

## *Chanticleer Festival 2000*

*Ana Cervantes*

### 9. CODA

How can you be homesick for a sixteen-day period of time? As strange as that might sound, I was. I'm determined to find funding so that I can go back next year: Salvo and I are already making plans to record a Brahms Sonata and maybe some Mozart ... and we still have to play that second movement of the Brahms ...

Returning to New Jersey on the plane, I start moving on to the next phase ... giving some study to the score of the 5<sup>th</sup> Piano Sonata of México's Federico Ibarra, on which I'm now starting to work. I'll be playing his Third Sonata in a few short weeks in Guanajuato, México, 12 days after I return there from the US, in México City, and in La Habana, Cuba a few days later. I'm about to spend 10 days of recreation-time in California without a piano, so I need every minute I can get with this music, especially Ibarra's Fifth. I will continue to work on this music away from the piano while I'm on the West Coast.

I go on to have a delightful time in California; but I wouldn't be honest if I didn't say that for a lot of the time I was there I had, in some deep place inside me, a profound feeling of homesickness for strings, and maybe even more, for the extraordinary feeling of togetherness that we're privileged to enjoy when we play ensemble music at this level.

When I am in San Francisco, of course my friend the *rumbero* takes me to the City Lights bookstore, a major financial peril for any lover of books. I am determined to keep my credit-card zipped, but my resolve flies out the window when I start leafing through David Blum's *Quintet*. It is a book of five interviews with great musicians, by a music writer of exceptional understanding and empathy, and I couldn't resist it after skimming the introduction by Arnold Steinhardt, first fiddle of the Guarneri Quartet and author of *Indivisible by Four*. The interviews are with Yo-Yo Ma the cellist; conductor Jeffrey Tate; the great violinist and teacher Josef Gingold; pianist Richard Goode; and soprano Birgit Nilsson. I save it for the plane trip back to México, but instead feel compelled to start writing these words about the magical time at Chanticleer Farm, and I don't end up starting to read "Quintet" until I am back in the piano room in my house in Guanajuato, México.

Like the living room at Chanticleer Farm, the piano room in Guanajuato is a space filled with light and music. I sit in my chair next to the window which looks out at the night sky dotted with the soft yellow México lights and read it slowly, savoring the interview with Yo-Yo Ma, so much my kind of musician, fresh and thoughtful, passionate and intellectual. Slowly, bit by bit in the succeeding nights, I go on to read every word wise Gingold has to say, to think with admiration of Richard Goode's long and thoughtful involvement with Schubert and Brahms; of Tate's courage and dedication as a conductor and as a human being. I'm saving Nilsson for last. The interviews with Yo-Yo Ma and Josef Gingold made me homesick for strings all over again, and continue to inspire me and light me up with their pure musical energy and humanity.

But for those moments on the airplane, flying away from Chanticleer Farm while studying my score, I am transported with the insight that my time with Brahms and the

Chanticleer Quartet has given me to this music of Ibarra, written in a different hemisphere and over a century later. I see the same architectural sense, the same vital and extraordinary awareness of register, the use of rhythm as a structural element, and I am awed and moved by the precious continuity of music, which we - by making it - help to keep alive.