CLASSICAL MUSIC INSIDE OUT

Photo by Robin Marx

PABLO SAINZ-VILLEGAS
Guitar Masterworks
Thursday, November 13, 2025
Virginia G. Piper Repertory Theater

Presented as part of the Classical Music Inside Out series
Classical Music Inside Out Artistic Director – Jack Bailey

Sponsored by: Bill Passey and Maria Silva

Guitar Masterworks USA
2025/26

Vive la pasión desenfrenada de una tradición invocada a través de las mágicas seis cuerdas de Pablo Sainz-Villegas. Acompaña a Pablo en un viaje musical a través de clásicos inside-out de Villa-Lobos, Piazzolla y Ginastera, doble melodías evocadoras y románticas, hasta las piezas más virtuosas y fogosas jamás escritas. Ya sea sorprendo y deifuta de la guitarra como nunca antes.

Héitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959)
Five Preludes
I. *Homenagem ao Sertanejo Brasileiro*
II. *Homenagem ao Malandro Carioco*
III. *Homenagem ao Boêi*
IV. *Homenagem ao Índio Brasileiro*
V. *Homenagem ao Vôo Social*

Johan Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Chaconne BWV 1004 (arr. *Pablo Sainz Villegas*)

INTERMISSION

Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909)
Asturias – Leyenda from Suite Española Op. 47, No. 5

Agustín Barrios-Mangoré (1885-1944)
Un suelo en la Floresta

Carlo Domeniconi (1947-)
Koyunbaba Op. 19
I. *Moderato*
II. *Mosso*
III. *Cantabile*
IV. *Presto*

Approximate duration without intermission: 90 minutes

"virtuoso playing characterized by its vividly shaded tone and unmistakable phrasing"
– THE NEW YORK TIMES

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Héitor Villa-Lobos
5 Preludes
Born March 5, 1887, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; died November 17, 1959, in Rio de Janeiro

Villa-Lobos, one of the most important musicians of the Americas, a prolific composer, an assiduous folklorist, an educator, and conductor, began his classical career as a cellist in the cafe orchestras of Rio de Janeiro, and as a young man, developed a great interest in the folk music of his country. His attention to his composition never ended 1912-1915, when he met his future wife Lucilia Guimarães Villa-Lobos, who her great artistic support to perform his works widely, discovered him. From 1923 to 1930, the young Brazilian lived in Paris, broadening his artistic horizons; there he met the great Spanish guitarist, Andrés Segovia. The two men became friends and collaborators. While in Paris, time, Villa-Lobos composed his *Twelve Etudes for Guitar*. Segovia, in 1940, wrote *Five Preludes for Guitar*, dedicated to Segovia; a decade later, in 1951, Segovia commissioned a Guitar Concerto from his friend.

Although Villa-Lobos wrote in a wide variety of genres, he is most known for Brazilian Popular Music, from suites for various ensembles in which he fused the forms, harmonies, and procedures of the European Baroque with the spirit of his native country.

Five Preludes, composed in 1940, were Villa-Lobos' last contribution to the guitar repertory. Had not written for the guitar in a decade, and this was not known why he decided to compose the preludes. Each of the Preludes encapsulates a different stylistic principle.

Prelude No. I, *Andantino expressivo*, is an extremely technically demanding, romantic piece, in which the opening Brazilian lullaby of the composer, with unmistakable term saudosismo in which a haunting, rich, sustained melody with the long-ingrained sadness or painful bittersweetness, the gentle opening section, *Andantino*, gives way to a more spirited middle section full of large gestures. The final section both an repeated part of the first section and a tertiary ABA structure of the piece. Villa-Lobos described this Prelude, which has the flavour of Chopin's music, "a lullaby of the sertão, a homage to the Brazilian country dweller." In a lecture, Villa-Lobos described the piece, saying, No. 1 "Homenagem ao sertanejo brasileiro" ("Homage to the dweller of the Brazilian sertão) hinterland or backcountry, a lyrical melody."

