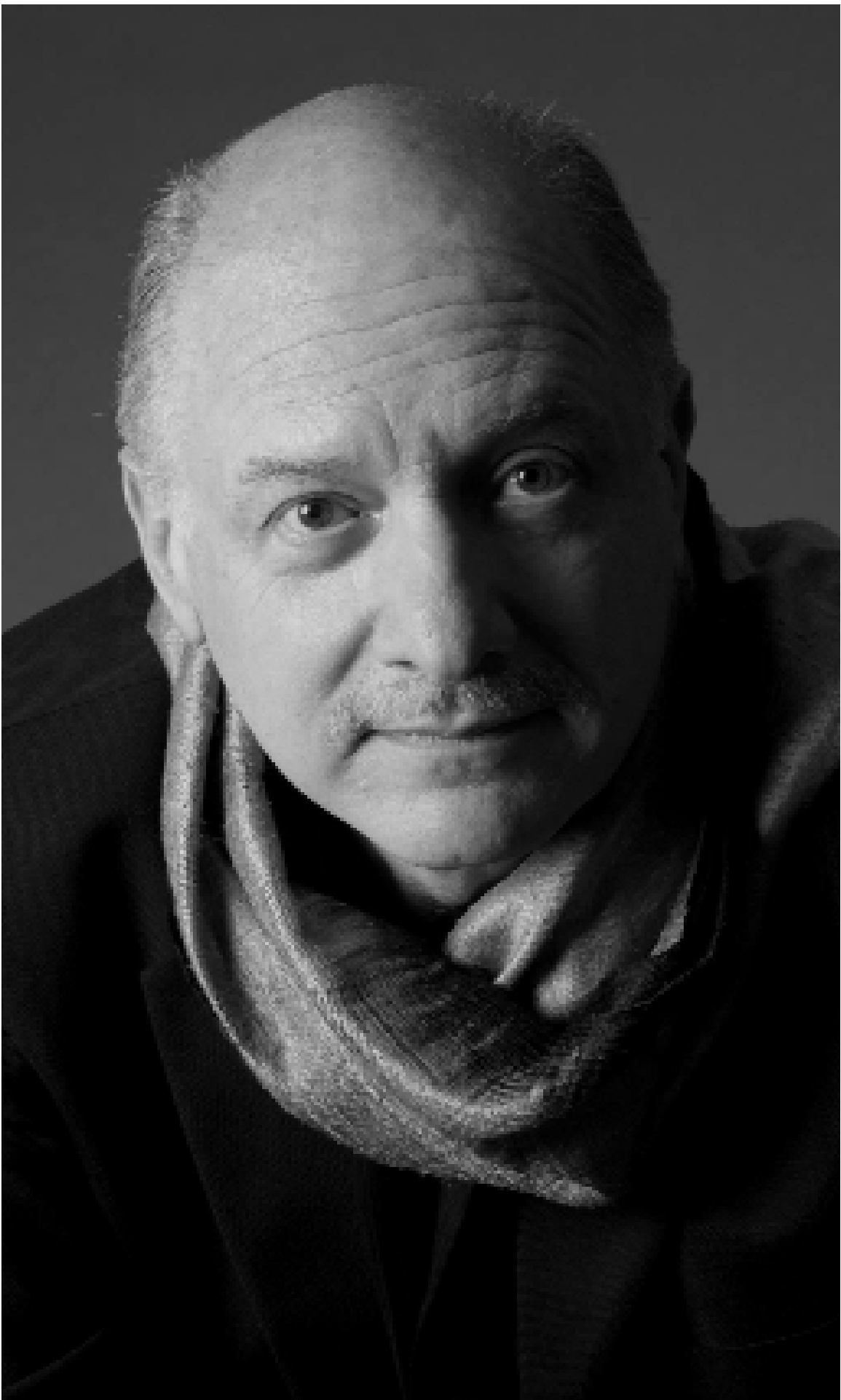


Daniel Catán

Biography and Works



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Daniel Catán, whose sudden death in April 2011 shocked the opera world, composed in a lyrical, romantic style that lends itself particularly well to the human voice, which features prominently in the majority of his works. Catán's proficiency can easily be heard in his opera *Florencia en el Amazonas* — the first Spanish-language opera commissioned by a major American company. Catán described his objective for the opera: "I set out to write beautiful music for a story of the journey to transcendent love; it concerns all of us who have lived love with all its intricacies, subtleties, wretchedness, and glorious happiness." Catán's intentions were noble and bold. In the eyes of both the public and the critics — who lauded the work's honesty, beauty, and sheer devastating dramatic effect — he accomplished his goals. His influences belie his native land: he has been compared to Debussy, Richard Strauss, and Puccini — with a wisp of Japanese influence. Catán attested gladly to his wide spectrum of influences. "I have inherited a very rich operatic tradition," he said. "In my work, I am proud to say, one can detect the enormous debt I owe to composers from Monteverdi to Alban Berg. But perhaps the greatest of my debts is having learnt that the originality of an opera need not involve the rejection of our tradition (which would be like blindly embracing the condition of an orphan), but rather the profound assimilation of it, so as to achieve the closest union between a text and its music."

Though Catán was born in Mexico, he was a product of both British and American schooling, receiving degrees from the University of Sussex (in philosophy), University of Southampton, and Princeton University — where he studied with Milton Babbitt — before returning to Mexico to take up the post of music administrator at Mexico City's Palace of Fine Arts. There, apart from establishing himself as an essayist writing about music, he came to love opera. In 1994, the San Diego Opera premiered his symbolist opera, *La Hija de Rappacini* (*Rappaccini's Daughter*), a work written in collaboration with librettist Juan Tovar. The success of *La Hija de Rappacini* led to Catán's next opera, *Florencia en el Amazonas* — a collaboration between Catán, Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez, and García Márquez's protégée, Marcela Fuentes-Berain. The opera is loosely based on García Márquez's novel *Love in the Time of Cholera*. *Florencia en el Amazonas* taps deeply into García Márquez's world of magical realism. "It is," said Catán, "the story of the return journey that we all undertake at a certain point in our lives: the moment when we look back at what we once dreamed of becoming, and then confront what we have now become." Since its premiere in 1996,

