

Fandango!

Eugenia Moliner, Flute Desiree Ruhstrat, Violin Denis Azabagic, Guitar David Cunliffe, Cello

Program

L'Inverno (Winter) from *Le quattro stagioni*
(The Four Seasons)

Allegro non molto

Largo

Allegro

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

(arr. Fandango!)

Pièce en forme de Habanera

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Asturiana, from *Siete Canciones populares Españolas*

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

(arr. Fandango!)

Danse Espagnole, from *La Vida Breve*

Balkan Suite

Miroslav Tadic (1959-)

(arr. Fandango!)

Pajdushka

Zajdi, Zajdi

Gajdarsko Oro

Intermission

Plegaria y Kanto (Al Bodre de la Mar)

Carlos Rafael Rivera (1970-)

Café 1930

La Calle

Libertango

Ástor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

(arr. Black Oak Ensemble / Fandango!)

Quintet for Guitar and Strings in D major

iii. Grave assai - Fandango

Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805)

(arr. Jeremy Sparks / Fandango!)

Fandango! appears by arrangement with Lisa Sapinkopf Artists, www.chambermuse.com

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

FANDANGO!

One of the most exciting groups on Chicago's musical scene, **FANDANGO!** is a toe-tappingly spicy mix of Latin, Spanish, Sephardic, Balkan, and classical sounds founded by four multi-award-winning, globe-trotting virtuosi who hail from Spain, the USA, former Yugoslavia, and the UK, and who have played, separately and together, on the world's most prestigious stages. **FANDANGO!** made its Washington DC debut on the illustrious Dumbarton Oaks series, and has appeared at Roosevelt University's Ganz Hall in Chicago, the Bermuda International Festival, and has toured Hawaii, Arizona, Florida and many other parts of the USA. More info available at www.fandango4.com.

Eugenia Moliner and **Denis Azabagic** are a husband-and-wife team acclaimed worldwide as the Cavatina Duo. They have captivated audiences with their electrifying performances in such major venues and festivals as Ravinia (Chicago), Da Camera Society (Los Angeles), Aix-en-Provence Summer Festival (France), the National Concert Hall of Taipei (Taiwan), National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing (China), National Flute Convention Gala Concert (USA), the Harris Theater (Chicago), Kolkata International Guitar Festival (India), Palau de la Musica (Spain), among many others. "If there is a finer flute and guitar duo in the world than Cavatina Duo, I have not heard them" raved Soundboard Magazine in June 2015.

Flutist **Eugenia Moliner**, a native of Spain, has been acclaimed as "brilliant" by the British Flute Society magazine. She has performed with principal musicians from the Chicago Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic and Toronto Symphony orchestras and appeared with many renowned ensembles including the Chicago Chamber Musicians. Eugenia has been featured on radio and television programs in Europe, Asia and the USA. Her discography includes seven CDs.

Prizewinner in twenty-four international competitions, Bosnian guitarist **Denis Azabagic** has been described as a "virtuoso with flawless technique" by Soundboard Magazine. He has appeared as soloist with orchestras such as the Chicago and Madrid Symphonies, among many others. His discography includes eleven CDs and two DVDs.

Violinist **Desirée Ruhstrat** and cellist **David Cunliffe** also husband and wife, are both members of the Lincoln Trio, a 2017 GRAMMY-nominee for Best Small Ensemble. Praised for their "joy of sheer technical ability, unanimity of phrasing and beautiful blended tone," the trio has become one of Chicago's most celebrated chamber ensembles. They have performed at Alice Tully Hall (Lincoln Center, NYC), Ravinia, across the United States as well as Germany, Singapore, Hong Kong and Vietnam.

Desirée Ruhstrat's artistry has captivated audiences throughout Europe and the Americas. Desirée has won numerous awards including First Prize at the National Young Musicians Debut Competition in Los Angeles, where she was also lauded with a special award for a young performer of extraordinary talent. She was the youngest prizewinner at Switzerland's Tibor Varga International Competition, where she also won the award for best interpretation of a contemporary composition. She won top prizes at the Carl Flesch, Julius Stulberg, and Mozart Festival Violin Competitions.

David Cunliffe has served as principal cello in performances with BBC Philharmonic, BBC Scottish and Royal Scottish Symphony Orchestras. As a member of the Balanescu Quartet, he toured Australia, Europe and the United States. In England, David was a recipient of the Terrance Weill and Leonard Hirsch Quartet Prizes and the Lady Barbirolli Chamber Music Award. David has appeared

frequently on radio and TV, including NPR and the BBC, and is a founding member of the Virtuosi Chicago Chamber Orchestra.

