Blair School of Music  
Presents

Vanderbilt University Orchestra  
Robin Fountain, conductor

with

Claire Thaler, violin

Friday, March 18, 2022  
8:00 p.m.  
Ingram Hall

Presented with gratitude to the Estate of Marion A. Katz  
for generously supporting Vanderbilt Blair
Vanderbilt University Orchestra
Robin Fountain, conductor
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Violin Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 99
  III. Cadenza
  IV. Burlesque

Claire Thaler, violin

Diaspora
  Conni Ellisor
  (b. 1953)

Danzas Fantásticas
  I. Exaltación
  II. Ensueño
  III. Orgía

Dimitri Shostakovich
(1906-1975)

Joaquín Turina
(1882-1949)

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Vanderbilt University Orchestra

First Violin
Kingston Ho*
Katherine Gao
Elena Lim
Abigail Harms
Gabriel Esperon
Maxwell van Hoeiji
Sarah McGuire
Monona Suzuki
Gabija Zilinskaite
Kate Reynolds
Jessie Zimmermann
Jay Kuo

Second Violin
Annika Hsu*
Joseph Wang
Catherine McLean
Alexandra Maynard
Avery Hsieh
Nandika Chirala
Riku Korenaga
Rachel Lawton
Emi Horii
Zoe Gotlin
Leon Kobayashi
Vania Sih
Vivian Kung

Cello
Alexander Smith*
Griffin Seuter
Catherine Choi
Kyle Pinzon
Melanie Chen
Aaron Chen
Ryan Har
Solomon Hearn

Bass
Luke Faessler*
Max Kalsner Kershen
Lacy Tier
Grace Wildermuth
David Cohen
Sloan Jordan
James Butler

Flute
Ashley Fang*
Joanna Hsieh
Elise Park

Oboe
Ashley Roh* Shostakovich
Rebecca Keith* Turina & Ellisor
Shianne Bonhom

Clarinet
Olivia Harrison*
Cheng Ding
Isabelle Krieger

Bassoon
Beck Rusley* Shostakovich
Tom Klink* Turina & Ellisor
Haley Mitchell

Horn
Isaac Ferrell* Turina & Ellisor
Hunter Keeran* Shostakovich
Ellie Repp
Katharine Davelos Baines

Trumpet
Olivia Achcet*
Krishna Palanivel
Charlie Schmitt

Trombone
Seth Hahn*
Austin Root
Jack O’Nan

Tuba
Jacob Dupont*

Piano
Catharine Jackson

Harp
Emily Reader*

Percussion
Matthew Enfinger* Shostakovich & Ellisor
Julia Reda* Turina
Eric Whitmer
Ethan Malcolm

Timpani
Eric Whitmer* Shostakovich
Julia Reparip* Ellisor
Matthew Enfinger* Turina

* Denotes principal player

Orchestra Managers:
Eric Whitmer*
Daniel Dardon

Librarians:
Julia Reparip
Melody Sim
Program Notes

Diaspora by Conni Ellisor

Notes for Conni Ellisor’s Diaspora were found @ http://ellisormusic.com/compositions/diaspora/

Diaspora- from Greek: a scattering of seeds; a dispersion of a people and culture from their original homeland.

For some time, I have wanted to write a piece based on West African percussion, and this NSO commission afforded me the perfect opportunity. While European classical music developed complex harmonies and tones, West African music cultivated a complex interweaving of contrasting rhythmic patterns. This simultaneous layering of different meters is precisely what creates the vital rhythmic spark inherent in Latin American, reggae, jazz, funk, and other music derived from the African music diaspora. The idea of fusing these polyrhythms, the ubiquitous call and response form, and the haunting pentatonic folk melodies with the rich pallet of the western symphony orchestra has been an idea of mine for a long time.

While I was working, the tragic earthquake in Haiti occurred, and I was overwhelmed by the terrifying images on TV. I watched, haunted by what I saw, and began to more deeply consider the Haitian experience and how their art spoke to their stories. I believe that music embodies the culture, ethos, values, and historical experience of the people who make it. I’m perpetually drawn to “folk” music: the music of the people who are, more often than not, the disenfranchised. Often, the voiceless in a society have the greatest story to tell.

