

Leo Brouwer, a Cuban and a multi-talented musical polymath, places a high value on the quality of imagination in composition, and in this work he certainly demonstrates that belief. **El Decameron Negro** is inspired by three ballads on African stories, collected in the early 20th-century by the anthropologist and writer Leo Frobenius. The title is clearly borrowed from Bocaccio's *Decameron*, the great 14th-century collection of fictitious tales. Brouwer says of the work: "The main story is about a great warrior who wants to be a musician. Expelled from his tribe and separated from his loved one, he wanders in the mountains. When the tribe began to lose every battle, they begged him to lead them to fight with them again. He won every war and then returned to the mountains with his love." *-cm*

On a summer evening in 2006, shortly after I had returned from a tour of the first **albus/ater** concert, Christophor and I initially spoke about a musical setting of book VI of Virgil's *Aeneid*. After nearly five years, I am happy to see the first act of this project come to fruition. In this performance, I have attempted to restore the educated pronunciation of Latin as it would have been spoken during the Golden Age of Roman literature (i.e. a period roughly spanning the last half of the first century BC and the first half of the first century AD; the time of prose writers Cicero, Julius Caesar, Livy, Varro and Sallust, and poets Virgil, Ovid and Horace). For this, I am indebted to W. Sidney Allen's *Vox Latina: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Classical Latin*.

Our musical setting of this Roman epic is an act of double fantasy. Neither the epic nor its subject can be grounded in musical reality, for there remains no evidence of Roman music (only musical instruments) and the music of the distant Trojan past can scarcely be imagined. To bridge this impossible distance, the music is an amalgam of contemporary and historical signifiers and distortions which envelope the sonic trace of Roman reality retained by the recitation of the classical Latin text. The guitar is tuned in a creatively-conceived just intonation, hinting at the tunings of the ancient Greeks. This intonation appears most clearly with the voice of Aeneas as a symbol of his purity and perfection. By contrast, the distortion created by the equal-tempered fret positions creates a haze around the quotations of historical repertoire which appear in the fourth scene. As Aeneas likens himself to Orpheus, the guitar-as-lute sounds a fragment of Francesco Landini's *Solace non vano*, one of the earliest extant references to Orpheus in music. Under the Sibyl's response is a quotation of Claudio Monteverdi's *Orfeo*—a parallel scene in which Speranza (Monteverdi's sibyl) repeats Dante's admonition to all who enter the underworld: "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here". The preparations of the guitar provide another layer of distortion to this trans-historical imagination, turning the guitar into a percussion ensemble whose cyclic repetitions echo the incarnations of possession ritual music known around the world.

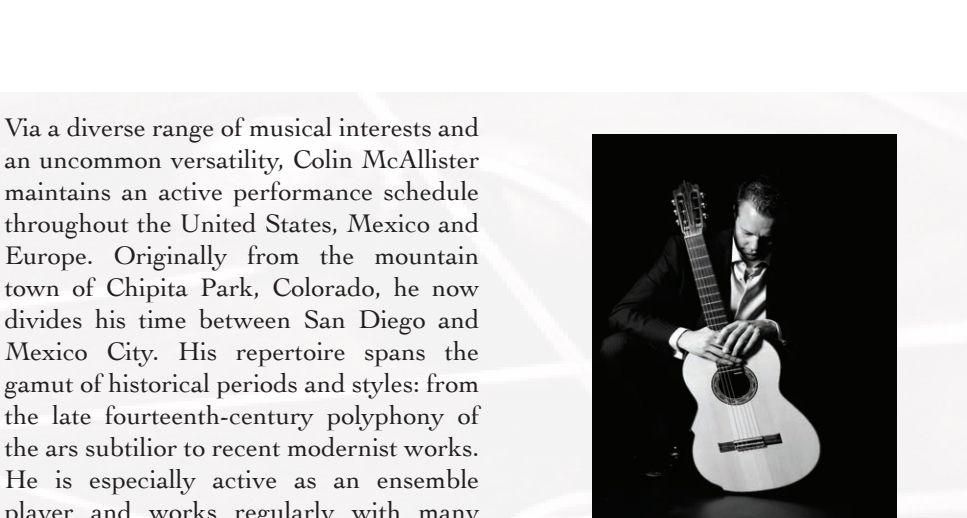
PROGRAM	
albus	
Citlatepetl Vertex [2011]*	Matthew Burtner
21 Grupos [1999]	Miguel Ordóñez
Ritmico	
Elegía	
Tocata	
Intermission	
ater	
Carmina obscura : A garland of 14th & 15th century polyphony	
Un Lion Say	Anon, arr. McAllister
Dulces Exuviae	Marbrianus de Orto, arr. Adler
Puis que je sui fumeaux	Johannes Simon Hasprois, arr. McAllister
Perchè cangiato è 'l mondo	Bartolino da Padova, arr. Christian
En Nul Estat	Goscalch, arr. McAllister
Aeneas in the Underworld [2010-11]*	Christopher Adler
Act I: The Caves of Cumae	
Scene 1: The Caves of Cumae	
Scene 2: The Prayer of Aeneas	
Scene 3: The Prophecy	
Scene 4: The Golden Bough	
El Decameron Negro [1981]	Leo Brouwer
El Arpa del Guerrero	
La Huida de Los Amantes por el Valle de los Ecos	
Balada de la Doncella Enamorada	

