The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires
Friday, August 3, 2012 at 6:30PM
Saturday, August 4, 2012 at 7:30PM

Harris Theater for Music and Dance
Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus
Carlos Kalmar, Conductor
Chee-Yun, Violin
Sarah Ponder, Mezzo-Soprano

GINASTERA
Dances from Estancia, Op. 8a
The Workers of the Land
Dance of the Wheat
The Cattle Men
Danza final: Malambo

PIAZZOLLA
The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires
Spring
Summer
Autumn
Winter

CHEE-YUN

INTERMISSION (SATURDAY ONLY)

FALLA
The Three-Cornered Hat

SARAH PONDER
Violinist CHEE-YUN, born in Seoul, Korea, was the winner of the 1989 Young Concert Artists International Auditions and a 1990 Avery Fisher Career Grant. She performs regularly with the world’s foremost orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, St. Petersburg Camerata, London Philharmonic, NHK Symphony (Japan), Haifa Symphony, MDR Radio Leipzig and the Toronto, Pittsburgh, Houston, Seattle, Pittsburgh, Atlanta and National symphony orchestras. Her career highlights include appearances at Kennedy Center’s “Salute to Slava” gala honoring Mstislav Rostropovich, the Mostly Mozart Festival’s tour to Japan, a performance with Michael Tilson Thomas in the inaugural season of Carnegie Hall’s Zankel Hall, and the United States premiere of Penderecki’s Violin Sonata No. 2 with pianist Barry Douglas. Firmly committed to chamber music, Chee-Yun has toured with Music from Marlboro and appears frequently with the Spoleto USA, Ravinia, Aspen, Bravo! Vail Valley, La Jolla, Caramoor, Green Music, Santa Fe and Bridgewater festivals in the United States, as well as the Great Mountains Music Festival in South Korea, Clandeboye Festival in Northern Ireland, opera Theatre and Music Festival in Lucca, Italy, Colmar Festival in France, Beethoven and Penderecki festivals in Poland and Kirishima Festival in Japan. Her recordings appear on the Naxos, Denon and Satirino labels. In 2007, she was appointed Artist-in-Residence and Professor of Violin at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Chee-Yun plays the Stradivarius “Ex-Strauss” violin (Cremona, 1708), which is on loan through the generous efforts of the Samsung Foundation of Culture of Korea and the Stradivari Society of Chicago.

Mezzo-soprano SARAH PONDER frequently performs as both a soloist and ensemble singer with Chicago’s finest musical organizations. Favorite recent performances include a recital with the Musicians Club of Women “Award Winners in Concert” Series, the role of Ino in Handel’s Semele, and solo appearances with Maestro Riccardo Muti as part of her continued work as a Teaching Artist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s outreach programs. In addition to her performing and outreach work, Sarah also maintains a large private studio.

DANCES FROM ESTANCIA, OP. 8A (1941)
Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)

Estancia is scored for piccolo, flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, percussion, piano and strings. The performance time is 13 minutes. The Grant Park Orchestra first performed these Dances on July 20, 1960, with Milton Katims conducting.

The career of Alberto Ginastera, Argentina’s most famous and widely performed composer, was divided between composition and education, and in this latter capacity he held posts at leading conservatories and universities in Argentina and at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. His musical works, many written on American commissions, include three operas, two ballets, six concertos, eleven film scores, eight orchestral works, various vocal and choral compositions, and
much music for chamber ensembles and piano. For his contributions to music, he was honored with many awards, including memberships in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Lincoln Kirstein, director of the American Ballet Caravan, became familiar with Ginastera’s first ballet, *Panambi*, during the company’s tour of South America on 1941. Recognizing the young composer’s genius, Kirstein commissioned from Ginastera *Estancia*, a stage work for the Ballet Caravan with a scenario based on Argentine country life. Though the company was disbanded the following year before it had performed the new work, a suite of dances from the score was given on May 12, 1943 at Buenos Aires’ Teatro Colón which confirmed Ginastera’s position as a leading figure in Argentine musical life. (The full ballet was not staged until 1952, at the Colón.) In extracting the suite from *Estancia*, Ginastera omitted the songs for baritone based on texts from the great epic poem of the “gauchesco” literature, *Martin Fierro*, and several pastoral scenes. Except for the gentle second dance, *Danza del trigo* ("Dance of the Wheat"), the symphonic suite, comprising *Los trabajadores agrícolas* ("The Workers of the Land"), *Los peones de hacienda* ("The Cattle Men") and *Danza final: Malambo* ("Final Dance: Malambo"), is brilliant and driving, largely built on short, recurring rhythmic and melodic patterns that accumulate enormous energy.

