

Peoria Symphony Orchestra Program Notes
February 15, 2020
Michael Allsen

The Peoria Symphony Orchestra opens this program by featuring two of our principal players—clarinetist Roger Garrett and violist Katherine Lewis—in Bruch’s Romantic *Concerto for Clarinet and Viola*. Soprano Marisa Buchheit then sings two exotic Brazilian works by Villa-Lobos. Jazz trumpeter Todd Kelly, who last performed with us in November, performs the rarely-heard *Concerto for Jazz Trumpet* by Iain Hamilton. To conclude, The Brazilionaires join the Peoria Symphony Orchestra for a wild Latin finale!

Max Bruch (1838-1920)

Concerto in E minor for Clarinet, Viola, and Orchestra, Op.88

Quick Notes: Bruch composed this work in 1911. Max Felix Bruch (his son) and Willy Hess played the clarinet and viola solo parts after the work’s premiere in Wilhemshaven on March 5, 1912. The concerto was not published until 1943. Duration 20:00.

Context: The clarinet and the viola serve as middle voices in their respective sections of the orchestra. Many composers, from Mozart and Schumann onwards, have combined their attractive, mellow tones in chamber and orchestral works. Max Bruch had an understandable interest in the clarinet—his son Max Felix Bruch was a virtuoso clarinetist. Bruch wrote two pieces for his son and his friend, violist Willy Hess: the *Eight Pieces for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano*, Op. 83, and the double concerto heard here.

Background: Max Bruch is known today primarily for two solo violin works, the *Violin Concerto in G minor* and the *Scottish Fantasy*, and for his *Kol Nidrei* for cello and orchestra. However, Bruch was a tremendously successful composer in his day, with a catalog of nearly a hundred works that included three operas, three symphonies, five concertos, dozens of other orchestral pieces, sacred and secular choral works, art songs, and chamber music. He was a well-regarded conductor and one of the most sought-after composition teachers in Europe—Ottorino Respighi and Ralph Vaughan Williams were among his more famous pupils. In 1911, when he composed his *Concerto for Clarinet and Viola*, Bruch was in his 70s, and about to retire from over 20 years teaching composition at Berlin’s famed Hochschule [Conservatory] für Musik. He had actually declared to a friend when he reached his 70th birthday in 1908 that he was through with composing. In fact, he continued to write music almost until his death at age 82.

What You’ll Hear: Typically for Bruch’s music, the *Concerto for Clarinet and Viola* is thoroughly Romantic in style. It is also a very conservative work for 1911, though the composer did include some unusual formal ideas. It is set in the traditional three movements, but begins, unusually, with a slow movement (*Andante con moto*). The viola and clarinet each open with short, dramatic cadenzas before the movement continues in a series of quiet and lyrical interlocking lines from the two soloists. The lyrical and restrained character continues in the second movement (*Allegro moderato*), though there is a slightly more agitated episode in the middle. The movement ends with a reprise of the opening music. Bruch saves all of the fireworks

for the finale (*Allegro molto*). This begins with a bright fanfare from the orchestra, and when the soloists enter, it is with brilliant, quick-footed lines. The coda is particularly flashy, as the two soloists fly up to their highest registers.

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Saudades de Clara Stelluto/Villa Lobos

Text by Dora Vasconcelos
Adapted by George Stelluto

Marisa Buccheit, soprano

Saudades de Clara was conceived and written in January 2020. It uses melodic material from Villa Lobos' *Melodia Sentimental* for soprano and piano. *Saudades* means *longing* in Portuguese, connoting an unending ache for one's love. The melody itself, one of Villa-Lobos' most haunting, never changes, echoing unmercifully throughout the poet's existence; in every thought, every vision. What does change, however, is its effect. The listener will notice the accompaniment becoming gradually more passionate with each phrase, even as the haunting melody, beckoning, remains beautifully steadfast. My treatment of the melody is inspired by Villa Lobos' *Bachianas Brasileiras #5*, also performed this evening. It is a tribute to his brilliant, sultry soundscape of celli and bassi. I incorporated some percussive effects for a more contemporary Brazilian feel in the spirit of love that permeates tonight's program. – G. Stelluto

Saudades de Clara (text)

Acorda, vem ver a lua
que dorme na noite escura,
que fulge tão bela e branca
derramando doçura.

Wake up, come to see the moon
which sleeps over the dark night,
which twinkles so beautiful and white
shedding sweetness.

Clara chama silente
ardendo o meu sonhar.
As asas da noite que surgem
e correm no espaço profundo.

Clara, my silent bright flame
warming my dreaming.
The night wings appear
and run over the deep space.

Ó doce amada, desperta!
Vem dar teu calor ao luar.
Quisera saber-te minha
na hora serena e calma.