The first act precedes Aeneas' entry into the underworld. The Trojan Hestia has arrived on the stark, rocky shores of Cumae, a volcanic region to the northwest of modern day Naples, Italy. The caves of Cumae are home to the sibyl, the female mystic prophet who will foretell Aeneas' founding of Latium and serve as his guide through the underworld. Scenes one, two and three are a concert-entation of the sibyl's ecstatic possession ritual, in which the god Apollo speaks through her. In the midst of the increasingly wild and powerful ritual, Aeneas prays to know and be assured of his god-granted fate. Upon completion of the ritual, Aeneas asks but one more favor of the sibyl: to guide him through the underworld for a chance to see again his father Anchises, who had died earlier in their voyage. She accedes, requiring of Aeneas to obtain the golden bough, a miraculous token which will yield only to him (like King Arthur's sword and Lord Rama's bow) and which will assure his passage across the river Styx.

The story of how the Trojan hero Aeneas leaves Troy after its capture by the Greeks and, after many trials, arrives in Italy to begin a settlement that is destined to develop into the Roman nation. It borrows elements from both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer. Book VI describes the katabasis, or descent into the underworld (cf. Odyssey XI), where, after traversing the darker regions of the world below with the Sibyl, Aeneas converses with the shade of his father Anchises in Elysium and is shown a pageant of the great Romans who in future days will establish the Roman Empire. After completing the *Eclouges* (37 B.C.) and the *Georgics* (29 B.C.), he spent the last ten years of his life working on the Aeneid, which was published posthumously. He died at Brundisium in 19 B.C.

Aeneas in the Underworld, Act I
Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro) was born in 70 B.C., during the sunset of the Roman Republic. Numerous settings of the **Dulces Exuviae** (Dido's lament from the fourth book of the *Aeneid*) were made during the Renaissance, but this one by the Franco-Flemish composer Martinus de Orto was one of the earliest, and contains extensive chromaticism. To complete this "garland" I have included a madrigal by Bartolino de Padova taken from the Squarcialupi Codex, the largest primary source of the 14th century Italian trecento. The arrangements were done by myself and two friends, Christopher Adler and Bryan Christian. *- cm*

Nul Estat) are ballades published in the Chantilly Codex [c. 1395], the most significant document of the ars subtilior – a movement centered in Avignon during the Great Schism of the Roman Catholic Church. The composers and performers of this music revealed in refined notation, opaque texts and a high degree of rhythmic complexity. These works were likely produced and enjoyed by a small audience of specialists, and the innovations of these pieces (especially in the arena of rhythm) were not fully realized until the later twentieth century.



and compositions are published by Les Productions d’Oz.

Highlights for the 2010-2011 season include albus/ater (a solo tour featuring new works by Christopher Adler and Matthew Burtner), the XVII Festival Hispanoamericano de Guitarra, concertos in Illinois and San Diego, NOISE at the Festival Internacional Chihuahua, the Fifth SoundON Festival of Modern Music, a Colorado tour with the Sonora Chamber Ensemble, and releases of new CDs by Christopher Burns, Peter Edwards and Stuart Saunders Smith. Colin earned the Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of California, San Diego in 2004.

