

Bekkers Piano Guitar Duo

Robert Bekkers, guitar

Anne Ku, piano

2010 Programme

George Frideric Handel (1685 – 1759)	Arrival of the Queen of Sheba**
Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)	Winter from the Four Seasons**
Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)	No. 2 from Tango Suite for two guitars
Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)	Danse Espagnole from La Vida Breve
Joaquin Rodrigo (1901-1999)	Concierto de Aranjuez <i>Allegro con spirito</i> <i>Adagio</i> <i>Allegro gentile</i>
Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837) and Mauro Giuliani (1781-1829)	Grand Potpourri National (1818)

** arranged by Robert Bekkers

Programme Notes

“**Arrival of the Queen of Sheba**” comes from Handel’s oratorio Solomon which was written in 1748 and premiered a year later in London. The libretto is based on biblical stories of the wise King Solomon. The Queen of Sheba visits King Solomon in the third act. “The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba” was originally scored for flutes, violins, violas, cellos, and basses.

Antonio Vivaldi composed “**The Four Seasons**” in 1723 and published them as a set of 4 violin concertos (with three movements each) in 1725. They were inspired by four sonnets, which most authorities believe Vivaldi wrote himself.

Programme notes from LA Chamber Orchestra:

Finally, there is “Winter,” L’inverno. The opening sounds like a shivering person rhythmically stamping his feet to stay warm. The soloist provides the icy winds, and the ensemble responds with chattering teeth. The middle movement describes the peaceful pleasure of warming up inside by a crackling fire. In the final movement, those outdoors walk carefully on the icy paths, while those inside feel winter’s chill as it relentlessly finds its way into the house. But still, Vivaldi reminds us, winter—like all the other seasons—has its specific charms and moments of contentment.

Winter – Concerto in f-minor

Allegro non molto

*Aggiacciato tremar trà neri argenti
Al Severo Spirar d' orrido Vento,
Correr battendo i piedi ogni momento;
E pel Soverchio gel batter i denti;*

Largo

*Passar al foco i di quieti e contenti
Mentre la pioggia fuor bagna ben cento*

Allegro

*Caminar Sopra 'l ghiaccio, e à passo lento
Per timor di cader gersene intenti;
Gir forte Sdruzzolar, cader à terra
Di nuove ir Sopra 'l ghiaccio e correr forte
Sin ch' il ghiaccio si rompe, e si disserra;
Sentir uscir dalle ferrate porte
Sirocco Borea, e tutti i Venti in guerra
Quest' è 'l verno, mà tal, che gioja apporte.*

Winter – Concerto in f-minor

Allegro non molto

*Shivering, frozen mid the frosty snow in biting,
stinging winds;
running to and fro to stamp one's icy feet, teeth
chattering in the bitter chill.*

Largo

*To rest contentedly beside the hearth, while those
outside are drenched by pouring rain.*

Allegro

*We tread the icy path slowly and cautiously, for
fear of tripping and falling.
Then turn abruptly, slip, crash on the ground and,
rising, hasten on across the ice lest it cracks up.
We feel the chill north winds coarse through the
home despite the locked and bolted doors...
this is winter, which nonetheless brings its own
delights.*

Manuel de Falla's "La Vida Breve" (*life is short or the brief life*) is a one hour opera in two acts and four scenes, first performed in Nice in 1913. There is as much instrumental as vocal music in this work. The Danse Espagnole, part of the wedding celebrations, was made famous as a violin showpiece by Fritz Kreisler. Incidentally de Falla wrote only one piece for guitar -- a solo Homenaje Le Tombeau De Claude Debussy.

Piazzolla was born in Argentina to Italian parents. He revolutionised the traditional tango into a new style called nuevo tango, including elements from jazz and classical music. He grew up in New York City, where he picked up the bandoneon. When he was 16, he returned to Argentina and, on the advice of the pianist Arthur Rubinstein, began studying with Ginastera. He won a composition contest and obtained a grant to study in France under the famous teacher Nadia Boulanger, who inspired him to compose in his own style.

Blind since age three, **Rodrigo** was a pianist whose "**Concierto de Aranjuez**" (1939) established him as one of the most important Spanish composers of the 20th century. The first movement was inspired by the gardens at Palacio Real de Aranjuez. The second movement, with its most famous melody, was composed in Paris, and according to his wife Victoria's autobiography, was "both an evocation of the happy days of their honeymoon and a response to Rodrigo's devastation at the miscarriage of their first pregnancy."

The half-hour long Grand Potpourri National is a joint collaboration two virtuoso performers Hummel and Giuliani. They wrote and played this potpourri of national anthems in 1818 in the Dukaten Concert Series at the gardens of the Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna.

About Bekkers Piano Guitar Duo

When pianist Anne Ku and guitarist Robert Bekkers met in 2001 in Amsterdam, they owned only one piece arranged for keyboard and guitar --- "Vivaldi's Guitar Concerto in D Major." Since then they have built a repertoire spanning 4 centuries, including their own transcriptions and commissioned works of Dutch composers for their unique duo.

Born in Brunei of Chinese parents, **Anne Ku** grew up on the island of Okinawa, Japan. She won a full scholarship to study at Duke University where she gave her senior recital of French impressionist works. Anne furthered her studies in London and more recently graduated from Utrecht Conservatory in composition. She specialises in the teaching of sight reading, the subject of her teaching diploma. She also has a duo with French horn and cello.

Born near Eindhoven, **Robert Bekkers** obtained his performance and teaching degrees in classical guitar from Maastricht Conservatory. He has toured with the Berdien Stenberg Orchestra, Amstel Guitar Quartet, and other ensembles. Besides his duo with Anne Ku, he is also active as a chamber musician and accompanying choirs and singers. His solo programme includes works such as Bach's Chaconne and Leo Brouwer's Dacameron Noire.



Official website: <http://www.pianoguitar.com>