



Recital II

**Navid Niknejad, Guitar**

June 28, 2023, 7:30 PM  
Walter Hall

**PROGRAMME**

Twenty-Four Preludes for Guitar (1929)

Manuel Maria Ponce  
(1882-1948)  
Ed. Miguel Alcázar

II. *Agitato* (in A Minor)

X. *Moderato* (in C-Sharp Minor)

IV. *Allegro* (in E Minor)

VIII. *Tranquillo* (in F-Sharp Minor)

I. *Moderato* (in C major)

V. *Vivo* (in D Major)

VI. *Lento* (in B Minor)

XX. *Allegretto vivo* (in C Minor)

XXIV. *Moderato espressivo* - Chant populaire espagnol (in D Minor)

XXII. *Agitato* (in G Minor)

Sonata III (1927)

Manuel Maria Ponce

I. *Allegro moderato*

II. *Chanson – Andante*

III. *Allegro non troppo*

**INTERMISSION**

Fandanguillo, Op. 36 (1925)

Joaquín Turina  
(1882-1949)

Ed. Marián Álvarez Benito

Homenaje a Tárrega (Deux pièces pour guitare), Op. 69 (1932)

I. Garrotín – *Allegretto*

II. Soleares – *Allegro vivo*

Ráfaga, Op. 53 (1929)

## Sonata para guitarra, Op. 61 (1930)

I. *Lento – Allegro – Allegretto tranquillo*

II. *Andante*

III. *Allegro vivo – Allegro moderato – Allegro vivo*

## Sevillana, Op. 29 (1923)

This recital is in partial fulfilment of the Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance.

Navid Niknejad is a student of Dr. Jeffrey McFadden.

Originally from Tehran, Iran, Navid Niknejad completed his previous studies at the University of Tehran, the Conservatory of Amsterdam under Lex Eisenhardt, and at California State University, Fullerton with Dr. Martha Masters. Since 2017, Navid is completing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Toronto.

### Program Notes

Andrés Segovia's role in reshaping the classical guitar's significance within the mainstream classical music scene is undeniable. In addition to heavily concertizing preexisting works, Segovia contributed immensely to expanding the guitar repertoire by commissioning new compositions. The Mexican composer, **Manuel M. Ponce** heard Segovia for the first time at a concert in Mexico City in 1923, an encounter that sparked a collaboration between the two which lasted for 25 years until Ponce's death.

Ponce's works featured in this program were composed between 1926 and 1932, during which Ponce returned to Europe to study with Paul Dukas in Paris. In contrast to the tonal language of his earliest guitar work, *Sonata Mexicana*, the chord colorations, complex extended harmonies, and dense textures of the Paris period demonstrate the influence of Dukas's late-Romantic and Impressionistic style on Ponce.

Of the *Twenty-Four Preludes*, written in 1929, only half were published by Segovia in 1930. Miguel Alcázar's rediscovery of the manuscripts in 1981 revealed that the *Preludes* were originally 24 and intended for all major and minor keys also that Segovia had changed the keys of some to supposedly make them playable. However, they were perfectly playable in the original keys. The *Preludes* are miniature character pieces that represent hallmarks of Ponce's style including modal mixture, chromatic

melodic and harmonic motion, and innovative textures. Despite the idea of writing in all 24 keys, Ponce's constant use of modal mixture, together with modal, and occasionally non-tertian harmonies, creates a sense of tonal ambiguity. The ten *Preludes* chosen for this concert demonstrate Ponce's fondness for Spanish music, particularly Flamenco, which is evident in both the melodic and harmonic use of the Phrygian mode. Unsurprisingly, the only Prelude that has a title, other than a tempo marking (Prelude XXIV), is named "Spanish Popular Song."

***Sonata III*** of 1927 is an emblem of Ponce's music in late-Romantic style and among the finest multi-movement sonatas in guitar music. The work incorporates a mixture of different elements from Ponce's influences of the Romantic era to Parisian musical trends of the time, as well as Segovia's request for Spanish-sounding music. In the first movement, the full chordal texture of the opening theme is contrasted by the second theme's serene yet mysterious character, while stirring transitional passages of augmented arpeggios connect the thematic areas. The middle movement, *Chanson*, is a fine example of Ponce's mastery of composing songs—sweet, short, and nostalgic, with hints of dissonant harmonies towards the end. The final movement, *Allegro non troppo*, is a rondo whose refrain, with its quick virtuosic passages and a Polonaise-like rhythm, is interjected with contrasting episodes including interludes with Flamenco-inspired passages, a choral-like episode reminiscent of Gregorian chant, and a slow jazzy interlude that continues to reappear towards the end.