Prelude No. 2, *Andantino*, takes up music that is associated with Brazilians who have African origins. In his lecture, he described No. 2 as "Homenagem ao Malandro Carioco – Modinha/Capoeira -Melodia Capoeira/Chorinho" "Homage to the Rascal of Rio – Capoeira Melody – Capoeira Melody." The music of this prelude is inspired by the capoeira rhythms of the capoeira dance ancient war dance of African origin. The second section of this prelude imitates the sound of a tambourine, as Brazilians use it to accompany by striking its single metal strip with a stick. This prelude, like the preceding one and No. 4, has an ABA structure.

Prelude No. 3, *Andante*, Villa-Lobos dedicated to Bach. "Homenagem à Bach." This Prelude is in reverence to Bach in a kind of Bachian Bourée in minature. The structure of this Prelude is ABAB.

Prelude No. 4 he labeled: "Homenagem ao Índio Brasileiro" ("Homage to the Brazilian Indian"). In this piece, Villa-Lobos gives us his reminiscence of the traditional tribal music of Brazil. This prelude also has a triptychs ABA form.

Prelude No. 5, *Andante expressivo*, is subtitled "Homenagem à Vôo Social." "Vôo" repetitivo e monótono frequentemente que frequentam as conversas de teatro ou Bic" ("Homage to the social life – "To the Flight of Social life – Flight to go to concerts and theatre in Rio") Here the composer pays tribute to the traditional urban music of Brazil. The structure of this prelude is different than the others: it is an abbreviated ABACRA rondo form.

Johann Sebastian Bach
Chaconne
Born March 21, 1685, in Eisenach; died July 28, 1750, in Leipzig

Bach, composer of only the four dances that were piled together in Bach's suites, plus a *Chaconne* added as a massive appendix, longer than the other four movements combined. Since many instrumentalists performed the suite the chaconne as a self-contained piece in its own right, historically it has often been performed as a solo work. Music historians and musicologists feel that sometime in 1720, Bach composed this Chaconne upon his return from a trip and found his accompanied his employer, Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen; Bach discovered on his return that his wife, Maria Barbara, the mother of his seven children, had died in his absence.

The chaconne was originally a dance, which probably originated in Mexico and was brought to Europe by Spanish voyagers to the New World. Early it is was described as a wild and lascivious dance, but by the time Northern European composers used it, its motion had become slow and dignified. Its structural rule is simple, a set of continuous variations over a repeated harmonic progression, but Bach's realization of the idea is complex. It has been suggested that Bach composed the chaconne (and the sarabande of the whole Partita) for his wife, as a tombeau, a musical composition to commemorate a loved person's death.

He begins his Chaconne with an imposing, serious theme; twenty nine variations create a cumulative effect of splendor. The motion from the minor key to the major and back to minor creates three large sections, with subdivisions resulting from the successive recurrences of the opening theme. The variations make a subtle and seamless sequence. These parts become increasingly shorter in length, and, in each, the musical intelligence and focus become more acute to create the impression of an overarching progression. With each variation, Bach uses different techniques to build up energy and momentum. Bach's depth of imagination and creative force in building so great a structure from so modest a subject is one of the wonders of music.

The Chaconne makes huge demands on both the technical skill and the artistic insight of the performer. Its music is laid out, heard, and at times, is a fragment that grows into a piece of musical architecture both vast and concentrated. Bach's Chaconne reveals his musical intelligence at its most enduring emotional impact. The piece begins and ends with powerful affirmations of the impinging, serious theme, yet within the whole the music includes a large spectrum of emotion and the variations create a cumulative effect of splendor.

The composer Johannes Brahms writing to his friend Clara Schumann sums up the enormous power of the work that he felt: "On one stave, for a small instrument, the man writes a whole world of the deepest thoughts and most powerful feelings. If I imagined that I could have created, even conceived the idea, I am quite certain that the excess of excitement and mental disturbance experience would have driven me out of my mind. If one doesn't have the greatest solitude around, then it is well the most fortunate idea occurs to a person listen to its sound in one's mind."

So, when Bach composed the chaconne, it was not likely to have been an act of personal expression but rather one of civic or religious service in which his emotions were neglected. In Discovering Music Symbology 2020 Bach's Chaconne intimates that beyond civic and professional duty, Bach composed for its expressive his faith.

