

Sofia
GUBAIDULINA

Complete Guitar Works

Repentance
Sotto Voce
Serenade • Toccata

David Tanenbaum

Thomas Viloteau • Paul Psarras

Peter Wyrick • Mark Wright

Marc Teicholz • Jodi Levitz

Scott Pingel

Sofia Gubaidulina (b. 1931) Complete Guitar Works

One of the most surprising things about working with great composers is that they can find completely new sounds from an instrument to which you have dedicated your life. When I was called to perform the premiere of *Repentance* during Sofia Gubaidulina's residency with the San Francisco Symphony in 2009, I had to come up with what the score called a "friction beater", which was "a small ball of rubber or elastic plastic... fastened onto a springy, resilient steel string (e.g. a piano string)". That prompted quite a few trips to different stores, and a lot of puzzling over how exactly one can fasten a piano string onto a small ball. But this was Sofia Gubaidulina. She hadn't written for the guitar since she produced the two early, short pieces heard here, but in the interim she had become celebrated as the great and fearless composer that she is. The rest of the score had fantastic and unusual sounds, and it all made sense, so I figured that she must have a very specific idea here that I just didn't get. I experimented with this 'friction beater' sound, and remained baffled. I finally showed up to the first rehearsal with a variety of options, which she found curious. But then she pulled out her own version, which she had brought all the way from Germany. It made a sound unlike any of mine, and in fact unlike the many devices I had hit strings with in the past. When she heard it, she smiled.

Sofia Gubaidulina has spent much time in the last ten years writing and revising the two big pieces heard here that use multiple guitars. She has clearly found in the guitar a kind of soulfulness and freedom that has spoken to her, and in each case she combines the guitars with the lower strings she frequently favours. Of the *Sotto Voce* instrumental combination, the composer writes: 'It fascinated me on account of its dark colour and its potential for contrast between a muted, almost whispered sotto voce sound and that particular sort of expressivity that low-pitched instruments possess'. She has written prolifically for bass in her career, and the bass parts in both of these pieces are virtuosic and multi dimensional. The cello in *Repentance* and the viola in *Sotto Voce* play a kind of lead, with the most searching melodic material, but one comes away with the sense that each instrument has been fully developed as an individual and a society member.

The guitar writing in both pieces is multi dimensional as well. She writes: 'The constant endeavour to penetrate the mysterious consonance in the guitars' chords of harmonics is forever proving itself to be fruitless. And thus we always have to return to the darker shades.' The guitars act often as a mega instrument in these pieces; there are chordal chorales, hard driving rhythmic sections and longer, free passages where the wheels come off. Guitar 1 has long improvisations in both pieces – in *Repentance* it is a lightly guided exploration of a ninth fret barré chord, played normally, plucked behind the chord, or done as harmonics on that fret; in *Sotto Voce* it is with a slide – and in both cases what you hear are my single take and unprepared improvs, complete with a few production noises.

Repentance (2008) for three guitars, cello and bass, was commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony and was premiered in San Francisco on February 22, 2009. It is the latest and seemingly final version of a piece written a year earlier, *Ravvedimento* (2007) for cello and guitar quartet. Later in 2007 she created the version called *Pentimento* for bass and three guitars, dedicated to the bass player Alexander Suslin. *Ravvedimento* and *Repentance* are dedicated to the cellist Ivan Monighetti. Although Gubaidulina is deeply religious, and all three titles refer to repenting, this repentance is secular: at long last it is the delivery of a promised piece to a cellist who was an early and long time champion of her music.

The *Serenade* and *Toccata* were included in a 1971 edition of guitar works of Soviet composers by the publisher Muzyka. The *Serenade*, which was republished by Matanya Ophee in his Editions Orphée series, was meant to be relatively easy to play, and has been described by the composer as 'music for pleasure'. It has a searching, improvisatory character, and it explores the full range of the instrument, from its bottom note to the top. It has gone on to be played and recorded many times. By contrast, the *Toccata*, recorded here for the first time and almost unknown, is more virtuosic; it has a driving momentum that hardly stops. As in the *Serenade*, it explores the full range of the guitar.

