



WISCONSIN UNION
THEATER

2016-2017 Season

**Los Angeles
Guitar Quartet**
Fan Taylor Memorial Concert
April 22, 2017



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LOS ANGELES GUITAR QUARTET



Los Angeles Guitar Quartet

John Dearman ~ Matthew Greif ~ William Kanengiser ~ Scott Tennant

LAGQ is managed by Frank Salomon Associates
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PROGRAM

Music from the Time of Cervantes.....(arr. W. Kanengiser)

Jácaras Anonymous (17th century)
El Villano Antonio Martín y Coll
Diferencias Sobre Las Folias Antonio Martín y Coll
Chacona ("La Vida Bona") Juan Arañéz
Oy Comamos Juan de Encina

Brandenburg Concerto #6, BWV 1051 Johann Sebastian Bach (arr. J. Smith)

Allegro
Adagio ma non tanto
Allegro

Three Brazilian Pieces

Da Sábado pra Dominguihos Hermeto Pascoal
O Lenda da Caboclo Heitor Villa-Lobos
Samba Novo Baden Powell

Intermission

Opals.....Phillip Houghton

Black Opal
Water Opal
White Opal

La soirée dans Grenade..... Claude Debussy (arr. J. Smith)

Carmen Suite..... George Bizet (arr. W. Kanengiser)

Aragonaise
Habanera
Seguidilla
Toreadors
Entr'acte
Gypsy Dance

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“Music from the Time of Cervantes”

In March 2009, LAGQ debuted the theatrical production “The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote” with British actor/comedian John Cleese. Interweaving tales from the classic novel with arrangements of pieces that Cervantes could have heard in his lifetime, it melded music and storytelling. Tonight’s recital includes selections from this production.

Jácaras is an anonymous *canción* (“*No hay que decir primor*”) from the 17th century. With raucous strumming and castanets imitating horses’ hooves, it accompanies Don Quixote’s departure from his farm to become an adventuring knight. **El Villano** (“The Rustic”) is a country dance from the anthology “*Flores de Música*” collected by Antonio Martín y Coll. It introduces Sancho Panza, Quixote’s trusty quire. **Diferencias Sobre Las Folias** is a set of variations contrasting on the famous harmonic progression, *Folias de Espana*. It tells of the famous argument between knight and squire, and of their reconciliation. **Chacona (“La Vida Bona”)**, from the *Libro Segunda de Tonos y Villancicos* (1624) by Juan Arañes, is one of the most celebrated early examples of the form. The *chacona*, which by Bach’s time had become one of the most noble and profound of all dance forms, was a suggestive and prohibited *danza* in 1500s Spain, almost their version of our *macarena*. It features the lines, “here’s to the good life, good little life: let’s do the *Chacona*”). **Oy comamos y bebamos** is a four-voice *villancico* from the *Cancionero Palacio*, written by Juan de Encina. The opening stanza is “*Hoy comamos y bebamos, y cantemos y holguemos, que mañana ayunaremos*” (Today we eat and drink, and sing and make merry, for tomorrow we must fast”). It serves as a fitting epilogue for Don Quixote’s quixotic character.

**Brandenburg Concerto #6 in B-flat major, BWV 1051
by Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750)

Written in 1721 as a means of gaining favor from the Margrave of Brandenburg, Bach’s “*Six concerts à plusieurs instruments*” never garnered payment or even thanks for the composer. Yet they establish him today as the master of the *concerto grosso* style pioneered by Corelli. Brandenburg Concerto #6 is scored for string orchestra, but without violins; violas carry the upper melodic material. This lower *tessitura* makes the piece ideal for an arrangement for guitar quartet. Set in a fast-slow-fast structure, the piece showcases Bach’s peerless use of imitative writing. The first movement is drivingly propulsive, with the two top parts chasing each other in a canon at the 1/8th note. The middle movement is one of Bach’s stately and shimmering Adagios, while the final movement is one of Bach’s most joyous giges, with a rondo theme recurring in a variety of guises.

