

NAXOS

**Pablo
ORTIZ**
(b. 1956)

**Choral
Works**

**Meridionalis
Sebastián Zubieta**



Pablo Ortiz
(b. 1956)

Choral Works

Maizal del gregoriano (‘Gregorian Cornfield’) for choir (SATB) and celesta (2016) (text: Arnaldo Calveyra, 1929–2015)	21:53	9 III. El desenlace de la noche... (‘The end of the night...’)	0:39
1 1	4:48	10 IV. Hay relación... (A relationship exists...’)	1:04
2 Interlude I	1:13	11 V. Prefiere decir... (‘He prefers saying...’)	0:36
3 2	12:09	12 VI. A veces lo débil... (‘Sometimes weakness...’)	0:34
4 Interlude II	1:12	13 VII. ¿Alguien es capaz de creer?... (‘Is anyone capable of believing...’)	0:51
5 3	2:31	14 VIII. Este hombre... (‘This man...’)	0:54
6 The Darkling Thrush for choir (SATB) (1997) (text: Thomas Hardy, 1840–1928)	3:53	15 IX. La inquietud... (‘Anxiety...’)	0:45
Teatro Martín Fierro Suite for three sopranos (2014) (text: Sergio Chejfec, b. 1956)	10:24	16 X. A esta altura... (‘At this point...’)	0:39
7 I. Fantasmas y héroes literarios... (‘Ghosts and literary heroes...’)	0:48	17 XI. Ahora se comprende... (‘Now we understand...’)	0:38
8 II. A pedido suyo... (‘At his request...’)	0:54	18 XII. Debe haberse sentido culpable... (‘He must have felt guilty...’)	0:51
		19 XIII. Entonces... (‘Thus...’)	1:11

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| <p>20 E ne la face de' begli occhi 3:04
 accende ('And before these bright
 eyes [he] lights up the golden darts')
 for choir (SATB) (2017)
 (text: Ludovico Ariosto, 1474–1533)</p> | <p>22 Ancor che col partire 2:49
 ('Although when I part')
 for choir (SATB) (2016)
 (text: Alfonso d'Avalos, 1502–1546)</p> |
| <p>21 Leaving Limerick 6:00
 for choir (SATB) (2015)
 (text: Richard Blanco, b. 1968)</p> | <p>23 Metamorphoses 4:31
 for choir (SATB) (2014)
 (texts: Ovid, 43 BCE–17 CE,
 Philippe de Vitry, 1291–1361,
 Francesco Landini, c.1325–1397)</p> |

Meridionalis

Sarah Brailey 1–23, Amy Goldin 6–23, Jolle Greenleaf 1–6, 20–23
Molly Netter 1–5, Molly Quinn 7–19, Soprano
Luthien Brackett 1–6, 20–23, Clare McNamara 1–6, 20–23, Mezzo–Soprano
Kirsten Sollek, Alto 1–6, 20–23
Andrew Fuchs 1–5, Timothy Hodges 1–6, 20–23, Clifton Massey 6, 20–23, Tenor
Thomas McCargar, Baritone 1–6, 20–23 · Steven Hrycelak 1–6, 20–23, Bass

Taka Kigawa, Celesta 1–5
Sebastián Zubieta, Conductor

Sung texts and translations can be found online at www.naxos.com/libretti/579026.htm

Pablo ORTIZ (b. 1956)

Choral Works

Maizal del gregoriano • The Darkling Thrush • Teatro Martín Fierro Suite

E ne la face de' begli occhi accende • Leaving Limerick

Ancor che col partire • Metamorphoses

Finding texts is possibly the hardest part of writing for voices. But, sooner or later, the texts come to you, and you discover deep connections with the words that compel you to try to set them to music. This collection represents most of my recent choral writing. An attentive listener may find echoes of Gregorian chant, *ars subtilior*, 16th-century polyphony, Yma Sumac, and Finnish and Argentinean tango. This variety is the result of my intense emotional connection with the past, and my belief that music is the ultimate time machine.

