

WILLIAM KANENGISER

Guitar

Sunday, July 18, 2021 | 7pm

Herbst Theatre

SANTIAGO DE MURCIA

arr. William Kanengiser Sonata in D

Allegro Grave Allegro

FRANCISCO TÁRREGA

¡Marieta! Sueño **Adelita**

Mazurka en Sol

María

FRANK WALLACE

From "Sweet Ladyslipper"

Cantiga

Pavane for a Dying Prince

Zar

GOLFAM KHAYAM

Lost Land (2021)*

(World Concert Premiere)

DUŠAN **BOGDANOVIĆ** Three African Sketches

Allegro ritmico

Misterioso

Allegro ritmico

BRIAN HEAD

From "Sketches for Friends"

Lobster Tale

Brookland Boogie

William Kanengiser is represented by BesenArts LLC 7 Delaney Place, Tenafly, NJ 07670-1607 BesenArts.com

William Kanengiser records for GSP

kanengiser.com

^{*} Commissioned as part of the "Diaspora Project," with the generous support of the Augustine Foundation.

ARTIST PROFILE

San Francisco Performances has presented William Kanengiser 14 times, beginning in 1986, as a member of the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet and earlier this weekend with the Alexander String Quartet.

William Kanengiser has forged a career that expands the possibilities of the classical guitar. A prize-winner in major competitions (1987 Concert Artists Guild International Competition, Toronto Guitar '81) he has toured throughout North America, Asia, and Europe with his innovative programs and expressive musicianship. He recorded four CDs for the GSP label, playing music as diverse as Caribbean, Eastern European, and jazz. A member of the guitar faculty at the USC Thornton School of Music since 1983, he has given master classes around the world and produced two instructional videos. Most recently, he performed the U.S. premiere of Folk Concerto by Clarice Assad, with fellow Los Angeles Guitar Quartet member Scott Tennant, and the Albany Symphony conducted by David Allan Miller.

An active proponent of new music, he recently received a grant from the Augustine Foundation for his *Diaspora Project*, commissioning seven new works focusing on issues of migration and assimilation. It includes new pieces by Sergio Assad, Dušan Bogdanović, Golfam Khayam, and others. An advocate for musician's wellness, he serves as Chair of the Thornton Musician's Wellness Committee, curating their Wellness Initiative with health screenings and a lecture series, as well as creating a Musician's Wellness course.

A prolific arranger, he has created dozens of transcriptions for solo guitar and guitar quartet, and composed a number of works for four guitars. In 2009 he created the stage production *The Illustrious Gentleman Don Quixote* for narrator and guitar quartet, writing the stage script and adapting music from the Spanish Renaissance. It was premiered with Monty Python member John Cleese, and extensively toured with Firesign Theater founder Phil Proctor.

As a founding member of the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, William Kanengiser has given hundreds of recitals and concer-

to appearances around the world and has recorded over a dozen releases. Their Telarc release *LAGQ Latin* was nominated for a Grammy, and it was their Telarc title LAGQ'S *Guitar Heroes* which won a Grammy in 2005 as the best classical crossover recording. Most recently, their recording of the title work on Pat Metheny's *Road to the Sun* hit #1 on the Apple Music Classical chart.

PROGRAM NOTES

Santiago de Murcia (1673–1739) is one of a group of Spanish composers who wrote for the baroque guitar, a smaller cousin of the modern instrument. The baroque guitar typically had five double-strings, or courses, and one (sometimes both) of the paired lower strings could be tuned one octave higher. This so-called "re-entrant tuning," not unlike that found on today's ukulele and five-string banjo, afforded wonderful sonority and campanella effects, and made it particularly effective for strummed chordal accompaniment. De Murcia, like his contemporaries Sanz, Guerau, and others, elevated this subservient instrument into a vehicle for high art, developing sophisticated counterpoint and brilliant figuration. Sonata in D is comprised of the final three pieces found in the famous "Saldívar Codex," a manuscript discovered in Mexico in the mid 1940s. The first movement, marked Allegro, is in ABA form, and features cascading lines and delicate ornaments. The middle *Grave* movement is a steady pulsation of block chords, with an expressive chorale-like texture. The final movement, also marked Allegro, is in bipartite form, and mixes sprightly parallel 10ths with rasgueado chords; its triple meter and frequent hemiolas is reminiscent of the keyboard sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti.

Francisco Tárrega (1852–1909) is generally considered the grandfather of the modern guitar, developing new technical approaches, creating brilliant compositions, spawning a vast lineage of students, and with the luthier Antonio Torres, overseeing the development and construction of the modern instrument. Most celebrated for concert pieces such as *Recuerdos de la Alhambra* and *Capricho árabe*, he created a stag-

gering number of arrangements, pedagogical pieces, and concert works, many of which were based on popular dances of the day. The current set of five character pieces are fine examples of this, and they also reveal his deep affection for his family and friends through their charming dedications. ¡Marieta!, in the form of a mazurka, is named after his wife; almost a conversation between husband and wife, it presents a plaintive melody in the A section, contrasted with a joyous one in the B section. Sueño ("dream") is also a mazurka, but with a more pronounced iteration of the Polish rhythm. Adelita is one of Tárrega's most popular "simple" pieces, a favorite of students, but with a charming and Romantic effect. Mazurka en Sol, obviously also a mazurka, explores a wide range of sonorities and effects, especially his favorite technique of the glissando. The final piece was named for his daughter and is in the form of a gavota. Through-composed, as opposed to the bipartite mazurkas that precede it, Maria puts Tárrega's dramatic and theatrical flair on display.

