

Quad City Symphony Orchestra
PROGRAM NOTES
Masterworks III: Ode to Guitar

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GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN
(1681-1767)

Ouverture-Suite *Burlesque de Quichotte*,
TWV 55:G10

Instrumentation: Strings and basso continuo
(harpsichord).

Premiere: Unknown.
QCSO Premiere.

Cervantes's great epic novel *Don Quixote*, first published in its final, complete version in 1615 and reprinted continuously ever since, is more than just a comic farce. Certainly, Cervantes achieved his literary triumph by inventing hilariously memorable characters and placing them in unforgettably absurd situations. But the work's power also rests on its implicit and sometimes incisive commentary on human nature and the evolution of cultures and societies. Unsurprisingly, it has often inspired derivative artistic works over the centuries, from Richard Strauss's 1897 tone poem to a sketch by Pablo Picasso, to the very loosely-adapted 1965 Broadway musical *The Man of La Mancha*.

Baroque composer Georg Philipp Telemann approached Cervantes as a source for inspiration twice during his long and

phenomenally productive career. Near the end of his life, he composed the opera *Don Quixote at Camancho's Wedding*, with a libretto in German by the young poet Daniel Schiebeler, based on an episode from Cervantes's novel.

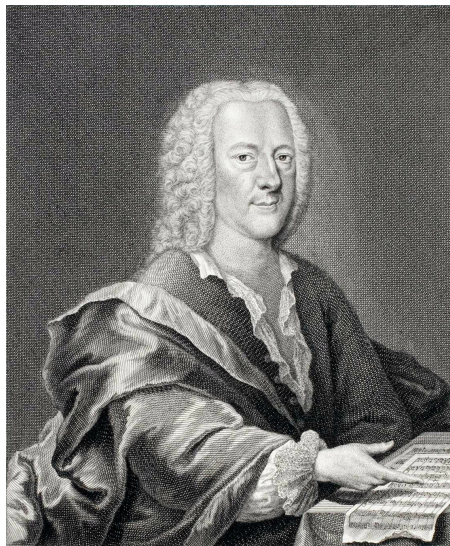
The work premiered in Hamburg in 1761. Much less is known about the genesis of his other Quixote-inspired work, the Ouverture-Suite "Burlesque de Quichotte", a multi-movement work with descriptive titles drawn from throughout the novel. Because the 1761 opera has no overture, the Burlesque overture is often used in

as a prelude to performances of the opera.

Although we do not know the exact year Telemann composed the suite nor the specific circumstances of its premiere, we can reasonably guess that it was written for a *collegium musicum* associated with one of Telemann's various courtly and civic posts, most likely also in



Picasso's sketch of Don Quixote



Georg Philipp Telemann

Hamburg, where he spent the bulk of his later career. *Collegia musica* were performing societies, many of them composed of university students and professional musicians, that produced public concerts and promoted fraternity and appreciation of musical arts. As such, they are a direct predecessor of the modern symphony orchestra.

Don Quixote Suite Listening Guide

1. Overture

TEXTURE. About halfway through this overture, Telemann employs a technique called fugato. Such “fugue-like” passages are distinguished by the performing of a single-line melody (in this case quite lively), which is joined a few measures later by a delayed and transposed version of the same melody. The effect in this case is a animated and ebullient celebration; Gi-nastera uses the same technique later in this concert, in a very different manner.

2. Awakening of Don Quixote

FORM. Like so many instrumental works from this era and afterward, this movement is in binary form, meaning it is divided into two large sections, both of which are independently repeated (AABB). Unlike the binary movements in the Mozart Divertimento later in this weekend’s program, Telemann does not begin the second half (B) in a different key than the first, a device later composers would use to make the middle-point clearer to listeners.

3. His Attack on the Windmills

RHYTHM. Telemann uses many war-like rhythms to depict Don Quixote’s windmill battle. Aside from the quick bows and thrilling runs, notice also that, like Quixote

himself, the length of Telemann’s phrases here are dangerously unpredictable.

