

ENCUENTRO PUERTORRIQUEÑO DE CREACIÓN MUSICAL / CONCERT 6:
ARMANDO BAYOLO – MI ALMA LATINA

Memorial Room
Smith Memorial Hall
Saturday, April 1, 2023
8:00 PM

ARMANDO BAYOLO **Neruda enamorado** (2021) (Text by Pablo Neruda)

Prólogo
Llanto de aquel a quien no lo escuchan
Metáfora de la abeja
Tempestades veraniegas
Chacona
Nocturno
Epílogo

Kristina Bachrach, *soprano*
Winston Choi, *piano*

Memorias vagabundas (2022)

Cordillera oceánica
Dédalo y San Felipe
The Fania All Stars Meet Igor Stravinsky
Cameo: Chopin y la niña
First Snow
Selbstoptrait mith Adams und Andriessen
(und Ginastera is Auch Dabei)
Cameo: Canción sentimental
Memories of Places Never Seen (Palimpsest)
Cameo: Full House
Juan Sebastián en El Yunque
Requiem
Cameo: El pelotero
Personal Apocalypses
Coquís en la llovizna
My Children's Country

Winston Choi, *piano*

Armando Bayolo

Born in 1973 in Santurce, Puerto Rico to Cuban parents, composer Armando Bayolo began musical studies at the age of twelve. At sixteen he went on to study at the prestigious Interlochen Arts Academy in Interlochen, Michigan, where he first began the serious study of composition. He holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music (B.M. 1995), where his teachers were Samuel Adler, Joseph Schwantner and Christopher Rouse; Yale University (M.M. 1997), where he studied with Roberto Sierra, Jacob Druckman, Ingram Marshall and Martin Bresnick; and the University of Michigan (D.M.A. 2001) where he studied with Michael Daugherty, Bright Sheng and Evan Chambers.

Mr. Bayolo has been hailed for his “suggestive aural imagination” (*El Nuevo Día*) in works that are “full of lush ideas and a kind of fierce grandeur, (unfolding) with subtle, driving power” (*The Washington Post*). His “music combines the audacity of popular music, the verve-filled rhythmic language of Latin America, and the pugnacity of postmodern classicism into a heady, formidable concoction” (*Sequenza21*), and “deserves to be heard many more times, and in many more places. It is new, it is fresh, and it gets its message across” (*The Charlotte Observer*) “with quite a high degree of poetic expressiveness” (*Music-Web International*).

Mr. Bayolo’s music has been commissioned and performed throughout the world by some of today’s most important musicians and ensembles including National Symphony Orchestra and Peabody Institute bassist, Jeffrey Weisner, violinist Cornelius Dufallo, cellist Natalie Spehar, violist Jason Hohn, guitarist D.J. Sparr, flutist Rowland Sutherland, clarinetist Katherine Kellert, pianist Kathleen Supove, and French Hornist Armando Castellano; conductors Mei-Ann Chen, Harlan Parker, Mark Scatterday, John Gordon Ross, Robert Geary, Julian Wachner, Robert Ponto, J. Reilly Lewis, Carlo Boccadoro, and Maximiano Valdés; Loadbang, the Society for New Music in Syracuse, NY, the Grand Valley State University New Music Ensemble, Trio Montage, the Euclid Quartet, the Bleeker ST Quartet, Volti, Janus Trio, Orfeón San Juan Bautista, the American Modern Ensemble, Third Coast Percussion, The Percussion Plus Project, London’s Ensemble Lontano, Amsterdam’s Hexnut, the South Jutlands Symphony of Denmark, the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra, Western Piedmont Symphony, Delaware Valley Symphony Orchestra, Wabash Valley Youth Symphony, Columbia Civic Orchestra, the Chicago Sinfonietta, the National Gallery of Art Orchestra and Vocal Arts Ensemble, the Washington Chorus and Washington Choral Arts Society, Great Noise Ensemble and the wind ensembles of Oregon State University, the University of Oregon, Arizona State University, the University of New Mexico, The Ohio State University and the Eastman School of Music.