Oh sweet beloved, wake up!
Give your heat to the moonlight.
Wanting to know you were mine
on the quiet and calm hour.

A sombra confia ao vento
o limite da espera,
quando, dentro da noite,

The shadow relies on the wind
O! Awaiting the limit of my breath,
when, over this long night,

reclama o teu amor.

Will you claim your love?

Acorda, vem olhar a lua,
que brilha na noite escura.
Querida, és linda e meiga!
Sentir meu amor é sonhar.

Wake up, come to see the moon
which shines over the dark night
Darling, more beautiful and gentle!
To feel our love is to dream.

Clara!

Clara!

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) **Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5**

Quick Notes: Villa-Lobos composed the two movements of this work in 1938 and 1945.
Duration 11:00.

Context: Between 1930 and 1945 Villa-Lobos wrote his famous *Bachianas Brasileiras*: a series of nine pieces for widely varying ensembles. He recalled that his earliest strong musical memory was hearing his aunt practicing Johann Sebastian Bach's preludes and fugues, and he considered Bach to be "a kind of universal folkloric source, rich and profound." The *Bachianas Brasileiras*—which translates roughly from Portuguese as "Brazilian Bach-like Pieces"—are his homage to Bach. In each piece, he adopts the form of the Baroque dance suite, with two to four movements of contrasting rhythm. Many of these pieces are more "Brazilian" than "Bach-like," but there are moments such as the strict fugue that closes *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 1* where he has adopted a self-consciously Baroque style.

Background: Villa-Lobos was the central figure in 20th-century Brazilian music. An astonishingly prolific composer, he wrote over 2000 works in a career that spanned more than 50 years. He was personally acquainted with many of the composers of his time and by the 1930s was an internationally successful composer in his own right. His music is eclectic, absorbing a huge variety of influences, from Impressionist color and Neoclassicism to more Modernist techniques, to the works of Bach. But the most important influence was the music of his homeland. Brazil has an amazingly diverse musical culture, and Villa-Lobos took it all in. The strongest musical thread is the rhythm of Afro-Brazilian music, from the rural *Capoeira* (a martial-arts dance of Bahia) to the more urban *Choros* and *Sambas* of his own Rio de Janeiro. He also incorporated Indian musical forms from the Amazon basin, and Indian/Portuguese hybrids like the *Zabumba* fife and drum music of northeastern Brazil.

What You'll Hear: The two movements of *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* are scored for soprano and eight cellos. The *Aria (Cantilena)* has a texture that sounds like it was transplanted from the slow movement of a Bach cantata... and infused with a bit of Brazilian sexiness. When the soprano enters, it is with a long and sensuous wordless line. Not until halfway through the movement does she begin the text, a melancholy poem about moonlight by Ruth Valadares Corrêa, sung in an unhurried recitative. The closing section is a reprise of the first, with the singer now humming with closed mouth. *Dansa (Martelo)* sets a poem by Manuel Bandeira, addressed

first to a little *irerê* bird, and then to entire forest full of birds. (All of the various birds named in the text are native to northeastern Brazil.) Here, the texture is much more nervous—and birdlike—as the soprano sings through the text at lightning speed above an Afro-Brazilian *embolada* rhythm. Both the poem and the music imitate various birdcalls.

Villa-Lobos, Bachianas Brasileiras No.5

Aria (Cantilena)

Tarde, uma nuvem rósea, lenta e transparente
sobre o espaço, sonhadora e bela!
Surge no infinito a lua docemente,
enfeitando a tarde, qual meiga donzela
que se apresta e a linda sonhadoramente,
em anseios d'alma para ficar bela
grita ao céu e a terra, toda a Natureza!
Cala a passarada aos seus tristes queixumes
e reflete o mar toda a Sua riqueza...
Suave a luz da lua desperta agora
a cruel saudade que ri e chora!
Tarde, uma nuvem rósea, lenta e transparente
sobre o espaço, sonhadora e bela!

Evening, a rosy cloud, slow and transparent
over the spot, dreamlike and beautiful!
The moon gently appearing on the horizon.
embellishing the evening, like a sweet girl
preparing herself until she's dreamily gorgeous,
with her soul desiring to become beautiful,
shouting to heaven and earth, to all of Nature!
The birds are silent to her sad laments
and reflected on the sea all of Her richness...
Softly the light of the moon awakes already
a fierce desire that laughs and cries!
Evening, a rosy cloud, slow and transparent
over the spot, dreamlike and beautiful!

Dansa (Martelo)

Irerê, meu passarinho
do sertão do Cariri,
Irerê, meu companheiro.
Cadê viola?
Cadê meu bem?
Cadê Maria?
Ai triste sorte a do violeiro cantadô!
Sem a viola em que cantava o seu amô,
Seu assobio é tua flauta de irerê:
que tua flauta do sertão quando assobia,
a gente sofre sem querê!

