Michael Brown, Piano  
Nicholas Canellakis, Cello  
Orion Weiss, Piano  
Ian David Rosenbaum, Percussion  

Saturday, February 19, 2022  
2:00 PM  
Bethel United Methodist Church Hall,  
Lewes, DE  

The Soul of the Americas  

PROGRAM  

El Salón México for Solo Piano  
arr. Leonard Bernstein  
Aaron Copland  
(1900 – 1990)  

Three Meditations from Mass  
(version for Cello, Piano, and Percussion)  
Leonard Bernstein  
(1918 – 1990)  

Souvenirs for Piano Four Hands, Op. 28  
Samuel Barber  
(1910 – 1981)  

INTERMISSION  

Mariel for Cello and Marimba  
Osvaldo Golijov  
(b. 1960)  

Divagação for Cello, Piano, and Drum  
Heitor Villa-Lobos  
(1887 – 1959)  

A Maré Encheu from Guia Prático for Solo Piano  
O Polichinelo from Prole do Bebê for Solo Piano  
Heitor Villa-Lobos  

Pampeana No. 2, Rhapsody for Cello and Piano, Op. 21  
Alberto Ginastera  
(1916 – 1983)  

Cuban Overture for Piano Four Hands and Percussion  
George Gershwin  
(1898-1937)  

- Program Subject to Change -
Program Notes

*The Soul of the Americas* celebrates the rich tapestry of musical influences across North and South America, featuring the works of seven iconic composers. Aaron Copland's *El Salón México* and George Gershwin's *Cuban Overture* were directly inspired by their travels to those respective countries. Leonard Bernstein was an ardent champion of Latin American music, including the music of Brazilian Heitor Villa-Lobos and Argentinian Alberto Ginastera. Osvaldo Golijov settled in the United States but his music draws on his Argentinian roots. Samuel Barber was enamored with diverse musical styles, as seen through his nostalgic *Souvenirs*.

Curated by Michael Brown and Nicholas Canellakis, with collaborators Orion Weiss and Ian David Rosenbaum, this program features unique combinations of piano, cello and percussion, and will take the listener on a sizzling journey through both hemispheres.

**COPLAND**

*El Salón México for Piano (1932-36) arr. Leonard Bernstein (1941)*

From the time of Copland’s first visit to Mexico City in 1932, when his friend Carlos Chávez took him to the colorful nightclub called *El Salón México*, Copland wanted to compose a piece about this unusual dance hall. He said: "I was attracted by the spirit of the place and by the Mexican people. Using Mexican melodies seemed appropriate. My purpose was not merely to quote literally, but to heighten without in any way falsifying the natural simplicity of Mexican tunes."

Much to Copland's surprise and delight, *El Salón México* was welcomed warmly in Mexico and has consistently been one of his most performed works. He said: "Never in my wildest dreams did I expect this kind of acceptance for the piece!"

**BERNSTEIN**

*Three Meditations from Mass (1978)*

Bernstein’s *Mass (A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players, and Dancers)* was composed at the request of President Kennedy’s widow to celebrate the inauguration of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. The Meditations, derived from instrumental interludes in the Mass, were premiered in its orchestral form at the Kennedy Center, the composer conducting the National Symphony Orchestra, with Mstislav Rostropovich as the soloist.

The *Three Meditations* were later arranged by the composer for cello and piano. In *Mass* itself the first two Meditations are used as instrumental interludes. The third is derived from various sections of *Mass*. Although some of these sections are widely separated in *Mass*, there is an underlying thematic unity between them.
BARBER
Souvenirs for Piano Four Hands, Op. 28 (1951–1952)

Souvenirs is one of Barber’s few works that could be considered light in style, or referred to as “salon” music. The suite, written for piano four hands, was composed at the suggestion of Barber’s friend, Charles Turner, who would often relax with the composer in New York City at the bar in the Blue Angel Club. Barber dedicated Souvenirs to Turner, and the two performed the composition at parties they attended in New York and across Europe.

The suite consists of six short movements, each representing a different style of dance (waltz, schottische, pas de deux, two-step, hesitation-tango, and gallop). In the preface to the original copy of the four hand piano version, Barber suggests that the suite was inspired by the music he heard from around 1910 to 1920, when he and his mother would visit the Palm Court of the Plaza Hotel in New York.

