

Date du récital/Date of the recital: 28th May 2023
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The following program is an invitation to a musical journey. The idea is to travel through lesser-known works from the solo Double Bass repertoire, concentrating mainly on Latin-American contemporary composers.

The concert will set sail in Venezuela to the sounds of a Venezuelan waltz. Luis Alfredo Laguna was a gifted guitarist and prolific songwriter born in 1926 in Guacara, Carabobo. His compositional style stands out with the use of contemporary harmonies and rhythms paired with melodies of a haunting beauty. This mostly self-taught composer is known for his "merengues caraqueños" (Venezuelan folkloric style in 5/8), his "joropos" (Venezuelan folkloric style in compound meter where the melody is felt in 6/8 while the accompaniment varies from 3/4 to 6/8 and vice-versa) and lastly his Venezuelan waltzes (a combination of the European heritage Waltze on a single theme with slight variations, with Venezuelan syncopation.) Not a lot can be said about the inspiration behind his waltz "Natalia"; we can only speculate on it based on the ethereal beauty of the melody and the title of the piece...

The following piece will take us to Brazil, where we will be led by Brazilian composer Sonia Ray. Writer, professor, researcher, and musician Sonia Ray holds a doctoral degree in Double Bass Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Iowa (USA, 1998) and attended two post-doctoral research exchange programs: at The University of North Texas (USA, 2008) and at Université Paris VII (2016-2017). When asked to comment on her piece "ONDAS para contrabaixo solo," dedicated "ao Maestro Edmundo Villani Cortes," written in 1993, she shares that she draws her inspiration from waves. Wanting to explore the entire instrument from the low range to the high range in ways that the sound created impersonates the motion of waves. Sonia Ray specifies that she doesn't limit this allegory to its most naturally obvious instance; she desires to also expand this concept to electric waves, waves of the body, and waves of the mind. She specifies that the middle section is to be performed with free meter and dynamics to allow the performer more artistic license.

The next piece, originally dedicated to the Latin Orchestra of Europe international double bass competition, launches our voyage to Mexico. Written by Rodrigo Mata in 2021, this piece is directly inspired by traditional Mexican music. In it, we can find three dances. A dance called "son itsmeño" from the state of Oaxaca inspires the first movement, "Itsmo de Tehuanpec." The next dance "son jorocho" native from the state of Veracruz inspires the 2nd movement "Sotavento Veracruzano". This movement is intended to imitate the "arapa jorocho" (the harp from the "son jorocho"). Finally, the dance "son huasteco," originally from the region of Huasteca Potosina in the state of San Luis Potosí, makes up the 3rd movement, "Huesteca." Like the 2nd movement this 3rd movement imitates another instrument, in this case, the "violin huasteco" (the violin from the "son huasteco"). Rodrigo Mata is not a stranger to unconventional techniques, an exploration he

shares in his compositions. For example, the programmed piece, "Sones de La Tierra", although written within a tonal structure, covers extended techniques such as pizzicato flageolet, pizzicato arpeggiato, and the combination of natural harmonics with regular notes, to name a few.

The following piece is by the internationally acclaimed composer Astor Piazzolla. A former student of Béla Wilda, Alberto Ginestera, Raul Spivak, Béla Bartok, Igor Stravinsky, and Nadia Boulanger. Astor Piazzolla was a revolutionary composer, incorporating elements of jazz and classical music into tango to create what we know today as "nuevo tango." In the style of "nuevo tango" Piazzolla writes this piece for Erique "Kicho" Diaz. Piazzolla met "Kicho" while they were both playing in Anibal Troilo's orchestra, a prolific tango ensemble known for expressive performances, and Troilo's arranging techniques and compositional style. Piazzolla's admiration for "Kicho" inspired a lifelong friendship and a musical partnership. In the article *It Takes a Bass to Tango*, Gabriela Mauriño writes, "Piazzolla used in his compositions all the double bass effects that Díaz mastered so well: the unison of the bass and the left hand of the piano; the 'bite' accent and the arrastre; the strapata; Pugliese's yumba; and the down bows. He also introduced some of his own features, which would become landmarks of his new style: sudden shifts of tempo (almost controlled 'telepathically' by the double bassist); ostinatos written for the double bass, marking the four beats of each bar in usually step-wise motion (also known as a 'tango walking'); and the cantabile solos for the double bass."¹

In our journey, we will extend our stay in Argentina, the home country of Piazzolla, by visiting our following composer: Andres Martin. Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Andres Martin is a composer, arranger, and musician (Double Bass). His ongoing popularity among the Double Bass community rose exponentially in February 2020 as his piece *Concierto para Contrabajo y Orquesta No. 1* was being performed by the candidates of the Sphinx Competition. His compositions are now gradually being incorporated into the standard double-bass repertoire. However, it's a pleasure to present a Martin composition that is perhaps not as well known today. Presented today is "Tristeza" (Sadness), initially written for solo Harp as the 2nd movement of a suite named "Postales del Alma" (Postcards from the soul), as described by the composer: "To surrender to the deepest sadness and realize all is left is to breath... or to stop doing so."

At last, the final piece of the program and a segue to our departure point: "Escenas del Sur." Composer Efraín Oscher, born in 1974 in Montevideo, Uruguay is known as a performer (flutist), composer, and teacher. Oscher grew up in Venezuela under El Sistema's umbrella and collaborated closely with the Bolivar Soloists, including Edicson Ruiz. His piece "Escenas del Sur" is a protest against totalitarian regimes and the suffering they've caused. In the editorial score of this piece, there are notes exclusively meant for the eyes of the performers. I would not dare to divulge such information but what I can say is that this piece references dictatorship, secret police, beasts, fugitives, missing people, torture, death, exile, prison, and hope. In the composer's own words, which are available to the public: "Escenas del Sur is a tribute to all the people who suffered exile, solitude, pain and sadness, to those whose families were broken or lost their beloveds; to those who risked their lives to give their folk a country where they could think and talk freely, where

¹ Mauriño, Gabriela. "It Takes a Bass to Tango." *Double Bassist*, (Winter, 2001): 50-52. <https://proxy.library.mcgill.ca/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/takes-bass-tango/docview/1553123/se-2?accountid=12339>.

peace prevailed over fear; to those who did not see their country embrace democracy as well as to those who later found happiness in faraway lands."

Finally, we must mention the encore! This piece is called "Pajarillo" and is known as a "joropo llanero," which has been discussed before. The "Pajarillo" is made up of a form that is probably one of the most performed from Venezuelan Folklore as it showcases the virtuosity of its participants due to its speed and fieriness. Part of the richness comes from its compound composition that superposes a 6/8 time signature against a 3/4, sometimes even suggesting a 3/2 depending on the direction the cuatro and the maracas players decide to take. The "Pajarillo" presents a short and fixed harmonic cycle in a minor key: dominant, tonic, subdominant, and dominant. Whatever modulations the players may choose to explore serve only as a passing transition to the original form.

For me, this piece represents home.

After I first left my family home to travel, my mom told me that it is a custom in Latin America for the traveler to go back home with stories to tell for those who couldn't come along and joyfully share the adventures lived. The encore of this program is meant to represent just that, a communion with those who were there before setting sail, and those who followed us back home, new friendships made along the way that will forever live in our hearts.