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# Marshall University Music Department Presents a Graduate Recital, Alexandre Lopesá

Alexandre Lopesá  
*Marshall University*

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Graduation Recital – Alexandre Lopesá  
April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Program

*Sonata K. 208*  
*Sonata K. 209*

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)

Suite BWV 1006  
- Prelude

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

*Sonata Romántica*

- I. *Allegro moderato*
- II. *Andante espressivo*
- III. *Allegretto vivo*
- IV. *Allegro non troppo e serio*

Manuel Ponce (1882-1948)

*Sonata*

- I. “Fandangos y Boleros”
- II. “Sarabanda de Scriabin”
- III. “Toccata de Pasquini”

Leo Brouwer (b.1939)

Program Notes – Alexandre Lopes

Sonatas K. 208 and K. 209 – Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)

Italian composer Domenico Scarlatti lived for many years in Spain, where he wrote most of his keyboard works while working at the Spanish court. He moved to Seville in 1729, living there during four years before he moved to Madrid, where he remained living as a court composer until his final days.

Some of his 555 one movement sonatas were meant to be played in pairs, as in the possible case of Sonatas *K. 208* and *K. 209*. They are both in the key of A major, with a well defined two-part structure. *Sonata K.208* is slow and lyrical, exploring the use of suspensions. *Sonata K. 209* is inspired in the *jota aragonesa*, a Spanish dance characterized by the triple meter in a fast pace and rapid alternation between chords. This dance was often played on the guitar, which was used as a strummed accompaniment to singers and dancers. Scarlatti uses some devices in this piece such as syncopation which imposes a 3/4 pattern over two measures of 3/8 time and insistent repetitions, some of his style characteristics.

Prelude from suite BWV 1006 – Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Bach’s suite BWV 1006 has two versions: one for the lute and another for the violin. This seven movement suite dates from the second half of the 1730s, when he was living as a church composer in Leipzig and working as the director of the collegium musicum, a voluntary association of professional musicians and university students that gave regular weekly public concerts. Bach directed this association from 1729 to 1736, having resumed it for a few more years in 1739.

This particular prelude is used as an introduction to the suite, a kind of practice initiated by Italian composer Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1715). It has a vivid and joyful character, featuring some characteristics Bach is known for, such as, the use of implied polyphony and counterpoint. This work was later rearranged and used as the introduction of his cantata 'Wir danken dir, Gott', BWV 29.

Bach's lute works are believed by some researchers to have been conceived under a partial influence of the renowned lutenist Sylvius Leopold Weiss, who was a close friend. Bach's contributions to the repertory of the lute – which was not at its highest peak at the time – represent, together with the works of Weiss, the greatest achievement of the instrument's 18<sup>th</sup> century collection of pieces.

#### Sonata Romántica – Manuel Ponce (1882-1948)

Mexican composer Manuel Ponce dedicated his *Sonata Romántica*, published in 1929, to the Spanish guitarist Andrés Segovia. It was written in the Romantic style in homage to Franz Schubert, who according to Ponce, 'loved the guitar'.

The first movement - *Allegro moderato* - is written in the key of A major and starts with a theme borrowed from the opening of Schubert's *Sonata D. 664, Op. 120*. It has the same structure as the sonatas from the Romantic era, with the melodic material from the initial motive being explored in many different tonalities.

The second movement - *Andante espressivo* – begins in the key of E major with a *legato* melody and its accompaniment. The first section features a lyricism compared to some of Schubert's *Lieder*, followed by a middle chordal section which resembles his piano works. As

Segovia wrote in his letters to Ponce, 'the andante is delightful: among the best that Schubert left without doing'.

The third movement - *Allegretto vivo* - is inspired by the *Moments Musicaux*, a series of six piano pieces composed between 1823 and 1828 which are marked by subtle nuances of emotion through key modulations. The first section alludes to Schubert's *Moments Musicaux* no. 3, while the slow second section alludes to the sixth of the *Moment Musicaux*. These two sections are contrasting in character: the first, in a minor key, is vivid with a detached bass voice while the second, in a major key, is slow and has a chordal structure filled with modulations.

The last movement - *Allegro non troppo e serio* - combines various elements, taken not only from Schubert's music, but from Romantic music in general. It begins with an energetic introduction which is followed by a *Scherzo* – a type of comic and playful composition - in the key of A major. The first section is repeated in a different key, with the following *Scherzo* also transposed to another key. That leads to a final coda with a series of chords being arpeggiated until its conclusion with the A major chord, as in the beginning of the first movement.

Ponce blends several Schubertian elements in a piece that can be called as a true musical pastiche, making *Sonata Romántica* a unique work for the guitar repertory. Its richness of harmony and form resemble the finest piano sonatas from the Romantic era.

#### Sonata – Leo Brouwer (b.1939)

Cuban composer Leo Brouwer's *Sonata* was published in 1990. This work, dedicated to the great English guitarist Julian Bream, is part of Brouwer's third phase as a composer, described by him as a 'new simplicity' era. This phase is characterized by the blending of modality and atonality, as well as elements from Cuban folk music, traditional music forms, structural fragmentation and the employment of simultaneous tonal centers.

The entire work is based on a four-note motive, which is repeated in various registers and pitches throughout all the movements. The first movement – "Fandangos y Boleros" - incorporates rhythms from the Spanish styles mentioned in its title, alternating between modality and atonality. A later section features the minimalist style, before a coda alluding to Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony (no. 6) in contrast to the recapitulation of the initial theme.

"Sarabanda de Scriabin" is in the pace of the *Sarabande*, a French dance characterized by its slow tempo. It creates an ethereal atmosphere through the use of slow passages where all the notes are sustained, making the guitar sound like a 'dissonant harp'.

"Toccata de Pasquini" is fast and rhythmical, with a slow middle section resembling the second movement of the piece. The minimalist style is also present in this toccata written in rondo form, with an arpeggiated refrain which is heard several times.

Brouwer's work sounds idiomatic and at the same time musically rich, with its characteristic style hybridism. It is notable that he begins most of his compositions from the standpoint of what the guitar has to offer in terms of sounds and effects, creating a unique style of composition that sounds both modern and audibly enjoyable.