

COMING EVENTS

SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 2017, 7:30 P.M.

ARIZONA STATESMEN AND WOMEN'S CHORUS

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, MESA

Bartlett R. Evans and Julie Neish, *conductors*

Tickets: \$10 (students with ID, free)

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2017, 7:30 P.M.

MUSIC OF STRAVINSKY AND BARTÓK AND

FEATURING BEETHOVEN'S MASS IN C MAJOR

ASU GAMMAGE AUDITORIUM

Choral Union, Chamber Singers, Barrett Choir and
Symphony Orchestra

Jeffery Meyer David Schildkret, *conductor*

Free Admission

ASU SCHOOL OF MUSIC PRESENTS

Songs and Dances

ASU Chamber Singers

**David Schildkret
and Eun-Mi Oh, *conductors***

**First United Methodist Church, Mesa
Saturday, March 25, 2017
7:30 p.m.**

PROGRAM

I.
The Turtle Dove Margaret Vardell Sandresky
(b. 1921)
Meet and Right It Is to Sing (Charles Wesley) Alice Parker
(b. 1925)
I Am Bound for the Promised Land Promised Land
arr. Craig Courtney
Alex Fragiskatos, *percussion*

II.
Romancero gitano, op. 152 Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco
(Federico Garcia Lorca) (1895 – 1968)
Baladilla de los tres rios
Asleif Willmer, *soprano* Jacqueline Black, *mezzo-soprano*
Michael Dawson Devery, *tenor* Aaron Pendleton, *baritone*
La guitarra
Puñal
Procesión
Aaron Pendleton, *baritone*
Memento
Baile
Michael Dawson Devery, *tenor* CodyRay Caho, *baritone*
Crótalo
Diego Alec Miranda, *guitar*

INTERMISSION

III.
Selections from *Choral Dances from "Gloriana"* Benjamin Britten
(William Plomer) (1913 – 1976)
Time
Concord
Time and Concord

IV.
Five Hebrew Love Songs (Hila Plitmann) Eric Whitacre
(b. 1970)
Temuna
Kala kalla
Larov
Eyze sheleg!
Nicole Blumentstein, *speaker* Hannah Cumiskey, *soprano*
Rakut
Felix Herbst, *violin* Nathan Arch, *piano*
Eun-Mi Oh, *conductor*

V.
Dance Set Libby Larsen
(b. 1950)
Two-Step and Drag
Her First Waltz
Polka
Jeremy Ruth, *clarinet* Alex Duke, *cello*
Alex Fragiskatos, *drums* Nathan Arch, *piano*

VI.
Around the Campfire Hebrew Folksongs
arr. Joshua Jacobson
Finjan
Zemer Lach
Rad HaLailah
Jeremy Ruth and Patrick Englert, *clarinet*
Nathan Arch, *piano*

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Tonight's program features various works inspired by various dance forms and song styles. The central piece is *Romancero gitano* by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. He was born in Italy and emigrated to the United States in 1939 to escape the anti-Semitic laws of the Fascists. Before his departure, he was among the most respected composers in Italy. He eventually established himself in Hollywood, working on some 250 films, though rarely for screen credit. His best known score for the movies was the 1945 film, *And Then There Were None*. Castelnuovo-Tedesco was also a respected teacher of film scoring; among his pupils were Jerry Goldsmith, Henry Mancini, André Previn, Nelson Riddle, and John Williams. In addition to film music, Castelnuovo-Tedesco also wrote a considerable quantity of music for the guitar, music for solo voice, music for chorus, and orchestral music.

Romancero gitano (Gypsy Ballad) is a setting of nine poems by the great Spanish writer Federico García Lorca. Lorca wrote a collection of poems by the same name, but the texts for this work actually come from another volume: *Poema del Cante Jondo*. Lorca, along with the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla, had an abiding interest in *cante jondo*, or Deep Song, a unique expression of Andalusia in southern Spain. This was a style of singing with its roots in age-old cultural influences: the singing of Byzantine chant, the effects of the Saracen invasion, the presence of Sephardic Jews, and the arrival of the gypsies on the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteenth century. The singing, improvisational, often—though not always—to the accompaniment of a guitar and dancing, became especially identified with the gypsies, hence Castelnuovo-Tedesco's title for the songs. Lorca and de Falla viewed *cante jondo* as purer and more honest than its successor, flamenco, and sought to preserve it. They sponsored a *cante jondo* competition in the 1920s and contemplated opening a café devoted to *cante jondo* performances. Rather than imitating forms or styles of the *cante jondo*, Lorca's poems are meant to evoke its spirit and atmosphere through almost impressionistic imagery. These images combine with Lorca's own viewpoint to create a unique form of expression.

This is beautifully demonstrated in the first poem, which forms a sort of prologue to the collection. *The Little Ballad of the Three Rivers* compares Seville's vigorous and legendary waterway, the Guadalquivir, with the Darro and Genil, the languid and less storied rivers that flow through Granada. For Lorca, Seville is a symbol of outward-looking vitality, while Granada is a sorrowful place trapped in its once-glorious past.