Frank Wallace (1952–2020) had a multi-faceted career, excelling as an early music specialist, vocalist, classical guitar virtuoso, recording artist, producer, teacher, arranger, and most notably, composer. My friendship with Frank goes back nearly five decades, as he became one of my first classical guitar teachers when I attended a summer music camp at age 14. I've been especially interested in championing his works recently, not only for their wonderful range and quality, but also to support him during his valiant struggles with cancer. Sweet Ladyslipper was written in 1990, dedicated to the memory of John Fleagle, who along with Frank and his wife, Nancy Knowles, comprised the ensemble Live Oak Trio. Cantiga is based on Spanish Renaissance music, with a dirge-like melody set over open harmonies. Pavane for a Dying Prince is a clear homage to Ravel's Pavane pour une enfante défunte, and points to the irony of Fleagle's own struggles with cancer. And the rousing Zar is based on an Egyptian dance, with drone sonorities and odd-meter grooves.

Golfam Khayam (b. 1983) is a brilliant young guitarist, chamber musician, improviser, and composer from Tehran,

Iran, and she specializes in fusing traditional Persian music forms with contemporary elements. A few years ago, I commissioned Golfam to contribute a new work to my Diaspora Project, an assemblage of seven new pieces focusing on issues of migration and assimilation. Golfam crafted this evocative and ethereal piece, Lost Land, that attempts to capture her personal experience of having left Iran for years (to study in the U.S. and Switzerland), and upon returning, finding her homeland almost unrecognizable. Most telling is the tempo indication she chose: "adagio disorientato." Using florid ornaments on a simple monody, the piece takes unsuspecting twists and turns in tonal centers, as if one is lost in a labyrinth of twisting alleyways. Adding to the open sonority of the cross-string ornaments, she asks that the sixth string be tuned down a fifth, to low A, providing a rich and deep resonance to the work. Tonight's performance will be the world concert premiere of Lost Land.

Bryan Johanson (b. 1951) was Professor of Guitar and Composition at Portland State University until his recent retirement, and now he devotes himself fulltime to his two favorite activities: writing music and beekeeping. An astonishingly prolific and eclectic composer, he has written hundreds of works for solo guitar and guitar in chamber settings, as well as complete string quartet cycles, concertos, and symphonies. While his typical musical palette leans toward the more peppery notes, The Magic Serenade is pure honey. Its most striking feature is the use of the capo, placed in the seventh fret. By limiting the available range of notes, he creatively opens up new resources by accessing the pitches between the capo and the nut, near the headstock of the guitar. In his typically ingenious style, he makes the guitar sound like a totally new instrument, more harp-like than guitar-like, and the plaintive, cascading melodies express a sweetness and delicacy that is rather captivating.

Dušan Bogdanović (b. 1955) is one of the most inventive and idiosyncratic composers writing for guitar today. With a distinct and individual compositional voice rooted in Balkan modes and 16th century polyphony, he has written pieces in

a wide variety of styles, including East Indian, Japanese, jazz, neo-Renaissance, and many others. But he has a particular affinity for African music, due to its common use of his favorite musical constructs: polyrhythm and polymeter. His *Three African Sketches* explores these elements, finding multiple ways to dissect and devolve a steady 12/8 groove. The outer movements, both marked *allegro ritmico*, also utilize a preparation of small staples on the treble strings, giving a wonderfully idiophonic rattle that evokes the kora, a traditional African harp. The middle movement is in three distinct and overlapping parts: an ostinato of gently rising and falling fourths, a bass melody derived from an existing African lullaby, and an obbligato descant that floats above the texture, each revolving in its own rhythmic and harmonic sphere.

Brian Head (b. 1964) is a Professor of Guitar and Composition at the USC Thornton School of Music, and also serves as the Artistic Director of the Guitar Foundation of America. His music draws on contemporary forms as well as typically American sources such as plainchant, spirituals, and other folk idioms. His Sketches for Friends is an early work, written as a set of remembrances of singular moments with important friends from his youth. Lobster Tale recalls a pleasant lunch during a summer music camp in Maine, shared with a cellist friend from Nashville. The music begins in a raucous bluegrass style, and then moves to a simple Puritan melody, attempting to reconcile his friend's southern drawl with the New England landscape. Brookland Boogie is a memory of Brian's trips from his Baltimore home to his jazz guitar lessons in Washington, D.C., where he would take the train to the Brookland Metro Station and "boogie" to his lesson. Written in jazz-infused style, it begins with a groove reminiscent of an up-tempo version of Miles Davis' So What, and moves to a middle section featuring a walking bassline and quasi-improvised jazz licks.

Program Notes by William Kanengiser



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