

KNOW YOUR COMPOSERS

PAVANE
CANARIOS
GASPER SANZ
(1640-1710)

Born in Calanda (Aragón, Spain) Gasper was a guitarist, organist and Spanish composer and also a Bachelor of Theology at the University of Salamanca (1647) although his degree did not have much apparent influence on his guitar music. We have to acknowledge that he lived in a transitional period between the Renaissance and the Baroque and this was reflected in the repertoire of the time, therefore, the renaissance dances gave way to the baroque suite. He wrote a monumental work of five-course baroque guitar, which was tuned like the first five strings of the modern guitar. His five-course guitar method *Instrucción de música sobre la guitarra española, Vol 1*, was published in Zaragoza in 1647. He continued writing and his guitar method ended with three volumes. Here he invoked the Italian style he himself had practiced when he stayed in Naples (Italy) where he was employed as an 'organist of the chapel'. The rhythm of Sanz's *Pavane* and *Canarios* is known as 'de amalgama' in modern flamenco's terminology due to the asymmetrical intervals. The Zarabande's rhythm is also present in his piece *Canarios* which is normally written as a mixed meter in 3/4 and 6/8. *Pavane* is a dance from which steps have been reconstructed by early dance specialists.

PASSACAGLIA
SYLVIUS LEOPOLD WEISS
(1686-1750)

Weiss was born in Breslau, Silesia (Wrocław, Poland) to a lutenist family. His father Johann Jacob taught his three children to play the lute, so Weiss played it from the age of ten and he made his debut in 1706 at the Court of Elector Jojann Wilhelm of the Palatinate in Düsseldorf. He was the leading lutenist of Bach's time and highly regarded as a composer for his instrument. He spent most of his life as a court musician playing the baroque lute, an instrument with a large number of strings and from there comes the comment that 'some lutenists spent half their lives playing it and the other half tuning it'. The music goes well with the six string guitar, but there is beauty in this piece of Weiss's art. For his solo performance he used an eleven course lute, however, after 1719 he often used a thirteen course lute and he became the most highly paid instrumentalist at Dresden. Weiss's music was originally

written for string instrument either for harpsichord or the lute and as a result there is accord between the resonance, the compositions original sound, and the resonance obtained on the guitar. *Passacaglia* is a baroque dance primarily developed at the French court during the 17th century, for them the dance is known as *pasacaille*, for the Germans *Passacalia*. Its name derives from the Spanish *pasar* (to walk) and *calle* (street) deriving either from street performance, or musicians taking a few steps in the street.

PRELUDE, FUGUE and ALLEGRO
FOR LUTE IN E FLAT MAJOR, BWV 998
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(1685-1750)

Bach was born in Eisenach, Thuringia, now Germany, and his family had a rich musical lineage. He was the greatest composer of the Baroque era and an excellent organist, but he is best known for his musical genius as a composer. There is no doubt that Bach's pen enriched the lute's idiomatic limitations, that is to say, its homophonic nature. Nonetheless, by the mid 16th century there emerged many partitures of polyphonic 'fantasie' and 'ricercari' which are little studied today, played only by the most accomplished lutenists, but at the end of the 17th century the French Rococo contributed to a moderate revival of the lute producing the most elegant pieces. By this time the lute's broken style, borrowed by the clavecinists, became the backbone of late Baroque keyboard music. On the other hand, Bach was known most particularly in his perfection of the fugue as an instrumental and choral form producing beautiful music with a mixture of both technical mastery and intellectual control. Contrapuntual artifice is predominant in Bach's last decade. The *Prelude, Fugue* and *Allegro* was written for lute or keyboard around the first half of the 1740s. It is an imposing and virtuosic work and these demands are kept in its transcription for guitar. The technical complexities are given without limits through the rich counterpoint for those who can scale faster with their fingers. The triptych BWV 998 bears the title *Per liuto o cambal* 'for lute or harpsichord'. There is the possibility that the three movements were assembled rather than composed as a single entity. The distinguished scholar Eugen Dombois concluded after detailed analysis that "the whole work is probably more a lute-harpsichord piece than a lute piece. The degree of probability... is highest in the case of the

Allegro and lowest in that of the *Prelude*". In the last decade of Bach's life his eyesight began to deteriorate, and operations and treatments were blamed for his death on 31st July. He was buried at St John's cemetery. Bach was a prolific composer who wrote works for orchestra, chamber music, keyboard, lute, organ, chorale, preludes, oratorios and songs. The only genre he did not cover was opera.

GRAND SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND
GUITAR IN A MAJOR, OP 35 MS3
Romance
Andantino Variato
NICCOLO PAGANINI
(1782-1840)

Paganini was an Italian violinist, violist, guitarist and composer considered one of the most famous violinists with perfect intonation, and innovative techniques in the playing of the violin inspired by the Romantic mystique of the time. After initial training with his father he studied with a local violinist G. Servetto and later with the celebrated Giacomo Costa. He performed for the first time in 1797 accompanied by his father, afterwards they embarked in a successful tour across Lombardy which contributed to enhance Paganini's brilliant skills as a violinist. As a composer he wrote his 24 *Capricce* for violin solo between 1801 and 1807 in which he showed the novel features of his technique, he also composed two sets of six sonatas for violin and guitar. He had made his name in Vienna by 1828 and gave sensational concerts in Paris, London and Scotland, the latter two making him a very wealthy man. In 1833 he went to live in Paris where he was commissioned to write a symphonic piece *Harold en Italie* for solo violin, a piece he never performed. He made a bad investment in a gambling house and as a result went to live in Marseille and in Nice (1839). His technique demanded a wide use of harmonics and pizzicato effects, a new method of fingering and even tuning, all of these accompanied by his flamboyant personality which made his performances unique events. The *Grand Sonata for Violin and Guitar in A Major, Opus 35, MS3*, (1803) was written in three movements: *Allegro Risoluto*, *Romance* and *Andantino Variato* of which Simon has chosen the two last ones. There are moments of tension and dramatic effects allowing an expansive contour making every aspect of the harmony implicit in the main theme creating a range of different effects.