

Agustín
BARRIOS

Guitar Music • 4

Las Abejas • Serenata Morisca • Aires Criollos

Celil Refik Kaya



Agustín Barrios (1885–1944) Guitar Music • 4

There is some obscurity over Agustín Barrios Mangoré's birthplace. Recent research has claimed he was born in Villa Florida, north of San Juan Bautista, in Southern Paraguay. He showed great musical ability early on and first studied guitar with Gustavo Sosa Escalda. Aged 13 he attended the National College, in Asunción, where he soon established a reputation as an outstanding guitarist. In 1909 Barrios made his first visit to Buenos Aires. After this he became a travelling artist, giving recitals in many countries including Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, and Cuba, among others.

In August 1930, in Bahia, Brazil, Barrios made the first public appearance as Chief Nitsuga Mangoré, 'the Paganini of the guitar from the jungles of Paraguay'. 'Nitsuga' was Agustín spelled backwards and 'Mangoré' the name of a legendary Guaraní chief. Quite dramatically Barrios dressed up in native costume, complete with head-dress and feathers. This phase concluded around 1934 when the Paraguayan ambassador to Mexico advised Barrios that the Nitsuga presentation was 'not dignified or appropriate'.

In 1934 Barrios travelled to Belgium, performing at the Royal Conservatoire, Brussels, before moving on to France, Germany and Spain. He played in Madrid on 1 December 1935, staying in Spain for three months before returning to South America.

In 1939 he suffered a heart attack while in Mexico City. Barrios, having partially recovered, then went to El Salvador where, with the help of the country's President, he was appointed professor at a music school. He died in San Salvador on 7 August, 1944.

Barrios's significance in guitar history, apart from his frenetic life of recitals and travels, is his legacy of recordings and compositions. He was also the first guitarist to realise the possibilities of the new art of recording and recorded more than 50 tracks for the Atlanta and Odeon labels between 1910 and 1942. These enabled later generations to notate his compositions especially when definitive manuscripts were not extant.

Las Abejas ('The Bees') written in 1921 in Uruguay and dedicated to Martín Borda y Pagola, is imitative of the buzzing of bees, similar in concept to Emilio Pujol's *El Abejorro* ('The Bumblebee'). However, the Barrios biographer, Rico Stover, observes that Borda y Pagola insisted Barrios should write his works down in manuscript form, and the title indicates that the composer wished to demonstrate he was 'indeed an industrious worker like the bees'.

Preludio in C minor, written in 1920, conveys a melancholy mood expressing the mature reflections of the composer. Its style may be reminiscent of Sor's arpeggio *Study, Op. 29, No. 13*, but Barrios's intention here seems more expressive than pedagogic.

Serenata Morisca, composed around 1921, in the Spanish style, begins with a quasi-improvisatory introduction leading to the serenade itself. The work recalls Tárrega's *Danza Mora* and *Capricho árabe* and Juan Parga's *Serenata Morisca*, but Barrios's innate originality shines through in every bar.

Danza, in the key of D minor, follows the European Minuet in 3/4 time, the opening theme being contrasted with a Trio in D major. It dates from the 1920s and its inspiration is Tárrega's arrangement of Haydn's *Andante* (the *Minuet* from the *Baryton Trio No. 87*), as Barrios pursues similar melodic and harmonic contours.

The title of *Jha Che Valle* (*Danza Paraguaya No. 2*), first performed in 1923, can be translated from the Guaraní language as 'Oh My Homeland'. The genre is that of the *polca paraguaya*, an early 19th-century form. The Paraguayan polka presents a lively, syncopated 6/8 rhythm often counterpointed by a bass in 3/4 time. Here the dance has a brilliant Trio episode leading to an exciting and vigorous finale.

Dinora, a gavotte in the European style, is dated by Rico Stover to around 1938. The composer gave guitar lessons to Walter Bolandi, an architect in Costa Rica and the piece is dedicated to Bolandi's daughter, Dinora.

