

Guitar Music of Carlo DOMENICONI

Koyunbaba
Don Quijote
Variations on an
Anatolian Folk Song
Taqsım

Celil Refik Kaya

Carlo Domeniconi (b. 1947)
Guitar Music

Carlo DOMENICONI		
Koyunbaba Suite, Op. 19 (1985)		
1	I. Moderato	3:22
2	II. Mosso	1:31
3	III. Cantabile	4:06
4	IV. Presto	4:00
5	Schnee in Istanbul (Snow in Istanbul), Op. 51a (1991)	2:24
6	Schneeschmeize (Melting Snow) Op. 51b (1991)	1:40
Âşık VEYSEL (1894–1973) (arr. Celil Refik Kaya)		
7	Uzun Ince bir Yoldayım (original Anatolian folk song theme)	0:31
Celil Refik KAYA (b. 1991)		
8	Improvisation (Taksim) in makam Hüseyni	0:43

Carlo Domeniconi, born in Cesena, Italy in 1947, began studying the guitar at the age of 13 with Carmen Lenzi Mozzani, granddaughter of the virtuoso guitarist, Luigi Mozzani (1869–1943). He later studied at the Rossini Conservatoire in Pesaro, Italy, and in Berlin at the Hochschule für Musik under the German composer and harpsichordist Heinz Friedrich Hartig (1907–1969).

During subsequent years, though with a teaching post in Berlin, he made many trips to Turkey and became fascinated by its music and culture. He founded the classical guitar course at the Istanbul University State Conservatoire and became internationally known both as a concert performer and as a leading contemporary composer for guitar with over 150 compositions published. His works include solo and ensemble pieces, chamber music and concertos, as well as compositions written for pedagogic purposes. Michael Lydon, writing in the prestigious guitar journal *Soundboard*, commented that ‘Domeniconi’s music seeks repeatedly the synthesis of East and West. He seems able to take the quintessence of different cultures and tell them anew. A hypnotic inevitability goes through his music.’ *Koyunbaba* (1985) has become Carlo Domeniconi’s most well-known and best loved composition. Requiring an

Carlo DOMENICONI		
9	Variationen über ein anatolisches Volkslied ('Variations on an Anatolian Folk Song'), Op. 15 (1982)	8:14
10	Taqsim, Op. 106 (2002)	6:58
11	Minyo (Variations on a Japanese folk song), Op. 50d (1990)	3:38
Don-Quijote-Suite, Op. 123 (2005)		17:52
12	Don Quijote	2:34
13	En el reino de la fantasía	3:57
14	Aventuras	4:18
15	Revelación y recogimiento	3:40
16	Transfiguración y muerte	3:23

unusual tuning, *Koyunbaba* evokes a world of Eastern mystery described by John Williams as ‘based on fantasy and variation’ resulting in an ‘hypnotic effect in creating the musical intensity and excitement’. The title can refer to a 13th century holy man who lived in the area of southwest Turkey (now named after him), but the word also means ‘shepherd’ (*Koyun* ‘sheep’, *baba* ‘father’). It is a truly virtuosic work building through the four movements into an extended meditation on both landscape and humanity. The liner notes to a recording by the composer in 1991 comment that the work is a *suite pastorale*, describing ‘the natural beauty of a bay’ overlooking the Aegean Sea, where the saint lived.

Schnee in Istanbul, Op. 51a (‘Snow in Istanbul’) was written in Istanbul on 19 December 1991. Along with its companion, *Schneeschmeize, Op. 51b* (‘Melting Snow’), vivid impressions are produced of the gentle falling of snow and the somewhat melancholy aftermath.

Two short pieces prepare the way for Domeniconi’s *Variations on an Anatolian Folk Song, Op. 15*. The first of these is the theme *Uzun Ince bir Yoldayım* (‘I am on a long and narrow road’) originally sung by Âşık Veysel (1894–1973), the eminent blind Turkish poet and musician,

renowned as a virtuoso of the *bağlama*, the long-necked lute popular throughout Turkey. The second work is an *Improvisation (Taksim) in makam Hüseyni*. The Turkish modal system is based on the term *makam*, a word which covers rules of composition and the structure of scales. The *taksim* refers to a spontaneous, improvisatory type of composition.

Variations on an Anatolian Folksong (1982) is directly related to the theme used by Âşık Veysel. Anatolia, the peninsula of western Asia, comprises most of the Republic of Turkey, also known as Asia Minor. The composition begins with a statement of the theme followed by five variations gradually becoming more elaborate, each presenting clear reminiscences of the theme itself. The variations conclude with a vigorous *Finale* and a further rendition of the folksong.

Taqsim, Op. 106, dedicated to the German guitarist Nora Buschmann (b. 1969), is influenced by the music of the Arabic lute, the *oud*, and the Turkish *bağlama*. This extended improvisation begins with ornamented passages of a meditative nature before moving to a more complex series of embellished thematic lines. The episodes become more elaborate and intense. Eventually a chordal element is introduced and the music evolves into interaction between bass and treble. The rhythms become increasingly dance-like and vigorous. A final section returns to the original contemplative mood and ends serenely.

