



Tengyue Zhang
Winner 2017
Guitar Foundation of
America (GFA) International
Concert Artist Competition

SCARLATTI
J. S. BACH
TANSMAN
CASTELNUOVO-
TEDESCO
BROUWER
ASSAD

Tengyue Zhang: Guitar Recital

**Domenico Scarlatti • Johann Sebastian Bach • Alexandre Tansman
Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco • Leo Brouwer • Sérgio Assad**

The Guitar Foundation of America's Guitar Competition presents to the world some of the finest guitarists of the younger generation. Over recent decades the standard of performance among younger players has risen to a technical and interpretative level which at one time was characteristic of only the most eminent recitalists. In this selection, Tengyue Zhang explores some of the most challenging works of the concert repertoire ranging from J.S. Bach's monumental *Chaconne* to the progressive contemporary music of Leo Brouwer and Sérgio Assad.

The versatility of the guitar makes it well suited to absorb, within a single recital, the Baroque landscape of Scarlatti and Bach, the wide vision of 20th-century masters such as Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Tansman, and the demanding complexities of guitarist/composers such as Brouwer and Assad. But most of all, Zhang's performance on this recording is solid testimony to the healthy vitality of the concert classical guitar with its manifold moods, colours, techniques, and composers from many cultural contexts.

Several of the pieces presented here take either the form of variations (a structure favoured by guitar composers since the early 19th century), or a detailed musical exploration of thematic motifs and harmonic progressions within a specific movement. The result is a potentially interesting and fortuitous relationship between pieces from widely diverse backgrounds, whether historical or geographical.

Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757), born in Naples, spent nearly 30 years of his professional life on the Iberian Peninsula. In about 1719 he was appointed as *mestre* to the Portuguese royal chapel of John V. Among his many duties was responsibility for teaching Princess Maria Bárbara. In 1729, when the princess married Prince Ferdinand (son of Philip V of Spain) and became Queen, Scarlatti moved with his pupil to the Spanish court. In 1738 Scarlatti's fame was enhanced throughout Europe by the publication of 30 of his *Essercizi* for harpsichord, dedicated to John V, who forthwith appointed him as a Knight of the Order of Santiago. The *Essercizi* were not merely 'exercises' but expressive and brilliant sonatas in binary form that would constitute Scarlatti's greatest legacy.

Scarlatti continued writing them for the rest of his life,

ultimately completing a total of 555 such works, an extraordinary achievement. The great Scarlatti scholar Ralph Kirkpatrick saw him as 'influenced not only by Spanish music but also by the guitar. Though Scarlatti probably never played the guitar ... surely no composer ever fell more deeply under its spell.' It is therefore appropriate that the playing of Scarlatti's sonatas is increasingly popular among guitarists. During recent years guitar arrangements of over 200 sonatas have been published.

Scarlatti's *Sonata in D major, K.53* was first published in 1752 by Johnson (London) in the publication *Libro XII sonatas modernas*. Kirkpatrick describes this as one of the 'flamboyant' sonatas, copied into the Queen's volume of 1742. The *Sonata*, marked *Presto*, is characterised at the beginning by trills on the third beat of the bar, leading on to brilliant interweaving between bass and treble in answering phrases. The final section of each half traces rapid arpeggio patterns well suited to the guitar. On the keyboard, there are passages where left and right hands cross, which, on the guitar, is translated into an equally virtuosic technique.

Guitarists have been playing the music of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) ever since Francisco Tárrega transcribed a few movements from the solo violin suites over a century ago. Baroque composers were generous in re-writing particular pieces for different instruments, and Bach was a shining example of this practice. Moreover, the classical guitar can offer his music a wide tonal spectrum of colour and variety and is eminently well suited for contrapuntal textures.

Among Bach's suites, the *Chaconne in D minor* 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 19th century, many of whom 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 performance for the latter being a feature of Segovia's epic Paris recital in 1935. Many of Bach's predecessors, such as Buxtehude, Muffat, Schenk, and Biber, wrote excellent *Chaconnes* (or *Ciacconas*). As the Bach scholar, David Ledbetter observed:

'Virtually every detail of [Bach's] Ciaccona has antecedents in the rich brew of overlapping traditions that constituted Bach's musical environment. His contribution was to bring them together into an all-encompassing unity that undergirded a new, large-scale expressive power.'

The Polish composer, Alexandre Tansman (1897–1986), having been introduced to Andrés Segovia during his stay in Paris in 1921, was persuaded to write for the guitar. His compositions include operas, ballets, nine symphonies, concertos, film scores, vocal and chamber music and works for piano and other solo instruments. In the 1920s and 30s he toured the United States, Europe, the Middle East and India, appearing as the soloist in his own piano concertos. He became a French citizen in 1938 but the war forced him to move to America, where he established close friendships with composers such as Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Milhaud. He returned to France in 1946.

