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STRATHMORE PRESENTS

Post-Classical Ensemble

“Mexican Revolutionaries”

Angel Gil-Ordóñez, Music Director
Joseph Horowitz, Artistic Director

Thursday, May 19, 2005
7:30 p.m.



AMERICAN INN
of Bethesda

*Strathmore thanks the American Inn of Bethesda for
accommodating artists on its Music in the Mansion
series.*

*Jordan Kitts Music, exclusive representative for Steinway and Boston
pianos, has generously provided the Steinway grand piano for use in
the 2004-2005 Music in the Mansion season.*

POST-CLASSICAL ENSEMBLE MEMBERS

Angel Gil-Ordóñez, Music Director
Joseph Horowitz, Artistic Director

Omar Herrera-Arizmendi, piano

David Salness, 1st violin
Jun-Young Park, 2nd violin
James Stern, viola
Evelyn Elsing, cello
Laura Ruas, bass
Suzanne Gekker, clarinet
Ed Walters, bass clarinet
Eric Dirksen, bassoon
Dan Orban, trumpet
Matt van Hoose, piano

With commentary by Jorge F. Hernández and Angel Gil-Ordóñez

PROGRAM

Mexican Revolutionaries

Planos (1934) Silvestre Revueltas
(1899-1940)

Post-Classical Ensemble
Angel Gil-Ordóñez, conductor

Balada Mexicana (1915) Manuel M. Ponce
(1882-1948)
Romanza de amor (1914)
Intermezzo No.1 (ca.1915)
Etude No.7: Juventud (ca.1906)

Omar Herrera-Arizmendi, piano

String Quartet No.1 (1921) Carlos Chávez
(1899-1948)
Allegro ~ Adagio ~ Vivo ~ Sostenuto

String Quartet No.4 (Música de Feria, 1932) Silvestre Revueltas
David Salness, violin; Jun-Young Park, violin;
James Stern, viola; Evelyn Elsing, violoncello

Planos Silvestre Revueltas
Post-Classical Ensemble
Angel Gil-Ordóñez, conductor

By Joseph Horowitz

Tonight's concert features the music of the three "founding fathers" of Mexican concert music. By far the least known of these composers in the United States is Manuel Ponce (1882-1948). Ponce grew up in Aguascalientes and later studied in Mexico City. As a concert pianist, he first performed in the United States in 1904. He studied in Bologna and Berlin, and much later in Paris with Paul Dukas. In Mexico City, he was influential as a teacher, conductor, pianist, and editor. As a composer, he was recognized as the one Mexican whose music appealed to all levels of society.

Ponce's output includes impressive concertos for piano, violin, and guitar. His "symphonic divertimento" *Ferial* is a portrait of Mexico. His many piano works range from salon cameos, of which tonight's *Romanza de Amor* (1914) is especially well-known, to large concert works. His *Intermezzo No. 1* (ca. 1915) has been

immensely popular since his publication: a little jewel in sonata form. His *Balada Mexicana* is considered the culmination of his first style: folk tunes and the Mexican song within a romantic virtuoso language. Of his fifteen studies for piano, No. 7 *Juventud* (Youth), concentrates on octaves and dates from his first trip to Europe in 1904-1906.

Partly through his friendship with Aaron Copland and frequent conducting engagements in the United States, Carlos Chávez (1899-1978) is the Mexican composer Americans have known best. He played a decisive role in the institutional culture of Mexico, whose Orquesta Sinfónica (later the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional) he organized in 1928. He was also general Director of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes from 1946 to 1952. Tonight's *First String Quartet* (1921) is an early work betraying French influences.

Silvestre Revueltas (1899-1940) is a romantic figure born the same year as Chávez, whose life

was cut short by alcoholism. In recent years his prestige and popularity in the United States have risen sharply, and will surely continue to rise. The poet Octavio Paz paid tribute to Revueltas as follows:

All his music seems preceded by something that is not [simply] joy and exhilaration, as some believe, or satire and irony, as others believe. That element, better and more pure . . . is his deep-felt but also joyful concern for man, animal and things. It is the profound empathy with his surroundings which makes the works of this man, so naked, so defenseless, so hurt by the heavens and the people, more significant than those of many of his contemporaries. His music occupies a place in our hearts above that of the grandiose Mexican murals that seem to know all except pity. Neither the paintings of Orozco, or Siqueiros, or Diego [Rivera]

contain sympathy, joy, or compassion.

Of tonight's *Planos* (1934), the Mexican Revueltas scholar Roberto Kolb Neuhaus has written:

The musical material consists of a number of closed units, each with a singularity of its own . . . By themselves they may sound simple and even conservative. What is unique and artful, though, is Revueltas' ability to combine these units into a whole. Out of the resulting mosaic the singular Revueltas sound finally emerges. His ingenious musical motifs are joined in a discourse that can be at the same time flowing and abrupt, a faithful mirror of the daily battle within the conflicting imagery of his inner and outer worlds.