Mr. Bayolo is the recipient of important commissions and awards from the Aspen Music Festival, Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University, the Music Department of the National Gallery

of Art, the Arts Councils of the states of Iowa and North Carolina, the Cintas Foundation, the Minnesota Orchestra and American Composers Forum, the Consortium for a Strong Minority Presence, the all-Virginia Intercollegiate Band, and the Festival Interamericano de las Artes. Significant upcoming performances of Mr. Bayolo's music include the European premieres of Wide Open Spaces and Gestos inútiles with Milan's Sentieri Selvaggi and Carlo Boccadoro, the world premiere of Hidden Zen with Kathleen Supove at New York's Di Menna Center for Classical Music, premiere performances of A Play of Mirrors by H2 Saxophone Quartet, A Hymnody for the Contemplation of Terrifying Mysteries for Atlanta's Chamber Cartel, Five for Four by The Guidonian Hand, Last Breaths, in its original version by Loadbang and a new, wind ensemble version by the College of New Jersey Wind Ensemble. Recent important performances of his work include performances of Action Figure, Hermandad and Gestos inútiles at the Lontano Festival of American Music in London, Hesychasmos at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign new music series, The Books of Bokonon by The Deviant Septet at the Outside the Box new music festival at Southern Illinois University and in their regular series in New York (2017-18), Caprichos at the 2014 Bang on a Can marathon (where he also conducted works by Carlos Carrillo and Marc Mellits). In 2015-16, the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra opened their season with Mr. Bayolo's concerto for orchestra, Ráfagas de baile to great acclaim. That same season, Great Noise Ensemble presented the world premiere of Mr. Bayolo's fourth symphony, Chamber Symphony: Obsessioning. Additionally, important performances and commissions of his works have been presented by the Chicago Sinfonietta, Trio Montage (at Carnegie Hall and the International Clarinet Association conference in Assisi), the Bowling Green New Music Festival, the Festival Interamericano de las Artes in San Juan, Volti, the Washington Chorus and Choral Arts Society, the Cathedral Choral Society, Invoke, and others. His music has been presented at such important venues as the Aspen Music Festival, the Charlotte New Music Festival, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Orchestra Hall in Chicago, and Carnegie Hall, among others. Major ongoing projects also include Che/The Passion of Che Guevara, an opera-oratorio in two acts to a libretto by Kate Gale, with Matthew Principe, producer and Kevin Newbury, director, and Los Caprichos, a setting of 80 miniatures for ensemble and multimedia based on Francisco de Goya's 1799 etchings.

Besides being active as a composer, Mr. Bayolo is an "adventurous, imaginative and fiercely committed (The Washington Post) advocate for contemporary music in American culture through his activities as Artistic Director and conductor of Great Noise Ensemble, curator, from 2011-2014, of the New Music at the Atlas series for the Atlas Performing Arts Center in Washington, and as a writer for such publications as Sequenza21 and NewMusicBox. With Great Noise Ensemble, Mr. Bayolo has led several world and regional premieres of music by a diverse group of composers, both emerging and established, like Joel Puckett, D.J. Sparr, Robert Paterson, Hannah Lash, Carlos Carrillo, Ryan Brown, David T. Little, David Smooke, John Adams, Michael Daugherty, Steve Reich, John Luther Adams, Frederic Rzewski, Poul Ruders, Ken Ueno, Gabriela Lena Frank,

Martin Bresnick, Sean Doyle, Marc Mellits, Arlene Sierra, Eric Nathan, and Louis Andriessen. As a conductor of “precision, imagination and tangible electricity” (The Washington Post), Mr. Bayolo has led Great Noise Ensemble to become the premiere contemporary music ensemble in Washington, D.C. and one of the most important arts organizations in the District of Columbia. He has specialized, particularly, in the music of Louis Andriessen, leading the first professional American ensemble performance of *De Materie* in 2010 and of *La Commedia* during the 2013-14 season as part of a week-long festival of Andriessen’s music he curated in honor of the composer’s 75th birthday in 2014.

