

Classical Programme
Piano Guitar Duo

Anne Ku, piano
Robert Bekkers, guitar

El Jardin de Belagua
<http://www.eljardindebelagua.com/>
Friday 1 May 2009
20:30

Potpourri
(on famous opera Themes) Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837)

Fantasia para un Gentilhombre
Españoleta Joaquín Rodrigo (1901 - 1999)

Sonatina
Allegretto
Andante
Allegro Federico Moreno-Torroba (1891 - 1982)

Le quattro stagioni
Summer Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741)
arr. R. Bekkers (2008)

Fantasia
Andantino
Vivacissimo Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968)

Variationen Opus 113 (65)
Polonaise Mauro Giuliani (1781-1829)

Programme Notes

Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837)

Son of a local musician in Pressburg (now Bratislava) and child prodigy pupil of Mozart, Hummel toured as a young pianist and then settled down to write and teach. Considered one of the most expensive teachers at the time, his students included Hiller and Mendelssohn.

Hummel wrote the entertaining Pot-pourri for guitarist Mauro Giuliani and Beethoven, very likely between 1810 and 1814. He and Giuliani played such piano/guitar pieces in the botanical gardens of Schönbrunn palace in the "Ducaten Concerte" --- so named for the entry price of one ducat. The Pot-pourri is typical of the medleys and variations on popular opera themes in his time.

Joaquín Rodrigo (1901 - 1999)

Born in Sangunto in Valencia, Rodrigo was nearly blinded by an epidemic of diphtheria when he was three and completely blinded by glaucoma later in life. As a first rate pianist, he decided to follow in the footsteps of other Spanish composers, Manuel de Falla, Isaac Albeniz and Joaquin Turina, to Paris where he studied under Paul Dukas. He also met the Turkish pianist Victoria Kamhi who became his wife and partner in every aspect of his professional and personal life. Rodrigo died in Madrid.

Rodrigo was best known for his concertos for guitar, the most famous being "Concierto de Aranjuez." Before he composed for the guitar, the only great classical works available to advanced guitarists were piano transcriptions of Bach and other classical composers. "Fantasía para un gentilhombre" was composed for Andrés Segovia at his request. The four-movement guitar concerto is based on six short dances for solo guitar by Gaspar Sanz, the 17th century Spanish composer.

Federico Moreno-Torroba (1891 - 1982)

Son of a well-known organist, Torroba brought the zarzuela (Spanish opera) tradition to the international stage through his directorship of several opera companies. In the 1920's, his growing friendship with Andrés Segovia, who brought the guitar to the concert stage, inspired him to write for the guitar, being the first composer to do so. The Dance in E Major was so well-received that Segovia wrote in his autobiography: "Then there was a 'first' in the field of the guitar: for the first time, a composer who was not a guitarist, wrote a piece for the guitar."

The original solo version of Sonatina was first recorded by Segovia in 1927. A version also exists for guitar and string quartet. It is not known whether the piano and guitar version was originally used for rehearsal or for Segovia and his second wife Paquita Madriguera, a concert pianist.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741)

Venetian priest, Baroque composer, and virtuoso violinist wrote numerous works, which were rediscovered in the early 20th century. Vivaldi scored the four concertos to four sonnets he wrote for each season. Published in 1725-1726, Summer is the second season, and like others, with three movements corresponding to three ideas. Below is the translation of the original Italian text to the sonnet.

Summer – Concerto in g-minor from the Four Seasons

Allegro non molto

Beneath the blazing sun's relentless heat men and flocks are sweltering, pines are scorched. We hear the cuckoo's voice; then sweet songs of the turtle dove and finch are heard. Soft breezes stir the air...but threatening north wind sweeps them suddenly aside. The shepherd trembles, fearful of violent storm and what may lie ahead.

Adagio e piano - Presto e forte

His limbs are now awakened from their repose by fear of lightning's flash and thunder's roar, as gnats and flies buzz furiously around.

Presto

Alas, his worst fears were justified, as the heavens roar and great hailstones beat down upon the proudly standing corn.

Mauro Giuliani (1781-1829)

Giuliani is one of the principal composers who wrote in that period for piano and guitar. Giuliani arrived in Vienna from Italy in about 1806. Soon he published works for guitar with other instruments, especially for guitar with flute or violin. In April 1808 he performed his first concerto for guitar and full orchestra there, and songs with guitar accompaniment soon followed.

The Polonaise is the last and longest piece in the "Varationen über 'nel cor più non mi sento' von Paisiello und Polonaise" op. 113 for guitar and piano. In $\frac{3}{4}$ time and allegro tempo, the piano and the guitar take turns being soloist and accompanist. The momentum continues to ride until a triumphant ending.

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895 - 1968)

Born and raised in Tuscany, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco began composing at age 9 and later escaped to America where he composed music for Hollywood. His students included such names as André Previn, John Williams, and Henry Mancini. Despite more than 200 works for film, Tedesco is regarded as one of the most prolific and important composers for guitar in the 20th century.

It was Segovia who persuaded Tedesco to write for the guitar, after their meeting at a music festival in Venice in 1932. Upon receiving his first work, Segovia wrote, "It is the first time that I have met a musician who understands immediately how to write for the guitar." This two movement Fantasia was written in 1950 for Segovia and his second wife Paquita but has never been performed by them.

About the Piano Guitar Duo

The PIANO and GUITAR, two of the most popular instruments, once accompanied each other in 19th century chamber music. Nowadays it is a rare but special occasion to see this unusual combination in the classical music scene.

Anne Ku and Robert Bekkers formed their **PIANO GUITAR DUO** in 2001, reviving this almost forgotten tradition of music making. This once favourite pastime of bringing together performers, composers and enthusiastic audiences has left a largely untapped legacy of published music specifically written for the piano and guitar. More at <http://www.pianoguitar.com>

A graduate of the Conservatory of Maastricht, **Robert Bekkers** also studied contemporary music with Angelo Gilardino in Italy. While accompanying flamenco dance classes, Robert formed the group "IMPETU" consisting of 9 musicians and dancers, mixing flamenco and classical music. He has toured with Serenata Mexicana, Amstel Guitar Quartet, and Berdien Stenberg Orchestra. Since 2001, he and pianist Anne Ku have taken their Piano Guitar Duo to London, North Cyprus, Cape Town, Italy, Houston and Hawaii, and throughout the Netherlands. Bekkers plays a 2005 Jeroen Hilhorst concert guitar, custom-made for the duo. Robert is actively involved in chamber music with mezzo-soprano, flute, violin, choir, and another guitar, as well as arranging music for his various chamber groups.

Born in Brunei of Chinese parents, **Anne Ku** studied piano under Betsy Hermann in Okinawa and Randall Love at Duke University. She began accompanying choirs from age 12, followed soon after by wedding engagements as pianist and organist. A graduate of London Business School and London School of Economics, she brings her passion for producing thematic house concerts from Houston and London to the Netherlands. Anne concluded her composition studies in June 2008 at Utrecht Conservatory with a premiere of her second chamber opera, Culture Shock! and a piano teaching thesis on sight-reading. She reviews operas, competitions, and music festivals for Le Bon Journal, an online publication she founded in 2001. She launched a new blog about her piano guitar duo in March 2009 at <http://www.pianoguitar.com/blog>

With grateful thanks to our sponsor



Stichting Jon Kasander, Havik 13 3811EX Amersfoort, Netherlands