



Pavel Kukhta

Winner 2015
Heinsberg International
Guitar Competition

**GORELOVA
BROUWER RODRIGO
GERHARD
MORALES-CASO
ASSAD
DYENS**

Pavel Kukhta: Guitar Recital

**Galina Gorelova • Leo Brouwer • Joaquín Rodrigo • Roberto Gerhard
Eduardo Morales-Caso • Sergio Assad • Roland Dyens**

A diversity of international composers, from Belarus, Cuba, Spain, Catalonia, Brazil and France are included in this selection. A wide variety of repertoire is embraced by the classical guitar yet so many idioms from various countries seem natural and appropriate to this versatile instrument. Moreover, the styles depicted here range from the impressionistic to the contemporary, from the simplicity of musical clarity to the overtly virtuosic.

Galina Gorelova (often transliterated from the Belarusian as Halina Harelava), was born in Minsk, Belarus, in 1951. After learning the piano as a child, Gorelova entered the Belarusian State Academy of Music, Minsk in 1972 to study composition with Anatoly Bogatyrev and Dmitry Smolsky. From 1983 to 1989 she attended the Tchaikovsky State Conservatory, Moscow, where her teacher was Yuri Fortunatov. Her creative output has been prolific and includes eleven concertos and other orchestral works, a quantity of chamber music, choral pieces and songs, as well as a number of instrumental works for a wide range of instruments and several guitar compositions. The *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* commends the lyricism and poetic spirituality of her music. Among her most eminent works are the *Guitar Concerto* (1994), the *Percussion Concerto* (2009), *Tisyacha let nadeshdi* (A Thousand Years of Hope) (c. 1990), and *Anno mundis ardentis*, awarded the State Prize of Belarus in 1992.

The Castle of Mir is in the nature of a Baroque chaconne and refers to the famous sixteenth-century fortification (a UNESCO World Heritage site), in the town of Mir, in the Grodno region of Belarus. The music evokes the majestic architecture in its slower passages, and these are set against episodes of rapid agitation which bring to mind the castle's turbulent history. *Prelude and Fugue* owes more to the example of Shostakovich than to those of J. S. Bach. Both movements deploy a contemporary musical vocabulary, providing a worthy fugal structure to the solo guitar repertoire which, apart from notable examples (such as those by Ponce and Arnold), is somewhat lacking in this

form. These works are arranged for guitar by Pavel Kukhta with an endorsement by the composer herself.

Leo Brouwer (b. 1939) from Havana, Cuba, is universally acknowledged as one of the most challenging and innovative of contemporary composers. His prolific output ranges from solo guitar pieces to symphonic works, including concertos, chamber music, and many film scores. Brouwer's guitar works have developed over four decades through various styles embracing the avant-garde and the experimental, as well as neo-romanticism. His guitar music is now performed internationally wherever the guitar is played and frequently recorded, making him one of the most popular of twentieth-century composers for the instrument.

El Decamerón Negro (The Black Decameron) (1981) proved to be one of the most frequently performed and recorded of Brouwer's compositions. The title appears to refer to the title of a collection of forty erotic tales from Central Africa by Leo Frobenius (1873–1938), German ethnologist, archaeologist, and traveller. However Brouwer's impressionistic legends do not adhere specifically to Frobenius's book but establish the composer's own representation of an Afro-Cuban fusion of influences.

Sonata del Decamerón Negro (*Sonata No. 3*), dedicated to the Greek guitarist, Costas Cotsiolis, is a later work, first published in 2012. An ambitious and substantial work of a virtuoso nature, the sonata is particularly colourful with each movement taking a central image for its imaginative stimulus. So far relatively obscure, this work will surely rapidly establish itself as one of the finest masterpieces of the modern repertoire.

The first movement, *Güijes y Gnomos* (*Elves and Gnomes*) takes the subject of mythical Cuban entities, similar to the leprechauns of Ireland, legendary tiny inhabitants of the countryside around whose imaginary existence many folk-tales are related. After an introduction reminiscent of elements of *El Decamerón Negro*, the earlier work, with its angular rhythms and snatches of melody contrasted against chords and arpeggiated episodes, a slow

movement recreates the music of Luys Milán's sixteenth-century vihuela. This style alternates strong chords with fast scale runs. After this interlude, the original theme returns and the movement concludes with a short agitated coda.

Treno por Oyá (Lamentation for Oyá) celebrates Oyá the powerful Yoruba goddess of winds and tempests, a fierce warrior and protector of women. As the goddess of change, she is also believed to watch over the dying and assist them with the transition into the afterlife. After a tranquil beginning with bell-like harmonics, the music takes the form of a slow habanera leading on to a *molto vivace* section of great energy. A vigorous finale of intricate virtuosity concludes the movement.

