

MUSIC FOR FLUTE BY EFRAÍN AMAYA



SYZYGY

ALEXA STILL, FLUTE

SYZYGY

MUSIC FOR FLUTE BY EFRAÍN AMAYA
ALEXA STILL, FLUTE | ROBERT SHANNON, PIANO

JUBILEE for flute and piano (2005)

1	Jubilate.....	3:35
2	Wooden Bird.....	6:31
3	Syzygy.....	4:11

MALAGIGI THE SORCERER for flute and piano (1999)

with Tasiaeafe Hiner, wine glass & rain stick

4	The Enchantment.....	4:13
5	Arden Forest.....	6:33
6	Bayard.....	2:07

DUO AMI for flute and piano (1997)

7	Mantra.....	3:23
8	La Espera.....	2:04
9	Amadís.....	3:31

ARCHIPIÉLAGOS for flute and piano (2014)

10	Las Aves.....	4:39
11	Los Frailes.....	4:39
12	Los Roques.....	4:28

PRES-ENT for flute and cello (2009)

with Darrett Adkins, cello

13	Enamored.....	5:55
14	Disquiet.....	5:29
15	Pas de Deux.....	3:18

16	PATHWAYS for two flutes (2009).....	7:41
----	-------------------------------------	------

with Aram Mun, flute

TOTAL: 72:19

Alexa Still: flute, piccolo

Robert Shannon: piano, wind chimes, triangle (*Jubilee*), clave (*Malagigi*)

Darrett Adkins: cello (*Pres-ent*)

Aram Mun: flute (*Pathways*)

Tasiaeafe Hiner: wine glass, rain stick (*Malagigi*)

JUBILEE for flute and piano (2005)

Jubilee was written for flutist Carlyn Lloyd and pianist Jon Warfel to commemorate their 20th anniversary performing together. It was obvious that I was going to write something that would have joy and a feeling of celebration. Thus came the first movement, *Jubilate*, which has three main sections, beginning with an introduction in which a simple theme serves as the main source of building blocks for the piece. The second section transforms the theme into a quasi-salsa rhythm when the piano takes off in an improvisatory manner, the flute later joining in. The texture becomes thicker little by little, until there is a sharp change in the third section, where repeated 16th patterns take over. These patterns are used as the background when once again the main theme is presented under this new texture by the flute. The movement slows to a peaceful ending.

For the second movement, I wanted to include something a bit more personal for the performers. One of the images that stayed in my mind was when Carlyn described to me her memories of going down to the basement when she was a child to watch her dad build clocks. She had vivid memories of walking barefoot in sawdust, smelling the wood shavings, and of course, hearing the clocks. I just couldn't resist writing about all this. *Wooden Bird* starts with a clock-like steadiness, even though the pulse is actually slower than the regular pulse of a clock. I must confess that I included a musical quote from my song *Clepsydra*, which was the precursor for my multimedia opera of the same name. This *Clepsydra* theme has made several appearances in other pieces of mine, as a reference to time (and/or how we are timeless beings). I also used some cuckoo sounds, mocking the chiming clocks.

The last movement, *Syzygy*, which means “moving together for a common goal,” brings back the main theme. There is a little reprise of the second movement, which leads into the most festive part of the piece: a clear salsa rhythm in the piano while the flute embellishes the main theme. Lastly, a little coda reprises the original main theme, closing the piece with a flourish.

MALAGIGI THE SORCERER for flute and piano (1999)

Malagigi the Sorcerer develops from the romanticism of mythical stories. This one in particular comes from “Legends of Charlemagne” from *Bulfinch's Mythology*. Rinaldo, nephew of Charlemagne, is knighted by the emperor and is “eager to go in pursuit of glory” into the forest of Arden. He is soon informed by an old man (Malagigi in disguise) of an untamable horse, Bayard, that lives in the forest and that “had been held under enchantment by the power of a magician [Malagigi himself], who predicted that, when the time came to break the spell, it should be subdued by a knight of the lineage of Amadís of Gaul [his former owner] and not less brave than he.” Rinaldo eventually succeeds, after a mortal combat with Bayard, in proving himself worthy of such a magnificent legacy.

