

Placitas Artists Series - March 19, 2017 Program
Willy Sucre & La Catrina String Quartet,
String Quartets & Viola Quintet

Willy Sucre, viola
La Catrina String Quartet:
Daniel Vega-Albela and Simón Gollo, violin
Jorge Martínez-Ríos, viola
Jorge Espinoza, cello

Program:

M.M. Ponce (1882 - 1948)	Gavota	Arr. J. Espinoza
A. Piazzolla (1921-1992)	1) Fuga y Misterio; 2) Milonga de la Anunciacion	Arr. J. Espinoza
J. Plaza (1928 - 2003)	"Payadora"	Arr. J. Espinoza
M. More (1918 - 2016)	"Cuartito Azul"	Arr. J. Espinoza

**** Intermission ****

F. Mendelssohn:
String Quintet No.2 in B flat Major OP.87
1) Allegro Vivace
2) Andante Scherzando
3) Adagio e Lento
4) Allegro Molto Vivace

Program Notes for Willy Sucre & La Catrina String Quartet March 19, 2017 Performance

Gavota by Manuel Ponce (Arranged by Jorge Espinoza)

Mexican composer Manuel María Ponce Cuéllar was a composer, music educator and scholar of Mexican music. He connected the concert scene with a usually forgotten tradition of popular song and Mexican folklore. Many of his compositions are strongly influenced by the harmonies and form of traditional songs. The Gavota was originally composed for solo piano.

Fuga y Misterio by Ástor Piazzolla (Arranged by Jorge Espinoza)

The *Fuga y Misterio* is drawn from Argentinean composer Piazzolla's nuevo tango chamber opera from 1968, *María de Buenos Aires* and provides the music for the fifth scene. The *Fuga* (or "fugue") begins with an excited solo line that is imitated by other instruments. The counterpoint is as clean and comprehensible as any fugue by Bach; but this is Piazzolla, and the strings soon transform the fugue into a tango that retains elements of the original theme. The music changes again, this time for the slower *Misterio* section. The mystery only lasts for a short time, though, before the irrepressible tango again bursts forth. A jazzier style is discernible here, especially in the solo part, but the tango still dominates. The energetic music positively dances and drives the piece to a breathless close.

Milonga de la Anunciacion by Ástor Piazzolla (Arranged by Jorge Espinoza)

The Milonga de la Anunciacion is a song and dance from Argentinean composer Piazzolla's nuevo tango chamber opera from 1968, *María de Buenos Aires*.

Payadora by Julián Plaza (Arranged by Jorge Espinoza)

Payadora, a delightful mixture of old and new, is one of the most famous tangos written by Argentinean composer Plaza. This uninhibited milonga has an obsessive rhythm that only abates for a moment, before it is off for another whirl around the dance-floor. The sharp accents in the rhythm and the spicy chords, both depict and inspire sharp stabs of the shoe, and those delightful moves where the leader "blocks" the foot of the follower in a sharp and percussive movement.

Cuartito Azul by Mariano Mores (Arranged by Jorge Espinoza)

Argentinean composer Mariano Alberto Martínez, known professionally as Mariano Mores, was also a pianist and conductor, who established himself as a leading tango performer. Cuartito Azul is his famous tango composition released in 1939 which tells the experience of a young man who says goodbye to the room where he lived his adolescence following his first love. It is the story of Mores himself, and was his first great success.

Around 1937 Mariano Mores decided to move to Villa del Parque to be close to his girlfriend, Myrna, who became his wife. Mores moved one block from her house. The room was painted blue. It was there where he was inspired to compose "Cuartito Azul", his first great success that made him known and popular.

String Quintet No.2 in B flat Major OP.87 by Felix Mendelssohn

Mendelssohn wrote his Second String Quintet in the summer of 1845. One of eight chamber works he composed in the 1840s, and one of his last, the Quintet holds several distinctions – not least that Mendelssohn chose not to publish it. It was published posthumously in 1851. This Quintet is appreciated today as a strong chamber work from the latter end of the composer's life. It is also the signpost of an evolving style, the growing pains of a composer freeing himself from contrapuntal writing and classical embellishments and pursuing more overt and dramatic expression.

The prominent attribute of the Quintet is energy. Immediately, fierce tremolo gales blow through the Allegro vivace, ushering in a sprightly rising theme. Eddies of triplets swirl and froth around the idea and, though the proceedings intermittently relax into a gentle, descending motif, the leaping theme rushes back in for a lively coda. The Andante scherzando changes the pace – mixing a light, courtly waltz theme with moments of devilish pizzicato.

Some of Mendelssohn's most sober, tragic writing is contained in the Adagio e lento – weighty chords swelling over a trudging cello line. Although this movement slows the work to poignant reflection, the energy remains in an intense, insistent rhythm that pervades, and it all climaxes with wild tremolos quaking beneath a high violin line. The Allegro molto vivace is what, apparently, gave Mendelssohn enough trouble to abandon the work – many have pointed to the absence of contrast in what starts out as a sonata-rondo form, rendering it the only monothematic finale in the composer's canon. Ignoring its author's disappointment, though, the finale hurls the Quintet back into action, serving up the most blazing rhythms yet for a rapid dash towards the finish line.