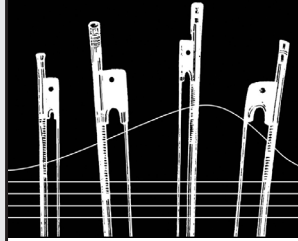


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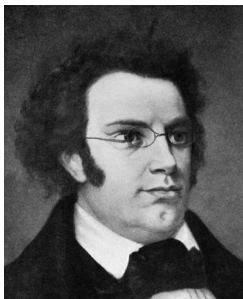


**FINE CHAMBER MUSIC
SINCE 1978**

**VERONA
QUARTET**

Sunday, March 20, 2022

Program notes by Connie Mayo



Quartettsatz in C Minor, D 703

Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

I. Allegro assai

The Quartettsatz (quartet movement) is seen as the first of Schubert's mature string quartets. Though it was intended to be the first movement of a full quartet, the remainder of the piece was left unfinished. As with his famous "unfinished" Symphony No. 8, it is now accepted as a complete work. Written in 1820 when Schubert was twenty-three, the Quartettsatz is technically more difficult than his previous eleven quartets and is clearly intended for professional string players. His earlier ones were written as Hausmusik for amateur musicians. Schubert regularly enjoyed playing his quartets at home with his father and brothers.

The piece begins in a tone of quiet apprehension, then quickly builds to a state of furious intensity. After relaxing into a lyrical second theme, it wanders restlessly through various keys, toggling between emotional extremes. Never seeming to settle, it ends as it began, in disquietude.

Brahms discovered the Quartettsatz forty years after Schubert's death; he scheduled the first performance of the work in 1867, then edited it for publication in 1870.



Leyendas, An Andean Walkabout

Gabriela Lena Frank (b. 1972)

- I. Toyos
- II. Tarqueada
- III. Himno de Zampoñas
- IV. Chasqui
- V. Canto de Velorio
- VI. Coquetos

An American composer and pianist, Gabriela Lena Frank is considered one of the most prolific and gifted composers of her generation and a leading voice for multiculturalism in music. Cultural identity is central to her music which fuses contemporary classical and Latin American styles and has been described as sophisticated, earthy, vibrant and soulful. Inspired by the music of Béla Bartók, she has traveled extensively throughout South America, studying Latin cultures, poetry, mythology and native musical styles, making her somewhat of a musical anthropologist.

Frank was born to a mother of mixed Peruvian/Chinese ancestry and a father of Lithuanian descent. While growing up in Berkeley, California, she was exposed to much traditional South American music. Since birth, she has lived with significant hearing loss, and as a child—at the encouragement of her piano teacher—she began to improvise, mixing folk music and Andean elements into her songs.

Recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Latin Grammy for Best Classical Contemporary Composition and a Heinz Award for the Humanities, Frank has composed numerous works for solo artists, chamber groups and symphonies. In 2017 she founded the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy at her home in California which seeks to foster the talent of emerging composers, particularly those who might not be well represented in the classical music world. Currently, she is Composer in Residence with the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra.

The composer describes her six movement *Leyendas*, *An Andean Walkabout*, first performed in 2001:

"This string quartet draws inspiration from the idea of mestizaje as envisioned by the Peruvian writer Jose Maria Arguedas, where cultures can coexist without the subjugation of one by another."

"Toyos" depicts one of the most recognizable instruments of the Andes, the panpipe. One of the largest kinds is the breathy toyo which requires great stamina and lung power, and is often played in parallel fourths or fifths.

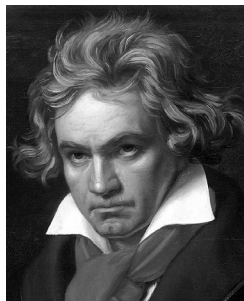
"Tarqueada" is a forceful and fast number featuring the tarka, a heavy wooden duct flute that is blown harshly in order to split the tone. Tarka ensembles typically also play in fourths and fifths.

"Himno de Zamponas" features a particular type of panpipe ensemble that divides up melodies through a technique known as hocketing. The characteristic sound of the zampona panpipe is that of a fundamental tone blown flatly so that overtones ring out on top, hence the unusual scoring of doublestops in this movement.

"Chasqui" depicts a legendary figure from the Inca period, the chasqui runner, who sprinted great distances to deliver messages between towns separated from one another by Andean peaks. The chasqui needed to travel light. Hence, I take artistic license to imagine his choice of instruments to be the charango, a high-pitched cousin of the guitar, and the lightweight bamboo quena flute.

"Canto de Velorio" portrays another well-known Andean personality, a professional crying woman known as the llorona. Hired to render funeral rituals even sadder, the llorona is accompanied here by a second llorona and an additional chorus of mourning women (coro de mujeres). The chant Dies Irae is quoted as a reflection of the comfortable mix of Quechua Indian religious rites with those from Catholicism.

"Coqueteos" is a flirtatious love song sung by gallant men known as romanceros. As such, it is direct in its harmonic expression, bold and festive. The romanceros sing in harmony with one another against a backdrop of guitars which I think of as a vendaval do guitarras ("storm of guitars")."



String Quartet No. 14 in C# minor, Op. 131

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)

- I. Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo
- II. Allegro molto vivace
- III. Allegro moderato
- IV. Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile
- V. Presto
- VI. Adagio quasi un poco andante
- VII. Allegro

Completed in July of 1826, seven months before his death, Op. 131 is the third of Beethoven's five late quartets. He considered it his most perfect single work and many would agree. Stravinsky called it, "perfect, inevitable, inalterable." Schumann wrote, "it stands on the extreme boundary of all that has hitherto been attained by human art and imagination."

Beethoven broke the mold of the traditional string quartet in writing this work which was considered strange and radical at the time. All sense of the previous form disappeared, replaced with one that appears fresh, original and eternally contemporary. A transcendent quality pervades much of the music which flows like a stream of consciousness delivering an overall sense of sadness and detachment. Not held to any constraints that might have been imposed by a commission, Beethoven was able to experiment freely, filling hundreds of pages with sketches for the piece.

The design of the work is an overarching form: seven continuous movements played without pause, each section dissolving into the next. From the beginning it establishes a mood of introspection with a slow, processional fugue that introduces a second lively movement based on a dance tune. A brief recitative lasting less than a minute sets up the fourth and central slow movement. This is the heart of the piece, a set of expressive variations in different tempos and meters based on a simple theme. The Presto is a humorous scherzo, but in 2/4 rather than 3/4, with adagio sections and a coda that begins with the whistling sound of *sul ponticello*: bows playing close to the bridge. The sad, lamenting theme of the Adagio introduces the finale, which has been referred to as "the giddy-up movement" with its unrelenting rhythm.