

Preview

Cleveland Classical Guitar Society — Beijing Guitar Duo at Plymouth on January 25

by Mike Telin



Following their May of 2011 performance at Classical Guitar Weekend, ClevelandClassical wrote: “The Beijing Guitar Duo’s recital... was a musically stunning lesson in ensemble playing. Like concentric circles, Meng Su and Yameng Wang performed from a common center: articulations, tonal colors, crescendos, decrescendos, whether jointly or individually were perfectly matched...”

On Saturday, January 25 beginning at 7:30 pm in Plymouth Church, the [Beijing Guitar Duo](#) returns to Northeast Ohio for a performance on the

Cleveland Classical Guitar Societies International Series. The concert features music of Domenico Scarlatti, Tan Dun, Giulio Regondi, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Granados and Piazzolla. A pre-concert demonstration of traditional Chinese painting will be given by Jerry Wang.

“We are very excited to be returning to Cleveland,” Meng Su told us by telephone from Baltimore. “We’re especially looking forward to playing Tan Dun’s *Eight Memories in Watercolor*,’ recalling a visit that she, Yameng Wang and their teacher Manuel Barrueco made to the composer’s home in New York. “Maestro Barrueco transcribed *Eight Memories* for us and we wanted to play it for him. We were so happy because he loved the arrangement and made no changes.” Originally for solo piano, Tan Dun describes *Eight Memories* as a “diary of longing,” inspired by the folk songs of his culture and the recollection of his childhood.

Other transcriptions of solo keyboard works include what Meng Su refers to as a sentimental arrangement of Granados’s *Valses Poéticos* and the Duo’s own arrangements of Domenico Scarlatti’s Sonatas in g, K. 173, D, K. 45, F, K. 540 & d, K. 151. “He wrote over 500 keyboard sonatas so we still have a lot of arranging to do,” she says, laughing. The Duo’s program will also feature works originally written for guitar by Giulio Regondi (*Rêverie*) Castelnuovo-Tedesco (*Rondo, op. 129*), and Astor Piazzolla’s *Tango Suite*. “We really like this piece. It’s full of touching melodies and it was written for two guitars.”

Although the piano and the violin remain the two most popular instruments in China, especially for children, Meng Su says the guitar is becoming more popular. “More children are now starting on the guitar because we now have guitar departments established in all five major conservatories in the country. And there are now a couple of competitions that offer very good prize money.”

Meng Su also points out that the number of professional guitar concerts that are presented in China is also increasing, “This coming July we will play our first concerts in China and we look forward to it because it will be the first time we have played in our hometown.” She adds that the Duo hopes to arrange an extended tour of China in the near future.

Still at the beginning of their professional careers, the Beijing Guitar Duo has already released two recordings, *Maracapine – Guitar Duos and Solos by Gnattali and Assad*, and *Bach to Tan Dun*. “We are now recording our third CD of all-encore pieces with Maestro Barrueco. It’s a lot of work [to establish] a career but it is also exciting.”

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