Three Brazilian Pieces

In this set, LAGQ pays tribute to the rich sonorities and infectious rhythms of Brazil. Inspired by their collaboration in 2006-07 with the brilliant singer Luciana Souza, LAGQ recorded a new CD of Brazilian music for the Telarc label. It opens with a tune by the idiosyncratic jazz musician Hermeto Pascoal, sometimes referred to as the “Frank Zappa of Brazil”; his “**Da Sábado pra Dominguihos**” is a fine example of the endless fount of tunes and surprising harmonic changes that characterize his music. We follow this with a lovely tune by the great Heitor Villa-Lobos, one of Brazil’s most celebrated classical composers, and a favorite among guitarists. His “**O Lenda do Caboclo**” (the Legend of the Native”) was originally written for piano, and features a gently gliding melody interrupted by a bow to the French Impressionist school. Music of the iconic guitar virtuoso Baden Powell closes the set. His “**Samba Novo**”, a reaction against the wave of popularity of the gentler *bossa novo* style, is hard driving and aggressive, with an extroverted melodic sense.

Opals

Phillip Houghton (b. 1954) is one of the most recorded and influential Australian guitar composers. His work expresses a distinctly Australian aesthetic, reflecting the country's vast landscapes and mystical "dreamtime" Aboriginal legends. He is famously a synesthete, wherein he sees very specific colors when he hears musical tones and timbres. "Opals" (1993, revised 2014) is a three-movement work for guitar quartet, and it attempts to capture the myriad glints and sparkles emanated by Australia's opalescent national gemstone. In the score, there are detailed notes describing the particular colors and sheens that the music attempts to evoke. The composer provided the following notes for each movement:

Rather than being pitch-black, the Black Opal is a stone of fantastic colour. Electric reds, purples, blues and greens of every shade predominate and refract and collide, in a fiery rainbow of splinters of brilliant light against a dark matrix. One could say that the opal is "made" from water, and, in the "Water Opal" movement, I imagined a kaleidoscope of colour in and against a transparent "water matrix"...colours floating, bleeding into each other. Against a white matrix the lighter colours of the White Opal are brilliant and translucent. Evident in this stone is what is called "pinfire" (glittering points of red and green) and the "rolling flash" (which describes the effect of layers of colour which ripple abruptly and sparkle through the stone when the stone is moved).

La soirée dans Grenade

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)'s **La soirée dans Grenade** (Evening in Granada) was written for solo piano in 1903, part of a three-movement work entitled *Estampes* (Etchings). Richly evocative of a visit to this historic Andalusian city, it is one of a number of Debussy pieces that reflect Spanish themes. *La soirée* could be fairly described as a "fantasy in the form of a habanera;" using the familiar dotted rhythm as an ostinato, the work deftly recreates the atmosphere of an evening stroll under the moon-lit shadow of the Alhambra Castle. References to Spain's Moorish past interrupt the texture, and a distant flamenco guitar is fleetingly glimpsed. This piece carries extra resonance with guitarists, as it was quoted by the great Spanish composer Manuel de Falla in his only composition for guitar, "*Homenaje pour Le Tombeau de Debussy*," written as an elegy to the fallen French master. James Smith, the long-time professor of guitar at USC and one of the principle instructors of LAGQ, arranged it.

Carmen Suite by Georges Bizet

The oft-repeated commentary that "the best Spanish music was written by Frenchmen" could certainly find its detractors, but justification for such a stance does gain some credence in light of the authentic Iberian character of George Bizet's *Carmen*. In addition to being one of the most beloved and enduring operas of all time, this work has found a home on the symphonic stage, most notably with an orchestral suite of some of its most popular excerpts. In this arrangement of six movements from *Carmen* for guitar quartet, a special emphasis was put on retaining the distinctly Spanish sound of the music, which finds a natural home on the guitar.

