

A close-up portrait of Gabriela Lena Frank, a woman with dark curly hair and glasses, wearing a patterned blue and green top. The background is dark and out of focus.

GABRIELA LENA FRANK: *Elegía Andina* (“Andean Elegy”)

Notes on the Program

By Dr. Richard E. Rodda

The fact that Gabriela Lena Frank was born in 1972 in Berkeley, California of Peruvian heritage forms the basis of her creative personality, which draws together musical qualities from both North and Latin America.

Frank, gifted as a composer, pianist and speaker, earned her bachelor's and master's degrees at Rice University in Houston and her doctorate at the University of Michigan; her principal teachers have included William Albright, Leslie Bassett, William Bolcom and Samuel Jones in composition, and Jeanne Kierman Fischer and Logan Skelton in piano. As a pianist, Frank has recorded the complete solo piano and violin/piano compositions of her teacher, Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Leslie Bassett.

The compositions of Gabriela Lena Frank incorporate elements of Latino/Latin American mythology, archeology, art, poetry and folk music into traditional Classical forms in works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, piano, chorus and vocal solo. She has received commissions, grants and awards from the orchestras of Cleveland, Philadelphia, Albany,

Utah, St. Paul and Seattle, Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, National Endowment for the Arts, Carnegie Hall, Aspen Festival, MacDowell Colony, Banff Centre for the Arts and many others; she won the inaugural Sackler Music Composition Prize of the University of Connecticut in 2002 and the 25th Anniversary Heinz Prize in Arts and Humanity in 2020. Frank has held residencies with the Detroit Symphony, Houston Symphony, Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, University of Missouri-St. Louis, Peabody Conservatory and Composers' Forum at Vermont's Bennington College, and is a frequent guest at schools and festivals in North America and throughout Latin America; she is Composer-in-Residence with the Philadelphia Orchestra through 2021. Frank received the 2009 Latin Grammy Award for Best Classical Music Composition (*Inca Dances*) and a Grammy nomination for Best Classical Crossover Album as one of the composers who contributed to Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble 2011 CD, *Off the Map*. In 2017, she founded the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music, a non-profit training institution that offers emerging composers



Gabriela Lena Frank
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short-term retreats at her farms in California, and was included in the *Washington Post's* list of the "35 Most Significant Women Composers in History." Born with a moderate-to-profound neurosensory hearing loss, Frank served as the keynote speaker at the national convention of the Association of Late-Deafened Adults in September 2005 in Salt Lake City. San Diego Opera premieres Frank's first opera, *The Last Dream of Frida and Diego*, with a libretto by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Nilo Cruz, during the 2022-2023 season.

Frank wrote that *Elegía Andina*, composed in 2000 for the Albany (New York) Symphony Orchestra, "is dedicated to my older brother, Marcos Gabriel Frank. As children of a multicultural marriage (our father being Lithuanian-Jewish and our mother being Chinese-Peruvian-Spanish), our early days were filled with Oriental stir-fry cuisine, Andean nursery songs,

and frequent visits from our New York-bred Jewish cousins. As a young piano student, my repertoire included not only my own compositions that carried overtones from Peruvian folk music but also rags of Scott Joplin and minuets by the sons of Bach. It is probably inevitable then that as a composer and pianist, I continue to thrive on multiculturalism. *Elegía Andina* ('Andean Elegy') is one of my first written-down compositions to explore what it means to be of several ethnic persuasions, of several minds. It uses stylistic elements of Peruvian *arpa/ira zampoña panpipes* (double-row panpipes, each row with its own tuning) to paint an elegiac picture of my questions. The flute part was particularly conceived with this in mind. I can think of no one better to dedicate this work to than to 'Babo,' my big brother — for whom Perú still waits."



JIMMY LÓPEZ BELLIDO: *Fiesta!*, Four Pop Dances for Orchestra

Notes on the Program

By Dr. Richard E. Rodda

Jimmy López Bellido, born in Lima, Peru in 1978, studied composition from 1998 to 2000 at the National Conservatory of Music in Lima and received his master's degree in 2000 from the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki (where he was the only Latin American among the school's 1,000 students); he completed his doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley in 2007.

