



Rovshan Mamedkuliev

**Winner 2015
Michele Pittaluga
Guitar Competition,
Alessandria**

**WALTON
RODRIGO
J. S. BACH
WILLIAMS
KOSHKIN**

Rovshan Mamedkuliev: Guitar Recital

William Walton • Joaquín Rodrigo • J. S. Bach • John Williams • Nikita Koshkin

Modern guitar music from the 1940s to the present day comprises many nationalities and a variety of styles. Though contemporary in vocabulary as well as in concept most of it is neither aggressively avant-garde nor atonal. The guitar remains an inspiration to composers for its capacity to evoke emotion through lyricism. The instrument is contrapuntal but also melodic, combining complexity with clarity of texture. For that reason many eminent composers have been attracted to the classical guitar, often inspired by particular artists, to meet the unique challenge of writing for the six plucked strings.

Sir **William Walton's** *Five Bagatelles* were written for Julian Bream and dedicated to Malcolm Arnold 'with admiration and affection for his 50th birthday'. Given their première by Julian Bream at the 1972 Bath Festival they were immediately acknowledged as masterpieces of the contemporary guitar repertoire.

The first *Bagatelle* is a virtuosic, mercurial piece with an *espressivo* middle section. *Lento* is reminiscent of Satie, while *Alla cubana* is a lyrically effervescent movement with rhythms evoking Latin-American music. *Sempre espressivo* offers a remarkably imaginative use of those familiar effects on the guitar, the bell-like harmonics, with many tenderly expressive moments in its gentle melodic line. The final movement, *Con slancio* (leaping forward) is full of vivid scalic passages and incisive chords, involving the full range of the fingerboard in a brilliant climax.

Walton also arranged *Five Bagatelles* for orchestra under the title of *Varij Capricci*. The music inspired Sir Frederick Ashton to choreograph a ballet performed at Covent Garden as a memorial to the composer in March 1983.

Joaquín Rodrigo, composer of the renowned guitar concerto, *Concierto de Aranjuez*, is one of the great Spanish composers of the twentieth century. He extended the romantic impressionist tradition of Albéniz, Granados and Falla, but was deeply influenced by French music, having studied from 1927 to 1932 with Paul Dukas in Paris.

Though blind from childhood, Rodrigo wrote almost two hundred works, including orchestral, choral and ballet music, many concertos, a host of songs, and a quantity of instrumental solos for pianoforte, guitar, violin, cello, and other instruments. The composer's contribution to the guitar is now appreciated as one of the central pillars of the concert repertoire. Over the years Rodrigo explored the Spanish nature of the guitar, responding to the distinguished history of plucked instruments going back to the sixteenth century. His achievement remains a significant aspect of the guitar's development since the 1940s.

Junto al Generalife (Close by the Generalife), written in 1955, was dedicated to the eminent German guitarist, Siegfried Behrend. The Generalife was the pleasure palace, with beautiful gardens, of the former kings of Granada, its name derived from the Arabic, *Gennat-Alarif*—'the gardens of the architect'. Situated on the slopes of the Cerro del Sol, the Generalife overlooks the city.

The composition is in two parts, a gentle introduction with fast scale passages in quasi-improvisatory style, and an *Allegro*, reminiscent of the *malagueña*. The middle section consists of the melodic *tremolo*, recalling the themes of the *granadinas*, the flamenco form originating among the gypsies of Granada. The final pages present the recapitulation and a coda which includes passages of fiery descending triplets.

En los trigales (In the Wheatfields) was composed during a short summer visit to northern Spain in 1938 after Rodrigo had spent several years abroad. It can be viewed both as a stimulating portrait of the Spanish landscape and as a song of joyous homecoming after long absence.

The history of performing **Johann Sebastian Bach's** music on the guitar goes back to the nineteenth century transcriptions by Francisco Tárrega (1852–1909). From the early days of his long career Andrés Segovia (1909–1987) relished Tárrega's arrangements while at the same time choosing further Bach pieces to play in recitals, including the famous *Chaconne*.

Bach's *Violin Partita No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1004*, follows the traditional grouping of dance movements, concluding with a *Chaconne*. Among Bach's suites the *Chaconne* is the longest individual movement, creating an effect of monumental proportions. The hugely acclaimed *Chaconne* in D minor, a combination of a long chain of intricate variations of great intensity and variety, has fascinated the world's leading instrumentalists since the early nineteenth century, among them many who were not violinists. Thus there have been a number of distinguished arrangements over the years including those for piano, orchestra, and guitar, the most significant original performance for the latter being a feature of Segovia's Paris recital in 1935.

John Williams, the American composer, conductor, and pianist, has been described as 'the most prolific and widely honoured living composer of film music and the most Oscar-nominated man alive'. His film scores include music for *Jaws*, *Star Wars*, *Superman*, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, *Indiana Jones*, *Jurassic Park*, *Schindler's List* and the Harry Potter movies, among others. He was principal conductor of the Boston Pops from 1980 to 1993. Williams has received just about every possible honour including Academy Awards, Golden Globes, British Academy Film Awards, and twenty-two GRAMMIES®, and was inducted into the Hollywood Hall of Fame in 2000. As well as film music his compositions include over a dozen concertos, and orchestral and chamber works.