In an essay for the *LA Review of Books*, Michael Markham puts Bach in historical context in a way that is ultimately very important for us to remain aware of when listening to this profound and moving work: "There is no evidence that Bach himself considered the chaconne to encode an entire vista of the universe or to record his personal relationship with God. Romantic notions would never have occurred to a court composer who had trained in the Baroque. Bach as a Lutheran Kantor organist. Composing sacred harmonic progression, Bach's notation of the idea is complex. It has been suggested that Bach composed the chaconne (and the sarabande of the whole Partita) for his wife, as a tombeau, a musical composition to commemorate a loved person's death.

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Isaac Albéniz
***Asturias* from Suite Española, Op. 47, No. 5**
Born May 29, 1860, in Camprodon, Spain; died May 18, 1909, in Cambó-les Bains, France

Composing most of his pieces in Spanish style in London and Paris, Albéniz expressed nostalgia for his homeland by creating rhapsodic tone poems for his native country's guitarists, its northern wilderness and its southern Moorish palaces. Albéniz's only excursion into the Spanish Classic Suite form, originally for piano, helped establish the composer as a major composer of Spanish nationalist music. Much of Albéniz's music was inspired by the traditions of Andalusia, the birthplace of the flamenco guitar.

At the age of twelve, the Catalonian composer-pianist Albéniz ran away from home, going as a stowaway to Argentina; from there, he traveled to Cuba, Puerto Rico, Africa, and across the United States to Paris. Although as a young adult, he made and lost a fortune playing pianos in Latin America, ending up playing a New York waterfront bar, he eventually settled in Paris, England and finally, to Germany where he studied with Liszt. In Leipzig he met Spanish composer and musicologist Felipe Pedrell, who encouraged him to delve into the musical resources of Spanish music; consequently, Albéniz became very important in the creation of a Spanish nationalist style, incorporating Spanish rhythms and melodies into his music. Actively promoting Spanish music, he participated in the modernism movement of the resurgence of Catalan culture, which began in Barcelona in the 1890's.

Albéniz's greatest masterpiece is the piano suite *Iberia* (1905), which depicts the regions of Spain. The grandeur of the twelve huge piano pieces demanded the technique of a pianist of the highest order. Albéniz's other works include the Suite Española (1886) in which each movement evokes the place whose name it bears. All the movements are in the form of a dance in triple meter, and all but one has ternary (three-part ABA) form made up of two similar sections and a contrasting middle, a style, originally an improvised song section placed within a dance.

"Asturias," named for a province in the north, that inspired it. "Asturias," subtitled Leyenda ("Legend"), is a piece that is often returned to a popular guitar solo transcription. Demanding technically, it creates a unique atmosphere. Although the legend that the composer has chosen is not known, the music is haunting and reminiscent of flamenco. It has original harmonic dissonance mixed with a long-lined melodic contour to devastating earthquakes. The opening section creates the sound of the flamenco guitar with its "open-string" pedal point and "rasgueado" chords. The slow central section is more sophisticated. The opening phrases evoke the comic pride, the improvised solo song of the persecuted Moorish dancer. Gypsy cultural emigrant that produced what we call flamenco. The work ends with a reprise of the first section and with bare octaves.

Agustín Barrios Mangoré
Un Suelo en la Floresta
Born May 5, 1885 in Missiones Department, Paraguay or Villa Florida, north of San Ignacio Guazú, in Southern Paraguay; died August 7, 1944 in San Salvador, El Salvador

Agustín Barrios Mangoré had great musical ability that was apparent early. His first guitar teacher was Cesáreo Sosa Escalada. When he was thirteen, he began to study at the National College in Asunción, where he shone as an outstanding guitarist. In 1909, he made his first visit to Buenos Aires and then became a traveling concert artist, giving recitals in many countries throughout Latin America.

In August 1930, in Bahia, Brazil, he debuted as "Chief Nitsuga Mangoré," "the Papyrus of the guitar from the jungles of Paraguay." Nitsuga, "against spelled backwards, and "Mangoré" was the name of a legendary Guarani chief. Mangoré donned native costume, complete with headdress and feathers, but around 1934, the Paraguayan ambassador to Mexico advised him that his costume was "not dignified or appropriate."

