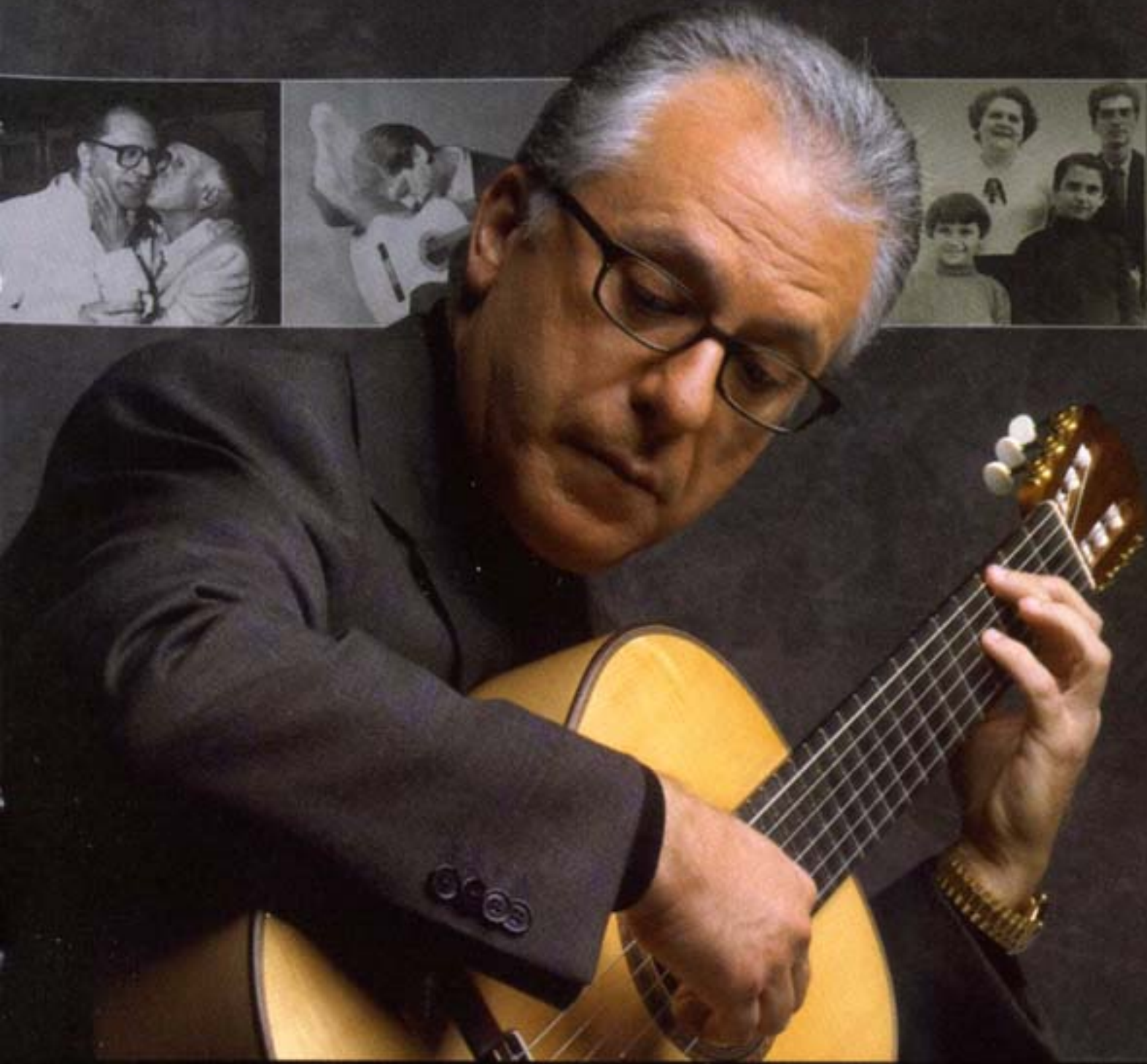


Pepe Romero



CLASSIC ROMERO

“I am delighted to present the second program of my collection of new recordings created in the intimacy of my home.

