

# BRIEF NOTES

**Jules Massenet (1842-1912)** was a post-Romantic French composer who studied piano with Adolphe Laurent in Paris, harmony with Reber and composition with Ambrose Thomas, he married Louise-Constance de Gressy (1866) who helped him in social circles and made his name by composing a series of sacred dramas based on the lives of female biblical characters. Massenet became a composition teacher at the Paris Conservatoire from 1878 to 1896. He adopted a Wagnerian type of composition shown in *Werther* written in 1892, one of his most famous operas, together with *Manon*. His output includes 27 published operas, 250 songs, orchestral suites, ballets, oratorios, choral music, a piano concerto and a cello fantasy. His compositions were popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He is famous for the solo violin with harp and strings accompaniment: *Méditation* from *Thais* (1894) which is one of his most performed operas, written for Sybil Sanderson, Massenet's heroine. This extract, an oft-performed concert, is played between the scene of Act II where Athanaël seduces Thais who nearly succumbed to his eloquence but instead drove him away; after a long meditation she changed her mind.

**Niccolo Paganini (1782-1840)** was a famous violist and composer who was taught by his father, however, he studied composition in Parma with Paër. His solo career started in 1809 within the Italian peninsula giving concerts, conducting and composing a series of works for violin. He launched his European career in Vienna, Germany, Paris and London. He did not have good health and in 1838 completely lost his voice but was still a virtuoso performer. The guitar went with him everywhere and was a favourite medium for composition and he was complimented by musicians of his generation with regard to his playing. *Sonata concertate per guitar* with accompaniment of violin has three movements, *Allegro spiritoso*, *Adagio Assai Espressivo* and *Rondeau: Allegretto con Brio, Scherzando*; it was written not later than 1803 and was dedicated to a Genovese noble woman Signora Emilia Dinegro, the piece is played in an A major with fingering nearly absent and with a few indications for the left hand.

**Houtaf Khoury (b.1967)** Lebanese composer studied piano with Michael Haddad in Tripoli, composition, harmony and piano with Abdelhaq Masri at the Iqbal Academy of Music also in Tripoli, and later studied composition with Yuri Ishenko at the National Music Academy of Ukraine in Kiev and obtained his MMus (1993) and his PhD in 1997. He taught composition as an assistant to Yuri Ishenko at the National Music Academy of Ukraine and later taught composition and orchestration as a Professor at the National Conservatoire of Music in Beirut. He has held teaching posts in Germany too and written orchestral works, chamber music, vocals and piano music and is extensively recorded.

**Celso Machado (b.1953)** guitarist, composer and multi-instrumentalist, the fifth of six brothers who grew up in Ribeirão Preto, a town near São Paulo. He commented that he missed the sound and rhythm of daily life in Brazil. He played with his brothers to have the "real syncopation". When both of his parents died, the boys separated, the youngest ones, Celso, Carlinhos and Filó, went to live with Benedito, the elder brother who had left home and played the guitar in dance bands, whilst Gerardo went to live in São Paulo. Celso was invited to perform in London in 1983 and remained in Western Europe for nearly ten years. However, participating in Festivals in Vancouver, Canada, he decided to settle in the city (1986). He is an innovative and versatile musician and has adopted rhythms and musical instruments from many cultures. *Paçoca* is included on his CD *Algodão Doce, Paçoca, Pé de Moleque, Quebra Queixo* (Romancing the Oboe), David Nuttall, Timothy Kain, guitar, Tall Poppies 119, (2006).

**Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)** *Verano Porteño* was recorded live during his concert given at the *Colón Theatre of Buenos Aires*, on 11th June 1983 and was played by the Noneto. "*Piazzolla en el Colón*" was edited under this name only in Argentina, for the rest of the world it is known as "*Concierto de nacar*", code Milán Sur 51139-2, adding the tango *Buenos Aires hora cero*.