PROGRAM NOTES

VIVALDI:

To create a piece of music which achieves unprecedented, household-name popularity throughout the world, continues to live on for centuries after one's death, and indeed becomes *the* defining work for a particular country and epoch, must be the dream of every composer. Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* clearly fall into this elite category. And yet there's a price to pay for such immortality: the masterpiece becomes, in the eyes of the general public, the only worthwhile work in the composer's entire output; everything else is pre-judged as inferior. Thus Sir Thomas Beecham famously dismissed Vivaldi's remaining 400+ concertos, with a single slice of his razor-sharp wit, as "the same concerto composed 400 times."

Certainly it is true that Vivaldi wrote his fair share of pot-boilers. He also frequently relied on the dazzling effects of his virtuosity on the violin to create the desired reaction from his audiences—a fact which led one musicologist at the time to dismiss him as a man with "too much mercury in his constitution." But his enduring reputation for composing only simplistic, endlessly repetitive harmonies and figurations simply does not stand up to close scrutiny, and the *Four Seasons*, deserve to be recognized as among the most colorful and inventive instrumental works of the Baroque period. (Adapted from a note by Piers Adams)

The movements have programmatic descriptions:

Allegro non molto (Bitter Frostbite—Cruel Winds—Stamping Feet in the Cold—Winds—Chattering teeth)

Largo (Peaceful and Content by the Fire / Rain Outside)

Allegro (Walking Cautiously on Ice—Falling Down—Running Swiftly—The Ice Breaks—The Sirocco Wind—All the Winds at War)

RAVEL:

"Pièce en forme de Habanera" was originally composed for bass voice and piano in 1907. Like most French composers of his time, Ravel was fascinated by the music of Spain, and he took the slow, sultry Spanish habanera dance as his source of inspiration for this piece, a wordless virtuoso exercise for the voice. Ravel later transcribed the work for cello and piano, which retains all the virtuosity of the original, and has allowed for several other arrangements for a multitude of instruments.

FALLA:

Pianist and composer Manuel de Falla was, along with with Isaac Albéniz and Enrique Granados, one of Spain's most important musicians of the first half of the 20th century

"Danse Espagnole" is an arrangement made by Fritz Kreisler, originally for violin and piano, of the "Interlude and Dance" from Act II of Falla's opera *La vida breve* (*The Brief Life*), his first major work.

The opera tells of a young Gypsy girl, Salud, who is passionately in love with a young well-to-do man named Paco. She does not know, and Paco does not tell her, that he is already engaged to a woman of his social class. Her uncle and grandmother have discovered this, and they try to prevent Salud from interrupting Paco's wedding after she learns the truth. In Act II (where this music

appears), confrontation ensues after Salud and her uncle gate-crash the festivities, astonishing the bride and the guests and momentarily throwing the mendacious groom so much off his guard that he utters Salud's name before denying he knows her and ordering her ejection. Her heart broken, Salud falls dead at his feet, in what is said to be the ultimate gesture of contempt for a former lover.

TADIC:

Macedonia has a rich cultural heritage in art, architecture, poetry, and music. Miroslav Tadic, a classically trained guitarist and composer from former Yugoslavia, captures the essence of its folklore in these pieces. This music brings together a mixture of multiple styles, from Turkish music, Albanian music, Roma ("Gypsy") music and other ethnic Balkan music idioms. Local dances are called "oro."

Macedonian folk songs are often historical in nature; lyrics detailing great heroes and warriors, love songs, and shepherd songs are common. The music of Eastern Europe is known for complex rhythms, and Macedonian music exemplifies this trait, using odd meters such as 5/4, and 7/8, and non-traditional scales like the Phrygian dominant.

These pieces are from a set of four published by Tadic. "Pajdushka" is a generic name for a dance in 5/8. "Gajde" means bagpipe and "oro" is a circle dance.

RIVERA:

Carlos Rafael Rivera is an award-winning composer whose career has spanned multiple genres in the music industry. His music has been acclaimed by the Miami Herald, the San Francisco Examiner, and the LA Times, helping establish him as a composer with the unique ability to incorporate a wide diversity of musical influences into his captivating compositions, which reflect his multicultural upbringing in Central America and the United States. His soundtrack for Universal Pictures' *A Walk Among the Tombstones*, starring Liam Neeson, is now available through Varèse-Sarabande Records.

His works have been performed by some of the most prominent ensembles and soloists, including Arturo Sandoval, Colin Currie, Chanticleer, Cavatina Duo, the American Composers Orchestra, the New England Philharmonic, and the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet; commissioned by the Simon Bolivar Youth Symphony, the Miami Symphony Orchestra, and the American Wind Symphony; recorded by Warner, Sony, Naxos, and Cedille labels; published by Mel-Bay, and Doberman Editions; and awarded by the ACO, the Herb Alpert Foundation, the Guitar Foundation of America, BMI, and ASCAP.