Estudio de Concierto No. 1, composed around 1920,

follows the guitar tradition of studies deploying a melody over flowing arpeggios. Of all such studies this is one of the finest, as well as being among the most virtuosic, a work both technically challenging and aesthetically satisfying.

Mazurka Apasionata ('Passionate Mazurka'), written around 1919, was also titled as *The Soul of María Esther*, a lady with whom it is said Barrios fell in love while in Brazil (1916–20). One of the composer's most sensuously ethereal works, its inventiveness demonstrates his mastery and understanding of the guitar.

Aires Criollos ('Creole Airs'), a selection of Argentinian themes recorded around 1910, begins with a quasi-improvisatory ornamented melodic line leading on to a nostalgic waltz theme. For the final theme Barrios chooses a polka, beginning with an introductory flourish before entering the exuberance of the dance.

Bicho Feo (*Tango humorístico*), recorded in 1913, can be translated as 'Ugh, Ugly' and makes great play of slides up the top string to create the impression of parody. The rhythm is reminiscent of both tango and ragtime.

Altair, from around 1916, is a gentle waltz. Rico Stover has pointed out that the last twelve bars are also used in the *Humoresque* [Volume 1, 8.554558], composed in 1921, the only time Barrios ever repeated himself.

Estudio in B minor (*Homage to Bach*), composed 1920, is a brilliant study invoking Bach's solo violin works. In later years Barrios added a second guitar part.

Divagaciones Criollas ('Creole Wanderings'), recorded in 1914 can be compared with *Aires Criollos* as a medley of melodies from Argentinian folk culture. Rico Stover suggests such music was used in cinemas and theatres as interludes between acts during Barrios's first visit to Buenos Aires.

Though there are many precedents for velocity studies in violin and keyboard music, as well as among the works of Tárrega, *Estudio No. 6*, written around 1921, has some of the composer's finest artistic characteristics including poignant treble melodies as well as a mastery of harmonic progression.

Prelude in E major, dating from 1939 and written for Walter Bolandi, presents a brief and poetic work based on

sweeping arpeggios across the fingerboard with expressive slurs in both treble and bass.

Una Limosna por el Amor de Dios ('Alms for the Love of God'), written shortly before the composer's death in 1944, is one of his most renowned compositions. Barrios creates a magnificently poignant theme by means of the tremolo technique by which the guitar can create the illusion of a continuous melodic line. The piece was inspired by a beggar pleading for 'alms for the love of God', the traditional mantra of Spanish and South American beggars.

Estudios para Ambas Manos ('Study for Both Hands'), composed in 1940, indicates by its title that both left and right hand are being developed here, the left hand with chordal patterns and slurs, the right hand with arpeggio patterns. This is by no means a velocity study but calls for precise clarity of articulation.

Armonías de América, recorded by Barrios in 1929 is a further medley of South American folk tunes, but this time more extended with a wider kaleidoscope of moods. Against expectation perhaps, the work ends meditatively.

Aires Andaluces ('Andalusian Airs', c. 1914), another early work, pays homage to southern Spain, a land which Barrios had not visited at the time. The themes begin in the genre of *malagueña*, including a tremolo section before introducing evocations of more introspective moods.

Canción de Cuna ('Lullaby', c. 1921) uses an altered *scordatura* with two bottom strings tuned down to create a different sonority. Though cradle songs may often be simplified melodic statements, this work is by no means a beginner's piece. Opening in G minor, the work introduces a contrasting Trio section in the key of G major.

Londón Carapé (*Danza Paraguaya No. 3*), an early piece written c. 1910, is an arrangement in tribute to the Paraguayan polka from the 19th century, where dancers join in a circle before dancing as couples with their partner.

Estilo Argentino 'Chinita', from around 1926, is based on the musical form *estilo*, an Argentine song type characterised by passionate song texts. The subtitle *Chinita* ('Little country girl') is the nickname Barrios gave to Aida, the youngest daughter of his friend, Martín Borda y Pagola.

La Bananita (*Tango*) ('Little Banana') recorded 1910–

13, is a rhythmic extended composition in five distinct sections moving through various tonalities.