The current suite begins with the *Aragonaise*, with strumming fanfares and imitations of castanets. Next is the timeless *Habanera*, a sensual aria based on a melody by Iradier that explores the lyric possibilities of a single line melody on the guitar. It is followed by the flamenco-inspired *Seguidilla*, which explores a wide range of articulations and colors available on guitar quartet. The ever-popular *Toreadors* features boisterous strummed chords and extended trills, while the delicate *Entr'Acte* is a gradually unfolding masterwork of lyric counterpoint. The final *Gypsy Dance* creates a slowly building tension with repeated staccato figures, finally erupting in the famous and furious coda.

ABOUT THE MUSICIANS

The Grammy Award-winning LAGQ is one of the most multifaceted groups in any genre. The LAGQ is comprised of four uniquely accomplished musicians bringing a new energy to the concert stage with programs ranging from Bluegrass to Bach. They consistently play to sold-out houses world-wide. Their inventive, critically acclaimed transcriptions of concert masterworks provide a fresh look at the music of the past, while their interpretations of works from the contemporary and world-music realms continually break new ground. Programs including Latin, African, Far East, Irish, Folk and American Classics transport listeners around the world in a single concert experience. Their 'Don Quixote' collaboration with Firesign Theater veteran actor Philip Proctor continues to expand and delight audiences, and the work 'SHIKI: Seasons of Japan,' written for the LAGQ plus guitar orchestra by composer Shingo Fujii, is connecting communities across the nation.

Winner of a 2005 Grammy Award, their "Guitar Heroes" CD released on Telarc is a brilliant follow-up to their Grammy nominated "LAGQ-Latin". "Spin" (Telarc, 2006) continues their explorations of jazz and contemporary music. "LAGQ: BRAZIL" (Telarc, 2007), including collaborations with vocalist Luciana Souza, was released to rave reviews, and their newest recording of the Rodrigo "Concierto Andaluz" and Sergio Assad's "Interchange", written specifically for them, was released on Telarc in Spring 2010, and quickly climbed to top spot on the Billboard charts. The live DVD of "The Ingenious Gentleman: Don Quixote" was released on the Mel Bay label in spring 2012.

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John Dearman

Originally from Minneapolis, John Dearman is a versatile guitarist whose repertoire ranges from samba to bluegrass, and from flamenco to classical. He enriches the sound of the LAGQ by performing on a unique seven-string guitar with extended upper and lower registers. John is currently director of the Guitar Chamber Music program at California State University, Northridge, in Los Angeles.

Matthew Greif

Matthew Greif is the newest member of the Quartet. In addition to being a classical guitarist, he has an extensive background playing in other styles, such as jazz, rock, flamenco, and bluegrass. Matthew's recordings include *Permanent Transition*, which features duo improvisations with Andrew York and Dusan Bogdanovic. Matthew was named Outstanding Graduate of the U.S.C. guitar department, where he studied with William Kanengiser, James Smith, and Scott Tennant. He also studied jazz with Joe Diorio and Frank Potenza. Matthew currently teaches classical and jazz guitar at Cal State University, Dominguez Hills, in the Los Angeles area.

William Kanengiser

Acclaimed soloist, recording artist and professor at the USC Thornton School of Music, William Kanengiser is one of the few guitarists to have won the Concert Artists Guild New York Competition. His solo recordings on the GSP label display his unique approach to programming, ranging from the music of the Old World to the Caribbean to his latest disc *Classical Cool*, an exploration of jazz currents for classical guitar. He has earned critical acclaim for his imaginative arrangements for solo guitar and guitar quartet, and for producing two instructional videos for Hot Licks. Kanengiser may be best known as the classical guitarist in the 1986 film *Crossroads*.

Scott Tennant

Celebrated as a world-class performer, author and teacher, Detroit-born Scott Tennant has been concertizing since the age of twelve. Much in demand as a solo artist, Scott has recorded for Delos International and is currently completing a recording project of the complete solo guitar works of Joaquin Rodrigo for GHA, Belgium. He is the author of the best-selling book and video *Pumping Nylon*, a technical handbook for the classical guitarist, and the five-part series *Scott Tennant's Basic Classical Guitar Method*. He has taught at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and is now on the faculty at the USC Thornton School of Music.

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