



Arts, Humanities,
and Technology

PRESENTS



WORLD PREMIERE

Harlequin's

Rainbow

Music by Beethoven & Rodríguez

With The Amernet Quartet & Mezzo Soprano Rachel Calloway

Harlequin's Rainbow Fall 2022

Saturday, September 17th, 2022
7:30 p.m. | Jonsson Performance Hall

Program

I.

String Quartet in B-flat, Op. 18, No. 6 (1800)
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
1 - Allegro con brio
2 - Adagio ma non troppo
3 - Scherzo: Allegro
4 - La Malinconia: Adagio – Allegretto quasi allegro

The Amernet Quartet
Misha Vitenson, Violin
Avi Nagin, Violin
Michael Klotz, Viola
Jason Calloway, Cello

Intermission

II.

L'Arc-en-ciel d'Arlequin (Harlequin's Rainbow) (2021)
Robert Xavier Rodríguez (b. 1946) (World Premiere)

1 - Théâtre (Theater)
2 - Décor (Decor)
3 - Cuisine Lyrique (Lyrical Cuisine)
4 - Harlequinade (Harlequin's Tale)
5 - À Colombine (To Columbine)
6 - Arlequin (Harlequin)
7 - Ivresse de Lune (Drunk with the Moon)
8 - Violon du Lune (The Violin of the Moon)
9 - Nostalgie (Nostalgia)
10 - Parfum Bergame (Perfumes of Bergamo)
11 - L'Alphabet (The Alphabet)
12 - Souper sur l'Eau (Soirée on the Water)

Rachel Calloway, Mezzo-Soprano
The Amernet Quartet

Composer Notes

L'Arc-en-ciel d'Arlequin (Harlequin's Rainbow) (2021) is a 36-minute song cycle for mezzo-soprano and string quartet on poems from Albert Giraud's 1884 *Pierrot Lunaire*. The work is the result of a commission from The University of Texas at Dallas for a premiere performance by Rachel Calloway and the Amernet Quartet.

Harlequin's Rainbow is a companion piece to Arnold Schoenberg's 1912 *Pierrot Lunaire*, of the same length, for reciter and chamber ensemble. It also pairs with Schoenberg's *String Quartet No. 2* (1908), which includes voice. In his *Pierrot Lunaire*, Schoenberg set 21 of Giraud's 50 poems in a German translation. He chose dark poems with images of death about Pierrot, the sad, white-faced clown from the Italian *commedia dell'arte*. In *L'Arc-en-ciel d'Arlequin*, I have set twelve cheerier poems in the original French, mostly about the more extroverted, rainbow-clad character of Harlequin. The sensuous, Symbolist poems express the escapism of theater, the quest of the artist and the mystery of the moon. They conjure the fairy-tale atmosphere of the elegant French pantomime version of the *commedia* to recount Harlequin's adventures with the shy Pierrot, as they compete for the love of the beautiful Columbine.

Every poem has the same strict rhyme scheme of three stanzas. The opening couplet returns at the end of the second stanza, and the first line comes again at the end: ABBA/ABAB/ABBAA. Each poem, thus, contains a built-in musical symmetry, which I have followed. I chose four poems which Schoenberg set: *Columbine* (my no. 5), *Mondestrunken* (my no. 7), *Heimweh* (my no. 9) and *O Alter Duft* (my no. 10). In his *Pierrot*, Schoenberg avoided any musical parallels to the rhymes or to the recurring words.

My musical language freely mixes tonality and atonality, following the lead of Schoenberg's pupil Alban Berg. I also feature the octatonic scale of alternating half steps and whole steps that Schoenberg's musical nemesis, Igor Stravinsky, used in *The Rite of Spring* in the same year as *Pierrot Lunaire*. I gain further inspiration from that era by evoking the lush textures of Schoenberg's French contemporaries Fauré and Debussy and the smoke-filled cabaret harmonies of Kurt Weill.

No. 1, *Théâtre* (Theater), creates the excitement of the Italian comedy, as the voice thrills to the transporting beauty of theater and introduces the desirable Columbine. A bravura cello solo leads to a short, wistful coda.

