

Jonathan Parkin | Echoes of España

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Javier Salvador

Al sostener la luna

Escenas sobre el Castillo de Mula

Taken from the yet unfinished suite, *Cartas a la luna (Postcards to the Moon)*, *Al sostener la luna (To Carry the Moon)* is, as the name would suggest, a delicate nocturne which through incessant and throbbing bass notes, delicately pushes the music from the beautifully familiar into the unexpected and ethereal.

Escenas sobre el Castillo de Mula (Scenes from Mula's Castle) was commissioned by the International Guitar Festival and Competition *Ciudad de Mula* in 2021 as the set piece for its guitar competition. After a spacious and atmospheric introduction, the piece is characterized as much by its relentless drive, as it is by its effortless and at times breathless zigzagging through keys and motifs.

Marco Smaili *obscura, íntima*

Inspired by diverse influences such as *Dreams* by Akira Kurosawa, *The Dead* by James Joyce and *Disgresso* by Gloria Marco, *obscura, íntima (obscure, intimate)* won 1st Prize in the Seville Guitar Composition Competition *Manuel de Falla* in 2018 and was written for the acclaimed guitarist David Russell, who says the following about the piece,

‘Deep, internal, hidden. A nocturnal in the purest sense of the word.’

Smaili describes the piece as follows:

‘The piece moves through a deliberate monotony. Each measure is a poem that advances with very short steps until reaching an unsustainable quiet but tense momentum which resolves itself in a dramatic violence.’

Salvador Brotons

2 Suggestions, Op 23, Balada, Tocatta

The Catalan composer and conductor's most popular piece in the guitar repertoire to date, these two suggestions from 1980 are simply a song and a dance. The first suggestion is a jazz-inspired ballad, whose delicately weaved counterpoint and richly resonant harmonies serve as a clear indication to the piece's wide appeal. The second suggestion, a toccata, bursts onto the scene with syncopated rhythms, crunchy dissonances and an unrelenting sense of tension which encapsulates, albeit in a distinct musical language, the fire and passion of flamenco music.

Vicente Asencio from *Col·lectici íntim*: *La Serenor, La Calma, La Joia*

The Valencian composer Vicente Asencio was a key musical figure in Valencia and was a member of the *Grupo de los Jóvenes*, a collection of influential cultural figures in Valencia in the 1930s whose manifesto stated, 'We aim to create a rigorous and rich Valencian musical art and the existence of a fecund and multi-faceted Valencian School which incorporates the unique psychological and emotional characteristics of our people and of our landscape.'

Col·lectici íntim (The intimate collection) is a suite of works based on traditional Valencian folk songs, which shows an intimate and extensive knowledge of the guitar. In *La serenor (The serenity)*, a timpani-like ostinato tenaciously accompanies a lamenting melody while *La calma (The calm)* intimately explores the guitars most delicate expressive ranges. Finally, *La joia (The joy)* mimics the traditional *danses* with a grace and effortlessness that belies its technical complexities.

Interval

Manuel de Falla *Homenaje a Debussy*

Two years after the death of his dear friend and mentor, Claude Debussy, Manuel De Falla was commissioned to write a piece to commemorate the composer's death. This commission coincided with a repeated and persistent request by his friend and virtuoso guitarist Miguel Llobet to write a piece for the guitar. So, in the hot, oppressive, Andalusian

summer of 1920, De Falla set to work on both. The piece evokes Debussy's fascination with Spanish music, quoting his pieces which were directly inspired by the Spanish literature. This homage, the first in a series of homages which he would later arrange for both piano and orchestra, is a dark and gloomy masterpiece. A simple, oscillating melody stubbornly drags itself forward through a contorted habanera rhythm. The result is a breath-taking representation of grief. Breathlessness, anger, desperation, frustration, nostalgia, and despair.

Joaquín Rodrigo *Junto al Generalife*

The Generalife palace and gardens, which is situated next to La Alhambra palace in Granada, was both a retreat for the kings of the Nasrid Dynasty and an allotment. They were represented in Manuel de Falla's tone poem *Noches en los jardines de España* and have become, along with the *Alhambra* itself, iconic of the city.

The piece, a fantasy, like most of Rodrigo's music, is explicitly programmatic and develops through various fragments, techniques and characters which typify not only the Andalusian spirit, but also the ornate fountains hidden within the walls of the Generalife.

Issac Albéniz

Capricho Catalan, Op 165 *Sevilla, Op 47*

The Catalan musicologist Felipe Pedrell was a pioneer in the study of traditional Spanish music in the second half of the 19th Century. His research and idealistic zeal inspired a generation of composers to implement melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic elements from traditional Spanish music into their own compositions.

A staunchly loyal disciple of Pedrell, the pianist Isaac Albéniz, recognised the importance of the mission to create unmistakably Spanish music, and sought to create a radically new pianistic sound world through the combination of traditional elements with a contemporary harmonic language.

