



Adam Almeida

UGA
presents.

24|25 SEASON

LOS ANGELES GUITAR QUARTET

John Dearman
Matthew Greif
William Kanengiser
Douglas Lora

SUN, SEPT 22, 3:00 pm
Hodgson Concert Hall

Supported by
JAMES A. AND LESLIE C. DE HASETH

Please silence all mobile phones and electronic devices. Photography, video and audio recording, and texting are prohibited during the performance.



PROGRAM

SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR (1875-1912)

Danse Nègre from African Suite, Op. 35 (arr. W. Kanengiser) [10:00]

PHILLIP HOUGHTON (1954-2017)

Opals [10:00]

- I. Black Opal
- II. Water Opal
- III. White Opal

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

From “Moonlight” Sonata #14, *Quasi una fantasia*
Adagio sostenuto (arr. W. Kanengiser) [5:00]

AARON COPLAND (1900-1990)

Two Mexican Pieces (arr. W. Kanengiser) [7:00]

- I. *Paisaje Mexicano*
- II. *Danza de Jalisco*

INTERMISSION

J. S. BACH (1685-1750)

Prélude, Fugue, and Allegro [10:00]

- I. Prélude #1 in C Major from “The Well-Tempered Clavier”
(arr. A. York)
- II. “Little Fugue” in G minor, BWV 578 (arr. A. York)
- III. Allegro, mvt. III from Brandenburg Concerto No. 3,
BWV 1048 (arr. S. Tennant)

DOUGLAS LORA (b. 1978)

Maracasalsa [8:00]

- I. *Preludio*
- II. *Fuga*

FRANZ LISZT (1811-1886)

Hungarian Rhapsody #2 in C-sharp minor (arr. S. Tennant) [10:00]

- I. *Lassan*
- II. *Frisska*

Timings are approximate. Program is subject to change.

PROGRAM NOTES

by William Kanengiser ©2024

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was born in London to an English mother and a father from Sierra Leone, Africa. Although raised in England, he came to embrace the music of America, most notably in his popular trilogy of cantatas, *Song of Hiawatha*, and numerous works informed by African American musical influences. A prolific composer and active conductor, his career was tragically cut short at age 35, but not before he earned the respect of musicians and nobility across Europe and the US. He ultimately earned the moniker of the “African Mahler” (although this writer might suggest that “African Dvorak” would be more apt). His **Danse Nègre** is the finale to a four-movement work entitled *African Suite*, originally written for piano, but subsequently arranged for full orchestra by the composer. Featuring a rousing introduction and ebullient theme, the piece moves to a middle section reminiscent of a spiritual and ends with a brilliant codetta. The simplicity of the themes belies a sophisticated sense of structure and harmonic inventiveness, and the piece seems to lend itself gratefully to this recasting on four guitars.

Phillip Houghton 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 was famously a synesthete, wherein he saw very specific colors when hearing 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 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).

Certainly, the **Moonlight Sonata** (1st movement of Sonata #14 in C# minor, Op. 27 #2, “*Sonata Quasi una fantasia*”) by **Ludwig van Beethoven** needs no introduction. It stands as one of Beethoven’s most recognizable works for solo piano, eclipsed perhaps only by *Für Elise* in popularity. Stunningly modern in its day (composed in 1801) it became one of Beethoven’s most-requested pieces after his premiere of the work in 1802 (apparently, he played so forcefully in the 3rd movement *Presto agitato* that a number of piano strings snapped!). The evocative *Adagio sostenuto* movement features undulating arpeggios murmuring under a melody that Berlioz described as “a lamentation.” With the instructions

that “the entire piece should be played with the greatest delicacy and without dampers,” it explores the full resonance of the lower tessitura of the piano in its most delicate dynamic range. The baritone voicing of the work lends itself well to the guitar, which already sounds an octave lower than written (although a number of the lowest bass notes traverse even the extended range of John Dearman’s 7-string guitar). The challenge in William Kanengiser’s arrangement was to attempt to mimic the resonant sustain of the piano, and the subtle pedaling effects that create its haunting atmosphere. Although every arrangement carries its own set of compromises, it is hoped that this one will shed new light on a much-loved Beethoven classic.

The son of immigrant parents, **Aaron Copland** lived to become the most celebrated of American composers. His popular reputation in the United States is founded on his thoroughly American ballets *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, and *Appalachian Spring*, while a great variety of other compositions won him an unassailable position in American concert life. In the course of his composing and conducting career, Copland made many visits to Central and South America; and, wfrom *El salon Mexico* of 1933-1936 onwards, the rhythms and colors of the region have enlivened several of his shorter works. The second and third of his Three Latin American Sketches were originally presented, under the title **Two Mexican Pieces**, at the 1959 Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy. The first movement, *Paisaje Mexicano* (Mexican Landscape) features a wondrous mix of lyric and languid atmosphere. The second, *Danza de Jalisco*, is based on the son, a traditional dance form from Veracruz. Using the alternation of 6/8

and 3/4 meters which typifies much Spanish and Latin-American music, Copland’s own distinctive voice is evident in the use of open harmonies, broad textures, and exotic percussion.

