

The Providence Mandolin Orchestra
Mark Davis, Director

Hingham Library
November 19, 3:30 PM

I.

Pavan Passamezzo	Peter Philips (1582-1633)
Song of Japanese Autumn	Yasuo Kuwahara (1946-2003)
Song for My Father	Clarice Assad
Latin Sketches	Owen Hartford

II.

Libertango	Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)
Movement #1	Fran Trester
Concierto de Media Luna Recuerdos- Elegia- Danza	Jose Luis Barroso

Program Notes by Robert A. Margo

As a classical instrument, the mandolin has its origins in the eighteenth century, but it was around the turn of the twentieth century that the instrument reached its zenith of popularity in the Old and New Worlds. By World War I interest in the mandolin had largely died out in America, but the instrument retained a passionate following in other countries, particularly Germany and Japan. Beginning in the 1970s the United States has experienced a revival of interest in classical mandolin. The contemporary American mandolin orchestra includes first and second mandolins (tuned like the violin), the mandola (viola), the mandocello (cello), the mandobass (string bass), and classical guitar as harmonic support.

Two of the pieces on this afternoon's program are arrangements for mandolin orchestra. The English composer Peter Philips left his native land in 1582 to avoid persecution as a Catholic. Philips settled in the Netherlands, where he became famous throughout Europe for his vocal and instrumental compositions. One of his best known pieces, "Pavan Passamezzo" is a dance (a "pavan") consisting of a theme plus six variations on a "ground" or bass progression (the "passamezzo"). Originally written for a six-part consort of viols, the work translates beautifully to an ensemble of plucked strings. Astor Piazzolla was one of Argentina's greatest composers of the twentieth century, the inventor of "nuevo tango", and a master performer on the bandoneon. His "Libertango", full of signature driving rhythms, acerbic harmonies and pointed melodies, is skillfully arranged for mandolin orchestra by Alex Timmerman, the conductor of one of Europe's leading ensembles, 'Het Consort'. Next summer Het Consort will visit the United States and perform in concert with the Providence Mandolin Orchestra.

The remaining pieces on the program were originally composed for mandolin orchestra. “Song of Japanese Autumn” by Yasuo Kuwahara (a virtuoso performer and one of the most important Japanese composers) is one of the classics of the modern repertoire while Jose Luis Barroso’s “Concierto de Media Luna” evokes a fiery Spanish atmosphere with its allusions to flamenco. The Providence Mandolin Orchestra has longed maintained an active program of commissioning new works for mandolin ensemble. Clarice Assad is a composer, vocalist, and pianist living in New York City, and the daughter of the celebrated classical guitarist Sergio Assad. Written in honor of Sergio Assad, “Song for My Father” is filled with the subtle harmonies and infectious rhythms of the composer’s native Brazil. Owen Hartford has written numerous pieces over his long tenure with the Orchestra. Featuring soaring melodies and unusual harmonic modulations, “Latin Sketches” was recently premiered by the Orchestra. Francine Trester is Associate Professor of Composition at the Berklee School of Music in Boston. A prolific composer for voice, piano, guitar and other instruments, and a virtuoso violinist, Trester’s music has been performed throughout the world and she has been the recipient of numerous honors and awards. “Movement #1” is the first of her “Three Movements for Mandolin Orchestra” which the Orchestra will perform in its entirety in 2007.

The Providence Mandolin Orchestra was founded by the late Hibbard Perry in 1971. Since then, it has become one of the leading American mandolin ensembles, with regular appearances throughout the Eastern United States, Canada, and Western Europe. With well over two hundred pieces in its repertoire, the Orchestra features a wide range of musical styles from Renaissance dances to Baroque concertos, turn-of-the-century nostalgia, and avant-garde expressions. The group’s unique tonality has inspired exciting new works by Clarice Assad, Will Ayton, Owen Hartford, Eva Kendrick, Barbara Kolb, Robert Martel, Michael Nix, Stephen Funk Pearson, Francine Trester, and many others. The Providence Mandolin Orchestra is under the direction of Mark Davis. Mr. Davis pursues an active career as a solo and ensemble performer, educator, and conductor. Mark Davis directs a multi-level guitar ensemble program at the Wheeler School in Providence RI.

The Providence Mandolin Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the support of the D’Addario Foundation.

“Song of Japanese Autumn,” “Song for My Father,” and “Concierto de Media Luna” are included on the Providence Mandolin Orchestra’s latest recording, “Spectrum”.

Performers: The Providence Mandolin Orchestra

Director: Mark Davis

First Mandolin: Joshua Bell (concertmaster), Michael Cappelli, Yvette Cote, Change Lee, Robert Margo

Second Mandolin: Lynne Bell, Chris Capaldi, Antonio Carlyon, Owen Hartford, Lisa Topakian, Paul Wilde

Mandola: Steve Caddick, Mack Johnston, Will Melton, Gayle Raposa

Mandocello: Duane Golomb, Dan Moore, Matt Synder

Guitar: Mark Armstrong, Christine Chito, Eric Christensen, Beverly Davis

Bass: Gino Cicchetti, Dave Parr