

ROBERT XAVIER RODRÍGUEZ CHAMBER WORKS



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Recording of *Meta 4* courtesy of Bella Lewitzky Archives; *Sor(tri)lège: Trio III* and *Trio II* recorded by James Fitzgerald and edited by Bruce Faulconer (CakeMix Studio, Dallas); Copying expenses for *Sor(tri)lège: Trio III* provided by Richard and Sherolyn Merrick; Recording of *Trio I* courtesy of Ross Powell and Hamon Arts Library at Southern Methodist University, Alisa Rata Stutzbach, Director. This recording was funded by a generous grant from the University of Texas at Dallas School of Arts and Humanities, Dennis Kratz, Dean.



Meta 4
Trio III: Sor(tri)lège
Trio II
Trio I

Colorado Quartet
Clavier Trio
Voices of Change

Photos:

Front cover: The composer's piano, with score of *Sor(tri)lège: Trio III*

photo by Mary-Margaret Eckert

Le Bateleur (The Magician from the Tarot of Marseilles)

Robert Xavier Rodríguez photo courtesy of BandQuest



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THE COMPOSER

Robert Xavier Rodríguez is one of the most significant and often-performed American composers of his generation. His music has been described as “Romantically dramatic” (*Washington Post*), “richly lyrical” (*Musical America*) and “glowing with a physical animation and delicate balance of moods that combine seductively with his all-encompassing sense of humor” (*Los Angeles Times*). “Its originality lies in the telling personality it reveals. His music always speaks, and speaks in the composer’s personal language.” (American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters). Rodríguez has written in all genres—opera, orchestral, concerto, ballet, vocal, choral, chamber, solo and music for the theater—but he has been drawn most strongly in recent years to works for the stage, including music for children.

Rodríguez received his early musical education in San Antonio (b. 1946) and in Austin (UT), Los Angeles (USC), Lenox (Tanglewood), Fontainebleau (Conservatoire Américain) and Paris. His teachers have included Nadia Boulanger, Jacob Druckman, Bruno Maderna and Elliott Carter. Rodríguez first gained international recognition in 1971, when he was awarded the *Prix de Composition Musicale Prince Pierre de Monaco* by Prince Rainier and Princess Grace at the *Palais Princier* in Monte Carlo. Other honors include the *Prix Lili Boulanger*, a Guggenheim Fellowship, awards from ASCAP and the Rockefeller Foundation, five NEA grants and the Goddard Lieberman Award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Rodríguez has served as Composer-in-Residence with the San Antonio Symphony and the Dallas Symphony. He currently holds the Endowed Chair of University Professor at The University of Texas at Dallas, where he is Director of the *Musica Nova* ensemble. He is active as a guest lecturer and conductor.

Rodríguez’ music has been performed by conductors such as Sir Neville Marriner, Antal Dorati, Eduardo Mata, James DePriest, Sir Raymond Leppard, Keith Lockhart and Leonard Slatkin. His work has received over 2000 professional orchestral and operatic performances in recent seasons by such organizations as the Vienna Schauspielhaus, The

National Opera of Mexico, New York City Opera, Brooklyn Academy of Music, American Repertory Theater, American Music Theater Festival (now Prince Music Theater), Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Pennsylvania Opera Theater, Michigan Opera Theatre, Orlando Opera, The Aspen Music Festival, The Bowdoin Festival, The Juilliard Focus and Summergarden Series, The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Mexico City Philharmonic, Toronto Radio Orchestra, The Baltimore, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Knoxville, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Boston and Chicago Symphonies, The Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Louisville Orchestra and Cleveland Orchestra. Rodríguez’ chamber works have been performed in London, Paris, Dijon, Monte Carlo, Berlin, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Edinburgh, The Hague and other musical centers. His music is published exclusively by G. Schirmer and is recorded on the Newport, Crystal, Orion, Gasparo, Pro Arte, ACA, Urtext, CRI (Grammy nomination), First Edition and Albany labels.