Sotto Voce for viola, double bass and two guitars was written in 2010 and then revised in 2013.

It was also written at the request of Alexander Suslin. Gubaidulina writes: 'A constantly repeated motif is played on the three lowest (wound) guitar strings. It contains the mystery of a purely acoustic phenomenon: if you move the soft fingertips along the strings, pianissimo, the result is sonorities that are very quiet, muted, dark and totally irrational in pitch. But if you press harder on the strings or run a plectrum across them, then behind the note that remains steady on one pitch, a space opens up for glissando; this can be exploited to achieve the greatest possible expressivity. Behind the steady note-pitch the string possesses an entirely different dimension! During the course of the piece, this motif

is repeated countless times, encouraging each of the other instruments to develop its own possibilities of musical expression, as if responding to the urge to reply to the acoustic mystery that the motif constitutes.'

The *Sotto Voce* score calls for each guitarist to have a round drinking glass – 'as slim as possible and at least 10.5 cm high' – to be used on the guitar strings. As with the *Repentance* ball, they produce a glissando sound unlike any slide or other device. In over forty years of playing new music, with many a drinking glass at my side, I had never before taken a drinking glass to the strings.

David Tanenbaum



David Tanenbaum

David Tanenbaum has performed in over forty countries, and has been soloist with prominent orchestras around the world, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra and the London Sinfonietta, with such eminent conductors as Esa-Pekka Salonen, Kent Nagano and John Adams. Among the many works composed for him are Hans Werner Henze's guitar concerto: *An Eine Äolsharfe*, which he performed throughout Europe and recorded with the composer conducting; four works by Pulitzer Prize-winner Aaron Jay Kernis as well as works by Terry Riley, Lou Harrison and Roberto Sierra. David Tanenbaum can be heard on more than thirty recordings on EMI, New Albion, Naxos and other labels. His Nonesuch recording as

soloist in John Adam's *Naive and Sentimental Music* with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic was nominated for a 2002 GRAMMY® as Best New Composition. David Tanenbaum is Chair of the Guitar Department at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He is a member of the Pacific Guitar Ensemble and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players.

Thomas Viloteau

The French-born guitarist Thomas Viloteau has won awards in numerous international competitions, including first prize at the Segovia Competition (Linares, Spain), Mottola (Italy), Ville d'Antony (Paris, France), Sernancelhe (Portugal) and in 2006, only nine years after he started playing, the Guitar Foundation of America International Competition, resulting in his first recording for Naxos [8.570510]. In the summer of 2012, after years away from competitions, he played for the first time at the Francisco Tárrega Competition in Benicàssim, where he won the prestigious first prize. Thomas Viloteau only uses Savarez strings and plays on a guitar made by the Australian luthier Greg Smallman.



Paul Psarras

Paul Psarras has embraced many musical styles throughout his career from world to classical. Paul was invited to the 2012 GRAMMYS® for his rôle in the recording *Kingdoms of Castille*, with *El Mundo*. In 2010 he performed with the San Francisco Symphony with conductor/composer John Adams in the latter's oratorio, *El Niño*. He also plays with the Bay Area all-star guitar group the Pacific Guitar Ensemble where he performed his composition *Alkioni*. As a soloist he has appeared with various orchestras performing Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*. [Facebook.com/paulpsarras](https://www.facebook.com/paulpsarras)
Paulpsarras.com



Peter Wyrick

Peter Wyrick entered The Juilliard School at the age of eight. He is active as a soloist, chamber musician, teacher and orchestra musician, and since 1999 has been Associate Principal Cellist of the San Francisco Symphony, appearing as soloist with the Symphony numerous times. His recordings include the cello sonatas of Gabriel Fauré with pianist Earl Wild for dell'Arte Records as well as performances for the Stereophile and Arabesque labels. Peter Wyrick was one of the last students of Leonard Rose at The Juilliard School, and plays on a David Tecchler cello, on generous loan from Jacques and Barbara Schlumberger, made in Rome, circa 1724.

