



# SOLI

CHAMBER ENSEMBLE



**MÚSICA, POR UN TIEMPO**

WORKS BY **Kramer Rodríguez Heuser Gardner**



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## THE MUSIC



### **Timothy Kramer: *Cycles & Myths***

Timothy Kramer's works have been performed widely throughout the world by major ensembles and orchestras, including such groups as the Indianapolis, Detroit, Tacoma, and San Antonio Symphony Orchestras, the Winters Chamber Orchestra, North/South Consonance, SOLI Chamber Ensemble, the ONIX Ensemble (Mexico), the Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, and Luna Nova. He has received grants from the Guggenheim

Foundation, the NEA, the MacDowell Colony, Meet the Composer, BMI, ASCAP, and the American Guild of Organists, among others. His degrees are from Pacific Lutheran University and the University of Michigan, and he was a Fulbright Scholar to Germany. Originally from Washington State, he taught at Trinity University in San Antonio for 19 years, where he also founded CASA (the Composers Alliance of San Antonio). In 2010 he became Professor and Chair of the Music Department at Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois, where he was recently named the Edward Capps Professor of Humanities.

For more information see [www.timothykramer.com](http://www.timothykramer.com).

***Cycles and Myths*** was commissioned by SOLI Chamber Ensemble and premiered in March of 1996 in San Antonio, Texas. The piece presents a number of cyclic ideas that occur with literal and varied repetition. Connections are made between the individual players of the ensemble through similarities of timbre and gesture. A driving, rhythmic theme begins the work and coordinates all the motives assigned to each player in each cycle. The *myths*, which occur between cycles, are essentially character variations where each soloist stakes their own musical territory and presents material specifically assigned to their instrument. In this way, connections are made between repetition (cycles) and development (myths), between recognition and contrast. This work also contains many references — both through quotation and imitation — to other works with this instrumentation. These distinct musical styles are heard against the backdrop of cycles of similarity.

—Timothy Kramer



### **Robert Xavier Rodríguez: *Música, por un tiempo***

Robert Xavier Rodríguez is “one of the major American composers of his generation” (*Texas Monthly*). His music has been described as “Romantically dramatic” (*Washington Post*), “richly lyrical” (*Musical America*) and “glowing with a physical animation and delicate balance of moods that combine seductively with his all-encompassing sense of humor” (*Los Angeles Times*).

Rodríguez has written in all genres — opera, orchestral, concerto, ballet, vocal, choral, chamber, solo and music for the theater — but he has been drawn most strongly in recent years to works for the stage, including music for children. Rodríguez' music has been performed by conductors such as Sir Neville Marriner, Antal Dorati, Eduardo Mata, James DePriest, Sir Raymond Leppard, Keith Lockhart, Andrew Litton and Leonard Slatkin and by such organizations as the New York City Opera, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Dallas Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Vienna Schauspielhaus, Israel Philharmonic, Mexico City Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra and the Seattle, Houston, Dallas, Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, Baltimore, St. Louis, National, Boston and Chicago Symphonies. He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Goddard Lieberson Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Prix Lili Boulanger and the Prix de Composition Prince Pierre de Monaco. Rodríguez has served as Composer-in-Residence with the San Antonio Symphony and the Dallas Symphony. Seventeen CDs featuring his music have been recorded (1999 Grammy nomination), and his music is published exclusively by G. Schirmer. He is Professor of Music at the University of Texas at Dallas, where he holds an Endowed Chair of Art and Aesthetic Studies and is Director of the Musica Nova Ensemble.

For more information see [www.robertxavierrodriguez.com](http://www.robertxavierrodriguez.com).

***Música, por un tiempo*** (2008) was commissioned by SOLI Chamber Ensemble for their core instrumentation of clarinet, violin, cello and piano. SOLI gave the premiere performances on March 16 and 17, 2009. Like its earlier companion piece *Les Niais Amaoureux* (1989) for the same instrumentation, *Música, por un tiempo* combines two widely divergent musical entities.

Here, the ground bass from the song *Music, for a while* by the 17th-Century English composer Henry Purcell, meets the traditional Latin dance rhythm of the rumba — hence the translation of Purcell's English title into Spanish.

