

## Cleveland Classical Guitar Society: Lukasz Kuropaczewski at Plymouth Church (Oct. 18)

by Mike Telin



All was perfect inside Plymouth Church this past Saturday evening, October 18. The responsibility for that perfection lay squarely in the hands of Polish classical guitarist Lukasz Kuropaczewski, who was making his Cleveland debut. The program was presented as part of the Cleveland Classical Guitar Society's International Series.

Kuropaczewski, an imposing figure with a witty sense of humor, began his slightly less than one-hour program with an inspired performance of Mauro Giuliani's

*Rossiniana No. 3*. It's one of six fantasies published by the composer, each of which draws on material from Rossini's operas — in this case, *La donna del lago*, *Il turco in Italia*, *Zelmira*, and *Ricciardo e Zoraide*. Kuropaczewski brilliantly tossed off the work's many virtuosic passages with ease. And, as an opera singer performing Rossini is prone to do, he relished each lyrical moment. Indeed, Kuropaczewski captured the essence of Rossini so well it would not have been surprising if he had begun to sing the arias as well.

Like Bach, Chopin and Scriabin, Mexican composer Manuel Ponce also composed 24 preludes, which together explore all 24 musical keys. Kuropaczewski selected ten for Saturday's program. His performance held the audience in rapt attention as he turned each prelude into a song without words.

Spanish composer Antonio José was a student of Maurice Ravel, whose influence is evident in José's captivating *Sonata para Guitarra*. A work in four movements, the sonata places numerous technical demands on the performer while providing plenty of lyrical moments. Kuropaczewski's interpretation of the opening "Allegro moderato" was arresting. The lilting "Minuetto" was pure elegance and the "Pavana triste: Lento," passionate. The rapid passages during the "Finale: Allegro con brio" were dazzling. From

beginning to end the guitarist played with a full-bodied tone and perfect intonation. His sensitive voicing of chords rivaled those of an accomplished pianist.

Lukasz Kuropaczewski ended his program with a remarkable presentation of Isaac Albeniz's *Asturias*. It was the perfect conclusion to an astonishingly beautiful recital.

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