Senior Recital

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Pulsar is a modern guitar work that was written as the set piece for The Beatty Classical Guitar Competition in 2009. A Pulsar is a highly magnetized, rotating neutron star that emits giant beams of electromagnetic rays into space. While the harmonies in this piece are more conservative as far as other modern works are concerned, it is up to the performer to try and bring “space” sounding element to the performance. “Pulsar” also features a catchy melody that can be heard throughout the piece.

Siguenza Federico Moreno Torroba Torija (1891-1982)

These two works are part of a large set of pieces called Castillos de Espana. Torroba wrote Castillos de Espana for the famous guitarist Andres Segovia in 1970. Segovia was responsible for bringing the classical guitar to the concert stage and in turn, composer who were non-guitarists wanted to write for the guitar. In previous centuries, guitar repertoire was mainly limited to compositions that were written by guitarists. But due to Segovia’s rising popularity, composers began seeing the guitar as a concert worthy instrument and they wanted their music to be heard on it. Some of the most wonderful guitar music ever written, such as Castillos de Espana, was written by non-guitarists because the composer is not influenced by what is easy or difficult to play on the guitar. The composer is therefore only limited to his or her imagination of what the guitar will sound like on stage.

Program Notes by Nathan Brown

Works Cited

“Mauro Giuliani : a life for the guitar” (GFA Refereed Monographs, 2) : Published as an e-book (Kindle, ePub) by the Guitar Foundation of America( 2013).
pretty melodies, and South American style characteristics such as accented off-beats, syncopation

These pieces are four Venezuelan Waltzes written by Antonio Lauro. They feature fast tempos, and hemiola. Lauro was both a political activist and cultural nationalist and he was determined to celebrate his nation's roots through the music that he wrote. He tried to preserve the integrity of Venezuelan music by drawing from composers from the past century, but he also wanted to express ideas of political change in his music as well. In fact, he was jailed in 1951 simply for his belief in democracy, but he was able to forget the experience and continue composing. Lauro has left behind many great works for the guitar and he is one of the composers credited for the large expansion of guitar repertoire that took place in the 20th century.

~Intermission~

Variations on a Theme of Handel
Mauro Giuliani
(1781-1829)

Mauro Giuliani was an Italian composer and guitarist whose works reflect the style of the High Classical style period. This piece is a theme and variations, which means that there is a beginning section where the main melody of the piece is heard and then there are subsequent sections called variations where the melody is altered to the composers liking. Giuliani enjoyed comic opera, especially the works of Rossini, and therefore each variation seems to exemplify some sort of character that might be found in these slapstick comedies. What is also interesting about this piece, is that the theme Giuliani uses is actually the melody to a set of variations written by George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) called the “Harmonious Blacksmith”. By Giuliani writing his own theme and variations, he was not only honoring a great composer of the past but was also composing contemporary music by bringing elements of comic opera into his work.

La Catedral
Augustin Barrios
(1885-1944)

La Catedral is Augustin Barrios’ most famous work. The piece is comprised of three movements: Preludio Saudade, Andante Religioso, and Allegro Solemn. Originally, Barrios composed Andante Religioso, and Allegro Solemn in 1929, and he later added the Preludio Saudade in 1939 as his health was declining. “La Catedral” is interpreted as having religious implications and many think that movements represent the spiritual atmosphere experienced inside a cathedral. Lastly, there are theories to suggest that “La Catedral” was Barrios’ tribute to Bach, but these are all speculations of researchers who have little written evidence from Barrios himself. What can be said is that “La Catedral” is a breathtaking guitar piece and for that reason alone, many guitarists choose to perform it.