He has also participated in master classes with Magnus Lindberg, Jouni Kaipainen, Michael Nyman and other noted composers. López was Composer-in-Residence with the Houston Symphony for the 2019-2020 season. His works, many written on commission, have been performed by the orchestras of Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, St. Paul, Atlanta, Fort Worth, Sydney, The Hague and Helsinki, as well as the Symphony Orchestra of Chile, National Symphony Orchestra of Peru, Aspen, Tanglewood, Darmstadt and Donaueschingen festivals, and the 2010 Youth Olympic Games in Singapore. *Bel Canto*, his full-length opera based on Anne Patchett's bestselling novel, was commissioned by Lyric Opera of Chicago and premiered to wide critical acclaim in December 2015 and broadcast nationwide on PBS' *Great Performances*. López's international honors include the Hewlett50 Arts Commissions from the Hewlett Foundation (2017), TUMI USA Award (2016), Musician of the Year from Opera Peru (2015), Antara Award (2014), Prince Prize from the Prince Charitable

Trusts (2013), Kranichsteiner Musikpreis at the Darmstadt Festival of Contemporary Music (2008), Morton Gould Young Composer Award (2008), First Prize in the ALEA International Composition Competition (2003), and Orchestra Prize of the Taiwan International Composition Competition (2002). Jimmy López Bellido is a member of the Society of Finnish Composers, ASCAP, Circle of Composers of Peru, and San Francisco Chapter of the Recording Academy (which helps select the Grammy Awards). He is also a founding member and Vice President of the *kohoBeat* Musical Association of Finland.

Fiesta!, Four Pop Dances for Orchestra, originally for an ensemble of fourteen musicians, was commissioned by Miguel Harth-Bedoya to mark the 100th anniversary of the Lima Philharmonic Society in 2007; the full orchestra version received its first performance in May 2008 by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Mr. Harth-Bedoya. López wrote of the work, "*Fiesta!*, the first piece in which I made explicit use of elements from popular music, draws influences from several sources: European academic compositional techniques, Latin American music, Afro-Peruvian music and today's pop music. It utilizes elaborate developmental techniques while keeping the primeval driving forces still latent in popular culture.

"Movements one (*Trance 1*) and three (*Trance 2*) are related to each other in spirit and form. Both start energetically, feature slow passages and lead to the following movement by means of open endings. The word 'trance' belongs to the realm of techno music, a form of electronic dance music that generally uses hypnotic and repetitive rhythms. But I also use the word in its original meaning, trying to convey the hypnotizing state achieved while listening to a constantly shifting melody against a static background, much as in Hindu music, where melodies unfold through a series of melismas against a pedal note and over a span of several minutes.

"Movements two (*Countertime*) and four (*Techno*) are conclusive in character and keep high levels of energy from beginning to end. Latin rhythms also play an essential part in them, so the percussion section rises to prominence in several passages. *Countertime* is an interplay of syncopations in which the downbeat is constantly shifted from the strong to the weak beat of the bar. The word 'countertime' has been derived from 'counterpoint,' which in the realm of music theory defines the interaction between two or more melodies, the goal being to produce a harmonious whole. I use the word 'countertime' to indicate the interaction between an underlying steady pulse and the rhythms playing against it. *Techno*, the last movement, uses Latin-American rhythms such as *merengue*."

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AARON ZIGMAN: *Tango Manos,* Concerto for Piano and Orchestra

Notes on the Program

By Dr. Richard E. Rodda

Aaron Zigman was classically trained as a composer and pianist at UCLA, but his protean career has encompassed writing, producing and performing pop, soul, jazz, television and film as well as concert music. Zigman was born in 1963 in San Diego, California and was introduced to music by his mother, a pianist and harpist. He developed an early interest in jazz and concert music, studied with several local musicians in high school, and was writing songs for Carly Simon and the television show *Fame* while he was still at UCLA. Another formative influence during his college years was study with his cousin George Bassman, the MGM composer who had orchestrated *The Wizard of Oz*, composed music for the films *Marty* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, wrote the Tommy Dorsey classic *Getting Sentimental Over You*, and arranged and orchestrated for Lena Horne, Benny Goodman, André Kostelanetz, and the Broadway smash hit *Guys and Dolls*.

