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Jaime LEÓN

MISA BREVE
PEQUEÑA PEQUEÑITA
SONGS

Sarah Cullins, soprano
Gemma Coma-Alabert, mezzo soprano
Tonos Humanos
Arcadia Chamber Choir
EAFIT Symphony Orchestra
Cecilia Espinosa, conductor
Mac McClure, piano

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

JAIME LEÓN, COLOMBIAN COMPOSER

by Patricia Caicedo

Now approaching his mid-nineties, Jaime León has been one of the foremost musicians in Colombia – as pianist, conductor, composer and teacher – for over half a century. His output is relatively modest – there are around fifty works, mostly songs, choral pieces, piano and orchestral scores – and as new editions of his works appear, they are growing in popularity in Colombia and abroad. His musical career has developed mainly in Colombia and in the United States, where he was prominent as a performer as well as a composer. León has also played a major role in Colombia as educator and promoter of his own music as well as that of his contemporaries.

Born in Cartagena de Indias, on the Caribbean coast of Colombia, on 18 December 1921, he was in contact with music from an early age thanks to his parents, who played music at home and encouraged Jaime to study; indeed, he received his first music lessons from his father. In 1924 his family moved to the United States, first to San Francisco and then to New York where, in 1929, the eight-year-old Jaime began private piano lessons with Leo Holtz. In 1935 the family returned to Colombia where he continued his studies with various private piano-teachers until 1937, when he entered the National University of Colombia Conservatory. His teachers there were the pianists Lucia Perez and Tatiana Goncharova and composer Guillermo Uribe Holguín,¹ and he studied briefly with Claudio Arrau who had a residency there in 1941, later also visiting him in the United States.

In 1941 León moved to New York where he was accepted at The Julliard School of Music for advanced studies in piano. He worked with two eminent teachers of the time: Josef Lhevinne and Carl Friedberg, who was one of the last disciples of Clara Wieck-Schumann and of Brahms. He obtained his degree in piano in 1945.

That same year, León won a scholarship to continue his studies in conducting and composition at the Julliard School (using an anglicised version of his name, James Leon) under the guidance of Edgar Schenkman,² Vittorio Giannini³ and Bernard Wagenaar.⁴ While still a post-graduate León

¹ Uribe Holguín (1880–1971), the founder of the Conservatorio Nacional de Música, is generally held also to be the founder of the Colombian national school of composition.

² Schenkman (1908–93) was the founder-conductor of orchestras in Toledo (Ohio) and Norfolk and Richmond (Virginia); after his retirement he served as consultant on western music to the Thai government, also performing in a violin-violon duo with his wife throughout south-east Asia.

³ Giannini (1903–66), who wrote in a late-Romantic style, was the composer of five symphonies and some twelve operas as well as



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Luis Carlos Figueroa, born in 1923, is one of the senior figures in Colombian music, much esteemed as composer, pianist and teacher. His works marry spontaneous lyrical charm – perhaps with a French twist from his student days in Paris – with vibrant South American folk influences, thus siting him downstream from Canteloube and Villa-Lobos.

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mullidamente reposa
– tan frágil como una rosa –
entre la mula y el buey.

Llévale a Jesús, poeta,
tu alma en ofrenda de amor,
Tu alma, como de poeta
es un alma de pastor.

[18] Algún día

Poem by Dora Castellanos

Un día llegarás;
el amor nos espera
y me dirás:
Amada, ya llegó la primavera.

Un día me amarás.
Estarás de mi pecho tan cercano,
que no sabré si el fuego que me abrasa
es de tu corazón o del verano.

Un día me tendrás.
Escucharemos mudos
latir nuestras arterias
y sollozar los árboles desnudos.

Un día. Cualquier día.
Breve y eterno,
el amor es el mismo
en verano, en otoño y en invierno.

softly repoes
– as fragile as a rose –
between the mule and the ox.

Take to Jesus, poet,
your soul as an offering of love,
Your soul, like that of a poet
is the soul of a shepherd.

[18] One Day

One day you will arrive;
love is waiting for us
and you will say to me:
My love, spring has arrived.

One day you will love me.
You will be so close to my bosom,
that I will not know if the fire that burns me
is of your heart or of the summer.

One day you will have me.
Silently we will listen
to the pulsing of our veins
the sob of the naked trees.

One day. Any day.
Brief and eternal,
love is the same
in summer, in fall and in winter.

*All song-translations courtesy of Victoria Sofia Botero, from
her Masters thesis The Art Songs of Jaime León: A Textual
and Musical Analysis, University of Missouri-Kansas City,
Kansas City, Missouri, 2011*

travelled back to Colombia, to give piano recitals to a warm reception from audience and critics. In 1947 he was named director of the National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, replacing Guillermo Espinosa.⁵ The position was important enough for him to interrupt his studies at Juilliard and return to Colombia. In the same year, he met Beatriz Carreño, the secretary of the National Conservatory of Music, whom he married in 1949. During his two years at the head of the orchestra León distinguished himself also as a professor of piano at the National University of Colombia Conservatory, but in 1948 civil unrest in Colombia prompted him to return to the United States, where he conducted a number of orchestras and productions of opera, ballet and musical theatre.

In 1955 León was named Assistant Director of the American Ballet Theatre, in which capacity he travelled to various countries in South America, Europe and in the Middle East; he kept this position until 1958. Thereafter, he began his affiliation with various orchestras and opera and music-theatre companies in the United States, such as the Dallas State Fair in Texas, where he conducted opera and musical-theatre productions; he was principal conductor of the Theatre Under the Stars (TUTS) company of Atlanta, Georgia, until 1960. In 1968 he returned to conduct the orchestra of the American Ballet Theatre, this time as the principal director, a position he held until 1972, when he returned definitively to Colombia as principal conductor of the Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá. He remained at the helm there for six years, after which he continued to work with other companies and performing-arts organisations.