No photography or recording devices are allowed. Please turn off all communication devices.
No food or drink is allowed in the Performance Hall or Theatre.

No. 2, *Décor* (Decor), begins with string tremolos and delicate figuration for the swooping wings of the “great birds of purple and gold” which decorate the theater set. The music swells to depict the birds’ graceful flight, and the song closes with the quiet return of the opening ripples.

No. 3, *Cuisine Lyrique* (Lyrical Cuisine), is a quirky serenade about the lonely Pierrot, gazing at the moon and seeing it as a golden omelet. Marked *giocosio misterioso*, it begins and ends with a gentle, guitar-like accompaniment of pizzicato strings. The more intense central section describes Pierrot’s fantasy of throwing the omelet into the sky from his frying pan.

No. 4, *Harlequinade* (Harlequin’s Tale), is a celebration of Harlequin, with cascades of string harmonics depicting the rainbow glow of his signature costume of red, green and yellow patches. Sly, chromatic motives in the strings show Harlequin’s devious, trickster ways, and, with a flash of harmonics, the song ends in a burst of glory.

No. 5, *À Colombine* (To Columbine), is an erotic expression of longing for the unattainable Columbine. Soaring vocal lines, pungent harmonies and two alternating tempos show the rising waves of emotion as the text expresses an ardent desire, at last, to experience “...the fleeting joy of strewing your auburn hair with the pale flowers of the moonlight.”

No. 6, *Arlequin* (Harlequin), is a rhythmic scherzo with harmonic surprises, vocal roulades and frequent changes of musical texture. The text parallels Leporello’s aria “Madamina” from *Don Giovanni* in recounting a seducer’s well-practiced tricks as he pursues his amorous desires.

In No. 7, *Ivresse de Lune* (Drunk with the Moon), the strings play an indulgently tipsy waltz, as the poet gazes at the moon and sings of “The wine we drink from our eyes.” Voice and strings build to a frenzied, absinth-induced state of ecstasy, and the poet blissfully drifts off to oblivion.

No. 8, *Violon du Lune* (The Violin of the Moon), is the first of two poems about stringed instruments. The song features delicate string arpeggios with seductive harmonies and a sustained vocal line to create the luminous glow of “the moon, with thin, slow rays.” It radiates, “vibrating in the endless night, the soul of the throbbing violin, full of silence and harmony.”

No. 9, *Nostalgie* (Nostalgia), returns to the “slow, sentimental Pierrot.” In a swooning tango, Pierrot, inspired by the moon, relentlessly clings to the beloved old traditions of the *commedia dell’arte*, “the soul of ancient comedies.”

No. 10, *Parfum Bergame* (Perfumes of Bergamo), evokes the “sweet fragrance of yesterday which intoxicates my senses.” I invoke the twelve-tone system which Schoenberg adopted after *Perrot Lunaire* by building each song around a different pitch. For this song, I use the order of the songs’ pitch centers (A-flat, E, F-sharp, G, E-flat, B followed, a tritone away, by D, B-flat, C, D-flat, A and F) as a twelve-note row, here wrapped around D-flat. Schoenberg’s atonal setting of the same text (*O alter Duft*) nostalgically looks back to the world of tonal music, which he was abandoning. In my tonal setting, I nostalgically look back to the world of serial music, which I am not abandoning, but embracing from a post-modern, 21st-century perspective of looking forward while re-connecting with the treasures of the past.

In No. 11, *L’Alphabet* (The Alphabet), the strings exchange playful, repeated figuration, as the poet recalls his schoolboy recitation of an enchanted alphabet, “with every letter a mask.” The music grows more lyrical, and glowing string arpeggios and harmonics return, as the poet imagines Harlequin, tracing the magical letters “with his rainbow form.”