THE MUSIC

Meta 4 (1994) for string quartet was commissioned by the Mid-America Arts Alliance for a ballet choreographed by Bella Lewitzky. It was premiered by the Lewitzky Dance Company and the Colorado Quartet. It may be performed either with dancers or as a concert piece. The title refers to the Greek prefix for “change” or “beyond,” as in “metamorphosis” and “metaphysics,” and the work features permutations of fours at various levels: four players, four movements based on one four-note melodic cell (C, A-flat, D, E-flat) and, originally, four dancers. The four movements thus function as variations on a single theme: a musical equivalent of French impressionist Claude Monet’s series of multiple paintings of the same subject (whether cathedrals, water lilies or haystacks) in the changing light of different times of the day. Here the musical landscape evolves from a

florid, Bach-like quasi-religious exaltation (I. *Soliloquy and Canon*) to a playful Sonatina (II. *Scherzo*) to a lyrical intermezzo with a rhythmic, canonic trio (III. *Arioso*) and, finally, to a brilliant *moto perpetuo* finale (IV. *Toccata*).

Sor(tri)lège: Trio III (2007) for violin, cello and piano was commissioned by the University of Texas at Dallas School of Arts and Humanities for the Clavier Trio, who gave the work its premiere. The title *Sor(tri)lège* combines the French word for sorcery, *sortilège*, with the number three to create a fanciful new word meaning “Sorcery for Three” or, literally, “Sorcerer(three).” The colorful aura of magic is an important element in the music, from the very first notes: a mysterious descending three-fold phrase to represent three sweeps of a sorcerer’s wand: “One, Two...THREE!”

I. The opening *Incantation* is cast in sonata-allegro form, with rich, lyrical intertwining among the three instruments. A harmonic sequence, which moves upwards by minor thirds, evolves slowly throughout the movement, with a reprise of the opening phrase at the midpoint, a tritone away from the opening. There is a forceful restatement of the theme at the climactic return to the tonic, decorated with splashes of colorful harmonics in both strings and piano.

II. The ensuing *Magie de Cabaret* has the French name for magic performed, not on stage, but in a cabaret, with a magician moving from table to table to perform tricks. The music creates a cabaret atmosphere (more from Kurt Weill’s Berlin than from Edith Piaf’s Paris), as a playful little march moves deviously through its harmonic sequence, in irregular meters. Midway, the magician pauses for an *affettuoso* interlude, perhaps to linger at the table of an attractive member of the audience; then the march continues, stopping, from time to time, for a seductive look back.



III. The final *Charme de Trois*, literally “Charm of Three,” refers to the popular idea in many cultures that, “Third time’s the charm.” After a cello introduction, a multi-layered musical spell is cast, as the strings begin an *espressivo* modulating canon in duple meter while the piano plays a pair of contrasting canons in triple meter over a rising pedal point. The tempo gradually increases, and a brilliant *toccata* ensues, in which the strings and piano continue their two-against-three rhythmic conflict in three-fold phrases. After the *toccata* reaches its climax, there is a quiet moment of culmination before all the major themes reappear in new, rapidly-changing harmonizations, and the trio ends with a flourish.

Trio II (1970) was written at Fontainebleau during my studies with Nadia Boulanger. While my larger *Trio I* (1971) was still in progress, Boulanger made the unusual suggestion that I gain perspective on that trio by stopping work on it for a few weeks to create a different, smaller study in the same medium. It worked; after completing *Trio II*, I continued more confidently with the conclusion of *Trio I*. *Trio II* is based on a twelve-note theme, cast in a one-movement sonata form. A quiet introduction for the strings based on a three-note motif prepares the exposition: an angular first theme and its lyrical foil announced by the violin over quiet piano figuration. The ensuing *agitato* development leads to a vigorous cadenza shared by the three instruments. A *fortissimo* entry for the cello leads dramatically into a concentrated recapitulation which quietly recalls the introduction.

Trio I (1971) is the earliest chamber work in my catalogue. I worked on it for the first three years of my ten years of study with Boulanger (1969-1979), and, for me, it represents an important coming-of-age in my musical development. The trio is in three movements (slow, fast, slow), each in a traditional ternary form (variations, sonata-allegro and rondo). The pitch material is drawn from two three-note chords (E-flat, B, D and G, B-flat, F-sharp), which are combined forcefully at the dramatic climax, at the end of the second movement. Echoes of the chord continue in repeated *pianissimo* arpeggiations throughout the final

adagio to create a tranquil quality of suspended time. The work was awarded the 1971 *Prix de Composition Prince Pierre de Monaco*, which I received that summer from Prince Rainier and Princess Grace at the *Palais Princier*. In 1972, members of the *Quintette Pro Arte* gave the European premiere at the *Salle Garnier* in Monte Carlo.

