



VANCOUVER  
RECITAL  
SOCIETY

A vertical graphic element consisting of three parallel bars of varying heights and colors: orange, pink, and magenta.

2024<sup>YEARS</sup>  
2025  
SEASON



## WINTER CONCERTS

MILOŠ classical guitar

Sunday January 26 2025

# From the Artistic Director

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Dear Friends:

Welcome to our first concert of 2025! And what a great way to start off the year with none other than MILOŠ, the supremely gifted and charismatic guitarist from Montenegro, who was described by the Sunday Times as “the hottest guitarist in the world”, and was listed by BBC Magazine as one of “six of the best Classical Guitarists of the past century.” (I wonder who the other five are?!)

He made his debut in Vancouver on our series in 2013, and then returned in 2021 with another VRS favourite, mandolinist Avi Avital. In addition to being a phenomenal talent and a leading exponent of the guitar (which he describes as “the instrument of the people”), MILOŠ is also a passionate advocate for music education.

I would like to thank our Season Sponsor, the Peak Group of Companies, and the sponsor of today’s concert, Ann Harding. We could not present these outstanding performances without this wonderful support.

We are also grateful to the City of Vancouver for its support over the years.

I hope you enjoy MILOŠ’ performance, and I look forward to seeing many of you at more of our amazing upcoming concerts.

Sincerely,



Leila



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The use of cellphones and recording devices is prohibited in the concert hall. Please take this opportunity to turn off all electronic devices.

音乐厅内禁止使用手机，禁止拍照，录音，录像。请观众关闭所有电子器材，感谢您的合作。

# Program

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**MILOŠ**, classical guitar

Sunday, January 26 at 7:30 pm  
Vancouver Playhouse

SYLVIUS LEOPOLD WEISS (1687-1750)

**Fantasia and Passacaglia**

(approx. 7 minutes)

JEAN-PHILIPPE RAMEAU (1683-1764)

**The Arts and the Hours** (arr. Michael Lewin)

(approx. 5 minutes)

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)

**Minuet in G minor** (arr. Michael Lewin)

(approx. 4 minutes)

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

**Chaconne in D minor**

(approx. 15 minutes)

INTERMISSION

ISAAC ALBÉNIZ (1860-1909)

**Asturias (*Leyenda*)** from *Suite Española No. 1*

(approx. 7 minutes)

DOMENICO SCARLATTI (1685-1757)

**Sonata in D minor K 32** (arr. Michael Lewin)

(approx. 3 minutes)

AGUSTÍN BARRIOS (1885-1944)

**Andante Religioso** from *La Catedral*

(approx. 2 minutes)

HAROLD ARLEN (1905-1986)

**Somewhere Over the Rainbow** (arr. Tōru Takemitsu)

(approx. 4 minutes)

MATHIAS DUPLESSY (b. 1972)

**Amor Fati**

(approx. 7 minutes)

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# MILOŠ, classical guitar

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**Early Life & Education:** Born in Montenegro in 1983, MILOŠ moved to London to study at the Royal Academy of Music at the age of 17. He continues to live and work in London while keeping close ties to his homeland. He performs on a 2017 Greg Smallman guitar.

**This Season:** MILOŠ is the 2024 feature artist of the Prinsengrachtconcert in Amsterdam. Other recent and forthcoming highlights include debuts with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony and Alain Altinoglu for the annual Europe Open Air concert, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and the Korean National Symphony; return performances with the Atlanta and Detroit Symphonies, Orchestre Métropolitain and OSM in Montréal, Hallé Orchestra, the London Philharmonic and the City of Birmingham Symphony; and extensive tours across the UK, US and China, as well as recitals in Japan, Spain, Oslo, San Francisco and London, as well as the Verbier, Gstaad and Bad Kissingen Music Festivals.



Photo credit: Christoph Köstlin

**Recordings:** MILOŠ's career began its meteoric rise in 2011 with the release of his international bestselling Deutsche Grammophon debut album *Mediterraneo*. Now exclusive to SONY Classical, MILOŠ is committed to expanding the repertoire for the classical guitar. His first album for the label, *Baroque*, came out in October 2023 and presents a carefully curated selection of baroque works especially transcribed and arranged for the guitar, both solo and in collaboration with Jonathan Cohen and his ensemble Arcangelo. MILOŠ is equally passionate about new music, and his album *The Moon and the Forest* features two world premiere concerti, by Howard Shore and Joby Talbot.