Florencia has been performed by a number of major American opera companies; the European premiere took place in 2006 in Heidelberg, Germany. In celebration of its 50th anniversary, the Houston Grand Opera commissioned Catán's third opera *Salsipuedes, A Tale of Love, War, and Anchovies* — a dark comedy which takes place on the fictitious island of Salsipuedes and premiered in 2004. The European premiere was seen in Hagen, Germany, in 2008 in a German singing translation. Catán's fourth opera, *Il Postino*, based on the Oscar-winning film, and commissioned by Los Angeles Opera, debuted in 2010 in Los Angeles with Plácido Domingo and Charles Castronovo in the leading roles in a production directed by Ron Daniels. In the short time since its premiere, *Il Postino* has been broadcast nationally on PBS and produced in five different countries. The European premiere followed at Vienna's Theater an der Wien (December 2010), with subsequent performances at Palacio de Belles Artes and Festival Cervantino in Mexico City (October 2011), Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris (June 2011), Teatro Municipal in Santiago, Chile (June 2012), and the University of Houston (April 2011). Madrid's Teatro Real presents the Spanish premiere in June 2013 with Domingo and Castronovo reprising their leading roles. Sony Classical releases the DVD of LA's award-winning premiere production in autumn 2012. In May 2012, Center City Opera in Philadelphia premiered a reduced orchestration of *Il Postino*.

At the time of his death, Catán was at work on his next opera, *Meet John Doe*. The University of Texas at Austin, which commissioned the work, also premiered the chamber version of *La Hija de Rappaccini* in February 2011.

Catán's non-operatic output is full of equally powerful works: *Caribbean Airs* for orchestra with a featured role for the percussion section (2007); *En un Doble del Tiempo* (*A Fold in Time*) and an orchestral suite from *Florencia*; *Mariposa Obsidiana*, for soprano, chorus and orchestra; and the small but charming *Encantamiento*, for two flutes. His music is published exclusively by Associated Music Publishers.

