



The Sixty-seventh Season of  
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin  
**Concerts**

National Gallery of Art  
2,688th Concert

**Brazilian Guitar Quartet**

Everton Gloeden and Luiz Mantovani, *8-string guitars*  
Tadeu do Amaral and Clemer Andreotti, *6-string guitars*

October 22, 2008  
Wednesday, 12:10 pm  
East Building Auditorium

*Admission free*

## Program

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

*Overture from Orchestral Suite no. 4, BWV 1069*

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959)

*Bachianas brasileiras No. 1*

Introdução – Embolada

Prelúdio – Modinha

Fuga – Conversa

Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909)

from *Iberia Suite*

Evocacion

Triana

Ronaldo Miranda (b. 1948)

*Variações sérias sobre um tema de Anacleto de Medeiros (1991)*

(Serious Variations on a theme by Anacleto de Medeiros)

Francisco Mignone (1897–1996)

*Lenda sertaneja*

Congada

All works arranged for guitar quartet by the Brazilian Guitar Quartet.

## The Musicians

Known as the “Dream Team” in their home country, the Brazilian Guitar Quartet began touring outside Brazil in 1999 and has since become one of the world’s most sought-after guitar ensembles, performing before large audiences and receiving rave reviews and many return invitations. The quartet is unique in the world for its use of two eight-string guitars. These innovative instruments, developed by Paul Galbraith (a founding member of BGQ who appeared in solo recitals at the National Gallery in 1992 and 2005), greatly increase the range of both sound and repertoire.

The Brazilian Guitar Quartet’s United States engagements include concerts in the 92nd Street Y and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Da Camera Society in Los Angeles, Dumbarton Church in Washington DC, the Latino Cultural Center of Dallas, the Museum of Latin American Art in Los Angeles, Baltimore’s Shriver Hall, Atlanta’s Spivey Hall, and the Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts. The Quartet has also appeared at the Albuquerque Winter Chamber Music Festival, the Carmel Bach Festival, the Chautauqua Institute, the Florida International Festival, Pro Arte Musical of San Juan, Puerto Rico, the Ravinia Festival in Chicago, the Round Top (Texas) Guitar Festival, the San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival, the Winter Park Bach Festival, and El Paso’s World on a String Festival. In 2004 the quartet and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra gave the world premiere of a specially commissioned concerto by Brazil’s composer of the year, Ronaldo Miranda, at the first World Guitar Congress in Baltimore.

International appearances include a performance at the first International Guitar Festival of Adelaide, Australia, in a program entitled “Bach, Brazil and Beyond;” concerts at the international guitar festivals of Hong Kong and Monterey, Mexico; and tours of Canada, Denmark, England, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Scotland, and other countries. The quartet has been featured in live performances and interviews on Voice of America and National Public Radio’s “Performance Today.”

The ensemble's repertoire ranges from Bach to Brazilian music to masterworks from Spain. Its latest recording, an original arrangement of the complete *Iberia Suite* by Albéniz, has received glowing accolades in the international press; the *Folha de São Paulo* called it "a recording of historical significance that deserves a place alongside that of Alicia De Larrocha."

## Program Notes

Johann Sebastian Bach's four *Orchestral Suites* were written between 1717–1723, when he was Kapellmeister at the court of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen. There he had one of Europe's finest orchestras at his disposal; another happy coincidence was that the prince was a Calvinist whose court's ascetic religious services did not require Bach to write weekly church music. As a result, he devoted most of his efforts during this period to orchestral and instrumental composition, and produced an unprecedented string of masterpieces, including Book I of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, the French and English keyboard suites, the sonatas and partitas for solo violin, the *Brandenburg Concertos*, and the orchestral suites. The suites were composed for varied instrumental combinations, with Bach himself at the harpsichord.

