

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH CONCERT SERIES AUTUMN · WINTER 2010

Concerts at The University

Friday 5 November 2010

1.10pm

St. Cecilia's Hall

Adam Brown · guitar

Programme of works by Lauro, Montes, Brouwer,
Van Heusen, Hart, Shearing, Piazzolla, Barrios
and Villa-Lobos.



Virgilio

Antonio Lauro (1917-1986)

Lauro, like many South American composers of his generation, was passionately proud of his country's musical heritage. His numerous works for the guitar, honoured and recorded by the great Andalusian master Segovia, are consistently melodic; featuring phrases that alternate between wistful melancholy and virtuosic brilliance. Each region of the Andes presents its own version of the *bambuco* dance, with variations in the number of step patterns. Rhythmic elements are distinctly characterised by hemiola-derived two-against-three syncopation.

Preludio de Adios

Alfonso Montes (b.1955)

Born in Ciudad Bolivar, Venezuela, Montes studied music in Caracas and London. His work is deeply rooted in Venezuelan musical tradition but also demonstrates his European musical environment of later years, particularly Germany and the United Kingdom. His compositions have been widely recorded by many notable guitarists, including John Williams.

Cuban Landscape with Bells

Leo Brouwer (b.1939)

This piece, composed in 1986, by the Cuban guitarist Brouwer demonstrates the composer's renewed interest in modality. Numerous extended techniques are used, including Bartok pizzicato, finger tapping, and the widespread application of harmonics. The bells referred to in the title, musically intended to represent cow bells, are evoked in the final section. *Cuban Landscape with Bells* is one of a series of works by Brouwer inspired by Cuban landscapes.

Darn That Dream and Like Someone in Love

Jimmy Van Heusen (1913-1990)

Credited with four Oscars and one Emmy award, Van Heusen was arguably one of America's most accomplished songwriters. His first success came in 1938 with *It's the Dreamer in Me*, a collaboration with Jimmy Dorsey. Later songs were subsequently recorded by Frank Sinatra, his long time friend, and Bing Crosby. Van Heusen's songs are musically sophisticated and frequently include reference to a background rhythm section.

My Romance

Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) and Lorenz Hart (1895-1943)

The collaboration between Rodgers, one of America's most esteemed songwriters, and the celebrated lyricist Hart began in 1919 and lasted until Hart's death in 1943. Rodgers and Hart first gained popular attention in 1925 with the Broadway musical *Garrick Gaieties*. By the end of the 1920's they were among the most popular songwriters in America. *My Romance*, composed for the musical *Jumbo*, is widely regarded as one of their finest songs.

Lullaby of Birdland

George Shearing (b.1919)

Blind from birth, English-born American jazz pianist George Shearing began playing aged three. His only formal musical training took place at the Linden Lodge School for the Blind. Shearing's sound is attributed to his unique harmonisation style that typically uses a piano quintet, including a vibraphone, guitar, double bass and drums. His most celebrated work, *Lullaby of Birdland*, was composed in 1952 and famously recorded by Ella Fitzgerald.

Campero from *Cinco Piezas para Guitarra*

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

The Argentine composer and bandoneon player Astor Piazzolla composed his *Cinco Piezas para Guitarra* as a musical homage to William Walton's seminal *Five Bagatelles for Guitar*. Guitarists perform numerous arrangements of works by Piazzolla but the *Cinco Piezas* are the only pieces he conceived specifically for the solo instrument. Piazzolla transformed the traditional tango genre incorporating eclectic stylistic influences, including jazz and avant garde classical forms.

Julia Florida and Waltz No.4

Agustin Barrios Mangore (1885-1944)

The Paraguayan guitarist and composer Barrios demonstrated the enormous potential of the guitar to an international audience. His compositions are often considered to occupy the style-void between popular and classical traditions, and this is perhaps why his music was ignored by the European guitarists of his generation. *Julia Florida*, one of his last works, is a melancholy *barcarole*. This work was composed in Costa Rica and dedicated to his student Martinez de Rodriguez. *Waltz No.4* succeeds in combining Chopin-influenced musical tastes with Latin American guitar gestures. A short introduction serves as an introduction to the dance interplays that follow. Barrios inventively employs a campanella, or bell-like, technique in the middle section, using the open strings to explore the instrument's natural sonorities.

Chôros no. 1

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959)

Heitor Villa-Lobos, perhaps the most celebrated Latin American composer, composed numerous works for the guitar. His compositions, particularly his works for the guitar, unite elements of Brazilian folk music with the form and style of European classical traditions. The word *chôro* refers to music played using both African and European instruments by an ensemble of Brazilian street musicians. These musicians often freely improvise in a dissonant contrapuntal style called *contracanto*.

A.B.

London-based guitarist **Adam Brown** has performed throughout Europe, the United States and South America. Among his many concert appearances are recitals at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, the 92nd St.Y-Tisch Center for the Performing Arts in New York City, and at St. Martin-in-the-Fields and the Wigmore Hall in London. He has also performed at such renowned music festivals as Aspen (USA), Spoleto (Italy), Accademia Chigiana (Italy), Amsterdam International Guitar Festival (The Netherlands), Bath International Guitar Festival (England) and the Musica y Danza Festival (Peru).

The Rebels Within, Adam Brown's first commercial solo album, was released in 2009; featuring works by Benjamin Britten, Frank Martin, Nuccio D'Angelo and Lennox Berkeley. *Gladios*, his recently released second album, showcases works by prominent Latin American composers, including Lauro, Montes, Chavez, Piazzolla, Brouwer and Barrios.

Adam's current recording project, *Aerial America*, will highlight the eclectic characteristics of contemporary music in the United States, with pieces and arrangements by Paul Lansky, John Duarte, William Lovelady, Brian Head, David Leisner.

Born in Scotland to American parents, Adam Brown studied with Carlos Bonell as a Foundation Scholar at the Royal College of Music in London, where he earned his Bachelor of Music degree with Honours and received several prestigious awards. He continued his studies with Sharon Isbin at the Juilliard School in New York City, completing the Masters of Music degree and subsequently becoming the first guitarist to obtain Juilliard's distinguished Artist Diploma programme. He went on to earn a performance-based Doctorate in Musical Arts at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, where he studied with the celebrated guitarists William Kanengiser and Pepe Romero.

More information on the artist, including audio and video performances, can be found at www.adambrownguitar.com