VILLEGAS: MASTER OF GUITAR
2018-19 HAL & JEANETTE SEGERSTROM FAMILY FOUNDATION CLASSICAL SERIES

Carlos Izcaray, conductor
Pablo Sáinz-Villegas, guitar

Ravel

RAPSODIE ESPAGNOLE
- Prélude à la nuit
- Malagueña
- Habanera
- Feria

Rodrigo

CONCIERTO DE ARANJUEZ
- Allegro con spirito
- Adagio
- Allegro gentile
Pablo Sáinz-Villegas

Intermission

Piazzolla

LIBERTANGO FOR GUITAR AND STRINGS
Pablo Sáinz-Villegas

Abreu

“TICO-TICO NO FUBÁ” FOR GUITAR AND STRINGS
Pablo Sáinz-Villegas

Unknown

“ROMANCE” FROM JEUX INTERDITS
Pablo Sáinz-Villegas

Piazzolla

SINFONÍA BUENOS AIRES
- Moderato - Allegretto
- Lento, con anima
- Presto marcato

The Thursday night performance is generously sponsored by Avenue of the Arts Costa Mesa, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel.
The Friday night performance is generously sponsored by Symphony 100.
The Saturday night performance is generously sponsored by our Board of Counselors.

This concert is being recorded for broadcast on Sunday, July 14, 2019, at 7 p.m. on Classical KUSC.
PABLO VILLEGAS GUITAR RECITAL

SPECIAL CONCERT

Pablo Sáinz-Villegas, guitar & curator

Albéniz
Granados
Granados
Barrios
Unknown
Albéniz
Tárrega
Tárrega

"SEVILLA" FROM SUITE ESPAÑOLA
SPANISH DANCE NO. 10 "MELANCÓLICA"
SPANISH DANCE NO. 5 "ANDALUZA"
"TANGO ZAPATEADO"
"SPANISH ROMANCE"
"ASTURIAS" FROM SUITE ESPAÑOLA
"RECUERDOS DE LA ALHAMBRA"
"GRAN JOTA DE CONCIERTO"

Saturday, May 4, 2019 @ 4 p.m.
Segerstrom Center for the Arts
Samueli Theater
Not that France is exactly polar—it has the Mediterranean, the Riviera, the Camargue—but its classical tradition is of cool understatement and rigorous, disciplined technique.

For composers such as Chabrier, Lalo, Bizet, Massenet and Debussy, Spain represented something irresistibly different: a place of magic and magnetism, of bright sunshine and hot blood where sensuality took precedence over elegance. These composers put all put their fascination to musical descriptions of Spain, and so did Ravel. But geography and circumstance gave him a closer claim on Iberia. He was born in the Basses-Pyrenees, just a few miles from the Spanish border, and as a child was fascinated by his Basque mother’s exquisitely refined descriptions of Spanish culture. His evocations of its dance rhythms and expressive harmonies are authentic. No less a Spaniard than Manuel de Falla, who greatly admired Ravel, was astonished by what he called the Rapsodie’s Spanish character and the “subtly genuine Spanishness of Ravel.”

The Rapsodie is comprised of four brief, seductive movements. Like the Alborada del Gracioso, it was originally composed for piano (four hands), in 1907. (The Habanera movement dates back to 1895.) The following year he orchestrated it, spending more time developing the orchestral score than on the original composition. Despite limited initial success, the Rapsodie became one of Ravel’s more popular orchestral works, a spectacular early example of his mastery of orchestral color.

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But first came study. Piazzolla returned to New York, taking music lessons with the Hungarian classical pianist Bela Wilda, a student of Rachmaninoff, who taught him to play Bach on his bandoneón, a traditional Argentine form of accordion that is the melancholy inner voice of the tango. In 1934 Piazzolla met Carlos Gardel, a seminal figure in the history of the tango, who invited the young Piazzolla to tour with him. This was a great honor and opportunity, and though the boy’s father did not allow it, Piazzolla was undeterred. He returned to Buenos Aires at age 17 and joined the orchestra of bandoneónist Aníbal Troilo—another tango artist whose ensemble was destined to become a legend, one of the greatest tango orchestras of all time. Eventually, like American composers such as Copland, Gershwin and Bernstein, he made the pilgrimage to Paris to study composition with the great Nadia Boulanger. But unlike many of her prominent students, who struggled to find their “voice,” Piazzola brought a strong sense of national and personal identity with him.

With his classical training and Argentinian soul, Piazzolla embodied the tango, expanded it, and transcended it. His tango-based compositions often specifically reference European forms and even quote themes from composers such as Vivaldi. But he does so in a distinctively Argentinian way, transforming instrument and instrumentalist into dance partners. In his music we hear the spirit of the tango, something we cannot hear in the music of European composers. Even without classical composition, this remarkable dance is a language unto itself that speaks with fiery eroticism tinged with melancholy and introspection. Applying 20th-century harmonic theory and his own unique style, Piazzolla opens a world of expressiveness to listeners.