I included the word "time/tiempo" in the title in homage to Olivier Messiaen's monumental *Quartet for the End of Time* (1941), for the same combination of instruments. While Messiaen's quartet evokes a transcendent, eternal state, when "...there shall be time no longer" (Revelation 10:6), my work, following Dryden's text for Purcell's song, instead celebrates individual moments of our fleeting, Earthly time, as those moments are intensified through music:

*Music, for a while doth all our cares beguile,  
Wond'ring how your pains were eased and disdain'd to be pleas'd...*

There are three movements — fast, slow, fast — in cyclical form, with thematic material carried forward, with variations from one movement to the next. The first movement, *Andantino amoroso*, is based on a single melodic/harmonic sequence derived from the first measure of the Purcell. The six sections gradually rise in pitch, each one a minor third higher, with hints of the rumba rhythm emerging, from time to time, in the accompaniment. The second movement, *Adagio espressivo*, is highly contrapuntal, with the short motives of the first movement now extended to create long lyrical lines, often in canon. At the end of the movement, Purcell's bass line appears, in the piano, for the first time in its entirety, disguised by trills in the strings and a counter melody in the clarinet. The finale, *Vivace alla rumba*, brings the first movement's rumba hints out into the open, using many of the same themes, but now in a more rhythmic dance-like setting, with each section again rising a minor third higher than the last. The Purcell theme returns in its complete form twice more in this movement, each time as a kind of "time-out" interlude, in which Purcell's six-bar phrase, here extended to twelve bars, provides contrast to the driving four-bar rumba phrases. In the coda, the long lines of the second movement return, with their polyphonic richness, superimposed over the rumba rhythm, as all of the principle themes return for curtain calls before a final flourish.

—Robert Xavier Rodríguez



### **David Heuser: *Catching Updrafts***

David Heuser's music has been hailed as "all-American music at its most dynamic and visceral," "thoughtful, beautiful and wonderfully made," and "just the sort of music classical music needs more of."

Heuser has received commissions from such ensembles as the San Antonio Symphony, the New York Youth Symphony, the Texas Music Festival Orchestra, and, of course, SOLI Chamber Ensemble. His music has won many awards, including the Columbia Orchestra American Composer Competition and the Dallas Wind Symphony Brass Fanfare Competition.

Heuser's degrees are from the Eastman School of Music and the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. A native of New Jersey, Heuser resided in San Antonio for 14 years, where he was a Professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio teaching music composition and theory, and electronic music. Since July 2011 he has been the Associate Dean at the Crane School of Music in Potsdam, New York. His music is published by Non Sequitur Music, and works of his can be found on recordings on the Albany, Capstone, and Equilibrium labels, as well as on CDs released by the Cactus Pear Music Festival and the Composers Alliance of San Antonio.

For more information see [www.davidheuser.com](http://www.davidheuser.com).

***Catching Updrafts***: Hawks, eagles and other raptors keep aloft by riding rising columns of air called thermals or by using updrafts of air caused when winds strike, and rise over, objects such as mountains, which deflect the wind upwards. Migrating raptors use thermals and updrafts along mountain ridges to gain altitude, slowly circling upwards. Then, with some innate knowledge of the right time, they leave the rising air stream and coast downwards over the ridge, expending as little energy as possible, until they reach the next thermal or updraft.

I find the image conjured up by this kind of flight to be a rich metaphor for the human experience. I imagined a bird at the pinnacle of its “static soar,” expending no energy to stay aloft. If we endow the creature with human emotions, we can imagine the conflict between wanting the hold on to that moment for as long as possible and knowing that we must go forward if we want to survive, even though there is no certainty that there will be another updraft to catch.

This, then is the metaphor from which *Catching Updrafts* came out of. From one point of view, our lives are a series of high points, when we have caught updrafts, and yet we must leave each one behind eventually (or we will stagnate and “die”), coasting downwards and hoping to catch another one in the future, knowing that there may not be another one waiting down the road, aware that this may be as good as it ever gets. In some ways, leaving those special moments is a matter of survival; in another way, it is a leap of faith.

In *Catching Updrafts*, this idea is played out in the musical form where, after an introduction, there is a struggling, rising melodic line, which eventually reaches a static, high music. The middle of the work descends from this peaceful pinnacle into the lowest registers (what I consider the “hell” music). Eventually all of the elements of the piece come back — the rising line, quick and direct this time; the static, high music; and recollections of the hell music — until finally the piece ends peacefully, rising up into the stratosphere.

*Catching Updrafts* was written for SOLI Chamber Ensemble with the help of a Faculty Research Award from the University of Texas at San Antonio. It is dedicated to my wife, Cherie, for riding through bad times and updrafts alike with me.

—David Heuser



### **Alexandra Gardner: *Crows***

Composer Alexandra Gardner creates music for varied instrumentations, often mixing acoustic instruments with electronics. Praised as “highly lyrical and provocative of thought” (*San Francisco Classical Voice*), and “mesmerizing” (*The New York Times*), her music has been featured at venues worldwide, including the Aspen Music Festival, Centro de Cultura Contemporanea de Barcelona, Beijing Modern Festival, Warsaw Autumn Festival, and The

Kennedy Center. Selected honors and awards include recognition from Meet the Composer, American Composers Forum, The American Music Center, Vassar College, and The Netherland-America Foundation. Alexandra’s music has been commissioned by many ensembles and musicians, such as Percussions de Barcelona, SOLI Chamber Ensemble, Seattle Chamber Players, cellist Joshua Roman, NOW Ensemble, pianist Jenny Lin, and the Seattle Symphony.

