Dillon Wong • guitar •

A Senior Recital in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Bachelor of Arts in Music

May 12, 2018
Saturday at 1 p.m.
Davidson Music Center
Room 218

Sponsored by Cal Poly's Music Department and College of Liberal Arts
Program
Senior Recital
Dillon Wong, guitar

*Suite populaire brésilienne.* Heitor Villa-Lobos
1. Mazurka – Chôro (1887-1959)
2. Schottish – Chôro
3. Valsa – Chôro

*Choro No. 1.* Villa-Lobos

*Tristezas de um Violão (Choro Triste N° 1)* ... Aníbal Augusto Sardinha (Garôto) (1915-1955)

*4 Valses Venezolanos.* Antonio Lauro
1. Vals No. 1 (Tatiana) (1917-1986)
2. Vals No. 2 (Andreina)
3. Vals No. 3 (Natalia)

— Intermission —

*Yesterday.* John Lennon (1940-1980) and Paul McCartney (b. 1942)
arr. Toru Takemitsu (1930-1996)

*Capricho Árabe.* Francisco Tárrega (1852-1909)

*Recuerdos de la Alhambra.* Tárrega
Heitor Villa-Lobos became the most internationally successful composer in the twentieth century by mixing South American music with European art music. Heitor was born March 5, 1887, and at the age of six started taking music lessons from his father, Raul, who was an amateur musician. The instrument Villa-Lobos started playing was a viola that was altered by his father to be played like a cello. Because of the rise to power of Floriano Peixoto, a military-minded leader, Villa-Lobos and his family moved to more rural areas, where he became fascinated with Brazilian folk songs. When they returned to Rio de Janeiro his family would often have gatherings where they would play chamber music into the early hours of the morning. His father would take him to see his friend who was an expert on folk music in the northeast of Brazil. His father passed away when Villa-Lobos was eleven years old, and his mother did not want him to become a musician. She wanted him to become a physician. As a result, he could not take piano lessons and had to take guitar lessons in secret from his neighbor. When he was eighteen he left his home because of his mother’s reluctance to allow him to follow his music career. After travelling for three years learning all about Afro-Brazilian music, Villa-Lobos started studying the music of European composers such as Bach, Wagner, and Puccini. In 1915 he made his debut as a composer in Rio de Janeiro, and his music started to be published. He attempted to mix Western music with the language of Brazilian music. In 1923 he took his first trip to Europe. There he wrote music in many genres for as many different ensembles as he could. For the rest of the 1920s he lived in Paris and started to gain international recognition. In 1930 Villa-Lobos was appointed the director of music education in São Paulo. In 1932 he started changing music education across Brazil. In 1945 he cofounded the Brazilian Academy of Music. From 1944 to 1949 he often travelled to the United States and Europe to compose film scores and conduct. He died on November 17, 1959.

At the turn of the century, *chôro* groups became very popular: these groups were almost always exclusively instrumental with music that was mostly improvised or based on variation. Many consider *chôro* music to require the same level of virtuosity as jazz.

The *Suite populaire brésilienne* was first published in 1955; however, many of the movements had been written decades earlier and were based on melodies and themes he had written when he was much younger, some as early as 1908. Some of the music was written or revised while he was in Europe from 1923 to 1928. While Villa-Lobos was in Paris, guitarists such as Andrés Segovia, who made his debut in Paris, and Emilio Pujol, who also moved to
Paris, began to make names for themselves. Additionally, many Spanish luthiers moved to Paris at that time.