Rounds is Williams's first solo work for classical guitar. Pablo Villegas gave the first performance at the 2012 Parkening International Guitar Competition. The piece is a mosaic of guitar colours and textures. It opens with harmonics stating the central theme. This leads on to a variety of scalic and chordal contrasts in contemporary style, steadily increasing momentum covering the range of the fingerboard and exploring a range of sonorities.

Nikita Koshkin, guitarist, composer and teacher, began to study music at the age of fourteen when his grandfather presented him with a guitar and a recording of Andrés Segovia. Soon afterwards he decided this would be his future career. Koshkin studied guitar under George Emanov at the Moscow Conservatory and with Alexander Frauchi at the Russian Academy of Music, and was a composition student of Victor Egorov. He achieved international fame as a composer with *The Prince's Toys* (1980) and *Usher Waltz* (1984) and is now acclaimed as one of the major creative artists of the contemporary guitar.

The twentieth century witnessed an extension of early nineteenth-century traditions of the guitar sonata with composers such as Rodrigo, Torroba, Ponce, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Berkeley, Bennett, Ginastera, Tippett, Dyens, Brouwer, and others, all contributing to the genre. Koshkin's *Sonata II* (2011), dedicated to Dimitris Dekavallas, premiered at the Wigmore Hall, London, in June 2012, is a further landmark in this area of the repertoire.

The first movement of *Sonata II* opens with a jaunty dance accompanied by a very energetic bass line. A more subdued tremolo section follows steadily rising in intensity. This progresses to a reflective episode developing in intensity as it moves along, culminating in strident chords. After a brief recapitulation of the opening, the tremolo returns us to the lyrical mood. The movement ends quietly with bass murmurs and harmonics. The slow movement begins with steadily pulsing bass and Koshkin at his most inventive in terms of both melody and harmony. The last movement presents tantalising spasms of sound, sudden silences, and occasional contrasting interludes. The finale provokes a cascade of virtuosity as the interrupted passages prolong the ending slightly beyond expectation.

Graham Wade

Rovshan Mamedkuliev

Rovshan Mamedkuliev was born in 1986 in Baku, Azerbaijan. A couple of years later, he and his family moved to Nizhny Novgorod (Russia), where at the age of eleven he started taking guitar lessons. From a very early age he showed an exceptional musical talent. In 2004 he entered the Nizhny Novgorod Conservatoire where he studied with the guitarist Aleksey Petropavlovsky. He completed his studies with Honours in 2009 and was invited to teach at the Conservatoire. In 2014 Rovshan Mamedkuliev was appointed a professor of the classical guitar department at the Maimonides State Classical Academy (Moscow). Since 1999 he has won more than twenty awards in national and international guitar competitions, including in 2012 the XXX Guitar Foundation of America International Concert Artist Competition. He has appeared widely as a soloist and recitalist, including performances of new works and of his own arrangements. His recordings include an earlier release in the Naxos Laureate Series [8.573179].



Photo by Juan Bastos

Rovshan Mamedkuliev's transcription of Bach's monumental *Chaconne* is flanked on this recording by contemporary works that show how the guitar has inspired composers with its capacity to evoke emotion through lyricism. Walton's brilliant *Five Bagatelles* are acknowledged as masterpieces of the repertoire, contrasting with Rodrigo's joyous musical descriptions of Spain. *Rounds* is prolific film composer John Williams' first solo work for guitar, and Nikita Koshkin is acclaimed as one of the instrument's major creative artists. Described as "an impressive debut" by *Classical Guitar Magazine*, Rovshan Mamedkuliev's previous recital can be heard on Naxos 8.573179.

ROVSHAN MAMEDKULIEV

Guitar Recital

William WALTON (1902–1983)		Johann Sebastian BACH (1685–1750)	
Five Bagatelles	13:49	8 Chaconne	14:19
1 I. Allegro	4:09	(from Violin Partita No. 2, BWV 1004, arr. Rovshan Mamedkuliev)	
2 II. Lento	3:15	9 Rounds	6:39
3 III. Alla cubana	1:50	John WILLIAMS (b. 1932)	
4 IV. Sempre espressivo	2:17	Nikita KOSHKIN (b. 1956)	
5 V. Con slancio	2:08	Sonata II	19:32
Joaquín RODRIGO (1901–1999)		10 I. Allegro moderato	7:22
6 Junto al Generalife (Close by the Generalife)	5:03	11 II. Adagio – con moto	6:33
7 En los Trigales (In the Wheatfields)	4:07	12 III. Allegro	5:29

Recorded at St John Chrysostom Church, Newmarket, Ontario, Canada, 7–10 January 2016
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Playing Time
63:57



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