The first movement, *The Enchantment*, focuses on the spell itself. It has two main sections, of which the first evokes the actual moment when Malagigi casts the spell on Bayard, and the second is a fugue that depicts the struggle of Bayard's will against Malagigi's spell. Bayard then succumbs to the enchantment in a peaceful manner.

The second movement, *Arden Forest*, has three main sections. It opens with a flute cadenza depicting the environment in the forest—mainly bird calls. There is a transition to a faster and exasperated second section, in which the flute depicts the inner feelings of the horse that is trapped forever in the forest. The flute cadenza becomes more agitated until the piano joins the flute in a climax, which rebuilds again to a second and more dramatic climax. After this outburst of anguish and frustration, the second section evolves into the third, in which the wisdom of the forest takes over Bayard, giving the horse the serenity and peace so much sought after.

The third movement, called *Bayard*, depicts the confrontation and fight between Rinaldo and the horse, in which Rinaldo overpowers the horse, winning its liberty and loyalty.

DUO AMI for flute and piano (1997)

Duo Ami is the first piece I wrote for my friend and colleague Alberto Almarza, who enthusiastically asked me to create a duo for flute and piano. It was also the beginning of a series of new pieces and collaborations that became a friendly motive for mutual challenges and artistic development.

The undercurrent theme of this three-movement piece is the celebration of the birth and first year of my son Amadís, who was born in 1995. This is obvious in the last movement, which is named after him. It is like a day in his infant life: from the moment he awakes, building up energy waves to a full throttle, until he winds down again to a peaceful sleep. The second movement, *La Espera* (“The Wait”), was written for piano alone. This movement has a quasi-piano-bar feeling to it and reflects on the trying patience surrounding the process of growth. The first movement, *Mantra*, encompasses many things at once. I had visions of whirling dervishes while I wrote this movement. It is a prayer; it is a love scene, the beginning of life, and the mystery of it all.

ARCHIPIÉLAGOS for flute and piano (2014)

Archipiélagos was commissioned and written for virtuoso Venezuelan clarinetist Jorge Montilla, whom I have known for many years since he taught at the Núcleo La Rinconada (one of the centers of El Sistema in Caracas), where I was music director and conductor more than two decades ago. In 2008 my piece *Wuaraira Repano* for solo clarinet and orchestra was included in the XV Festival Latinoamericano de Música, where Jorge was one of the guest performers and soloed in my piece. He then commissioned me to write for him a virtuosic piece for E-flat clarinet and piano. I happily agreed, and that was the beginning of the idea for *Archipiélagos*, although I did not write it until 2011.

The piece has four movements, all named after different archipelagos of Venezuela. I made a flute and piano version in 2014, but for this version I didn’t include the third movement

because it didn’t quite translate well for the flute. While writing, I kept going back to my memories of all the beautiful shores and islands in Venezuela, and yet I kept also thinking of the sociopolitical anxiety that the country faces today. As I was writing this carefree and upbeat music, somehow the Venezuelan national anthem kept subtly appearing here and there—a symbol to remember that we have a beautiful country, which we could lose forever to invasive ideologies and powers.

The first movement, *Las Aves* (“The Birds”), is named after one of the most important archipelagos in Venezuela—important not only because of its ecological significance, but also for its strategic location in the Caribbean. As in many of these archipelagos, there are several keys and islets all belonging to *Las Aves*. As the name indicates, *Las Aves* is a sanctuary to sea and migrating birds. The movement is divided into five shorter sections, which develop from a slow introduction that evokes a sunrise on a beach to a complex dance.

The second movement, *Los Frailes*, is basically a rondo also in five parts with a short codetta. Each time the refrain returns, it’s shorter but more virtuosic for the flute. The episodes are really variations of the same material presented in different contexts: One is faster and driven, another is more introverted, etc.

