Grade 3

Music for String Orchestra

Danzas Festivas

Mark Contreras Gómez

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INSTRUMENTATION

Violin I 8
Violin II 8
Viola 5
Cello 5
Bass 5
Percussion 1

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Performance Notes

Danzas Festivas is a suite of Latin American music for string orchestra and percussion. This collection presents three genres that encompass a large part of Latin American culture: *Bambuco* (Venezuela and Colombia), *Danzón* (Mexico and Cuba) and the *Pasodoble* (Spain and Latin America). All are genres that have common musical roots, but each took its own path to become enormously different, with distinct rhythms, characteristic instruments, and harmonic and melodic variations that set them apart.

Mi Tiplecito: this *bambuco* from Colombia captures the essence of the Latin American Andes. Made simple and fun for young musicians, it retains its main characteristics: major and minor mode changes, $\frac{6}{8}$ meter, and strummed pizzicato to represent the unmistakable rhythm of the *tiple* (tee-play), a small guitar commonly heard in the *bambuco*.

La Danzonera: the *danzón* from México depicts the orchestras that made the *danzón* famous, filling the dance floors of all of Latin America with fun and peculiar rhythm. Throughout the whole piece you can hear a particular "ostinato" that is traditionally played by the *timbales*. Now played by string instruments, it will make you move your feet!

Olé, Chulapa! This pasodoble is one of the most festive genres orginating from Spain, traditionally heard at the start of a party. Although it is not Latin American, its influence in the culture of these countries is easily heard. In this piece, pizzicato is combined with double stops over constant rhythms in bass that feature prominently in the scoring. Do you want to play with fire? The *pasodoble* is your thing!

About the Composer

Mark Contreras is a violinist, arranger, composer, and pedagogue. His works have been published in Spain, the United States, and Latin America under the signature of prestigious music publishers. Most of his publications focus on the practical initiation and learning of different instruments, including violin, guitar, viola or cello. In these methodologies one can feel the importance of work and practice, the result of more than 20 years of experience as a member of the Venezuelan youth orchestra program, known worldwide as “El Sistema.”

Contreras obtained the title of Superior Violin Professor with the highest qualifications at the Juan José Landaeta National Conservatory in Venezuela. He was a regular member of the Caracas Municipal Symphony Orchestra, where he shared the stage with the most prestigious conductors and soloists in the world. In Spain, obtained a degree in Pedagogy at the National University of Distance Education. He is currently dedicated to teaching full time, an activity he combines with concerts, recordings and the production of new materials.

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Danzas Festivas

1. Mi tiplecito

(Bambuco, Colombia)

Alegre ♩. = 84

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3. Olé Chulapa
(Pasodoble, Spain)



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