gameros, guitar & vocals

Medley of Traditional Mexican Songs:
   FELIPE VALDÉZ LEAL
   Mi Ranchito
   JOSÉ LÓPEZ ALAVEZ
   Canción Mixteca
   AGUSTÍN LARA
   Farolito
   Diana Gameros, guitar & vocals
   DIANA GAMEROS
   En Juárez
   Diana Gameros, guitar & vocals
   Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Carlos Moreno
   JOSÉ PABLO MONCAYO
   Huapango
   Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Carlos Moreno

Thank you to the Oakland East Bay Symphony for continuing to enrich our community with music!

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Michael Morgan, Conductor

Season Media Sponsors: Oakland Magazine, KDFC, East Bay Express
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The 2014-2015 season is supported by grants from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, and the City of Oakland’s Cultural Funding Program.
Michael Morgan, Music Director & Conductor
Bryan Nies, Assistant Conductor

FIRST VIOLIN
Vivian Warkentin, Principal
Dawn Harms, Concertmaster
Jeremy Preston, First Violin & Concertmaster
Kristina Anderson, Second Violin
Patrice May, Second Violin
Ellen Gronningen, First Violin
Deborah Spangler, First Violin
Emanuela Nikiforova, First Violin
Natasha Makijiani, Viola
Hee-guen Song, Viola
Michelle Maruyama, Violin
Antoine van Dongen, Violin

SECOND VIOLIN
David Cheng, Principal
Sue-mi Shin, Violin
Betsy London, Violin
Cecilia Huang, Violin
Tess Varley, Violin
Andrea Plesnarski, Oboe
Amy Likar, Piccolo
Tyler Mack, Principal
Jim Kassis, Bassoon

CELLO
Daniel Reiter, Principal
Michelle Kwon, Second Cellist
Elizabeth Vandervennet, Third Cellist
Michael Graham, Bass
Richie Peree, Double Bass

STRINGS BASS
Patrick McCarthy, Double Bass
Randy White, Double Bass
Karen Wells, Double Bass

PITTORENNI & CORSAIRO
Antoine van Dongen, Bass
Michelle Maruyama, Bass
Hee-guen Song, Bass

FLUTE
Alice Lenaghan, Principal
Rena Uso-Trapani, Flute
Leslie Chin, Piccolo

OBED
Andrea Plesnarski, Oboe
Robin May, Oboe

RECORDER & BASSOON
William Harvey, Recorder
Leonard Ott, Bassoon

TRUMPET
Thomas Livings, Cornet

TROMBONE
Bruce Crisp, Principal
Brendon J. Whaley, Bass Trombone

HORN
Meredith Clark, French Horn

PIANIST & ORCHESTRA
Meredith Clark, Piano

DIANA GAMEROS, GUITAR & VOCALS
Diána Gameros is a singer, songwriter, music instructor and social activist. Originally from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, Gameros arrived in the Bay Area six years ago.

LLEWELLYN SANCHEZ-WERNER, PIANO
At just 18 years old, Llewellyn Sanchez-Werner was named the 2014 Gilmore Young Artist, an honor awarded every two years singling out the most promising American pianists of the new generation. He received the Atlantic Council's 2014 Young Global Citizen Award, along with fellow recipients Robert De Niro, Prime Ministers Shinwon Peres and Lee Kuan Yew, and Presidents Enrique Pena Nieto and Petro Poroshenko.

In 2010, he was the first American soloist to perform in Israel with the Israeli National Symphony Orchestra for an international audience of diplomats, US soldiers, and Israelis of all ages (Gershwin and Grieg Concerti). The concert raised funds to support the Children's Cancer Hospital and celebrated World Day for Cultural Diversity.

Llewellyn made Juilliard history at age 14 as the youngest student ever admitted to the College Division. In 2009, he performed solo at the White House for President Obama; and in 2013, for the Presidential Inauguration concert at the Kennedy Center.

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General David Petraeus recognized Llewellyn “for his courageous humanitarian contributions through the arts” and for “strengthening the ties that unite our nations,” in a Pentagon performance. To excite more youth about classical music, Llewellyn performed 16 concerts for 20,000 North American students; for an anti-bullying campaign, he performed “Beethoven and the Bully” for 6,000 students.
and has since been creating music that reflects the 21st century experiences of a young indie artist at the borders between cultures, languages, and genres.

Gameros was born to a musical family where she was surrounded by traditional Mexican songs of love and revolution. The first of her family to receive formal music lessons, Gameros left Mexico as a teenager to study piano and recording technology in Michigan. During those formative years, Gameros not only soaked up the sounds of classical music, the avant-garde, world music, and jazz, but also collected stories and images of immigrants, forever influencing her own diverse musical style and the profound themes of her compositions and lyrics.

After just a few years in the Bay Area, Gameros’ talent and versatility have brought her a steady stream of high profile gigs at such notable venues as Herbst Theater, Brava Theater, The Independent, Fox Theater, SFJAZZ Center, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and dozens of other venues small and large. Gameros has opened concerts for Ximena Sariñana, and Latin Grammy-nominee Ximena Sariñana, and Latin Grammy-winners La Santa Cecilia. She was one of the artists featured in the MEX-I-AM Festival, which included the participation of renowned Mexican artists such as Natalia Lafourcade, Murcof and Tambuco.

Even as she continues her musical journey, Gameros has inspired her community as an activist promoting social justice and global awareness through her support of organizations like ALIADI (Alianza Latinoamericana por los Derechos de los Inmigrantes), Dolores Street Community Services, CARECEN, Galería de la Raza, Biosafety Alliance, Urban Sprouts, SF Living Wage Coalition, andLas Hormigas.