**Joaquín Turina** was born in Seville in the same year as Manuel Ponce (1882). He also studied in Paris, although Turina's Paris years (1905-13) were earlier than those of Ponce. Despite being a native of Seville, Turina's early compositional style was heavily influenced by French music. The turning point of Turina's career was marked in 1907, when the renowned Spanish composer, Isaac Albéniz, advised him to find his inspirations in Andalusian music. Turina's attention to Andalusian popular songs is apparent in his works written between 1908 and 1913, which brought him international recognition as a nationalist Spanish composer. Responding to Segovia's requests, Turina wrote his guitar works in Madrid between 1923 and 1932. This period was significant in Turina's overall compositional output and included several important orchestral works.

Elements of Flamenco music are abundant in Turina's guitar works—long scalar passages, parallel chords often with 7<sup>th</sup>s or 9<sup>th</sup>s, as well as impressionistic harmonies accompanying melodies of narrow range, reminiscent of *cante jondo* singing style. The use of Phrygian and Andalusian modes and Phrygian cadence, characteristic of Flamenco *cante*, is a distinctive feature of all Turina's guitar works.

*Fandanguillo* is perhaps the only piece among Turina's guitar works which is inspired by a non-Flamenco dance since Fandango has eighteenth-century origins and is used in folk dances throughout Spain. In *Fandanguillo*, Turina juxtaposes the recurring Fandango rhythm with lyrical cante-inspired melodies that lead to a climax with fast scalar passages and strummed chords before the end of the piece.

*Homenaje a Tárrega* and *Ráfaga*, are Turina's only guitar works that are not dedicated to Andrés Segovia in the autograph manuscript. It is also not known whether Segovia premiered the two works nor exists a recording of the works by him. Given *Homenaje a Tárrega*'s strong Flamenco character, it remains a mystery why it is titled as a homage to Francisco Tárrega. The two short pieces of *Homenaje a Tárrega* are both titled after Andalusian dances. *Garrotín* is an Andalusian dance in 2/4 popular during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, while *Soleares* is a Flamenco dance with a twelve-beat metric cycle (*compás*). Turina's impression of the two dances, however, is not in their literal Flamenco form but includes elements from their rhythms, harmonies and melodic motifs that blend into Turina's musical idiom.

*Ráfaga*'s rhythm is based on a fast twelve-beat *compás* inspired by the *Bulerías* Flamenco dance. Other characteristics of Turina's compositional language, such as parallel chords, fast scalar passages, and *rasgueados* (strummed chords) are apparent in the piece.

In the *Sonata*, Turina molds the improvisational character of his themes into the confines of the cyclical form. Turina's sonata-form is unique in that it mainly progresses by the unfolding of the themes rather than their development or statement in different key areas. The second movement has an improvisatory character with melodic passages reminiscent of the *cante jondo* melismata. Similar to *Ráfaga*, the third movement of the *Sonata* features a *Bulerías compás*. Towards the end of the movement, the return of the first movement's last theme creates a sense of formal cohesion and conclusiveness.

Turina's first guitar composition, *Sevillana* is inspired by the Sevillanas dance of the annual Feria of Seville. Turina's *Sevillana* is not a literal rendition of the flamenco dance; however, it features some of the dance's main characteristics, such as *rasgueados* (strummed chords), rhythms, and lyrical motifs that evoke the dance's vibrant spirit. Inspired by contrasting Flamenco forms, Turina juxtaposes the exuberant and lively dance sections with the sombre lyrical parts. A noticeable example of this is in *Sevillana*, in which a long lyrical middle section follows the convulsive opening *rasgueados*. The

integration of folk music elements with modern harmonic language, in addition to a creative approach to form, has made *Sevillana* a favourite work in the Spanish repertoire of the guitar.

As was his usual practice when commissioning music, Segovia played a significant role in all compositional and editorial stages of Turina's guitar works. According to Segovia, while composing his first guitar piece, *Sevillana*, Turina had a difficult time finding information about the guitar in any orchestration treatises, therefore Segovia offered to help and revise Turina's writings "bar by bar." Nonetheless, Segovia suggested that the revisions were neither comprehensive nor important and were only limited to omitting doublings in chords, inverting some chords, changing melodic motives, and thinning dense harmonies. Segovia claimed that Turina had developed a better understanding of guitar technique by the time of his second work, *Fandanguillo*.

Marián Álvarez, who edited the manuscripts of Turina's complete guitar works, finds it striking that there are still over one hundred differences between Turina's manuscript and Segovia's printed edition of *Fandanguillo*. This becomes even more surprising since Turina's manuscripts are almost entirely playable on the guitar, without any modification, demonstrating his thorough understanding of the instrument. This raises the question of to what extent Segovia's revisions were necessary to improve playability and to what extent they were based on Segovia's personal taste and aesthetics.

Turina's works prepared for this concert are primarily based on the manuscript edition. Segovia's changes were mainly applied to improve playability and melodic fluency. Only in one instance, in *Sevillana*'s opening *rasgueado* chords and the middle *Allegro* dance, Segovia's proposed rhythmic change is maintained since Segovia's rhythm arguably captures the character of the Sevillana dance.