

Laureate Series • Guitar





Cecilio Perera

First Prize 2011 Michele Pittaluga Guitar Competition, Alessandria

Manuel
PONCE
Leo
BROUWER
Julio César
OLIVA
Vicente Emilio
SOJO

Cecilio Perera: Guitar Recital Manuel Ponce (1882-1948): Preludio • Balleto • Gique • Sonata Mexicana Tres canciones populares mexicanas Leo Brouwer (b. 1939): Sonata Julio César Oliva (b. 1947): Tangomania Vicente Emilio Soio (1887-1974): Five Pieces From Venezuela

The guitar is indeed the national instrument of Central and aroused in Weiss's music. The true provenance of these South America and many hundreds of years of performance on fretted instruments across the continent have created virtuosic traditions of great sophistication. This selection demonstrates the strength and beauty of some of those traditions, with composers from Mexico, Venezuela, and Cuba. Through the coming together of many diverse currents, a treasury of music has been created of great melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic intensity. The individual works, even within one country, are also immensely varied, nourished as they are by the deep gravitational pull of folkloric elements as well as by the academic concepts of European musical training which most composers undergo. Uniting them together is the guitar itself, a remarkably versatile instrument of almost infinitely adaptable resources.

Manuel Ponce was the founding father of twentiethcentury Mexican music. His pupil. Carlos Chávez (1899-1978) said of him: 'It was Ponce who created a real consciousness of the richness of Mexican folk art.' Segovia and Ponce met in Mexico in 1923, and from that time onwards the composer devoted himself to writing many pieces for the guitar, nearly all of them dedicated to Segovia Of these compositions, which include preludes suites, a concerto, variations, several sonatas, and works for guitar and harpsichord. Segovia has written: 'Large or small, they are, all of them, pure and beautiful.

Preludio, Balleto and Gigue, though written by Ponce in the early 1930s, were performed by Segovia for many years and attributed in programme notes to Sylvius Leopold Weiss, the great baroque lutenist. It seems these guitar compositions in an eighteenth-century style were inspired by the music of J.S. Bach but it was thought prudent to assign them to a less well known composer. Paradoxically, through this false labelling considerable interest was

pieces was not revealed until the 1960s.

In 1923 Segovia wrote to Ponce from Paris commenting that he had 'recently played your beautiful Sonata in Madrid to the applause of the public, assent of the critics, and effusive admiration of musicians'. He was referring to the Sonata Mexicana, the composition which began Ponce's contribution to the guitar repertoire. The sonata evokes imaginative Mexican themes and Segovia in his later years assigned programmatic titles for each movement:

- Bailecito del Rebozo (Dance of the Scarf)
- II. Lo que sueñe el ahuehuete (Dream of the Ahuehuete Tree) III. Intermedio Tapatío (Guadalaiara Interlude)
- IV. Ritmos v Cantos Aztecas (Aztec rhythms and melodies)

The opening, Allegro moderato, in the key of A major. begins with a theme similar to that of the villancico from Guanajuato's Salve, niño hermoso (Hail, beautiful child), while the second theme uses a hemiola with a syncopation before the strong beat. The short development section is founded entirely on the first theme. The second movement, Andantino affettuoso, in the key of D major, is written in five/eight time. Its impressionistic harmonies and intricate modulations are more harmonically complex than Ponce's usual guitar style, the subtle chordal progressions and occasional chromaticism being of particular interest. The third movement, Allegretto quasi serenata, was the first piece Ponce ever wrote for the guitar and the predecessor of the sonata's other movements. In the key of A minor and with a time signature of three/eight, it is comprised of elegant flourishes and fragments of sound as the composer experiments with guitar idioms. Miguel Alcázar, the editor of Ponce's complete guitar pieces, has pointed out that at the end Ponce quoted from Vamos a tomar atole, ('We are going to have the hot maize drink'), a fragment of the

Jarabe Tapatío ('Syrup from Guadalajara'). The final movement. Allegretto un poco vivace, in A major, is in rondo form. Its maiestic principal theme, in six/eight time. is one of Ponce's most charismatic works, full of Mexican vitality. Superbly idiomatic for the guitar, the piece deftly combines elegant harmonies with catchy melodic filigree. The coda employs a progression of parallel chords on a dominant pedal with exciting effect.