GOLIJOV
Mariel for Cello and Marimba (1999)

Golijov was born and raised in Argentina and learnt about music from his pianist mother. When he was ten years old his parents took him to hear Astor Piazzolla. This was a defining moment. Music was suddenly no longer something found in a score; it was alive and real. Golijov feels that some cultures have explored different aspects of the human soul more deeply than others, leading him to select certain specific influences when he wishes to evoke a particular emotion - for instance Spanish flamenco flavors when infusing his music with despair.

In the composer’s words: “I wrote this piece in memory of my friend Mariel Stubrin. I attempted to capture that short instant before grief, in which one learns of the sudden death of a friend who was full of life - a single moment frozen forever in one’s memory, and which reverberates through the piece, among the waves and echoes of the Brazilian music that Mariel loved.”

VILLA-LOBOS
Divagação for Cello, Piano, and Drum (1946)

There are many stories of Villa-Lobos’s multi-tasking, and his phenomenal ability to focus on his music in spite of many distractions. These are examples of Divagação (Digression): this is often a common trait of great artists. The big picture emerges in the mind of the genius, and he or she pokes around it, taking different paths, sometimes at once, to bring it to the rest of us. In story-telling we see it often; Rudyard Kipling was a master. According to Lawrence Sterne, “Digression is the sunshine of narrative”. In this little piece for cello and piano, notice how the composer (a cellist himself) digresses with some drumming before the actual cello part begins.
A Maré Encheu (The Tide Flowed) from Guia Prático for Solo Piano (1932)

Heitor Villa-Lobos composed a collection of choral pieces titled Guia Prático (Practical Guide). It was based upon Brazilian folk songs and melodies, and intended as an educational tool aimed at elevating musical standards in schools.

Villa-Lobos also wrote a second version of Guia Prático for solo piano, based on the original material of the first. Regardless of the fact that he was not a pianist, Villa Lobos had a remarkable understanding of the technical and expressive possibilities of the instrument.

The world of children was an inexhaustible source of inspiration to Villa-Lobos, as can be seen by the high percentage of his works inspired and written around that theme. In this he was partaking of a venerable tradition in the history of Western music, which contains several examples of composers who created veritable musical jewels inspired by children. Schumann’s Kinderszenen, Debussy’s Children’s Corner, Bizet’s Jeux d’enfants, Ravel’s Ma Mère l’Oye, and Bartók’s For Children are a few that come to mind. What sets Villa-Lobos apart from these precedents, however, is the sheer number, variety, and originality of his children’s works.

O Polichinelo from Prole do Bebê for Solo Piano (1918)

Polichinelo (sometimes referred to as “Punch”) is an old type-character and burlesque of the theater, whose roots go back to Ancient Rome and who subsequently was further developed with the commedia dell’arte. He is the Neapolitan version of the Harlequin.

A Prole do Bebê (The Baby's Family) is a collection of character pieces. It was composed in three volumes. The volume known as Series 1 (As Bonecas/The Dolls) was dedicated to the composer's wife, Lucilia Villa-Lobos.

GINASTERA

Ginastera gave the name Pampeana -- relating to the Argentine pampas -- to three rhapsodic works evoking his country’s vast plains, without quoting specific folk songs or dances. Although the third Pampeana is a large-scale orchestral work, the first two are more compact pieces for violin (No. 1) or cello (No. 2) and piano.

Written for cellist Aurora Natola, Ginastera’s future wife, the second Pampeana begins with a cello proclamation related to the announcement speeches in gaucho singing competitions. The piano, initially restricted to sharp, intermittent chords, launches a vigorous folk rhythm and engages the cello in a brief dance, but soon the cello spins off into its own cadenza, full of double stops and pizzicato. Eventually the two instruments unite in a slow, nocturnal meditation and then fall into a final, frenzied dance with hints of the malambo traditional Argentine step dance.
GERSHWIN
*Cuban Overture* for Piano Four Hands and Percussion (1932)

After spending a two-week winter holiday in Havana, Cuba, Gershwin was inspired to write this masterpiece the following summer. Originally titled *Rumba*, it was renamed *Cuban Overture* to avoid giving audiences the idea that it was simply a novelty item. The new title provided, as the composer stated, "a more just idea of the character and intent of the music."

The original orchestral version of *Cuban Overture* is dominated by Caribbean rhythms and Cuban native percussion, with a wide spectrum of instrumental color and technique. It is a rich, exciting, and complex work illustrating the influence of Cuban music and dance. With a driving *rumba* in the outer sections, and a more sensuous *adagio* at the center, this is the world of Gershwin’s “American” shifted from the multifaceted experiences of Paris to the heady club life of Havana in the first half of the twentieth century. The piano four hands version, arranged by Gershwin himself, retains all the color and excitement of the original.