At the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina in Buenos Aires, where I did my undergraduate work, all students study Gregorian chant for a year. Although I didn't know it at the time, this repertoire became a crucial factor in defining the way in which I work with the human voice. *Maizal del gregoriano* (2016) is a setting of a fragment of Arnaldo Calveyra's extensive poem, published in 2005. The poem describes the voyage of a man from the Mesopotamia in Argentina, in the eastern part of the country, to the abbey of St Pierre de Solesmes in north-western France, where

Benedictine monks developed, in the early 20th century, the most current version of the *Liber Usualis*. Calveyra contrasts the idyllic description of the stained glass windows with the undulating landscapes of his native region in Argentina, and, at some point in the poem, he remembers the horrors of the military dictatorship and their repressive practices. The expressive apex of the piece occurs in the middle movement, with the phrase 'don't forget about the power of forgetfulness'. The celesta takes the role of the little bells that signal important moments during mass, and the musical language is reminiscent of Benedictine chant.

I first came across Thomas Hardy's work through a 1960s film adaptation of *Far from the Madding Crowd* featuring Terence Stamp and Julie Christie, and subsequently read all of his novels. It was only a few years later that I realised he stopped writing novels after *Jude the Obscure* was published in 1894, and became one of the greatest poets in the English language. I find it amazing that someone that I so strongly identified as being

a part of the 19th century continued creating well into the next. Though dated 'December 1900' in print, a deleted note in the manuscript makes *The Darkling Thrush* one of the last poems the author wrote during the 19th century, and it is a melancholy depiction of the end of the era, portrayed as a cold, frozen winter landscape. When Paul Hillier asked me to write a Christmas carol in 1997, I turned to Hardy's poem, that features the line 'So little cause for carolings', with its bleak but still barely hopeful tone, for *The Darkling Thrush* – my own anti-carol.

In 2014 I wrote *Martín Fierro*, a chamber opera for three sopranos, guitar quartet, actors, and video, with text by Sergio Chejfec – a meditation on the famous poem by José Hernández from a contemporary perspective. *Teatro Martín Fierro Suite* (2015) extracts one of the opera's musical elements, where the three female voices in high registers create a stylistically inaccurate reference to the Three Ladies in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*.

E ne la face de' begli occhi accende (2017) is the second in a series of madrigals in what will be my first book of madrigals, following the great Italian madrigalists of the 16th century. The text, by Ludovico Ariosto, was beautifully set in 1561 by Cipriano de Rore, one of the most celebrated composers of his time, and was brought to my attention by my friend and distinguished musicologist Tony Newcomb.

The most important lines for me were '*si sente'il cor ferito / e non sa come.*' ('he feels his heart pierced / and knows not how'). A most accurate and beautifully succinct description of the moment when one falls in love. The piece is dedicated to Tony.

Leaving Limerick (2015) was written for the Liberation Project, an idea conceived by Mark Ludwig, director of the Terezín Music Foundation, to commemorate the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps in 1945. Ludwig assembled an extraordinary group of poets from different countries and asked them to write poems around the idea of liberation. He published the collection, and in turn, commissioned several composers to set some of the poems to music. Richard Blanco's poetry has Latin American overtones, and that allows me to bring to the fore my own memories. I understand very well what Blanco is talking about when he mentions 'the palm tree shadows / down the street where I learned to ride [my] bike,' which connect me to the shadows on the street where I (now an amateur cyclist in California) learned to ride mine. The pieces were premiered at the Terezín Music Foundation Annual Gala at the Boston Symphony Hall in 2015.

Ancor che col partire (2016) was requested by my colleague Jessie Ann Owens in the context of a symposium on the works of Cipriano at the University of California, Davis a few years ago, and is based on one of his

most famous madrigals. The poem has overtly sexual overtones, which have been extensively discussed by numerous musicologists over the years. The phrase '*mille volt' il giorno*' ('a thousand times a day') is particularly pregnant with not-so-hidden meaning and innuendo. My own version is mired in melancholia, coming, as it does, from someone in his sixties. The piece was premiered by the Orlando Consort in 2016.