Villa-Lobos started writing the “Mazurka – Chôro” in 1906 and finished it in 1908, revising it first in 1911 and then again in 1948. This is one of the earliest pieces by Villa-Lobos that is still performed today. This first movement is dedicated to Maria Tereza Teran. A mazurka is a Polish folk dance in a triple meter and is usually upbeat with an emphasis on beat two. While this piece is in a triple meter, the tempo marking “un peu lent,” translates to “a little slow.” It is in a traditional chôro form with a coda, which also resembles the rondo form, $A B A C A$ coda. It starts in A minor with a reflective, melancholy melody with sparse accompaniment. The $B$ section is much more upbeat with a faster melody and more dense accompaniment. The $C$ section is in A major, the relative major key. The distinctive feature about this section is the series of large, upward leaps in the melody, followed by a descending line. The texture is mostly three voices, resulting in a thinner texture. Villa-Lobos mixes the Brazilian folk music he grew up with together with the European mazurka. This piece illustrates Villa-Lobos’s tendency to mix Brazilian traits with European folk dance.

The “Schottish – Chôro” was made to sound like a Scottish dance. It is in a duple meter and is more upbeat compared to the mazurka, but it follows the same chôro form. The $A$ section is in the key of E major and has a bright, joyful melody, starting with short phrases and ending with one long phrase. The $B$ section is in the relative minor key F-sharp minor, giving it a much darker feel. A line consisting of repeated, descending, chromatic chords and running eighth-note lines characterizes this section. The $C$ section is in A major and is the most dissonant of the three. The melody is in the bass line and has a more legato feel, which is contrasted by the short chordal accompaniment in the upper strings.

The “Valsa - Chôro” is a slower waltz in the same chôro form as the other two pieces from the suite. However, unlike the other two, the yearning mood in this piece stays much more constant throughout. The $A$ section starts with a slow melody with descending lines and a very dense accompaniment. The $B$ section has a similar accompaniment pattern, but the melody line moves much more quickly. The $C$ section has a tempo change from “valsa lenta” to “Più mosso” (or from “slow waltz” to “more moved”), which makes this section more uplifting compared to the other two sections—but it still maintains a yearning feeling to it, nevertheless.

Chôro No. 1 is not from the same set as the other chôros, but is one of Villa-Lobos’s most popular works for solo guitar. Additionally, just like the other chôros, this one is in the same chôro form. It starts with an easily recognizable gesture consisting of three notes, each of them sustained—and they announce the beginning of the $A$ section each time that it returns. It has a blissful melody
with a mostly constant rhythm broken up by some longer, held-out notes. The B section has a similar feel but with a more constant rhythm throughout the entire section. The C section is in a completely different mood from the rest of the piece. It alternates between a slow, sensual melody and a faster, cheerful tune.

**Aníbal Augusto Sardinha**

Aníbal Augusto Sardinha is not a household name but was one of the key figures in bringing the Brazilian style of music into mainstream American popular music. Sardinha was maybe better known by his nickname “Garôto,” which means “the kid” in Portuguese. He was born on June 28, 1915. His musical experience started when he was just seven years old working in a music store in São Paulo where he was born. The first recording he made was in 1929 with his teacher at the time. In 1939 Garôto came to America to play with Carmen Miranda, a Brazilian singer, Broadway star, and celebrity known for her signature fruit hat. At the end of Miranda’s shows, Garôto would play solo guitar. Jazz greats such as Duke Ellington would frequently come to watch him play. While playing with Miranda, Garôto got the chance to perform for President Franklin Roosevelt at the White House. After just eight months, he left working with Carmen and went back to Brazil where he would change the trajectory of Brazilian pop music, helping create what would become known as bossa nova. Unfortunately, he would be unable to see his influence spread worldwide as he died at the age of thirty-nine in 1955.

The piece *Tristezas de um Violão (Chôro Triste)* translates to “Sadness of a Guitar (Sad Choro).” It begins with a melody that shows longing with sparse accompaniment. As the texture becomes denser with harmonies accompanying the melody, the mood becomes more aggressive. This is all in the A section, which then gets repeated. Now the melody moves to the bass with a similar longing feeling from the beginning of the piece. Then there is a descending chordal passage where the melody is in the upper register, and the mood becomes brighter. Then the melody alternates between the higher and lower strings before staying on the upper strings entirely. This all takes place the B section, which is repeated. Then there is a return to the original A section, which brings the return of a familiar melody, making the form of this piece ternary.