**Did you know:** A passionate advocate for music education, MILOŠ is an active patron of numerous charities supporting young musicians in the UK and abroad. He recently launched the MILOŠ Foundation — based in Porto Montenegro, this philanthropic organization aims to act as a regional hub of influence by empowering artistic excellence through various educational opportunities, partnerships and close mentorship.

MILOŠ is represented by Opus3 Artists, New York, NY.

# Program Notes

## Sylvius Leopold Weiss Fantasia and Passacaglia

The lute repertoire reached its high point at the end of the Baroque era in the works of German lutenist and court musician Sylvius Leopold Weiss, an exact contemporary of Bach.

Early in his career Weiss was employed at the court in Rome of dowager Queen Maria Casimira of Poland (1641-1716), where he rubbed shoulders with Alessandro Scarlatti and his son Domenico. He later established himself at the court of Saxony in Dresden, where his court colleague, Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1710-1784), would later bring him into the social circle of Wilhelm's famous father, Johann Sebastian.

\* \* \*

Weiss' musical style, like that of Bach senior, is a blend of Italian melody-making and German counterpoint. Famed for his skill at improvisation, he would often begin his dance suites with an unmeasured movement in free improvisatory style, such as the *Fantasia* that begins this evening's recital.

Structured as a typical Baroque-era pairing of prelude and fugue, it opens with a free-ranging pattern of broken chords responding to a climbing bassline.

FANTASIE  
[1719]

Sylvius-Leopold WEISS  
(1686-1750)

Guitar

This soon develops into a three-voice imitative texture, leading to a mini-fugue in the second section.

\* \* \*

The *Passacaglia* that follows features a series of variations on a descending bassline that repeats throughout.

$\text{♩} = 60$  ( $\text{♩} = 120$ )

$6^a = \text{Ré}$

The rhythmic pattern is that of a dignified sarabande, with an emphasized second beat of the 3/4 bar.

Weiss uses this rhythmic pattern to emotionally resonant effect by putting a dissonance on the first beat of most bars, a dissonance that resolves on the stronger second beat.

## Jean-Philippe Rameau

### The Arts and the Hours from *Les Boréades* (arr. Michael Lewin)

In Act IV of Jean-Philippe Rameau's last opera, *Les Boréades* (1763), protagonist Abaris is pining with love for Alphise, Queen of Bactria, but is unable to marry her because of his murky family background.

A storm ensues, emblematic of the gods' displeasure and of Abaris' inner turmoil. But wait! The din subsides and the divine Polyhymnia arrives, leading a quiet procession of allegorical figures representing *The Arts and the Hours* of which she, as goddess of poetry and dance, is the chief inspiring figure.

The message she brings is one of hope; hope that a way may yet be found to unite our hero with the girl of his dreams.

Víkingur Ólafsson / Jean-Philippe Rameau



The repeated descending scale figures of this *intermède* lend it a processional quality while long-held suspensions over the bar line evoke the yearning of the tormented lover.

The serene mood and delicate emotional palette of this small piece of French theatrical stage music have won it many admirers, including pianist Víkingur Ólafsson, who has recently recorded his own piano transcription of it.

The guitar transcription played by MILOŠ is by Michael Lewin.

## George Frideric Handel

### Minuet in G minor (arr. Michael Lewin)

While modern scholarship has stripped Handel's *Minuet in G minor* from its erstwhile association with the composer's Keyboard Suite in B-flat major HWV 434 published in 1733, few scholars today would deny that it constitutes one of the saddest, most contemplative dance pieces to come out of the Baroque era.

G. F. Händel



Its wistful moping quality derives from the plaintive pattern of falling intervals in its melodic line, moving in parallel with the implacable stepwise descent of its bass, made all the more pathos-laden by yearning suspensions in the tenor.

## Johann Sebastian Bach Chaconne in D minor

Bach's *Chaconne in D minor*, the final movement from his Partita in D minor BWV 1004, stands at the summit of the violin repertoire, both for the technical challenges it poses for the performer and for the crystalline brilliance of its formal design.

