

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

GRADUATE RECITAL IN CLASSIC GUITAR

An artistic performance presented in partial
satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts in Music

by

Joseph Glaser

May, 1975

The artistic performance of Joseph Glaser is
approved:

California State University, Northridge

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ABSTRACT

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Program

Fantasia No. 1 John Dowland

Four Preludes Manuel Ponce

Lute Suite No. 3 in G minor . . . J.S. Bach

BWV 995

Prelude

Poco vivace

Sarabande

Gavotte I

Gavotte II

Intermission

La Espiral Eterna Leo Brouwer

En Los Trigales Joaquin Rodrigo

Variations on a Theme by Luis Milan . .

. Joaquin Nin-Culmell

The selection of the pieces played on this recital was based on the following criteria: A balanced variety of different types of pieces, in terms of style and historical period, from the guitar repertoire; a program which would be challenging for the performer and structured so as to have dramatic interest and continuity.

The opening piece, the Fantasia No. 1 by the English Renaissance composer John Dowland, was written originally for lute. It was performed in lute tuning, with the third string tuned a half-step lower to f#, and a capo was placed on the third fret to raise the pitch level a minor third. Its lively quality, together with its usage of guitar techniques - four-voice counterpoint contrasted with homophonic chordal sections, and rapid scale passages in both the bass and treble - make this work a test of technical skill, articulation, and musical expression.

The Four Preludes by the Mexican composer Manuel Ponce, which consist of nos. 2, 1, 4, and 7 out of a set of 12 miniatures he composed for guitar, are a marked change in character from the Dowland. Utilizing impressionistic-like harmonies, these short pieces explore the guitar's textural capacities, and each has the flavor of being a transcendent splash of color. These short works, although not of great technical

difficulty, test the performer's sensitivity to the delicate nature of the guitar's sonorous range, and his ability to maintain and project this sensitivity in the performing situation.

The first half of the program ends with the Lute Suite No. 3, BWV 995, by Johann Sebastian Bach. This is one of the six lute suites Bach composed which mark a cornerstone in the literature for guitar. These works are a challenge to the guitarist both musically and in the realm of endurance. Technically demanding, interpretatively inexhaustible, they are standard repertoire for the concert guitarist. Several of the dance movements of this particular suite were deleted, but the basic form of slow - fast - slow - fast has been maintained, especially in the manner in which the driving poco vivace segues into the ethereal sarabande, to be followed by the lively pair of gavottes.

The second half of the program begins with the most experimental work included in the program, La Espiral Eterna (The Eternal Spiral) by Leo Brouwer. Brouwer, a native Cuban, is becoming recognized as one of today's leading guitarists and composers for the guitar. This particular work is his most radically innovative work to date, and concentrates on the presentation of a pure illusion - that of the image of the universe as an eternally flowing spiral of energy. The

composition employs spatial and aleatoric notational techniques, and explores such methods of playing as rapid arpeggios (played as fast as possible), right hand glissandos, and the percussive striking of the strings on the fingerboard with both hands. To increase the involvement of the audience for this particular performance, the stage lights were dimmed to put more emphasis on the piece of music itself, rather than on the performer, and the guitar was amplified by two microphones so as to increase both the intensity and the intimacy required of the piece by filling the room with more sound than the guitar alone is normally capable of doing.

En los Trigales (In the Wheatfields), by the Spanish composer Joaquin Rodrigo, is lighter in character than the Brouwer, and tonal although composed in 1958. The piece echoes Spain with its rapid scale passages, changes of color, and chordal texture. Also bringing out the Spanish aura is the inclusion of a fragment of a Spanish folk tune in the lyrical middle section.

The final piece of the program, Variations on a Theme by Luis Milan, composed by the Cuban composer Joaquin Nin-Culmell, is a relatively little-played piece which is a tour-de-force for the guitarist. Starting with a pavane by the Sixteenth-century com-

poser and vihuelist Luis Milan, each variation elaborates the basic motives of the theme by means of various technical devices of the instrument. The first variation is a scalar variation of great speed. The contrasting second variation, in the parallel minor, is much slower and of a darker tone color. The third variation is a canon for two voices, and leads directly into the fourth variation, which is harmonically related to the original theme and is built around a right hand arpeggio figure. The fifth variation slows down again and sounds in the key of B-flat, a major third lower than the key of the theme (D-major). The final variation is a return to the theme, only in a more contemporary harmonic idiom. Its ABA structure has a lyrical middle section followed by the return of the opening idea which ends the piece in a fitting bravura of full harmonic texture.

This program, which is comprised of varied pieces which are standard repertoire and rarely-heard-in-concert selections, presents a balance of Renaissance, Baroque, and different styles of Twentieth Century compositions for guitar. Also, all the pieces included were written for guitar or an instrument in the guitar family. Finally, the programmatic design is such that the dramatic interest and momentum, and the musical substance of the presented works, made it fitting, I

believe, for a concert-recital on the professional level, and is reflective of my own interest in and development on the guitar during my two years of graduate work at California State University, Northridge.

