

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
*presents*

GUEST ARTIST RECITAL

4HANDS Piano Duo

Kristina Henckel  
and  
Amanda Virelles

Monday, April 4, 2022  
Marsh Auditorium  
8:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

*Cuban Overture*

George Gershwin  
(1898-1937)

*Six Pieces, Op. 11*

- I. Barcarolle
- II. Scherzo
- III. *Thème russe* [Russian song]
- IV. Waltz
- V. Romance
- VI. *Slava* [Gloria]

Sergei Rachmaninoff  
(1873-1943)

From *The Garden of Eden*

- I. Old Adam
- III. The Serpent's Kiss

William Bolcom  
(b. 1938)

*Intermission*

*Sonatina Romance del Plata*

- I. Allegretto Cantabile
- II. Andante Cantabile Sereno
- III. Rondo

Carlos Guastavino  
(1912-2000)

From *Ma Vlast* [My fatherland]

- II. *Vltava* [The Moldau]

Bedřich Smetana  
(1824-1884)

Tarantelle, Op. 67

Louis Moreau Gottschalk  
(1829-1869)

From *Suite No. 2, Op. 27*

- IV. Tarantella

Sergei Rachmaninoff

## PROGRAM NOTES

George Gershwin's **Cuban Overture** was originally titled *Rumba*, and it was inspired by the rhythms and dances that Gershwin experienced while visiting Havana in February of 1932. The original score is filled with native Cuban percussion. Its main theme was crafted after the 1930s song "*Échale Salsita*" (roughly translated as "Add a little sauce to it") then a current hit by the traditional music ensemble "Sexteto Nacional de Ignacio Piñeiro." This piece, under the title *Rumba* and in an orchestral version, was successfully premiered by the New York Philharmonic in 1932. Gershwin changed the name to *Cuban Overture* three months after the premiere, stating that the new title provided "a more just idea of the character and intent of the music." Gershwin arranged it for four hands and two pianos.

Rachmaninoff composed the **Six Pieces, Op. 11** when he was a student at the famous Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow and only 21 years old! His energetic youth is apparent in each of the six pieces, opening with a rather subdued "Barcarolle," then he builds the cycle piece by piece to the ultimate monumental climax in the finale "*Slava*." Rachmaninoff takes inspiration in the Russian folklore for some of the pieces of this set, especially in the Russian song which evokes the nature of the peasant chants, and in the Finale where he features an old liturgical chant. Modest Mussorgsky had used the same chant earlier in his opera *Boris Godunov*.

**The Garden of Eden** was arranged for two pianos by the composer. It was originally published for solo piano in 1974, and it contains the following rags: I. Old Adam; II. The Eternal Feminine; III. The Serpent's Kiss; and IV. Through Eden's Gates. The title page to the two-piano edition states: "Bolcom's suite *The Garden of Eden*, originally for solo piano, uses the ragtime idiom to tell the biblical story of the Fall from Genesis." "The Serpent's Kiss" uses various ragtime effects such as heel stomping and knocking on the wood of the piano, in addition to tongue clicking.

The sonatina **Romance del Plata** was written in 1987 by Argentinian composer Carlos Guastavino who was born in Santa Fe, a province in close proximity to the capital. Although he spent his adult life in the capital city of Buenos Aires, most of his music is permeated with a folkloric nature most closely related to the rhythms, melodies, customs, and nuances of the life in the countryside. In addition to piano music, Guastavino's output encompasses choral, vocal, chamber music, and orchestral works. *Romance del Plata* is a three-movements sonatina for piano duet. *Plata* refers to a region and river with the same name in Argentina. The work is composed of three characteristic movements: a lyrical first movement, leading to a slow second movement, and finishing with a Rondo that includes episodes featuring marked use of folkloric rhythms, juxtaposition of different time signatures, syncopation. It is loosely constructed on the basis of an Argentinian dance called *Chamamé*.

Bedřich Smetana is regarded as the father and founder of Czech music. The symphonic cycle *Ma Vlast* [My country], composed between 1774 and 1880, consists of six tone poems—each depicting some important aspect of Czech history or geography. *Vltava* [The Moldau] is the second movement of the set as well as the name of the longest river in the Czech Republic, commonly referred to as the “Czech national river.” In his symphonic poem, Smetana presents a very specific music description of its course through the Czech lands. He even includes “chapter headings” in the score; at the beginning two brooks, one cold the other warm, join a stream running through the forests and meadows and then by jubilant hunters. Then the river passes by a rustic village wedding, presented by the Czech national dance polka. As the sounds of the polka recede into the distance, the river enters the forest at night. The river then enters the most dramatic part of its path, the Saint John Rapids. From here the broad stream is headed towards Prague. As the Moldau enters Prague it passes the castle *Vysehrad*, a site of historical importance, and disappears majestically into the distance. While the original score is composed for orchestra, Smetana made his own arrangement for four hands.