— September 2012

Opera and Music Theatre

Florencia en el Amazonas (1996) 1h 40'
 Text: (Spanish) Marcela Fuentes-Berain
 Solo: 2 Sopranos, Mezzo Soprano, Tenor,
 2 Baritones, Bass
 chorus
 2(pic).22+bcl.2(cbn)/3221.timp.4perc/
 hp.pf/str (4.4.4.4.3)
Performance materials on rental
Vocal Score 50484955 for sale

La Hija de Rappaccini
(Rappaccini's Daughter) (1983-89) 1h 45'
 Text: (Spanish) Juan Tovar, based on the play by
 Octavio Paz and the short story by Nathaniel Hawthorne
 Solo: Mezzo Soprano, Soprano, 2 Tenors
 Chorus: 3 offstage female voices
 3(pic)+2rec.3(ca).3(bcl).3/4331/timp.3perc/
 pf.cel.hp/str
 Alt: 2perc.hp.2pf
Performance materials on rental

Il Postino (2008) 2h 5'
 Text: (Spanish) Music and Libretto by Daniel Catán;
 based on the novel by Antonio Skármeta, and the film
 by Michael Radford
 Solo: 2S, Mz, 4T, Bar, B-bar, 5T, 2Bar, 2B,
 1 silent role (boy)
 Chorus: TB
 3(pic).2(obda).2+bcl.2/4.3.2+btbn.1/timp.2perc.pf.hp/str;
 Onstage: sxx, tpt, sous, perc, riq, acn
Libretto 50490334 for sale

Salsipuedes, A Tale of Love,
War and Anchovies (2004)
 Text: (German, Spanish) libretto by Eliseo Alberto and
 Francisco Hinojosa; English trans: Shane Gasbarra and
 Daniel Catán
 Solo: 3S, Mz, 4T, Bar, B-bar, B, Spkr
 Chorus: SAT Chorus (24 voices total)
 3(pic).2.5(bcl).2/3.4Ctpt.2+btbn.1/timp.perc/
 pf.hp/4vc.4db; onstage 4perc
Performance materials on rental

Orchestra

En un Doble del Tiempo
(A Fold in Time) (1982) 12'
 ed. by Eduardo Diazmuñoz,
 3(pic).3(ca).3(bcl).3(cbn)/432+btbn.1/
 timp.1[=2]perc/cel.hp/str
Performance materials on rental

Florencia en el Amazonas
(Orchestral Suite) (2003) 28'
 2(pic).2.2+bcl.2/3221/timp.2perc.mba/hp.pf/str
Performance materials on rental

Three Interludes from Florencia (2003) 16'
 2(pic).2.2+bcl.2/3221/timp.2perc.mba/hp.pf/str
Performance materials on rental

Soloist(s) and Orchestra

Caribbean Airs (2007) 20'
 Solo: 3 perc
 3(pic).2.4(bcl).2/4.4.3.1/timp.perc/pf.hp/str
Performance materials on rental

Works for 2-6 Players

Encantamiento (flute and harp) (1989) 7'
 fl, hp
Score and Part(s) 50485188 for sale

Encantamiento (flutes) (1989) 7'
 2fl
Set of Parts 50485186 for sale

Solo Works (excluding keyboard)

Encantamiento (alto recorders) (1989) 7'
 2arec, one player
Score 50484728 for sale

Chorus a cappella / Chorus plus 1 instrument

O Pardon Me,
Thou Bleeding Piece of Earth (2006) 6'
 Text: (English) William Shakespeare
 Chorus: TTBB
 timp
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Work List

Daniel Catán

Chorus and Orchestra/Ensemble

**Mariposa de Obsidiana
(Obsidian Butterfly)** (1984) 26'
Solo: Soprano or Mezzo-soprano
Chorus
3333/4331/perc/hp/str
Performance materials on rental

Solo Voice(s) and up to 6 players

Comprendo (2006) 3'
Text: Acuna
Solo: Voice
pf
Performance materials sold by Rental Library

Work List

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