Irerê, my little nestling
from the wilds of Cariri,
Irerê, my sweetheart,
where is the guitar?
Where is my darling?
Where is Maria?
Ah, too bad for the singing guitarist!
Without his guitar, in which his lover sang,
your whistle is your irerê flute:
your flute that plays from the wilderness,
as we suffer without complaining!

Teu canto chega lá do fundo do sertão
como uma brisa amolecendo o coração.

Your song comes from deep in the woods
like a breeze that softens the heart.

Irerê, solta teu canto!
Canta mais! Canta mais!
Pra lembrá o Cariri!

Irerê, let loose your song!
Sing more! Sing more!
Bring me songs of Cariri.

Canta, cambaxirra!
Canta, juriti!
Canta, irerê!
Canta, canta, sofrê!
Patativa! Bem-te-vi!
Maria-acorda-que-é-dia!
Cantem todos voces, passarinhos do sertão!
Bem-te-vi! Eh! Sabiá!
La! liá! liá! liá! liá! liá!
Eh! Sabiá!
Lia! liá! liá! liá!
La! liá! liá! liá! liá! liá!
Eh! Sabiá da mata sofrédó!
O vosso canto chega lá do fundo do sertão
como uma brisa amolecendo o coração.

Sing, cambaxirra!
Sing, juriti!
Sing, irerê!
Sing, sing of suffering!
Patativa! I-saw-you!
Wake-up-Maria-at-daybreak!
Sing with all your voices, birds of the wild!
I-saw-you! Hey! Sabiá!
La! liá! liá! liá! liá! liá!
Hey! Sabiá!
Lia! liá! liá! liá!
La! liá! liá! liá! liá! liá!
Hey! Sabiá of the suffering forest!
Your song comes from deep in the woods
like a breeze that softens the heart.

Iain Hamilton (1922-2000) **Concerto for Jazz Trumpet, Op. 37**

Quick Notes: Hamilton composed this piece in 1958. Its first performance was by trumpeter George Swift, at London's Royal Festival Hall, on June 21, 1958. Duration 13:00.

Context: In the mid 20th century, the English loved "light" music—one of the more popular BBC channels from the 1940s through the 1960s was designated the "Light Channel." Just what is "light" music? One Englishman has wryly defined it as music "where the tune is more important than what you do with it." This is immediately-appealing, mostly upbeat and melodic music, that occasionally blended in elements of Jazz and Pop. The style was popular enough that the BBC sponsored an annual broadcast Festival of Light Music every June through the 1950s, featuring newly-composed pieces. Iain Hamilton is one of dozens of composers who wrote music for this broadcast.

Background: Scottish composer Iain Hamilton was born in Glasgow, and, after working for several years as an engineer, studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London. He had various teaching posts in London before moving to North Carolina to serve as professor of composition at Duke University for over 20 years. Hamilton's music is difficult to categorize in a simple way. He had eclectic influences, and in his later career he was known for complex works that involved serial technique, and other *avant garde* approaches. However, Hamilton also composed many light works, including the *Concerto for Jazz Trumpet*. This was commissioned for the 1958 BBC Festival of Light Music. In a set of excellent liner notes for the premiere recording in 2006, Philip Lane describes the soloist, George Swift, as "Britain's answer to Harry James" [the great American trumpeter and bandleader of the 1940s]. While Hamilton went on to a successful career as a composer and academic, Swift was not so successful. According to Lane, once Rock

music became dominant in England, Swift “retired to Spain to run a launderette and play at the local bullring.”

What You’ll Hear: Hamilton’s concerto is laid out in four movements, the first two of which are directly connected. While much of the music may sound improvised, every note is written out. It begins with a *Medium Blues*—Gershwin-esque music that begins with a dramatic slide from the trumpet. The main theme is a bluesy tune that has a clear family resemblance to the old standard *Stormy Weather*. This moves directly into *Allegro: Quick Bounce*—uptempo symphonic Jazz that gives the trumpet a chance to show off its high range. There is a short cup-muted solo in the middle of movement that sounds like a bit of a throwback to the 1930s, before a quick conclusion. The third movement, *Lento*, is a sophisticated Blues that leaves plenty of room for soulful trumpet. The concerto ends with a fast-paced movement (*Allegro*) that has just a hint of Boogie-Woogie, until a hard-swinging “half-time” section in the middle. Brief trombone and clarinet solos ratchet the tempo back up for the exciting conclusion. At the very end, Hamilton makes a brief reference to the opening movement before a wild ending.