Leo Brouwer from Cuba is acknowledged as one of the most challenging and innovative of contemporary musicians. His compositions range from solo guitar pieces to symphonic works, including concertos, chamber music. and many film scores. His prolific output for guitar has developed through various styles embracing the avantgarde and the experimental, as well as neo-romanticism Sonata, composed in 1990, is dedicated to Julian Bream who gave the première of the work on 27th January 1991 at the Wigmore Hall, London. The following comments are based on Julian Bream's note about the piece

The three movements take their unity from a thematic idea introduced at the beginning of the composition, a motif of eight notes with the interval of a major second and minor third. Fandangos y Boleros begins with a short preamble which leads on to the first subject. The second subject is in dotted rhythm accompanied by a double octave pedal. Following the development section, the coda quotes fragments from Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, the Pastoral. The theme from the first movement appears occasionally in the Sarabanda de Scriabin but with different harmonies. By re-tuning the lower string from E to E contrasting tone colours are achieved. La Toccata de Pasquini offers the opening theme adding several intervals of the second and third. Brilliant figurations and arabesques give way to a brief return to the slow movement before the opening music is heard once more.

Julio César Oliva (b. 1947, Mexico City) is a distinguished Mexican composer and concert guitarist who studied at the National School of Music and National Conservatoire of Music under Alberto Salas. He has arranged many traditional folk-tunes and popular songs for guitar, as well as writing more than two hundred original compositions for various instruments. In 1970 he became the first guitarist to perform an all-Bach programme in a

recital and in 1976 was the first soloist to appear at the inauguration of the Sala Nezahualcóvotl, Mexico City, one of the leading concert halls of Latin America, with a capacity of over two thousand

Maestro Oliva has provided the following comments about Tangomania, here recorded for the first time: A sonata in the style of the modern tango influenced by Piazzolla, written originally for solo guitar in 2001 and then arranged for three or four guitars. Like Sonatango (the first sonata that I wrote in tango style), this second sonata consists of four movements. Infortunio (Misfortune), Te esperaré siempre, (l'Il Always Wait for You), Vagando en la soledad (Lost in Solitude) and Te llevo en mis venas (I Carry You in My Heart). These titles evoke the dramatic intensity of the tango which. like flamenco song and the blues, is music that involves a great amount of that feeling which we call 'pathos'. Throughout the work I deliberately imitated the sonority of the grand and modern tango performing ensembles such as the Buenos Aires Quintet and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. This sonata is dedicated to the remarkable Mexican quitarist. Cecilio Perera.

Vicente Emilio Sojo is considered as the pioneer and fountainhead of the modern school of Venezuelan music. He first studied music in his birth place. Guatire, with Régulo Rico, and then moved to Caracas in 1910 where he had composition lessons with Primo Moschini. In 1921 he became professor of theory at the National School of Music and was appointed as its director in 1936. He later entered politics, being elected as a senator in 1958 and 1963 for the state of Miranda. Soio's compositions include a quantity of choral music, a string quartet (1913), and many guitar pieces. He also collected together a considerable amount of Venezuelan traditional songs and dances.

Five Pieces from Venezuela, originally arranged for guitar by Alirio Díaz and published in 1965, have become popular items in recitals, and, along with other works, have also been recorded by, Diego Blanco, Alirio Díaz, Eliot Fisk, Alberto Ponce, David Russell, John Williams, Joseph Zsapka, and others. Within the sequence there is a variety of style, tempo and mood

The opening Cántico (Canticle or chant) is in six/eight in the key of D minor, offering an evocative opening to the suite. Cantemos, cantemos (Aguinaldo) (Let us Sing, Let us Sing, a Christmas Carol), in the key of D major, has the unusual timing of 5/8 (as in the second movement of Ponce's Sonata Mexicana). Within this framework various exciting rhythmic shifts can be heard within the melodic line as well as an air of the unpredictable. Si de noche ves qui brillan (Canción) (If by night you see what shines, Song), in three/four time, is in the direct tradition of Venezuelan folkmusic, its haunting melody supported by a richly inventive accompaniment. Malhaya la cocina (Curse the kitchen, Aire Venezolano), also in three/four with occasional bars of six/eight, to be played Allegro, is an optimistic miniature, full of vigour and momentum. Finally, Ave Maria (Que muchachol (Galerón) (Hail Mary, What a Boyl), a characteristic Venezuelan folk-dance, presents an exciting theme over a striding bass line and vivid chordal progressions in a dazzling finale.