In 1934, Mangoré travelled to Europe, making Belgium his first stop. There, he performed at the Royal Conservatoire, Brussels before going to France, Germany, and Spain. After three months in Madrid, he returned to South America. In 1939, he suffered a heart attack while in Mexico City. After he partially recovered, he journeyed to El Salvador where, with the help of the country's president, he became a professor at a music school.

Barrios Mangoré's guitar-playing technique is his legacy both of recordings and of original compositions. He was the first guitarist to do a significant amount of recordings; he made more than fifty recordings between 1910 and 1942, which enabled others to notate his compositions, especially when definitive manuscripts were no longer to be found. Mangoré sometimes, like the violinist Fritz Kreisler, attributed his compositions to earlier European composers.

Most of Mangoré's works seem to treat the line between Chopin-like poetry, filtered through 19th century conventions of salon music and Latin American sacrificial dances. Highly inspired by Chopin's own artistry, Barrios he gives this work a unique atmosphere of enchantment and romance.

Barrios Mangoré composed *Un suelo en la floresta* ("A Dream in the Forest") in 1937 and recorded it in 1929. It became one of his most famous of works, especially popular for its extended tremolo, which was often judged to be the most difficult and complex tremolo piece ever written for the guitar. It is often compared to Francisco Tárrega's *Recuerdo de la Alhambra*, which, with its tremolo technique, was famous until Barrios took the tremolo to a new level. Barrios' piece requires tremendous technical expertise in particular because of the left-handed stretches that it demands; nevertheless, it has an extremely romantic quality and a soaring melody. The introduction and initial melodic theme beautifully suggest the lyrical work's title; throughout, the piece also includes very lyrical musical phrases and even a gypsy dance.

For a long time, Barrios used *Souvenir d'un Rêve* as the work's title, but in 1930, he changed the name to its present one to emphasize the way that the music suggests, meditation, and rhythm provoke the different locations and moods to be found with the forest.

Carlo Domeniconi
Koyunbaba, Op. 19
Born in 1947 in Cesena, Italy

The prolific Italian composer and guitarist, Carlo Domeniconi is known as a concert artist in both classical music and jazz. Domeniconi's strikingly eclectic musical language reflects his commitment to multiculturalism, world music and jazz. Over time, he has been influenced by a variety of musical, artistic, and literary traditions from Baroque suites to bossa nova, from Anatolian folksong to Indian ragas.

He currently lives in Berlin, where early on he studied and later taught, but he also spent many years living and teaching in Istanbul, where he drew inspiration from Turkish folk music, which plays a large part in his compositions. He began the guitar studies department at the Istanbul Conservatory and while there, developed a compositional style that reflected the regional folk influence.

The Turkish word *koyunbaba* literally translates as "sheep-father" meaning shepherd. Additionally, it also refers to a 15th century mystical dervish, like figure whose grave, decorated with colored pieces of cloth by Turkish villagers, is honored by his family problems. The Koyunbaba, in addition, the family name of people who still reside in the area and the name of a Turkish folk dance, which is performed by the Turkish people in Mediterranean of southeast Turkey to local legend, it has a secret power to be a talisman against the evil eye. Koyunbaba, the dance, is performed at weddings and other festivals. Domeniconi cites two examples: one a German woman who wanted to keep the area in its natural, unspoiled state, and her son who became ill with cancer. The other was a man of the Koyunbaba family who, after selling some of the land, hung himself.

Koyunbaba, composed in 1985, is an ever-demanding four-movement suite, which requires the guitar to be tuned in C# minor, totally different from normal tuning. The resulting sound is rich and exotic. Koyunbaba is based on fantasy and variations; its music is quite rhapsodic; it gradually builds in intensity, relying on repetition, drones, and slowly shifting textures and harmonies. The final Presto is remarkable for its speed and clarity.

Baba is a title given to Sufi saints, which has caused some listeners to have detected in this impressively repetitive music references to the ecstatic whirling of the Sufi Dervishes. In other places in the music, Domeniconi, who describes this work as a pastorale, evokes the sound of the Turkish folk Turkish lute. The music gradually builds during the work's four continuous sections, using the special tuning to hypnotic effect in creating the musical excitement.