AMERICAN CLASSICS

ROBERTO SIERRA

Sinfonía No. 4
Fandangos • Carnaval

Nashville Symphony • Giancarlo Guerrero

Roberto Sierra (b. 1953)

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Fandangos (2000)

There are two prevailing theories about the origins of the *fandango*: one places it in the Iberian Peninsula, while the other points out to the New World (the West Indies and Nueva España – modern México). Although during the 18th century the dance was considered to be too sensual, the *fandango* became very popular and many composers integrated it in their works. A harpsichord work attributed to Antonio Soler (1729-83) was my point of departure. Soler's *Fandango* seems fractured, almost like a written improvisation, an important element that provided me the base for writing this orchestral fantasy, where I also incorporated elements from Luigi Boccherini's (1743-1805) and Domenico Scarlatti's (1685-1757) respective *fandangos*, as well as my own Baroque musings.

A basic D minor chord progression can be heard through different transformations, from beginning to end, over a web of elaborated orchestration and highly virtuosic instrumental writing that brings the music of the 18th and the 21st centuries together. These transformations, which are always based on material heard before, amplify small motifs and elaborate the musical fabric by varied repetition or dense superimpositions of melodic and rhythmic layers.

Sinfonía No. 4 (2008-09)

This is the fourth work in a series of compositions that demonstrate my relationship to the great symphonic tradition, one that I change and transform from within its own formal logic. In the first movement (*Moderadamente rápido*) the idea of a development section is turned into structural accumulation and saturation of layers of sound, and the binary nature of competing thematic groups does not apply; instead, thematic material is developed as soon as it is presented. Non-lineal thinking permeates the work, and, although themes or motives may recur, the need for a recapitulation does not form part of the ethos of the work.

The second movement (*Rápido*) enters with material that has already been heard at the fringes of the first movement. The concept of memory has become an important aspect of my recent work. In this *scherzo* a Proustian involuntary reflex of memory generates the musical structure: a lost fragment from the first movement engenders the structure, bringing forth an already heard, albeit "forgotten," melodic fragment that now becomes a central element to the work.

The structure of the *bolero* – a *topos* of my recent work – that follows is oneiric; the movement (*Tiempo de bolero*) is structured in the manner in which I sometimes dream: recurrent images are never the same, retaining a sense of familiarity while being strangely foreign.

The *bolero* and the preceding *scherzo* are structurally related: they contain fast music within the slow music and vice versa. Clave rhythms bring the symphony to an exhilarating ending (*Muy rápido y rítmico*). This is a clave that permeates and cannibalizes the structure; my version of musical anthropophagy, where a structure devours another structure creating a form of expression that is loose but at the same time highly concentrated. This method allows me to reshape external influences, while freeing them from anything that might restrain its own vitality. At the end the process becomes one not of transformation but of transcreation; a term which describes the process of adapting a message from one language to another, while maintaining its intent, style, tone and content.

Carnaval (2007)

The five movements of *Carnaval* draw their inspiration from mythical creatures. *Gargoyles* depict those strange stone figures that are perched atop many ancient buildings. Their odd, fascinating and grotesque appearance translates into evanescent musical gestures – sometimes menacing, sometimes mysterious. *Sphinxes* is built on a passacaglia bass derived from Schumann's enigmatic *sphinx motifs*, that, although inscribed in the score of *Carnaval*, was not intended for performance. The passacaglia builds up to a climax, at which point my answer to the Sphinx's riddle is heard: it is Schumann's *Papillons* (Butterflies) which makes a brief appearance ending in a cry of despair. *Unicorns* is a meditation on the serenity and majestic beauty of the mythical creature, as depicted in *The Lady and the Unicorn* medieval tapestries. In *Dragons* the music breathes fire, and out of the ashes *The Phoenix* emerges in a glorious Latin dance. This orchestral suite is linked to Robert Schumann (1810-56) not only by the quotes in *Sphinxes*, but also by the *character piece* nature of the movements.

