

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

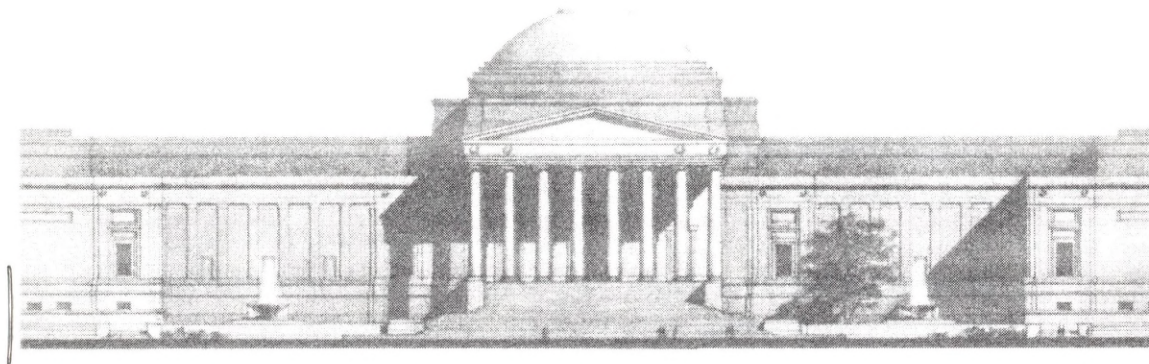
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

Mailing address
2000B South Club Drive
Landover, MD 20785

www.nga.gov



The Sixty-eighth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,757th Concert

Sharon Isbin, guitarist

December 27, 2009
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

PERFORMED WITHOUT INTERMISSION

Enrique Granados (1867–1916)

Spanish Dance no. 5

Francisco Tárrega (1852–1909)

Recuerdos de la Alhambra

Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909)

Asturias

Transcribed by Andrés Segovia

Leo Brouwer (b. 1939)

The Black Decameron (1981)

Lovers Fleeing through the Valley of the Echos

The Harp of the Warrior

The Maiden in Love

John Duarte (b. 1919)

Joan Baez Suite, op. 144 (2002)

Fantasia: Once I Had a Sweetheart; Rambler Gambler;

Barbara Allen

House of the Rising Sun

The Lily of the West

The Unquiet Grave

Silkie

Where Have All the Flowers Gone?

Finale: Rake and Rambling Boy; Wildwood Flower;

The Trees They Do Grow High

Tárrega

Capricho arabe

Regino Sainz de la Maza (1896–1981)

Zapateado

Antonio Lauro (1917–1986)

Waltz no. 3

Seis por derecho

Agustin Barrios Mangoré (1885–1944)

Waltz, op. 8, no. 4

The Musician

Acclaimed for her extraordinary lyricism, technique, and versatility, GRAMMY® Award winner Sharon Isbin has been hailed by *Guitar Player magazine* as “Best Classical Guitarist.” She has played to sold-out audiences in Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, Boston’s Symphony Hall, London’s Barbican and Wigmore Halls, Madrid’s Teatro Real, Munich’s Herkulesaal, New York’s Carnegie and Avery Fisher Halls, Paris’ Châtelet, Vienna’s Musikverein, and Washington, D.C.’s John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. She has served as artistic director and soloist of festivals she created for Carnegie Hall and New York’s 92nd Street Y and for the acclaimed national radio series *Guitarjam*. A frequent guest on National Public Radio’s and Garrison Keillor’s *A Prairie Home Companion*, she has been profiled on *CBS Sunday* and A&E Television and was a featured guest on Showtime Television’s hit series *The L Word*. On September 11, 2002, Isbin performed at Ground Zero for the internationally televised memorial to the victims of September 11, 2001. In November 2009 she performed a concert at the White House by invitation of the President and Mrs. Obama. She is the featured soloist in the soundtrack of Martin Scorsese’s Academy Award winning film, *The Departed*. She has been profiled in periodicals from *People to Elle*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Times*, as well as on the cover of more than forty magazines.

From classical music to crossover and jazz-fusion, Isbin has produced more than twenty-five recordings. Recently signed to SONY Masterworks as an exclusive recording artist, she produced her first CD for SONY, *Journey to the New World*, in collaboration with Joan Baez and Mark O’Connor. Her earlier album, *Dreams of a World*, earned her a GRAMMY award in 2001, making her the first classical guitarist to receive the award in twenty-eight years. She won GRAMMYS again in 2002 and 2005, and in 2006 a GLAAD award nomination for her recording with the New York Philharmonic of Joaquin Rodrigo’s *Concierto de Aranjuez* and concerti by Manuel Ponce and Heitor Villa-Lobos. This was the Philharmonic’s first recording with a guitar soloist in twenty-six years.