León's career as a composer evolved in parallel with his activities as a performer. In 1952 he wrote his first song, *Aves y ensueños* ('Birds and Dreams'), for voice and piano, to a text by José Joaquín Casas. It was also the first of a large number of vocal works inspired by verses by Colombian poets, and among Colombian composers (and, indeed, contemporary Latin American composers more generally), his vocal output has attracted some attention from recording labels outside Columbia.

His career as a teacher has also been of central importance in music in Columbia. He taught piano and conducting to private students and gave many master-classes at different Colombian universities.

The energy and devotion León has devoted to all these tasks has naturally made him an icon of Colombian cultural life, as well as serving as an ambassador for Colombian culture internationally as a pianist and conductor. In 1988 he was appointed to the Order of Artistic Merit in recognition of his long

other orchestral and vocal pieces and chamber music.

⁴ The Dutch-born Wagenaar (1894–1971), who took American citizenship in 1927, composed in a contrapuntally informed Neoclassical style; his output includes four symphonies and four string quartets.

⁵ Like León, Espinosa was born in Cartagena, in 1905, studying in Italy and Germany. As a conductor he was a vigorous champion of Latin American music, not least through the Pan American Union based in Washington, DC. He died in 1990.





and fruitful career and his invaluable contribution to the musical life of his country. Among the awards he has received are the Order of Cultural Merit by given by the president of the republic Virgilio Barco, the Ministry of Culture award for outstanding service in 2001, and the 'Edmundo Mosquera Troya' Order from the Festival of Religious Music in Popayán in 2003. In 2005 the EAFIT⁶ University of Medellín paid him a tribute by dedicating a week of contemporary music to him, during which Mac McClure and Gemma Coma-Alabert, having studied the cycle *Pequeña Pequeñita* with León, performed it in a concert of Colombian art-song. In 2010 the Barcelona Festival of Song offered a course on the interpretation of his vocal music.

As with many other composers, Jaime León's output has naturally been constrained by the obligations that kept him away from his writing desk. The largest part of his output is vocal music: there are 36 songs for voice and piano. Among his other works are the *Variations on a Theme of Bizet* for orchestra and the brilliant *Remembranzas* on Colombian folk-tunes for two pianos. He has written three works for solo piano, the best known being a set of *Tema y variaciones*, the five preludes *Made in USA* (both composed in the late 1970s) and a *Triptych* (1982).

As Jaime León once said, 'I am not the kind of composer who looks at what is going on around me and in the world. I just like nice music that reaches out to the heart and makes people feel better at the end of the concert!'

Misa breve (1980)

León's *Misa breve* – one of the most important Colombian sacred works of the twentieth century – is an eclectic piece that reflects the diverse influences and styles that he was exposed to in the course of his life. As in the rest of his vocal works, he demonstrates a deep understanding of the human voice, building vocal lines that are expressive and often romantic in nature. The *Misa breve* was written for the Festival of Religious Music in Popayán (capital of the department of Cauca, in south-west Colombia) in 1980 and is scored for soprano, mezzo soprano, chorus and orchestra. The opening Kyrie [1] has an ethereal quality that invites reflection and contrition. The orchestration of the emphatic and joyful Gloria [2] suggests the world of Puccini and, at times, even the American musical theatre with which León was so familiar. The energetic Credo [3] conveys the conviction of faith by using denser orchestration, with heavy winds and percussion. The Sanctus, scored for soprano and orchestra [4], begins as a solitary prayer with muted strings; as the vocal line grows and becomes more impassioned, the orchestra swells to an ecstatic climax,

⁶ It stands for Escuela de Administración y Finanzas Instituto Tecnológico.

⁷ In conversation with Mac McClure, Bogotá, 2008.

Tal vez la serenata con su ruido
busca un alma de niña que ama y espera,
como buscan alares donde hacer nido
las golondrinas pardas en primavera.

La calle está desierta; la noche fría;
en un espacio claro brilló la luna;
arriba ya está abierta la celosía
y se apagan las notas una por una.
El cantor con los dedos fuertes y ágiles,
de la vieja ventana se asió a la barra
y dan como un gemido las cuerdas frágiles
de la guitarra.

[17] *Canción de Noel*

Poem by Eduardo Castillo

Nochebuena!... Nochebuena!
Sobre el lino del mantel,
cerca de la copa llena
de rosas, está la cena
de Noel.

Está el vino moscatel
todo espumoso y dorado,
el gordo pavo trufado
y los buñuelos en miel.

¿No oyes, soñador, un coro
bajo la noche, y también
en tu espíritu sonoro?
Son las campanas de oro
de Belén.

Bajo la noche nevosa
de diciembre, el niño Rey

Maybe the serenade with its noise
looks for a soul of a girl who loves and waits,
the way birds look for where to make a nest,
the dun-colored swallows in the spring.

The street is deserted; the night is cold;
In a clearing shines the moon;
the lattice above is open
and the notes end, one by one.
The singer with his fingers strong and agile,
from the old window he grabbed hold of the
crossbar and a moan emits from the fragile strings
of the guitar.

[17] *Christmas Song*

Christmas Eve!... Christmas Eve!
Laid out on the linen tablecloth,
close to the cup full
of roses, is the Christmas
dinner.

There is the muscatel wine
sparkling and golden,
the fat truffled turkey
and honeyed cheese puffs.

Do you not hear, dreamer, a choir
in the night, and also
sonorously in your spirit?
They are the golden bells
of Bethlehem.

Under the snowy night
of December, the child king





[15] *Siempre*

Poem by Alfredo Gómez Jaime

Por ti serán siempre mis hondos cantares,
por ti nuevas trovas ensayan sus vuelos;
tu has sido en mi senda de mudos pesares
rosal florecido de amor y consuelos.

¡La perla mas blanca de todos mis mares,
la estrella mas dulce de todos mis cielos,
la flor mas gloriosa de los azahares
el premio mas grande de ocultos anhelos!

