

REDBRIDGE MUSIC SOCIETY

GUITAR RECITAL

ALEXANDRA WHITTINGHAM



Tuesday 26th April 2016 8 pm

**Churchill Room, Wanstead Library
Spratt Hall Road, Wanstead E11 2RQ**

For information about Redbridge Music Society and for details about membership, please contact either Malcolm Billingsley (Secretary) Tel: 020 8504 6340 Email: vitaophone16@gmail.com or David Bird (Membership Secretary) Tel: 07511 888 520 Email: bird.d@tiscali.co.uk

PROGRAMME

Phantasia and Gigue in D major	David Kellner (1670 – 1748)
Andante Largo Op.5	Fernando Sor (1778 – 1839)
Recuerdos de la Alhambra	Francisco Tárrega (1852 – 1909)
Homenaje pour le tombeau de Claude Debussy	Manuel de Falla (1876 – 1946)
Sonata I) Fandangos y Boleros II) Sarabanda de Scriabin	Leo Brouwer (1939 –)
El Decameron Negro I) El Arpa Del Guerrero	

INTERVAL

Etude No.1 Prelude No.1	Heitor Villa Lobos (1887 – 1959)
Verano Porteño	Astor Piazzolla (1921 – 1992)
Capriccio Catalan	Isaac Albéniz (1860 – 1909)
Saudade No.3 I) Rituel II) Danse III) Fête et Final	Roland Dyens (1955 -)

PROGRAMME NOTES

David Kellner (1670 – 1748) was a German composer of the Baroque Period and a contemporary of J S Bach (1685 – 1750). He was born in Liebertwolkwitz, a small village close to Leipzig and became well known not only as a composer (especially of lute music) but as a writer on music theory, organist, poet and military captain. The *Phantasia and Gigue in D major* was originally written for the lute and was later transcribed for guitar by Hubert Kappel.

Fernando Sor (1778 – 1839) was a Spanish guitarist and composer who helped raise the status of the guitar to the concert instrument that it is today. Although best known as a guitar composer, Sor's guitar playing was of the highest calibre and he toured widely giving recitals in Europe and Asia. In addition to guitar music, his prolific output covered vocal, choral, orchestral, chamber, piano music and opera. His *Andante Largo Op5 No5* is a much loved work for guitar.

Francisco Tárrega (1852 – 1892) was a Spanish composer, pianist and guitarist; known as the “Sarasate of the guitar”. As a performer he toured widely and in Valencia he met a wealthy arts patron, Conxa Martinez, who took him to Granada to see Alhambra (a Moor-built palace in Andalusia). This visit moved him to write one of his most famous and popular works “Recuerdos de la Alhambra” which he dedicated to his friend Alfred Cortot.

Manuel de Falla (1876 – 1946) is considered one of the most influential of Spanish composers. It was during his studies with Felipe Pedrell in Madrid that he became interested in native Spanish music (especially Andalusian flamenco) – music that influenced much of his work. For seven years he lived in Paris where he was influenced by the French impressionist composers Dukas, Ravel and Debussy. The *Homenaje pour le tombeau de Claude Debussy* was published in 1920 in a special issue of the Paris *La Revue musicale* dedicated to the memory of Claude Debussy. It was premiered by Spanish guitarist Emilio Pujol in Paris 1922. Listen for the popular habanera rhythm at the beginning of the work. Falla later orchestrated the work calling it ‘Elegia de la guitarra’.

Leo Brouwer (b 1939) is Cuban guitarist whose playing career ended in his early forties due to a tendon injury. He has written many solo guitar pieces, concertos for the guitar and numerous film scores. His later work shifted away from his earlier Cuban folk-influenced music towards the avant-garde and has shifted again to a less aggressive and more cordial style. The three-movement suite *El Decameron Negro* was composed in 1981 and was dedicated to Canadian guitarist Sharon Isbin who premiered the work in 1983. Tonight we hear the 1st movement, *The Warrior's Harp*, a contrast of rhythmic with lyrical passages. His *Sonata* was written in 1990 and dedicated to the English guitarist and lutenist Julian Bream.