The second poem more clearly evokes the *cante jondo*. A guitar sounds in the middle of the night, breaking the silence like sound breaks glass. Nothing can stop its sound; it's useless even to try. It is like the sounds of nature, and yet the sound is pointless, lacking a future. Hence the images of an arrow without a target, an afternoon without a tomorrow, and even a dead bird perched upon a branch. The last line of poem depicts the guitar itself, with its opening like a heart, pierced by the player's five fingers as though they were swords.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco picks up on this image by moving directly to the song about the dagger, which occurs quite a bit later in Lorca's collection. The third song thus elaborates on the second; the dagger is the *cante jondo* itself, which goes as easily into the heart as a plow breaks the dusty Andalusian soil. We do not like to be vulnerable to such raw emotion, so we cry out, "No, don't stab me!" The brutal imagery of *La guitarra* and *Puñal* is germane to the *cante jondo*, whose central themes are tragic love and sorrowful death.

The fourth movement combines three different poems, each evoking an image of the Easter vigil processions. Crowds of people move through the city streets more or less in silence (there might be the beating of a drum), following the clergymen and barges or floats carrying sacred effigies. The people are often dressed to express their repentance for their sins. They might wear the pointed hat of a criminal, or chains, or carry a heavy cross. Suddenly, from an open window, someone might sing a *Saeta*, a particular form of *cante jondo*, dramatic and prayerful, that dwells on the suffering and death of Jesus (again the *cante jondo* centers on tragedy).

In the first poem of this movement, the singer sees the people in their penitential garb as fantastic creatures—unicorns, astronomers, sorcerers—and people from literature: *Ecce homo* refers to Christ himself (these are Pilate's words when he presents Jesus to the people), Durandarte is a hero of Spanish chivalric fiction, and Orlando is the hero of a famous Renaissance epic. Next comes a statue of the Virgin. She is dressed in crinoline; the stiff, billowing skirts evoke for Lorca a giant tulip. The platform carrying the effigy travels through the streets like a boat traveling on a sea of light. The final part of the procession has the image of Christ on his float, transformed from a pale Judean lily to the likeness of a Spanish peasant with dark skin, prominent cheekbones, and bright eyes: he has become not a distant figure but like the parishioners themselves.

Memento, set as a tango (which is Argentinean, not gypsy, but it's wonderful anyway), is a little epigram. The singer wishes to be buried with his guitar, then among the orange trees and mint, and finally above everything, in a weather vane. Thus the singer moves progressively from under the earth to a vantage point high above it. The weather vane, turning in every direction, is a potent symbol of vision and change, but also of fickleness and powerlessness. Through its restless, groundless movement, it reflects Lorca's own sense of exile and homelessness.

Carmen in the next song is a personification of the *cante jondo* itself: though she is a white-haired, aged woman, she is still seductive. As she dances through the streets of Seville, her influence is so primal that young women must be shielded from it: "Girls, close the curtains." Yet, though everyone hides from the emotion of the *cante jondo*, it still has the power to stir Andalusian hearts.

The last song is an evocation of the castanets. The word *crótalo* is a pun: it can refer both to the castanets and to a rattlesnake. This poem also shows Lorca's gift for the small but vivid image as he compares the hand wrapped around the castanets to a spider.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco takes the poems at face value, using archetypal musical gestures to create a fantasy of Spain that seems at once remote and familiar. The elegant guitar accompaniment contributes to the exotic atmosphere of the work. As with the poems, we are hearing not a recreation of the *cante jondo*, but an artistic response to it in a musical dialect that we associate with Spain.

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The program opens with three works based on 18th- and 19th-century hymns. "Turtle Dove" is Margaret Sandresky's adaptation of a Southern Harmony tune: "Meet and Right It Is to Sing" is Alice Parker's setting of a Charles Wesley hymn. Her original melody is evocative of old American hymns but with irregular meters that give it a modernist cast. "I Am Bound for the Promised Land" by Craig Courtney is an arrangement of an American hymn. Courtney composed it in honor of the 100th anniversary of the founding of Acadia National Park in Maine on a commission from the Mount Desert Summer Chorale. David Schildkret conducted the premiere as part of the park's centennial celebration in August 2016.

The second half opens with three selections from a masque composed in honor of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. It connects her with her namesake, Elizabeth I, who was known by the poetic nickname of Gloriana. The poetry captures the hopefulness that surrounded the crowning of the young queen in the midst of the privations following World War II.

Five Hebrew Love Songs were originally a set of songs for solo soprano. Whitacre adapted it for choir in 2002, and it exists in a variety of versions. The touching poetry captures the budding relationship between the composer and his future wife.

Libby Larsen's *Dance Set* was composed for and recorded by the Gregg Smith Singers. Using a popular dance and vocal jazz style, Larsen creates a virtuoso work for choir. We conclude with a set of campfire songs from Israel as arranged by the noted scholar of Jewish folk music, Joshua Jacobson.

ASU CHAMBER SINGERS

Nathan Arch, piano

Julie Neish and Eun-Mi (Mia) Oh, assistants

David Schildkret, conductor

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
Nicole Blumenstein	Jacqueline Black	Michael Devery	CodyRay Caho
Hannah Cummiskey	Megan Law	David Hopkins	Miles Coe
Melanie Holm	Brynn Lewallen	Aaron Jones	Nathan Haltiwanger
Kyla McCarrel	Eun-Mi (Mia) Oh	Adam Sowards	Derrick Hester
Juhsee Seo	Yijeong (Isabel) Yun		Wyatt Kent
Asleif Willmer			Aaron Pendleton
			Elliott Wulff