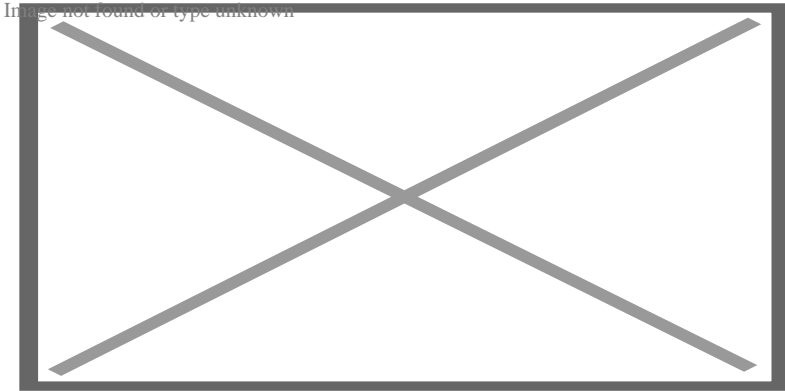


San Francisco Chamber Music Society: A Performance of “El Cimarrón”, April 19, 1982, 1 of 2



Identifier

SFC.1982.04.19.A

Description

The final concert of the 1981-82 season of the San Francisco Chamber Music Society featured Hans Werner Henze's "El Cimarrón," a recital for four musicians. The work, which is divided into fifteen tableaux or songs, is based on the true story of Esteban Montejo, a cimarrón, or runaway African slave, and fighter for Cuban independence, who told his tale to author Miguel Barnet in 1963 when Montejo was 104 years old. The composition begins with "The World" which introduces Esteban, in his story of Africa and the cunning of the white slave traders, and ends with an African drum rhythm that is still familiar in Cuba. An African harp introduces El Cimarrón's life on the sugar plantation, Flor de Sagua, and his white exploiters, with the torments of slavery depicted in exaggerated music. After hitting the overseer in the mouth, Esteban takes flight, to try to find his liberty in the forest. As Esteban is pursued by various spirits we hear music addressed to the Yoruba goddess Babalu Aye, who is to guard Esteban and all the cimarróns of the world from evil. However, the emptiness of life adds to Esteban's sense of false freedom, so he eventually returns to the plantation. A series of adventures with women produces a son. Foreigners then come with their new machines and Esteban sinks back into his former ambivalent feelings of deception. Additionally, the influx of clergy and new religions make time stand still and his African heritage seems far off. An uprising that follows in Esteban's story is accompanied by a lone guitar to accentuate his monologue, which culminates in the story of the Battle of Mal Tiempo. The victory is an evil one since everything returns to the earlier restricted relationships. A false sense of gaiety prevails until finally Esteban's voice is heard alone pouring out his emptiness of feeling. However, friendliness finally prevails and brings Esteban back to the solidarity with his fellow cimarróns on his landing so many years ago. This concert was recorded live on April 19, 1982 at the Fireman's Fund Forum in San Francisco, by Steve Wolfe.

Note: Description taken from the concert program guide.

Musical Selections

El Cimarrón, Act I: The World ; The Cimarrón ; Slavery ; Flight ; The Forest ; The Spirits ; False Freedom [text by Hans Magnus Enzensberger, after book by Miguel Barnet] (1969-70) (44:53) / Hans Werner Henze

Artists

San Francisco Chamber Music Society (features)

Henze, Hans Werner, 1926- (features)

Enzensberger, Hans Magnus (features)

Barnet, Miguel, 1940- (features)

Duykers, John (features)

Lenoir, Jane (Flutist) (features)

Tanenbaum, David (features)

Blackshere, Lawrence (features)