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Distinguished Concerts International New York (DCINY) presents Misatango 20th Anniversary in Review

DISTINGUISHED CONCERTS INTERNATIONAL NEW YORK (DCINY) PRESENTS
MISATANGO 20TH ANNIVERSARY

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DISTINGUISHED CONCERTS ORCHESTRA; DISTINGUISHED CONCERTS SINGERS INTERNATIONAL
MARTÍN PALMERI, COMPOSER/CONDUCTOR MAINE FESTIVAL CHORUS
RICHARD NICKERSON, ROBERT WESTERBERG, CO-DIRECTORS; DARRELL MORROW, ACCOMPANIST
STERN AUDITORIUM AT CARNEGIE HALL, NEW YORK, NY APRIL 17, 2016

On April 17, 2016, Distinguished Concerts International New York (DCINY) presented a concert to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the composition of *Misa A Buenos Aires*, more widely known by its subtitle *Misatango: A Tango Mass from Argentina*. What better way to bring in the spring season than with the vibrant, lively sounds of far away Argentina, courtesy of performers from France, Germany, Poland, The Netherlands, Switzerland, and of course, Argentina. Also featured was the Maine Festival Chorus, in what was to be a most enjoyable evening.

The Maine Festival Chorus took the stage for the first half. Led by Co-directors Richard Nickerson and Robert Westerberg, this fine ensemble offered eight works. Mr. Westerberg led the first four works, and Mr. Nickerson, the final four. They wasted no time in announcing their presence in an arresting opener- Williametta Spencer's *At the Rounded Earth's Imagined Corners*. Set to the text of John Donne's Holy Sonnet 7 of the same name, this work captures the essence of Donne's shattering words with consummate skill. It's highly unusual for me to find an opening work as my favorite, but this was far and away the case, in what was simply a first-rate performance. The touching *For the Beauty of the Earth* by Philip Stopford, and *Twilight on the Beach* by Andrew Hurst, a musical rendering of the Maine coast, followed. The last of Mr. Westerberg's set was the joyous *Alleluia* of Paul Basler, with the added talents of French Horn player Justin Drew. Mr. Nickerson took the baton and opened his portion with *Lamentations of Jeremiah* by Z. Randall Stroope. This piece reminds one of Carl Orff's *O Fortuna* from *Carmina Burana* with its driving intensity. *Jenny*



Şahan Arzruni,
Pianist in Review

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by Nick Myers was a heartbreaking song of a lost love that had many in the audience in tears. The poignant Scottish anthem *Caledonia* by Dougie Maclean (arranged by Richard Nickerson) was lovely. Keith Hampton's jubilant *A Shout of Praise* was like a victory lap for this ensemble, and ended their part of the program in triumph.

Some general observations – balance was superb throughout, with a rich sound of middle and lower voices that are often covered by the higher ones. Diction and intonation were spotless. The Maine Festival Chorus is one of the best vocal ensembles I have heard, and I have heard many excellent ones. Congratulations to the singers, and to Mr. Nickerson and Mr. Westerberg!

After intermission, the stage was set for the featured work of the evening, Martín Palmeri's *Misatango*. *As the three hundred plus singers filed onto the stage, I was thinking back to the January 18, 2015 DCINY performance of this work. I had had my doubts about concept of tango music with the Mass (largely fueled by my earlier hearing of another Mass using non-traditional form that I found to be problematic), but was won over in the end. What was of particular interest for me on this occasion was that the composer himself was to conduct.*

*As I wrote in January 2015, Misatango is a six-movement work scored for chorus, string orchestra, bandoneón (for this performance there were three bandoneón players), and mezzo-soprano soloist. Quoting Mr. Palmeri, "...my objective in this composition was to maintain the harmonic language, rhythms, melodic designs, and all the characteristics of the tango within the orchestra score, thus allowing the chorus to have the full liberty to 'just sing the mass.'" It seems to be completely counter-intuitive, but it works, and it works brilliantly. From the quasi-cadenza bandoneón solo that opened the *Kyrie* to the last note of the serene *Agnus Dei*, it was passion-plus that captured the hearts of the audience (who broke convention over and over with boisterous applause between movements).*



As was the case in 2015, the *Credo* was my favorite, but I also found the *Benedictus* to be especially beautiful. Of course, all six movements command attention. Soprano Carla Filipcic Holm was a revelation; her voice soared to the heavens with angelic grace, but she also possessed striking power and intensity. Kudos as well to the three bandoneón players, Daniel Binelli, Emmanuel Trifilio, and Rodolfo Marcelo Zanetti.

After the music of the *Agnus Dei* faded to silence, the audience reacted with a thunderous ovation. Mr. Palmeri then encored a section of the *Credo*, to the delight of all.

Jeffrey Williams for New York Concert Review; New York, NY



by [Jeffrey Williams](#) for New York Concert Review; New York, NY

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