



Vojin Kocić

Winner 2018

Michele Pittaluga
Guitar Competition,
Alessandria

**GUITAR
RECITAL**

Antonio JOSÉ
Isaac ALBÉNIZ
Joan MANÉN

Vojin Kocić: Guitar Recital

Antonio José • Isaac Albéniz • Joan Manén

These compositions, representing three generations of Spanish composers, reveal the diversity and depth of the Iberian musical imagination. The impressionistic works of Isaac Albéniz, the inspiration for so many 20th-century Spanish composers, translate naturally in arrangement from the pianoforte to the guitar. It is to be regretted that Joan Manén did not write more pieces for the guitar, as his *Fantasia-Sonata* reveals an instinctive awareness of the instrument's sonorities and expressive possibilities. The life of Antonio José ended tragically prematurely yet once again a solo masterpiece of the guitar repertoire shows promise in abundance and an ability to compose for the guitar in an innovative style entirely his own. The potential richness of the Spanish late Romantic legacy among the traditions of the classical guitar is undoubtedly exemplified in this selection.

Antonio José (1902–1936) was praised by Maurice Ravel as a composer who would 'become the greatest Spanish musician of our century'. But José's arrest and execution near his home city of Burgos in 1936 during the Spanish Civil War cast his music into a subsequent obscurity which has only recently been remedied. A monograph about his life and work has been published by the municipality of Burgos.

Considerable interest was aroused by the discovery in the late 1980s of the *Sonata*, which Antonio José finished on 23 August 1933. One movement was given its premiere in Burgos by Regino Sáinz de la Maza in November 1934. *Sonata* offers further perspectives on the expansion of the guitar repertoire during the early 20th-century Spanish musical renaissance. The work established Antonio José's reputation beside those of his distinguished contemporaries who respected the guitar as an expressive medium. José's *Sonata* is a composition requiring virtuosity as well as emotional depth and insight.

It can be observed with historical hindsight that José's *Sonata* is a remarkably original and inventive work, written in a period of very few precedents for guitar in this genre.

By 1933 Moreno Torroba, Ponce and Turina had indeed presented various pieces in sonata form to Andrés Segovia, but it is by no means certain that José was acquainted with these compositions.

The first movement contrasts the lively lyricism of the opening statements with meditative slow chords and answering arpeggio patterns. This leads to a passage characterised by urgent pedal notes sustaining a short burst of three-part chords before the return of the opening section and a modified recapitulation. In these final pages, the previous musical substance is taken through various modulations before concluding with a resounding chord of E major.

The *Minueto* retains the 3/4 metre of its traditional 18th-century predecessors, but otherwise assumes an entirely 20th-century vocabulary. Though the essence of its opening theme is straightforward, its harmonic basis is complex, leading to a rainbow of modulations through diverse keys and labyrinthine sequences. Similarly *Pavana triste*, written in 3/2 time, brings a new language to an ancient dance form. At first dotted rhythms suggest a certain lightness of atmosphere but the predominant mood of the movement turns out to be melancholic rather than lyrical. Once again, intricate harmonic progressions lift this dance to new expressive heights reminiscent of Rodrigo's use of traditional musical structures to create fresh and meaningful vehicles for modern music.

Final begins with strummed chords characteristic of the Spanish guitar. Their function is not to provide Andalusian associations but to establish part of a compelling framework for statements of the first movement presented in modified *rondo* form. This structure supplies a powerful means of presenting familiar material from new perspectives while achieving a unifying effect between the first and last movements. After much harmonic divagation, the work ends decisively on the chord of E major, one of the most convenient and appropriate keys in keeping with the guitar's usual tuning.

Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909), born in Camprodón, in northern Spain, spent much of his childhood in Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia. Yet, though Catalan by birth, his celebration of the great cities of Andalusia remains a perennial evocation of Iberian Romanticism. Albéniz composed mainly for piano, writing nothing directly for the guitar, but ever since Tárrega first transcribed some of his pieces, Albéniz's music has remained at the very heart of the guitar repertoire.

Suite española, Op. 47 depicts various regions and musical styles of Spain. The pieces performed here represent the original works included in the suite. (Following Albéniz's death his publisher included several other compositions within the *Suite*.)

The lyrical sweetness of *Cuba* expresses both the indigenous music of the island and the Spanish influence which permeates Cuban music. The piece is written in the style of a *nocturne*. *Granada* commemorates the beauty of the ancient city, its Moorish past symbolised by the Alhambra Palace. Described by Albéniz as a *serenata*, this melodic work captures the spiritual presence of old Granada, full of mystery and romance. *Cataluña* is a tribute to the composer's native province and bears a dedication to his 'dear mother', who was Catalan by birth. *Sevilla* evokes the vigorous flamenco dance, the *sevillanas*, full of colour and vitality. The slow middle section expresses the

plaintiveness of *cante jondo* (flamenco 'deep song') before the dance returns in all its gaiety and virtuosity.