I immersed myself in all the Haitian history, literature, and poetry I could find, particularly the writings of Edwidge Danticat and Paul Farmer. I learned that Haiti originated as a French slave colony, and that to operate the sugar plantations, hundreds of thousands of slaves were imported from Africa, many of whom were literally worked to death. I discovered field recordings of Haitian folk music chronicled by the ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax in 1935: enchanting work songs sung in the fields accompanied by layered polyrhythms made by hoes striking the soil, powerful call, and response recordings of the pervasive African tradition of democratic participation, intricate and delicate percussion with ghostly overtones, jubilant exaltations of harmonies and rhythm that sound remarkably like big band jazz. I learned that in Haitian culture, the drum represents the spiritual voice of God and therefore begins and ends every religious ceremony and because of that, the French ordered all the drums burned. The Haitians built new ones out of whatever they had on hand and so their drums took on unique qualities of indigenous trees of the region. I was inspired by the indomitable spirit that enabled the Haitians to throw off the shackles of slavery and become the first Latin American country to gain independence and greatly saddened reading of the genocide in 1937; when Dominican soldiers massacred as many as 35,000 defenseless Haitians, based on the darkness of their skin. It is said the river ran red with blood for 5 days. Yet, somehow, the strength of the human spirit prevailed.

Though my writing has been influenced by the complex and fascinating patterns that make up Haitian folk music, the Haitian/African story serves as a conduit for a more universal theme. It is about all the world’s peoples whose deep need to express themselves through their music and culture is more important than life itself, who do so against all odds and in spite of violence, tragedy and repression.
**Danzas Fantasticas by Joaquín Turina**

Joaquín Turina’s musical style might be said to represent the confluence of two powerful musical influences: the sound memories he carried from his native Spain (both folk and art music), and the sensuous tonal palette he later absorbed from his studies in turn-of-century Paris. His music blended characteristic rhythms and dance styles from different regions of Spain to produce music both wholly new and completely organic.

The inspiration for the present set of three dances was a novella La orgía by José Mas. Each dance is prefaced by an epigraph from the text:

“Exaltación” (“It seemed as if the figures in that incomparable picture were moving inside the calyx of a flower.”) The dance is a Jota, evoking the music of Aragon and Castile.

“Ensueño” (“The guitar’s strings sounded the lament of a soul helpless under the weight of bitterness.”) A 5/8 Zortziko dance from the Basque country.

“Orgía” (“The perfume of the flowers merged with the odor of manzanilla, and from the bottom of raised glasses, full of wine incomparable as incense, joy flowed.”) A gypsy Faruca.
Robin Fountain is Professor of Conducting at Vanderbilt University’s Blair School of Music, where he serves as conductor of Vanderbilt Orchestra and as a teacher of conducting. He recently concluded a 14-year tenure as Music Director of the Southwest Michigan Symphony, following a similar period as Music Director of the Williamsport (PA) Symphony. He has guest conducted the Singapore Symphony, the Louisiana Philharmonic, and many other orchestras in Russia, Poland, France and Germany as well as the U.S.A.

Professor Fountain has led Vanderbilt Orchestra on two tours of China, and in recordings for the Navona and Blue Griffin labels. He has been awarded the Madison Sarratt Prize for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and the Blair School’s Faculty Excellence Award. His book The Ensemble Musician (co-written with Vanderbilt colleague Thomas Verrier) is published by GIA Publications.

He was educated at Oxford University, The Royal College of Music in London, and Carnegie Mellon University. He won a conducting fellowship to Aspen, participated in master classes with Lorin Maazel and Gennadi Rodhestvensky, and studied at Tanglewood with Leonard Bernstein, Kurt Sanderling and Leonard Slatkin. He was also privileged to have the opportunity to train with members of the famed Berlin Philharmonic at The Conductors Lab in Aix-en-Provence.
Upcoming Blair Events

Vanderbilt Wind Symphony
Thomas Verrier, conductor
Saturday, March 19, 2021
8:00 PM
Ingram Hall
Live streaming on the Blair School of Music website

Presented with gratitude to Judy and Steve Turner for their generous support of Vanderbilt Blair

Senior Recital: Rose Olson, double bass
Sunday, March 20, 2022
3:00 PM
Steve and Judy Turner Recital Hall
Live streaming on the Blair School of Music website