

Flash

INTERNATIONAL GUITAR FESTIVAL AND CONTEST HAVANA CITY (May 7-22-2004)

Every two years, Havana city is swollen with passion for a marvelous instrument, the guitar. In 1982 Havana opened its doors for the first time to this event, which constituted the preliminaries of what nowadays is an integral component of the Cuban musical life.

This Festival is artistically directed and headed by Master Leo Brouwer – founding personality and corner stone of the event. It has called together renown professors and players from Cuba and the rest of the world, such as: John Williams, Costas Cotsiolis, Paco de Lucia, Manolo Sanlúcar, Jesús Ortega, Robert Ausel, Alirio Diaz, Vicente Amigo, Ichiro Suzuki, Pepe Romero, Eliot Fisk, Timo Korhonen, Pavel Steidl, Garreth Walter, Joaquin Clerch, Alvaro Pierri, Eli Kassner, Shin-Ichi Fukuda, Victor Pellegrini, Guitart Quartet, Paolo Paolini, Eduardo Fernández, and others. Robert Vidal, one of the world's great personalities of the guitar, said: "Leo's influence has been like a lighthouse, a focus gathering here all these players from all these countries". Costas Cotsiolis stated: "In my opinion, if this festival and competition are not the best in the world, at least it is one of the most important ones. Personalities with worldwide artistic authority and renown are here; Leo Brouwer is here...". Juan Helguera expressed: "Such far-reaching biennial festival deserves our support, respect, admiration and sympathy. The moral strength of the host nation has made this possible".

The International Guitar Competition. Contestants must play: Saturday 8 (10.00 am), First round: A) Sonata (Ópera Tres Editions, Madrid) B) Contestants must choose one of these works: Danza del altiplano (Max Eschig Editions, Paris), Zapateo cubano (Max Eschig Editions, Paris), Ojos brujos (Max Eschig Editions, Paris), Canción de Cuna (Max Eschig Editions, Paris), Danza característica (Max Eschig Editions, Paris). Second round: Tuesday 11 (morning and afternoon), A) Quinteto para guitarra y Cuarteto de cuerdas (Ricordi Editions, Milano), www.ricordi.com. B) Contestants must choose one of these works: Hika (Gendai Guitar Editions, Tokio), Viaje a la semilla (Chester Editions, Londres), Tarantos (Max Eschig Editions, Paris), Paisaje cubano con campanas (Ricordi Editions, Milano). Third round: Wednesday 12 (morning). Contestants must choose one of these concerts for guitar and orchestra: Concierto Elegiaco (Max Eschig Editions, Paris) Concierto de Toronto (Dobermann-Quebec Editions). Awards ceremony: Friday 14 (20.30 pm).

Master classes and seminars will be held from May, 10 to 14, in morning and afternoon sessions, at "Alejandro Garcia Caturia" hall, at "Amadeo Roldán Theater". Professors will be: Victor Pellegrini, Joaquin Clerch, Eduardo Fernández, Shin-Ichi Fukuda, Paolo Paolini

During the festival: Exhibition of documentary film: "Sencillamente...Leo" by Senobio Faget (Sturday 15, 10:00 am, "Alejandro Garcia Caturia" hall, Auditorium Theater "Amadeo Roldán").

New dimensions in classical guitar Glimpse inside the future of concert art...

New Dimensions in Classical Guitar, the prototype of a planned international tour, will feature Özgen performing innovative, contemporary pieces in fluid worlds of light and subtly shifting imagery...

by Adam Cotton

Artfully synthesizing elements of music, light, imagery and stage choreography, the once puritanical classical music concert is fast becoming a multidisciplinary theatrical production. There is no doubt that with its innate charm and intimate nature, the modest and traditional classical concert format will persist. However, as we ride the crest of the forthcoming digital age with the boundaries between the different areas of performance art becoming increasingly blurred, a new breed of concert music presentation is on the verge of emerging and breaking through to the mainstream.

In the same way most people can enjoy a good movie without any pretenses of what the story may be about, such visually augmented concerts create fresh opportunities for composers and performers to relay new music to unfamiliar audiences. Many listeners find these multifaceted, engaging performances more memorable. In addition, the added elements of theatre and motion picture are bound to appeal

to a larger audience, which will perhaps funnel more financial support into the field. Seasoned classical listeners will have the opportunity to experience music presented from a new angle, closer in scope to that of today's modern multimedia opera productions (a la Philip Glass and John Adams).

At the forefront of this embryonic trend is *New Dimensions in Classical Guitar*, a collaborative effort of a multidisciplinary team featuring Mesut Özgen on guitar. Frequently collaborating with accomplished, innovative composers, award-winning guitarist Özgen champions new music for guitar. His eclectic tastes, rooted predominantly in traditional and folk musics of the world have inspired composers to combine avant-garde compositional techniques with traditional tunes and rhythms.