The last movement, *Los Roques*, is named after one of the most famous vacation destinations in Venezuela because of the many beautiful hidden beaches within its small islands. This movement has three main sections: The first is a declaration, very much influenced by Afro-Venezuelan music, that leads to the middle section, where the flute sets a rhythmical ostinato while keeping the material of the first section going, creating the illusion of two different instruments playing at the same time. The piano answers, then—after this is repeated in a different key—the music leads to the same dance at the end of the first movement, driving the piece to a climactic ending.

PRES-ENT for flute and cello (2009)

I got a call one day from Gerald Carey, whom I had met during a National Flute Association conference. He and his wife Tanya wanted to commission a piece to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. I asked if he had any ideas about what type of piece they wanted, and they told me immediately that they wanted music that would tell the story of a marriage—the good with the not so good. I also asked them about what sonorities he and Tanya liked, or if they had favorite intervals or harmonies, but they were open to any musical language I wanted to use. The resulting piece has three movements. The first is called *Enamored* and has four different subtitles: “The Proposal,” “The Wedding,” “The Vows,” and “Fiesta.” The second is *Disquiet*, and the third is *Pas de Deux* with two subtitles, “The Voyage” and “Fiesta.”

PATHWAYS for two flutes (2009)

I wrote this piece as a commission by Alberto Almarza, who was scheduled to perform with flutist Eva Amsler at the National Flute Association’s annual conference in 2009. They had one piece programmed, but wanted to include a new work for their portion of the recital. Of course, there wasn’t much time to compose the new piece, which proved to be a challenge. Perhaps this was one of the reasons I started looking for a magical expansion of time.

Searching through my recollections, I remembered that I had received the book *Magical Passes* by Carlos Castañeda as a gift. When I was in my teens, I had read several of his books and was always fascinated by the ideas and teachings of Don Juan. I was, like many others, very disappointed to later find out that all these encounters with the shaman Don Juan were fictional—or at least that’s what many people have concluded today. Still, there are many others who believe in the physical movements, called “magical passes,” and all that they bring for the purpose of restoring one’s well being. I took an interest and was able to find some videos online of people following the steps. These movements are supposed to be done in silence or with sounds made by nature. In the videos they were silent, but I wanted to convey

through music the feeling of well being, of wholeness, which is the purpose of these passes. I also wanted to reflect how in nature everything is balanced and how every thing is part of something else.

The piece has five main sections. For the first, I wrote a very simple and peaceful modal melody—a folk-like tune that would sound familiar to listeners even though they’ve never heard it before. This melody, however, is not played by one flute but by both, and it’s passed between the two constantly and seamlessly. My idea was to have the two flutes on either side of the stage creating a stereo effect. While the listener would still hear just one melodic line, it would be shifting from one flute to the other. The running arpeggios thus also alternate between both flutes. The effect is rather a very peaceful mood with the cascading notes and a chant-like melody.

The second section is very similar, but the running arpeggios here flow upward while a very similar modal melody passes between the two flutes. A third section interrupts with driven rhythms while still using the hocket technique I had established in the previous sections, to the point that the listener doesn’t realize that what he or she is perceiving as the melody is actually being bounced back and forth at every note. While using the arpeggios as a transition, the rhythmical drive comes back, culminating in a canon, more like one flute chasing the other until they merge into a high unison while slowing down and making a decrescendo to an echo-like phrase. The fourth section starts with the building up of a rhythmical and upbeat ostinato; once it is established, a modal melody along with the ostinato accompaniment once again passes between the two flutes. Finally, a permutation of this rhythmical section metamorphoses into the final section, which uses the same material as the beginning, ending the piece with the same peaceful and primal state of consciousness.