Musicologist Susan McClary has called it "the chaconne to end all chaconnes", while violinist Yehudi Menuhin referred to it as "the greatest structure for solo violin that exists". It should not be surprising, then, that transcriptions for piano by Busoni and Brahms, and for guitar by Andrés Segovia, have made it a staple of the repertoires of those instruments, as well.

\* \* \*

At its core is a four-bar pattern of chords, stated sternly and resolutely at the outset, that serve as the harmonic foundation for a series of variations that follow. Bach's four-bar thematic pattern comes in the distinctive rhythmic profile of a sarabande, emphasizing the second beat of the bar.

### Chaconne.



The 64 variations that follow may be organized into three parts. The first 33 variations in D minor become increasingly animated as smaller and smaller note values fill out the harmonic pattern of the theme until a flamboyant re-statement of the stern opening chords closes out the section:



There then follows a new section of 19 variations in the major mode, which begin in a much quieter mood



but soon undergo their own long build-up of excitement, climaxing in this "ringing bell" episode on the dominant of A:



The final section of 12 variations in the original key of D minor also begins quietly, almost contemplatively



but builds to the greatest climax of all to finish in a furious blaze of instrumental tone that serves as a capstone to the entire work.

## Isaac Albéniz

### Asturias (*Leyenda*) from *Suite Española No. 1*

The best-known piece of Spanish guitar music began as a work for piano. First published as a prelude to Albéniz's *Chants d'Espagne* in 1892, it was posthumously re-published as part of the composer's *Suite Española* just before the First World War with the title *Asturias* and the subtitle *Leyenda* (legend), under which names it is known today.

The publisher's titling was quite mistaken. This work has nothing to do with Asturias and everything to do with the southern Spanish region of Andalusia. Andalusia is the cultural homeland of the flamenco tradition, an art that developed under gypsy influence to embrace a passionate amalgam of guitar-playing, singing, wailing, dancing, stomping, clapping and finger-snapping, the sonic echoes of which Albéniz transferred with consummate skill to the keyboard.

Many transcriptions of this piano work exist for the guitar, but the most popular is undoubtedly that of Andrés Segovia, who transposed it from its original G minor to the more guitar-friendly key of E minor, allowing the fingers of the right hand to play on an open string the work's most ear-catching riff: a chiming pedal note in the treble that constantly sounds while the guitarist's thumb picks out melody notes down below.

Allegro. (♩ = 132.)

I. Albeniz.

*p*

*marcato il canto*

This opening section is structured as a long crescendo, eventually punctuated by brusque exclamatory full chords played *rasgueado* (strummed with the fingernails), in imitation of the sharp heel-stomp of a flamenco dancer.

The piece is in three parts. Its more soulful and pensive middle section features a free-floating melody with minimal accompaniment

Più lento. (♩ = 80.)

*p espr. e rubato*

*rit.*

*pp*

*a tempo*

*rit.*

*a tempo*

*p*

*pp*

*p*

that eventually returns to the “busy-bee” hum of the work's opening section.



## Domenico Scarlatti

### Sonata in D minor K 32 (arr. Michael Lewin)

The 550-odd sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti are perhaps the most successful works to migrate from the harpsichord to the modern grand piano. Equally successful, however, is their migration back to the guitar, the timbre and characteristic figurations of which found their way into these sonatas from the composer's decades-long career at the courts of Portugal and Spain.

Their transparent texture of simple two- and three-part keyboard writing anticipates the Classical era of Haydn and Mozart in its clarity of phrase structure and harmonic simplicity.

The Scarlatti sonatas exist in two distinct varieties. Many are fast, display-oriented virtuoso pieces bristling with dazzlingly novel and effective keyboard textures that tickle the ear. Others are more lyrical and songlike, however, reflecting Scarlatti's roots in the traditions of Neapolitan opera, with its unusual emphasis on pathos and soulful lyricism.

The *Sonata in D minor K 32* is clearly in the latter category. Labelled *Aria*, it features a recurring pattern of phrases each beginning with a "sobbing" little run-up figure and ending with a mournfully dissonant appoggiatura.



The utter simplicity of the setting combined with the density of expressiveness in each phrase supports Horowitz's famous remark that Scarlatti gives us "so much music in so few notes".