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887 – 1959) was a prolific Brazilian composer whose works (over 2000 by the time of his death) were influenced by Brazilian folk music and European classical music. His *Étude No. 1* (the first of his 12 Studies for Guitar) was published in 1929. It is in E minor and whilst focusing on right hand technique also includes challenging left hand chord patterns. His *Five Preludes* for guitar, written in 1940, are considered to be very important works for guitar. The first of these is also in E minor and was a favourite of Andrés Segovia. Listen out for the beautiful lyrical cello-like melody in the bass that starts this prelude and for its recurrences later in the piece.

Astor Piazzolla (1921 – 1992) was an Argentinian tango composer and bandoneon (concertina) player. He revolutionized the traditional Brazilian tango into a new style termed *nuevo tango* by incorporating elements of jazz, dissonance and classical music. However, Piazzolla had considerable self-doubt about which genre (tango or classical music) to pursue. In 1954 he studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris and she dispelled any self doubt he had by encouraging him to continue his new style of tango. The *Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* (*The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*) is a suite of four of Piazzolla's tango compositions originally written as separate pieces. *Verano Porteño* (*Buenos Aires Summer*) was written in 1965, originally as incidental music for the play *Melenita de Oro* by Alberto Rodríguez Muñoz.

Isaac Albéniz (1860 – 1909) was an influential Spanish pianist, conductor and composer best known for his piano works based on Spanish folk music. Although he never composed music specifically for guitar, transcriptions have been made of many of his pieces. The *Capriccio Catalan* played this evening is an arrangement by guitarist David Russell.

Roland Dyens (b 1955) is French classical guitarist, composer and arranger well-known for his superb ability to improvise. His music is folk and jazz influenced and very popular amongst both professional and amateur guitarists. The Brazilian Portuguese word *saudade* means “a melancholic longing about something that's missing” and has been a driving force for many songs and compositions by composers and performers of all genres. Dyens's *Saudade No. 3* consists of three movements – *Rituel*, *Danse* and *Fête et Final*.

BIOGRAPHY

Currently 18 years old **Alexandra Whittingham** has already gained national and international recognition for her playing. Her recital this evening, spanning three centuries of classical and Spanish guitar music, is the penultimate event of Redbridge Music Society's 2015-16 'young musicians' project.

Alexandra currently studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Previously she studied classical and jazz guitar, piano and composition at the world-renowned Chetham's School of Music in Manchester during which time she became a member of the Wigan Youth Jazz Orchestra touring extensively with them in Germany and the Czech Republic. In her final year at the school, she gained her LRSM (Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music) second diploma in guitar performance.

In 2013, Alexandra won the inaugural Edinburgh Guitar Competition and following this travelled to Budapest to take part in the Carpathian International Youth Guitar Competition, where she gained second place. In 2015 at the Gregynog Young Musicians' Competition, Alexandra became Gregynog Young Guitarist of the year after her performance of Leo Brouwer's *Sonata* and Albeniz's *Sevilla*

Alexandra has played at Leeds College of Music, the Bridgewater Hall, the Yehudi Menuhin School, the West Dene International Guitar Festival (as part of the National Youth Guitar Ensemble) and at the British Embassy in Paris where she performed to an invited audience of diplomats in February 2015. Later that year, she was also invited to perform Castelnuovo Tedesco's *Concerto No. 1* with the Gorton Philharmonic Orchestra.

Recently Alexandra reached the classical final of the Sky Arts Guitar Competition which gave her the opportunity to play in Milton Court Concert Hall at the Barbican, London. During the course of the competition, she was very fortunate to be able to work with the internationally famous classical guitarist, Miloš Karadaglić.

Alexandra plays one of only three-hundred Antonio Sanchez 2500 guitars and is delighted to be endorsed by Aquila Strings, highly recommending their Perla range

Redbridge Music Society's next recital is on **Tuesday 24th May** 8 pm in the Churchill Room, Wanstead Library, when harpist **Oliver Wass** will play, talk and demonstrate the harp. Tickets will be available at the door on the evening: £10 (visitors) £7 (members) Full-time students are admitted free of charge. The event will be preceded by the Society's AGM 7:30 – 8 pm (members only)

Redbridge Music Society is supported by Vision Redbridge Culture & Leisure