

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

Raphaël Feuillâtre, guitar

Thursday, November 21 – 7:30 PM

Benjamin Franklin Hall, American Philosophical Society

PROGRAM (selection of notes)

Prelude in C Major, BWV 846, from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I

Johann Sebastian Bach

Born: March 31, 1685, Eisenach, Germany

Died: July 28, 1750, Leipzig, Germany

Composed: 1722

Duration: 2 minutes

The Prelude in C Major, BWV 846, is one of Bach's most beloved and recognizable works, serving as the opening piece of his monumental *Well-Tempered Clavier*, a collection of 24 preludes and fugues in all major and minor keys. This serene and flowing prelude is built on a simple harmonic progression that unfolds with graceful arpeggios, creating an air of elegance and clarity. Though seemingly straightforward, its timeless beauty and perfect balance exemplify Bach's mastery of counterpoint and form.

Les barricades mystérieuses

François Couperin

Born: November 10, 1668

Died: September 11, 1733

Composed: 1717

Duration: 2 ½ minutes

Couperin's *Les barricades mystérieuses* (The Mysterious Barricades) is one of the most enigmatic and poetic pieces from his *Second Book of Harpsichord Pieces*. This brief yet mesmerizing work is structured in the form of a rondeau, with its repeated motifs creating a hypnotic and fluid texture. The title itself remains a puzzle, inspiring speculation about its meaning. Some interpret it as a reference to the complex, interweaving harmonies and rhythms, while others see it as a poetic metaphor. Regardless, the piece's gentle, flowing elegance and sense of mystery is well suited for an intimate guitar recital setting.

Concerto in D Major, BWV 972 (after Vivaldi)

Johann Sebastian Bach

Born: March 31, 1685, Eisenach, Germany

Died: July 28, 1750, Leipzig, Germany

Composed: 1713

Duration: 11 minutes

Bach's Concerto in D Major, BWV 972, is a transcription of Antonio Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in D Major, RV 230. Bach arranged this piece during his Weimar period (1708–1717), when he was deeply influenced by Italian composers, particularly Vivaldi. Through this guitar transcription (originally for solo harpsichord), Bach transformed Vivaldi's vibrant and energetic concerto into a masterpiece. This arrangement retains the lively, virtuosic spirit of the original, while also showcasing Bach's genius for counterpoint and his ability to expand on Vivaldi's harmonies, particularly in the bass line. It is an excellent example of how Bach absorbed and reimagined the styles of his contemporaries, blending Italian exuberance with German craftsmanship.

Suite española, Op. 47, No. 5, Asturias (Leyenda)

Isaac Albéniz

Born: May 29, 1860, Camprodon, Spain

Died: May 18, 1909, Cambo-les-Bains, France

Composed: 1892

Duration: 5 minutes

Though originally written for piano, Albéniz's *Asturias (Leyenda)* has become most famous in its transcription for guitar, capturing the essence of Spanish flamenco with its rhythmic drive and bold harmonies. Part of the Suite was published posthumously, though it was not originally intended to represent the Asturias region. Its fiery rhythms and exotic melodies evoke Andalusian flamenco traditions more than the northern province of Spain. The piece

showcases Albéniz's masterful blending of classical forms with traditional Spanish idioms, transporting listeners to a world of passion and drama. Marked by rapid, arpeggiated passages, the music unfolds with a distinctive, hypnotic rhythm that is well suited for the strumming of a guitar. A contrasting middle section provides lyrical repose, offering a fleeting moment of tranquility before the return of the vigorous flamenco-style dance. Albéniz's keen ability to evoke a sense of place, even in works not directly connected to their titles, is a hallmark of his compositional voice.

La Catedral

Agustín Barrios Mangoré

Born: May 5, 1885, San Juan Bautista, Paraguay

Died: August 7, 1944, San Salvador, El Salvador

Composed: 1921

La Catedral, one of Mangoré's most celebrated works, stands as a masterpiece of the classical guitar repertoire. Written in homage to J.S. Bach, this three-movement piece reflects Barrios' deep spirituality and his fascination with the grandeur of European cathedrals. The first movement, Preludio (Saudade), opens with a reflective and lyrical expression of longing. In the second movement, Andante religioso, Barrios evokes the solemn, meditative atmosphere of a cathedral. The final movement, Allegro solemne, contrasts sharply, with its virtuosic energy and rhythmic drive, perhaps mirroring the bustling life outside the sacred space. Through these movements, *La Catedral* seamlessly blends European classical traditions with the rich musical heritage of Barrios' native Paraguay.

Triaela: Clown Down (Sel.)

Roland Dyens

Born: October 19, 1955, Tunis, Tunisia

Died: October 29, 2016, Paris, France

Composed: 2003

Roland Dyens was one of the most innovative and eclectic guitarists of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, known for seamlessly blending classical, jazz, and world music influences. Dyens gained international recognition as both a performer and composer, celebrated for his technical virtuosity and imaginative compositions. *Triaela* is one of Dyens' later works, written for guitar trio and dedicated to three of his former students. The piece showcases Dyens' characteristic stylistic fusion, offering performers ample opportunity for both individual expression and intricate ensemble interplay. The final movement, Clown Down, has a playful, yet bittersweet quality. As its title suggests, the music evokes the image of a clown, perhaps in the midst of a melancholic or reflective moment after the laughter has faded. Dyens' distinctive harmonic language, with its jazz-inspired chords and unexpected modulations, gives the piece a sense of wistful introspection. The rhythmic drive, though gentle, propels the music forward, while the melody weaves between moments of whimsy and deeper emotional undertones.