

UR COMPOSERS

Mexico and *La Valentina* is a song reflecting the audacious character of the *fronterizos* located in northern Mexico, the piece has a quick rhythm.

PAISAJE CUBANO CON TRISTEZA

LEO BROUWER (b. 1939)

There is so much information for Leo Brouwer, some of it is given in the first part of the programme. *Paisaje Cubano con Tristeza*, the most recent solo piece, was written in 1999 and has been performed by guitarists from all over the world.

Leo Brouwer's discography is vast and has been recorded by John Williams, Julian Bream, Franz Bruggen and Harry Sparnay, the Toronto Festival, the London Sinfonietta and the Liege Festival. As a music director he is invited to give concerts around the world. He has conducted the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the Scottish National Symphony Orchestra, and BBC Concert Orchestra and the Mexico National Symphony Orchestra. Added to this, he has been in charge of the Cuban National Symphony Orchestra for ten years, and also held the post of Director of the Music Department of the Cinema Institute of Cuba in 1961; he was Musical Adviser to the National Radio and TV company in Havana as well as Professor of Composition at the Music Conservatoire. He has conducted the Córdoba Orchestra in Spain since 1992. He presently conducts and judges competitions worldwide which includes masterclasses and performance workshops. He works tirelessly in association with the Havana International Guitar Festival and Competition and has contributed immensely by composing for other instruments apart from the guitar, including chamber and choral pieces, a modern ballet and even pieces for a wind band. *Paisaje Cubano con Tristeza* was written in 1999 and is his latest solo piece. It is a popular work which is part of the repertoire of guitar performers worldwide.

O MA CHARMANTE, ÉPARGNEZ-MOI!

CAPRICE RO182 (Op. 44) 1861
arr. for guitar by William Kanengiser
LOUIS MOREAU GOTTSCHALK
(1829-1869)

Gottschalk was the first born son of a Jewish-English New Orleans insurance business man and a French Creole mother who sung to him Creole melodies with a mixture of African-Caribbean and South American rhythms. He was very much influenced by Hector Berlioz and Franz Liszt. A romantic innovative composer, virtuoso pianist and conductor he informally gave his first concert at the St. Charles Hotel in 1840 where he took a Latin dance tune and played a series of variations of it, known later as

the 'Gottschalk treatment'; his debut was an instant success. As a composer he wrote more than 300 pieces most of them immensely popular, syncopated compositions. He visited Europe in 1844 in his quest to learn classical music, but was rejected by the Conservatoire in Paris which made him take private lessons with Karl Hallé, Camille-Marie Stamaty and composition with Pierre Malenden; with this training background he became a pianist first. Young Gottschalk became most critical of the European way of life and decided to return to the USA in 1853. After his return and in the same year he embarked on a lengthy trip to Cuba which was the beginning of a series of trips to Central and South America. He was already popular before the Civil War for his incredible piano technique. He used North and South American popular tunes in pieces such as *Creole Eyes* and *Souvenir de Puerto Rico*. He executed his piano pieces in a pianistic style reminiscent of Franz Listz; for instance his *Le Banjo* imitates banjo strumming. Around 1860 he had established himself as the foremost pianist in the New World, he was most popular in his lifetime. Gottschalk wrote more than one hundred compositions for piano essentially in the Romantic style with vernacular elements from American traditions for instance African-American and Creole rhythm. *O ma charmante, épargnez-moi! RO182/Op. 44* was written in 1861 for piano, in the Romantic style, was premiered in the Antilles and re-recorded in Arkansas in June 1999.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY JAROMIR KLEMPÍR

STEPAN RAK (b. 1945)

Rak was born at the end of World War II. Russian soldiers found him in a small village in the Ukraine and took him to Prague where he was raised by foster parents who had no inclination for music. He studied graphic art and painting for four years at the Fine Arts School before he incursioned into the field of music. In his younger years he played beat music in rock and jazz bands playing double bass and the tuba. He became interested in classical guitar and entered the Prague Conservatoire to study composition with Štěpán Urban who detected in him his potential to become composer and performer. By 1970 he gave concerts in Czechoslovakia, Soviet Union, Poland and West Germany and by 1973 had premiered a symphonic piece entitled *Hiroshima* which won second prize at the National Competition for Young Composers in Czechoslovakia. He felt the need to perfect his knowledge in composition and entered the Prague Music Academy in 1975 where he was under the supervision of Jiri Dvořáček who taught him general composition, Vaclav Kucera who introduced him

into the modern style of composition and Karel Janáček with whom he learned music analysis. After he successfully finished his studies he was hired by the Jyväskylä Conservatoire in Finland where he stayed until 1980. Thereafter, Rak returned to Prague and gave concerts but most importantly he established guitar studies at the Academy of Fine Arts for which the Academy awarded him the category of *docent* in recognition of his academic services in favour of the guitar. His approach to guitar pedagogy is critical in the sense that it is okay in relation to the development of fingers of the left hand, but the student does not need to neglect the thumb he said... "Train the little finger..."

By now Stepan Rak is recognised as a renowned guitarist. As a composer he is very much interested in the expression of music from different ethnic regions. Rak's innovative and demanding compositions were first introduced to Western audiences by Czech guitarist Vladimír Mikulka and he recorded the *Variations on a theme by Jaromír Klempír* in his CD entitled *Vladimír Mikulka Plays Stepan Rak*. Jaromír Klempír and Petr Skoumal both composers are well known in Czech Republic for their music for children. Jaromír Klempír also wrote, in 1985, the film score of *Podivná Pratelství Herce Jesinia*, directed by Karel Sterkty.

NEVICATA (Pastorale) Op. 29

BENVENUTO TERZI (1892-1980)

Information about the self-taught guitarist-composer Benvenuto Terzi was difficult to find, therefore we decided to request it from Italy, and who best to answer our queries than Signor Angelo Gilardino who, together with Stefano Aruta, published *Teresa de Rogatis - Opera scette per chitarra*, in December 1994 (she was a student of Maestro Benvenuto Terzi). They included some of the best composers Italy has produced. So I have concluded from his foreword to the above-mentioned book, one of the most interesting characteristics of Terzi's personal life. He did not allow mercantilism to get a grip of his work; as a teacher gave private concerts to explain the secrets of playing guitar to his students; he maintained correspondence with Emilio Pujol, Miguel Llobet and he avoided ostentation at all costs. As a guitar performer Angelo Gilardino wrote... "He played softly and the sound produced was tiny, yet it possessed an astounding variety. I recall each and every nuance articulation. It was terse and spontaneous rhythm was exact to the dot and pulsating accentuation discrete, his polyphony crystal and free from undue highlighting. Most memorable of all was his legato which I had heard once before from Ida Presti and from no other afterwards..."



Leo Brouwer (b. 1939)



Manuel M Ponce (1882-1948)



Stepan Rak (b. 1945)



Benvenuto Terzi (1892-1980)