4. Sighs of Love for Dulcinea

MELODY. Here Telemann makes use of the common “musical sigh”, a dissonant note placed on a beat that resolves step-wise downward, usually before the next beat. This is sometimes given the technical name *appoggiatura*, which means “leaning”.

5. Sancho Panza Swindled

MELODY. Depicting one of the many sad but hilarious misfortunes of Don Quixote’s squire, this movement includes some fitful five-note runs, perhaps alluding to Sancho Panza’s amusingly furious rants. The exact rhythmic placement of these figures is a matter of some dispute among musicians.

6. Rosinante Galloping/The Gallop of Sancho Panza’s Mule

METER. The contrasting movements of Quixote’s horse and Sancho Panza’s mule are humorously depicted between these two movements. Both are in compound meter, which means that beats are divided into three rhythmic sub-units; this has been a common way to depicted the cadence of horses across many centuries of music. The liveliness of Rosinante depicted here is, of course, in Don Quixote’s imagination; Cervantes describes his horse as old and tired.

7. Don Quixote at Rest

HARMONY. Telemann depicts the death of Don Quixote by using a pedal tone for the entire movement; named after the pedals on the pipe organ, a pedal tone is a long-lasting, persistent pitch, usually in the lowest register. Even when Telemann writes rests for the low instruments, the pedal G continues as the lowest pitch in the violas.

MICHAEL ABELS (b. 1962)

Borders

QCSO Co-Commission.

Instrumentation: Solo guitar, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, one trombone, timpani, two percussion, and strings.

Premiere: September 23, 2022, River Oaks Chamber Orchestra, Mak Grgić as soloist, Mei-Ann Chen conducting, Houston, Texas.

QCSO Premiere.

Composer Michael Abels writes:

"This piece is inspired by the museum exhibit 'Sahara: Acts of Memory' depicting life camp 'Sahara' that was created in Denmark for housing refugees of the Bosnian War in the 1990s. Among the refugees was graphic artist Ismet Berbic and his family. The exhibit details the Berbics' struggle to preserve individuality, family and cultural identity in the face of losing country and community. Guitarist Mak Grgić was a friend of the Berbics, and experienced the Balkan War firsthand as a child. In the first movement of this concerto, the guitar is a protagonist that is repeatedly confined by sonic bars or walls created by the orchestra. The second movement depicts a child running, sometimes joyfully, but also sometimes in fear."



Michael Abels

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

Divertimento No. 1 in E-flat Major, K. 113

Instrumentation: Two clarinets, two horns, and strings.

Premiere: 1771, Milan.

QCSO Premiere.

The gradual integration of clarinets into Mozart's works mirrors the development of the instrument itself. Derived from the single-reed instrument the chalumeau, it was primarily used as a military instrument during most of the eighteenth century,

though composers saw its concert-music possibilities early on. In 1778 Mozart famously wrote to his father from Mannheim, "Oh, if we only had two clarinets!", and the inclusion of the instrument in various middle-period symphonies is usually attributable to the personnel Mozart had at his disposal. Thanks to his association with clarinetist and fellow court musician Anton Stadler, near the end of his life Mozart produced two of the most sublime and popular works ever written for the instrument, the Clarinet Quintet of 1789 and the Concerto of 1791. Both are testament both to Mozart's transcendent late style and the instrument's nearly-supernatural expressive qualities.

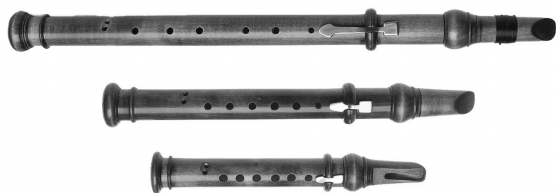
Thus the early Divertimento of 1771, written while Mozart still served in the court at



Mozart during his travels to Italy in the early 1770s.

Salzburg, is a historical marker of sorts: the first Mozart work which included the clarinet. He composed it during one of his several visits to Milan, Italy, where the instrument must have been in active use. *Divertimento* means “diversion”; it and the many other works with the same title are intended as short, multi-movement pieces for entertainment.

