

KNOW YOUR COMPOSERS



HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS
(1887-1959)

FIVE PRELUDES

1. *Lyric Melody* – E Minor
2. *Capadocia Melody* – E Major
3. *Homage to Bach* – A Minor
4. *Homage to Brazilian Indian* – E Minor
5. *Homage to Social Life* – D Major

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A native of Rio de Janeiro, young Villa-Lobos was taught to play the cello by his father, a widely-read librarian with a sound knowledge of music. Villa-Lobos performed with popular musicians in cafés. He travelled extensively throughout Brazil (1905) returning to Rio to teach and founded the Conservatorio Nacional de Canto Orfeónico and the Brazilian Academy of Music, initiating the movement of national identity. Later he went to Paris where he remained for nearly a decade. In the early 30s he wrote several pieces for his series “Chôros” portraying Brazil’s rich, exuberant landscapes. He did not conform to academic rules when composing, he did it in a very personal way. His second career was as a teacher of music, and he wrote a complete system of musical instructions because he thought that academic knowledge did not allow creativity to flourish. Villa-Lobos’ early compositions came from improvisations on the guitar.

He married pianist Lucília Guimarães and began publishing his music in 1913; until 1939 he continued writing patriotic music.

Even after his death 49 years ago he is still warmly remembered in Brazil despite being a classical composer.

Five Preludes for Guitar was published in 1940 by the French publisher Max Eschig. They were written in the mature phase of Villa-Lobos’ years as a composer. The Preludes embraced freedom and emotional feelings. *Prelude No.1* uses the “open string” which functions as a pedal to give a central tone providing a variety of tones. This Prelude includes in its middle section a melodic material as the structural base and the uncomplicated waltz-like new conception of accompaniment; it portrays the peasant of the backlands immersed in the solitude of the vast Brazilian landscape. By contrast *Prelude No.2* includes a contrasting arpeggio section as well as, open string pedal tones in an intrinsic relation with chords, and refers to the carefree atmosphere of the *chôro*, which symbolises the carioca; in its middle section it suggests the sound of the “berimbau”, a percussive instrument. *Prelude No.3*, as its title implies, is a homage to Bach who exercised a great influence on Villa-Lobos; this is noticeable in the second half which includes both the *Tocatta and Fugue in D minor* and the well-known *Serenade*. Moreover, in *Prelude No.4* there is extensive use of arpeggiation and pedal tones and it opens with a single line melody which pays homage to the indian character. Lastly, in *Prelude No.5* there are small changes in the first two sections and in the third one, the composer used a popular sounding harmonic style; he had in mind a tribute to the social life of his beloved Rio as a city, above all, is a reminiscence of the struggle of the street musicians which emulates the composer in his younger days.

ALUCINACIÓN (2004), *Sonata*
World Première

Dedicated to José Antonio Escobar
CHRISTIAN VÁSQUEZ
(b. 1965)

Vásquez was born in Santiago, Chile and started his formal musical education at the age of 12. He studied baroque and traverse flute and in 1988 entered the Faculty of Arts, University of Chile to perfect his knowledge of traverse flute, but having a creative mind he decided to study composition where, in 1992, he was under the supervision of

Ricardo Rozzi, composer, to study Renaissance Poetic Composition and Analysis of Musical Forms. In 1994 Vásquez met Aliosha Solovera, a distinguished Chilean composer who guided him between 1996-2006 when he finally obtained his Degree of Licentiate of Arts with mention in Composition at the University of Chile.

Vásquez is considered one of the most gifted composers of the new generation in his native country. He has premiéred his works in Festivals of Contemporary Music in Chile and overseas, in 2005 the Chilean Symphonic Orchestra premiéred his piece *Tercer Túnel*, written for string orchestra and four percussionists, which was well received by critics and public alike. In 2006 he was commissioned by the Andes Foundation to compose *Eco del Silencio* for traverse flute, oboe, violin, viola, cello, piano and percussion. This work will be premiéred in June 2007 by the *Ensemble Recherche*, in Freiburg, Germany. He is currently reading a post-graduate course in Composition at the Hochschule für Kunst, Bremen, Germany with the renowned composer Professor Younghy Pahg-Paan. Vásquez describes himself as a traditional composer as he has dedicated himself to the discovery of the every-day traditional music and he would very much like to be understood in the structural course of time and that his compositions are analysed and perceived from a poetic, time immemorial and refined point of view.

Alucinación was written for guitar in 2004 with two ideas in mind; a refined idiomatic technique and a simple chordal musicality, which gave the composer freedom for writing the piece. It is dedicated to José Antonio Escobar who wanted the structure of a Sonata. Here Vásquez worked with a thematic complex, the first one containing two elements in contrast with one another: the harmonic structure expressed in a simple form. The composer explored with tunes of great resonance to take advantage of the gentleness of the guitar sound. The second element was the *glissando* used as a melodic aspect in the same way as the melody of *traditional music* which contain its own harmony; and so Vásquez worked with the purpose of discovering within itself the sweetly and brightly natural harmonies of the guitar as well as groups of sound to represent in colour and timbral voice the