A gentler continuation of the cello solo from the first song leads to No. 12, *Souper sur l’Eau* (*Soirée on the Water*). Again, the text includes a reference to strings, set to a dreamy *barcarolle* in two tender interludes for the quartet alone. Harlequin, Pierrot and Columbine are in Venice, home of the *commedia dell’arte*. “Bejeweled with fireflies,” they wine and dine on the water “under a glowing moon,” as “viols sing madrigals in languorous gondolas.”

© Robert Xavier

Rodríguez

L'Arc-en-ciel d'Arlequin (Harlequin's Rainbow)

Poems from Pierrot Lunaire by Albert Giraud

1 – Théâtre

Je rêve un théâtre de chambre, / Dont Breughel peindrait les volets.
Shakespeare, les féeriques palais, / Et Watteau, les fonds couleur d'ambre.
Par les frileux soirs de décembre, / En chauffant mes doigts violets.
Je rêve un théâtre de chambre, / Dont Breughel peindrait les volets.
Émoussillés par le gingembre, / On y verrait les Crispins laids
Oüater leurs décharnés mollets / Pour Colombine qui se cambre.
/ Je rêve un théâtre de chambre.

2 – Décor

Les grands oiseaux de pourpre et d'or, / Ces voletantes pierreries,
Breughel les pose, en ses féeries, / Sur les arbres bleus du décor.
Ils vibrent, et leur large essor / Jette une ombre au ras des prairies.
Les grands oiseaux de pourpre et d'or, / Ces voletantes pierreries.
Le soleil perce avec effort / De ses jaunes orfèvreries /
L'azur vert des branches fleuries, / Et sa lumière avive encore
/ Les grands oiseaux de pourpre et d'or.

3 – Cuisine Lyrique

La Lune, la jaune omelette, / Battue avec de grands œufs d'or,
Au fond de l'azur noir s'endort, / Et dans les vitres se reflète.
Pierrot, dans sa blanche toilette, / Guigne, sur le toit, près du bord,
La Lune, la jaune omelette, / Battue avec de grands œufs d'or.
Ridé comme une pomme blette, / Le Pierrot agite très fort
Un poëlon, et, d'un brusque effort, / Croit lancer au ciel qui paillette
/ La Lune, la jaune omelette.

4 – Arlequinade

Arlequin porte un arc-en-ciel / De rouges et vertes soieries,
Et semble, dans l'or des féeries, / Un serpent artificiel.
Ayant pour but essentiel / Le mensonge et les fourberies,
Arlequin porte un arc-en-ciel / De rouges et vertes soieries.
A Cassandre jaune de fiel / Il dénombre ses seigneuries
En Espagne, et ses armoiries : / Car sur fond d'azur et de miel,
/ Arlequin porte un arc-en-ciel.

5 – À Colombine

Les fleurs pâles du clair de Lune, / Comme des roses de clarté,
Fleurissent dans les nuits d'été : / Si je pouvais en cueillir une !
Pour soulager mon infortune, / Je cherche, le long du Léthé,
Les fleurs pâles du clair de Lune, / Comme des roses de clarté.
Et j'apaiserai ma rancune, / Si j'obtiens du ciel irrité
La chimérique volupté / D'effeuiller sur ta toison brune
/ Les fleurs pâles du clair de Lune !

6 – Arlequin

Brillant comme un spectre solaire, / Voici le très mince Arlequin,
Qui chiffonne le casaquin / De la servante atrabilaire.
Afin d'apaiser sa colère, / Il fait miroiter un sequin.
Brillant comme un spectre solaire, / Voici le très mince Arlequin,
La vieille, empochant son salaire, / Livre Colombine au faquin,
Qui sur un grand ciel bleu turquin / Se dessine, et chante lanlaire,
/ Brillant comme un spectre solaire.

L'Arc-en-ciel d'Arlequin (Harlequin's Rainbow)

Poems from Pierrot Lunaire by Albert Giraud

English Translation by Jay Dowling

1 – Théâtre

I dream of a chamber theater / Where Breughel painted the curtain,
Shakespeare the fairy palaces / And Watteau the amber scrim.
On chilly December nights, / Warming my purple fingers,
I dream of a chamber theater / Where Breughel painted the curtain.
Enchanted with ginger, / Ungainly Crispinos
Pad their shriveled thighs / To impress the alluring Columbine.
/ I dream of a chamber theater.