**Antonio Lauro**

Antonio Lauro was born in Ciudad Bolívar on August 3, 1917, to an Italian-immigrant father who started to teach Lauro guitar before he passed away when Lauro was only five years old. After his father’s death, the Lauro family moved to the capital of Venezuela, Caracas. At the age of nine he started his formal music training in piano and composition at the Academia de Música y
Declamación. In 1932, world-renowned guitarist Agustín Barrios performed in Caracas. After seeing Barrios, Lauro switched from studying piano to guitar. The next year, in 1933, he began his formal study at the School of Guitar at the National Conservatory where he studied with Raúl Borges. He became the first Venezuelan guitarist to perform major works on guitar and helped make the guitar a large part of his country’s culture. From 1948 to 1958, a military dictatorship was in place in Venezuela. From 1951 to 1952 Lauro was imprisoned for his beliefs in democracy. He later said that spending time in prison was part of life for a Venezuelan man in his generation. In addition to his role as a guitarist, he was also named the president of the Venezuelan Symphony Orchestra. Despite insisting he was only a composer, he nevertheless was convinced to go on tour as a solo guitarist: the tour ended in 1980 at Wigmore Hall in London. Before he died, on April 18, 1986, he was awarded Venezuela’s highest musical award, the Premio Nacional de Música.

Lauro had strong nationalist pride and celebrated Venezuelan music. He played in a group called Trio Cantores del Trópico, which performed Venezuelan music in Venezuela and nearby countries. One of the genres the ensemble would perform was the vals venezolano, or Venezuelan waltz, a popular genre from the nineteenth century. These valses venezolanos are characterized by their distinctive syncopation created by hemiola. After one colleague performed an entire solo piano concert with these waltzes, he suggested that Lauro write similar pieces for the guitar. Between 1938 and 1940, he wrote three waltzes titled Tatiana, Andreína, and Natalia. Later these were put together in a set—along with one other movement—and the collection was titled Quatro Valses Venezolanos. They were later arranged for various instrumentations.

The first waltz, Tatiana, was named after one of his nieces. The piece is in sectional binary in D major. Almost the entire A section is either a tonic chord or the dominant chord. The B section of the piece is also in D major but adds more harmonic variety in it. Like most pieces in the genre, it is marked as allegro. The majority of the piece has a 3/4 feel but some measures that are in 6/8. But unlike the other waltzes that often superimpose simultaneously different meters in a fabric of polyrhythms, here, the 3/4 and 6/8 feels do not happen at the same time. The upbeat tempo and constant melody give the piece a feel of excitement throughout.

The second waltz, Andreína, was named after his other niece, Tatiana’s sister. This piece is rounded binary, meaning the first section comes back at the end of the second section. For the majority of the piece, the bass line is in 3/4, following a typical waltz accompaniment pattern, while the melody is entirely in 6/8. The different stressed beats along with the quick tempo are what give this piece the characteristic of a Venezuelan waltz. The constant running melody line throughout the whole piece gives it an aggressive feel.

The third and probably most well known waltz, Natalia, was named after
his own daughter. In 1955, Andrés Segovia made a recording of this piece. It is the longest of the three pieces, and—similar to the other pieces—it is in binary form: however, it also includes an introduction. Both the intro and the A section are in E minor, while the B section is in E major. While this piece has some of the hemiola effect that is present in the Andreína, the majority of the piece is in the 6/8 feel. This piece is the longest of the three, which allows it to have a mood change that the other pieces do not have. It starts with a darker mood that permeates the entirety of the introduction and A section. At the beginning of the B section, the feel becomes much more optimistic.