Sólo por amarte comprendo la vida;
tan sólo por verte perdono la herida,
de males que hieren sin tregua ni calma.

Por ti hay nuevas rosas sobre los senderos,
y cómo jazmines, tremblantes luceros
despliegan sus broches de luz en el alma.

[16] *Serenata*

Poem by José Asunción Silva

La calle está desierta; la noche fría;
velada por las nubes pasa la luna;
arriba está cerrada la celosía
y las notas vibrantes, una por una,
suenan, cuando los dedos fuertes y ágiles,
mientras la voz que canta, ternuras narra,
hacen que vibran las cuerdas frágiles de la guitarra.

La calle esta desierta; la noche fría;
una nube borrosa tapó la luna;
arriba está cerrada la celosía
y se apagan las notas, una por una.

[15] *Always*

For you there will always be my deepest songs,
for you new verses test their flight;
you have been on my path of mute sorrows
a flowering rose of love and consolation.

The whitest pearl of all my seas,
the sweetest star of all my skies,
the most glorious flower of the orange blossoms
the greatest prize of the hidden desires.

Merely by loving you I understand life;
if only for seeing you I pardon the injury
of the wrongs that hurt relentlessly without respite.

For you there are new roses on the paths,
and like jasmine, trembling splendors
display their brooches of light in the soul.

[16] *Serenade*

The street is deserted; the night is cold;
the moon passes veiled by the clouds;
the lattice above is closed
and the vibrant notes, one by one,
sound, when the strong and agile fingers,
while the voice sings, tenderly narrating,
makes the fragile guitar strings vibrate.

The street is deserted; the night is cold;
a hazy cloud covers the moon;
the lattice above is closed
and the notes end, one by one.

from which it then descends, the soprano slowly returning to earth to be alone again, once more singing a simple prayer over muted stings. The Benedictus, scored for mezzo soprano, chorus and orchestra [5], shows the influence of American musical theatre in the treatment of the two soloists, and the brisk orchestration, especially in the brass and woodwinds, recalls Broadway. The Mass ends with an Agnus Dei [6], for soprano, chorus and strings, a movement of extraordinary delicacy which may suggest the feeling of coming home, to peace and serenity.

Pequeña pequiñita (1986)

The cycle of six children's songs *Pequeña pequiñita* ('Little girl, very little girl') was composed in February 1986 (each song written in a day, some two to a day, with León working on piano and orchestral versions in parallel) to texts by Ecuadorian poets. Premiered in 1987 by the Ecuadorian soprano Beatriz Parra, it explores the fantastic inner world of early childhood.

The work opens with 'Pequeña pequiñita' [7], by Francisco Delgado Santos,⁸ written on 18 February: in this gentle G major *Valse lento* in 3/4, a little girl narrates her feelings and adventures in daily life.

The next song, 'El Muñeco Dormilón' ('Sleepy-headed Doll') [8], also to a poem by Delgado Santos in which an adult tries to get a child to fall asleep, was composed nine days earlier. In F major, moving from an *Ad libitum andantino* (*Hablado*) ('Spoken') in 4/4 to a 3/4 marked *No muy rapido*, the entire song is written in the *bambuco* rhythm typical of the Colombian Andes.

'Viaje' ('Journey') [9], a *Lento espressivo* lullaby in 4/4 setting a text by Renán de la Torre,⁹ was also composed on 9 February. It opens and closes with C sharp minor chords, though its internal cadential points are in E major; the tonic is further obscured by juxtaposing dominant and subdominant chords. Although the key is thus destabilised, the text anchors the song in the painful social reality in some Latin American streets where children have to sleep below the stars.

'Caballito de madera' ('Wooden Horse') [10] – another Delgado Santos setting, this time a 2/4 in A major marked *Con alegría* – was composed on 15 February. It presents the imaginary world of a child riding his horse and creating fantasy worlds inhabited by fairies and princesses, subtly underlined by changes in the harmony.

The next song, 'La tunda para el negrito' ('La Tunda for the Little Black Boy') [11], using a poem by

⁸ Delgado Santos (born in 1950) is one of the most prominent writers of children's literature in Ecuador and has been a major figure on the literary side of Ecuadorian cultural life.

⁹ Jorge Renán de la Torre (1945–2005), who emerged as a writer of short stories for children in the 1970s, was concerned to move children's literature away from a sentimentalised, saccharine view of the world to something closer to reality, though still seen through children's eyes.





the Afro-Ecuadorian Adalberto Ortiz¹⁰ (though omitting the fourth of Ortiz's five stanzas) [11], dates from 23 February. In F major and marked *Ritmico*, it takes the listener to Esmeraldas on the Ecuadorian Pacific coast for its rhythm and a use of language that mimics the way of talking of the black communities (descendants of African slaves) there. In the song a strong mother scolds her son, urging him to study for a better future or La Tunda, a 'bogey woman', will get him.

The cycle ends with 'El columpio' ('The Swing'), an *Allegretto* setting of a Renán de la Torre poem in A flat major [12], composed on 28 February. In it a parent invites a child to fly, to dream, as children with their sweetness and innocence are, as the poem says, closer to God. León uses a good deal of word-painting here: the strings illustrate the swing gathering momentum; chromatic tonal shifts change the voice from parent to child and back; the word 'ovejas' ('lambs') triggers little chromatic runs.

In *Pequeña pequinita* León combines poems with local, Columbian rhythms and at times elements that look back to American dance and Broadway. True to his multicultural education he reflects the universality of the child's world with beauty and fascination.

Songs for voice and piano

Most of León's vocal music sets the work of the major national poets of Colombia. The stimulus comes from the poetry itself, as he explained: 'when I lived in New York I received from Colombian composer Luis Alberto Escobar a book of Colombian poetry that inspired me to compose my first songs'.¹¹ His skill has been to listen to the poetry, to let the words suggest the musical response, which is usually one of considerable subtlety.