Ponce's output included five arrangements of well known Mexican songs and in 1928 three of these were published by Schott in Segovia's guitar editions under the title of Tres Canciones populares mexicanas (Three Popular Mexican Songs). The first of these, La Pajarera (The Aviary) tells the story of the beloved Rosita, whose lover wishes to capture singing wild birds for her, including goldfinches and sparrows. But the little aviary full of singing birds is really the lover's heart. Por timi corazón (For you my heart), is a beautiful love-song in which the poet declares his devotion. Finally Valentina, one of the popular songs from the Mexican Revolution, includes the sentiments, 'If I have to die tomorrow, better to die today ... But only if I can see you!'

Graham Wade

Cecilio Perera

Cecilio Perera was born in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico. He is among the most outstanding guitarists of the younger generation. He began guitar lessons with his brother Pedro Perera and went on to study with Ricardo Vega at the José Jacinto Cuevas Music School. From 1999 to 2005 he studied at Xalapa University of Music (Mexico) with Consuelo Bolio and Alfredo Sanchez. His concert activity has taken him to perform solo recitals and appear as soloist with leading orchestras in many counstries, Mexico, the United States, Canada, Cuba, Costa Rica, Belize, Austria, Germany, Bulgaria, Russia, France, Estonia, Finland, Slovenia, Spain and Italy. He has made many appearances on radio and television. He made his Carnegie Hall début recital at Weil Recital Hall in New York in February 2012. He graduated at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg under the direction of Eliot Fisk and Ricardo Gallén, where he also studied the lute and early music with Hans Brüderl and modern music with Simone Fontanelli. His repertoire ranges from renaissance to contemporary music, as well as chamber music with Simone Fontanelli, this repertoire ranges from renaissance to contemporary music, as well as chamber music with voice, piano, flute, string quartet and other combinations. He is currently assistant professor to his mentor Eliot Fisk at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg, Austria. His many awards include first prize at the 2011 44th Michele Pittaluga International Guitar Competition at Alessandria, at the 2008 Villa de Petrer VII International Guitar Competition José Tomás, at the American III Boston International Guitar Competition in 2008, at the Salzburg Mozarteum Chamber Music Competition in 2007, and at the Leo Brouwer International Guitar Competition in Havana in 2004, as well as other prizes awarded in Spain, Cuba, America and Mexico.

Winner of a remarkable number of awards and acknowledged as one of the most important guitarists to emerge from Mexico in recent years, Cecilio Perera demonstrates the strength and beauty of the guitar tradition in Central and South America in this recital. Manuel Ponce's evocative Sonata Mexicana contrasts with the exciting meeting of ancient and modern in Leo Brouwer's Sonata, Julio César Oliva's Tangomania, 'a sonata in the style of the modern tango influenced by Piazzolla', and the haunting and at times dazzling Pieces from Venezuela by Vicente Emilio Sojo.

CECILIO PERERA

Guitar Recital

MANUEL PONCE (1882–1	1948)	12 II. Te esperaré siempre	2:43
1 Preludio	2:26	13 III. Vagando en la soledad	3:44
2 Balleto	3:42	14 IV. Te llevo en mis venas	5:20
3 Gigue	5:32	VICENTE EMILIO SOJO	
Sonata No. 1 'Mexicana'	13:01	(1887–1974)	
4 I. Allegro moderato	4:09	Five Pieces From Venezuela	6:32
5 II. Andantino affettuoso	3:33	15 Cántico	1:41
6 III. Allegretto quasi serenata	1:24	16 Aguinaldo	1:08
7 IV. Allegretto un poco vivace	3:54	17 Canción	1:49
LEO BROUWER (b. 1939))	18 Aire Venezolano	1:00
	14:39	19 Galerón	0:53
8 Fandangos y Boleros	6:16	MANUEL PONCE	
9 Sarabanda de Scriabin	3:32	Tres Canciones populares	
10 La Toccata de Pasquini	4:47	mexicanas	6:43
JULIO CÉSAR OLIVA (b.	1947)	20 La Pajarera	1:20
	15:45	21 Por tí mi corazón	3:36
11 I. Infortunio	3:58	22 Valentina	1:47
* Works Drawing angenning			

* WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING

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Guitar by Stephan Connor, USA • Photo of Cecilio Perera by Santiago Boceta