The program for *New Dimensions* includes nine works, all contemporary. Five of the nine are premieres, and six out of the nine were written by non-guitarist composers. Özgen enjoys the collaborative process of working

with non-guitarists, who possess a generally fresh perspective on the instrument, "even though I love many guitarist composers, personally I prefer to collaborate more with non-guitarist composers to open up horizons and explore new mediums in guitar...It's my job to make it sound special on the guitar. The sound changes depending on how you play, where you play, how you put together the notes; where you put the slurs or the cross strings".

New Dimensions in Classical Guitar, the prototype of a planned international tour, will feature Özgen performing innovative, contemporary pieces in fluid worlds of light and subtly shifting imagery. All around him his team will be creating subdued optical worlds akin to watching the reflection of a sunset on the surface of a placid lake, as the watery images of clouds slowly but majestically transform from fiery oranges through sweet pinks and soft violets and finally finding their way into lingering dream-laden shades of indigo and blues. In such a setting, Özgen and his multidisciplinary artistic team: Gustavo Vasquez, video and stage choreography; Peter Elsea, digital images and multimedia design; and David Lee Cuthbert, scenic/lighting design and stage choreography, aspire to create an artful world where the music stays in the forefront of an intriguing but delicate ever-shifting visual wonderworld that peaks the listener's interest throughout the show without overpowering the music. Seeking to avoid the repetitiousness that plagues most current concert imagery (the screen-saver syndrome), the crew has been working with the pieces as individual entities, visually bringing out musical contrasts through lighting shifts, stage manipulations and digital-optical effects. The team offers its first three performances to California central coast audiences in March 2004 (see below for details)

The idea for a multimedia classical guitar presentation grew out of Özgen's experiences with audiences' reactions to classical guitar recitals. Speaking mainly of

non-musician audience members, he observes that people like the concerts but have difficulty holding their attention through the end of the show. For such audience members who also attend more active or decorative theatre performances, pop concerts, or even movies, the absence of anything *else* happening on the stage becomes monotonous. After a while too many in the audience, the music starts to sound the same, regardless of the quality of the performance. Özgen and his team are working to remedy this common experiential occurrence through the idea of looking at the concert as a holistic, artistic, audio-visual experience. Elements such as stage props, imagery, colors, transitions, and lighting will be carefully considered both from the perspective of the individual piece and in the context of the larger production. Using this synergistic combination of ingredients, Özgen and his crew are engineering a colorful mutant unlike any classical guitar concert ever produced before.

Özgen's talented artistic team consists of Gustavo Vasquez, video and stage choreography; Peter Elsea, digital images and multimedia design; and David Lee Cuthbert, scenic/lighting design and stage choreography. Vasquez has directed over thirty productions including documentaries, video installations and dramas. He currently has a multimedia exhibit called "Who am I?" for *Chicano Now* nationally touring museums. He is also a proud recipient of The Rockefeller Media Fellowship and Eureka Visual Artist Fellowship awards. Vasquez currently teaches classes in The University of California, Santa Cruz's film and digital media department. Elsea, the current director of UCSC's amazing electronic music program, is a pioneer realm of software design for electronic musicians. His "Lobjects" software has become standard in electronic music studios around the world. One of his current projects, which will be showcased in this concert, is devising an interactive tool kit of sound-sensitive computer gen-

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Exhibition of Leo Brower's photographs, programs, posters, music papers, bibliographic material. "Habana" Gallery. (Vedado) Curatorship: Isabelle Hernández. (May, 7-22-2004). Magazines, books, CDs and cassettes presentations and sales. (Auditorium Theater lobby "Amadeo Roldán").

Street Festival, by the end of each concert at the Theater, music will be carried to the streets (Villalón park), providing a unique opportunity to enjoy Cuban popular music.

For all information, please contact: XII International Guitar Festival – Contest "Leo Brouwer", Havana City, Organizing Center: Centro Nacional de Música de Concierto, Calzada Esquina a D. Vedado. Plaza de la Revolución, CP: 10400, Telephones: (537) 8324521, (537) 8324522 extension 121, Telefax: (537) 832-0487