Roberto Sierra

Roberto Sierra

Photo: Cornell University

For more than a decade the works of Roberto Sierra have been part of the repertoire of many of the leading orchestras, ensembles and festivals in the United States and Europe. At the inaugural concert of the 2002 world renowned Proms in London, his *Fandangos* was performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra in a concert that was broadcast by both BBC Radio and Television throughout the United Kingdom and Europe. Sierra's numerous commissions include works for many of the major American and European orchestras. International ensembles that have performed his works include the orchestras of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, New Mexico, Houston, Minnesota, Dallas, Detroit, San Antonio and Phoenix, as well as the American Composers Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Tonhalle Orchestra of Zurich, the orchestras of Madrid, Galicia, Castilla y León and Barcelona, among others. Roberto Sierra is the Old Dominion Foundation Professor in the Humanities at Cornell University, and Subito Music publishes his music.

For more information visit: www.robertosierra.com.

Nashville Symphony

Photo: Mickey Dobo

The Nashville Symphony has established an international reputation for its recordings and innovative programming. With 140 performances annually, the orchestra is the largest performing arts nonprofit body in the state of Tennessee, offering a broad range of classical, pops, jazz and family programs, along with extensive community outreach efforts. One of the most active recording orchestras in the country, the Nashville Symphony has received far-reaching acclaim for its numerous recordings on Naxos. These recordings have received a total of fourteen GRAMMY® nominations and seven GRAMMY® wins, including two for Best Orchestral Performance – one awarded to Joan Tower's *Made in America* (Naxos 8.559328) and the other to Michael Daugherty's *Metropolis Symphony* (Naxos 8.559635). Schermerhorn Symphony Center, the home of the Nashville Symphony, opened in September 2006. Notable for its remarkable acoustics and distinctive architecture, this 197,000-square-foot facility has become an integral part of cultural life in Music City and is regarded as one of the finest concert halls in the United States.

Giancarlo Guerrero

Giancarlo Guerrero is Music Director of the Nashville Symphony Orchestra (NSO) and concurrently holds the position of Principal Guest Conductor of The Cleveland Orchestra Miami Residency. In 2012, he led the Nashville Symphony to a GRAMMY® win with their recording of American composer Joseph Schwantner's *Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra* (Naxos 8.559678). His previous recording with the orchestra of Michael Daugherty's *Metropolis Symphony* (Naxos 8.559635) won three 2011 GRAMMY® Awards, including Best Orchestral Performance. As a guest conductor he has appeared in Europe with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin, London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, and in North America with the orchestras of Baltimore, Boston, Cincinnati, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Seattle, Toronto and Vancouver, and the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C. Also in demand in Central and South America, he conducts regularly in Venezuela with the Orquesta Sinfónica Simón Bolívar, with which he has had a special relationship for many years. Guerrero holds degrees from Baylor and Northwestern universities. He was previously Music Director of the Eugene Symphony in Oregon. From 1999 to 2004, he served as Associate Conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra. Prior to his tenure in Minnesota, he served as Music Director of the Táchira Symphony Orchestra in Venezuela.

Roberto SIERRA
(b. 1953)
Sinfonía No. 4

1	**Fandangos (2000)**	**11:07**
	Sinfonía No. 4 (2008-09)*	**23:12**
2	I. Moderadamente rápido	6:53
3	II. Rápido	6:13
4	III. Tiempo de bolero	5:24
5	IV. Muy rápido y rítmico	4:44
	Carnaval (2007)*	**21:13**
6	Gargoyles	3:54
7	Sphinxes	4:21
8	Unicorns	6:20
9	Dragons	3:00
10	The Phoenix	3:38

*WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

Nashville Symphony
Giancarlo Guerrero

AMERICAN CLASSICS

Over the last decade the music of the Puerto Rican composer Roberto Sierra has become internationally admired, and this has led to prestigious commissions and performances around the world. *Fandangos* was heard at the BBC Proms in London and employs a harpsichord work attributed to Antonio Soler as a departure for a richly inventive orchestral fantasy. The dramatic *Sinfonía No. 4* was described by *ArtsNowNashville* as 'a textbook example of how this composer breathes new life into old forms. The piece is basically a classic Germanic symphony imbued with Spanish sensibilities and reinvigorated with new harmonies and rhythms.' Robert Schumann is subtly evoked in *Carnaval*, five character pieces that explore mythical creatures, both menacing and serene.

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Playing Time: 55:35