Burlesca del Aire (The Dance of the Wind) takes the subtitle of *Scherzo*, featuring many changes of time signature and rhythmic patterns of a syncopated kind interspersed with arpeggios and agitated chords. Once again a short *lento* interlude is merely the calm before the storm as the first tempo returns followed by an exciting arpeggiated coda.

The final movement, *La Risa de los Griots* (The Smile of the Storyteller) at times evokes the kora, the plucked chordophone of West Africa accompanying the storyteller's legends. This astonishingly virtuosic movement also provides dramatic contrasts of mood and tempo.

Joaquín Rodrigo (1901–1999), composer of the renowned guitar concerto, *Concierto de Aranjuez*, is universally acknowledged as one of the great Spanish composers of the twentieth century. Though blind from childhood Rodrigo wrote almost two hundred works, including orchestral, choral and ballet music, many concertos, a host of songs, and a quantity of instrumental solos for pianoforte, guitar, violin, cello, and other instruments. The composer's contribution to the guitar is now appreciated as one of the central pillars of the concert repertoire. Rodrigo's compositions for solo guitar comprise no more than some 25 titles. Yet the significance of his output is far greater than the sum of its parts because of his extraordinary insight into the nature of the guitar, developed over decades.

Rodrigo's *Toccata* remained a mystery to the outside world for decades, though mentioned in a letter to Regino

Sáinz de la Maza of 22 May 1936, where the composer promised the performer a new guitar piece 'after the enormous and unparalleled fiasco of the *Toccata*'. It was not until 2005 that the manuscript of *Toccata* was discovered in the Regino Sáinz de la Maza archives, with the indication that it had been written in Estivella in August 1933.

From the outset *Toccata* establishes its credentials as an extraordinarily virtuosic work, its energetic momentum interrupted merely by two short expressive passages before once again embarking on its headlong flight. It is clearly a guitar piece well ahead of its era, awaiting a time when the technique of guitarists could reach a kind of parity with that of leading violinists or pianists. Since its discovery, *Toccata* has become an accepted part of the international repertoire.

Roberto Gerhard (1896–1970), son of a Swiss father and French mother, was born in Valls, Catalonia. He studied with Granados and Pedrell in Barcelona and later with Schoenberg in Vienna and Berlin. Following the Spanish Civil War, Gerhard went into exile, settling in Cambridge, England. His compositions include four symphonies, ballets, an opera (*The Duenna*), a violin concerto, and chamber music.

His *Fantasia* (1957) uses traditional elements of the guitar in a highly original way. Lines of melodic fragments in the opening *andante* section contrast with rich chords and harmonics, increasing in complexity of texture as the music quickens its pace. A middle section, *molto vivace*, uses plucked chords percussively and brilliantly, the harmonies being very different from conventional guitar patterns yet comfortably idiomatic. After the flurry of this section, which recalls as from a distance the vigour of dance rhythms, the quieter mood returns. The whole piece is an exercise in guitar colour and varying timbres.

Eduardo Morales-Caso, born in Havana, Cuba, in 1969, studied in Havana and Madrid with a number of teachers including Carlos Fariñas, Joaquín Clerch and Antón García Abril. He was awarded a doctorate in music from the Complutense University of Madrid in 2014, and currently resides in Spain. Morales-Caso won first prize in the XIV Andrés Segovia International Composition Competition in 2001 and his works for guitar have been performed by many eminent guitarists. His prolific output of compositions

includes pieces for orchestra, concertos, chamber music, choral works and songs, instrumental solos for piano, guitar, and clarinet, and also electroacoustic music.

El Jardín de Lindaraja (The Garden of Lindaraja), depicting a garden in the Alhambra Palace of Granada, was first performed in the Okurayama Kinen Hall, Tokyo in 2001. The piece has been described as 'a fantasy that pushes and pulls the guitar in many directions while bringing out every tonal capability and timbre the instrument has to offer ... ternary in its structure, the work opens with a very imaginative introduction that delivers rich colours, creating a mysterious dream-like atmosphere...The next section is the exact opposite, filled with running scales, arpeggios and intense rhythmically strummed chords ... Alternating lyrical and rhythmic sections push the boundaries and dynamic possibilities of the guitar'.

