

CANTIGAS PRESENTS: Soulful Journeys: Puerto Rican Choral Music

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Washington, DC – In a grand season finale in collaboration with string quartet Cuarteto Rústico, Cantigas presents a celebration of contemporary Puerto Rican composers whose works evoke the eclectic cultural music heritage of the island. Selections include *El Tren* (The Train), a world premiere by composer Jorge A. Figueroa for choir, string quartet and percussion. Commissioned by Cantigas, it was inspired by the cacophony of sounds once heard at the island's old train station. The tribute also includes *Andanza del Alma* (Wanderings of the soul) by Enrique Bayoán Ríos Escribano and Sonia Morales Matos's *Lamento Negro*, a distinctive choralpercussion- dance piece that explores the fusion of Afro-Puerto Rican bomba rhythms such as sicá and holandé with western harmonies, in collaboration with JB Sotomayor and Friends. The bomba is a rhythmic and lively musical expression inspired by West African workers in Puerto Rico's colonial sugar plantations. Popular songs include *En mi Viejo San Juan*, *Capullito de Aleli* and *Tormento* (a Puerto Rican danza.) Having recently returned from a landmark tour in Puerto Rico, Cantigas presents this concert as a tribute to the people and culture of the island. Composer Jorge A. Figueroa will give a brief presentation about his featured work during the show.

CUARTETO RUSTICO, a string quartet dedicated to promoting the history and cultures of the Americas, is touted as having "...a focused sound at all dynamic levels, beautiful phrasing, a perfect balance among the instruments" (New York Concert Review.) With roots from Chile, Columbia, Venezuela and New York, the quartet's repertoire ranges from classical music to lesser known works and folk songs from Latin America. The name Rústico (rustic) refers to the rustic elements of nature in the arts including the folk elements encountered throughout many European and Latin American music.

JORGE A. FIGUEROA graduated cum laude with a combined Bachelor of Arts-Master of Arts degree from Aaron Copeland School of Music in Queens, NY, where he studied harmony and counterpoint, and composition. He launched his career as French horn and symphonic band teacher at Antonio Paoli Music School, Caguas Puerto Rico. His compositions include *Sinfonía en Canción*, *Salsa Clásica para Cuarteto de Cuerdas*, *Cuarteto en Mi*, *Autoctonus Percussion* and *El Tren* commissioned by Cantigas, among others. His *Potpurri Puertorriqueño* was featured in Uruguay and Panama to critical acclaim.

ABOUT CANTIGAS (website and video: www.cantigas.org)

Founded by Artistic Director Diana Sáez, DMA, Cantigas is a leading chamber choir prized for presenting rare and exciting Latin American and Spanish works that are unpublished in the US, and for its cross-cultural integration and collaborations. Having loyal, cross-over audiences that are half Hispanic/Latino, and half mainstream American, Cantigas concerts showcase extraordinary talent while bridging cultures and communities. Cantigas has received numerous nominations for the Wammies (Washington Area Music Awards) and performed at the Latino Inaugural concert in honor of the President of the United States.

For more information, contact: Magalie Salas, Executive Director: 301-230-1361

To schedule interviews, contact: Marisa Arbona-Ruiz, PR Chair: 240-432-3177

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CONTACT:

Magalie Salas
Executive Director
CANTIGAS
Washington's Premier Latino Chorus

Phone: 301 230 1361

Email: magalie.salas@cantigas.org

Website: www.cantigas.org