In November, 2013, Gameros released her first official album, entitled Éterno Retorno, a soulful retrospective of her journey as a musician and immigrant. The songs on Gameros’ album include SB1070, which she wrote in response to the anti-immigration Senate Bill passed in Arizona in April, 2010, and Libre Y Serena, the story of an immigrant woman who decides to return to her homeland.

In October, 2014, Gameros received the Emerging Leader Award from the Latina/Chicana Foundation.

BALLETON FOLKLORICO MEXICANO DE CARLOS MORENO

Founded in 1967 by Carlos Moreno Samaniego, the Ballet Folklórico Mexicano has achieved recognition both in the United States and in Mexico. In 1980, the Mexican consulate in San Francisco named the company the official ambassador for ongoing cultural activities with Mexico. It has held that distinction for over twenty years, during which time it has regularly conducted tours in Mexican cities such as Guadalajara, Oaxaca, Aguascalientes, and Durango.

Drawing on the artistic variety of Mexico’s different regions, the Ballet Folklórico Mexicano has a dance repertory of 120 pieces. Many of these are presented in their traditional form, while others have been re-staged to include artistic elements from more contemporary choreography. In this way, the indigenous rhythms of Tarascan Indian dances from central Mexico stand in sharp contrast to the Spanish military and courtship dances from that region. Similarly, the African influences that characterize dances from the Gulf of Mexico are juxtaposed by Mexican polkas that mark the influence of eastern Europe from the north. In her review of the company, Jennifer Fisher, the celebrated dance critic for the Los Angeles Times, noted that the Ballet “… has much appeal. They are tightly rehearsed and (their) choreography is inventive.”

The Ballet Folklórico Mexicano maintains an active performance agenda. The company’s yearly “Navidad en México” show at Chabot College in Hayward is a highlight for the entire Bay Area Community. The troupe also tours regularly in the western and southwestern United States.

SILVESTRE REVUELTA (1899-1940)

Born on New Year’s Eve, 1899, in Santiago Papasquiaro in the northern state of Durango in Mexico, Revueltas studied violin as a youth. He came to the United States three times, for study in Chicago and Austin, Texas and for work as a theater musician in Texas and Alabama. He returned to Mexico City in 1929 to become assistant conductor to Carlos Chávez and the newly founded Orquesta Sinfónica de México. After seven years, differences with Chávez led to the founding of Revueltas’ own ensemble, the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional.

Revueltas wrote music steeped in the traditions of his country, without actually quoting folksongs as such. “Why should I put on boots and climb mountains for Mexican folklore if I have the spirit of Mexico deep within me?” he said. Revueltas died of pneumonia in 1940. Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians blames his early death on “exertions and irregular life.”

His last orchestral work was Sensemayá, composed in 1938 from a song for voice and small orchestra he had written the year before. It was introduced by the Orquesta Sinfónica de México on December 18, 1938. The title is a word meaning ritualistic popular rhythm or song. The work was inspired by a poem by the Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén subtitled “Chant to Kill a Snake.” The poem begins:

Mayombe–bombe–Mayombe!
Mayombe–bombe…
The snake has glassy eyes
The snake comes and coils itself around a tree
With its glassy eyes around a tree

The Piano Concerto was commissioned by the Guggenheim Foundation in 1938. The work was introduced on January 4, 1942, at Carnegie Hall. Eugene List was the pianist, with Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting the New York Philharmonic. In his liner notes to Jorge Federico Osorio’s recording, Elbio Bariliari writes: “The concerto’s monumental first movement is an exhaustive sample of Chávez’s mature musical language: sharp angles; strong rhythms; abrupt changes from one block of sound to another, often without any transition or preparation; and the use of native scales, grooves, and timbres – especially the intensive use of percussion and flutes with accents on the piercing sounds of E-flat clarinet and piccolo.”

In the second movement, “Chávez…offers a chamber-like sound with the piano striking strong chords in the lower register and the harp echoing those strokes. The double reeds introduce a short theme associated with indigenous sounds. What happens after that is very minimalist: a skillfully played game among these few
elements and a progressive crescendo that dissolves into nothingness without offering the easy relief of a resolution.”

“Despite its apparently calm title, the last movement … ranges from nervous to frenetic. It is not as demanding in its proportions or instrumental chemistry as the first movement. Even so, its whimsical nature, with passages at breakneck speed, demands a display of uncommon virtuosity which, if realized, will awaken the audience to an ovation that shakes the walls of the most massive orchestral hall.”

Huapango

José Pablo Moncayo (1912-1958)

Born in Guadalajara, Moncayo studied composition with Carlos Chávez, played jazz piano in local cabarets, and eventually became the conductor of the Mexican National Symphony Orchestra. He was one of the “Group of Four” Mexican composers who were dedicated to promoting a national music. He and another member, Blas Galindo, once visited the town of Alvarado in the state of Veracruz to collect folk music. There they encountered a dance called the “huapango.” Depending on the source, huapango is a corruption of the word “fandango,” or a word from the Náhuatl language meaning “the site where the wood is placed,” namely, the wooden planks for dancing.

Moncayo used three of these huapangos in an orchestral work first performed on August 15, 1941, by Orquesta Sinfónica de México, conducted by Carlos Chávez. It has become a second Mexican national anthem. A lyrical central section with solos for harp and winds is flanked by more rhythmic parts. In the last section, trumpet and trombone engage in a kind of musical duel.

~ Program Notes by Charley Samson, copyright 2015.

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