2 – Décor

Great birds, purple and gold, / Flying jewels,
Breughel sets them in his fairy scenes / Among the blue branches.
They vibrate, and their soaring wings / Throw shadows over the fields,
Those great birds of purple and gold, / Those flying jewels.
The sun tries to pierce, / With its yellow jewelry,
The green azure of the budding trees, / And its light brightens once again
/ The great birds of purple and gold.

3 – Lyrical Cuisine

The moon, the yellow omelet, / Beaten with great golden eggs,
Dozes in the dark azure sky / Reflected in the windows.
Pierrot in his white costume / Spies, from the edge of the roof,
The moon, the yellow omelet, / Beaten with great golden eggs.
With brow creased like an overripe apple, / Pierrot brusquely tosses the pan
And thinks he has flipped into the sky / The moon, the yellow omelet.

4 – Harlequin's Tale

Harlequin wears a rainbow / Of red and green silk.
And slithers like a snake / In the golden fairytale.
His essential aims / Are lies and deceptions.
Harlequin wears a rainbow / Of red and green silk.
To Cassander, yellow with gall, / He lists his Spanish fiefs
With their coats of arms. / And, with this background of azure and honey,
/ Harlequin wears a rainbow.

5 – To Columbine

The pale flowers of the moonlight, / Like shining roses,
Flourish in summer nights — / If only I could pick one!
To soothe my misfortune, / I seek, on the banks of the Lethe,
The pale flowers of the moonlight, / Like shining roses,
And I would assuage my bitterness / If I could have from the wrathful heavens
The fleeting joy / Of strewing on your auburn hair / The pale flowers of the moonlight.

6 – Harlequin

Shining like a rainbow, / The thin and dashing Harlequin
Rumples the cape / Of the grumpy servant.
To calm her anger, / He sparkles a sequin,
Shining like a rainbow — / The thin and dashing Harlequin.
The old lady, pocketing her tip, / Brings Columbine to the rogue,
Who, against a turquoise sky, / Presents himself strutting and singing,
/ Shining like a rainbow.

L'Arc-en-ciel d'Arlequin (Harlequin's Rainbow)

Poems from Pierrot Lunaire by Albert Giraud

7 – Ivresse de Lune

Le vin que l'on boit par les yeux / A flots verts de la Lune coule,
Et submerge comme une houle / Les horizons silencieux.
De doux conseils pernicieux / Dans le philtre nagent en foule :
Le vin que l'on boit par les yeux / A flots verts de la Lune coule.
Le Poète religieux / De l'étrange absinthe se soûle,
Aspirant— jusqu'à ce qu'il roule, / Le geste fou, la tête aux cieux—
/ Le vin que l'on boit par les yeux !

8 – Violon de Lune

L'âme du violon tremblant, / Plein de silence et d'harmonie,
Rêve dans sa boîte vernie / Un rêve languide et troublant.
Qui donc fera d'un bras dolent / Vibrer dans la nuit infinie
L'âme du violon tremblant, / Plein de silence et d'harmonie ?
La Lune, d'un rais mince et lent, / Avec des douceurs d'agonie,
Caresse de son ironie, / Comme un lumineux archet blanc,
/ L'âme du violon tremblant.

9 – Nostalgie

Comme un doux soupir de cristal, / L'âme des vieilles comédies
Se plaint des allures raidies / Du lent Pierrot sentimental.
Dans son triste désert mental / Résonne en notes assourdies,
Comme un doux soupir de cristal, / L'âme des vieilles comédies.
Il désapprend son air fatal : / A travers les blancs incendies
Des lunes dans l'onde agrandies, / Son regret vole au ciel natal,
/ Comme un doux soupir de cristal.