It is with the deepest love and respect I name this recording 'Classic Romero' as a dedication and tribute to my family and roots from which I draw the passion and fortitude to dedicate my life to the art of playing the guitar.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pepe Romero". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

On the 50th Anniversary of the life changing journey from Spain to the United States - August 13, 1957.



Isaac Albéniz: *Leyenda, Granada, Sevilla*

The Spanish pianist Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909) was born to a Catalan mother and a Basque father, but in his imagination he was a Moor, a man of the Andalusian region of southern Spain, the land of the rousing Gypsy music known as Flamenco. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Albéniz became known for his tuneful character pieces, many of them named for a city or region of Spain. "Granada" and "Sevilla" first appeared in the original *Suite española*, Op. 47 (1886), a sort of musical voyage through Spain and an exemplar of the Spanish nationalism of the period. "Leyenda" was not originally part of this suite. It was first published a decade later as the "Preludio" to the *Cantos de España*, Op. 232 (1896), another musical voyage through Spain. In 1918, a posthumous, enlarged edition of the *Suite española* contained the piece "Leyenda" under its new names, "Asturias: Leyenda." These latter names were probably assigned by the anonymous editor or the publisher, since the music is more of a dance than a narrative, and—as Albéniz' biographer Walter Aaron Clark has pointed out—more Andalusian than Asturian in nature. The rhythm and Phrygian harmonies evoke the *bulerías*, one of the greatest and most noble Flamenco forms.

"Granada," subtitled "Serenata," evokes the great Andalusian city which was the last capital of Moorish Spain. The Alhambra rises above the city, its fountains and gardens watered by an ingenious hydraulic system that dates to the Middle Ages. "Granada" was probably the piece to which Albéniz referred when he wrote, "I [am writing] a Serenata, romantic to the point of paroxysm and sad to the point of despair, among the aroma of the flowers, the shade of the cypresses, and the snow of the Sierra ... I seek now the tradition ... [not of flamenco, but of] the guzla [an ancient stringed instrument], the lazy dragging of fingers over the strings. And above all, a heartbreaking [modal] lament."

"Sevilla: Sevillanas" was the third movement of the original *Suite española*. Sevilla is the unofficial capital of Andalusia, an inland seaport (the Guadalquivir river is navigable) that flourished in the Golden Age of the Spanish empire, the city of Figaro and Carmen and the center of Flamenco. The *sevillanas* is a local song and dance heard everywhere during the spring festival, traditionally celebrated two weeks after Easter.

Joaquín Rodrigo: *Invocación y danza*

By 1960, the Spanish composer Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-1999) had emerged as perhaps the best-known contemporary guitar composer, thanks largely to his phenomenally successful *Concierto de Aranjuez* and the afore-mentioned *Fantasía para un gentilhombre*. That year Robert Vidal, in the midst of organizing the Radio France guitar festival, sought out Rodrigo to encourage him to enter a piece in the composition competition. Although Rodrigo had no plans to begin on a new guitar piece, he agreed to revisit a work he had begun a few years earlier, an homage to Manuel de Falla conceived for his friend the guitarist composer Regino Sainz de la Maza, who had been the dedicatee of the *Concierto de Aranjuez*. Sainz de la Maza was able to provide a rough

draft, in pencil, the only copy of the piece; major revisions and extensive corrections were made quickly, and the resurrected *Invocación y Danza: Homenaje a Manuel de Falla* took first prize at the festival the following year. Ironically, the second prize went to *Homenaje a la guitarra* by another well-known Spanish composer, Eduardo Sainz de la Maza, the brother of Regino! *Invocación y Danza* received its official premiere in 1962, performed by the Venezuelan guitarist Alirio Díaz, and it has since become one of the best-known pieces in the contemporary repertoire.

The *Invocación y Danza* opens with atmospheric harmonics, then unfolds dramatically, evoking the Andalusian music beloved of Falla and cleverly interspersing motifs from Falla's *œuvre*, especially from *El amor brujo* and the Polo from *Siete canciones populares españolas*. The haunting melody in the tremolo section is from Rodrigo's own setting of the Spanish Renaissance classic "Song of Durandarte."

