

GUITAR MUSIC OF MEXICO

**Oliva • Ritter • Tamez • Lunagómez
Tamayo • Córdoba • Helguera
Cecilio Perera**



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**Ernesto Hernández Lunagómez · Julio César Oliva · Jorge Ritter · Cecilio Perera
Alfredo Tamayo · Cutberto Córdoba · Juan Helguera · Gerardo Tamez**

Ernesto Hernández Lunagómez (b. 1974)	Julio César Oliva		
1 Siena , homenaje a Andrew York (dedicated to Cecilio Perera)	3:45	Sonata para – El Final de los Tiempos (dedicated to Cecilio Perera)	24:14
Julio César Oliva (b. 1947) Imágenes de Yucatán (dedicated to Cecilio Perera)	16:50	10 Señales proféticas	8:45
2 Mérida	5:37	11 La gran tribulación	8:03
3 Paseo Montejo	5:08	12 Paraíso recobrado	7:25
4 Chichén Itzá	6:02	Alfredo Tamayo (1880–1957)	
Anonymous/traditional		13 Sueño (soñó mi mente loca) (arr. Cecilio Perera)	3:38
5 La llorona (arr. Julio César Oliva)	2:41	Cutberto Córdoba (b. 1963)	
Jorge Ritter (b. 1957)		14 Mabi	2:25
Tres Piezas	6:42	Juan Helguera (b. 1933)	
6 Rápido	2:22	15 Un retrato	2:32
7 Andante	2:05	Gerardo Tamez (b. 1948)	
8 Jaleo	2:10	Aires de Son	7:50
Cecilio Perera (b. 1983)		16 Aire Itsmeño	2:06
9 Marina	4:17	17 Quedo	3:35
		18 Son trunco	2:02

The contemporary guitar music of Mexico is a vibrant and active characteristic of the country's cultural identity. Following in the footsteps of Manuel Ponce (1886-1948), who wrote many guitar pieces as well as a Guitar Concerto inspired by Andrés Segovia, the new generations of composers, many of them concert guitarists themselves, are creating a fascinating new repertoire. Their compositions are rooted in the historical elements of the Mexican musical heritage with their complex blend of rhythms and influences. The guitar is indeed the national instrument of Mexico, bringing together the essence of indigenous folkloric vitality with the sophistication of European compositional techniques.

Ernesto Lunagómez, born in Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico, grew up in Cerro Azul, Veracruz. He later returned to Xalapa to begin guitar studies at the University of Veracruz. He has given recitals throughout South America and Europe and is on the academic faculty of the university from which he graduated.

Siena, homenaje a Andrew York, dedicated to Cecilio Perera, was included in the repertoire list for the 5th National Guitar Competition in Culiacán, Sinaloa, Mexico in 2006. Andrew York, American guitarist and composer, commented, 'Many, many thanks for writing such a beautiful piece! I am

deeply honoured.' The work has rhythmic and harmonic affinities with Andrew York's *Sunburst*, one of his most well-known compositions.

Julio César Oliva (b. 1947, Mexico City), composer and guitarist, studied at the National School of Music and the 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 Nezahualcōyotl, Mexico City, one of the leading concert halls of Latin America, with a capacity of over two thousand.

The suite *Imágenes de Yucatán* (Images of Yucatán), dedicated to Cecilio Perera, refers to the State of Yucatán in south Mexico on the northern part of the peninsula. The state capital is Mérida, situated near the Gulf of Mexico with a population of around a million people, the majority being of Maya ethnicity.

Thus the first movement in honour of Mérida is a blend of the nostalgically wistful and the evocation of historical remembrances. The Paseo Montejo, in the city of Mérida, is the most important avenue in the city. Its mansions were once

owned by the richest people and the avenue commemorates the founder of Mérida, Francisco de Montejo, the Spanish *conquistador*. The avenue is represented by a beautiful ballad-like composition full of emotion and elegance. Chichén Itzá, one of the most visited archaeological sites in Mexico, was a pre-Columbian city built by the Maya people. Thus the work named after it is in essence a Mayan dance.

La Llorona (The Weeping Woman) relates to the myth of a woman who lost her children and now weeps while eternally searching for them. Many versions of the story exist. One tale tells of Maria who drowned her children in a river as revenge when her husband deserted her. Maria is not permitted to enter heaven until she has found her children and is thus condemned to roam the earth in an endless and futile search.

Though the origins of the melody are obscure, versions of the song were popularized by various singers including the Spanish singer, Raphael (b. 1943) and the Costa Rican born Mexican singer, Chavela Vargas (1919-2012):

*Todos me dicen el negro, Llorona,
negro pero cariñoso.
Yo soy como el chile verde, Llorona,
picante pero sabroso.*

(Everyone calls me the dark one, Llorona
dark but loving,
I am like the green chile, Llorona
spicy but tasty.)

Jorge Ritter studied piano and composition at the National Conservatoire of Music in Mexico City. His orchestral works have been played by major orchestras world-wide and he has also written a *Guitar Concerto* (1989). His solo guitar works include not only *Tres Piezas* (1982) but also *Variaciones Capoeira* (1987), *Fantasia* (1994), *Toccata* (1997), *Cignus* (undated) and *10 Estudios Concertantes* (2012), amongst others. Ritter has composed *Poemas Tabulares* (1991) for two guitars, *Caudas*, a guitar quartet, and *Diskantos* for guitar quartet and clarinet, as well as *Triptico* for flute and guitar (1995).