AMADEUS GUITAR DUO



Tour 2003/2004

- 03.01.04 REMSCHEID (Int. Guitar Festival)
 - 23.01.04 BOSTON/USA
 - 25.01.04 NEW YORK/USA
 - 08.02.04 LÖHNE (City Hall)
 - 12.02.04 GOTHAM (concertos by J. Rodrigo with Orch.)
 - 13.02.04 SUHL (concertos by J. Rodrigo with Orch.)
 - 14.02.04 KORBACH (concertos by J. Rodrigo with Orch.)
 - 15.02.04 RHEINBERG (concertos by J. Rodrigo with Orch.)
 - 29.02.04 LEHRTE (City Hall)
 - 20.03.04 MEDEBACH (Castle)
 - 27.03.04 SHANGHAI /China
 - 28.03.04 BEIJING /China
 - 29.03.04 WUHAN /China
 - 23.04.04 SIEGEN (concertos by J. Rodrigo and M.Herchenröder with Orch.)
 - 06.05.04 HANKENSBÜTTEL (Castle)
 - 08.05.04 WINSSEN (Mill)
 - 15.05.04 LEBACH (City Hall - 20h)
 - 16.05.04 LEBACH (11h)
 - 22.05.04 ISERNHAGEN (3 concertos by J. Rodrigo and G.Zamfir with Orch.)
 - 23.05.04 BALVE (3 concertos by J. Rodrigo and G.Zamfir with Orch.)
 - 26.06.04 HELMSTEDT (concertos by Vivaldi and Zenamon)
 - 27.07.04 ISERLOHN (3 concertos by J. Rodrigo and M.Herchenröder with Orch.)
- Amadeus Guitar Duo, D-58638 Iserlohn / Germany,
Tel./Fax: -49/(0)2371/560707, Mobil: -49/(0)173/20-95-685, www.amadeusduo.de.

erated imagery software that musicians can integrate into their live performances. David Lee Cuthbert has designed lighting for numerous bay area and national theatres, plays and theme park attractions including *The Adventures of Spider-Man*, *The Ride* at Orlando's Universal Studios and *Alice in Modernland* at Sledgehammer Theatre.

Of particular interest to guitarists, there will be several world premieres in the program, all written for Mesut, including *Be Kind all the Time* by Benjamin Verdery, *Surya* by Deepak Ram, *Sortija* by Pablo Ortiz, *La Guitarra* by Robert Strizich and the American premiere of *Stars* by Anthony Gilbert. Internationally renowned guitarist/composer Verdery was last spotted in Santa Cruz overseeing the premiere performance of his critically acclaimed *Pick and Roll* (also written for Mesut) for guitar ensemble, violins, saxophone and basketball player (yes, in uniform and dribbling). *Be Kind all the Time*, his latest

work, has been influenced by recent international events and is dedicated to world peace. This inherently unusual composition, inspired partly by the music of Philip Glass and Ingram Marshall, will be performed on a prepared guitar (using chopsticks and paperclips) in a non-traditional tuning with digital delay! Specifically for this work's performance, Özgen has been collaborating with Santa Cruz luthier Gil Carnal and acoustic researcher Rick Turner to build a classical guitar with a special pickup and amplification system.

Within *Surya* for bansuri (traditional Indian flute) and guitar, composer and performer Deepak Ram has found a colorful crossroads where the forms and feelings of Indian music meet with contrasting transitions and other freedoms of contemporary classical music. Part of the uniqueness of this fusional composition lies in the idea that each instrument speaks with its native voice. In other words, the surya does not

try to be western and the guitar does not try to be Indian in technique. The combination of the two within a Hindustani Northern Indian tonality and structure, similar to that of a traditional raga but with added liberties, creates a new sound. The piece is ornamented towards the end with a virtuosic hoquet-like dialogue between the instruments that climaxes in increasingly shorter trade-offs.

Inspired in his student days by Lorca's evocative poem *La Guitarra*, displayed wall of a Berkeley coffee shop, Robert Strizich composed a piece for soprano and guitar based largely on the flamenco hemiola-like *siguriya* rhythmic pattern. The piece also calls for the soprano to play pitched wine glasses. Also noteworthy is Anthony Gilbert's *Stars* which is a programmatic piece for recorder and guitar based on an M.C. Escher wood engraving by the same title. The image illustrates two chameleons inside a geometric structure in outer space surrounded by several odd looking stellar objects.

The show begins with the intricate and passionate work, *Sonata* by UCSC faculty composer Christopher Pratorius. *Sortija*, another solo piece in the program, written by UC Davis faculty composer Pablo Ortiz, is based around game children play with a large ring on merry-go-rounds in Argentina. Listeners can also look forward to a beautiful arrangement of the romantic frontier tune *Shenandoah* by Robert Beaser, the current chairman of the composition department at The Juilliard School. Özgen will be joined in different pieces by Annette Bauer, recorder; Lauren Rasmussen, soprano; and Deepak Ram, bansuri. A marriage of classical music and visual arts, *New Dimensions in Classical Guitar*, offers audiences an exciting and groundbreaking peek into the future of concert music presentation.



Adam Cotton

is a San Francisco bay area guitarist and composer. He can be contacted at adamcotton@skyhighway.com. Website: www.adamcotton.net

New Dimensions in Classical Guitar

premiere performances:

Friday, March 5 and Saturday, March 6 2004 at the University of California Santa Cruz Music Center Recital Hall as part of the 2003-04 Arts & Lectures season <http://events.ucsc.edu/artslecs/ARTISTS.03-04/NewDimensions.html>.

Saturday, March 13, 2004 at the Mello Center for the Performing Arts as part of the 2004 season Artists in Residence Performance Series of Pajaro Valley Performing Arts Association in Watsonville, CA, <http://www.mellocenter.com/>.

Mesut Özgen's website: www.mesutozgen.com.