Piazzolla published and recorded Libertango in 1974 in Milan; to name it, he crafted the Spanish word for liberty onto the musical form for which he was famous. Critics tell us that the title expresses his liberation from the constraints of classical tango form in favor of the freer Tango Nuevo style. Dating from 1951, the Sinfonia Buenos Aires is considerably earlier and more youthful. Buenos Aires was the city where Piazzolla had studied with composer Alberto Ginastera, and the Sinfonia is a compelling amalgam of Piazzolla’s early influences, especially Ginastera’s formal attachment to European classical traditions and Piazzolla’s to Argentinian
tango: his awareness of Stravinsky’s accomplishments can also be heard. In his instrumentation we hear the tang of the bandoneón—an inclusion that aroused controversy when the Sinfonia won the Fabian Sevitzky Award in 1953.

Zequinha de Abreu: "Tico-Tico no Fubá" for Guitar and Strings, Arr. Russ

The song “Tico-Tico,” an enduring international hit, passed the century mark two years ago; it was composed in 1917 by Zequinha de Abreu, a Portuguese émigré to Brazil. But its global popularity, launched in Hollywood, came later. Dating from a 1937 movie, Ethel Smith’s performance of an arrangement for theater organ sold more than two million worldwide. A decade later, in Copacabana, the “Brazilian Bombshell” Carmen Miranda sang it opposite Groucho Marx and made a sensation with American-style covers. But in Brazilian music, which does not exile pop forms from classical traditions, “Tico-Tico” is actually a choro—a song form that typically shrugs off misfortune with good humor, good tunes and fast tempos. The title refers to a bird that got into the cornmeal, but we can imagine the same kind of grousing over morning coffee at the office.

Unknown: “Romance” from Jeux Interdits

We don’t know who composed this brief, beguiling romance, but every note of its haunting melody is familiar to lovers of the classical guitar. If it is not difficult to learn, playing it well is another matter: its apparent simplicity conceals technical pitfalls and expressive challenges. The tune wavers between major and minor, underlined by an ostinato accompaniment of broken chords. With one hand, the guitarist must articulate both contrasting lines to ardent effect. They proceed with a uniform pulse that must be maintained smoothly, together yet separate, like two beating hearts. This is no time for shyness.

The name by which we know this piece in the concert hall, “Jeux Interdits” (“Forbidden Games”), is deceptive. It is taken from French director René Clément’s 1952 film of that name, which uses the music as counterpoint to the experiences of two children caught in heartbreaking circumstances during World War II. The cinematic connection places this romance in the category of pieces that have been renamed by moviegoers, such as Mozart’s “Elvira Madigan Concerto” (his Piano Concerto No. 21) and Strauss’ Also Sprach Zarathustra (now better known as “the theme from 2001”).

Michael Clive is a cultural reporter living in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. He is program annotator for Pacific Symphony and Louisiana Philharmonic, and editor-in-chief for The Santa Fe Opera.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:

Avenue of the Arts Hotel: The Avenue of the Arts Hotel Costa Mesa is a Tribute Portfolio property, breaking beyond the typical hotel experience with eclectic arts-inspired design, inventive culinary creations and an ideal location in the theater and arts district. The hotel celebrates the very best in human expression, and by doing so, creates a perfect space to be yourself. Beyond captivating design, the hotel features a unique social scene with sincere service, dedicated to helping patrons make the most of every moment.

Symphony 100: Symphony 100 is an exclusive membership group that offers members adult music education opportunities, lunches with artists, and several unique events or field trips annually. Membership is limited to 100 women, who support special projects of the Symphony through an annual contribution of $1,000.

Board of Counselors: The Board of Counselors (BOC) is a Symphony support group of business and community leaders who have a passion for orchestral music. Through private luncheons, artist receptions and other exclusive events, members expand their knowledge of music and the inner workings of the orchestra. BOC luncheons have featured Andre Watts, Pinchas Zuckerman, Hilary Hahn, Pink Martini and Michael Feinstein. These unique events enrich the member’s symphony experience and prepares members to be strong advocates for Pacific Symphony.
Carlos Izcaray is music director of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra and of the American Youth Symphony. Praised by the international press, he won top prizes at the 2007 Aspen Toscanini International Conducting Competition. Since then he has appeared with numerous ensembles across five continents and is now firmly established as one of the leading conductors of his generation. Throughout his career, Izcaray has shown special interest and prowess in tackling some of the most complex scores in the symphonic repertoire, while also championing the historically informed approach to works from past eras.