Those familiar with standard classical guitar repertoire will no doubt recognize the title **Prelude, Fugue and Allegro**, as it is one of the most beloved and frequently performed **J.S. Bach** pieces on solo guitar. This set is not that piece. Instead, it is a group of essentially unrelated works by Bach, held together only by the thread that they are wonderful pieces. The first is the famous Prelude No. 1 from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, which earned further prominence as the accompaniment for Gounod’s setting of “Ave Maria.” Andrew York arranged it much like a change-ringing pi ece, with each guitarist playing a single note in the rolling arpeggios. The Fugue (also arranged by Andrew) is the delightful “Little Fugue in G Minor”, originally for organ. It features a classic theme and



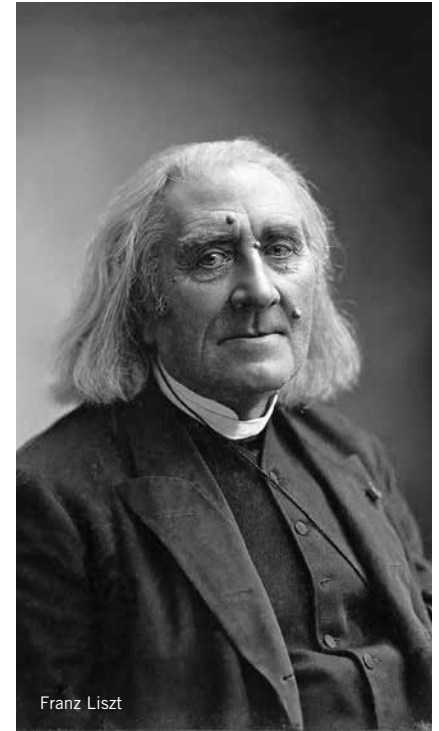
J. S. Bach

exquisite four-part imitative textures and draws a wide range of organ-stop colors from the group. The final allegro is the 3rd movement of the 3rd Brandenburg Concerto. Scott Tennant’s arrangement makes full use of the entire range of the quartet and demands a good deal of technical finesse; it is also an homage to Los Romeros, who frequently performed this piece.

As a foil to the preceding Bach prelude and fugue, LAGQ features a composition by their newest member, **Douglas Lora**. *Maracasalsa* is cast in the form of a prelude and fugue, with the imitative counterpoint and thematic unity of the Bacchian model but rooted in traditional Brazilian rhythms. Based on the *maracatú*, an ancient dance form descended from the Afro-Brazilian culture of the northern state of Pernambuco, *Maracasalsa* playfully explores the rhythmic interplay of superimposed motives, as well as unexpected harmonic and textural changes. This technically and musically challenging work was written when Douglas was only 25 years old.

Hungarian-born **Franz Liszt** was a unique “sibling” indeed amidst a formidable “brotherhood” of composer/performers (such as Chopin, Paganini, Kreisler, and Rachmaninov, to name a few) whose music and peerless virtuosity on the piano made him an international superstar of his time.

As was common and, most likely, expected of a composer such as Liszt, he dove deeply into his ethnic roots for those pearls that would make his music truly and unmistakably Hungarian. Bela Bartok would later praise Liszt and his music, particularly the Hungarian Rhapsodies, calling them “perfect creations,” while at the same time hastily pointing out that the material



Franz Liszt

Liszt was using was essentially Roma, and not entirely Hungarian.

The second of Franz Liszt’s **Hungarian Rhapsodies** is one of his better-known works. It was originally composed in 1847 as a solo piano piece dedicated to the Count László Teleky and published in 1851. An orchestral version followed soon thereafter. Most of his rhapsodies, including this one, are comprised of two parts: a slower and expressive part which Liszt marks *Lassan (lassu)*, and a final section marked *Frisska (friss)* which builds up in intensity into a frenzied swirl.

On a contemporary note, the piece has found its way into the television and film media, appearing in such favorites as the Bugs Bunny “Rhapsody Rabbit” episode, and the movie *One Hundred Men and a Girl*.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

For four decades on the concert stage, the members of the Grammy Award-winning **Los Angeles Guitar Quartet (LAGQ)** have continually set the standard for expression and virtuosity among guitar ensembles while perennially redefining themselves in their musical explorations. As one of the most charismatic groups performing today, the LAGQ's critically acclaimed transcriptions of concert masterworks provide a fresh look at the music of the past, while their interpretations from the contemporary and world-music realms continually break new ground. *Opalescent*, the solo recording released in Spring 2022, shows off the LAGQ's rich palette of colors and sparkling sound. 2021 albums include the Grammy-nominated collaboration with *Conspirare*, *The Singing Guitar* (Delos), featuring Nico Muhly's groundbreaking work *How Little You Are* and Pat Metheny's *Road to the Sun* (Modern Recordings/BMG), named for the title track written for LAGQ, which hit #1 on the Apple Music Classical chart. This monumental work features in their current American Guitar Masters program. In addition to solo programs, other touring highlights include collaborative works with choir, guitar orchestra, symphony orchestra and Latin Romance with vocalist and flamenco dancers; many of these works were written expressly for the LAGQ.

LAGQ's recordings appear on the Telarc, SONY, Delos and LAGQ labels. Please visit Los Angeles Guitar Quartet online at lagq.com and on Twitter (@LAGQ), Instagram (@laguitarquartet) and Facebook (@laguitarquartet) for candid photos and additional information about touring, recordings and special projects.

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