—Notes by the Composer

THE PERFORMERS

The Colorado Quartet (Julie Rosenfeld, violin; D. Lydia Redding, violin; Francesca Marlin Silos, viola; Diane Chaplin, cello) is Quartet-in-Residence at Bard College in New York State, where, with their present violist, Marka Gustavsson, Quartet members teach private lessons, coach chamber ensembles and present courses on the Literature of the String Quartet. The Colorado Quartet has won both the Banff International String Quartet Competition and the Naumburg Chamber Music Award. They have performed in 20 countries and have recorded widely. Members of the Colorado Quartet have served on the juries for several international competitions, including the Coleman Chamber Music Competition, Banff Quartet Competition and Concert Artists Guild Competition. For more information, see www.coloradoquartet.com.

The Clavier Trio (Arkady Fomin, violin; Jesús Castro-Balbi, cello; David Korevaar, piano) regularly tours internationally. The ensemble has served as Trio-In-Residence at Fort Lewis College, Colorado and at The University of Texas at Dallas. Founder Arkady Fomin (www.newconservatory.org/claviertrio/arkady) is a violinist in the Dallas Symphony and Artistic Director of both the New Conservatory of Dallas and the Music in the Mountains Conservatory in Durango, Colorado. Jesús Castro-Balbi (www.jcbcello.com) is on the faculty of Texas Christian University, where he is founder and director of the TCU

Cello Ensemble and of the Faculty & Friends Chamber Music Series. David Korevaar (www.davidkorevaar.com) is a member of the faculty at the University of Colorado at Boulder, and he tours and records extensively as a solo artist. For more information, see www.newconservatory.org/claviertrio.

Voices of Change (Jo Boatright, piano; Ronald Neal, violin; Craig Weaver, cello) is dedicated to the music of living composers. The ensemble has performed music by over 300 composers, including 60 world premieres, of which 25 were commissioned by the ensemble. Voices of Change has received a Grammy nomination for Best Performance by a Small Classical Ensemble and has received five ASCAP Awards for Adventuresome Programming. Jo Boatright (www.voicesofchange.com/Jo01) was a founding Director of Voices of Change, and she has served on the faculty of Texas Christian University. Ronald Neal (www.dallaschamberorchestra.com/about) is Director of the Dallas Chamber Orchestra and is a member of the faculty of the University of Texas at Dallas. Craig Weaver (www.cellopower.com) has been a member of the Dallas and Seattle Symphonies. For more information, see www.voicesofchange.com.

ROBERT XAVIER RODRÍGUEZ CHAMBER WORKS

Meta 4 (1994) for String Quartet

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|--------------------------|---------|
| | [17:43] |
| 1 I. Soliloquy and Canon | [6:07] |
| 2 II. Scherzo | [3:24] |
| 3 III. Arioso | [4:12] |
| 4 IV. Toccata | [4:07] |

The Colorado Quartet

Julie Rosenfeld, violin I D. Lydia Redding, violin
Francesca Marlin Silos, viola I Diane Chaplin, cello

Sor(tri)lège: Trio III (2007)

for Violin, Cello and Piano [20:28]

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|------------------------|--------|
| 5 I. Incantation | [7:56] |
| 6 II. Magie de cabaret | [5:47] |
| 7 III. Charme de Trois | [6:49] |

The Clavier Trio

Arkady Fomin, violin I Jesús Castro-Balbi, cello
David Korevaar, piano

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|---|---------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 8 | <i>Trio II</i> (1970) for Violin, Cello and Piano | [5:07] |
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The Clavier Trio

Arkady Fomin, violin I Jesús Castro-Balbi, cello
David Korevaar, piano

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| | <i>Trio I</i> (1971) for Violin, Cello and Piano | [15:23] |
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|---------|-------------------------------|--------|
| 9 I. | Variations: Adagio espressivo | [2:56] |
| 10 II. | Allegro vivace | [7:59] |
| 11 III. | Adagio tranquillo | [4:29] |

Voices of Change

Jo Boatright, piano I Ronald Neal, violin
Craig Weaver, cello

(Live performance, 1979, Merkin Concert Hall, New York)

Total Time: 59:07

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