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22nd Year – Fall Season

Eduardo Rojas
Piano

**Residence of the
Ambassador of Colombia**

**Thursday, October 29, 2015
7:30 PM**

The Embassy Series is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation

PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770- 1827)
Sonata No. I, Op. 13 (Pathétique)

Grave- Allegro di molto e con brio
Adagio cantabile
Rondo: Allegro

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873- 1943)
Prelude No. 4, Op. 23

Ference (Franz) Liszt (1811- 1886)
Transcendental Etude No. 10 in f minor

INTERMISSION

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)/arr. Rojas
Adios Nonino

Moisés Moleiro (1904-1979)/arr. Rojas
Joropo

Luís Calvo (1882-1945)
Intermezzo No. 2 "Lejano Azul"

Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983),
Danzas Argentinas, Op. 2

Fulgencia García (1880-1945)/arr. Rojas
La Gata Golosa

ARTIST

A native of Colombia, Eduardo, considered by the Dallas Morning News "clearly a pianist with considerable skill and force of personality" has appeared with orchestras of Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, Panama, Puerto Rico, Canada and United States. Noteworthy performances include appearances with the National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, Bogota Philharmonic, Valle Philharmonic, Panama National Orchestra, Colombia Youth Philharmonic Orchestra, Van Cliburn Foundation, New Philharmonic Orchestra of Irving, Great Lakes Symphony, American Wind Symphony, Manitowoc Symphony Orchestra, Flower Mound Orchestra, Dallas Winds, Orpheus Chamber Singers and Dallas Chamber Symphony among others.

In 2006 Eduardo moved to the University in Fort Worth, Texas, Diploma and Master in Music.

Eduardo's first album, "Here & released in 2011. In the summer of Colombian Youth Philharmonic World Center in Miami, featuring 2015 he released 2 albums; Sonatas Volume I and "Pueblito arrangements on Latin American



United States to study at Texas Christian where he received his International Artist

There, Exploring the Americans" was 2013 Mr. Rojas was invited by the Orchestra to record a live DVD at the New Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No 2 and in "Eduardo Rojas Plays Beethoven" Piano Viejo" highlighting his own piano music.

Mr. Rojas lives in Dallas, Texas and serves as faculty at Tarrant County College and Pianist for the Dallas Chamber Symphony. He is also the Founder of Rojas School of Music and was recently appointed as International Bosendorfer Artist.

PROGRAM NOTES

The names are there, at the tops of the scores, some appearing more frequently than others, but always with the same words – "Dedicated to . . ." **Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)** moved to Vienna, Austria, from his hometown of Bonn and spent his first years consolidating his reputation as the city's leading pianist and improviser. But performances alone would not pay the bills. Concerts as we know them were nonexistent in Beethoven's day, and performances took place in the private homes and estates of the wealthy nobility, not in front of ticket-purchasing public audiences. Patronage was the coin of the realm, either in the form of a stipend (in cash or in kind) to provide a living, or occasional payments in compensation for a high-profile dedication. Income could also be generated by the publication and sale of a steady stream of new works. On some cover pages of Beethoven's scores, the name of the dedicatee received greater typographical billing than the name of the composer himself!

Beethoven's reputation soon opened many lofty doors after his arrival in Vienna, one of the earliest and staunchest boosters being Prince Carl Lichnowsky, the dedicatee of the **Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13 (Pathétique)** which opens this evening's program. It was the Prince who provided Beethoven with his first home in the city, and he subsequently received the dedication of the composer's three Opus 1 piano trios. Soon after the dedication of the Opus 13 sonata, the Prince gave Beethoven a quartet of valuable Italian string instruments and shortly afterwards secured for him an annuity of 600 florins a year. Travels to Prague and beyond would also be made in the Prince's company. The appearance of both names on published sheet music was beneficial to both parties. The composer received the imprimatur of a leading member of society, while the patron shared in the glory gathering around the figure of the leading classical musician of the day. In later years, as Beethoven's fame spread across Europe, potential dedicatees competed for important commissions as much as publishing houses did to sign onto Beethoven's latest best-selling composition. Beethoven also soon learned (from his year of study with Haydn?) how to play one publisher off against another, but also when to cooperate when the nature of the business required.