Marina by **Cecilio Perera** is a gently reflective, romantic eulogy, a tribute to Marina Razumovskaja, pianist and composer with whom the guitarist has appeared in concert performing duos for guitar and piano.

Julio César Oliva's *Sonata para – El Final de los Tiempos* (Sonata for the End of Time) begins with *Señales proféticas* (Prophetic Signs), expressing the sense of dramatically significant omens. *La gran tribulación* (The Great Tribulation)

opens with menacing bass lines evolving into more complex textures as the time of trouble intensifies. The final movement, *Paraíso recobrado* (Paradise Recovered) begins with short exploratory phrases as realisation dawns of the passing of tribulation and the entry into a new reality. The work resolves into a pastoral ballad of peace and happiness.

Alfredo Tamayo, born in Mérida, Yucatan, is reputed to be the composer of *Sueño* (*Soñó mi mente loca*) (Dream, My Mad Mind Dreams), published in 1909 in *Cancionero de Chan Cil*. In 1920 Manuel Ponce, accused of plagiarising the tune as one of the many folksongs that he harmonized, commented that he did not know 'the name of the author of that popular song – he has talent'.

Cutberto Córdoba graduated in composition from the University of Veracruz, where in 1995 he was appointed as professor in the Music Faculty. He also took a prominent role in the department for introducing young people to music including the founding of a Guitar Orchestra. He has toured internationally as lecturer and soloist. The deeply expressive piece, *Mabi*, was written for the composer's wife on the 25th anniversary of their wedding.

Juan Helguera, guitarist, writer, critic, teacher, and composer, has written a number of guitar pieces, including *Homenaje a Satie, Impresiones, Callejones de Taxco*, various *Estudios*, amongst others. *Un retrato* (A Portrait) is a poignant depiction of a character whose personality is quiet and introspective with more than a touch of nostalgia.

Gerardo Tamez, born in Chicago, USA, is of Mexican nationality. He studied at the National Conservatory of Music, the National Music School (UNAM), the Centre for Research and Music Studies (CIEM) and the California Institute of the Arts. As a composer he has written works for guitar and other solo instruments, and chamber and orchestral works as well as music for cinema, theatre, dance and television. He has toured world-wide as a guitarist and made a number of recordings. Gerardo Tamez teaches composition, folklore and guitar at the State of Hidalgo Music School.

Son, a generic term for categories of Mexican folk music and dance, varies in its precise meaning from region to region in style and content. *Aires de Son* (1977) is a three-movement suite with evocative atmospheres of the music of southern Mexico. *Aire Istmeño* refers to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, while the second movement, *Quedo*, takes its inspiration from Oaxaca, in south-west Mexico on the Pacific coast. *Son trunco*, is an energetic indigenous dance.

Graham Wade

Cecilio Perera

Cecilio Perera was born in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico in 1983 and started playing guitar at an early age with his brother Pedro Perera and later with Ricardo Vega. Between 1999 and 2005 he studied at Xalapa University of Music with Alfredo Sánchez and Consuelo Bolío, and has won first prize in many international competitions. Perera has performed in Mexico, the USA, Canada, Cuba, Costa Rica, Belize, Austria, Germany, France, Finland, Estonia, Russia, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Italy and China. He has broadcast widely and appeared at prestigious festivals and theatres in Europe and America. Cecilio Perera holds a master's degree from the Mozarteum University in Salzburg where he studied with his mentor Eliot Fisk – he also studied with Ricardo Gallén, the lute with Hans Brüderl, early music with Howard Penny, and modern music with Simone Fontanelli. His repertoire ranges from the Renaissance on the lute to contemporary and chamber music with flute, voice, string quartet, and other combinations. He is currently assistant professor to his mentor Eliot Fisk at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg. www.cecilioperera.com



Photo: Arturo Escobedo

The contemporary guitar music scene of Mexico is a vibrant and active community of composers, many of them concert guitarists themselves. The new generations of composers are creating a fascinating new repertoire which, while rooted in the historical elements of the Mexican musical heritage with its traditional melodies and indigenous folkloric vitality, embraces the sophistication of European compositional techniques. Evocations of period and place can be heard in Oliva's *Images of Yucatán* and Gerardo Tamez's *Aires de Son*, reminiscent of the music of southern Mexico. There are also personal homages such as award-winning guitarist Perera's romantic *Marina* and Helguera's poignant *Un retrato* (A Portrait).

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| 9 Marina 4:17 | 16-18 Aires de Son 7:50 |

Cecilio Perera, Guitar

Full track details will be found in the booklet

Recorded: 19–21 January 2017 at St. John Chrysostom Church, Newmarket, Ontario, Canada
 Producers: Norbert Kraft and Bonnie Silver • Engineer and editor: Norbert Kraft • Guitar: Stephan Connor
 Booklet notes: Graham Wade • Publishers: Carlam Musique (track 1); Editorial Mundo América (5); GSP Guitar
 Solo San Francisco (6–8); BBY Biblioteca Básica de Yucatán (13); Liga de Compositores de México (15);
 Éditions Salabert (16–18); Unpublished – recorded with permission of the composer (2–4, 9–12, 14)
 Cover image: Temple of Kukulkan, Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, Mexico (© Fernando Gregory / Dreamstime)



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Playing Time
75:26



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