

## Program Notes

**Juan Crisóstomo Arriaga** was often referred to as the Spanish Mozart. Unfortunately, he died shortly before his 20th birthday, but not before leaving several excellent works, including three string quartets. *String Quartet No.1 in D minor* is perhaps the most striking of the set because of the Spanish melodies, which appear throughout. The initial *Allegro* begins with a theme that is dark and forceful, but not particularly Spanish, and is played in unison for a powerful effect. It is with the captivating second theme, introduced by the first violin, that we initially hear Spanish melody, more plaintive but still propulsive. The first violin clearly dominates the second movement, *Adagio con espressione*, which is rhythmically very intricate. The opening theme is song-like, tender and expressive, while the second theme is full of pathos. The third movement is a *Menuetto*, with short, fragmentary phrases seeming to gravitate toward dramatic counterpoint without ever coalescing. In strong contrast, the central *Trio* section is a lighter, simpler Andalusian bolero, which features pizzicato chord accompaniment with a guitar-like feel. The last movement begins with an expressive *Adagio* section that gives way to a lilting yet troubled *Allegretto*. The movement seems to be a set of variations, but contrasting material brings it into more of a rondo form.

**Antonín Dvořák's** colorful Slavonic works of the 1870s, the Slavonic Dances, Slavonic Rhapsodies, and the Moravian Duets, were immensely popular. Jean Becker, the first violinist of the then-famous Florentine Quartet consequently asked Dvořák to write a "Slavonic work" for the group. The *String Quartet No. 10 in E flat, Op. 51* is the result of that commission. The quartet opens with a warm, lyrical sonata played at a perfectly relaxed tempo. It has a dance-like quality that becomes more pronounced with the transitional material and the second theme. After the development, the second theme returns first, but it is the calm first tune that draws the movement to a close. The most obviously Slavonic movement of the quartet is the second, an *Andante con moto* dumka with bursts of furiant sections in the middle. (The dumka and the furiant are both dance forms native to Dvořák's homeland.) The third movement is a beautiful *Romanze*. While not representing a specific Slavic trait, the music exhibits a heartfelt directness, warmth, and finely wrought "simplicity" for which Bohemian musicians and composers have long been famous. The rollicking finale is a swift rondo based on the skačna, a Bohemian fiddle tune akin to an Irish reel, with a jolly perpetual motion. An unmistakably vivacious dance energy animates the momentum with contrasts in rhythm, tempo, key, and an infectiously rustic folk character.

## Willy Sucre and Friends play String Quartets

**Krzysztof Zimowski, violin**  
**Carol Swift-Matton, violin**  
**Willy Sucre, viola**  
**Lisa Donald, cello**

### **Juan Crisóstomo Arriaga (1808-1826)**

#### *String Quartet No 1 in D minor*

- I.** *Allegro*
- II.** *Adagio con espressione*
- III.** *Menuetto*
- IV.** *Allegro*

#### *Intermission*

### **Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)**

#### *String Quartet No.10 in E flat Major Op. 51*

- I.** *Allegro ma non Troppo*
- II.** *Andante con Moto*
- III.** *Vivace*
- IV.** *Romanze*
- V.** *Allegro Assai*