The brothers **Sergio** and Odair **Assad**, born in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1952 and 1956 respectively, are not only one of the top classical guitar duos in the world but also eminent solo recitalists with international careers. They studied in their formative years in Rio de Janeiro with the guitarist/utenist Monina Távora, a student of Segovia. Their virtuosity has inspired many composers including Piazzolla, Riley, Gnattali, Nobre, Koshkin, Dyens, Morel, Krieger and Mignone, to dedicate pieces to them. Sergio Assad, acknowledged as one of the finest contemporary composers

for the guitar, has a long list of works in his catalogue.

Fantasia Carioca (1994) is a meditation on the city of Rio de Janeiro. The original word 'kar'i oka' originated from the indigenous Tupi language and means 'white man's house'. The Portuguese settlers took this word as *Carioca*. Sergio Assad's composition threads its way through many emotions, some introspective, others more agitated, ranging from implicit melancholy to moments of elation.

Roland Dyens, born in Tunisia of French nationality in 1955, is a leading guitarist/composer and a distinguished teacher at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique, Paris. His concerts throughout the world offer improvisatory pieces as well as an extensive repertoire of original works. His profound knowledge of contemporary harmony co-exists with a vivid mastery of jazz and rock aspects which appear in various manifestations throughout his compositions.

Blue Montuno is a gently plaintive evocation of Cuban moods. *Montuno* means 'from the mountains'. It is a Cuban rhythm of African origin, one of the components of the salsa, and may indicate elements of the older kinds of music played in the rural mountain areas of Oriente. The subtle contrasts of harmonics and chords at the opening evolve into a reminiscence of a repetitive quasi-folk theme with an ostinato bass line imparting a delightful textural quality.

Graham Wade

Pavel Kukhta

The guitarist Pavel Kukhta was born in 1984 in Grodno, where he first studied with V. Zakharau. Having graduated from the Academy of Music in Minsk he entered the Master Course under E. Gridushko, supported by grants from the Belarusian Ministry of Culture and from the Special President Fund. Pavel Kukhta is a laureate of a number of international guitar competitions. His awards include first prize and special prize for the best interpretation of a John Duarte work at the IX John Duarte International Guitar Competition (Rust, Austria, 2007), second prize and audience choice award at the Tenth Leo Brouwer International Competition (Antony, France, 2009), third prize at the XLV Michele Pittaluga International Guitar Competition (Alessandria, Italy, 2012), second prize and audience choice award at the XLVIII Francisco Tárrega International Competition (Benicàssim, Spain, 2014) and second prize at the XXX Andrés Segovia International Competition (Almunecar, Spain, 2014). In May 2015 Pavel Kukhta won first prize in the Sixth International Guitar Competition in Heinsberg (Germany), for which he was given the opportunity to record for Naxos, the first Belarusian to record for this company. At present Pavel Kukhta is a soloist of the Belarusian State Philharmonic and he enjoys an active concert life in Belarus and abroad.

This recital by the Belarusian guitarist Pavel Kukhta, winner of the 2015 Heinsberg International Guitar Competition, offers a diversity of composers from Belarus, Cuba, Spain, Catalonia, Brazil and France. The widely-ranging programme opens with the Baroque style of Galina Gorelova's *Castle of Mir*, Leo Brouwer's Afro-Cuban fusion of influences and the virtuosity of Rodrigo's *Toccata*. Then we hear the unconventional timbres of Roberto Gerhard's *Fantasia* and Eduardo Morales-Caso's boundary-pushing fantasy on a garden at the Alhambra Palace. The programme ends with Sergio Assad's meditation on Rio de Janeiro and Roland Dyens' plaintive evocation of Cuban moods.

PAVEL KUKHTA

Guitar Recital

Galina GORELOVA (b. 1951)		Joaquín RODRIGO (1901–1999)		
1	The Castle of Mir	4:46	8 Toccata	8:11
	Preludio and Fuga *	5:02	Roberto GERHARD (1896–1970)	
2	Preludio	1:52	9 Fantasia	4:28
3	Fuga	3:10	Eduardo MORALES-CASO (b. 1969)	
Leo BROUWER (b. 1939)				
	Sonata del Decamerón Negro		10 El Jardin de Lindaraja	6:16
	‘Sonata No. 3’	20:03	Sergio ASSAD (b. 1952)	
4	I. Güijes y Gnomos	5:24	11 Fantasia Carioca	10:49
5	II. Treno por Oyá	5:46	Roland DYENS (b. 1955)	
6	III. Burlesca del Aire	3:49	12 Blue Montuno *	3:54
7	IV. La Risa de los Griots	5:03		

*** WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING**

Tracks 1–3 arr. Pavel Kukhta

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