Joan Manén (1883–1971), born in Barcelona, was a Catalan violinist and composer. An infant prodigy, he made his concert debut in Latin America at the age of nine, and a European debut in 1898. Over the years he made five world tours as a violin virtuoso. His compositions include operas and other stage works, vocal, and instrumental pieces. *Fantasia-Sonata* was published in the Schott/Segovia editions in 1930. The music is dedicated '*Por y para Andrés Segovia*' ('for and because of Andrés Segovia').

The original notes for Segovia's recording observed: 'In the first *Allegro*, Catalonian sentiment predominates and the *Largo* motif recurs as the second theme. The middle section is a slow evocative *Andante cantabile* and the third section a lively *Allegro assai*.'

The composition begins with heavy chords, reminiscent perhaps of the opening of J.S. Bach's *Chaconne*. The opening theme is taken up in a later *cantando molto* section and subjected to a number of modulations. Of particular interest is the Spanish nature of each section, characterised by rapid scale passages, flamenco-like ornamentation, strummed chords, and vigorous rhythmic fragments.

Graham Wade

Vojin Kocić

Born in Serbia in 1990, Vojin Kocić began playing guitar at the age of eight, studying with Jovica Milošević and Darko Karajic. He went on to study with Anders Miolin at the Zurich University of the Arts, Switzerland, and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts, Master of Specialised Music Performance and Master of Pedagogy Diploma. Kocić also studied with Oscar Ghiglia at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena, Italy, where he was the only guitarist to be awarded the Diploma d'Onore. Kocić has been the recipient of over 50 international awards, including first prizes at the 2014 Prix Credit Suisse Jeunes Solistes in Switzerland, the 2009 Incontri chitarristici di Gargnano in Italy, and the International Guitar Competition 'Ruggero Chiesa' in Italy. In 2017 he was awarded First Prize at the International Guitar Festival and Competition in Heinsberg, and subsequently recorded his debut album for Naxos. In 2018 Kocić was awarded First Prize at the 51st Michele Pittaluga Guitar Competition in Alessandria, Italy, the prize for which was the opportunity to record his second album for Naxos, as well as a 50-date concert tour scheduled for 2019 including concerts at Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow, the Academic Capella in St Petersburg and the Verbier Festival. Kocić has given over 300 concerts around Europe, and has performed as a soloist with ensembles such as the St Petersburg State Academic Cappella Symphony Orchestra, the Symphony Orchestra of the National Philharmonic of Ukraine, the Radio Television Serbia Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestergesellschaft Zürich, and the Orion String Trio, to name a few. His concerts have been broadcast by Radio SRF 2 Kultur (Switzerland), NPO Radio 4 (Netherlands) and Rai (Italy), among others. He regularly gives masterclasses, and often sits on the juries of international music competitions. Kocić plays on the Jean-Noël Rohé guitar (2016), and he is endorsed by D'Addario strings.

Also available



8.573906

Representing three generations of Spanish composers, these works reveal the diversity and depth of the Iberian musical imagination. Albéniz's *Suite* is a perennial evocation of Iberian Romanticism that transcribes naturally from piano to guitar, and José's original and inventive *Sonata* revives a reputation cut short by the Spanish Civil War. Dedicated to Segovia, Manén's *Fantasia-Sonata* is rich in Catalonian sentiment both elegiac and celebratory. Vojin Kocić's debut recording, 'and what a debut it is' (*The WholeNote*), can be heard on 8.573906.

VOJIN KOCIĆ Guitar Recital

Antonio JOSÉ (1902–1936)

Sonata (1933) 23:00

- | | | |
|----------|----------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | I. Allegro moderato | 8:31 |
| 2 | II. Minueto | 3:01 |
| 3 | III. Pavana triste | 6:20 |
| 4 | IV. Final | 4:59 |

Isaac ALBÉNIZ (1860–1909)

**Suite española, Op. 47 (1882–89) (excerpts)
(transcr. Carlo Marchione, b. 1964) 23:21**

- | | | |
|----------|-----------------|-------------|
| 5 | Cuba | 6:25 |
| 6 | Granada | 6:10 |
| 7 | Cataluña | 5:14 |
| 8 | Sevilla | 5:26 |

Joan MANÉN (1883–1971)

9 Fantasia-Sonata, Op. A22 (1930) 21:30

Recorded: 28–30 March 2019 at La Rotonda, Englewood, Florida, USA
Producers and editors: Norbert Kraft and Bonnie Silver • Engineer: Norbert Kraft
Publishers: Berbèn Musicali, Ancona **1–4**, Marchione Music Edition (transcriptions) **5–8**,
Schott Music **9** • Guitar by: Jean-Noël Rohé, Strasbourg, 2016
Booklet notes: Graham Wade • Photo of Vojin Kocić: Andrej Grilc



8.574133

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Playing Time
67:56



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