The preface to the score notes, “The deep and bare beauty of the land, its richness and natural strength, constitutes the basis of Argentine life. This ballet presents various daily aspects of the activities of an ‘estancia’ (Argentine ranch), from dawn to dusk, with a symbolic sense of continuity. The plot of the ballet shows a country girl who at first despises the man of the city. She finally admires him when he proves that he can perform the most rough and difficult tasks of the country.”

**THE FOUR SEASONS OF BUENOS AIRES (1968)**

*Piazzolla’s Four Seasons of Buenos Aires, as arranged by the St. Petersburg composer Leonid Desyatnikov, is scored for strings and solo violin. The performance time is 25 minutes. This is the first performance of this work by the Grant Park Orchestra.*

The greatest master of the modern tango was Astor Piazzolla, born in Mar Del Plata, Argentina, a resort town south of Buenos Aires, in 1921 and raised in New York City, where he lived with his father from 1924 to 1937. Before Astor was ten years old, his musical talents had been discovered by Carlos Gardel, then the most famous of all performers and composers of tangos and a cultural hero in Argentina. At Gardel’s urging, the young Astor returned to Buenos Aires in 1937 and joined the popular tango orchestra of Aníbal Troilo as arranger and bandoneón player. Piazzolla studied classical composition with Alberto Ginastera in Buenos Aires, and in 1954, he wrote a symphony for the Buenos Aires Philharmonic that earned him a scholarship to study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. When Piazzolla returned to Buenos Aires in 1956, he founded his own performing group, and began to create a modern style for the tango that combined elements of traditional tango, Argentinean folk music and contemporary classical, jazz and popular techniques into a “Nuevo Tango” that was as suitable for the concert hall as for the dance floor. Piazzolla toured widely, recorded frequently and composed incessantly until he suffered a stroke in Paris in August 1990. He died in Buenos Aires on July 5, 1992.

Piazzolla realized his electrifying blend of the fire and passion of the traditional tango with the vast expressive resources of modern harmony, texture and sonority in some 750 widely varied works that explore the genre’s remarkable expressive
range, from violent to sensual, from witty to melancholy, from intimate to theatrical. Among his most ambitious concert works is Las Quatro Estaciones Porteñas (“The Four Seasons”), published originally for piano solo in 1968 and later arranged for his own ensemble (he often used one of the movements to open his concerts) and for strings and piano. The four movements, beginning with Spring, are not specifically pictorial, as are Vivaldi’s well-known precedents, but are instead general evocations of the changing seasons in Piazzolla’s native Argentina.

THE THREE-CORNERED HAT (1917, 1919)
Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

The Three-Cornered Hat is scored for pairs of woodwinds plus piccolo and English horn, three horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, piano, celesta and strings. The performance time is 30 minutes. The Grant Park Orchestra first performed selections from the ballet on July 9, 1948, with Alfredo Antonini conducting.

The dazzling Parisian success of Sergei Diaghilev’s Ballet Russe that began in 1909 came to an abrupt halt when the Guns of August tore across Belgium and France to begin World War I in 1914. Diaghilev, Leonide Massine and some of the company took refuge in Switzerland and Spain, while Nijinsky and others fled to America. Diaghilev arranged a season in Spain for 1917, and, always on the prowl for new talent, he took the opportunity to look up a musician Stravinsky had met in Paris in 1910. Stravinsky described his Spanish colleague as “even smaller than myself, and as modest and withdrawn as an oyster... unpityingly religious, and the shyest man I have ever met.” His name was Manuel de Falla.

