

Grade 2.5

Commissioned By The New Canon Project



Nocturno Isleño

Island Nocturne

For String Orchestra
(with optional percussion)

Rolando Jaury Gómez

Score

Instrumentation

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Contrabass
Clave
Maracas
Conga

Biography



Rolando J. Gómez (b. 2001) is a composer and musician originally from Miami, Florida. He graduated from Oberlin Conservatory in 2023 with a major in music composition, where he studied with Stephen Hartke, Jihyun Kim, and Jesse Jones. His music often infuses Cuban, American, Neo-classical, and European Modernist styles. His repertoire includes numerous solo and chamber works, humorous and sentimental art songs, as well as compositions involving electronics. His latest work for wind quintet—*Sit And Play*—was premiered in the Summer of 2023 during the Imani Winds Chamber Music Festival. He is currently studying music composition with Nicolas Scherzinger, Natalie Draper, and Loren Loiacono at Syracuse University. Apart from composing, Rolando remains connected to his Cuban heritage by performing the Cuban Tres, a traditional string instrument native to the island.

Program Note

Nocturno Isleño is a nocturne for string orchestra, with a strong Cuban influence. Composed at a grade 3 level, the piece serves as a musical exploration designed to enhance rhythmic sensibilities, focusing particularly on syncopations, and the allure of the D harmonic scale.

Inspired by the rich musical heritage of Cuba, *Nocturno Isleño* draws from the rhythmic language of popular Cuban genres, notably the bolero and the danzón. The composition also weaves in elements of folkloric music, creating a harmonious blend that reflects the vibrant musical culture found on the enchanting Cuban Isle.

This composition was commissioned by the New Canon Project, a partnership between the American Choral Directors Association, the American String Teachers Association, and Rising Tide Music Press, with support of the Sphinx Venture Fund and the National Endowment for the Arts.

I hope *Nocturno Isleño*, in addition to teaching musical and technical skills, can inspire curiosity and enthusiasm for Cuban music.

Cuba And Its Music



Illustration by Jesse M. Doan

Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean. Music is one of the greatest exports of the country. The *clave*—a rhythmic foundation in most Cuban musical genres—has influenced music in America and across the world. Some notable Cuban musical artists include Celia Cruz, Benny Moré, Juan Formell, Pablo Milanes, and Kiki Valera. Each of these artists are major figures in the varied genres from the island such as *Salsa*, *Guaracha*, *Son*, *Bolero*, *Timba*, *Nueva Trova*, and *Musica Tradicional*.

Glossary

This piece makes use of Italian musical expressions. Italian is considered the “standard” language for musical expressions. Familiarity with the following terms will be useful for this work and other works, so take time to study them.

Misterioso: Mysterious; used to indicate music with a strange, aimless, or abstract character.

Poco Ritardando: To slow down the tempo, but only for a little bit.

Piú Ritardando: To slow down the tempo; more than *poco* and less than *molto*.

Molto Ritardando: To slow down the tempo by a greater degree.

Legato: Smooth and connected; to be played without interruptions.

Moderato: Moderate; used to indicate music with a tempo that is neither fast nor slow.

Solo: A passage of music is to be played by a singular person.

Soli: A passage that is in the foreground and played by a whole section—not played by a singular person.

Secco: Dry; a passage of music should be played with little resonance—similar to *staccato*.

Simile: Similar; if a passage of music is repeated, expressive marks and bowings should be repeated even if it is not explicitly notated.

Accelerando: Speeding up; the tempo of a piece is progressively faster. Can be modified by *poco*, *piú*, and *molto*.

G.P. (Grand Pause): An extended period of silence.

Tempo I: *Tempo Primo*; a shift back in to the original tempo.

Tempo II: *Tempo Secondo*; a shift in to the second tempo.

Espressivo: Expressive; to be played with great emotion and vibrato.

Dolce: Sweet; similar to expressive but with a lighter quality.

Ma: But; it is used to join two contrary expressive markings. For example, *forte ma dolce* directly translates to *strong but sweet*.

Sub. (Subito): Suddenly; indicates a quick and unexpected shift in either dynamic level or tempo.

Rehearsal Notes

This composition is constructed using the D harmonic scale and the clave. It is important to be able to perform each component before learning the piece. The following learning bank has all of the required materials to facilitate practicing these two fundamental concepts.

Here are some other notes to keep in mind when rehearsing the piece:

- Measures 13 - 36 introduce the clave with pizzicato. Feel free to use this passage to practice the clave as an ensemble.
- Be sure to exaggerate the contrasting *forte* and *piano* dynamic levels in measures 43 - 58.
- A difficult passage worth focusing on is on measure 55b - 58b. The upper strings need to be careful with the syncopations and the shifting bowings. The downbeats from the lower strings alongside the percussion should help maintain a sense of pulse during this tricky passage.
- Feel free to add *molto ritardando* starting at measure 90 for a more dramatic ending.
- When the optional percussion joins the texture, avoid tempo fluctuations unless explicitly stated.
- Notated tempo markings refer to the maximum speed; slightly slower tempos are appropriate when adjusting to the acoustics of a space.

Learning Bank

The Son Clave

The son clave is a fundamental rhythm in this work. Students should be able to internalize this rhythm first before practicing their parts. In addition, students should practice the clave with the accompanied bowing pattern. Mastery of the clave rhythm and its bowing patterns should facilitate rehearsals and individual practice.

Violin

Viola

Violoncello
Contrabass

The musical score for 'The Son Clave' is written for Violin, Viola, and Violoncello/Contrabass. It consists of two measures. The Violin part is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The Viola and Violoncello/Contrabass parts are in alto and bass clefs respectively, also with a common time signature. The rhythm is based on the son clave pattern. Above the notes, there are 'V' marks indicating bowing patterns. The first measure shows a half note followed by a quarter note, and the second measure shows a quarter note followed by a half note. The Viola and Violoncello/Contrabass parts play a steady quarter-note accompaniment.

The Harmonic Minor Scale

This work is composed using the D harmonic minor scale. Students should be able to play this scale before practicing their parts. Mastery of this scale should facilitate rehearsals and individual practice.

Violin

Viola

Violoncello
Contrabass

The musical score for 'The Harmonic Minor Scale' is written for Violin, Viola, and Violoncello/Contrabass. It consists of two measures. The Violin part is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The Viola and Violoncello/Contrabass parts are in alto and bass clefs respectively, also with a common time signature. The scale is D harmonic minor, which includes a flat on the sixth degree (Bb) and a sharp on the seventh degree (C#). The Violin part plays the scale in ascending and descending motion. The Viola and Violoncello/Contrabass parts play a steady quarter-note accompaniment.

Dedicated To The Hanover High School Orchestra

For String Orchestra

Rolando J. Gómez

Misterioso,
(♩ = 90)

poco rit.

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

Clave

Maracas

Conga

Optional Percussion

5

A Tempo

più rit.

vln. I

vln. II

vla.

vlc.

cb.

cl.

mar.

cg.