Sargento Cabral (Zamba) (c. 1921), an example of the composer's early style, celebrates the *Zamba*, the traditional stately Argentinian dance, in 6/8 time, which originated in the early 19th century.

Preludio in A minor, written in 1939, follows the pattern of various 19th-century guitar studies that articulate a fine melody over an arpeggio accompaniment. Barrios here also reveals his harmonic capabilities in a work dedicated to his friend, Don Francisco Salazar.

Milonga (Estilo Criollo) (c. 1914), an early

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composition featuring the song genre of Uruguay and Argentina, is light-hearted in character, with occasional scintillating cross-rhythms against the 6/8 metre.

Graham Wade

Grateful acknowledgement is due in the writing of these notes to the indispensable scholarship of Rico Stover in his biography, *Six Silver Moonbeams, The Life & Times of Agustín Barrios Mangoré* (Paraguay Edition, 2012) and his editions of *The Complete Works of Agustín Barrios Mangoré, Volumes 1 & 2* (Mel Bay, 2003).

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 Classical Music Awards in Istanbul in 2017. Kaya has performed in the most prestigious concert halls and festivals around the US and Turkey, including Carnegie Hall, The Frick Collection Museum, NYCGS, Round Top, Brevard and Ankara International Music Festival, as well as numerous radio and TV broadcasts throughout the United States and Turkey. Born in Istanbul, Turkey, Celil Refik Kaya studied in Turkey with his father Mehmet Refik Kaya, Yusuf Doğan Büyükköğüt, Raffi Arslanyan and Soner Egesel. He later undertook his master's degree in New York City at the Mannes School of Music with Michael Newman and privately with Sharon Isbin. Kaya is currently studying his DMA at The University of Texas at Austin in the studio of Adam Holzman. Kaya is also an avid composer, with his chamber and instrumental works being performed throughout the United States, Turkey, South Korea and Australia. www.celilrefikkaya.com

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Agustín Barrios Mangoré was one of the greatest guitar virtuosos of his time and something of a pioneer in making recordings, which he began as early as 1910. His compositions offer a lexicon of technical and expressive devices for the guitar, from both the South American and European traditions. This penultimate volume in the series offers the scintillating *Estudio No. 6*, which demonstrates some of the composer's finest artistic characteristics such as poignant treble melodies and a mastery of harmonic progression. Other works include examples of the Paraguayan polka, the *Zamba*, Creole airs, the *Serenata* and many other pieces attesting to Barrios's inexhaustible individuality and variety.

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1 Las Abejas (1921)	2:08	14 Estudio No. 6 (1921)	1:22
2 Preludio in C minor (1920)	2:09	15 Preludio in E major (1939)	1:03
3 Serenata Morisca (1921)	5:27	16 Una Limosna por el Amor de Dios	
4 Danza (c. 1921)	3:38	(1944)	3:35
5 Jha Che Valle (Danza Paraguaya No. 2) (c. 1923)	1:47	17 Estudio para Ambas Manos (1940)	2:17
6 Dinora (c. 1938)	2:32	18 Armonías de América (1929)	4:30
7 Estudio de Concierto No. 1 (c. 1920)	2:28	19 Aires Andaluces (c. 1914)	6:35
8 Mazurka Apasionata (c. 1919)	5:17	20 Canción de Cuna (c. 1921)	3:08
9 Aires Criollos (c. 1910)	2:54	21 Londón Carapé (Danza Paraguaya No. 3) (c. 1910)	1:28
10 Bicho Feo (Tango humorístico) (1913)		22 Estilo Argentino 'Chinita' (1926)	2:18
(arr. Tony Morris)	3:13	23 La Bananita (Tango) (1910–13)	3:38
11 Altair (c. 1916)	2:07	24 Sargento Cabral (Zamba) (c. 1921)	1:32
12 Estudio in B minor (Homenaje a Bach) (1920)	1:50	25 Preludio in A minor (1939)	2:59
13 Divagaciones Criollas (1914)	3:05	26 Milonga (Estilo Criollo) (c. 1914)	3:09

Celil Refik Kaya, Guitar

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