A Senior Classical Guitar Recital

By: Daniel Esposito

World Music Hall

Tuesday, April 18th
Pavanas I, II, and IV
- Luis de Milán (1536)

Introduction and Variations
on a Theme by Mozart - Fernando Sor (1821)

The Spanish guitarist and composer Fernando Sor (1778–1839) was considered by his contemporaries to be the greatest guitarist in the world, and his works for guitar have been widely played and reprinted since his death.

Sor's Introduction and Variations on a theme by Mozart, op. 9, is one of his most famous works. First published in London in 1821, the theme is adapted from Mozart's "Das Klinget so Herrlich," an ensemble piece from Act I of Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute). Sor adds a dramatic introduction in minor mode to precede Mozart's theme, which he then treats to five variations, in a variety of styles, and a coda. The work has been described as a "testing ground for every aspiring guitarist."

Luis de Milán (c. 1500 - c. 1561) was a Spanish Renaissance composer who wrote music for the vihuela de mano, a guitar-like instrument that circulated predominantly in Spain and Portugal but also in Italy during the 15th and 16th centuries. The main body of Luis de Milán's compositions come from his 1536 book, Libro de música de vihuela de mano intitulado El maestro. Within this book are six pavanas for the vihuela.

The pavana (pavane in English) is a type of dance that originated in Italy—the name pavana may be derived from the Italian Padovana, being from the city of Padova—but became associated with Spain. Pavanas were most popular during the period 1530-1676. They typically feature duple meter and follow the form A-A'-B-B'-C-C'.

In each of the three pavanas here performed, in addition to the broad structural similarity of A-A' sections, etc., you will notice more immediate "echoing" of the melody within any given section that invites variation of both timbre and dynamic range.
Étude No. 1
- Heitor Villa-Lobos (1929)

Heitor Villa-Lobos was a Brazilian composer who lived 1887–1959. His music blended the sounds of Brazilian folk music with European classical styles. In the 1920s, Villa-Lobos met famed guitarist Andrés Segovia, who commissioned a guitar study. As a response to this commission, Villa-Lobos wrote Twelve Studies for Guitar (published 1929, Paris), each one focusing on a single element of guitar technique.

Étude No. 1 in E minor emphasizes right hand technique, though it also features interesting left hand chord progressions. The repetitious, harp-like right hand arpeggio pattern is broken only twice in the piece: once for a rapid descending line back to E minor, and once more at the end of the piece, when a line of harmonics leads to a fermata on E.

Sonata in A minor for Arpeggione and Piano, 1st movement, D.821 – Franz Schubert (1824)

Arranged by Julian Waddell, Daniel Esposito, Cem Duruöz

Austrian composer Franz Schubert (1797–1828) likely wrote this sonata for a friend, Vincenz Schuster, who was a virtuoso of the newly invented arpeggione, an instrument that was strung and fretted like a guitar but bowed like a cello. Modern renditions of the piece mostly feature viola or cello in place of the arpeggione.

The first movement of the sonata is here performed as a guitar duet, with Julian Waddell performing an arrangement of the piano part, while Dan plays an arrangement of the arpeggione part.
Capricho Árabe – Francisco Tárrega (1892)

Francisco Tárrega (1852 – 1909) was a Spanish composer and classical guitarist of the Romantic period. He is credited with increasing interest in guitar as a recital instrument, and preferred smaller, more intimate performances.

The Spanish word "capricho" literally means "whim," while the Italian equivalent, "capriccio" is derived from the words "capo" (head) and "riccio" (hedgehog), and means a "head with the hair standing on end." The word "capricho" came to signify a lively piece of music. This, combined with the heavy Arab musical influence on the piece, make Capricho Árabe an apt title. The dramatic opening passage sets the tone, and its rapid, descending 16th note pattern reappears as a theme throughout.

Grand Solo Op. 14 – Fernando Sor (1822)

One of Fernando Sor's most important works for guitar, Grand Solo mirrors the sonatas of Mozart and Haydn in both structure and scale (~9-10 minutes long). A slow, minor introduction gives way to a lively first theme that features a repeating low D bass note. A second, "dolce" theme emerges. Throughout the exposition, the repeating bass note pulse reappears to drive forward the narrative. The development is tumultuous and emotional, and leads eventually to a recapitulation that brings back the first theme in full force. The ending features a tease in which playing stops abruptly for dramatic effect.
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