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The Brazilionaires is a Latin fusion band fronted by vocalist Dove Benoit and guitarist "Rico" Wayne Johnson. Their music has been described as a rich blend of Latin rhythms under a layer of jazzy, sophisticated pop. The band is backed by a stellar lineup of musicians including Andy Crawford (bass), Tom Marko (drums), Jose Reyes (percussion), Todd Kelly (trumpet), and Jim Curless (tenor saxophone).

The band first debuted their symphonic program, *Passion & Amor*, in 2018 with the PSO. This return engagement in Peoria will feature a new twist on their previous program with new selections, rhythms, and sounds, called *A Latin Romance*. Rico and Dove's original compositions have reached new heights with the opulent orchestration and arrangements by Tom Marko (*Euforia*, *Blue October*, *Crave*, and *Popularity of Paula*) and Scott Hall (*Venetian Blinds*, *La Libertad*, *Saudade*, and *TakeOff*). Marko is the Director of Jazz Studies at Illinois State University and is a composer and Jazz recording artist on the Summit Records label. Hall is the Director of Jazz studies at Columbia University in Chicago and orchestrated the music of the great Jazz pianist/composer Ramsey Lewis.

In *A Latin Romance*, The Brazilionaires set out to create another auditory delight for listeners. Once again, the program showcases the excitement of The Brazilionaires’ music with a variety of Latin-based rhythms, creating a palette for exhilarating melodies and clever lyrics. Akin to a typical romance, the individual pieces invoke a sense of passion, joy, desire, despair, and sadness. As a whole, they synthesize the very definition of the experience that is love.

What better way to start the concert than to triumphantly declare that: “It’s much too divine... for words!” In the opener, *Euforia*, the audience will feel the excitement of new romance through this percussive samba, with fanfare from horns and flutes, pronouncing with joy: *Love has arrived and everyone must know!*

Quickly the listener is moved into a rhythmic *bolero*, reminiscent of a heartbeat. In *Venetian Blinds*, the darkness of passion is uncovered: obsession. "I can't deny the one who waits for me." What begins as a quiet conversation between the horn and trombone suddenly leads to a dizzying cacophony—almost confusion. With the flute trailing at the end, the audience is left on the edge of their seats in anticipation.

In *Blue October*, the full orchestra sets a scene of change with the timpani rolling into a lone guitar that strums a classic Brazilian *Bossa Nova* groove. This foreshadows the mood which is carried throughout the song with a haunting melody and heartbreaking lyrics: "Winter seems the time to go, leaving footprints in the snow... It never crossed my mind at all, you'd leave in Fall." The second section of the piece abruptly shifts to a fast *samba*, an escape from the despair.

With all its drama and fervor, *La Libertad* ("freedom") is an exaltation. The fiery passion of this rhythm, based on the Catalan *rumba*, is not to be understated. The rhythm section drives the music and emphasizes a desire to move forward. "In my dreams, I imagine what it means to be carefree, as I spread my wings to fly! Free from blame, and forgiven for mistakes of yesterday, heading for blue skies." With percussion solos trading turns over dramatic descending scales, the music captures the tumultuous excitement of romance.

The regret of leaving can be heard in the passionate music of the instrumental *bolero* aptly named *Saudade for Her*. The strings, with their lush swells, capture a longing for the past. "Saudade" is a Portuguese word that has no true English equivalent but speaks of nostalgia and desire. This melancholy is only broken momentarily by an excited up-tempo *tumbao* section featuring a marimba and brass—could the spark still be there? The return of the pensive bolero at the end suggests that love may truly be gone...

Crave takes us into newly charted rhythmic territory. Based on a *bachata* rhythm, a dance known for sensuality, the fire of desire is clearly evident. Opening with beautiful string lines that peak curiosity, these suddenly give way to the *bachata* groove, and one can't help but want to get up and dance.

Once again, with the upbeat samba *TakeOff*, a return to the joy of love. The trumpet fanfare cues the arrival of a new romance: "You make me high, just the thought of you gives the urge to fly!" The music carries a sense of passion and excitement—the unknown possibilities to come, ending with the violin section playing the characteristic montuno emphasizing the happiness that love can bring.

Popularity of Paula is a pop-influenced piece with a unique take on the *cumbia* rhythm. The funky bass and haunting electric guitar lines provide an interesting rhythmic backdrop for the orchestra accompaniment. It almost leads the listener to a feeling of restlessness. And that is entirely the idea—this piece represents the frustration of change and superficiality that often accompanies love. "Popularity - to her that matters most, but I want back the girl I used to know!"

Finally, a reprisal of *Euforia* welcomes the audience to sing along—“Sha la la la la...”—as a show of solidarity. We have all been there: the joy, the hope, the despair, the sadness... all of it.
LOVE!