

Intimate Gatherings Cuarteto Latinoamericano Latin chamber musicians bring unique sound to Rudder

BY SUZANNE BRABECK
The Battalion

Intimate gatherings, for most of the college-aged demographic, do not involve string quartets except in the most drastic need-for-sphere situations.

The Cuarteto Latinoamericano, Latin chamber ensemble, is coming to Rudder Theater tonight as the first "Intimate Gatherings" performance.

The MSC Opera and Performing Arts Society (OPAS) bring violinists Alvaro and Aron and cellist Alvaro, who are all brothers, and violinist Montiel to Texas A&M to provide an outlet for students who enjoy both the symphony and classical music.

Jeremy Byrd, president of MSC OPAS and a senior psychology major, said this performance will be a quality small-venue program.

"The quartet will perform in Rudder Theater, which holds about 30 people," Byrd said.

"The quartet will be especially interesting to those students who are interested in string instruments."

Cuarteto Latinoamericano has been around since 1981 and has performed on most mass-media venues, including radio, television and live concerts.

Cuarteto Latinoamericano is going to be the "ground-breaker" for a new OPAS program called Intimate Gatherings.

Sara Peeples, director of public relations for OPAS and a junior accounting major, said the new series will bring the audience closer to the performers. There has never been an OPAS performance in the theater, but OPAS hopes its in-

timate setting will be fresh and new to the organization.

"This performance is also unique because after their performance, there will be a 30-minute question-and-answer period," Peeples said.

Byrd said a mediator will regulate the discussion.

Byrd said it is often hard to coordinate when companies can perform for OPAS because of their hectic schedules.

"This time things just nicely fell into place," Byrd said. "We were trying to book an act to reflect National Hispanic Heritage month, and this time it worked out nicely."

The MSC Program Advisory Committee was in charge of deciding which performances would come to year and said this group stood out because of their positive reviews. Fanfare magazine said of the group, "It has a clean, tight ensemble, startling luxuriance of tone and the delightful collective habit of playing cleanly on pitch."

The group also was praised by many other newspapers, including the San Francisco *Chronicle* who described the quartet as a "first-rate ensemble of passionate temperament."

As the quartet has spread its music across the continents, it has captured many accomplishments and praises.

Its first CD containing three quartets by Ginastera won the *New York Times* Critic's Choice for 1989 by the *New York Times*, and have since produced 14 more CDs.

"The performances are exceptional," Fanfare magazine said. "The Cuarteto Latinoamericano seems to own this music. It plays with enormous precision and pas-



PHOTO COURTESY OF CUARTETO LATINOAMERICANO

Cuarteto Latinoamericano will be performing tonight at Rudder Theater

sion. I can't imagine better interpretations."

Since October is Hispanic Heritage Month, it is only fitting to highlight a well-known Latin ensemble to perform for the Texas A&M crowd.

For students from large metropolitan cities, cultural programming may be reminiscent of home. However, this programming also serves as an opportunity for those students who have never had the chance or desire to try something new or for those who came from small towns without the resources to attract such a world-renowned organization.

"We are trying to get the word out to all students about the program, but we have made a special attempt to invite Latin-American

groups, Spanish classes and other Hispanic organizations to the performance," Byrd said.

Like most college students who have two homes, so does Cuarteto Latinoamericano.

The group holds two teaching jobs, one at the Centro Nacional de las Artes in Mexico City and one at the Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. The group, which has been employed by the Carnegie Mellon for 12 years, was chosen for its magnificent skill and range.

Houston Newsweekly magazine also praised the group, saying, "they play with more fire, precision, and taste than their North American peers. [They are] one of the most satisfying performances of Schubert's music that I've heard."

CNN's Millennium series analyzes past thousand years

NEW YORK (AP) — If you do the math on "Millennium," CNN's hour-long portrait of the past thousand years, one is struck by all that must be missing.

Figure it out: "Millennium" has less than 30 seconds to cover each year's global happenings from AD 1000 to the present. Is this a documentary series or a fool's errand?

If you tune in its premiere Sunday at 10 p.m. EDT, Millennium will surprise you.

Though it was spurred by millennium mania, this would be a fascinating series in any year. It is an ambitious project with no stake in being all-inclusive, just compelling. And how time flies when you are having fun.

In five vignettes each hour (that is, per century), Millennium seizes on big stories, personalities and ideas, then presents them with majesty and style. Actor Ben Kingsley narrates, but the words take a back seat to the visuals and music.

"It's intended to be a pleasure for the eye and the ear," British filmmaker Sir Jeremy Isaacs, who shared executive producer duties with Pat Mitchell, president of Time Inc.-CNN Productions, said. "It's history as a magic carpet ride into the past."

Here is the itinerary for the first edition, "Century of the Sword: The Eleventh Century":

"It's history as a magic carpet ride into the past."

— Pat Mitchell
president, Time Inc.
CNN Productions

— The world's preeminent civilization, China, which had innovations other cultures hadn't even imagined: printing, paper money, gunpowder and kites that carried humans aloft. Not to mention what was perhaps the world's first restaurant (it specialized in take-out chicken).

— The vast expanse of Islam from India to Spain, flourishing particularly in Cordoba, Europe's largest city, which was home to more than 1,000 mosques.

— India, whose towering spiritualism, scholarship and wealth were undermined by its indifference to neighboring cultures and their advances.

— Jerusalem, where pilgrims flocked from all over Europe seeking salvation as they anticipated the thousandth anniversary of Christ's crucifixion in 1033 — and perhaps the end of the world.

— And imperial seclusion in Japan as chronicled by Sei Shonagon, a lady-in-waiting in the royal court, in her diary *The Pillow Book*. A splendid sanctuary of friskiness that makes the Playboy Mansion seem like a flophouse, here no one ever seemed to get a full night's sleep — or be burdened with a full night's bedfellow. Declares *The Pillow Book*: "One's attachment to a man depends largely on the elegance of his leave-taking."

Millennium will continue each Sunday, devoted to a successive hundred years with a loosely applied theme (Century of the Scythe, Telescope, Furnace, Globe). It concludes Dec. 12 with, natch, the 20th century.

Along the way, a special Web site (CNN.com/1000) will offer supplementary material for viewers whose curiosity is piqued by glimpses of Genghis Kahn, those enormous sailing vessels of Admiral Zheng, the exquisite churches carved from an Ethiopian moun-

tainside, or Pierre de Maupertuis, who almost 300 years ago led an expedition to the Arctic Circle to determine Earth's precise shape.

"We know our own history best," Isaacs said, acknowledging that narcissism and proximity distort one's view of the past. "But Millennium tells of other histories, of people all over the world who in the last thousand years influenced those around them."

In doing so, Millennium adds up to 50 illuminating sketches.

Does it add up to anything more sweeping? Can any grand conclusions about humankind's past be reached?

"This was never intended to be a series that drew a line through things," Isaacs said. He can point to three concepts binding these 1,000 years.

"First, science overtakes religion as an explanation of how the world works.

"Second, you see the balance of world interest and cultural energy moving from the East to the West."

"And, third, the world's piecemeal knowledge of itself becomes a general awareness. Once, few people knew what life was like over the next mountain or beyond the sea."

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