

About Ezequiel Viñao's music:

"There is a lot to engage the imagination in Mr. Viñao's work" (The New York Times)

"Of great contemplative beauty" (Le Monde de la Musique)

"Monumental" (Stuttgarter Nachrichten)

Argentinian-American composer Ezequiel Viñao has been described by the members of the Juilliard String Quartet as a *"particularly personal and intimate musical voice,"* one that *"combines an encyclopedic musical knowledge with an eclectic compositional philosophy."* It is perhaps this sense of diversity in the music that has prompted a wide range of organizations and performers to collaborate with Mr. Viñao: the list includes Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, City Opera and The Kitchen in New York; the Almeida Theatre in London; the Musikverein in Vienna; the Kennedy Center and the Library of Congress in Washington; the Presences and Bourges Festivals in France; the Celebrity Series in Boston; the Helsinki Biennale; the Tanglewood, Ravinia and Aspen Music Festivals; The Tramway in Glasgow; the Philips Muziekcentrum in Holland; the Shobi Institute in Tokyo; musicians as varied as Dennis Russell Davies, Kristjan Jarvi, Joseph Kalichstein, Stephen Gosling and Anne Akiko Meyers, and ensembles such as the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Chanticleer, the American Composers Orchestra, Absolute Ensemble, Da Camera of Houston, The Smith Quartet, Speculum Musicae, and the Juilliard and Brentano String Quartets.

A five-time ISCM (International Society for Contemporary Music) First Prize winner, Viñao has been singled out for distinction with a Kennedy Center Friedheim Award; a First Prize from UNESCO's Latin-American Rostrum of Composers; an Endowed Fellowship from California's Djerassi Foundation, and by the Argentinean Academy of Fine Arts, the International Music Council in Paris, the San Antonio Festival in Texas and the New York Foundation for the Arts.

Ezequiel Viñao was born in Buenos Aires on 21 July 1960. He first studied piano with Manuel Rego and composition with Jacobo Ficher. Early on he developed an interest in music technology and in the rhythmic cycles of Indian music, both of which were later to become features of his music. In works from the 1980's such as 'La Noche de las Noches' for string quartet and electronics -*"concentrated, evocative, of austere theatrical force"* (The Times, London)- or in the solo tape piece 'Voices of Silence' -*"exquisitely sustained music"* (Express News, TX)- his style was already distinctive. In 1978 his skill at the keyboard drew the attention of American pianist Earl Wild. The mid-seventies were something of a cultural dead end in Argentina, particularly in so far as aesthetics came to be subordinated to politics and questions about acceptable ideological lines. Wild was instrumental in securing a grant from the United Nations that allowed Viñao to leave his home country and move to New York.

From 1981 to 1987, Viñao attended the Juilliard School, where he also studied with Gyorgy Sandor and Milton Babbitt. After graduating, he was invited to Avignon, France, to work with Olivier Messiaen in a series of televised master classes. This experience had a lasting influence on Viñao's style, particularly in relation to the use of dissonance and consonance as pure color, rather than as tension and release. This concept permeates 'The Conference of the Birds' (1991), a work for piano and electronics inspired by a medieval Sufi text. Soon after it was completed, the piece was performed in Europe, Japan, and the United States. 'Newsday', reviewing a performance at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, found the work *"fascinating."* Similarly, after the West Coast premiere, the 'L.A. Times' remarked how it *"filled the hall with a sense of expectation and cresting excitement."*

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'The Conference of the Birds', as well as a first book of piano 'Études', brought Ezequiel Viñao wider recognition in the international musical scene. So in 1992, through a commission from the Boston Pro Arte Orchestra to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the New World, he was able to realize an idea that had interested him for some time: the creation of a work integrating live electronics and orchestra. The Boston Herald described the resulting 'El Sueño de Cristobal' as "*a hallucinatory vision of the sleeping admiral's dream voyage, marked by skewed dance rhythms and accumulating textures of fevered intensity.*" These complex rhythmic structures were prominent in several of his works from the 1990's (e.g., 'The Seven Valleys' for violin and electronics, written in 1992; the 'Trio' for violin, cello and piano, which he began to compose in 1994, and even the 'Fantaisie' of 1998.) Yet, after 'El Sueño de Cristobal,' Viñao's interest began to move away from both technology and the highly structured rhythmic organization of his earlier work. An increasing concern with the articulation of large-scale form led him to view the notion of "scale" (understood as the proportions of one section to another and their relative symmetries), rather than that of "process", as the one imparting stability to form.

In 1995, the Washington Post remarked how Viñao "*carved compelling musical statements out of virtuosity, engaging the ear in a fantastic harmonic language.*" The following season, Jed Distler, reviewing the first concert devoted solely to Viñao's compositions (Weill Hall at Carnegie) found that: "*there is nothing generic about this highly gifted composer, whose music, whichever way it turns, is always vibrant and alive.*" A commercial recording of the concert followed, and 'Fanfare' -the recording industry publication- focused on the dramatic impact of the works: "*the powerful, evocative music of Ezequiel Viñao is a real find. It is intensely communicative without sacrificing invention and originality.*"

Since then, the unfolding of long, vocally conceived lines, as well as the concept of "reinterpretation" (the recontextualization of past narratives), has been integral to Viñao's output. An example of these trends can be found in 'Arcanum' (1996), an hour long vocal cycle where "*... the music draws on old European musical traditions or on non-European music. The most remarkable thing about it is that the music never sounds like pastiche or parody. Quite the contrary; it possesses a timeless quality that –curiously enough– sounds remarkably modern.*" (MusicWeb, UK)

Recent works include 'Saga' (2003), an evening length work for large chamber ensemble and soloists written for the Composer Portrait Series at Miller Theater in New York; String Quartet II: 'The Loss and the Silence' (2004) -for the Juilliard School's Centennial- and 'The Wanderer' (2005) -a setting of a tenth century Anglo-Saxon text commissioned by Chanticleer, Chicago A Cappella and Meet the Composer.

Ezequiel Viñao's music is available from TLON Editions and can be heard on BIS Records, ICMA and Pro Piano Records. He has also served as a consultant for Nonesuch's best-selling recordings of Gershwin's piano rolls.

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