—Notes by Efraín Amaya



EFRAÍN AMAYA

American conductor and composer Efraín Amaya was born in Venezuela, where he began his musical training and served as music director and conductor for the El Sistema youth symphony orchestra based in the Núcleo La Rinconada. He earned bachelor's degrees in composition and piano at Indiana University and a master's degree in conducting at Rice University, and he returned to America to be resident conductor and artist lecturer in music theory at Carnegie Mellon University from 1993 to 2009. From 1994 to 2007, he also served as associate conductor with the Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra, in addition to stints as music director and conductor for the Greensburg American Opera, the Three Rivers Young People's Orchestra, the Westmoreland Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Carnegie Mellon Summer Orchestra and Wind Ensemble, and the Carnegie Mellon Contemporary Ensemble.

As a guest conductor, Amaya has appeared with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Venezuela, the Orquesta Sinfónica Municipal de Caracas, the Orquesta Sinfónica Simón Bolívar del Táchira, and the Jóvenes Arcos de Venezuela, among many others. He founded the Point Chamber Orchestra, which debuted during the summer of 2006 with a tour of seven concerts in Italy and released an acclaimed 2009 CD on Albany Records that included two works by Amara: the chamber opera *Clepsydra* and the children's opera *Phantasmagorilla? No! Phantasmagoria*.

Amaya's compositions have been selected for performance at major international festivals including the Seattle Symphony's Viva la Música Festival, the V Congreso Iberoamericano de Llíria in Spain, the Festival de Música de Santa Catarina in Brazil, the American Composers Orchestra Festival of Venezuelan Music at Weill Recital Hall in New York, and the II Congreso Puertorriqueño de Creación Musical in San Juan. Since 2012 Amaya has been one of four national adjudicators for the National YoungArts Foundation in Miami. Since 2007 he has served as music director of Tanz Theater André Koslowski and as chief regional officer of the Centro Latinoamericano de Música. Amaya is a member of the faculty at Minot State University and music director for the Minot Symphony Orchestra. www.efrainamaya.com



ALEXA STILL

Born in New Zealand, Alexa Still won the New York Flute Club Young Artist Competition and the East and West Artists Competition while she was a graduate student at Stony Brook University. At age 23, she returned to New Zealand for the position of principal flute with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. In 1998 she joined the University of Colorado at Boulder faculty; eight years later, she moved to Sydney to become professor of flute and director of performance research at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. She joined the Oberlin Conservatory faculty in 2011.

An avid performer, Still has presented recitals, concertos, and master classes in England, Germany, Slovenia, Turkey, Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, Canada, Korea, China, Japan, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, and throughout the United States. Recent notable performances include the Australian and American premieres of Australian composer Matthew Hindson's *House Music* (Sydney in 2011 and at the National Flute Association's annual convention in 2012); John Corigliano's *Pied Piper Fantasy* with the Colorado Music Festival (2013), Albany Symphony, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic for Corigliano's 70th birthday celebrations; and several world-premiere performances including Valerie Coleman's *Elegy* (based on a work by Maya Angelou) for the keynote presentation of the 2014 National Flute Association convention.

Still has released more than 15 solo CDs, including a 2004 release of concertos that caused *Fanfare* to exclaim: "Anyone who doubts Still's dumbfounding technical ability or complete tonal control should hear these ... You just won't hear better-sustained flute playing on disc." Her 2014 premiere recording of Hindson's *House Music* is available digitally on Oberlin Music.

Still is past president of the National Flute Association and regularly contributes articles to flute journals across the globe. She plays a silver flute made for her by Brannen Brothers of Boston, with both gold and wooden headjoints by Sanford Drelinger of White Plains, New York. When her flute is in its case, Alexa is an avid motorcyclist, and she shares a daughter and two dogs with her husband. www.alexastill.com