Aside from the full score for two clarinets, two horns and strings, Mozart produced a second score of the work, which consisted of only parts for pairs of oboes and bassoons. This has provided an all-too-typical battleground among musicologists: did Mozart intend to *add* the oboes and bassoons, or were the oboes and bassoon parts intended to *replace* the clarinets and horns wherever clarinets were not available? Because the oboe and clarinet parts are almost exact copies, it seems fairly certain that Mozart intended the oboes to be used as replacements for the clarinets when necessary, not as doublings.



Chalumeaux of various sizes, predecessors to the modern clarinet.

Divertimento No. 1 **Listening Guide**

1. Allegro

ORCHESTRATION. Notice how Mozart treats the strings as mostly separate and distinct from the clarinets and horns; although the whole ensemble unites at the ends of phrases, the two “instrument

families” are mostly used in contrast with each other.

2. Andante

RHYTHM. As is often the case, the slow tempo of a Classical-era Andante is used as a playground for various divisions and subdivisions of the beat. Notice how all of the instruments move slowly together at the beginning of the movement; as the music continues, shorter notes emerge as accompaniment. The melody in turn starts to employ these shorter notes, even while the accompaniment uses even shorter notes underneath. Just when things start to feel over-active, Mozart brings all of the instruments back to the original long note length.

3. Menuetto – Trio

FORM. As in all dance movements with a trio (ABA form), pay attention to the shifting character between the contrasting sections. The “A” sections, in E-flat major, are noble and gregarious, with outbursts of laughing triplets; the trio (B), in a much more cautious and concerned character, begins in the shadowy “mediant” key of G minor.

4. Allegro

MELODY. Near the end of the main melody, listen for how Mozart builds excitement with an ascending chromatic scale. “Chromatic” means “colorful”, and is so-named because it moves up or down using all of the black and white keys of the keyboard. In this case, the strings begin with the ascending scale in accented dissonant tones, and the winds echo with a more straightforward statement of the same scale.

ALBERTO GINASTERA (1916-1983)

Variaciones Concertantes, Op. 23

Instrumentation: Two flutes (second doubling piccolo), one oboe, two clarinets, one bassoon, two horns, one trumpet, one trombone, timpani, harp, and strings.

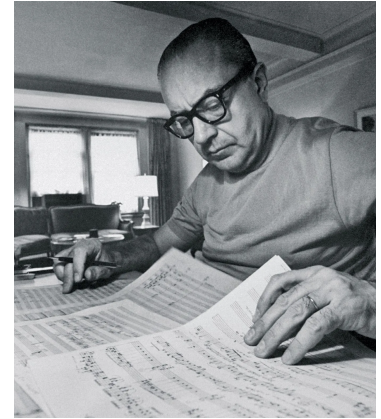
Premiere: June 1953, Asociación Amigos de la Música, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Igor Markevitch conducting.

QCSO Performance History: This work was performed only once in the TCSO/QCSO history, in a 1984 Masterworks concert led by James Dixon.

Argentine composer Alberto Ginastera's work in some ways mirrors the work of his friend and contemporary, Aaron Copland. Both received commissions from impresario Lincoln Kirstein's American Ballet Caravan during the years before World War II, and both used the occasion to produce works inspired by the dual cowboy/gacho cultures of the United States and Argentina. Both works, Copland's *Billy the Kid* (1938) and Ginastera's *Estancia* (1941), would ultimately stand as definitive works in the classical style of the composers' respective nations.

In 1952, Ginastera experienced a professional crisis due to his refusal to name the music conservatory he administered after Eva Perón, the late wife of dictator Juan Perón. Ginastera wrote to Copland that "this was a terrible blow in my economic life (and, I must confess that, in the beginning, in my spiritual life too)." This was another point of similarity between the two; around the time Ginastera fell out of favor with Perón, Copland was called before Senator Joseph McCarthy's House Un-American Activities Committee. But following their respective political misfortunes, the two composers recovered very differently. Whereas Copland

responded to his run-in with McCarthyism by writing very little in the remaining four decades of his life, Ginastera used the episode as an opportunity for recovery. "Now thinking more calmly [about] the whole affair," Ginastera



Alberto Ginastera

wrote Copland after the fact, "it seems to me a favorable change and a real luck in my composer's life, because you know that I was so overworked that I could hardly write... Now I am writing very enthusiastically."