On the symphonic platform he is leading ensembles such as the St. Louis, North Carolina, Grand Rapids and Kitchener-Waterloo symphonies, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of San Antonio, Orchester der Komischen Oper Berlin, Malmö Symfoniorkester, Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini, Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música, Orchester Regionale dell’Emilia-Romagna, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, Macedonian Philharmonic, Bangkok Symphony Orchestra, Kwazulu-Natal Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, Bahia Symphony Orchestra, Salta Symphony Orchestra, Venezuela Symphony Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfónica Municipal de Caracas and Orquesta Filarmonica Nacional de Venezuela, among others. For a forthcoming release on the Orchid Classics label, Izcaray recorded Max Richter's Recomposed: Vivaldi’s Four Seasons with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and violinist Francisco Fullana. Izcaray is equally at home with opera repertoire, receiving rave reviews for his performances at the Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Utah Opera, International Opera Festival Alejandro Granda in Peru, and in particular at the Wexford Festival Opera, where he has led many productions since the opening of Ireland’s National Opera House. His 2010 performances of Virginia by Mercadante won the Best Opera prize at the Irish Theatre Awards. In November 2017, Izcaray joined Opera Omaha for Puccini’s Tosca, a new co-production with Boston Lyric Opera.

Pablo Sáinz-Villegas has become a worldwide sensation known as one of this generation's great guitarists. He has been acclaimed by the international press as the successor of Andrés Segovia and an ambassador of Spanish culture in the world. Since his early debut with the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos at Lincoln Center, he has played in more than 40 countries and with orchestras such as the Israel Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the National Orchestra of Spain.

Plácido Domingo hailed him as “the master of the guitar” from the beginning of their multiple collaborations together. They most recently released “Volver,” a duo album with Sony Classical and their performances have taken place in unique stages around the world such as the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid to an audience of over 85,000 people, at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles and on a floating stage on the Amazon River televised internationally for millions. Villegas “virtuosic playing characterized by irresistible exuberance” (The New York Times) make him one of the most acclaimed soloists by prestigious conductors, orchestras and festivals. In 2019 he will make his debut with the Chicago Symphony and will be a special guest at the tribute concert for Plácido Domingo at Guadalajara's stadium in Mexico. As a solo recitalist, he will perform for the first time at the Harris Theater in Chicago, at San Francisco Performances and at Boston’s Celebrity Series. He will also continue touring with his trio band along with a special presentation this year at the iconic Blue Note Jazz Club in New York.

Villegas has appeared on some of the world’s most prominent stages including the Carnegie Hall in New York, the Philharmonie in Berlin, Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow, the Musikverein in Vienna and the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing. During his last season he played at the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago to an audience of 11,000 people and highlights of his past international tours with orchestras include the Amsterdam Sinfonietta, the National Orchestra of Spain and the New Zealand Symphony. The success of his performances has translated into repeated invitations from conductors such as Juanjo Mena, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Carlos Kalmar and Alondra de la Parra. Regularly invited to perform at corporate and governmental events, he has played at special events for the Real Madrid Foundation and on several occasions before members of the Spanish Royal Family, as well as other heads of state and international leaders such as the Dalai Lama.

Daniel Binelli tours extensively in concert and recital. Binelli is also widely acclaimed as the foremost exponent and torchbearer of the music of Astor Piazzolla. In 1989 Binelli joined Piazzolla’s Sexteto Tango Nuevo, touring internationally. He has appeared as guest soloist with the orchestras of Philadelphia, Atlanta, Virginia, Sydney, Montreal, Ottawa, Saint Petersburg and Zurich’s Tonhalle Orchestra, to name but a few. Some of the conductors Binelli has worked with include Charles Dutoit, Lalo Schifrin, Franz-Paul Decker, Robert Spano, JoAnn Faletta, Giisèle Ben-Dor, Isaiah Jackson, Michael Christie, Lior Shambadal and Daniel Schweitzer. Binelli conducted Piazzolla’s opus 86, “María de Buenos Aires” in Sicily with Italian singer, Milva in the title role. Binelli’s collaborations include duo performances with pianist Polly Ferrman and guitarist Eduardo Isaac, as well as with the Binelli-Ferman-Isaac Trio. Binelli is the musical director of Tango Metropolis Company, featured in the PBS Documentary “Tango, the Spirit of Argentina” and in a BBC documentary on Astor Piazzolla’s life. A seasoned composer in his own right, Binelli has created and arranged music for solo instruments, quintet, chamber and symphony orchestras, and has also written dance and film music, including soundtracks for the Argentine films, “Tango Baile Nuestro” and “Tango Shalom.”