During the 1980s, Zigman worked as a studio musician, wrote such pop hits as *Crush On You*, *Curiosity* and *Private Number*, and arranged and produced for Aretha Franklin, Natalie Cole, Ray Charles, Phil Collins, Dionne Warwick, Tina Turner, Christina Aguilera and many other top artists. He became involved in film during the following decade, producing, arranging, orchestrating and being featured as a pianist on soundtracks for *Mulan*, *What's Love Got to Do With It?*, *The Birdcage*, *License to Kill* and *Pocahontas*. Zigman wrote his first film score for the 2002 thriller *John Q.*, which won a BMI Film Music Award, and broke into television with his music for the 2004 Showtime production *Crown Heights*, for which he won an Emmy for Outstanding Original Song. He has since established himself among Hollywood's busiest composers, with scores for more than sixty major Hollywood releases, including *The Notebook*, *The Company Men*, *Bridge to Terabithia*, *The Proposal*, *Flicka*, *For Colored Girls*,



Flash of Genius, Sex & the City, and Escape from Planet Earth. Zigman has also composed concert works for orchestra, chamber ensembles and singers, including the 1994 tone poem *Rabin: An Orchestral Work in Five Movements* (in memory of assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin), *Martyrology: A Tribute to Those Who Have Died in the Face of Persecution*, *Rhapsody for Cello and Piano*, *Impressions for Wind Ensemble*, *No Strings Attached* for Horn Sextet, and vocal settings of traditional Hebrew, Latin and Italian texts.

Like Jascha Heifetz, Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, Joshua Bell and other famed classical virtuosos, pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet has been featured on the soundtracks of several films (*Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, *Atonement*, *Pride & Prejudice*, *Bride of the Wind*), and in 2017 he was engaged to record the score for *Wakefield*, directed by Robin Swicord and starring Bryan Cranston and Jennifer Garner. The composer for that production was Aaron Zigman, and he and Thibaudet worked so

well together that they began exploring possibilities for collaborating on a new concert composition. Thibaudet continued the story: "Long Yu [Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the China Philharmonic and founder and former artistic director of the Beijing Music Festival] had the idea to do a tango concerto together and asked me to look at who could write that for us. He was very serious about it, and I was excited by the idea. I have always admired the music of Argentina. And then, one day, I was speaking with Aaron Zigman and realized that he was very much into the tango and South American music as well. It was one of his specialties, which I didn't know! So I asked him to write a teaser, a few minutes or so, and send it to me and Long Yu, who immediately loved it." A joint commission for the new concerto was arranged by the Beijing Music Festival, Radio France and San Francisco Symphony, and Zigman composed *Tango Manos*, Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in 2019. Thibaudet gave the premiere on October 14, 2019 at the Beijing Music Festival with the China Philharmonic and conductor Huang Yi; Thibaudet also performed the American premier, with the San Francisco Symphony on February 14, 2020.

Zigman said that the tango distills feelings of "pain, beauty and love, a dance that reflects all these emotions. It's a very introspective art form." His three-movement *Tango Manos* ("*Tango Hands*," perhaps a suggestion that the motion of the soloist's hands at the keyboard creates its own sort of dance) is rooted in the traditional rhythms, melodic gestures, and expressive qualities of the Argentinean dance, but it also evokes the Impressionism of Thibaudet's French heritage, though refracted through a tango sensibility. French and Latin styles are juxtaposed in the opening movement's long, dreamy piano solo that suddenly shifts to a driving, sensual dance. The second movement also evokes these two musical worlds, though the contrast is not as stark. The finale is a dynamic showpiece of keyboard virtuosity and orchestral color.