Mark Wright

Mark Wright has been a member of the San Francisco Symphony bass section since 1986. He has been principal bass of the Colorado Philharmonic (National Repertory Orchestra), principal of the Flint Symphony Orchestra and the Ann Arbor Chamber Orchestra, performed and toured with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, participated in the Grand Tetons Music Festival, was principal of the Sun Valley Summer Symphony, and took a leave of absence from the San Francisco Symphony to play the 1990-1991 season with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.



Marc Teicholz

First prize winner in the 1989 International Guitar Foundation of America competition, Marc Teicholz has toured throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and Russia, receiving critical acclaim for his recitals and master-classes. He has toured Southeast Asia under the auspices of the U.S.I.A. Artistic Ambassador programme and appeared as a soloist with orchestras in Spain, Portugal, California and Hawaii. He records for Naxos and Sugo records. Teicholz graduated magna cum laude from Yale University and received an MM from the Yale School of Music and a J.D. from the Boalt School of Law at the University of California–Berkeley. Marc Teicholz can be contacted at mark.teicholz@sfcu.edu.

Jodi Levitz

Jodi Levitz is Professor of Viola and Chair of Strings and Chamber Music at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She received the 2011 Sarlo award for excellence in teaching. Violist of the Ives Quartet, for twelve years she was the principal violist of the Italian chamber orchestra I Solisti Veneti, appointed while still a student at The Juilliard School. A musician of international reputation, she performs as soloist and chamber musician throughout Europe, the Americas and the Far East, with recordings on the Concerto, Dynamic, Naxos and Erato labels. She holds BM and MM degrees from Juilliard.



Scott Pingel

Scott Pingel became principal bass of the San Francisco Symphony in 2004 at the age of 29, after serving as principal bass of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra, performing with the Metropolitan Opera, the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood, and the Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra, and serving as guest principal with the National Arts Center Orchestra in Canada. As a chamber musician, he has collaborated with distinguished colleagues. He has taught master-classes at the Curtis Institute of Music, The Juilliard School, and elsewhere and is a faculty member of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Sofia Gubaidulina has found a soulfulness and freedom in the guitar which speaks to her musical language of expressive mood and often mysterious but precise sonorities. In both *Repentance* and *Sotto Voce* she combines guitars with lower stringed instruments, creating a virtuosic, multi-dimensional and deeply poetic role for each voice. Fascinating new sounds from the guitar are produced, from the most eloquent chorales to remarkable effects using a drinking glass. The earlier *Serenade* is ‘music for pleasure’, while this première recording of the *Toccata* reveals a work with a driving momentum that hardly stops.

Sofia
GUBAIDULINA
(b. 1931)

Complete Guitar Works

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|----------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Repentance (2008) | 24:50 |
| 2 | Serenade (1960) | 3:17 |
| 3 | Toccata (c.1969)* | 2:56 |
| 4 | Sotto Voce (2010, rev. 2013) | 25:48 |

***WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING**

David Tanenbaum, Guitar 1–4
Thomas Viloteau, Guitar II 1 • Paul Psarras, Guitar III 1
Peter Wyrick, Cello 1 • Mark Wright, Bass 1
Marc Teicholz, Guitar II 4 • Jodi Levitz, Viola 4
Scott Pingel, Bass 4

Recorded at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, California: Sol Joseph Recital Hall on 22 February 2010 (track 1) and Osher Salon on 3 October 2014 (4) & 14 October 2014 (2–3) • Producer: Jason O’Connell
Engineers: Jason O’Connell (tracks 1–3); Zach Miley (4) • Editors: Jason O’Connell (1, 4); Zach Miley (2–3)
Booklet notes: David Tanenbaum • Publishers: Sikorski Musikverlage (track 1, 4), Editions Orphée (2), Muzyka, Moscow (3) • Cover image uses photo by Valero58 / Dreamstime.com • This recording was made possible by a Faculty Development Grant from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music



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Playing Time
57:05



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