León wrote his first song for voice and piano on 20 October 1951: *Aves y ensueños* ('Birds and Dreams') [13], to the poetry of José Joaquín Casas.¹² The crude, realistic text – Casas' poetry always tried to capture the details of everyday life – tells the naked truth that can be understood only in middle age, when you look to the past and realise that youth and summer are long gone. Marked *Lento* and set in C minor, this first song of León's is remarkable in its ability to treat the vocal line almost as naturally as if it were spoken: the rhythms of the words are reflected in the melody and in the piano part; his fondness for chromaticism and dissonance is also already apparent.

¹⁰ In 1942 Ortiz (1914–2003) published *Juyungo*, his first novel and the first Ecuadorian novel to have a black male as its central character. His writing often uses the rhythms of Afro-Ecuadorian speech and words of African origin in its exploration of the Afro-Ecuadorian experience.

¹¹ Conversation with the author.

¹² As well as being a prolific writer, Casas (1866–1951) was also a politician, occupying a number of positions in public life, most prominently as Minister of National Education in 1901–3: the educational system of present-day Columbia is essentially the one he established then.

¡Mustio desmaya cuanto fue risueño!
¿A qué horizonte os dirigís temprano
veloces aves, ilusión de un sueño?

Os va siguiendo el corazón las huellas.
Adiós las tardes del azul verano
veloces aves, ilusiones bellas.

[14] *Cuando lejos, muy lejos*

Poem by Julio Flórez

Cuando lejos, muy lejos, en hondos mares,
en lo mucho que sufro pienses a solas
si exhalas un suspiro por mis pesares,
mándame ese suspiro sobre las olas.

Cuando el sol, con sus rayos, desde el oriente,
rasgue las blondas gasas de las neblinas,
si una oración murmuras por el ausente,
deja que me la traigan las golondrinas.

Cuando pierda la tarde sus tristes galas,
y en cenizas se tornen las nubes rojas,
mándame un beso ardiente sobre las alas
de las brisas que juegan entre las hojas.

¡Que yo, cuando la noche tienda su manto,
yo, que llevo en el alma sus mudas huellas,
te enviaré, con mis quejas, un dulce canto
en la luz temblorosa de las estrellas!

What was once cheerful fairs and withers!
To what horizon do you go so early
you fast birds, illusion of a dream?

You are following the footsteps of the heart.
Goodbye to the blue summer afternoons
fast birds, beautiful illusions.

[14] *When far, very far* (originally *Drops of Absinthe*)

When far, very far, in deep seas,
when you think sometimes of how much I suffer
if you breathe a sigh for my sorrows,
send me that sigh on the waves.

When the sun, with his rays, from the east,
scratches the golden gauze from the mists
if you murmur a prayer for the absent,
let the swallows bring it to me.

When the afternoon loses its sad finery,
and the red clouds turn to ashes,
send me an ardent kiss on the wings
of the breezes that play among the leaves.

That I, while the night tends its cloak,
I, who carries in my soul her silent footsteps,
I will send you, with my laments, a sweet song
in the trembling light of the stars!





[12] VI El cumpio

Poem by Jorge Renán de la Torre

Vuela pequeño,
vuela dulce amor,
cumpio en el cielo
tu fresco candor.

Vuela pequeño,
pasta tiernas nubes,
ovejas de plata
en prados azules.

Vuela pequeño,
cuélgate del sol,
ponle en su pechera
este girasol.

Vuela pequeño,
Déjà oír tu voz
– música in cristales –
más cerca de Dios.

[13] Aves y ensueños

Poem by José Joaquín Casas

Se van las tardes del azul verano,
se van con él las raudas golondrinas,
se van las horas del bullicio ufano,
de alegre sol y diáfana neblina.

Se van los sueños del amor temprano;
poniente sol alumbra nuestras ruinas;
no torna el gozo al corazón humano
ni a su alero de ayer las golondrinas.

[12] VI The Swing

Fly little one,
fly my sweet love,
swinging in the sky
your fresh innocence.

Fly little one,
soft porcelain clouds,
silver sheep
in blue meadows.

Fly little one,
hang from the sun,
pin this sunflower
on its chest.

Fly little one
let them hear your voice
– music in crystals –
closer to God.

[13] Birds and Dreams

Gone are blue summer afternoons,
gone with them are the swift swallows,
gone are the hours of noise and pride,
of a happy sun and translucent mist.

Gone are the dreams of an early love;
the sunset illuminates our ruins;
joy cannot return to the human heart
nor the swallows to the eaves of yesterday.

Cuando lejos, muy lejos ('When far, very far'),¹³ in D flat major [14], was written on 13 March 1977 and sets a text by another of the major voices of Colombian poetry, Julio Florez.¹⁴ This strongly impressionist work reveals the influence of French music, an affinity evident in the harmony; the opening indication, *A la barcaola*, evokes Gabriel Fauré no less than the rising and falling arpeggios in the accompaniment. The text longs for the past and searches for the future, and the constant fluctuation between major and minor imparts a feeling of melancholy.

The delicate, ethereal *Siempre* ('Always') [15], setting a poem by Alfredo Gómez Jaime,¹⁵ was written on the very first day of 1982. In A flat major, *Siempre* is one of León's longest songs, with each of its four stanzas taking on a character of its own. The subtle dissonance and chromaticism of the piano chords reflect the pain of separation suggested by the words. The chromatic notes in the vocal line usually coincide with words with negative connotations, such as *pesares* ('sorrows'), *herida* ('injury'), *hieren* ('hurt') and *ni calma* ('without respite').

Serenata [16] – set down on paper, in F sharp minor, on 31 January 1977 – is one of three poems by José Asunción Silva¹⁶ that León has set. The *seguidilla* is a verse-form as well as a musical one, and since Silva's poem is a *seguidilla*, León's setting is one, too (with, for example, many of the vocal phrases beginning off the beat); moreover, the prosody of the song closely reflects the punctuation of the poem. Each stanza opens with the phrase 'La calle está desierta; la noche fría' – 'The street is deserted; the night cold' – and the piano suggests the empty streets in which a guitar-player comes to the window to serenade his beloved.