**Toru Takemitsu**

Toru Takemitsu may not be well known in America, but he is one of the most prolific Japanese composers. Not only did he write guitar music, but he also wrote for orchestra, solo piano, and small ensembles, and crafted works for a broad spectrum of settings, including film scores, radio plays, television scores, commercials, and more. He was born in Tokyo in 1930, but then moved to China until 1938 when he moved back to Japan. He joined the military in 1944, where he was introduced to Western music that was banned during the World War II. After the war he worked at an American military base and listened to as much Western music on the radio as possible. At the age of sixteen, he decided he was going to be a composer despite having no training. He was completely self-taught. The first composer Takemitsu studied in depth was Debussy. In 1950 Takemitsu made his debut as a composer with a solo piece for piano. Within the piece were characteristics he would use in his music the rest of his life, such as modal melodies coming out from a chromatic background, and the suspension of regular meter with a focus on register and timbre. The piece was not well received by the audience; however, by 1957 when he wrote *Requiem for Strings*, he was starting to gather international attention. In 1959 Stravinsky heard the piece and called it a masterpiece and noted its unbroken intensity. In 1977 Takemitsu arranged various folk and pop tunes for solo guitar including “Yesterday,” written by Paul McCartney.

“Yesterday” was originally recorded in 1965 and, according to the *Guinness World Records*, is the most covered song of all time. The Takemitsu arrangement of this piece begins in song form (AABA), followed by an abbreviated adaptation in ternary form (ABA) that then draws to a close with a short coda in the last two measures. Takemitsu adds small variations throughout the A sections so that the listener does not get bored by many inflexible repetitions. In this arrangement, Takemitsu complements the well known melody with more complex harmonies and small counterpoint lines, while at the same time keeping the mood as originally intended by McCartney.
Francisco Tárrega

Before Francisco Tárrega, the guitar was completely overshadowed by the piano in European art music. Born in 1852, Tárrega started taking guitar lessons when he was ten years old and soon became the most important composer for this beloved Spanish instrument. Because of the piano’s ubiquitous importance, his parents pushed him to also learn piano. He quickly became highly proficient on both instruments.

In 1869, he acquired a guitar built by the master luthier Antonio Torres, and in 1874 he enrolled in the Madrid Conservatory. In 1880, he made his international debuts in London and Paris. He was praised as, “the Sarasate of the guitar,” who was the most famous Spanish violinist of the time. His repertoire included not only his own compositions but also piano pieces from his contemporaries, including fellow Spanish composers, which he arranged for the guitar. From 1885 through 1903 he toured Europe, but, unfortunately, at the peak of his career, he suffered paralysis in his right hand and was unable to ever perform again.

Tárrega composed one of his most well-known works, *Capricho Arabe*, in 1888 when he was spending time in Valencia. Tárrega was most likely influenced by the diversity of religion and people in this city where Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were all prevalent at the same time. The introduction of the piece is a series of accelerating, descending lines that help set the mood for the piece. The melody enters with a pensive and contemplative melody with a fairly constant accompaniment and a running eighth-note line before the section is repeated. The next section has a much more exultant atmosphere to it. This section is broken up by long single-note passages. This is followed by a return to the original melody. Harmonically this piece is simple; however, the charm comes from its strong melody held together with a constant bass pattern.

Another of Tárrega’s most famous compositions, *Recuerdos de la Alhambra* (which translates to “memories of the Alhambra”), was written in 1896, when he was on a trip with his wife in Granada, Spain. It uses tremolo throughout the entirety of the piece, which gives the piece a constant feeling of motion, much like the gently rippling waters of the many fountains found in nearly every room of the Alhambra. The melody is in the bass line, accompanied by tremolo in the upper register. The piece begins with a melancholy melody. After this section is repeated, it moves to a more contented and serene melody that is also repeated. Both sections are repeated again, followed by a coda that has a much more stationary melody, before finally stopping the tremolo to signify the end in the last couple of measures. The interest in this piece is not so much in the melody or harmonic progression, but rather in the constant tremolo that flows and undulates throughout the entire piece.