For Beethoven, a new piano sonata was a calling card, a visible way of demonstrating his skill and artistry, with publication and sale of the scores to disseminate that evidence. Talented amateurs could try their hand

at music which Beethoven himself had recently performed to wow his wealthiest admirers. The *Pathétique Sonata* was actually named *Grande sonata pathétique* by his publisher, who was impressed by the sonata's tragic overtones. It was written in 1798, when the composer was twenty-seven years old, and published in 1799. Musicologists debate whether the *Pathétique Sonata* may have been inspired by Mozart's Piano Sonata K. 457, since both compositions are in C minor and have three very similar movements. The sonata's opening, *Grave*, must have shocked Beethoven's contemporary audience. The exposition, marked *Allegro di molto con brio*, features three themes. The first is an aggressive rocket-like theme covering two octaves, accompanied by constant tremolo octaves in the left hand. The second theme, also in a minor key, is more lyrical and uses grace notes and crossing hands. The third theme features figurations for the bass with tremolo. A dramatic coda includes a brief reminder of the *Grave* before ending with a swift cadence. The second movement, *Adagio cantabile*, is played three times, always in A-flat Major, separated by two episodes that commence in minor keys. The main theme of this movement is nearly identical with an episode in the Mozart Piano Sonata No. 14, K. 457, mentioned above. The sonata concludes with a straightforward *Rondo: Allegro* which is shorter than the preceding movements and also lighter and more relaxed in spirit. The use of *sforzandos*, or suddenly accented chords, creates a forceful effect. This sonata was a great success and sold well, helping to create Beethoven's reputation as a composer, not just an extraordinary pianist.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) was the last great musical voice of the Russian Romantic tradition. After the October Revolution of 1917, he left Russia and lived mainly in Switzerland and the United States for the remainder of his life. His initial piano compositions and songs brought him early success. He completed a set of ***Ten Preludes, Op. 23***, for solo piano, between 1901 and 1903. The preludes range from two to five minutes in length. Most of them were completed after the composer's marriage to his cousin Natalia Satina. Their glittering piano writing and melodic appeal marked the composer as a creative artist of refined sensibilities. These were difficult years for Rachmaninoff, and his motivation for writing the Preludes was mostly financial. They were well-received, and after the composer's premiere performance, Vladimir Stasov praised the unusual and innovative bell-like quality of the pieces, and Maxim Gorky simply notes: "How well he hears the silence." The ***Prelude in D Major, Op. 23, No. 4***, a tempo marking of *Andante cantabile*, is a quiet meditation in the form of three variations. After the first variation of the theme, a triplet descant in the right hand is added. Variation two changes the rhythm, and triplets appear in the accompaniment. The piece reaches a climax, and the third variation changes the triplet figure to the left hand, with the melody in the right hand.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was indisputably the greatest and most renowned pianist of his day. In addition to his phenomenal gifts as a performer, he also composed a great deal of music, mostly for his favorite instrument. The dazzling ***Transcendental Études, S. 139*** -- one critic has called them "complex, extraordinary, beautiful" -- are a set of sublimely moving sound-prints, as well as extremely difficult technical studies to help budding virtuosi hone their skills on their chosen instrument. They went through three distinct stages covering twenty-five years of the composer's life. Liszt wrote the first set in 1826 when he was thirteen years old. The second version was a revision of the original twelve études, from the year 1837, when he was beginning his virtuoso show days. The third and final version dates from 1851 and this is the form in which these "technical studies" for the piano are most often heard today. The final set was dedicated to Liszt's piano teacher, Carl Czerny, himself a prolific composer of technical piano studies. When revising the 1837 set of études, Liszt added programmatic titles in French and German to all but numbers 2 and 10. Editor Ferruccio Busoni later gave the name *Appassionata* to the ***Transcendental Étude No. 10***, which is on this evening's program. Liszt's original idea was to write 24 études, one in each of the 24 major and minor keys, but he completed only half of this project, using the neutral and flat key signatures. This is a restless piece which begins in an agitated manner but then turns into a sweeping and vivid romantic melody.