Variations on a Theme of Scriabin (1972) was dedicated to Segovia. The theme, Scriabin's *Prelude in E flat minor, Op. 16, No. 4* (for piano), was also arranged for guitar by Segovia in B minor (publ. Celesta Publishing Co., New York, 1945). This melody has a haunting quality, though Tansman has at certain points re-worked the original harmonisation.

The composition has six variations, the first being a transference of the theme to the bass line, with an accompaniment in the treble. Variation II, slightly faster, explores the harmonic potential of Scriabin's melody, while Variation III is a virtuosic *Vivo* episode in semiquavers. Variation IV changes the tonality and explores some ingenious modulations. Variation V, *Allegretto grazioso (quasi Mazurka)*, is the composer's homage to Poland, presenting the national dance with a dash of humour and elements which evoke the music of J.S. Bach. The last variation is fugal, a contrapuntal working out of the melodic implications, which gives way to a final, slightly altered, quieter statement of the theme itself.

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895–1968) was born in Florence and studied composition and piano at the Istituto Musicale Cherubini and later at the Liceo Musicale of Bologna. His teachers were Pizzetti and Casella, members of the influential and progressive Società Italiana di Musica, a group of influential composers with whom Castelnuovo-Tedesco became closely associated. Castelnuovo-Tedesco's interest in writing for the guitar began with his introduction to Andrés Segovia, who had travelled to Italy with Manuel de Falla, at the Venice International Festival in 1932. As a result, he was

to compose over a hundred works for the instrument, including concertos, chamber music, many solos and some of the finest pieces for two guitars, the latter inspired by the illustrious French duo, Ida Presti and Alexandre Lagoya.

In 1939, as a result of Mussolini's anti-Jewish edicts, Castelnuovo-Tedesco was obliged to seek refuge abroad, but after settling in California he became a prolific writer of film music between 1940 and 1956, in the same period composing more than 70 concert works. As a member of the faculty of the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music, he numbered among his pupils Henry Mancini, Nelson Riddle, André Previn, and the composer, John Williams.

The great Spanish painter, Francisco Goya (1746–1828) was appointed Court Painter to Charles IV in 1789. In 1792 he retreated to Cádiz for several months when illness brought about deafness, but on his return to Madrid in 1797 he resumed his activities, becoming First Court Painter in 1799. Around this time he began etching his sequence of 80 *Caprichos* ('Caprices'). Following Napoleon's invasion of Spain, Goya painted many vivid pictures of the atrocities of the war as well as portraits of the Duke of Wellington. In 1824 he left Spain and spent the last few years of his life in France.

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco selected 23 pictures from Goya's *Caprichos*, and a further etching in similar style, as inspiration for an extended sequence of guitar solos, completing the work in 1961. In Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *24 Caprichos de Goya, Op. 195*, the composer allows his own imagination and artistic instincts to shape his individual response to each work of art rather than following any facile programmatic patterns.

In *Capricho No. XII, No hubo remedio* ('Nothing Could Be Done About It'), Goya presents a picture of a woman sentenced by the Inquisition to be executed, flanked by stern figures of authority and the hideous faces of the mob. The composer deals with this grim topic by a set of variations in *passacaglia* form on the theme of the *Dies irae* ('Day of Wrath'). The *passacaglia* provides a bass melody around which seven variations are fashioned, each variation having its own distinct character. Variation 1, for example, has the theme in the treble, Variation 2 is *molto tranquillo*, while Variation 4 is a virtuosic study. The ending, Variation 7, combines 'sustained and grandiose' loud chords with brilliant bursts of semiquavers in a final traversal of the *Dies irae* mood.

Capricho No XVIII, El sueño de la razón produce monstruos ('The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters'), one

of Goya's most famous images, has been considered as one of the artist's self-portraits. The man, either sleeping or dreaming ('*sueño*' in Spanish carries both meanings), is surrounded by evil-looking owls, a sinister lynx with pointed ears, and bat-like creatures.

The music takes the form of a short *Chaconne* with five variations. Variation 1 deploys rapid arpeggios accompanying the *Chaconne* theme. Variation 2 moves into triplet patterns, while Variation 3 uses the *Chaconne* in the bass against treble scale passages. The next Variation brings the theme back into the treble against a busy accompaniment before Variation 5, marked *con fuoco* ('with fire') offers a chordal exploration in quavers of the insistent theme. The final recapitulation is 'very slow and solemn'.

Leo Brouwer (b. 1939), from Cuba, one of the most innovative contemporary composers, is also a renowned conductor and recitalist. His prolific output ranges from a multitude of guitar pieces to concertos, chamber music, and scores for over a hundred films. His guitar works have evolved over four decades embracing the avant-garde and the experimental as well as Neo-romanticism.