Gottschalk’s **Grande Tarantelle, Op. 67**, subtitled *Célèbre Tarentelle* was first performed at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia in 1864. The composer transcribed the piece for many different combinations, including solo piano, piano trio, violin and piano, and two violins and piano. In addition, the piece has been arranged by others, including a “concert” transcription by Cuban composer Nicolás Ruiz Espadero for two pianos, and a “salon” transcription by Sydney Lambert, another New Orleans-born pianist (like Gottschalk), which is the transcription we are performing in this concert.

Rachmaninoff composed the **Suite No. 2, Op. 17**, for two pianos in 1901, in Italy, after a period of three years when he retired from composition due to the poor reception of his First Symphony which brought him to a deep state of depression. The Suite No. 2 and the Second Piano concerto were the two major pieces that Rachmaninoff composed after returning from the 3-year hiatus. The wonderful reception of the Second Piano Concerto contributed to regaining his confidence. The Suite was first performed on November 24th of 1901 in Moscow by the composer and his cousin Alexander Siloti. The piece is written in four movements, and Rachmaninoff integrates the two pianos—infusing both parts with equally virtuosic passages. Rachmaninoff dedicated this suite to Alexander Goldenweiser, one of the greatest pedagogues of the Russian piano school.

## ABOUT THE GUEST ARTISTS

**Amanda Virelles** has played as a soloist as well as collaborative artist throughout the United States, Europe, South and Central America, and the Caribbean. She began her piano studies in Cuba, continued undergraduate studies at Moscow State Conservatory Tchaikovsky, in Moscow, and received her Master of Fine Arts Degree from the Gnesin Russian Academy of Music in Moscow, Russia, under the guidance of Inna Malinina. Virelles also holds a master's degree and a Doctorate in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Southern Mississippi, where she received a full assistantship and a fellowship, the latter as the winner of the Doctoral Assistantship Competition. While at USM, Amanda was the student of Dr. Lois Leventhal.

After winning First Prize at the "Amadeo Roldan" Piano Competition, in Cuba, Virelles was given a full scholarship to study in Russia. She was a featured soloist with several orchestras in Europe and South America under the direction of Yoshikatsu Fukumura, Mikhail Shervakov, Dmitir Manolov, Fillipo Zigante, Kimbo Ishii-Eto, and Miguel Harth-Bedoya. In 2007, she was winner of the William T. Gower Concerto Competition and performed with the USM Symphony Orchestra under conductor Jay Dean. She has also performed under the baton of Raul Munguia and Alejandro Drago, both USM alumni.

Dr. Virelles has served as an Associate Professor of Music at Universidad del Atlántico in Colombia, the *Conservatorio Nacional* in Lima, Peru, and since her arrival to the United States, she has also served at Lane College, Vanderbilt University, and Belmont University. Currently, Dr. Virelles is an Associate Professor of Music at Fayetteville State University, and Virelles teaches piano at Fayetteville School of Music, a school she founded with her husband, Dr. Carlos Castilla, also an USM graduate. Amanda Virelles's solo and duo recordings with Duo Guitiano and 4HANDS Piano Duo are available on all digital platforms.

**Dr. Kristina Henckel**, an accomplished pianist and teacher, is a native of the Czech Republic. She is a graduate of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, under the tutelage of Professor Peter Toperczer. During her study she received several awards in competitions held in the Czech Republic: third prize in the Chopin Piano Competition and Smetana International Piano Competition, and first prize in the National Piano Competition of Conservatories, including an award for best performance of Antonín Dvořák's composition. At 18 years old, Kristina debuted with Beethoven's Concerto No. 5, the "Emperor," Op. 73, with the Hradec Králové Philharmonic Orchestra. She further collaborated as a soloist with other regional orchestras in the Czech Republic.

After relocating to the United States in 1999, Kristina Henckel continued her studies by earning a Doctorate in Piano Performance and Pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma. In Oklahoma she acquired additional awards for her performances: first prize in the Donna Turner-Smith Piano Competition and first prize at the Graduate Concerto Competition 2012. In addition, her dissertation "Pianistic Analysis of Bedřich Smetana's Piano Cycle Dreams" was nominated for the University of Oklahoma Provost's Dissertation Prize 2016. Henckel has performed numerous solo and collaborative recitals in Europe and United States. She also made several recordings for Radio Vltava, Czech Republic and King FM 98.1, Seattle, WA. In the fall of 2015, she became a Ritmüller piano artist. In May 2016, she released a CD with the piano trio Turnia featuring the piano trios of Antonín Dvořák and Bedřich Smetana. Currently she serves as music faculty at Fayetteville State University and Sandhills Community College in North Carolina.

In 2020, 4HANDS Piano Duo released "**Rhapsody in White and Blue**" featuring works for piano ensemble by American composers.