**Diego Luzuriaga (b.1955)** is a prolific Ecuadorian composer who studied at the Quito Conservatoire, École Normale de Musique de Paris, Manhattan School of Music and at the Columbia University in New York. He has gained the influence of Masters such as Gerardo Guevara, Yoshihisa Taira and Mesias Maiguashca. In his early formative years he researched subjects such as the experimentation, performance and recording of Andean folk and Latin American music, which turned him into one of the most original composers. His music came from his roots combined with the French post-impressionism full of colourful sonority and open lyricism. His opera, *Manuela y Bolívar*, was premiered in Quito in November 2008 with great success and will be staged again in Ecuador, Mexico and South Korea in 2009. *Tu Eternidad, pasillo* and *Rhythms and Places from Ecuador Suite*, with four movements which are put together to match different rhythms to geographical places such as En Guaranda, (City in the Andean Mountains), Litoral Sentimental, (refers to the Ecuadorian Blue Coast region), Religious Quito, (The city was declared "Patrimonio Cultural de la Humanidad", 1978, UNESCO) and Baile Circular, *yumbo*, (*yumbo* is an Amazonian typical dance) and the Suite is premiered in tonight's concert.

**Claudio Aizaga (b.1928)** pianist, composer and musicologist, started his piano studies with Maestro Françoise Lambert in 1946 and later at the National Conservatoire of Music in Quito, and while studying there wrote his famous ballet *Cumandá*, based on the book by Juan León Mera. Many of his compositions have gained recognition such as *Preludio*, which won First Prize at the *Composition Competition* organised by the National Conservatoire of Quito. His *Sonatina for Flute and Piano* was also premiered at the Second International Festival of Music in Moscow (1984). It is worth mentioning that Maestro Aizaga has worked all his life as a researcher at the Department of Musical Arts of the Ecuadorian House of Culture in Quito.

**Gerardo Guevara (b.1930)** pianist, composer, conductor and musicologist is one of the greatest musicians of the second half of the 20th century in Ecuador. His contribution to Ecuadorian music marks a relevant milestone in the confluence between the academic and popular within the nationalist musicians line, and the contemporaneous music. He studied with the most renowned nationalistic musicians of the time, Luis Humberto Salgado, Corsino Durán, Belisario Peña, Angel Honorio Jiménez, Ricardo Becerra Lara and Hungarian Maestro Jorge Raiky. He won a grant and went to Paris to study with Maestra Nadia Boulanger. He graduated as Conductor at the École Normale de Musique in Paris and a year later obtained a Diploma of Musicology presented by the Institute of Musicology of the Sorbonne of Paris. Guevara has been the Titular Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Ecuador and founder of the Choir of Central University of Ecuador, which he conducted until 1988. He was the Rector of the National Conservatoire of Music in Quito (1980-1988) and has written pieces for symphonic and chamber orchestra, choral music, ballet, songs, piano, etc. He was presented with the *Science and Culture Eugenio Espejo Prize* by the Ecuadorian government in 1993. He published *History of Music in Ecuador* and is currently Professor at the Integral Centre of Music of Quito.

**Enrique Espín Yépez (1926-1997)** violinist, composer and conductor was the son of Manuel María Espin Freire, clarinetist, who studied at the National Conservatoire of Music in Quito with Jorge Paz and later at the National Conservatoire of Mexico and with studies of music in Chile and Germany. He attended classes with the Polish violinist Henryk Szeryng who, avoiding the Second World War, had settled in Mexico. Maestro Szeryng nominated Espín Yépez his Technical Assistant and only successor and heir to his technique. He studied composition with Manuel Ponce, Rodolfo Halfter and chamber music with José Rocabrana. In 1969 was appointed Professor at the Conservatoire National of Mexico and also Conductor of the Symphonic State Orchestra of Mexico and a Guest Conductor of the Symphonic Orchestra National of Ecuador and of the Symphonic Orchestra of Guayaquil. One of his best known pieces is *Pasional, pasillo* (passage) inspired by the *Concert for Violin and Orchestra No.5* by Henry Vieuxtemps, from Belgium.