León set *Canción de Noel* ('Christmas Song') [17] by Eduardo Castillo¹⁷ on 31 October 1952. In D major and marked *Allegretto*, it is a *villancico*, a Renaissance form of folk origin originally used in

¹³ León originally called this song *Gotas de ajeno* ('Drops of Absinthe') after the title of the book of poems in which the text was published.

¹⁴ Flores (1867–1923) was a liberal, Bohemian thorn in the flesh of Columbia's conservative establishment, to the point where, in 1904, he was banished from the country for five years. After his return, in a striking contrast to his roistering youth, he worked as a farmer in rural seclusion, although he continued to write poetry.

¹⁵ Gómez Jaime (1878–1946) enjoyed a considerable reputation in his own day but has now largely been lost from view, despite publishing nineteen books of poetry and writing widely for international as well as domestic audiences.

¹⁶ A major figure in Colombian literature, the short-lived Silva (1865–96) spent some time in Paris in the mid-1880s, counting Mallarmé, Moreau and Verlaine among his acquaintances and drinking up European modernism. Returning to Colombia from a posting in Venezuela in 1895, Silva survived a shipwreck but lost much of his work. It was the last straw in a series of personal tragedies and he shot himself. None of his poems had been published at the time of his death.

¹⁷ Castillo (1889–1938) was a leading light in the *Centenaristas*, a group of reformist thinkers which took its name from the centenary of Colombian independence in 1910. He earned his living as a journalist, translator and editor; by the time of his death he was blind and a morphine addict. His poetry rejected the formal language of earlier writers, seeking freedom in form and expression.



religious ceremonies and which thereafter retained echoes of both. *Canción de Noel* thus reflects a traditional Colombian Christmas feast with a folk-dance – a *bambuco* from the Colombian Andes – which takes on a more personal, devotional touch, spiced with jazzy harmonies, dissonances and strong harmonic contrasts.

Algún día ('Some Day') [18] by Dora de Castellanos¹⁸ – composed on 15 November 1980, in E major and marked *Molto espressivo e rubato* – shows the influence of American music-theatre; León responds to the direct, passionate character of the text with dramatic flourishes, rich, romantic harmonies in the piano part and a vocal line of almost operatic flair.

Patricia Caicedo is a soprano and, as musicologist, an acknowledged expert in the art-songs of South American composers. Among her books is the two-volume, bilingual *The Colombian Art Song* – Jaime León: Analysis and Compilation of his Works for Voice and Piano, *Mundo Arts*, New York, 2009), and her recordings include a CD of Jaime León songs, also from *Mundo Arts*.



¹⁸ Born in 1924, Dora de Castellanos worked in administration and public relations in the public and private sectors in the first part of her career and then was active as a journalist for a number of national newspapers and magazines. Since 1948 she has written over twenty volumes of poetry and was the first woman to be elected to the Colombian Language Academy.

Vivimos mil aventuras
contigo, fiel Alazán:
sueños que vienen al paso
y que al galope se van...

[11] V La tunda para el negrito Poem by Adalberto Ortiz

Pórtate bien, mi negrito,
pa' que yo te dé café,
porque si viene la tunda,
la tunda te va a cogé.

No te escondás, mi negrito,
que ya te voy a busca
y si la tunda te encuentra,
la tunda te va a entundá.

Pa' duro te estoy criando
y no pa' flojo, ¿sabé?
y si te agarra la tunda,
la tunda te va cogé.

No quiero que sea bruto,
sino que sepa leé,
que si te coge la tunda,
la tunda te va a comé.

Y no te dejes de naide,
respétame solo a mí,
porque ya viene la tunda,
la tunda ya va a vení.

Échate pronto en tu mague,
que no te voy a pegá.
¡Huy, que ya llega la tunda!
¡La tunda ya va a llegá!

We live through a thousand adventures
with you, faithful sorrel:
dreams that come on our path
and go galloping away...

[11] V La Tunda for the Little Black Boy

Behave yourself my little black boy,
so that I will give you coffee,
because if La Tunda comes,
La Tunda will get you.

Don't hide from me, my little black boy,
because now I am coming to find you,
and if La Tunda finds you,
La Tunda will beat you.

I'm raising you to be strong
and not soft, you know?
and if La Tunda grabs you,
La Tunda will get you.

I don't want you to be stupid,
I want you to learn how to read.
If La Tunda catches you,
La Tunda will eat you.

Don't obey anyone else,
respect only me,
because La Tunda is coming
La Tunda will be here soon.

Quickly get in your hammock
because I am not going to beat you,
Oh! La Tunda is coming!
La Tunda will be here soon!

Y allá, en la distancia,
mil seres de espuma,
besaron su cuerpo
vestido de luna.

10 IV Caballito de madera

Poem by Francisco Delgado Santos

Caballito de madera
valiente y noble Alazán,
compañeros de mis sueños
de jinete y capitán.

Tan pronto dejo la escuela
corro a buscarte en mi hogar
y te enseño castellano
antes de hacerte trotar.

Cuando cabalgo en tu cuerpo
conquisté reinos de amor
y siento que poco a poco
me voy haciendo señor.

Juntos vamos por el campo
entonando una canción
que suena linda y sincera
porque es flor de corazón.

Somos amigos del viento,
las cometas y las hadas,
a nuestro paso despiertan
las princesas encantadas.

Peleamos, como en los cuentos,
contra un ogro comelón
y contra un duende perverso
disfrazado de dragón.

And there, in the distance,
thousands of misty beings
kissed his body
that dressed in the moon.

10 IV Little Wooden Horse

Little wooden horse,
valiant and noble sorrel,
comrades of my dreams
of horse-rider and captain.

As soon as I leave school
I run to look for you at home
and I teach you Spanish
before making you trot.