10 – Parfums de Bergame

O vieux parfum vaporisé / Dont mes narines sont grisées !
Les douces et folles risées / Tournent dans l'air subtilisé.
Désir enfin réalisé / Des choses longtemps méprisées :
O vieux parfum vaporisé / Dont mes narines sont grisées !
Le charme du spleen est brisé : / Par mes fenêtres irisées
Je revois les bleus Élysées / Où Watteau s'est éternisé.
/ O vieux parfum vaporisé !

11 – L'Alphabet

Un alphabet bariolé / Dont chaque lettre était un masque
Fut l'abécédaire fantasque / Qu'en mon enfance j'épelai.
Très longtemps je me rappelai, / Mieux que mes sabres et mon casque,
Un alphabet bariolé / Dont chaque lettre était un masque.
Aujourd'hui, mon cœur enjôlé, / Vibrant comme un tambour de basque,
Rêve un Arlequin bergamasque, / Traçant d'un corps arc-en-ciellé
/ Un alphabet bariolé.

12 – Souper sur l'Eau

En d'alanguissantes yoles / Au pavillon de bleu turquin,
Pierrot, Colombine, Arlequin / Font saigner les rouges fioles.
Les femmes ont de lucioles / Diamanté leur casaquin,
En d'alanguissantes yoles / Au pavillon de bleu turquin.
Enrichissant ces fanfoles / La Lune luit comme un sequin,
Et sous un rose baldaquin / Madrigalisent les violes,
/ En d'alanguissantes yoles.

L'Arc-en-ciel d'Arlequin (Harlequin's Rainbow)

Poems from Pierrot Lunaire by Albert Giraud

English Translation by Jay Dowling

7 – Drunk with the Moon

The wine we drink with our eyes / Flows from the moon in green waves,
Flooding like an ocean swell / The silent horizons.
Sweet seductive urges / Swim in the potion—
The wine we drink with our eyes / That flows from the moon in green waves,
The ecstatic poet, / Drunk from the strange absinthe,
Breathes it —until he reels / With wild gestures, his head in the clouds—
/ From the wine we drink with our eyes.

8 – The Violin of the Moon

The soul of the throbbing violin, / Full of silence and harmony,
Dreams in its lustrous case / A languid and disturbing dream.
But who with an aching arm / Will set, vibrating in the endless night,
The soul of the throbbing violin, / Full of silence and harmony?
The moon, with thin slow rays, / With gentle agony,
Caresses with its irony / Like a luminous white bow
/ The soul of the throbbing violin.

9 – Nostalgia

Like a soft sigh of crystal, / The soul of ancient comedies
Laments the stiffness / Of slow, sentimental Pierrot.
In his sad mental desert, / Muffled tones resound
Like a soft sigh of crystal, / The soul of ancient comedies.
But he forgets his fateful air: / Across white fires
Of monstrous moons in the wave, / His longing flies to his native skies
/ Like a soft sigh of crystal.

10 – Perfumes of Bergamo

Oh, sweet fragrance of yesterday / Which intoxicates my senses,
Sweet, silly pranks / Swirl in the rarified air.
Desire, finally realized, / For things long disdained:
Oh, sweet fragrance of yesterday / Which intoxicates my senses.
Melancholy's charm is broken: / Through my rainbow-tinted windows.
I see the blue Elysium / Where Watteau became immortal.
/ Oh, sweet fragrance of yesterday.

11 – An Alphabet

A multi-colored alphabet, / With every letter a mask,
Made an extravagant ABC / In my childhood.
I have long remembered, / Better than my swords and helmet,
That multi-colored alphabet, / With every letter a mask.
Today my enchanted heart, / Thrumming like a Basque drum,
Dreams of Harlequin in a bergamasque / Tracing with his rainbow form
/ A multi-colored alphabet.

12 – Soirée on the Water

In languorous gondolas / Under turquoise blue banners,
Pierrot, Columbine and Harlequin / Bleed their red flasks.
The women have capes / Bejeweled with fireflies
In languorous gondolas / Under turquoise blue banners.
Enriching these baubles, / The moon glows like a sequin,
And, under a rose-colored canopy, / Viols sing madrigals
/ In languorous gondolas.