Ginastera's *Variaciones Concertantes* originates from this period of political repression and artistic regeneration. Though it includes plenty of explosive and thrilling passages reminiscent of *Estancia*, the work has a subtle air of gloom throughout, due mostly to the melancholic and lamenting theme first played by the solo cello. As will be obvious to anyone who has ever attempted to tune a guitar, the opening notes of harp accompaniment are the open strings of the guitar (E, A, D, G, B, E), a subtle reference to the figure of the Argentine gaucho which had so colorfully inspired Ginastera's work a decade before.

Variaciones Concertantes Listening Guide

1. Theme for Cello and Harp

INSTRUMENTATION. The theme is presented by the solo cello in its extreme high register. Though this melody is so high it could have been played on the

violin or viola, Ginastera exploits the unique color of a high cello, which has more drama and resonance than the other string instruments in this range.

2. String Interlude

PITCH. The cello solo's final pitch, an excruciatingly high E, provides a segue into a brief and haunting string interlude. Ginastera here uses a very strange scale, a curious hybrid of two utterly unrelated scales, E minor and B-flat minor.

3. Humorous Variation for Flute

INSTRUMENTATION. The flute is easily buried in its low register, so notice how Ginastera carefully handles the descending lines in the solo part, often silencing the accompaniment entirely when necessary.

4. Variation in the Style of a Scherzo for Clarinet

RHYTHM. The clarinet melody is distinguished by accented, syncopated notes, preceded by grace notes, or rapid single pitches played out of time, just before the syncopated note. At the variation's end, the grace note figures give way to fleeting runs in the clarinet part.

5. Dramatic Variation for Viola

INSTRUMENTATION. After several chilling long tones in the solo viola that seem to silence the orchestra, Ginastera includes several passages of double-stops, or two-note chords where the viola plays two strings simultaneously.

6. Canonical Variation for Oboe and Bassoon

TEXTURE. In this variation, the oboe plays a melody, and the bassoon echoes it exactly one measure later, a fifth below. Though canons like this are not uncommon ("Row, Row, Row Your Boat"), this canon is distinctive because, despite its travels through many different keys, there are no adjustments whatsoever to the

bassoon part to fit the prevailing harmony. Musicians refer to this as a "real" canon, as opposed to a "tonal" one.

7. Rhythmic Variation for Trumpet and Trombone

ORCHESTRATION. While all ears will be on the brass in this variation, notice the strings and Ginastera's generous use of consecutive down-bows, with the players repeatedly lifting their bows to play strongly accented notes in succession.

8. Variation in the Style of Perpetual Motion for Violin

INSTRUMENTATION. Listen carefully to the solo part for a very brief instance of left-hand pizzicato. This difficult technique allows a player to interpolate bowed and plucked pitches in close succession.

9. Pastoral Variation for Horn

HARMONY. This melancholy version of the theme begins in the pure key of C major. Though Ginastera cautiously adds other pitches, he returns to the "white-key" sound for the variation's closing.

10. Interlude for Winds.

ORCHESTRATION. Listen for the buzzy, uncanny sound of the trumpet mute at the end of this interlude.

11. Reprise of the Theme for Contrabass

INSTRUMENTATION. The contrabass revives the cello's theme from the beginning of the work, an octave below the original statement. Rather than sounding urgent and passionate as at first, it now seems melancholy and muted.

12. Final Variation in the Style of a Rondo for Orchestra

RHYTHM. The variations conclude with one of Ginastera's favorite dances, an Argentine Malambo. The malambo is a competitive stomping dance, also connected to gaucho lore.