Heitor Villa-Lobos, Brazil's most famous composer, launched the "nationalist" movement in Brazilian music when his compositions were featured at São Paulo's "Week of Modern Art" in 1922. Villa-Lobos broke away from the nineteenth-century European tradition, drawing inspiration instead from the music of the *chorões*—popular musicians of Rio de Janeiro—with whom he toured extensively in his youth. He was introduced to the music of J. S. Bach by his Aunt Zizinha, who played the composer's great preludes and fugues. In the *Bachianas brasileiras*, a set of nine suites for a variety of ensembles, Villa-Lobos linked Bach and Brazilian folk music through melody, instrumentation, harmonic language, and even in the dual names of the movements, the first standard and the second Brazilian.

*Bachiana brasileira no. 1*, written for cello ensemble, was dedicated to Pablo Casals. An *embolada* is a sequence of verses typical of the *repentistas* (improvising poets and singers of northeast Brazil who pit their skills against one another at great speed, reminiscent of today's rap artists). The *Modinha* (the diminutive of *moda*, a song of Portuguese origin) was one of the earliest forms of Brazilian popular music, dating to the eighteenth-century. About the *Fugue*, Villa-Lobos wrote: "The kernel of the initial

theme is characterized by the transfiguration of certain melodic fragments typical of—and dear to—the old-time serenaders of [Rio] . . . it conveys, first, a Bachian spirituality, and then a conversation between four *chorões* whose instruments are competing to play the main theme.”

Isaac Albéniz was born in 1860 in Catalonia, Spain. A child prodigy, he was giving public piano performances by age four and was accused of using trickery in his playing. At twelve, he stowed away on a ship to South America. He led a haphazard life of touring and performing in Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, and eventually the United States, where he appeared in a vaudeville act playing piano behind his back. He finally settled in Paris, where he became close friends with the major impressionist composers. *Iberia*, Albéniz’s last composition, is a set of twelve pieces for solo piano divided into four equal volumes. As in much of his music, regardless of instrumentation, the guitar’s spirit permeates the work. Subtitled “12 nouvelles impressions,” *Iberia* combines an impressionistic quality with typical Spanish melodies. Pianists, composers, and musicologists have universally praised its rich harmonic vocabulary, rhythmic complexity, and ambitiousness of architectural design. Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992) hailed it as a pianistic marvel and the greatest masterpiece of Spanish music.

Ronaldo Miranda, a native of Rio de Janeiro, was awarded the Carlos Gomes Prize as Brazil’s composer of the year in 2001. One of the two most active Brazilian composers alive today, he is also a journalist, and for many years was a critic for the *Jornal do Brasil*. His career was launched in 1977 when he received the First Prize for Chamber Music at the Second Biennial for Contemporary Brazilian Music. Numerous national and international prizes followed. His works, which range from atonal to neo-tonal, include solo instrumental pieces, chamber works, symphonies, and the opera *Don Casmurro*. They have been performed in major venues, including Carnegie Hall, the Salzburg Mozarteum, and the Zurich Tonhalle. Miranda’s *Variações Sérias* (“Serious Variations,” the title alluding to Felix Mendelssohn’s piece of the same name) were originally composed for wind quintet. The theme is from the ballad *Rasga o coração* (Tear My Heart) which was very popular in the early twentieth century, and was also used by Villa-Lobos in his *Chôros no. 10*.

Francisco Mignone, the son of Italian immigrants, was born in the capital of the state of São Paulo, where Italian opera was thriving. The composer described his *Lenda sertaneja* (Legend of the Outback) no.9 as the most romantic, and most Brazilian, of the set of ten. Although not inspired by specific folktales, the *lendas* are permeated with a folk-like atmosphere. The *Congada* is an energetic dance of African origin. It has been described as “a royal procession accompanied by chanting, for the enthroning of a king.” Mignone wrote his *Congada* at age twenty-four as part of the second act of his opera *O Contratador de diamantes* (The Diamond Merchant). The popularity of his *Congada* led the composer to create versions for solo piano (on which this transcription is based) and piano four-hands. It was performed by the Vienna Philharmonic, conducted by Richard Strauss, on a tour of Brazil in the 1920s.

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

**Vienna Piano Trio**

Music by Haydn, Schubert, and Smetana

October 26, 2008

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

West Building, West Garden Court

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

Music Department  
National Gallery of Art  
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC

*Mailing address*  
2000B South Club Drive  
Landover, MD 20785

[www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov)