

October 22, 2017 Program

Antigoni Goni - Classical Guitar

Francisco Tárrega (1852-1909)

Endecha y Oremus
Rosita

Dušan Bogdanović (b. 1955)

*Hymn to the Muse***

Hymn to the Muse (after Mesomedes)
First Delphic Hymn to Apollo (first fragment)
First Delphic Hymn to Apollo (second fragment)
Second Delphic Hymn to Apollo
Hymn to Nemesis (after Mesomedes)
Epitaph to Seikilos

Carlo Domeniconi (b. 1947)

Koyunbaba (Suite for guitar)

* * * * * INTERMISSION * * * * *

Manos Hadjidakis (1925-1994)
(Arr. Tulio Peramo)

*Giokonda's smile ***

Returning in an evening

Atanas Ourkouzounov (b. 1970)

*4 Greek miniatures ***

Pleading Song,
Joyous Love Song,
Lament,
Leaping Dance

Mikis Theodorakis (b. 1925)

Epitafios

Mera Magiou (A Day in May)
Edises, asteri mou (You Have Set, My Star)

José Luis Merlin (b. 1952)

Suite del Recuerdo

Evocacion
Zamba
Chacarera
Carnavalito
Evocacion

** Dedicated to Antigoni Goni

Program Notes

Born in the Spanish province of Villarreal, **Francisco Tárrega** (1852-1909) was one of the most influential guitarists of the Romantic era. This set of miniatures opens with Tárrega's original prelude *Endecha*. It is complimented by *Oremus*, Tárrega's transcription of the piano work *Phantasietanz* by Robert Schumann, completed thirteen days before Tárrega's death in 1909. The title of the capricho *L'Aborada* translates to "dawn." *Maria* is in the form of a gavotte, a French folk dance, and was the name of Tárrega's wife and daughter. A lively Bohemian polka is the basis for *Rosita*, dedicated by the composer to Dr. Rosita Gonzalez de Melo.

Carlo Domeniconi (b. 1947) is an Italian guitarist and composer known for his fusion of multicultural influences. He draws on the culture, musical traditions and landscapes of Turkey, India, Brazil, and other countries around the globe. Domeniconi is most well known for his guitar work *Koyunbaba*, a four-movement guitar suite inspired by Southwest Turkey and the calm nature of the life of a shepherd. This hypnotic guitar solo requires tuning the guitar to C# minor. "The title can be interpreted in two ways; first as 'shepherd' (Koyun = sheep, baba = father) or secondly as the name of a thirteenth-century holy man who lived in Southwest Turkey, an area that now bears his name" states John Duarte, the late British guitarist, composer, and writer, as he describes the strong influence of Turkish music, landscape, and culture in *Koyunbaba*. "The two are brought together in Domeniconi's concept, that a shepherd is uniquely given both the time and insight to contemplate and understand the vastness and immense power of Nature. The area of Koyunbaba, with its spectacular and contrasting land and seascape, is particularly conducive to such profound thoughts, mirrored in the eponymous music. Each of the four movements develops a separate mood in the hypnotic fashion of eastern music and on a time-scale that reflects the unhurried life of both shepherd and mystic, using a wide range of the guitar's available devices and textures."

José Luis Merlin, born in Argentina in 1952, is a guitar virtuoso and composer who blends his background in classical guitar with his Argentinian, Ukrainian-Jewish, and Spanish roots to craft music that is uniquely his own. *Suite del Recuerdo* uses South American folk dance forms and melodies as the basis for this nostalgic work. Merlin relates this work to memories. "This is an homage to memories, my memories. To the collective memories of my people living in nostalgia, tormented, anguished, happy and hopeful. Memories from the country, in San Luis, with all the smells and sounds from the country. It is like looking inside yourself in very profound silence. Memories of afternoons with grandparents, aunts and uncles, parents, brothers, sisters, cousins. All enjoying each other, sharing our feelings and playing guitar, sitting in the backyard drinking wine, under the vines. Lots of them are not here anymore. They are in my memories." *Program notes on Tárrega, Domeniconi, and Merlin by Satchel Henneman.*

Greek Music on Guitar

The classical guitar in Greece is a formidable musical force with its own traditions and characteristics. Since the pioneering efforts of Dimitri Fampas (1921-1996,) the founding father of the Greek guitar's popularity, a player deeply influenced by Andres Segovia (who performed in Greece in 1931,) the instrument has flourished. Many Greek composers have written works of quality for the guitar and over the decades a considerable number of guitarists of international stature (of whom Antigoni Goni is one of the most eminent,) have enlivened and enriched the concert platform. However, composers do not necessarily have to be born in Greece to aspire to write 'Greek music.' The vitality of Greek folk music stimulates a range of foreign composers to create a guitar repertoire using Hellenic idioms and techniques.

Dušan Bogdanović, born in Belgrade, Serbia, is a American composer and concert guitarist whose compositions bring together classical, jazz and ethnic influences. As a performer, he has toured world-wide. At the Geneva Conservatoire, Bogdanović studied composition with Pierre Wissmer and Alberto Ginastera, and guitar with Maria Livia Sao Marcos. He has taught at the University of Southern California and the San Francisco Conservatory and is currently teaching at the Haute Ecole de Musique, Geneva.

With over one hundred published compositions to his credit as well as many recordings, Bogdanović was a founding member of the Falla Guitar Trio, an ensemble which explores diverse styles of music such as Afro-Latin, jazz, light classical, and mainstream pop in an acoustic guitar setting. *Hymn to the Muse*, composed in 2005, was premiered by Antigoni Goni the same year in the Herbst Theater, San Francisco. The composition, in six movements, celebrates the poems and music of ancient Greece. The first and fifth of these commemorate Mesomedes of Crete, poet and musician, who lived during the 2nd century AD, in the time of the Roman Emperor Hadrian. Fifteen of his poems have survived, including *Hymn to the Muse* and *Hymn to the Nemesis*. *Delphic Hymns to Apollo* are two compositions from ancient Greece, which survive in substantial fragments inscribed on the walls of the Athenian Treasury at Delphi. *Epitaph to Seikilos* probably dates from the 1st century AD. The song, with its melody and verse in ancient Greek musical notation, engraved on a tombstone near Aydin, Turkey, was first discovered in 1883. *The Hymn* is the oldest surviving complete musical sample. At the end of Bogdanović's composition, the theme appears complete and intact as it was discovered almost 2000 years ago. Dušan Bogdanović has provided the following comments for his composition *Hymn to the Muse*: "When I began composing this work, my instincts led me to the few remaining fragments of the ancient Hellenic musical past...I have chosen this piece to be a bridge between the abyss of the long departed and the mystery of the ever-present. The language of ancient Greek music speaks of the intimately personal as well as the collectively mythical. In creating a modal and rhythmic world for each movement, I followed the implications of the architecture of each fragment. Thus the simpler meter of the *First Delphic Hymn to Apollo* (5/8) alternates with a more complex meter of the *Hymn to Nemesis* (15/8). A variety of techniques imitate guitar-related instruments (such as the lyre, the lute or the kithara), with note-bends, ornaments, arpeggios and percussive effects."

Atanas Ourkouzounov, from Sofia, Bulgaria, began his guitar studies with Dimitar Doitchinov, continuing later in France with Arnaud Dumond, Alexandre Lagoya and Olivier Chassain. He also studied guitar, chamber music, analysis, ethnomusicology and improvisation at the Paris Conservatory, graduating in 1997 with first prize in guitar. He has composed over eighty works for guitar and his music is

performed and recorded internationally by many leading recitalists. Ourkouzounov has won a number of prestigious composition prizes and given recitals world-wide. He holds a professorial post at the Conservatoire Maurice Ravel in Paris. 4 *Greek Miniatures*, composed in 2008 and premiered in Paris by the composer in that same year, are dedicated to Antigoni Goni. The composer has commented: "The concept was to create miniatures based on Greek folklore. In the first two movements I have made use of the traditional Greek songs sent to me by Antigoni. In the third miniature I used a Macedonian theme. The fourth piece is not an authentic folk theme. The traditional music of this region (Greece, Bulgaria, Macedonia) is very vivacious and the frontiers between traditional music and new music based on folklore are not truly visible. We find folk music in all genres of music – jazz, classical and contemporary. This is why it is very natural for me to make use of such an approach, mixing traditional themes with a more personal musical language which carries on whatever kind of tradition." The traditional melodies in the two Miniatures, *Pleading Love Song* and *Joyous Love Song*, were provided by Antigoni Goni. As a child her first experience of performing onstage was to dance to these songs in a children's group. In *Pleading Love Song*, one lover begs the other, 'Do not leave me. Let's talk. Let's work things out. I cannot live without you.' In contrast, *Joyous Love Song* declares: 'Sunday, I first saw her. Monday and Tuesday, I fell in love with her. Wednesday, I kissed her; Thursday, I asked for her hand; Friday, I adorned her with a gold necklace; and on Saturday, I danced with her at our wedding.'