Performer Biographies

Praised for their “intelligence” and “immensely satisfying” playing by the New York Times, **the Amernet String Quartet** has garnered recognition as one of today’s exceptional string quartets. They are Ensemble-in-Residence at Florida International University in Miami. Their sound has been called “complex” but with an “old world flavor.” *Strad* magazine described the Amernet as “...a group of exceptional technical ability.” The Amernet’s performance schedule has taken the quartet across the Americas and to Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Their current season includes tours throughout Europe and Latin America as well as the premieres of several new works for quartet and return engagements throughout the U.S. and Israel.

They have collaborated with prominent artists and ensembles including the Tokyo and Ying quartets as well as Gary Hoffman, Ida Kavafian, Anthony McGill, Sherrill Milnes and Michael Tree. The quartet has appeared at major festivals around the world, including Cervantino, San Miguel de Allende, Aviv (Israel), and Colima (Mexico). In Germany, a critic commented that their playing was “fascinating, with flawless intonation, extraordinary beauty of sound, virtuosic brilliance and homogeneity of ensemble.” (*Nürnberger Nachrichten*). The Amernet’s U.S. engagements have included the Tilles Center, Caramoor and the Kennedy Center. The Amernet has also appeared as a solo quartet with the Cincinnati Symphony and Alan Gilbert. Earlier in their career, the Amernet won the gold medal at the Tokyo International Music Competition before being named first prize winners of the Banff International String Quartet Competition.

The Amernet has always been committed to the music of our time and has premiered works from leading composers, including John Corigliano, John Harbison, Toshi Ichijanagi, Bernard Rands, Morton Subotnick, Chinary Ung and Robert Xavier Rodríguez. The Amernet has made many recordings, and the group actively advocates for neglected works of the past and aims to enliven the concert experience through its innovative programming.

Mezzo Soprano Rachel Calloway brings versatility and compelling insight to stages worldwide. Her work has been praised by the New York Times for “penetrating clarity” and “considerable depth of expression” and by Opera News for her “adept musicianship and dramatic flair.” A dedicated interpreter of new music, she has premiered hundreds of solo works and works with chamber ensembles.

Performer Biographies

She has appeared with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, the BAM Next Wave Festival and the Lincoln Center Festival. Ms. Calloway made her European operatic debut as Mrs. Grose in *The Turn of the Screw* at Opéra de Reims, Athénée Théâtre Louis-Jovet (Paris), and Opéra de Lille. She has performed with conductor Lorin Maazel at the Castleton Festival in Virginia, and at Opera Philadelphia, Tulsa Opera, Central City Opera, Gotham Chamber Opera, The PROTOTYPE Festival and the Glimmerglass Festival. Ms. Calloway holds degrees from The Juilliard School (BM) and Manhattan School of Music (MM). She serves on the faculty of the University of South Carolina, and her artistry can be heard on Albany Records, Tzadik Records, BCMF Records, and Toccata Classics.

Music by **Robert Xavier Rodríguez** (b. 1946) has been performed by conductors such as Sir Neville Marriner, Antal Dorati, Eduardo Mata, James DePriest, Sir Raymond Leppard, Keith Lockhart, Andrew Litton and Leonard Slatkin and by such organizations as the New York City Opera, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Vienna Schauspielhaus, Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Vienna Schauspielhaus, Israel Philharmonic, Mexico City Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra and the Seattle, Houston, Dallas, Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, Baltimore, St. Louis, National, Boston and Chicago Symphonies. He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Goddard Lieberman Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Prix Lili Boulanger and the Prix de Composition Prince Pierre de Monaco. Rodríguez has served as Composer-in-Residence with the San Antonio Symphony and the Dallas Symphony. Twenty CDs featuring his music have been recorded (1999 Grammy nomination), and his music is published exclusively by G. Schirmer. He is Professor of Music at The University of Texas at Dallas, where he holds an Endowed Chair of Art and Aesthetic Studies and is Director of the Musica Nova Ensemble.

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