Program note by the composer:

About a year ago, Eugenia Moliner and Denis Azabagic approached David Leisner, Clarice Assad, Allan Thomas, Joseph Williams, and myself to write chamber works for what would be a collaboration between the Cavatina Duo and members of the Lincoln Trio Desiree Ruhstrat and David Cunliffe.

The register of the violin—along with its near infinite *sostenuto* (sustained sound)—was a welcome addition to the now familiar flute and guitar combination. It became clear that rather than compete with the violin's range, a better choice was to use (mostly) the alto flute for its wonderful and grounded color, allowing the guitar to live comfortably in its own register. Most importantly, the melodies that were to inform this piece were of Sephardic origin. My knowledge about the music

itself was scant, but Eugenia and Denis' passion for it was contagious. So I began to investigate, and learned for the first time about the troubled history of the Sephardic Jews in Spain . . . and then I fell into their poetry, and music.

The first poem/song to grab me was "Ven Kerida":

Ven kerida, ven amada
Ven al bodre de la mar
Amán, amán
Ven te kontaré mis males
Ke te metas a yorar
Amán, amán
Guérfano de padre i de madre
Yo no tengo onde arrimar
Amán, amán
Estira la tuya pierna um poko m'arrimaré
Azeré un buen esuenyo
En tus brazos muereré

It loosely translates to: "Come, my love / to the edge of the sea / I will tell you of my sufferings / They will make you cry / An orphan, without father or mother / I have nowhere to rest / Stretch out your leg a bit so I may rest / I will have a beautiful dream / In your arms I will die."

It was this poem and gorgeous melody that formed the pillar of the piece I composed. Throughout the writing process, I had a recurring vision of a proud yet helpless soul approaching the edge of the coastal town of Burriana in Eastern Spain, pleading her misery as an affront to the Ocean. After a silence, she hears a song. She joins in, perhaps comforted, and tells her story. It is a story wrought with sadness, yet hopeful—and to me perfectly encapsulates the Sephardic peoples' plight.

PIAZZOLLA:

As a young man, Ástor Piazzolla became a virtuoso on the bandoneon, an accordion-like instrument that uses buttons rather than a keyboard, and he achieved early fame as a performer on that instrument. But Piazzolla wished to succeed as a composer, and he turned to that greatest of twentieth-century teachers, Nadia Boulanger in Paris, for a classical grounding. She soon gave him the best possible advice: that he should not try to be a "classical" composer but should follow his passion for the Argentinian tango as the source of his own music. Piazzolla returned to Argentina and gradually evolved his own style, one that combines many strands of music: the tango, jazz, classical music, and Latin American street songs, as well as dances like the rumba, samba, and maxixe.

"Café 1930" is the second piece of the four-part "Histoire du Tango," which aims to show the history of the tango from 1900 ("Bordel") to "Concert d'aujourd'hui" (concert of the present day).

"La Calle 92" ("92nd Street") is named after the street where Piazzolla lived during his years in New York.

"Libertango" was the title song on Piazzolla's first LP after moving to Rome in 1974 (he claimed, "I'm sure I'm going to write better there than in Buenos Aires."). His agent had urged him to compose

pieces that were short enough to be easily programmed on the radio, and Piazzolla protested, "But Beethoven wrote . . ." His agent replied "Beethoven died deaf and poor. So far, you are neither deaf nor poor." Piazzolla took Paganini's advice, and wrote a series of short instrumental pieces during the following months, including the hard-driving "Libertango," which the composer called "a sort of song of liberty," a release of new ideas inspired by a new place. It became one of his greatest hits.

BOCCHERINI:

Boccherini was a contemporary of Haydn, and they lived in similar worlds: both composers were court musicians. They fulfilled "orders" for compositions, many of which were chamber works. The Italian-born Boccherini was a court musician in Vienna as a young man and undoubtedly knew "Papa" Haydn. He moved to Spain and served in the Royal Court in Madrid, enthusiastically adopting Spanish sounds and rhythms.

The "Fandango" Guitar Quintet was written for the Duke of Benavente, a guitar enthusiast. It is a transcription of movements from earlier Boccherini string quintets. A melancholy and halting "Grave assai" (serious enough) leads to the traditional Spanish couples' dance, the Fandango. It is here that the guitar truly takes the lead, playing the assertive and accented rhythms we associate with the world of Spanish music. The work swirls and relaxes, finishing with mounting intensity from the strumming guitar and a resounding flourish from the whole ensemble.

(adapted from a note by Fran Rosenthal)