Heitor Villa-Lobos: Five Preludes

Numerous contemporary accounts relate that the prolific Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959), in his youth, performed on guitar in the folkloric ensembles of his native land. His small but distinguished body of compositions for the instrument indicate an accomplished performer with a profound understanding of its possibilities. In 1940, the already-famous composer accompanied a musical embassy from his country to the neighboring state of Uruguay. While in Montevideo, Villa-Lobos took advantage of the opportunity to visit the guitar virtuoso Andrés Segovia, who was then living in the Uruguayan capital in preference to wartorn Europe. Villa-Lobos brought with him six preludes that he had dedicated to the guitarist, but Segovia was at first unimpressed. In a letter to his friend, the Mexican composer Manuel Ponce, Segovia disparaged Villa-Lobos' chamber music as presented in a recent concert ("The music was dreadful, Villalobos' [sic] most of all."); he confided that he found the *Preludes* for guitar to be "vulgar," and in particular he ridiculed the third: "[T]here is one, which he himself attempted to play, of lethal boredom. It attempts to imitate Bach and by the third cycle of a descending progression—a regression, therefore— ... it makes one want to laugh." But Villa-Lobos found a warmer reception for his music from other guitarists. In 1943, several of the *Preludes* were premiered by the Uruguayan Abel Carlevaro. By the time Max Eschig published the *Five Preludes* in 1954, Villa-Lobos had re-dedicated them to his wife, Arminda ("Mindinha").

Segovia, who spent much of his career struggling to raise the public's perception of the guitar as an art instrument, had little appreciation for folkloric guitar styles or for modern harmonies; Villa-Lobos, on the other hand, found his inspiration in both. But in spite of their artistic differences, each of these extraordinary men seems to have recognized the greatness of the other, and a cordial relationship developed. At some point Segovia must have experienced a change of heart regarding at least some of Villa-Lobos' music, because he provided a complimentary dedication to the Brazilian's *Twelve Etudes*, and several of the *Preludes* eventually found their way

into the Maestro's repertory, including both the first and the previously maligned third!

Villa-Lobos' *Preludes*, now widely considered among the finest pieces ever composed for the guitar, were intended by the composer to constitute a sort of musical picture of Brazil and its music, and are best presented as a set. The extant manuscripts contain descriptive titles that were deleted from the printed edition: (1) "Lyrical Melody: Homage to the Rural Brazilian," (2) "Melodia capadocia," apparently a reference to certain urban groups of dubious reputation, (3) "Homage to Bach," (4) "Homage to the Brazilian Indians," and (5), an elegant waltz, is an "Homage to High Society." The sixth prelude, mentioned both by Segovia and by Mindinha, has unfortunately disappeared. Carlevaro, who in 1943 worked with Villa-Lobos on the pieces, has stated that he only knew of five at that time, so it seems likely that the missing prelude was deleted from the set by the composer himself sometime between 1940 and 1943.

Gaspar Sanz: *Danzas españolas*

The origins of the guitar lay in ancient times, when plucked stringed instruments of various sizes and shapes came into common use. In the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, several instruments evolved which are directly related to the modern instrument. One was a small, four-course instrument similar to a modern ukulele, now usually referred to as the "Renaissance guitar." The other was the *vihuela*, shaped like the modern guitar and with six-courses, and unique to Spain. By the seventeenth century, both of these instruments had been largely eclipsed by a five-course instrument now usually called the "Baroque guitar." Although most of the music for this instrument was published in Italy, the original Italian manuals suggest a Spanish origin for the instrument by referring to it as "*la ghitarra spagnuola*," or "*chitarra alla spagnola*," or the like. It was probably the absence in Spain of music publishers, not guitars, that best explains why the first significant Spanish publication for the instrument did not appear until 1674-1675—the *Instrucción de música sobre la guitarra española* ... by the Aragonese priest Gaspar Sanz (c. 1645-after 1721?). It was the first and most significant collection of Spanish music for the instrument, and musicologist Robert Strizich has also called this work "the most comprehensive guitar treatise of its time."