## Agustín Barrios

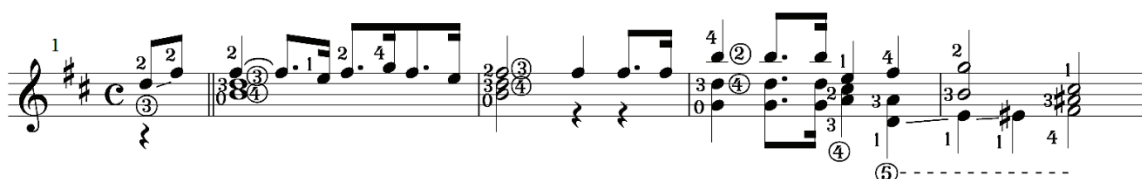
### Andante Religioso from *La Catedral*

The Paraguayan guitarist Agustín Barrios, who added Mangoré to his name in tribute to his Indigenous ancestry, was a prodigiously talented performer and one of the first guitarists to make recordings, his first being in 1911. His career largely centred on South America, and he was forgotten for many years until John Williams brought his music back into view in the 1970s.

The style of Barrios' three-movement *La Catedral* (The Cathedral) is late Romantic but with a backward-looking reverence for the Baroque, as exemplified in its second-movement *Andante Religioso*, the inspiration for which is distinctly Bachian.

In 1921 the composer was staying in the Uruguayan capital of Montevideo where he could hear from his hotel room the bells of the nearby Cathedral of San José.

In this second movement of the suite, he imaginatively enters the cathedral, attracted by the tolling of the bells, and finds that an organist is playing Bach.



## Harold Arlen

### Somewhere Over the Rainbow (arr. Tōru Takemitsu)

The \$28-million-dollar price paid recently at auction for the red shoes worn by Judy Garland in the 1939 musical fantasy film *The Wizard of Oz* testifies to the enduring appeal of this cinematic landmark in Western filmmaking.

Coming at the end of the Great Depression, the film's welcome message of hope for a better future is evoked in the yearning opening octave leap of its signature song *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*.

The image displays a musical score for the song "Somewhere Over the Rainbow". It consists of two systems of staves. The top system shows the vocal line with lyrics: "Some - where o - ver the rain - bow". The bottom system shows the piano accompaniment, featuring a bass line and a treble line with chords. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is arranged by Tōru Takemitsu.

Japanese modernist composer Tōru Takemitsu (1930–1996) also fell under its spell, creating an affectionate arrangement for guitar in 1974, framed in the song's original jazz harmonies and replete with loving counter melodies.

## Mathias Duplessy

### *Amor Fati*

Mathias Duplessy is a wildly eclectic French composer and multi-instrumentalist with an interest in classical music (Ravel, Stravinsky and Prokofiev in particular) and in world musical cultures, especially the music and guitar-like instruments of India, China and Mongolia. He is astoundingly prolific, having written scores for several dozen feature films and documentaries, and he has made more than two dozen recordings. As a performer he is described by one critic for Radio-France International in following terms:

A guitarist of the highest virtuosity, Mathias Duplessy is one of those rare performers capable of shining in every genre: classical, jazz, oriental music, flamenco... As a composer he has assimilated all of these styles in order to compose and perform music that is uniquely his own, alive and personal, brilliant and coming from deep within, sensitive and yet contemporary.

*Amor fati* was written for MILOŠ in 2021 and premiered by him in New York in a recital honouring the legendary guitarist Andrés Segovia (1893–1987).

The Latin phrase *amor fati* means “love of (one’s) fate”, and in his remarks on this work the composer states that

*Amor fati* is a concept of my favourite philosopher: Nietzsche. It means loving life in its entirety, the good along with the bad, embracing life with all your soul, on sunny days and stormy nights, loving life as it is.

The work begins simply, with a kind of invocation:

The image displays two staves of musical notation for the piece 'Amor Fati'. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It begins with a dynamic marking of *p* and the instruction *avec regret*. The music features a series of eighth notes with a slur and a fermata, followed by a section marked *accel.* with a dashed line. The staff concludes with a double bar line, a 4/3 time signature, and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The bottom staff continues the melody with a dynamic marking of *pp* and the instruction *let ring*, followed by a series of notes with slurs and fingerings.

But in the course of its development, it builds to unleash a torrent of life-affirming energy and propulsive momentum that gives voice to the composer’s belief in the intrinsic value of Life itself — as it is.

Program notes by  
Donald G. Gislason, 2025

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