Carmina obscura : A garland of 14th & 15th century polyphony
This fanciful title is mine, merely designed to present together a group of short polyphonic pieces from the interesting epoch bridging late Medieval and early Renaissance music. Obscura (like so many other words in Latin) is pregnant with manifold meaning. I use it here in the sense of "unpublished, not open, secretive". Three of these pieces (Un Lion Say, Puis que je sui Fumeaux and En

Miguel Ordóñez had his first experiences as a guitar player through rock and jazz, and was later trained systematically as a performer at Mexico's National School of Music. The title of his work **21 Grupos** has a peculiar origin. In the early 1980s a competition of rock bands was held in Mexico City, and the prize for the first 21 groups was to make a record. This old LP record was titled **21 rock groups**, and the title of the guitar piece is a personal homage paid by Ordóñez to that event in particular and to rock in a more general manner. The first movement of the work, Ritmico, is characterized by the use of successive tonal centers and a propulsive rhythm. The Elegía - strongly influenced by the guitar works of the Paraguayan Augustin Barrios Mangore – is a contemporary movement in which resonance plays a fundamental role. The final movement is faithful to the outgoing, forceful character of the Tocata, with the indispensable undercurrent of instrumental virtuos-

live guitarist and audience. *- mb*
mance could feature a team on the mountain, sending sounds in real time into a concert hall for a track and the piece would be performed as Denali Vertex. Further, the piece is designed to use the Denali in Alaska for example, sounds from that expedition could be substituted into the electronic adding different sounds in place of those recorded on Citadelpetl. If a performer wished to climb in anticipation of future adventures and performances, the piece is intended to be recomposed by

ing for the vertex (In Latin, "vertex" means the summit or highest point).
minimal harmonic/rhythmic framework, that creates grid-like patterns the guitar climbs, as if reach-point or vertex within a larger field of potential paths. The acoustic guitar part is supported by a surface from a noise texture created from 200 noise generators, as if the adventure were a meeting each have an analog in the electro-acoustic part. The sounds of the mountaineering adventure axes, and the numbing blasts of sub-zero wind. The mountaineering sounds and the acoustic guitar hear footsteps on snow and rock, voices, the movement of equipment such as harnesses, rope and untreated real-time mountaineering sounds are woven into the electronics of the composition. We his team ascended the mountain carrying recording equipment to document the adventure. The de Cruzaba), the highest mountain in Mexico and the second tallest volcano in the world. He and for guitarist and mountaineer Colin McAllister. In December 2010 Colin climbed Citadelpetl (Pico **Citlatepetl Vertex** (2011) for guitar, mountaineering sounds and electro-acoustics was composed

PROGRAM NOTES	
albus ~a ~um, a. (compar. ~ior, superl. ~issimus, according to VAR.L.8.75 [cf. Umb. alfu, sab. alpum, Gk. alphos]	ater atra atrum, a. compar. atrior. [Sub.] forms: compar. ἄελ2.26.14, 2.30.11. <i>ΝΒ</i> . The word is used emotively, esp. by poets; and meanings such as 'dark', 'funereal', 'ill-omened', 'terrible' merge into one another in many instances.
1 White, light-coloured. b ~ae ffusiones, ~i menses, etc., leucorrhoea. c ~um opus, stucco work; plumbum ~um tin. δ uncoloured, plain.	1 Black, dark-coloured; (h)olus atrum, alexander(s), horse-parsley, Smyrnum sesatium (see ὄσφος). b having black or dark skin or hair, dark-coloured; also, sunburnt, dark-skinned. c in prov. exprs., contrasted w. albus, etc.)
2 Made white, whitened; clad in white.	2 Devoid of light; a (of clouds, etc.) eta dark, thick black. b (of woods) dark, black colour. c waves the sun, the sky, etc.) bright, shining white
3 Transparent, clear, colourless. b (of light)	3 (of night) darkness, etc. m. b. c) thick, black, clear; (also transf. of winds or stars).
(applied to clear, lucid statement).	3 (of light) from winds etc. b whitened, discoloured. b Dark, black, food.
4 a Light-skinned, fair, whiter than ~us	4 Displour, stained; sordid, squalid. b Discoloured with bruises, 'black and blue'. c (applied to bile, regarded as a morbid symptom and as the cause of ill-temper)
aterne sit nescire and sine., not to know a person from Adam'; (masc. as sb.) a white man. b (applied to varieties or species of plants, etc., light, white, silver: populus ~a,	5 (of fires, flames, light, etc.) Smoky, murky, smouldering. b (spec. of the fire of a funeral pyre; cf. senses 7a and 8) δ (of ashes, etc.) blackened with fire, charred.
white poplar, abele, spina ~a, white thorn	6 (as the colour that denotes disapproval, etc.) Black. b (relig.) ater or atra dies, a black, i.e. unlucky or ill-omened, day; poet., of the day of death).
hawthorn; uitis ~a, white briony. c (of wine	7 a Black or dark (as being associated with funerals, mourning, etc.), funereal; wearing black. b black, dark, or dusky (as an ep. applied to death, esp. personified, or things connected with it).
or vinegar) white. δ (applied to unripe or green olives).	7 a Black or dark (as being associated with funerals, mourning, etc.), funereal; wearing black. b black, dark, or dusky (as an ep. applied to death, esp. personified, or things connected with it).
5 White with age, grey; (also poet., of age).	