As curator of the New Music Series at the Atlas Performing Arts Center, Mr. Bayolo developed an innovative, adventurous concert series which quickly became “a key destination for anyone interested in new American music” (The Washington Post) in the United States. His series featured such luminary performers as Ethel, the International Contemporary Ensemble, the Bang on a Can All Stars, Kathleen Supove, the Prism Saxophone Quartet, So Percussion, Janus Trio, Maya Beiser, Tim Brady, Imani Winds Newspeak, and eighth blackbird. Mr. Bayolo currently serves as Director of the Publick Playhouse for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission as well as director of the Commission’s partnership with Bowie State University.

Mr. Bayolo has been featured on Public Radio International’s Studio 360 broadcast out of WNYC in New York and on the NPR program Fresh Ink broadcast out of WCNY in Syracuse, WQXR’s Q2, as well as the Washington Post and the New York Times’ Opinionator Blog. He has also contributed articles to New Music Box and Sequenza21, where he was a Contributing Editor until 2011. As an educator, he has served on the music faculties of Reed College, Hamilton College, the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University, and Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, where he coordinated the Outside the Box new music festival. From 2013-15, he served as guest faculty with the Charlotte New Music Festival. He is the recipient of a 2011 Fromm Foundation grant from Harvard University, the 2008 Brandon Fradd fellowship in music composition from the Cintas Foundation, a fellowship from the Consortium for a Strong Minority Presence from 2006-2008 and various other awards and honors from the American Composers Forum, the University of Michigan, BMI, ASCAP and the arts councils of Iowa and North Carolina. His cello concerto, *Orfei Mors* and the cantata, *Kaddish:Passio:Rothko*, were each nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in music. Mr. Bayolo’s music can be heard on the Sono Luminus, Inova, New Focus, and Great Noise labels and is published by his own imprint, Olibel Music and available through his web site, www.armandobayolo.com.

On Neruda Enamorado:

When, in 2021, the *20 Love Poems and a Song of Despair* by Pablo Neruda entered the public domain, I jumped at the suggestion, from the soprano, Denise Rivera, at setting some of them to music. Neruda is one of my favorite poets, and it had been some time since I’d written anything

that would qualify as an “art song.” Upon spending time with these texts to find suitable settings, however, I found that I didn’t really like what I read. Not that the poetry is poor, obviously, but that texts I remembered as being about passionate love turned out to read more like the diary of an “incel.”

So, I decided to lean on that.

Neruda Enamorado (*Neruda in Love*) contains no sweetness or romantic expression to it. These are songs sung from the point of view of a disappointed, rejected lover not even at the end of a relationship but facing rejection of a relationship that only exists in his head. We are lucky that they led to expression in poetry like Neruda’s and not anything more tragic.

Neruda Enamorado was commissioned by Denise Rivera, Monica Szabo-Nieste and Hillary LaBonte. It was composed in the fall/winter of 2020-21.

On *Memorias Vagabundas*:

Memoirs are strange things. Too many people who really ought not write one do so while not enough people with something truly important to say do not. I don’t think of myself as having anything of particular importance to say, nor do I enjoy engaging in the type of navel gazing that is required for these projects. When it was suggested, however, that I write a type of memoir in a musical composition, the idea proved an intriguing one.

In *Memorias vagabundas* (*Vagabond Memories*) I primarily focus on engaging the cultures I’ve inherited by genetics, birth, and residence. My family is made up primarily of Cuban exiles who fled Fidel Castro’s communist regime in the 1960’s. My siblings and I were born in Puerto Rico, and were raised to see ourselves as Puerto Rican. And, in 1989 at the age of 16, I settled in the United States to pursue musical studies and remain there to this day. This mélange of cultures—mixed with the ancestral culture of Spain, to which my paternal grandfather belonged directly but to which my entire family traces its origins—has made questions of identity personally murky throughout my life, and it is my goal to address them as best as I can in this piece.

Memorias vagabundas was commissioned by a consortium of eleven pianists: Vicky Chow, Winston Choi, Geoffrey Burleson, Erika Dohi, Megumi Masaki, Vicki Ray, Ju-Ping Song, Michael Mizrahi, Timothy Hoft, Mikael Darmanie and Blair McMillen. It received its virtual premiere under the auspices of Bang on a Can in November, 2022 and its live premiere in January, 2023 at Barge Music in New York.