

Charles Valentin Alkan. In the composer's own words. "My guitar *Sonata* was inspired by the many fascinating descriptions of the colourful life of *runo* singer and *kantele* player Iivana Shemeikka (1843-1911) known as Jehkin Iivana. After his ancestors patronymic he was one of the last and greatest proponents of the ancient oral tradition of 'runo singing' in *Karelia*. According to the contemporary information he had a bright and strong personality and his music could not be described in words, it possessed the power of transporting the listener to the world of myth. In my *Sonata*

language mixing modern and traditional elements in various degrees of constructivism or freedom. His latest stage work is his opera *Rasputin* (2001-2003) which is about the life of Grigory Rasputin. The name of *Variétude* comes from two types of composition 'variations' and 'études'. The whole piece is conformed by variations like the little motif in the beginning of the work with a whole tone up and a semitone down. This happens in every possible transformation and seems to be associated with more and more new figures expanding and contracting fast and slow. The

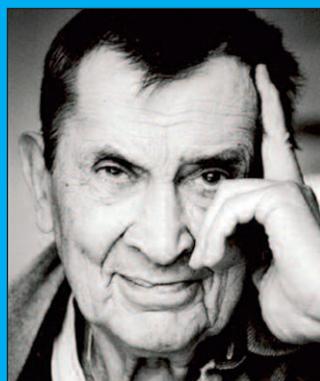
Italy, in Berlin with Martin Krause and in Paris with Paul Dukas and was a student together with Villa-Lobos and Rodrigo. Later in 1923 he met Andrés Segovia who became his inspiration. *Variations on Folia de España* and *Fugue* is considered a synthesis of guitar language. Its theme *Folia* has a simple harmonic tonal structure and is one of the most frequently played for variations and is known in Finland as *Lampaanpôska* (Lamb Polska) mainly through the piano piece by Toivo Kuula. The *Folia* was a Mediaeval dance whose participants seemed to lose their minds whilst



J. S. Bach (1685-1750)



Olli Mustonen (b.1963)



Einojuhani Rautavaara (b.1928)



Manuel M. Ponce (1882-1948)

the role of the *kantele* is taken by the guitar in sorrow and in happiness. The journey starts in the *runo* singer's lowly cottage and eventually returns to its origin but not before taking the listener to many strange realms, even the domains of death..."

VARIÉTUDE

arr. by Ismo Eskelinen
British Première

EINOJUHAN RAUTAVAARA (b.1928)

Rautavaara is one of the most frequent Finnish composers played everywhere. He studied piano and composition at the Helsinki University and the Sibelius Academy respectively. His early works have closed ties with tradition with a touch of modernism, followed by a phase of avant gardé, such is the case of his fourth symphony *Arabescata* (1962), after the composer turned himself to an hyper-romanticism phase and finally to mysticism. After the 80s he had adopted a post modern musical

symetry of the basic motif is encountered for instance in the broken chords spreading in different directions that are in turn very étude like. *Variétude* was originally composed as a compulsory work for the Jean Sibelius Violin Competition. Ismo Eskelinen's version for guitar has preserved the virtuosic tone of the piece.

VARIATIONS ON FOLIA DE ESPAÑA AND FUGUE (1919)

according to original manuscript

MANUEL M. PONCE

(1882-1948)

He was introduced to music at the age of five in the typical Mexican markets of his home town, Fresnillo in the region of Zacatecas where singers sung popular music. They were an inspiration until the moment when a genuine nationalism came into existence, all of this accompanied with solid musical studies. He was under the supervision of Torchi and Dall'Olio in

dancing, perhaps because the meaning of the word is madness. Both Renaissance and Baroque composers saw the potential of the variations and memorable ones were written by composers of the stature of Marin Marais, Arcangelo Corelli, Franz Liszt and Serge Rachmaninov. This work is formed by twenty perfectly interlinked variations. It is the eighth and tenth which allows the performer to show his virtuosity and the twelfth is a warm homage to the style of the Spanish guitar whilst the seventeenth and eighteenth have a playful feeling and the final one a suspended atmosphere. To top it all we have the *fugue* where Ponce showed an extraordinary mastery of contrapuntal art which was for him the purest form of musical language. Ponce died in Mexico City on 24th April 1948.

Material for Notes provided by
FAZER Artists' Management Inc.

© J. Sylvester, LACCS, 2007.

All Rights Reserved.