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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

A Musical World in Motion

Ehrbar Saal, 25.09.2026 [ENA]

The opening concert of the fourth famous international festival mundo redondo – Classical Music of the Regions festival transformed Vienna's historic Ehrbar Saal into a meeting place of musical traditions. Held on 23 September 2026, the evening brought together the Cantaremos Choir, pianist and composer Mauricio Arias-Esguerra, and an international group of guest performers.

This was a programme spanning European Romanticism, Caribbean song and Colombian concert music. Under the direction of Luis Carlos Muñoz Segovia, the Cantaremos Choir opened the concert with warmth, rhythmic vitality and an infectious sense of community. Erin Varga-Won provided the piano accompaniment. Rafael Hernández Marín's Capullito de alhelí established an atmosphere of lyrical tenderness, while Bello que bonito, drawn from the traditional folklore of Colombia's Chocó region, introduced a more rhythmically animated musical language. Felipe Rosario Goyco's Madrigal, featuring guest singer Anabell Garfio-Méndez, completed this colourful first half.

What made the choral programme particularly appealing was its refusal to treat Latin American music as a single, uniform tradition. Instead, the selection revealed a world of contrasting regional identities: intimate song stood beside folk-derived rhythm, and carefully shaped choral textures retained the spontaneity of music rooted in collective memory. The singers communicated this diversity with openness and evident affection for the repertoire.

After the interval, Mauricio Arias-Esguerra turned to Alexander Scriabin's complete set of twelve Études, Op. 8. The cycle provided the evening's most concentrated encounter with the European canon, progressing through sharply contrasting characters—from the forceful A capriccio, con forza and shadowy Presto tenebroso to the inward-looking Andante cantabile and the celebrated final Patetico. Arias-Esguerra approached the set not merely as a display of virtuosity, but as a sequence of compressed psychological dramas. His interpretation highlighted the music's restless changes of colour and its constant tension between intimacy and eruption.

The return to Latin America with Manuel María Párraga's El Bambuco, Op. 14, was both historically illuminating and musically satisfying. This virtuosic treatment of New Granadian national melodies occupies an important place in the development of Colombian concert music. Positioned after Scriabin, it also made a persuasive argument: regional musical traditions can sustain just as much formal sophistication

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and pianistic brilliance as works from the established European repertory.

Arias-Esguerra's own compositions formed the concert's compelling final chapter. Convergencia No. 1, performed with violist Daniel Melguizo-Martínez, created an absorbing dialogue between lyricism and rhythmic momentum. The two songs from Rosas del Mar, interpreted by mezzo-soprano Sladja Raicevic, brought vocal intimacy and poetic refinement, while the Fantastic Variations on "La Guaneña", featuring trumpeter Randy Lee, concluded the programme with brilliance and imagination.

More than a sequence of attractive contrasts, this concert embodied the festival's central idea: classical music does not belong to one geographical centre. By allowing Scriabin, Caribbean song, Colombian folklore and contemporary composition to illuminate one another, mundo redondo offered Vienna an evening that was generous, adventurous and genuinely international. The warmly responsive acoustics of the historic Ehrbar Saal further enriched this musical encounter, giving both the intimate vocal passages and the programme's most dramatic instrumental moments remarkable clarity and presence.

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