

Duo canónico

Written for and dedicated to the Katona Twins, and commissioned in part by the Summer Music Society of Dorset, England.

It is inevitable to write for the guitar and not think about Flamenco. But trying to quote, emulate, or refer directly to--competing with--the stylisitic monument built by the likes of Manitas de Plata, Paco de Lucía, or Tomatito is simply out of the question for me. Interestingly enough, as I went along composing and trying to think only about the notes and rhythms I was choosing, the idea of the two guitars and their various musical materials appearing in the piece in a manner not unlike the way musicians and dancers emerge on a Spanish "tablao" somehow crept in. In Flamenco, so much of the action is delivered in staggered, episodic fashion with only one cathartic burst of unison frenzy reserved for the end, when the "duende" finally appears and completely overwhelms not only the performers, but anyone who is lucky to be present. The sound of hocketing rhythms, the staggered entrances, the constant cat-and-mouse interplay of the two guitars, and--hopefully--the arrival of the elusive "duende" at the end, will surely demonstrate that no matter how hard one can try, the Flamenco spirit is simply too strong to be subdued.

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The Duo Canonico of Mexican composer Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, completed in January, provided a generous, sometimes playful catalog of guitar textures and sounds--and a surprising reminiscence of mid-20th century pointillism.

Wayne Lee Gay, The Star-Telegram Music (Forth-Worth)