When I am riding astride
I conquer kingdoms of love
and I feel that little by little
I am becoming a gentleman.

Together we go through the country
singing a song
that sounds lovely and sincere
because it is a flower from the heart.

We are friends of the wind,
of kites and of fairies,
our steps awaken
enchanted princesses.

We fight, as they do in tales,
against hungry ogres
and against an evil goblin
disguised as a dragon.

A sought-after soprano and voice-teacher, the American **Sarah Cullins** divides her time between her busy career performing Latin American repertoire, as well as opera, oratorio and symphonic works, and her voice studios, both private and at the University of Vermont.

She recently returned to the USA after ten years in Bogotá, where, after winning the country's national voice competition in 2004, she appeared regularly with the Philharmonic Orchestras of Bogotá and Medellín as well as the National Symphonic Orchestra of Colombia. On the operatic stage in Latin American, she enjoyed success as Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Adèle in *Die Fledermaus* with the Lyric Foundation of Antioquia in Medellín, and made her debut as Musetta in *La bohème* at the National Theatre in Guatemala.

In 2006 she was invited by the Universidad Central to design and implement its first voice and opera programmes, which she then led for seven years. Graduates as well as current students of the undergraduate programme have already begun appearing with important orchestras and opera companies in Colombia, the United States and Europe, have won all categories of Colombia's national voice competition, and have been granted full scholarships to international master's degree programmes.

While living in Colombia, Sarah also had the unforgettable experience of working personally with Jaime León extensively on his song repertoire, performing with him in a concert honouring his compositions, and giving master-classes focused on his works.

Back home in Vermont, Sarah is a frequent guest with the Opera Company of Middlebury and the Oriana Singers, and is particularly dedicated to the duo she and her husband, the Colombian guitarist Daniel Gaviria, have formed to promote Iberoamerican song and guitar repertoire: 8 Cuerdas (8 Strings), which has appeared all over the region, delighting audiences with sensitive and spirited renditions of classical Latin American and Spanish music.

A graduate of the New England Conservatory/Tufts University double-degree programme, Sarah also studied at Mannes College of Music before moving to Bogotá.

Her website can be found at www.sarahcullins.com and that of 8 Cuerdas at www.8cuerdas.com.



Born in Girona, the mezzo soprano **Gemma Coma-Alabert** obtained first prize at the Conservatoire National in Paris, attended the Guildhall School of Music in London and was in residence in the Opera Studio at the Opera National de Lyon. She has performed at the Aspen Opera Theater (USA) as Medea in Cavalli's *Giasone* conducted by Harry Bicket, of which *The New York Times* said: 'Gemma Coma-Alabert, a spitfire mezzo-soprano, made fine work of Medea in both vocal tone and characterization'. She returned to Aspen as a guest artist for a recital of Spanish songs with the guitarist Sharon Isbin, and made her New York debut at the 92nd Street Y, also with Sharon Isbin.

Her repertoire includes roles such as Carmen, Ottavia (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*), Cherubino (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Rosina (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Isaura (Rossini's *Tancredi*), Zulma (*L'Italiana in Algeria*), Cloe (Martín y Soler's *L'Arbore de Diana*), Teresa (Bellini's *La Sonnambula*), Rossweisse (*Die Walküre*), Flora (*La Traviata*), Nicklausse/Muse (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*), Abadesa (*Suor Angelica*), Mrs Herring (*Albert Herring*), and Selysette (Dukas' *Ariane et Barbe-bleue*). She has sung at the Liceu Barcelona, Palau de les Arts Valencia, Ópera de Bilbao, Ópera de Oviedo, Ópera de Catalunya/Ópera de Sabadell, Opéra National de Montpellier, and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and elsewhere.

Her recent vocal-symphonic repertoire stretches from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony through Schumann's *Szenen aus Goethes Faust*, Pau Casals' *El Pessebre*, Manuel de Falla's *L'Atlántida* (as Reina Pirene) and Mahler's Eighth Symphony (Alto 1) to Granados' *Dante* (CD release by Naxos), which she has sung with orchestras such as Orchestre National de Montpellier, Orchestra of the Liceu Barcelona as well as Barcelona Symphony Orchestra.

She has worked with such conductors as Harry Bicket, Fabio Biondi, Ottavio Dantone, Stéphane Denève, Pablo Gonzáles, Lawrence Foster, Jean-Claude Malgoire, Andrea Marcon, Zubin Mehta, Josep Pons, Arthur Post, Antoni Ros-Marbà, and stage directors like Peter Brook, Massimo Gasparron, Claus Guth, Moshe Leiser and Patrice Caurier, Marco Arturo Marelli, Francisco Negrin, Laurent Pelly, Emilio Sagi and Krzysztof Warlikowski.

Recent releases include the Opus Arte DVD of Dukas' *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* from the Liceu Barcelona and the London Philharmonic Naxos recording of Bottesini's Requiem. In May 2014 Naxos will record her singing Granados' *Dante* with the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra.



*Cuentan que a partir de entonces
se oye cantar este són:*

Pim, pirín, pirín, pompón.
¡ponte saco y pantalón!

¡Sal de la cama pequeño!
Pim, pirín, pirín, pompón.

Ya no debes tener sueño:
¡ponte saco y pantalón!

*Pedacito de granuja
si no estudias la lección,
te convertirá la bruja
en muñeco dormilón...*

9 III Viaje

Poem by Jorge Renán de la Torre

En la calle triste
cual si fue se cuna,
se durmió mi niño
bajo de la luna.

Se durmió soñando,
morado de frío,
que iba sin barco
llevando se el río.

Y en su extraño sueño
desnudo subía,
por cauces fugaces
de azul melodía.

*They say that ever since then
you could hear this song:*

Pim, pirín, pirín, pompón.
Put on your shirt and pants !

Get out of bed little one!
Pim, pirín, pirín, pompón.

You shouldn't be sleepy now:
Put on your shirt and pants!