Minyo (1990) was commissioned by *Gendai Guitar* of Tokyo. The term *Min’yô* refers to a genre of traditional Japanese music and means ‘folk song’, being a translation of the German word *Volkslied*. The word came into existence in Japan in the 1890s, owing its origin to European influences. *Min’yô* is not a fixed category but includes songs that have been handed down by oral tradition as well as *shin-min’yô* (‘new folk songs’) written by contemporary composers. Carlo Domeniconi has provided a series of atmospheric variations following the initial statement of the theme. The work is a charming evocation of Japanese music depicted through a European sensibility.

The great novel by Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616) under the name of *Don Quijote* (published 1605), and later entitled *El ingenioso hidalgo, Don Quijote de la Mancha* (‘The Ingenious Knight, Don Quijote of la Mancha’), told the

story of an unfortunate knight during the period of chivalric decline. Don Quixote (as he is usually called in English) sets out with lance and sword to defend the weak and punish the wicked and embarks on a series of wild adventures.

With his companion Sancho Panza and his old horse Rocinante, inspired by his vision of love for Dulcinea (a peasant girl transformed by Quixote’s fantasies into a princess), the knight’s quest results in many disasters and disillusionments. Such has been the imaginative power of Cervantes’s great work that many composers, including Telemann, Mendelssohn, Chapi, Richard Strauss, Massenet, Falla, Ravel and Gerhard, to name a few, have written music to commemorate literature’s greatest anti-hero.

Domeniconi’s five movement *Don-Quijote-Suite, Op. 123* (2005) begins with *Don Quijote*, an affectionate portrait, and progresses through *En el reino de la fantasía* (‘In the Realm of Fantasy’), to *Adventures, Revelation and Meditation*, to *Transfiguration and Death*.

The work opens with the rhythms of the knight proceeding slowly on his horse, the music being reminiscent of Spanish vihuela music of the 16th century. The tempo then picks up into a more defiant onward march before reverting to a quieter mood as if the journey has tired the knight.

The second movement, *En el reino de la fantasia*, begins with harmonics evoking the ethereal world of the imagination. The composition explores diverse fragments of sound till the harmonics bring the listener back to introspection. This leads to lyricism and a sense of the romantic. Ultimately a poignant gentleness predominates towards the close, ending as if in sleep and perhaps a dream.

Aventuras (‘Adventures’), the third movement, evokes the atmosphere of flamenco. The music becomes restless with a sense of daring enterprise. A middle section evolves into a Spanish atmosphere of increasing tension leading to strummed chords (*rasgueados*) vigorously played, followed by ominous discords. A final sonorous theme provides a respite from wild adventures leading to serenity and resolution of conflict.

The complex layers of *Revelación y recogimiento* (‘Revelation and Meditation’) are investigated next. The

movement opens with exploratory chords moving to mild discords and moments of silence between plaintive sounds. Gradually the music gains momentum, developing towards a peaceful, enlightened finale.

Transfiguración y muerte ('Transfiguration and Death') express the last stages of Quixote's life as he abandons

his chivalric pretensions and succumbs to fever. A hallucinatory mood is evoked at first. But irrevocably the pulse becomes hesitant and the end arrives with a drum beat and the last flickerings of the heart.

Graham Wade



Celil Refik Kaya

Celil Refik Kaya was awarded First Prize at the JoAnn Falletta International Guitar Concerto Competition in 2012 and has since received multiple awards from several prestigious American guitar competitions, as well as the Rising Young Musician of the Year by the Donizetti Music Classical Awards in Istanbul. Kaya has performed in the most prestigious concert halls and festivals around the United States and collaborated with orchestras such as the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Virginia Symphony, the Presidential Symphony Orchestra in Turkey, the Istanbul State Symphony, the Hilton Head Symphony, the Brevard Festival Orchestra, the Lake Placid Sinfonietta and the Bilkent Symphony, among others. He has given premiere performances of concertos by Roberto Sierra, Derwyn Holder, Leonard Handler and Süleyman Alnitemiz, and has worked closely with composers including Lowell Liebermann and Jorge Morel, among others. Born in Istanbul, Turkey, Celil Refik Kaya studied in Turkey and later pursued his master's degree in New York City at Mannes College. Kaya studied in the studio of Michael Newman as well as private studies with GRAMMY® Award-winning guitarist Sharon Isbin. Kaya is also an avid composer, with his chamber and instrumental works being performed throughout United States, Turkey, South Korea and at the Opera House in Sydney.

www.celilrefikkaya.com

Photo: Orhan Cem Çetin

Carlo Domeniconi's distinguished career as an internationally renowned guitarist has been paralleled by his prolific output as a composer whose music repeatedly seeks a synthesis between the disparate cultures of East and West. This programme takes us from the evocative Anatolian mystique of *Koyunbaba*, Domeniconi's best-loved work for guitar, through vivid impressions of *Snow in Istanbul*, the Arabian-influenced *Taksim*, and a charming visit to Japan through *Minyo*. Award-winning soloist Celil Refik Kaya concludes with the *Don-Quijote-Suite*, Domeniconi's heart-stoppingly expressive distillation of Spain's most famous narrative.

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| Carlo DOMENICONI | |
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| Koyunbaba Suite, Op. 19 (1985) | |
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A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet

Celil Refik Kaya, Guitar

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