

Review

**Cleveland Classical Guitar Society —
Carlos Perez at Plymouth (November 23)**

by Daniel Hathaway



As part of the 2013-2014 International Series presented by the Cleveland Classical Guitar Society, Chilean guitarist Carlos Perez charmed a good-sized audience at Plymouth Church on Saturday evening with two short sets of Romantic-era music, half by Spanish composers and half by their Latin American cousins whose forebears had emigrated to Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil.

Actually, one of those Spanish composers got on a boat as well. Antonio Jiménez Manjón, whose *Dos Mazurkas* and *Aire Vasco* opened the program, took up residence at some point in Buenos Aires. Blind since he was 13, Manjón produced some sprightly, cheerful music, judging by *Una Flor* and *Lírica*, and some technically demanding works as well, if the "Basque Air" is any indication. Perez played the sentimental Mazurkas with humor and color and tossed off the fleet divisions in the Basque variations with ease and flair.

Perez lavished attention on the details of Emilio Pujol's light-spirited *Cubana* and playful *Schottish Madrileño*, alluring salon pieces that gained importance with that treatment, and made a dramatic scenario out of Tomás Damas's *Fandango variado*, with its many color changes, fast figuration between pillars of chords and tremolandos. Knocks on the guitar case punctuated the narrative.

After intermission, Perez was back for the New World part of the evening, beginning with Agustín Barrios's Bach-like *Preludio opus 5* and more down-home *Maxixa*, with its graceful arpeggios and populist vamps.

Three pieces by Julio Sagreras followed: a Habanera-like *Estilo Criollo*, *La Ideal*, which set up a dialogue between the high and low registers of the instrument, and a busy and cheerful *La Güella*, featuring sudden key changes and a bass cadenza.

Perez noted that Ernesto Nazareth was enamored of the music of Chopin, a few touches of which came through translated from piano to guitar. *Mariazinha sentada na pedra* was a rather simple song, *Eponina*, a tender and expressive waltz. Perez flew through the busy rhythms of *Vem ca branquinha*, then called it a night, politely declining encores.

Since the music totaled less than an hour from end to end — quite enough to satisfy the ear, given the great variety of effects Perez can summon up in a short space of time — it seemed a shame to interrupt the concert with a twenty-minute intermission. Sometimes a straight-through program is the best format.

As a prelude to the evening, CCGS showed off the fruits of one of its educational programs in a brief concert by students from Akron's Buchtel Community Learning Center, who first picked up their guitars under the tutelage of Leeda Shokalook and Mike McNamara last September. It will be fun to watch them progress.

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