ROBERT SHANNON, piano



Robert Shannon has presented solo recitals, ensemble concerts, and master classes throughout the United States, Europe, South America, and Asia. His repertoire ranges from Bach to Adams, and he has been noted for his penetrating interpretations of recent American music. He has commissioned and premiered works by John Harbison, Charles Wuorinen, Carla Bley, and Steven Dembski, among others. Shannon's recordings of sonatas by Charles Ives on Bridge Records have received rave reviews worldwide. He has performed regularly at the Grand Teton Music Festival, the Festival Tibor Varga in Switzerland, the Sacramento Festival of American Music, and as guest artist with the Chicago Contemporary Chamber Players. In recent seasons, Shannon has appeared in London, Paris, Glasgow, Rome, Stuttgart, New York, San Francisco, Colombia, and Taiwan. He is a member of the faculty at Oberlin Conservatory and director of the Cooper International Competition for Piano. A 1972 graduate of Oberlin, he joined the conservatory faculty in 1976.

DARRETT ADKINS, cello

Darrett Adkins has commissioned and been the dedicatee of many important new works for cello, including concertos by Su Lian Tan and Philip Cashian, which appear on the 2017 Oberlin Music release *Myth & Tradition*. An avid chamber musician, Adkins performs and records in the U.S. and Europe with the Lions Gate Trio and is a former member of the Zephyr Trio and the Flux Quartet. Adkins' first release on Oberlin Music, *Hypersuite II*, featured music by Bach interwoven with solo works by contemporary composers. He is a member of the faculty at Oberlin Conservatory, from which he also graduated in 1991.

ARAM MUN, flute

Aram Mun was born in Seoul, South Korea, and attended the Goyang High School of Arts and the Korean National University of Arts. A 2017 graduate of Oberlin Conservatory, Mun continued her Oberlin studies in the artist diploma program under the guidance of Alexa Still. She participated in numerous prestigious performances at Oberlin, including the Danenberg Honors Recital and solo appearances on the Orientation and Commencement Recitals, and she served as principal flute on tour with the Oberlin Orchestra.

TASIAEAFE HINER, wine glass and rain stick

Tasiaeafe Hiner is a 2017 graduate of Oberlin Conservatory, where he studied flute with Alexa Still and Baroque flute and recorder with Michael Lynn. Hiner's playing on tour with the Oberlin Orchestra was described as "eerily haunting" by *The Chicago Tribune*. He has performed as a fellow with the Texas Music Festival and with the Henderson Symphony Orchestra, the Tuacahn Festival Orchestra, and the Marrowstone Festival Orchestra, among others. He won the Las Vegas Flute Club's Young Artist Competition.

OBERLIN MUSIC is the official record label of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

It celebrates the artistic vision and superlative talent of Oberlin's faculty, students, and alumni—on campus and on tour. Essential to this mission is Clonick Hall, a superior recording facility dedicated to capturing studio sessions in the heart of the conservatory. Oberlin Music titles are available on CD and digital channels worldwide. For more information, visit oberlin.edu/oberlinmusic.

OBERLIN CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC, founded in 1865 and situated amid the intellectual vitality of Oberlin College, is the oldest continuously operating conservatory in the United States. Recognized as a professional music school of the highest caliber, it was awarded the National Medal of Arts, the country's highest honor given to artists and arts patrons.

LABEL DIRECTOR: Michael Straus

EDITORIAL DIRECTORS: Cathy Partlow Strauss and Erich Burnett

PRODUCER: Paul Eachus

AUDIO ENGINEERING AND EDITING: Paul Eachus and Andrew Tripp

MASTERING ENGINEER: Paul Eachus

GRAPHIC DESIGN: Ryan Sprowl

PHOTOGRAPHY: Jennifer Manna (Still), Vanessa Briceno (Amaya), Tanya Rosen-Jones (Shannon)

DEAN OF THE CONSERVATORY: Andrea Kalyn

Recorded in February, March, and April 2015 at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

I am especially grateful to Jeanne Baxtresser, for drawing my attention to the music of Efraín Amaya, and to a flute community dedicated to bringing new works to the repertoire. My deepest thanks also go to my wonderful colleagues who joined me in the studio, the sound booth, and beyond. —**Alexa Still**