Adiós Nonino [Farewell, Nonino] is a composition by the great Argentine tango composer **Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)**. It was actually written while the composer was in New York City in October 1959, in memory of his father, Vicente "Nonino" Piazzolla, a few days after his father's death. At the time, Piazzolla was on a tour of Central America when, during a presentation in Puerto Rico, he received news of the death of his father due to a bicycle accident in his hometown of Mar del Plata, Argentina. The news, coupled with the tour's failure, economic problems, and homesickness, led Piazzolla into depression. After returning to his family's temporary residence in New York in October 1959, he composed this wonderful work, based on another tango which Astor had composed five years earlier in Paris, also dedicated to his father. Let the composer's son

explain the sad tango's origins: "Dad asked us to leave him alone for a few hours. We went into the kitchen. First there was absolute silence. After a while, we heard dad playing the bandoneon. It was a very sad, terribly sad melody. **Adiós Nonino** was composing." Nonino is an Argentine variation of the Italian word for grandfather (*nonno*). The piece was more recently played at the royal wedding of King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands and Queen Máxima Zorreguieta, in homage to her Argentine roots. In this recital, the pianist is performing his own arrangement of Piazzolla's original composition for bandoneon.

Moisés Moleiro (1904-1979) was a Venezuelan pianist and composer. He founded the Orfeón Lamas and taught piano at the *Caracas Musical Declamation Academy* – today the *Escuela de Música José Angel Lamas*. **Joropo**, one of Moleiro's most popular compositions, is the composer's take on a Venezuelan folkloric melody. This piano arrangement is also by tonight's artist, Eduardo Rojas.

Luís Calvo (1882-1945) is regarded as the most important Colombian composer. After his father abandoned the family, Luís moved, with his mother and sister from Gámbita to Tunja, where he studied piano and violin. In May 1905 he moved with his family to Bogotá and entered into military service. He was finally accepted into the musical academy in 1907, where he took up the violoncello. In 1916 he was diagnosed with leprosy and settled in a sanatorium in Agua de Dios. There he married Ana Rodríguez in 1942, two and a half years before his death; she and a sister lived with him and cared for him in the sanatorium. In addition to the dances and songs which Calvo composed, he also penned four *Intermezzi*. The **Intermezzo No. 2 ("Lejano Azul")** [*Distant Blue*] on this program was written in 1916.

Argentine composer **Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)**, grandson of Italian and Catalonian immigrants to Argentina, began his formal musical training at the age of seven. His first work was written for the piano, the three **Danzas Argentinas, Op. 2**, which were completed in 1937. This was a "student work" but only in the sense that it was composed by a student. Although influenced by Argentine nationalism, the dances reveal Ginastera's own personal style, which mixed polytonality and dissonance with folk elements that enliven the rhythm of the dances. The very brief **Dance No. 1, Danza del Viejo boyero** [*Dance of the Old Herdsman*] is a bi-tonal piece for which the left hand plays only black keys, the right hand only white keys. The strong rhythmic drive, the hints of the herdsman's song and the final strumming of the guitar create an unmistakably masculine dance. **Dance No. 2, Danza de la moza donosa** [*Dance of the Graceful Maiden*], by way of contrast, features a wistful melody. The maiden dances alone, but her imagination moves her to a place of passionate abandon. The wistful melody returns, "somewhat richer for having had that moment of rapture" in the opinion of one imaginative critic. The third dance of the set is omitted for this program.

Fulgencia García (1880-1945) was another Colombian composer who favored the bandola and other Colombian native instruments. **La Gata Golosa** [*The Greedy Cat*] is perhaps his best-known composition, dating from 1912. It is a *pasillo*, a Latin American dance for two in triple time. This year celebrates the 135th year of García's birth, as well as the 70th anniversary of his death. The arrangement is also by Eduardo Rojas.

Louis J. Reith

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To **H.E. Juan Carlos Pinzón and his wife Pilar Lozano de Pinzón** a very special thanks for their great cooperation and opening up his residence to The Embassy Series. We welcome them and their family to Washington and look forward to a very fruitful relationship in the coming years.

To **Ms. Tatiana de Germán Ribón**, Cultural Attaché at the Embassy of Colombia, our deep appreciation for helping to make this event possible.

To our extremely talented **Dr. Louis Reith** for his insightful program notes which have graced our programs for years.

Our great thanks to classical WETA-FM for their constant support over the years of The Embassy Series

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December 11, 12: Christmas Gala: Embassy of Luxembourg

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