Falla, a meticulous worker who composed slowly, had completed only a small number of works by 1917 — most notably Nights in the Gardens of Spain, the opera La Vida Breve (“The Brief Life”) and the ballet El Amor Brujo (“Lover, the Magician”) — and he was little known outside his homeland. When Diaghilev and Massine introduced themselves to him in Barcelona, he took them to see a one-act farce set in the early 19th century about the attempted seduction of a miller’s wife by the local governor for which he had provided the music, El corregidor y la molinera (“The Corregidor and the Miller’s Wife”). The script for this “pantomime” was by Gregorio Martinez Sierra, who based it on a short novel by Pedro de Alarcon published in 1874 as El sombrero de tres picos. Alarcon was said to have heard the story in turn from an old goatherd who hired himself out as an entertainer for local weddings and feasts. Of Falla’s score, Massine wrote that it “seemed to us very exciting, and its blend of violence and passion was similar to much of the music of the local folk-dances. Both Diaghilev and I felt that the story and the music offered us the potentials of a full-length ballet.” Falla accepted Diaghilev’s proposal to revise and extend his score for production when the war was over, but gave the provision that he be allowed enough time to study Spanish folk music and dance styles to assure the correct atmosphere for the finished work. It was not until World War I ended that the production of The Three-Cornered Hat could be staged as part of the 1919 London season of the Ballet Russe.

The racy story of the ballet has its roots in the folk traditions of Spain. The curtain rises on the sunny esplanade beside a mill. The miller and his pretty wife are busy about their chores. A stately procession enters carrying the elderly Corregidor (the local magistrate) and his wife. The Corregidor is attracted to the miller’s wife, and slips back after his retinue has left to make his advances. The wife tells her husband to hide and watch her spurn the old man’s attempts at love. She dances a brilliant fandango and further tantalizes him with a bunch of grapes. He chases her, tripped, and becomes
aware of the teasing intrigue between husband and wife. The Corregidor departs, and
the miller and his wife cheerfully resume the fandango.

Part II of the ballet takes place that evening, St. John’s Night. The miller and his
wife are joined in celebration by their neighbors, and together dance the popular
seguidillas. The miller performs a virile farruca. The festivities are interrupted by the
local constabulary, who have come to arrest the miller on a charge trumped up by the
Corregidor to get him out of the way. The Corregidor appears as soon as the miller is
led away, but falls into the millstream as he is pursuing the girl. She runs off in search
of her husband, while the Corregidor removes his sodden clothes, including his three-
cornered hat — the symbol of his office — hangs them on a chair outside the mill, and
jumps into the absent girl’s bed to ward off a chill. Meanwhile, the miller has escaped
from his captors to return home, sees the Corregidor’s discarded clothes and believes
himself betrayed by his wife. Vowing to get even, he exchanges his garments for those
of the official, scribbles on the wall “The wife of the Corregidor is also very pretty,”
and runs off in search of his conquest. The Corregidor emerges from the bedroom to
find only the miller’s clothes. He puts them on just in time for the police, hunting their
escaped prisoner, to arrest him by mistake. The miller’s wife returns, followed by the
miller, and the two are happily reconciled in the joyous final dance while the villagers
toss a straw effigy of the Corregidor in a blanket.

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Dance of the Miller’s Wife

Ole! Ole! Ole! Ole! Ole!
Casadita, Casadita,
cierra con tranca la puerta!
Ole! Ole! Ole! Ole!
Casadita, Casadita,
cierra con tranca la puerta;
Que aunque el diablo esté dormido,
a lo mejor se desperta!
Que aunque , etc.
Ole! Ole! Ole! Ole!

Ole! Ole! Ole! Ole!
Little wife, little wife,
bolt your door!
Ole! Ole! Ole! Ole!
Little wife, little wife,
bolt your door;
the devil may be asleep,
but he awakes when least expected.
The devil, etc.
Ole! Ole! Ole! Ole!

Por la noche canta el cuco
Adviertiendo a los casados
que corran bien los cerrojos
que el diablo está desvelado!
Por la noche canta el cuco —
Cucú! Cucú! Cucú!

Through the night the cuckoo sings
warning husbands
to fix the bolts firmly
for the devil is awake!
Through the night the cuckoo sings —
Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo!

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