

# VILLEGAS: MASTER OF GUITAR

2018-19 HAL & JEANETTE SEGERSTROM FAMILY FOUNDATION CLASSICAL SERIES

Carlos Izcaray, conductor  
Pablo Sáinz-Villegas, guitar

Ravel

**RAPSODIE ESPAGNOLE**

*Prélude a 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*

Thursday, May 2, 2019 @ 8 p.m.  
Friday, May 3, 2019 @ 8 p.m.  
Saturday, May 4, 2019 @ 8 p.m.  
Segerstrom Center for the Arts  
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

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**.

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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	<b>"SEVILLA" FROM SUITE ESPAÑOLA</b>
Granados	<b>SPANISH DANCE NO. 10 "MELANCÓLICA"</b>
Granados	<b>SPANISH DANCE NO. 5 "ANDALUZA"</b>
Barrios	<b>"TANGO ZAPATEADO"</b>
Unknown	<b>"SPANISH ROMANCE"</b>
Albéniz	<b>"ASTURIAS" FROM SUITE ESPAÑOLA</b>
Tárrega	<b>"RECUERDOS DE LA ALHAMBRA"</b>
Tárrega	<b>"GRAN JOTA DE CONCIERTO"</b>

Saturday, May 4, 2019 @ 4 p.m.  
Segerstrom Center for the Arts  
Samueli Theater

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# PROGRAM NOTES

Maurice Ravel:

## **Rapsodie Espagnole**



Living and listening in a warm climate, it's hard to imagine the allure that the warmth of Spain held for French composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

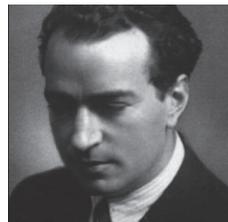
Not that France is exactly polar—it has the Mediterranean, the Riviera, the Camargue—but its classical tradition is of cool understatement and rigorous, disciplined technique.

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 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.

Joaquin Rodrigo:

## **Concierto de Aranjuez**



So many of classical music's great geniuses led tragically short lives—Mozart, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Bizet all died in their 30s—

that when we encounter those blessed with longevity, we rejoice. The Spanish composer Joaquin Rodrigo, though blinded by diphtheria at age 3, lived to be 98. He credited the apparent calamity of his illness for his lifelong involvement in music.

Rodrigo made rapid progress at the conservatory in Valencia, graduating early and going on to Paris, where he studied with Paul Dukas at the École Normale de Musique. But while he absorbed the elements of French style and refinement, his music remains Spanish to its very core. With Manuel de Falla (b. 1876) and Enrique Granados (b. 1867), Rodrigo was central to the flowering of musical creativity that raised the prominence of Spanish music in the 20th century. These composers burst upon the music world like a new discovery, though their cultural lineage extended back centuries. Musicians and audiences greeted them like long-lost brothers, but their distinctively Iberian sound, drenched in folk melodies and in the traditions of Spanish church music of the Baroque period, was like nothing to be heard in the rest of Europe.

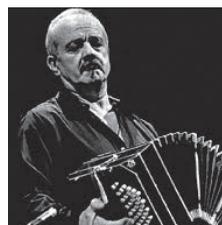
While Manuel de Falla gained renown for ballet scores that traveled with Serge Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*, and Granados' orchestral and piano compositions earned their standing as repertory staples (and his opera *Goyescas* in opera houses including New York's Metropolitan), Rodrigo became known for his remarkable concertos. They reflect the Spanish affinity for the guitar; the two best-known examples, his *Fantasy for a Nobleman* and the *Concierto de Aranjuez*, are both for that instrument. But there are other notable examples, including a spectacularly original concerto for harp. Rodrigo composed the *Fantasy for a Gentleman* in 1954 for Andrés Segovia, and though it is often mistakenly associated with Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*—inspiration for many musical adaptations—the gentleman of Rodrigo's title is actually Segovia himself. But the *Concierto de Aranjuez* remains his most popular and widely performed composition.

Inspired by the gardens at the Palacio Real de Aranjuez, the concerto opens with two themes in alternation. As Rodrigo notes, the movement is "animated by a rhythmic spirit and vigor without either of the two themes ... interrupting its relentless pace." Their rhythmic impetus makes the slow hush of the second movement all the more dramatic, with a dialogue between solo instrument and ensemble that is traditional in concertos. The last movement, as Rodrigo notes, "recalls a courtly dance in which the combination of double and triple time maintains a taut tempo right to the closing bar."

The late George Jellinek—a perceptive musicologist and commentator not inclined to exaggerate—called Rodrigo's concertos revolutionary, and asserted that their freshness resulted from the composer's use of the second interval. Even listeners with no musical background are likely to have heard about other harmonic intervals—thirds, fourths, fifths, and so on—but seconds, comprised of two notes that lie next to each other on the piano keyboard, are rarely heard or mentioned. And, yes, we do hear them frequently in this concerto. But are they so fully responsible for the concerto's distinctive sound? Or do they function more like the rainfall on a streetscape in Paris or at the Palacio Real de Aranjuez, adding a poetic dimension to a scene that is already beautiful?

Ástor Piazzolla:

## **Libertango for Guitar and Strings, Sinfonía Buenos Aires**



Ástor Piazzolla was born in Argentina to Italian immigrant parents with whom he moved to New York's Little Italy neighborhood at age 4, staying for

several years. But he returned to Argentina while still a child and fairly burned with love for the music of his native country—most especially the tango, which he would later revolutionize, treating it with the respect of form and the compositional techniques we associate with European classical forms.

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 Anibal 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,” Piazzolla 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 grafted 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 Sevitzyk Award in 1953.

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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 Hollywood-ized lyrics about a hot date and a cuckoo clock, spurring more than 40 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

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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”).

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*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.*

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**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 lunches have featured André 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.

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## CARLOS IZCARAY

conductor



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

Music Festival and later at the 2008 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, Orchestra 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 Filarmónica 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.

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## PABLO SÁINZ-VILLEGAS

guitarist



Praised as "the soul of the Spanish guitar", 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 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.

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## DANIEL BINELLI

bandoneonista



Internationally renowned composer, arranger and bandoneón master, Argentine 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, Gisèle Ben-Dor, Isaiah Jackson, Michael Christie, Lior Shambadal and Daniel Schweitzer. Binelli conducted Piazzolla's operita, "María de Buenos Aires" in Sicily with Italian singer, Milva in the title role. Binelli's collaborations include duo performances with pianist Polly Ferman 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."