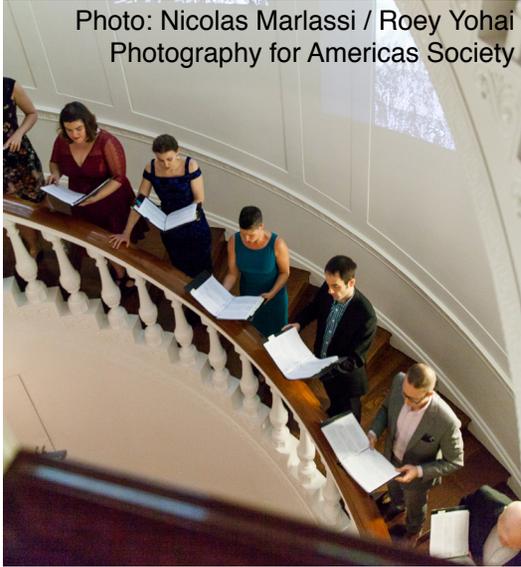
Metamorphoses (2014) was commissioned by Pedro Memelsdorff for the Symposium 'Reworkings', which took place at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in 2014. The meeting explored the idea of reworking pre-existing music, and the variety of processes of alteration used from the Middle Ages to the present. I wrote an idiosyncratic mash-up of motets by Francesco Landini and Philippe de Vitry (which had some surprisingly euphonic coincidences). The superimposition of three texts in Italian and Latin (Vitry's polytextual motet alone

superimposes two poems) makes intelligibility all but impossible. I think that ars nova is one of the most fascinating periods in music history, and I have a personal connection with the music of the time. I have re-worked several pieces for Pedro Memelsdorff's early music group, Mala Punica.

Maizal del gregoriano and *Teatro Martín Fierro* were commissioned by the Centro de Experimentación del Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires (I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Miguel Galperin, who directs the CETC and commissioned these two works); *The Darkling Thrush* was commissioned by Paul Hillier; *Leaving Limerick* was commissioned by the Terezín Music Foundation and *Metamorphoses* was commissioned by Pedro Memelsdorff.

Pablo Ortiz

Photo: Nicolas Marlassi / Roey Yohai
Photography for Americas Society



Meridionalis

Founded in 2010, Meridionalis is the Americas Society's vocal ensemble. It has performed early and contemporary music from Latin America and Canada to critical acclaim in the US, Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, and Ecuador. It is directed by Sebastián Zubieta.

www.as-coa.org/meridionalis

Sebastián Zubieta

Sebastián Zubieta, born in Buenos Aires in 1967, is the music director of the Americas Society, where he curates the MetLife Foundation Music of the Americas Concert Series. He made his New York conducting debut with Meridionalis at the Look and Listen Festival and has conducted in the US and Latin America, including the Latin American premiere of Claude Vivier's *Kopernikus*. He has presented papers on baroque and contemporary music at congresses in Cuba, the US and Japan. His compositions have been performed by musicians including the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), the Momenta Quartet, violist Antoine Tamestit, and clarinetist Joshua Rubin, among others.



Photo: Roey Yohai Photography
for Americas Society

Pablo Ortiz



Pablo Ortiz was born in 1956 in Buenos Aires. He has written music for the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players (commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation), Chanticleer (commissioned by the Gerbode Foundation), and the Theatre of voices, among others. He has also received commissions from the Terezín Music Foundation and the Centro de Experimentación del Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. He received a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship and an American Academy of Arts and Letters Academy Award. Recent premieres include *Tango Futurista* for intonarumori conducted by Luciano Chessa, *Trois tangos en marge* performed by the Zebra Trio, *Concerto for Bandoneon* given by the Santa Rosa Symphony and Juan Pablo Jofre, *Mores redux* performed by the Sinfonie Orchester Biel Solothurn, and *Jubilant Burbs* given by the Camellia Symphony Orchestra. Ortiz is professor of composition at the University of California, Davis.

This programme represents most of Pablo Ortiz's recent choral writing, much of which reflects the composer's intense emotional connection with the past. *Maizal del gregoriano* uses a musical language that is reminiscent of Benedictine chant, while *The Darkling Thrush* absorbs Thomas Hardy's melancholy depiction of the end of an era. Mozart is referenced in the operatic *Teatro Martín Fierro Suite*, as are the beauties of 16th-century madrigals in *E ne la face de' begli occhi accende*. The final *Metamorphoses* is a remarkable superimposition of Medieval motets, expressing the essence of Ortiz's belief in music as the ultimate time machine.

**Pablo
ORTIZ**
(b. 1956)

Choral Works

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Meridionalis

Taka Kigawa, Celesta 1–5
Sebastián Zubieta, Conductor

A detailed track list can be found on pages 2 and 3 of the booklet

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