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS: AENEAS IN THE UNDERWORLD

Scene 1: The Caves of Cumae

VI: 1-12
Sic fatur lacrimans, classique immittit habenas
et tandem Euboicis Cumarum adlabitur oris.
Obvertunt pelago proras; tum dente tenaci
ancora fundabat navis et litora curvae.
praetextunt puppes. Juvenum manus emicat ardens
litus in Hesperium; quaerit pars semina flammae
abstrusa in venis silicis, pars densa ferarum
tectata rapit silvas inventaque flumina monstrat.
At pius Aeneas arces quibus altus Apollo
praesidet horrendaeque procul secreta Sibyllae,
antrum immane, petit, magnam cui mentem animumque
Delius inspirat vates aperitque futura.

VI: 37-54.1
non hoc ista sibi tempus spectacula poscit;
nunc grege de intacto septem mactare juvencos
praestiterit, totidem lectas ex more bidentis
talibus adfata Aeneas (nec sacra morantur
jussa viri) Teucros vocat alta in templa sacerdos.
Excisum Euboicae latus ingens rupis in antrum,
quo lati ducunt aditus centum, ostia centum
unde ruunt totidem voces, responsa Sibyllae.
Ventum erat ad limen, cum virgo "Poscere fata
tempus" ait; "deus...ecce deus!" Cui talia fanti
ante fores subito non vultus, non color unus,
non comptae mansere comae; sed pectus anhelum,
et rabie fera corda tument, maiorque videri
nec mortale sonans, adflata est numine quando
jam propiore dei. "Cessas in vota precēsque,
Tros" ait "Aenea?" Cessas? Neque enim ante dehiscent
attonitae magna ora domus." Et talia lata
conticuit.

Scene 2: Aeneas' Prayer

VI: 56
"Phoebe, gravis Trojae semper miserate labores,
VI: 62
hac Trojana tenus fuerit fortuna secuta.

VI: 65.3-68
Tuque, O sanctissima vates,
praescia venturi, da (non indebita posco
regna meis fati) Latio considerare Teucros
errantisque deos agitataque numina Trojae."

So he declares as he weeps. Then he lets the fleet run under full sail,
Finally putting ashore at Euboea's colony, Cumae.
Prows veer round to face seaward; then anchors secure all the vessels
fast to the land with the bite of their teeth. Curved sterns add a patterned
fringe to the seashore. A handful of youths, blazing eager,
flashes ashore onto Twilight's Land. Some strike for the dormant
seeds of a flame in a flint vein; others tear off into forests,
wildlife's dense-roofed homes, find streams, point out their locations.
Righteous Aeneas, though, heads for the citadel's heights where Apollo
rules, and towards a huge cave, the secluded haunt of the Sibyl.
She sends a shiver through distant hearts. For the seer of Delos
breathes into her the great force of his mind, disclosing the future.

'Your casual sightseeing isn't what this occasion demands. You'd do rather better
to slaughter seven young bulls from a virgin herd, a like number of young ewes
chosen as rite prescribes.' Once she's spoken this way to Aeneas,
no time's lost, Men ready the offerings demanded. The priestess
summons the Teucrians into the depths of her towering temple.
Mined from a Euboean cliff's broad flank is a cavern of vast size.
Into it lead a full hundred broad-shanked shafts, a full hundred
mouths; out spills the same tally of voices: the Sibyl's responses.
So, when they came to an entrance, the virgin exclaimed: 'Now's the moment:
Ask for the statements of god. See the god, look, the god's here!' While speaking,
facing the doors, she abruptly transformed: her expression, her colour
totally altered. Her hair sprang loose, gasped struggles to draw breath
shuddered her chest. Heart, lungs puffed huge in her bestial madness.
Looming much larger in size, no longer sounding just human,
bellowed by god's spirit, nearer now: 'Have you stopped your devotions,
Trojan Aeneas?' she cried. 'Have you stopped praying? Think about this then!
Not till you pray will the dumbstruck mouths of the great dwelling open.'
This said, she lapsed into silence.

'Phoebus, you've always shown pity for Troy and her burdens of suffering.
Let our Trojan luck pursue us no further!

And you too, holiest priestess,
you know the future beforehand. Permit Teucer's sons and the vagrant
gods and uprooted spirits of Troy to resettle in Latium.
What I request is merely the kingdom my destiny owes me.

