

FUN

Intriguing Latin voices in 'Doces Voces'

By Peter Jacobi
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IU's Latin American Music Center is 30 years old. To celebrate, director Ricardo Lorenz put together a program called "Doce Voces, Words and Sounds by Twelve Latin American Artists" as a start to the center's season.

It had been performed Sunday at the IU Art Museum and then was repeated Tuesday in Recital Hall. Lorenz, in a statement prior to the concert, suggested the program be renamed to just "Voces," to "Voices," thereby honoring not only the poets and composers featured but the performers, too.

Indeed, there were some fine performers to handle what seemed at first hearing to be difficult material. And for this viewer, most of what was played amounted to a first hearing. Only *Two Little Serious Pieces*, written by the always interesting Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas shortly before his death in 1940, were familiar fare. And these are delightful, the first an item of languid charm, the second of cheerful cacophony. Five students read the material zestfully, making stretches of it sound like *Threepenny Opera* music with a swing to it. Bowing to audience applause were Keila Garcia (piccolo), Kristen Barton (oboe), Marcela Argeles (clarinet), Miguel Rosario (trumpet), and Julia Cummings (baritone saxophone).

Garcia returned to pair with Bruce Hamilton on the snare drum in Gerardo Dirie's *Soneto del Can*. Dirie, who was present, wrote this manic exposition of chirps and claps and poundings to words by Nelda Nelson-Eaton, the soprano known best hereabouts for her interpretation of John Eaton's works. Her brawny, rangy voice was well-suited for Dirie's potent musical expression, written in 1990.

The other new work on Tuesday's program was Lorenz's *Piedra en la*

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Piedra, a 1991 dreamscape offering eerie combinations of sounds to Kathryn Lukas and her flute, and to Kay Stonefelt on her marimba and vibraphone. The music haunts. The performers managed it splendidly.

Stonefelt had opened the concert with a sensuous and muscle-toning exercise on the bongos, appropriately called *Bong-O*, a 1983 creation of Roberto Sierra.

How different all these from the lyrical, softly dissonant music of Joaquin Nin-Culmell, a composer with an intriguing background. He's an American of Cuban origin

born in 1908 in Berlin who then studied in Paris and Spain. Perhaps all these strains were evident in *Dos Poemas de Jose Marique*. The poems, about love and longing, date to the 15th century. The music is much more contemporary but also reflects a timelessness. It is quite lovely. Angela Malek's soprano, beautifully used and sensitively nuanced, gave full-bodied life to Nin-Culmell's music.

She was partnered by a string quartet which then offered selections from *Cuatro Cancoes*, declamatory, syncopated material written in 1958 by Kilza Setti, a Brazilian composer. The deft performers: Elizabeth Pabon and Lisa Cole (violins), Stacia Spencer (viola), and Nancy Snustad (cello).

Readings from Pablo Neruda, Octavio Paz, Emilio Carballido and Roberto Athayde filled out the program. They were stronger for what they said than for how they were performed but certainly contributed to the impact of the evening.

Perhaps the strongest impact came from one of the quietest moments. Contemporary composer Leo Brouwer's *Paisaje Cubano con Lluvia* recreates rain through four guitars. Gentle rain, then downpour, then the final drips and drops before sunshine: that's what one envisions. The effect is startling and soothing all at once. The musicians who played it deserve to be credited: Dan Quinn, John Linburg, Nick Antonaccio and Igor Kukavica.