Isbin has expanded the guitar repertoire with some of the finest new works of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. John Corigliano, Lukas Foss, and Joseph Schwantner have written concertos for her, as have Leo Brouwer, David Diamond, Ned Rorem, and Joan Tower.

Isbin began her studies at age nine in Italy, and later studied with Andrés Segovia, Oscar Ghiglia, and Rosalyn Tureck. She received bachelor and master of arts degrees from Yale University and directs guitar departments at the Aspen Music Festival and The Juilliard School. The author of *The Classical Guitar Answer Book*, Sharon Isbin appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Columbia Artists Management, Inc., of New York City.

Born July 27, 1867 in Lérida, Spain, Enrique Granados received both piano and composition lessons at a young age. In 1887 he went to Paris to study piano with Charles de Bériot. In 1916 President Woodrow Wilson heard Granados' *Goyescas* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and requested that the composer give a recital at the White House before returning to Spain. In order to accommodate the president's request, Granados changed his travel plans and returned to Europe via England. The British ship on which he sailed was torpedoed by a German submarine. In the subsequent confusion, Granados jumped from a lifeboat to save his wife, and both drowned.

Granados' *Danzas españolas* (Spanish Dances) is a collection of twelve dances, originally written for the piano, that fuse elements of Spanish nationalism and romantic piano technique. *Dance no. 5*, the most famous of the set, evokes the guitar through the piquant nature of its melody and the picking and strumming effects in the bass, making it a prime candidate for an effective transcription for performance on the guitar.

The Spanish composer and guitarist Francisco Tárrega paved the way for the rebirth of the guitar as an instrument to be heard in the concert hall. He earned his living by teaching music theory and giving recitals, and by 1877 was hailed as the "Sarasate of the guitar." His career began with a brilliant concert at the Alhambra Palace in Granada, and *Recuerdos de la Alhambra* (Recollections of Alhambra), a tremolo study, calls to mind the fountains in the thirteenth-century Moorish gardens in that famous place.

Isaac Albéniz was born in Camprodón, Spain. His exuberant talent as a pianist was obvious from early childhood—he gave his first concert when he was four years old. At age six he studied in Paris with Antoine François Marmontel (1816–1898). Albéniz' piano recitals were eagerly awaited and some newspapers called him the "Spanish Rubenstein." As the result of a petition from Claude Debussy, Gabriel Fauré, and other distinguished French composers, the French government made Albéniz a member of the Legion of Honor days before his death at the age of forty-eight.

In *Asturias*, Albéniz sings of his beautiful native land, its scenery, and its changing moods. Subtitled "Leyenda" (Legend), the piece comes from his *Suite espagnole* for piano and is the composer's tribute to the Asturias region of northwest Spain.

Composer Leo Brouwer wrote *The Black Decameron* (El decameron negro) for Sharon Isbin in 1981, and her recording of the work can be heard on EMI/Virgin Classic's *Latin Romances: Road to the Sun*. The work is made up of three ballads inspired by love stories from Africa, which were collected by the German anthropologist Leon Frobenius in the nineteenth century. Colorful Afro-Cuban rhythmic and melodic elements as well as rich programmatic imagery imbue this evocative music.

In the first ballad, "Lovers Fleeing through the Valley of the Echoes," the foreboding opening dramatizes a warrior who has been banished from his tribe because he loves to play the harp. As he and his lover flee, the music evokes the hastening gallop of horses. The opening passage returns briefly, followed by an evocation of tender and nostalgic remembrance. With the return of fast triplets, the lovers resume their journey as they ride furiously through the Valley of the Echoes. The echo effect is produced by a continuous alternation between *forte* and *piano*.

In "The Harp of the Warrior," the banished soldier is summoned by his tribe to return and save them from defeat by an invading army. Energetic rhythmic motives depict the warrior's victorious strength, while slow, harp-like interludes evoke his artistic sensibility. Written in rondo form, the third ballad, "The Maiden in Love," contrasts the gentle sensuality of a young maiden with episodes of vibrant, passionate energy.

Written by John Duarte for Sharon Isbin in 2002, the *Joan Baez Suite* was commissioned by funds provided by Rose Augustine and the Augustine Foundation. It is dedicated to the memory of Jody Nordlof. The following notes are in the composer's own words.

"I am old enough to have known and admired Joan Baez's work from the earliest years of her career. In writing this *Suite* it would, however, have been misguided to attempt to arrange the selected songs in the same style and format as hers. My settings represent my own reactions to the spirit and texts of the songs.

“The opening *Fantasia* brings together three songs: ‘Once I Had a Sweetheart’ is a song of frustrated love, with five-bar phrases. ‘Rambler Gambler’ is an American adaptation of an English lyric song, sung by a man who doesn’t care what others think about his attitude to life. He has also experienced a love affair that ended unhappily. The English ballad ‘Barbara Allen’ records the death of a young man whose love for its eponym was not returned; filled with remorse, she dies on the next day.