Rito de los Orishas ('Rite of the Orishas'), was premiered by the dedicatee, Álvaro Pierri, at the Festival de Radio France, in October 1993, a few months after its composition. 'Orishas' is the Yoruban word for the gods worshipped by the African slaves.

The first movement, *Exordium – Conjuro* ('Introduction – Incantation/Exorcism'), in ternary form with an episodic middle section and a modified recapitulation, celebrates a ritual where evil spirits are vanquished. Isabelle Hernández, Brouwer's biographer, points out that this movement is created from three

fundamental cells, a repeated sound in groups of three in the manner of an ostinato, an ascending scale in rapid figurations, and a theme characterised by a descending minor third followed by an ascending major second. The second part, *Danza de las diosas negras* ('Dance of the Black Goddesses') comprises three dance elements interspersed by darkly atmospheric episodes named 'evocations'.

The brothers Sérgio and Odair Assad, born in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1952 and 1956 respectively, are one of the top guitar duos but also eminent solo recitalists. They studied in their formative years in Rio de Janeiro with Monina Tavora. Their virtuosity has inspired many composers, including Astor Piazzolla, Terry Riley, Radamés Gnattali, Marlos Nobre, Nikita Koshkin, Roland Dyens, Jorge Morel, Edino Krieger and Francisco Mignone, to dedicate pieces to them. Sérgio Assad, acknowledged as one of the finest contemporary composers for guitar, has a long list of works in his catalogue.

Aquarelle, written in 1986 and dedicated to David Russell, the Scottish guitarist domiciled in Spain, is in three movements. The composition is an extended piece featuring extreme levels of technical challenge. The first movement, *Divertimento*, marked *Très calme*, is based on a three-note motif introduced at the beginning and thoroughly explored in various increasingly virtuosic episodes as the movement develops. *Valseana*, marked *Andante*, presents a languidly romantic melody. The final part, *Preludio e toccatina*, begins with a different kind of meditative mood, *Lent et très expressif*, and is quite soon succeeded by a vigorously climactic demonstration of *toccata* style.

Graham Wade

Tengyue (TY) Zhang

TY Zhang is the First Prize winner of the 2017 Guitar Foundation of America (GFA) International Concert Artist Competition, known as the most prestigious guitar contest in the world. He also won the GFA Senior Division in 2010. Zhang will perform a 2018–19 GFA concert tour of over 50 cities in North America, including his recital debut in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, with additional dates in Europe, South America and Asia. TY Zhang has received several First Prizes including the Forum Gitarre Wien International Youth Competition, the 2015 Changsha International Competition which presented him on tour throughout China, the 2017 Schadt String Competition, and the 2017 Frauchi Competition in Moscow which will present him in recital/concerto tours in Russia. Zhang studied in China at the Music School of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing with Chen Zhi, and has been a student of Sharon Isbin at The Juilliard School since 2012, where he received his BM and MM. www.tengyuezhang.com



Tengyue Zhang won the 2017 Guitar Foundation of America (GFA) International Concert Artist Competition, one of the world's most prestigious events. His debut recital illustrates the moods, colours and techniques of the concert classical guitar from baroque transcriptions to masters of the twentieth-century genre such as Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Tansman and Brouwer. Despite being from very different backgrounds and time periods, several of the pieces share intriguing relationships in their use of variation form or thematic motifs and harmonic progressions.

TENGYUE ZHANG

Guitar Recital

<p>Domenico SCARLATTI (1685–1757) 1 Keyboard Sonata in D major, K.53/L.261/P.161 (1742) 3:50 (arr. Tengyue Zhang for guitar)</p> <p>Johann Sebastian BACH (1685–1750) Violin Partita No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1004 (1720) 14:13</p> <p>2 V. Chaconne (arr. Tengyue Zhang for guitar)</p> <p>Alexandre TANSMAN (1897–1986) 3 Variations on a Theme of Scriabin (1972) 8:26</p>	<p>Mario CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO (1895–1968) 24 Caprichos de Goya, Op. 195 (1961) 11:25</p> <p>4 XII. No hubo remedio 6:18 5 XVIII. El sueño de la razón produce monstruos 5:05</p> <p>Leo BROUWER (b. 1939) Rito de los Orishas (1993) 11:44</p> <p>6 I. Exordium – Conjuro 3:32 7 II. Danza de las diosas negras 8:12</p> <p>Sérgio ASSAD (b. 1952) Aquarelle (1986) 13:11</p> <p>8 I. Divertimento 6:46 9 II. Valseana 3:16 10 III. Preludio e toccatina 3:05</p>
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