"Silvestre, like all real people, was a battlefield," writes Octavio Paz.

Angel Gil-Ordóñez, music director

Formerly Associate Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Spain, Angel Gil-Ordóñez has led the American Composers Orchestra, Opera Colorado, the Pacific Symphony, the Hartford Symphony, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic. Abroad, he has been heard with the Munich Philharmonic, the Solistes de Berne, at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, and at the Bellas Artes National Theatre in Mexico City. In summer 2000 he toured the major music festivals of Spain with the Valencia Symphony Orchestra in the Spanish premiere of Leonard Bernstein's *Mass*. A specialist in the Spanish repertoire, Mr. Gil-Ordóñez has recorded four CDs devoted to Spanish composers with the Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra of Spain, the Madrid Symphony Orchestra, the Galicia Symphony Orchestra and the Camara XXI chamber orchestra. Born in Madrid, he worked closely with Sergiu Celibidache for more than six years in Germany. In addition being the founding Music Director of Post-Classical Ensemble, he is Director of Orchestral Studies at Wesleyan University and Music Director of the Wesleyan Ensemble of the Americas.

Joseph Horowitz, artistic director

Joseph Horowitz has long been a pioneer in classical music programming, beginning with his tenure as Artistic Advisor for the annual Schubertiade at the 92nd Street Y. As Executive Director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, he received national attention for "The Russian Stravinsky,"

"American Transcendentalists," "Flamenco," and other festivals exploring the folk roots of concert works. Now an artistic advisor to half a dozen American orchestras, he has created more than two dozen interdisciplinary music festivals since 1985. Called "our nation's leading scholar of the symphony orchestra" by Charles Olton, former President of the American Symphony Orchestra League, Mr. Horowitz is also the award-winning author of seven books mainly dealing with the institutional history of classical music in the United States. His *Classical Music in the United States: A History of Its Rise and Fall* was recently published by W.W. Norton. A former *New York Times* music critic, Mr. Horowitz writes regularly for the Sunday *New York Times* and for the *Times* Literary Supplement (UK).

Omar Herrera-Arizmendi, piano

Omar Herrera-Arizmendi was awarded the National Scholarship to study piano abroad by the Mexican government (FONCA) and graduated from the University of Texas at Austin (BA) and Rice University (MM). He has performed in many cities of his native Mexico and the USA with several orchestras and chamber groups including the Cuarteto Latinoamericano. He is currently finishing his doctoral studies in the music of Ponce under a prestigious fellowship from the University of Houston with Timothy Hester. Omar Herrera-Arizmendi is a proud relative of Manuel M. Ponce and has played most of his works for piano.

Jorge F. Hernández, commentator

Jorge F. Hernández has been awarded the Mexican National Prize for Regional History, for his book *La soledad del silencio*, and the Mexican National Short Story Award for *Noche de ronda*. He would later be finalist in the prestigious Alfaguara International Literary Prize with his novel, *La Emperatriz de Lavapiés*, and he currently publishes a weekly column in Mexico's MILENIO newspaper. Hernández is the author of nine books to date, some of which are in the process of being translated to English. He is a member of Mexico's Sistema Nacional de Creadores de Arte as well as of the Fundación para las Letras Mexicanas.

Post-Classical Ensemble

Post-Classical Ensemble, called by *The Washington Post* "a welcome, edgy addition to the musical life of Washington," was created by Angel Gil-Ordóñez and Joseph Horowitz, and made its debut in 2003. "More than an orchestra," it breaks out of classical music, with its implied notion of a high-culture remote from popular art. Its concerts regularly incorporate folk song, dance, film, poetry, and commentary in order to serve existing audiences hungry for deeper engagement, and to cultivate adventurous new listeners. Post-Classical Ensemble's formal debut, at George Washington University's Lisner Auditorium, was a tribute to Silvestre Revueltas titled "Viva la Revolución!" *The Washington Post* commented on the "relentless zeal" with which "a dazzling array of information" was imparted by

the ensemble. "Not just traditional program notes but also lectures, poetry, movies and popular song—all in a burst of three hours. Even the date—May Day—was selected to add meaning to the music of a composer fired by the idea of socialist revolution."

The orchestra's past season notably included "Csárdás!," a one-of-a-kind program with the Gáza Band of Budapest, which furnished gypsy and peasant sources for music by Liszt, Brahms, and Bartók. The concert was recorded for national broadcast via Chicago's WFMT, and has also been heard in part over National Public Radio. On June 11 and 12, 2005, in association with the American Film Institute, Post-Classical Ensemble will present two classic American documentaries—*The River* and *The Plow that Broke the Plains*—whose scores, by Virgil Thomson, will be performed live. These presentations will generate a state-of-the-art DVD produced by Naxos.

Post-Classical Ensemble

Angel Gil-Ordóñez, *Music Director*
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Susan Kelly, *Personnel Manager*
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