Sanz was educated at the University of Salamanca and travelled extensively in Italy, where he became familiar with the work of the greatest guitarists of that peninsula. Nevertheless, his music has a uniquely Spanish character, and is an important source for many of the popular dances of the era (the three volumes contain ninety pieces!). The *pavana*, *villano*, and *danza de las hachas* were already well-known from Spanish Renaissance sources; the *paradetas* and *folías* were of Catalan and Portuguese origin, respectively, while the *canarios* was said to have its origins in the Guanch dances of the Canary Islands. The *zarabanda*, perhaps of African origin, was a voluptuous dance that was banned for a time, but it was reincarnated as the stately Baroque *sarabande*.

Several of the pieces seem to have an Italian origin, such as the *torneo*, which is a fragment of a *battaglia*—a medley of bugle calls and military fanfares—and the *rujero*, which may derive its name from the Italian dance *ruggiero*. Sanz' *gallarda* bears little resemblance to the famous Renaissance dance in 3/4 time, but Fabritio Caroso, in his *Il Ballarino* (Venice, 1581), includes a "*Gagliarda di Spagna*" that is in 2/4 tempo, like that of Sanz. The *españolito* was also well-known in Italian sources before 1600, although the name seems to acknowledge a Spanish origin. Caroso provides one example, similar to Sanz' dance, that he calls the "New Spagnoletta in the Style of Madrid." The "Impudent Girl (from the Italian word *sfacciata*) of Naples," on the other hand, may well be a Spanish piece in spite of its tarantella-like rhythm, since many Spanish troops were well acquainted with that Italian city and its ladies, as they were with the *miñonas* (pretty girls) of Catalonia.

One contemporary composer who made splendid use of Sanz' *Instrucción* was Joaquín Rodrigo, who based his guitar concerto *Fantasía para un gentilhombre* on dances and themes from that source; a number of the melodies included here, such as the *españolito* and *canarios*, figure prominently in Rodrigo's music. Ottorino Respighi also notably used the *españolito* in his *Ancient Airs and Dances* for orchestra, but he had found the music in Italian sources.

Federico Moreno Torroba: *Romance de los pinos*

Federico Moreno Torroba (1891-1982) may have made his international reputation as the composer of *zarzuelas* such as *Luisa Fernanda* and operas such as *La virgen del Mayo*, but guitarists know him best for his exquisite miniatures, often composed in suites with names such as *Aires de la Mancha*, *Madrileñas*, *Suite castellana*, or *Puertas de Madrid*. The exquisite miniature *Romance de los pinos*, composed in 1958, has a melody worthy of the composer's beloved arias and quickly became a favorite encore of Andrés Segovia. Two decades later, at Segovia's request, the *Romance* was included in the composer's suite *Castillos de España*; it was renamed "Montemayor," after a Renaissance castle between Salamanca and Cáceres. Still later, and again at Segovia's request, the same melody was embellished and developed in the composer's *Dialogos entre guitarra y orquesta*.

——Richard M. Long

ISAAC ALBÉNIZ (1860-1909)

- 1 **Leyenda** (arr. Pepe Romero)
- 2 **Granada** (arr. Celedonio Romero)
- 3 **Sevilla** (arr. Pepe Romero)

JOAQUÍN RODRIGO (1901-1999)

- 4 **Invocación y danza**

HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS (1887-1959)**Five Preludes**

- 5 I. Lyrical Melody: Homage to the Rural Brazilian
- 6 II. Melodia capadocia
- 7 III. Homage to Bach
- 8 IV. Homage to the Brazilian Indians
- 9 V. Homage to High Society

GASPAR SANZ (c. 1645-c. 1721)**Danzas españolas** (arr. Pepe Romero)

- 10 Pavanas ... con Partidas al Aire Español
- 11 Española No. 1
- 12 Española No. 2
- 13 Danza de las Hachas
- 14 Folias
- 15 Gallarda
- 16 Villano
- 17 Zarabanda
- 18 Rujero
- 19 Paradetas
- 20 Torneo
- 21 La Esfachata de Napoles
- 22 La Miñona de Cataluña
- 23 Canarios

FEDERICO MORENO TORROBA (1891-1982)

- 24 **Romance de los pinos**

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Produced by Barton Michael Chiate and Pepe Romero

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