Born and raised in Washington, D.C., Gardner holds degrees from The Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University (M.M.) and Vassar College (B.A.). She currently resides in Baltimore, Maryland.

For more information see [www.alexandragardner.net](http://www.alexandragardner.net).

*Crows* is dedicated to SOLI Chamber Ensemble. Inspired by the writings of poet Joy Harjo, each movement is based upon a short excerpt that describes some aspect of life in the desert Southwest. These excerpts serve as a starting point for the creation of five musical landscapes:

*red earth* — “My house is the red earth; it could be the center of the world. I’ve heard New York, Paris or Tokyo called the center of the world, but I say it is magnificently humble. You could drive by and miss it. Radio waves can obscure it. Words cannot construct it, for there are some sounds left to sacred wordless form...”

*clusters* — “We fly into the body and we fly out, changed by the sun, by crows who manipulate the borders of reason...”

*silver breaths* — “I see the flash of silver breaths on the wing of the sky, and hear the explosion of a thousand horses running...”

*invocation* — “I think of the lush stillness of the end of a world, sung into place by singers and the rattle of turtles in the dark morning...”

*drying stone* — “Invisible fish swim this ghost ocean now described by waves of sound, by water-worn rock. Soon the fish will learn to walk. Then humans will come ashore and paint dreams on the drying stone. Then later, much later, the ocean floor will be punctuated by Chevy trucks, carrying the dreamers’ descendants, who are going to the store.”

Poetry by Joy Harjo, from *Secrets from the Center of the World* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1989) and *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994).

In Native American tradition, the crow represents the gateway to the supernatural, possessing the ability to see simultaneously past, present and future. While writing this piece I often wondered how these birds (which appear often in Harjo’s poetry) might experience the journey through these musical expanses from their special perspective.

—Alexandra Gardner



## THE PERFORMERS

In 1994, SOLI Chamber Ensemble began shattering stereotypes for classical music in their performances of 20th- and 21st-century contemporary compositions. Based in San Antonio, Texas, the quartet — clarinetist **Stephanie Key**, cellist **David Mollenauer**, violinist **Ertan Torgul**, and pianist **Carolyn True** — presents concerts featuring underappreciated giants of the modern and contemporary classical repertoire. In addition, SOLI annually commissions new works by emerging and established composers, ensuring that music lovers hear the pioneering efforts of this century’s latest talents.

Award winners and international performers, SOLI mesmerizes audiences through both their dynamic performances and their articulate commentary about the music of our time. Deeply committed to education, SOLI Chamber Ensemble introduces avant-garde chamber

music in San Antonio area schools with their *SOLI Saturdays* concert series, as well as coach student chamber groups and present open rehearsals at Trinity University as its Ensemble in Residence since 2008. SOLI also takes its residency program to other colleges and universities throughout the United States. By closely working with emerging composers and musicians of tomorrow, the ensemble provides valuable insight to help them fully communicate their message. Beyond traditional concert venues, SOLI brings the classical music of today to hospitals, hospices, clinics, and rehabilitation centers.

Twice voted "Best Chamber Ensemble" by the San Antonio Current, SOLI is the recipient of the 2013 CMA/ASCAP *Adventurous Programming Award* in the small chamber ensemble category, and is proud to be the only Resident Chamber Ensemble selected to perform at San Antonio's newest crown jewel, The Tobin Center for the Performing Arts, opening in September 2014.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*Catching Updrafts & Crows* March 13-15 2012

Timothy Kramer's *Cycles & Myths* is published by Timothy Kramer.  
Robert Xavier Rodríguez' *Música, por un tiempo* is published by G. Schirmer, Inc.  
David Heuser's *Catching Updrafts* is published by Non Sequitur Music Publishing.  
Alexandra Gardner's *Crows* is published by Periferia Music.

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# SOLI

CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

**Stephanie Key** CLARINET  
**David Mollenauer** CELLO  
**Ertan Torgul** VIOLIN  
**Carolyn True** PIANO

**Timothy Kramer**

1 *Cycles & Myths* [11:16]

**Robert Xavier Rodríguez**

*Música, por un tiempo*

- 2 I. Andantino amoroso [4:32]
- 3 II. Adagio espressivo [4:58]
- 4 III. Vivace, alla rumba [4:24]

**David Heuser**

5 *Catching Updrafts* [13:28]

**Alexandra Gardner**

*Crows*

- 6 I. red earth [3:40]
- 7 II. clusters [3:26]
- 8 III. silver breaths [3:08]
- 9 IV. invocation [5:51]
- 10 V. drying stone [3:02]

Total Time = 57:47



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