*Little rascal
if you don't study your lessons,
the witch will turn you
into a sleepy-headed doll...*

9 III Journey

In the sad street
As if it were a cradle,
my boy went to sleep
under the moon.

He slept dreaming,
purple with cold,
that he was carried without a boat
by the river.

And in his strange dream
he arose naked,
by the fleeting banks
of a blue melody.

Cuando siento llegar
a papi del trabajo,
No corro si no vuelo
escaleras abajo;
pero como él es alto
sólo abrazo sus piernas
y escondo mi carita
entre sus manos tiernas.

Ya pinto en las paredes
como una artista 47
y me muero de miedo
cuando hablan del dentista,
porque a pesar de todo,
– como mi muñequita –
soy todavía pequeña,
pequeña, pequeña.

[8] II El muñeco dormilón
Poem by Francisco Delgado Santos

*Cuando yo estaba en la escuela
me gustaba una canción
que relataba la historia
del niño dormilón:*

...érase una vez un niño
pequeñito y remolón
que no quiso levantarse
para estudiar su lección;
Y como jamás hiciera
caso a papá ni a mamá,
lo convirtió una extranjera
en muñeco dormilón.

When I hear that papa
has arrived from work,
I don't run I fly
down the stairs;
but because he is tall
I can only hug his knees
and bury my little face
in his soft hands.

Now I paint the walls
like an artist
and I die of fear
when anyone speaks of the dentist,
because in spite of it all,
– like my doll –
I am still a little,
little, very little girl.

[8] II The Sleepy-headed Doll

*When I was in school
I liked a song
that told the story
of the sleepy-headed boy:*

...once upon a time there was a boy
very little and lazy
who did not want to get up
to study his lesson;
And because he never paid
attention to his papa nor mama,
a strange woman turned him
into a sleepy-headed doll.

The Colombian conductor **Cecilia Espinosa Arango** began her musical training in the Conservatory of the University of Antioquia in Medellín. She then studied theory in the Longy School of Music (Cambridge, Mass.) and took graduate studies at King's College, University of London, where she studied with the conductors Alan Hazeldine and Colin Metters. Later she finished her Masters in conducting at the Hartt School of the University of Hartford, Connecticut, under the tutelage of Harold Faberman. She is the recipient of scholarships from the British Council, the International Peace Scholarship of Iowa State, the Ibero-American Cooperation and Mazda Scholarship Foundation for Art and Science. She has also taken courses in Latin American Music in Austin, Texas, and in polyphony in Santiago de Compostela, where she was awarded the Andrés Segovia and José Ruiz Morales prizes.

She has been active in different academic institutions in Medellín and the University of the Andes in Bogotá. She has been Director of the Music Department of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Antioquia and the Musical Director of the Music Institute Diego Echavarría.

She founded the School of Music and served as Head of the Department of Music at the University EAFIT in Medellín, which also has developed an intense pedagogical activity in orchestral and choral conducting. Currently she is also the director of the EAFIT Symphony Orchestra. For several years she worked as professor of conducting for the National Foundation for Youth and Children's Orchestras 'Batuta' and has been advisor to the Ministry of Culture for their musical training programmes.

She is the founder and director of two important choral ensembles in Medellín: the Tonos Humanos choir and the chamber choir Arcadia. Both have represented Colombia internationally, receiving gold, silver and bronze medals for the country in major choral competitions.

She has directed numerous concerts with the orchestras of Medellín, the National 'Batuta', the Youth Orchestra of the Institute Diego Echavarría, Chamber Orchestra of the Javeriana University, the Caldas Chamber Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the State of Sucre (Venezuela), Hartt Symphony Orchestra, Symphony Orchestra of Colombia and the Symphony Orchestra del Valle. In 2003 she was invited to lead the America Philharmonic Orchestra in Italy.



She has also been invited to conduct the Philharmonic Orchestra of Bogotá, Cali Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra of Cuba and the Municipal Orchestra of Caracas.

Mac McClure is internationally recognised for his in-depth knowledge of Spanish music. In the words of the composer Xavier Montsalvatge, 'Mac knows my music just as well if not better than me, is an excellent performer of Falla, Mompou and Granados, and is one of the most outstanding protégés of the Marshall Academy'. When Columna Musica began the complete recording of Montsalvatge's music, the composer asked Mac McClure to record and to supervise the recordings. He has recorded more than 40 CDs for Columna Musica, among them the world-premiere recordings of Albéniz songs, the first recording of the complete version of the Granados Quintet, as well as the complete songs (two CDs) and piano music (three CDs) of Frederic Mompou.



He studied at the Marshall Academy in Barcelona with Carlota Garriga and worked closely for nine years with Alicia de Larrocha. He studied in detail with ten composers in particular, learning and performing their music: Moises Bertran, Ernest Borras, Alberto Garcia Demestres Carlota Garriga, Ricardo Llorca, Xavier Montsalvatge, Joaquin Nin-Cumell, Miquel Ortega Carlos Surinach and Xavier Turull.

He is founder and owner of Spanish Independent Labels, a company that exports the recordings of Spanish independent labels. As an editor for Boileau Music, he has revised and edited the Albéniz songs (with Francis Barulich) as well as piano works by Manuel Valls, Joaquim Cassadó, and three volumes of piano pieces by Mompou. He is now preparing the first complete edition of the *Tonadas* by Roberto Gerhard.

The 2013–14 season took him to four continents, performing solo recitals, chamber music and concertos by Bartók, Beethoven, Mozart, Poulenc and Surinach.

He is Associate Professor and director of the graduate keyboard studies programme at the National University in Bogotá. In 2011–14 he was Director of the National Conservatory of Music, part of the National University of Colombia in Bogotá. In 2013 he was appointed to the board of Directors of the Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra.

Confiteor unum baptismam,
in remissionem peccatorum.
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum
et vitam venturi sæculi.
Amen.

[4] IV Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.