Capricho Catalán recalls the Pyrenees mountains of Albeniz's hometown. A bouncing drone mimics bagpipes and supports a gently rocking tune. Yet, while the piece evokes a simpler time, its truly impressionistic harmonic development takes us quite directly to the Paris Conservatoire of the late 19th Century.

Pedrell found in flamenco music the vehicle in which to deploy his brainchild. Students such as Manuel De Falla, Roberto Gerhard and Enrique Granados forged a Spanish musical narrative with flamenco music at its heart. Albéniz was no exception. His postcard of Seville, a pianistic imitation of the guitar, conjures, through Sevillian rhythmic and melodic elements, a bright, bustling, and profound portrait of the city.

Francisco Tárrega *Recuerdos de la Alhambra, La Gran Jota Aragonés*

Francisco Tárrega is often, and quite rightly, credited as being a key figure in the development of the classical guitar in the 20th Century. Without doubt, his original works, methodology and tutorship of figures such as Emilio Pujol, Miguel Llobet and Daniel Fortea set in motion a dominant Spanish guitar school which was to greatly influence guitar playing throughout the first half of the 20th Century.

However, perhaps an equally important figure was that of the guitarist Julián Arcas. Arcas, a generation senior to Tárrega, not only made guitar transcriptions and composed original pieces, but also helped Antonio Torres in the development of his revolutionary guitar design. Famously, a young Tárrega, after hearing Arcas play, decided to take up the guitar, and from that moment, a mutual respect, which at times bordered on plagiarism, was born.

Tárrega's show piece is based on Julian Arcas' *Jota Aragonesa* and includes no fewer than ten variations penned by Arcas himself. A concert staple of both musicians, in spite of today's more immutable version, Tárrega enjoyed chopping and changing the variations in his performances, demonstrating not only his technical prowess, but also his light-hearted and convivial nature.

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Carducci Quartet & Anton Lesser
Life, Letters and Friendship

Sunday 10 March 3pm

'Even if they cut off both my hands and I have to hold the pen in my teeth, I shall still go on writing music.'

Experience the intense emotional power of Shostakovich's String Quartets. The **Carducci Quartet** paint an intimate portrait of the great composer through music and spoken word.

Shostakovich walked a delicate tightrope, balancing political pragmatism with personal

expression against the backdrop of Josef Stalin's tyrannical Soviet regime. For this concert, the composer's music is interspersed with historical sources and letters from him to one of his closest friends. They are read by British actor **Anton Lesser** (*Game of Thrones, Endeavour, The Crown*). Together, they paint a fascinating picture of how music offered a much-needed emotional outlet in the most difficult of times.

**£25 / Friends £22.50 /
Under 18s and students £12**



CAVATINA: If you are aged 18 - 25, you can see this concert for FREE



Hailing from Teesside in North East England, **Jonathan Ross Parkin** has established himself as a sensitive and versatile musician of the highest quality.

Jonathan’s musical journey began at 11 and he spent his teenage years playing in rock bands. At the age of 17 Jonathan’s curiosity had taken him to the classical guitar where he relished the technical and musical challenges it posed. After one year of study with John Forsyth MBE, Jonathan had earned a place at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama studying with John Mills, Graham Anthony Devine, Eleftheria Kotzia, Helen Sanderson and Stephen Gordon, where he graduated in 2015 with first class honors. While in Cardiff, Jonathan had the opportunity to study in Jyväskylä, Finland, with the eminent composer Kai Nieminen, a truly unique and formative musical experience.

Jonathan’s rapid musical progression continued in London at The Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, as he studied for a Masters Degree in Performance with Graham Anthony Devine. While in London Jonathan performed in prestigious venues such as Wigmore Hall, Kings Place, The Barbican and Saint James’

Piccadilly and for festivals such as The IGF London Guitar Festival, The Greenwich Early Music Festival and Greenwich Guitar Festival as well as performing as a soloist with the Cobweb Orchestra and Teesside Symphony Orchestra.

After graduating his Masters degree in 2017 with Distinction, Jonathan moved to Spain and in recent years his sensitive and virtuosic playing has brought him international praise at the very highest level. He has been a prize winner and finalist at some of the most prestigious international guitar competitions including Certamen Llobet (2nd Prize, Public Prize 2018 & Llobet Prize 2020) London International Guitar Competition (2nd Prize 2020), Concurso International Raimundo (1st Prize 2018), Ivor Mariants award (3rd Prize 2017). Since moving to Spain, Jonathan has had the opportunity to perform at prestigious venues such as Palau Les Arts (Valencia), L’Auditori (Barcelona) and Museo de Bellas Artes (Madrid) as well as as for festivals such as the Rodrigo Festival, Festival Fortea and Semana Tárrega.

Currently based in Valencia, Jonathan is a professor at both the Escuela Superior de Música Alto Rendimiento (ESMAR) and at the Conservatorio Profesional Ignacio Monzonís. He combines his teaching activity with solo and chamber recitals throughout Europe with his role as Guitar Coordinator at the Institute of Musical Development (IDM) for festivals such as Semana Tárrega and Festival Fortea. Jonathan plays a Daniele Chiesa 2017 guitar.

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