

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921-1992), arr Osvaldo Golijov

Escualo (1979/2020)

OSVALDO GOLIJOV (b. 1960)

A new arrangement (2020) of 'Arum dem Fayer', a traditional Yiddish lament

ERNÖ DOHNÁNYI (1877-1960)

Piano Quintet No. 1, in C minor, Op. 1 (1895)

Allegro

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Adagio: Quasi Andante

Finale: Allegro animato

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA, arr Osvaldo Golijov

Born in Mar del Plata, Argentina, March 11, 1921; died Buenos Aires, Argentina, July 5, 1992

Escualo (1979/2020)

Argentine composer Osvaldo Golijov, who turned 60 a few weeks ago, has had a long and productive partnership with the SLSQ. It has been productive for both sides, with collaboration being the key to its success. The new arrangements we are hearing today are, in the words of Geoff Nuttall: "A gift for the quartet. Two little arrangements, but with a hint of 'Ozzy' in them." The collaboration started over Zoom. It was then followed by a performance-workshop at Stanford with students of the SLSQ, illustrating the close interaction between composer and performer. Today's performance is the first time that the short arrangements have been played in public.

As in much of Argentine tango-master Astor Piazzolla's reported 3000 compositions, the rhythmic vibrancy of *Escualo* derives from alternating rhythms against a constant metrical pulse. Its quick *candombe* rhythm, emphasising the first, fourth and seventh eighth-notes within a 4/4 time signature, draws from a classic Uruguayan dance. The brief piece's title *Escualo* (Shark) reflects Piazzolla's pastime of shark-fishing in Punta del Este, Uruguay. But the piece is also a brilliant creation for violinist Fernando Suárez Paz who was an integral part of Piazzolla's second Quinteto Tango Nuevo. "Let's see if you can play this!", the demanding band leader Piazzolla dryly said, as he put his high soaring, virtuoso score on Paz's music stand. Golijov may have had the same thing in mind for his friend Geoff Nuttall.

OSVALDO GOLIJOV

Born in La Plata, Argentina, December 5, 1960

A new arrangement (2020) of 'Arum dem Fayer', a traditional Yiddish lament

Golijov dedicated this beautiful folk tune arrangement to the family of his Argentine friend Guillermo Limonic (1940-2020).

Arum dem Fayer

Around the fire, we sing songs. This night is precious; it won't come ever again. And when the fire has burned out, the heavens sparkle with stars.

Don your garland-crown of flowers; around the fire it's good to dance. Because dancing and singing around the fire is our life. Around the fire, dreams hover.

Around the fire, we sing songs. This night is precious. It won't ever come again.

(Translation: Joachim Johow)

ERNŐ DOHNÁNYI

Born in Pozsony [now Bratislava], July 27, 1877; died in New York, February 9, 1960

Piano Quintet No. 1, in C minor, Op. 1 (1895)

Though just five years older than Bartók and Kodály, Dohnányi's early success made him the senior member of the trio. Together, these three composers laid the groundwork for 20th century Hungarian musical life. Dohnányi held positions as director of the Budapest Academy of Music, head of the music department of Hungarian Radio and chief conductor of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition, shortly after he published his Op. 1, his appearances as a pianist in Germany and Britain established him as the greatest Hungarian pianist since Liszt. His international career as a pianist followed a roller-coaster pattern, often sinking for political reasons. But Dohnányi did substantially broaden the repertoire. He added neglected works by the great Viennese composers, and performed complete cycles of all the Beethoven sonatas in 1920 and all the Mozart piano concertos two decades later. He was also the first major pianist with an international career to feature chamber music on a regular basis.

Dohnányi's music, however, does not *sound* particularly Hungarian. Although intensely patriotic, he did not feel a need to find a musical identity through Hungarian folksong. Like Brahms, he looked to classical forms and traditional harmonies for his starting point. He felt that there was still much to be said – often in a quite innovative way – within the traditional genres of suite, symphony, sonata and the like. His early Piano Quintet of 1895 was a strong start. With it, the 18-year-old composer came to the attention of the elderly Brahms in neighbouring Vienna. Brahms said he could not have written better himself and commended the work of the young student from Budapest to the prestigious Tonkünstler-Verein in Vienna, where it was premièred, with the composer at the keyboard. When he wrote the quintet, Dohnányi already had an astounding 67 works under his belt. He matured quickly as a composer and the basic stylistic framework for his entire career was established early on.

The piece opens confidently, resonant in Brahms-like opulence and richness of texture. The crisp scherzo that follows exuberantly exploits a favourite Brahms thumbprint where a pattern in two-beats is played against one in three. Schumann comes to mind in the lovely slow movement, while the finale introduces a characteristically Hungarian rhythm of five beats to a bar. Recurring echoes of the themes from the first movement throughout the work add a cyclical feel to the score, a technique familiar to Dohnányi from the music of Liszt. The quintet is a full-blooded piece and ends triumphantly.

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