Scene 3: The Prophecy

VI: 77-101
At Phoebi nondum patiens immanis in antro
bacchatur vates, magum si pectore possit
excussisse deum; tanto magis ille fatigat
os rabidum, fera corda domans, fingitque premento.
Ostia jamque domus patuere ingentia centum
sponte sua vatisque ferunt responsa per auras:
"O tandem magnis pelagi defuncte periclis
(sed terrae graviora manent), in regna Lavini
Dardanidae venient (mitte hanc de pectore curam),
sed non et venisse volent. Bella, horrida bella
et Thybrim multo spumantem sanguine cerno.
Non Simois tibi nec Xanthus nec Dorica castra
defuerint; alius Latio jam partus Achilles,
natus et ipse dea; nec Teucris addita Juno
usquam aberit, cum tu supplex in rebus egenis
quas gentis Italum aut quas non oraveris urbes!
Causa mali tanti conjunx iterum hospita Teucris
externique iterum thalami.
Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito
qua tua te fortuna sinet. Via prima salutis,
quod minime reris, Graja pandetur ab urbe."
Talibus ex adyto dictis Cumaea Sibylla
horrendas canit ambages antroque remugit,
obscuris vera involvens: ea frena furenti
concutit et stimulos sub pectore vertit Apollo.

Scene 4: The Golden Bough

VI: 119-123
"si potuit manis accersere conjugis Orpheus
Thracia fretus cithara fidibusque canoris,
si fratrem Pollux alterna morte redemit
itque reditque viam totiens. Quid Thesea, magnum
quid memorem Alciden? Et mi genus ab Jove summo"

VI: 135-143
"et insano juvat indulgere labori
accipe quae peragenda prius. Latet arbore opaca
aureus et foliis et lento vimine ramus,
Junoni infernae dictus sacer; hunc tegit omnis
lucus et obscuris claudunt convallibus umbrae.
Sed non ante datur telluris operta subire
auricomos quam qui decerperit arbore fetus.
Hoc sibi pulchra suum ferri Proserpina munus
instituit."

Text: Oxford Classical Texts, ed. R.A.B. Mynors

The prophet, monstrous still, isn't broken in yet to the bridle of Phoebus.
Rather, as if Bacchus ruled her, she rages around in the cavern,
hoping to buck the huge god from her breast. But he wearies her froth-flecked
mouth even more, as he tames her heart's wildness, and shapes her with pressure.
Now all hundred mouths of the shrine fling open their portals,
willingly bearing the seer's oracular words through the breezes:
'You who've at last passed on, with success, beyond perils of salt sea-
though greater dangers await you on land – the Dardanians will enter
into the realms of Lavinium. Dismiss your concerns on this issue!
But: they will also wish they had never arrived. I see warfare,
hideous warfare, the Tiber frothing with torrents of bloodshed.
Simois, Xanthus, the Dorian camp: there'll be features to match them,
even another Achilles is now born for Latium. He's also
son of a goddess. There's also the Teucrians' incubus, Juno,
she'll haunt you every day, everywhere. Which of all Italy's peoples,
which cities won't you approach for assistance, a destitute suppliant?
Once more the cause of such evil's a wife, who'll be hostess to Teucrians,
Once more a foreign bridal affair.
Don't give way to these evils, but move the more boldly against them,
turn any way that your fortune permits. The first pathway to safety,
one you anticipate least, will emerge from a Greek city's portals.'
Fearsome, ambiguous words such as these are the Sibyl of Cumae's
song from her sanctum. She rolls up the truth in obscurity's riddles,
rumbling the cavern with echoes. Apollo shakes hard on the bridal's
reins as she raves, and he's raking her breast with his spurs to control her.

'Orpheus found, in the resonant strings of his Thracian lyre,
power to conjure his dead wife's ghost back into existence;
Pollux brought back his brother by sharing his death and so often
treading, retreading this path – one could also add Theseus and mighty
Hercules. Why not me? I too claim descent from Almighty Jupiter.'

'If it's your pleasure to wanton in labours of madness,
grasp what you must do first. On a dense, dark tree lurks a hidden
bough, and its leaves and its pliable, willowy stem are all golden,
sacred, they say, to the underworld's Juno. It's masked by the forest,
Dank shadows lock it inside a hollow cwm of protective concealment.
No one's permitted descent beneath earth's deep mantle without first
harvesting this gold-tressed live growth from the tree where it's nurtured.
This is the gift you must steal, fair Proserpina rules, as her tribute.

translation: Frederick Ahl (Oxford, 2007)