“‘The House of the Rising Sun’ is the lament of a girl (in its original form she was a miner’s daughter) who served in a brothel of that name. The lyrics were ‘soft-pedaled’ in the version made popular in the 1960s. I have based my version of the tune on that of the American blues singer, the late Josh White, whom I knew.

“Frustrated love rears its head again in ‘The Lily of the West,’ the song of a man who stabbed to death his rival for the affection of Flora—the lily of the west—and remained cheerfully unrepentant to the end.

“‘The unquiet grave’ is an English folk song of love, death, and grief, sung by a girl whose loved one has died. In its final appearance in this arrangement I have counterpointed it with the melody of ‘Dido’s Lament’, from Henry Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*. Dido, deserted by her lover Aeneas, sings ‘When I am laid in earth, remember me.’

“‘Silkie’ refers to the legendary ‘sealfolk’ (silgies) said to exist in the waters around the Orkney Islands off the coast of Scotland. They were believed to be able to shed their skins and pass as human beings in order to find human partners. The tune is by Dr. James Waters, a one-time professor at Columbia University. I have chosen to present it in the form of a simple set of theme and variations.

“The opening bars of Pete Seeger’s ‘Where have all the flowers gone?’ bear an uncanny but doubtless coincidental resemblance to an accompanimental figure in Franz Schubert’s song ‘Trockne Blüten’ (dried flowers). In my arrangement the opening and connecting passages are based on the melody of Schubert’s song at the point at which this figure appears. Pete Seeger’s ‘flowers’ are those who did not return from Vietnam, so the final

bleak statement of the tune is interrupted by ‘Taps,’ the bugle call used at American military funerals.

“The Finale, like the opening *Fantasia*, introduces more than one tune: ‘Rake and Rambling Boy’ is an English broadside ballad, recounted by the perpetrator of numerous crimes—some of them robbery from members of the aristocracy—for which he was finally hung on the gallows. With ‘Wildwood Flower’ we are back to the lamentations of a girl (the eponymous ‘flower’) on the departure of her lover. The ballad has long been well known in the southern mountains but its origin remains unknown. ‘The trees they do grow high’ is an English ballad about a boy married off to a young woman who waits impatiently for him to grow into adulthood (thus the analogy in the ever-rising accompaniment). At fifteen he becomes a father, but the joy is short-lived as he meets his death in battle within the year.”

Known primarily as a performer, Regino Sainz de la Maza was also a teacher of guitar and composer of music for the instrument. He was the guitarist for whom Joaquín Rodrigo wrote his famous *Concierto de Aranjuez*, which Sainz de la Maza premiered in 1940. Much of de la Maza’s music has become part of the standard repertoire for the guitar. Its style is heavily influenced by Castilian and Andalusian folksong.

Born in Bolívar, Venezuela, Antonio Lauro began composing at age eight and soon after became the official guitarist of Caracas Broadcasting. He studied with Vicente Sojo and Raúl Borges, and toured South America performing in vocal-instrumental trios. Considered a “South-American Gershwin,” he wrote and arranged hundreds of works for guitar, piano, chorus and orchestra. His spirited dances express the rich, exuberant energy of his native Venezuelan folk culture. *Waltz no. 3* is dedicated to Lauro’s daughter Natalia. *Seis por derecho* (Six [steps] to the right) is a stunningly virtuosic joropo (Venezuelan social dance) replete with many varieties of rhythmic counterpoint. Although Agustín Barrios is known today almost solely to devotees of the guitar, he was one of the most colorful musicians of his age. He ranked as one of the prime Latin American guitarists in the early twentieth century and was one of the instrument’s modern pioneers. His spirit was ebullient and bohemian. “I am a brother to those medieval

troubadours," he once wrote, "who in their glories and despairs suffered such romantic madness." Barrios identified with the Indian culture of Paraguay, from which he was partly descended. He adopted the name Mangoré, after a legendary Guarani chief, and sometimes performed in full Indian costume.

Barrios' compositions, over a hundred in number and all for the guitar, evoke three influences: the music of Bach and Chopin, whom he revered, and Latin American folk music. The influence of Chopin can be heard in the *Waltz*, op. 8, no. 4, with its arcing melodic line and the running figuration of its principal theme.

Program notes by Sharon Isbin

Upcoming Concerts at the National Gallery of Art

National Gallery of Art Orchestra

José Serebrier, guest conductor

Carole Farley, soprano

New Year Concert

Music by Bizet, Ginastera, Montsalvage, and Serebrier,
and traditional Viennese favorites

January 3, 2010

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court



Astrid Walschot-Stapp, harpist

Karen Johnson, flutist

Music by Glass, Godefroid, Kingma, Ortiz, Piazzolla,
and other composers

January 10, 2010

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court