As Michael Lorimer comments, the composer complements his settings of these two traditional songs from the Greek islands with music he created in the Greek style, invoking the mainland. *Lament* is a poignant and orchestral dialogue of natural tones and bell-like harmonics. It is in typical Macedonian rhythm (3+2+2.) *Leaping Dance* evokes the athletic Greek dance that originated in rugged mountainous areas. With a colorful and virtuosic interplay of slurs played by the left hand, harmonics played by the right hand, string slaps, and percussive thumps, the guitarist portrays the lead dancer's dazzling leaps, turns, and fancy maneuvers.

Manos Hadjidakis, born in Xanthi, Greece, started piano lessons at the age of four, and also played violin and accordion. After the death of his father in 1938, the family endured much financial hardship. He began studying musical theory in the 1940s and was a member of the Greek Resistance against the Nazi occupation. During this time he met Mikis Theodorakis, with whom he established a firm friendship. In 1949 he attracted much criticism when he gave a lecture on rebetiko (urban folksong,) which at the time was somewhat disdained by the academies. He became famous in 1960 for his song *Never on Sunday*, featured in the film of that name, for which he received an Academy Award.

Between 1967 and 1972 Hadjidakis lived in New York. On his return to Greece he was in due course appointed director of music programs for Hellenic Radio during the time of the government of Karamanlis, along with directorships of leading Greek orchestras. When Papandreou came to power, Hadjidakis moved on to found a record company and become editor of an art journal, as well as conducting the Orchestra ton Chromaton (Orchestra of the Colors.)

Over the decades, Hadjidakis wrote many songs and song cycles, but also a quantity of ballet and stage works, as well as seventy-six film scores and incidental music for over sixty plays. He also produced a number of choral and instrumental works.

The *Giokonda Songs*, arranged here by one of Cuba's leading composers, **Tulio Peramo**, were written after Hadjidakis observed a lonely woman in a New York City parade: "I lost sight of her. I ran a little way ahead, stood on tiptoe in the hope of catching sight of her again, but the big black sea of people had swallowed her up...Without realizing it, I'd come to a stop outside Rizzoli's Bookshop and in the display window...was a book about da Vinci with the Gioconda on the cover. Incredibly enigmatic, she smiled to me, automatically enlarged to the size of the woman who'd just disappeared down the street. I don't know why all these elements became strangely tangled up within myself, together with an exquisite motif by Vivaldi, which I had heard several days before this and which had continued ever since, plaguing my memory tyrannically. These ten songs were composed with a blend of despair and reminiscences. The theme is a solitary woman in the big city. Each song is a monologue of hers and all the songs together compose her story. A story which is modern and, yet at the same time, old."

Mikis Theodorakis is the most famous Greek composer of the 20th century. Following his participation as a communist in the Greek Civil War (1944-9,) Theodorakis was put in prison and exiled (1949-52) and did not return to Greece until 1960. In the intervening years he studied at the Paris Conservatoire with Messiaen and Bigot and won a number of prestigious international composition prizes. Having returned to his homeland, the composer wrote many songs, the first of which was *Epitaphios* (1960.) Theodorakis's international fame spread when he wrote the theme, *Zorba the Greek* (1964.) Following the establishment of the Greek dictatorship in 1967, he was again imprisoned and then found exile in Paris. He returned to Greece in 1974 and became a minister of state in the government in 1983. His prolific output includes many dramatic works including operas, ballets and music for plays, orchestral works, choral pieces and song cycles, film scores, and instrumental compositions. The eminent Greek poet, Yiannis Ritsos (1909-90) was inspired to write *Epitaphios* (Epitaphs,) a sequence of twenty stanzas following a tobacco workers demonstration in Thessaloniki during May 1936, where thirty men were killed and three hundred injured. On seeing a photograph in the Athenian newspaper Rizospastis of a mother kneeling with her son's corpse, Ritsos wrote *Epitaphios* in two days and two nights. The poetry rapidly achieved popularity but was banned and publicly burned by the regime at the columns of the Temple of Olympian Zeus in Athens. In 1958 Theodorakis composed eight songs based on verses from eleven of the twenty stanzas of *Epitaphios*. *Mera Mayiou* (A day in May) the third in Theodorakis's settings, contains these lines: "A day in May you left me, on a day in May I lost you... My son, you told me all those wonderful things would be ours, but now you have died, our brightness and fire are gone." *Edises, asteri mou* (You have set, my star), the fourth stanza, reads: "My star, you have set, all Creation has set... Now you are shrouded in flags. Sleep, my son, and I shall go to your brothers, taking your voice with me."

Program notes on Greek Music on Guitar by Graham Wade, reprinted here with his express permission.