

ODALINE DE LA MARTINEZ FRAM – Composer, Conductor

A most dynamic and gifted musician, with a distinguished reputation at home and on the International music scene, Cuban American **Odaline de la Martinez** pursues a demanding and successful career

- Composing, particularly opera
- Conducting repertoire from Mozart symphonies to the latest contemporary music
- Record production for Lontano Records (LORELT) which she founded
- Music education charity working with disadvantaged young people

Brought up and educated in the USA, she furthered her studies at the Royal Academy of Music. **Odaline de la Martinez** became the first woman to conduct a BBC Promenade concert at the Royal Albert Hall in 1984. Since then she has been invited to the Proms regularly, including a special performance in 1994 of Dame Ethel Smyth's opera *The Wreckers*.

Martinez studied at Tulane University, New Orleans reading both music and mathematics, graduating in 1972 summa cum laude and receiving several major awards. A Marshall Scholarship from the British government, and Danforth and Watson Fellowships, allowed her to continue her studies both in the UK and the European Continent.

At the Royal Academy of Music, she studied composition with Paul Patterson and piano with Else Cross and in 1976 she founded the ensemble Lontano. Martinez received her MMus in composition from the University of Surrey (1977), studying with Reginald Smith Brindle.

This was followed by composer awards from the American National Endowment for the Arts (1979) and a Guggenheim Fellowship (1980), which supported the composition of her first opera *Sister Aimée: An American Legend* (1984). This was premiered at Tulane University in 1984, followed by two other productions at the Royal College of Music, London (1987) and in Marin County College, California (1995).

Martinez has received many awards and prestigious positions:

- 1983: Outstanding Alumna of Newcomb College, Tulane University
- 1988: Villa-Lobos medal by the Brazilian government in recognition promoting and conducting his music.
- 1989: Co-Director of VIVA, a festival of Latin-American music at London's South Bank Centre
- 1990: Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music.
- 1992: Founder of the record label, **LORELT**, which concentrates on music neglected by many recording companies, contemporary composers, women composers and those from Latin America
- 1994 Conducted a historic performance of *The Wreckers* by Dame Ethel Smyth at the BBC Proms, later released on CD by Conifer Records (BMI), followed by a CD recording of Smyth's orchestral music for Chandos Records.
- 1994: Artistic Director of the Cardiff Festival.
- 2006 Founder of the Biennial London Festival of American Music, bringing to London the music of composers well known in the States but less known in Europe.

For about ten years in the 1990s Martinez pursued a rigorous conducting schedule

- 1995 Visited Colombia, Canada and New Zealand and later a residency as special guest of the New Zealand Arts Council.
- 1996 Conducted a series of concerts with the Sinfónica del Valle in Colombia, the Ensemble 2e2m in Paris, an Icelandic opera by Karólína Eiríksdóttir with **Lontano** as part of the Nordic Season and visited Argentina as composer/conductor. She returned to London for a Steve Reich 60th-birthday celebration concert presented by BBC Radio 3.
- Other engagements included concerts in the United States, Denmark, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa and Australia and performances throughout the United Kingdom, including a BBC Prom with **Lontano** and a two-month tour of the United Kingdom performing Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, several commercial recordings together with concerts and broadcasts.
- 2005 and 2006 a series of concerts titled All About Salsa, Samba and Tango – (from the classical point of view) at London's South Bank, visits to Ireland – the National Concert Hall, and a series of concerts to celebrate **Lontano's** 30th Anniversary.
- 2006 together with **Lontano** she founded the London Festival of American Music to bring a broader spectrum of the best American and US-based contemporary composers to UK audiences. This festival is now celebrated biennially. Several major works have received their UK premieres there, including works by John Harbison, Marjorie Merryman, Daniel Asia, Peter Child, Chen Yi and Roberto Sierra.
- 2006 Martinez gave a two-week tour of Mexico during the Cervantino Festival with the BBC Singers and the Orquesta Filarmonica de la UNAM, sponsored by the British Council. This was followed by a visit to Argentina (also sponsored by the British Council) where **Lontano** was ensemble in residence in Buenos Aires.