[5] V Benedictus

Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.

[6] VI Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei.
Dona nobis pacem.

Pequeña, pequenita

[7] I Pequeña, pequenita

Poem by Francisco Delgado Santos

Soy todavía pequeña,
pequeña, pequenita,
pero ya puedo andar
como una señorita
y aunque, de vez en cuando
se enreda mi escarpín,
corro por la cocina,
la sala y el jardín.

I acknowledge one baptism
for the remission of sins.
And I await the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

[4] IV Sanctus

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

[5] V Benedictus

Blessed is He that cometh
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

[6] VI Agnus Dei

Lamb of God,
Who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God.
Grant us peace.

Little Girl, Very Little Girl

[7] I Little Girl, Very Little Girl

I am still a little,
little, very little girl,
but now I can walk
like a young lady
and even though, sometimes
my shoes get tangled,
I run through the kitchen,
the living room and the garden.

3 III Credo

Credo in unum Deum;
Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem coeli et terrae,
visibilium omnium.
Dominum Jesum Christum,
Filium Dei unigenitum,
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
Genitum non factum,
consubstantialem Patri:
per quem omnia facta sunt.
Qui propter nos homines,
et propter nostram salutem
descendit de coelis.
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria Virgine: et homo factus est.
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis
sub Pontio Pilato,
passus et sepultus est.
Et resurrexit tertia die
secundum Scripturas.
Et ascendit in coelum:
sedet ad dexteram Patris.
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria,
judicare vivos et mortuos:
cujus regni non erit finis.
Credo in Spiritum Sanctum,
Dominum, et vivificantem:
qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.
Qui cum Patre et Filio simul
adoratur et conglorificatur:
qui locutus est per Prophetas.
In unam sanctam
catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.

3 III Credo

I believe in one God;
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
begotten of the Father before all worlds;
God of God, light of light,
true God of true God,
begotten not made;
being of one substance with the Father,
by Whom all things were made.
Who for us men
and for our salvation
descended from heaven;
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost,
of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.
He was crucified also for us,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
and was buried.
And on the third day He rose again
according to the Scriptures:
and ascended into heaven.
He sitteth at the right hand of the Father;
and He shall come again with glory
to judge the living and the dead;
and His kingdom shall have no end.
I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the Lord and giver of life,
Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son,
Who with the Father and the Son together
is worshipped and glorified;
as it was told by the Prophets.
And I believe in one holy
catholic and apostolic Church.

The EAFIT University Symphony Orchestra was founded in 2000 in order to respond to the requirements not only of the Medellín community for a symphony orchestra of the highest quality, able to provide stable annual programming (including the standard symphonic repertoire) but also to meet the expectations of students of the School of Music at the University, to enable the orchestral experience required by the curriculum, and to facilitate the professional practice of local and foreign musicians residing in the city.

Today, after ten years of hard work, the EAFIT University Symphony Orchestra plays an important cultural role in the city and in the academy, in the quality of its interpretations, the choice of repertoire and of guest artists – conductors and musicians of renowned national and international fame.

These elements have earned led the Orchestra a highly considered place in Colombian life, in the eyes of the critics and the general public like. In 2001, it received the award 'El Colombiano Examples' in the category of culture, awarded annually by the newspaper *El Colombiano*. Under the direction of Cecilia Espinosa, the Orchestra has given the Colombian premieres of many symphonic and stage works, ranging from *The Magic Flute* and *The Marriage of Figaro* to *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Part of the Orchestra is made up of advanced students from the EAFIT School of Music, thus fulfilling one of the fundamental purposes of the organisation. The Orchestra performs annual concert for 'Young Talents' which gives young musicians the opportunity to participate with the orchestra as conductor, composer or instrumental soloist.

The EAFIT Symphony Orchestra has become a source of professional training for young people from the association of bands and orchestras run by the office of the mayor of Medellín and the Department of Antioquia, giving these musicians the opportunity to continue their musical training.



Founded in 1984 by Cecilia Espinosa Arango, who continues to direct it today, **Tonos Humanos** is a professional choir whose repertory includes composers from the fifteenth century until those of today. Among their repertory are works for choir and small instrumental ensemble by foreign and Colombian composers, some of which have been national premieres in Colombia, as well as numerous symphonic and choral pieces. They have also performed works for chorus and keyboard instrument and also have an extensive repertory for six and eight voices.



The chamber choir **Arcadia** was founded by Cecilia Espinosa in March 1999 and consists of nineteen singers. They offer concerts of the mainstream choral repertory as well as commissions and premieres of new music for chorus. Arcadia has represented Colombia at various festivals and international competitions, among them the First International Festival of Choral Music in Mendoza, Argentina, where they won the third prize in their category. In 2002 they were chosen as the only Latin American choir to participate in the IV International Music Competition held in Rhodes, Greece, winning gold medals with the highest score in the chamber-choir category. In 2004 Arcadia participated in the International Choral Music Competition held in Helsingborg, Sweden, and in 2006 they represented Colombia in the Béla Bartók International Choir Competition in Debrecen, Hungary, obtaining the third place in the chamber-choir category. In the same year they represented Colombia in the international choral festival held in Los Teques, Venezuela.



Texts and Translations

Missa breve

[1] I Kyrie

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

[2] II Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Et in terra pax
hominibus bonæ voluntatis.
Laudamus te; benedicimus te;
adoramus te; glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,
Filius Patris.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dextram Patris,
O miserere nobis.
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

Missa breve

[1] I Kyrie

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

[2] II Gloria

Glory be to God in the highest.
And in earth peace
to men of good will.
We praise Thee; we bless Thee;
we worship Thee; we glorify Thee.
We give thanks to Thee
for Thy great glory.
O Lord God, Heavenly King,
God the Father Almighty.
O Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son.
Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have
mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive
our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy upon us.
For thou only art holy,
thou only art the Lord,
thou only art the most high, Jesus Christ.
Together with the Holy Ghost
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.