Primavera Porteña

The music of Ástor Piazzolla is a unique fusion of folkloric beauty and contemporary tension. Piazzolla’s Nuevo Tango was distinct from the traditional tango in its incorporation of elements of jazz, its use of extended harmonies and dissonance, its use of counterpoint, and its ventures into extended compositional forms. As Argentine psychoanalyst Carlos Curi has pointed out, Piazzolla’s fusion of tango with this wide range of other recognizable Western musical elements was so successful that it produced a new individual style transcending his influences. Las cuatro estaciones portenas (The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires) has become one of Piazzolla’s best-known works. He pays homage to the tango of Buenos Aires as well as the “serious” music of the great Italian composer Antonio Vivaldi. Primavera Porteña (Spring) is filled with excitement and rhythmic electricity.

The Elixir Piano Trio

Samvel Chilingarian—violin
Lucy Nargizyan—piano
Garik Terzian—cello

Winner of the Most Distinguished Musician award 2005 IBLA International Competition in Italy, The Elixir Piano Trio has appeared in performances in Europe and the United States. Founded in 2004, this dynamic group performs both traditional and modern repertoire with classical, folk and jazz influences. Known for its unique and exciting interpretations, the Los Angeles-based ensemble has dazzled audiences with its energy and sensitivity, and has become instrumental in promoting works by Contemporary composers.

The Elixir Piano Trio is the Trio-In-Residence and is on the faculty of the Beverly Hills International Music Festival.

www.elixirpianotrio.com

Upcoming Events

- Friday, May 3, 2013:
  Faculty Composers Recital, Alan Shockley, director 8:00pm Daniel Recital Hall $10/7
**PROGRAM**

*Summer Park* .......................................................... James LaPiana Jr.

*La Pyramide du Louvre a l’heure de pluie* ......................... Joe Sanders

*Here, Now* ............................................................................ Josué Orozco

*Vibrating Cupcakes Underwater* ........................................... J.C. Scheid

*Scenes Over Time* .......................................................... Brandon K. Rivera

*Buzzard’s Sunset* ........................................................... Casey Martin

*Sond-Nomb* ......................................................................... David Landon

*An Evening Trip to the Zoo* ................................................. Edna A Longoria

**INTERMISSION**

*Cassandra’s Rockaby* ...................................................... Penka Kouneva

*Piano Trio in F sharp minor* ............................................... Amo Babadjanian

III. Allegro vivace

*Two Pieces for Trio* ......................................................... Thomas Parisich

I. Meditation
II. Burlesque

*Café Music* ................................................................. Paul Schoenfield

I. Allegro Con Fuoco

*Primavera Porteña* ......................................................... Ástor Piazzolla

**PROGRAM NOTES**

The first part of tonight’s program is a series of “snapshots,” each piece roughly one minute long and each written specifically for the Elixir Trio by members of the CSULB Composers’ Guild. The challenge the composers faced was not simply to write one minute of music, which in itself is not very hard to do, but to write a work that was fully realized and complete within that time frame. The Composers’ Guild members are excited to hear their works performed by musicians of this caliber. We thank the Elixir Trio for taking on the challenge of premiering these new works.

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**Cassandra’s Rockaby** by Penka Kouneva

Simultaneously tempestuous and reflective, *Cassandra’s Rockaby* is my musical answer to the question of how “postmodernist tonality” and minimalist idioms, when mixed with popular influences, can be used in today’s music. During the ’90s when post-minimalism was en vogue, I was fascinated by it and wanted to challenge the old notion that minimalism is emotionally limited. My piece was inspired by the poem “Rockaby” by Samuel Beckett about a mother sitting in a rocking chair. The piece, in a form of rondo, features toccata patterns in the piano and smoothly gliding melodic lines in the violin and cello. The harmonic language is tonal and descends from impressionism, popular music and minimalism.

**Piano Trio in F sharp minor** by Arno Babadjanian was written in 1952. It received immediate acclaim and was regarded as a masterpiece from the time of its premiere. In three substantial movements, it is passionate and full of memorable melodies with wonderful writing for all three instruments. The first movement, *Allegro*, begins in dramatic fashion with the strings playing the main theme in unison. Like a leitmotif, this theme reappears in each of the following movements. The second movement, *Andante*, begins very softly with the violin introducing the lovely main theme high on its e-string. Eventually the cello joins in and the theme is intertwined between them in a very original fashion. The finale, *Allegro vivace*, is rhythmically quite interesting. Mostly in 5/8 time, it features two themes which stand in stark contrast to each other. The first is rather rough and aggressive while the second is softer and more song-like. The trio ends with the appearance of the opening theme and leads to a short stormy coda.

**Two pieces for Piano Trio** was written for the Elixir Piano Trio in winter 2010 by Thomas Parisich. The intention of this set of two movements was to explore the idea of unity by contrast rather than unity by commonalities. Purposely not having the two pieces sharing any characteristics or thematic material, I tried to sting them together, pair them up as opposing sides or poles of what I would call archetypical dualities. Their unity thus results from the juxtaposition of complementing extremities. The musical language employed for both pieces is rooted in classical tradition infused with influences by modern styles, mainly jazz. These influences show mostly in the harmonic content but also (mainly in the second movement) in melodic and rhythmic material.

**Café Music** by Paul Schoenfield mixes Broadway with Jewish folk music, jazz, blues, Dixieland, contemporary, classical, romantic and circus styles. The composer writes: “The idea to compose this trio came to me in 1985 after sitting one night for the pianist at Murray’s Restaurant in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Murray’s employs a house trio which plays entertaining dinner music in a wide variety of styles. My intention was to write a kind of high-class dinner music—music which could be played at a restaurant, but might also find its way into a concert hall.” The work draws on many of the types of music played by the trio at Murray’s. For example, early 20th-century American, Viennese, light classical,