In the late 1990s Martinez resumed her composing career:

- Music to a radio play commissioned by BBC Radio 4 (1998)
- The *Hansen Variations for Piano* (1999), commissioned by the Music Department of Tulane University.
- Second opera *Imoinda*, about slavery and the beginning of the Afro-Caribbean culture (2005-2008). This, the first of the *Slavery Trilogy*, with libretto by Joan Anim-Addo, was commissioned by the Caribbean Women Writers' Alliance of the United Kingdom (CWWA), with funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 2012 *The Crossing*, Part II of the *Slavery Trilogy*, was commissioned by Tulane University with a grant from the Sophie Newcomb Institute and was premiered by the Tulane and Xavier University Choirs with the Louisiana Philharmonic and soloists in April 2013.
- 2013 A grant from Becky Skau Fund of The Sophie Newcomb Institute toward a residency at Tulane University to give master classes and deliver a public lecture.

- In October 2014, Martinez was in residence at the University of Arizona, where she co-directed the University's Festival of Latin American Music with lectures and performances, including her own works.
- In November 2014, a semi-staged version of *The Crossing*, Part II of her Slavery Opera Trilogy received its UK Premiere at the Fifth London Festival of American Music.
- In April 2015 Martinez received an award from Opera America, toward the production of a video based on her second opera *Imoinda*.

Martinez is founder and Music Director of the contemporary ensemble **Lontano** with whom she has performed and broadcast all over the world, of the London Chamber Symphony and, in 1990, the European Women's Orchestra. As well as frequent appearances as guest conductor with leading orchestras throughout Great Britain, including all the BBC orchestras, she has conducted amongst others, the San Diego and New Zealand Symphony Orchestras, the Australian Youth Orchestra, the Natal Philharmonic, the Aarhus Symphony, the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, Radio-Television Orchestra of Brazil, the Kansas City Symphony and the Vancouver Chamber Orchestra. She is also known as a broadcaster for BBC Radio and Television.

As well as radio recordings for the BBC and commercial recordings for Metier, Chandos, Conifer, BMI, Summit, Da Capo, Albany and her own label, **Lorelt** Records, Martinez was interviewed and featured as conductor in a two hour radio programme for Swiss Radio, introduced composers for BBC Radio 3 Composer of the Week, and participated in Channel 4 television series featuring women composers.

- 2007/8, (in addition to her concert and recording work with Lontano Martinez made several visits to Portugal and Ireland, recorded two CDs featuring the choral and orchestral music of Elizabeth Maconchy, as a celebration of her 100th Anniversary - the first with the BBC Singers (2007). Other releases with Lontano included CDs of music by Peter Child, Dorothy Ker and Silvina Milstein.
- 2009 following a BBC Radio 3 programme on Choral Music by Daniel Asia, a CD of that programme was recorded for Summit Records, and released at the 3rd London Festival of American Music in 2010.
- 2010 Manitoba Chamber Orchestra in a concert of Villa Lobos including his guitar concerto and *Bachianas Brasileiras No.9*.
- A CD of Martinez's music titled *Asonancias*, was released in 2010.

RECENT WORK:

- 2011, together with **Lontano**, Artist in Residence at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Also toured Nicola LeFanu's newly composed opera *Dream Hunter* in Wales, supported by a grant from the Arts Council Wales.
- 2012 Conducted *Dream Hunter* at Wiltons Music Hall in London.
- In October 2012 she presented the *Fourth London Festival of American Music* which featured the European Premiere of John Harbison's opera *Full Moon in March*.
- In 2013 worked on production and direction of the UK premiere of ***The Crossing***.

- In 2013 she composed *The Crossing* Part II of the Slavery Trilogy.
- In 2013 in residence at Tulane University with a grant from the Becky Skau Fund of The Sophie Newcomb Institute
- In October 2014 she was co-Director of a Festival of Latin American Music at the University of Arizona
- She directed the Fifth London Festival of American Music in November 2014
- March 2015 Martinez participates in the BBC's International Women's Day Concert where one of her works was broadcast.
- March 2015 undertook US tour with Lontano. Residencies at MIT and SUNY Binghamton.
- May 2015 Martinez received award from Opera America.

Odaline de la Martinez is in demand throughout the world both as an orchestra and opera conductor and with her ensemble **Lontano**. She has recorded numerous CDs for **Lorelt**, her own record label, as well as Summit, BMI, and Albany Records in the United States, Chandos, Metier and Conifer Classics in the UK and Da Capo in Denmark. As a musician she has acquired a remarkable reputation for her versatile and eclectic vision, and supreme ability to work with others to make the vision a reality.

Odaline de la Martinez is also trustee of The Mornington Trust, who together with **Lontano** has been responsible community and educational work in Waltham Forest and other London boroughs since 2000. Presently the charity is involved in a three-year project working with Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities in the East of London.