# 11 Perspectives on the classical guitar in the twentieth century

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At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the classical guitar finds itself at a level of quality and popularity that was unimaginable even fifty years earlier. There are scores of degree programs in the United States alone, major and minor record labels keep increasing their catalog of guitar recordings,[1] and a growing number of international competitions are being won by young players of astounding technical facility. The ubiquitous Rodrigo *Concierto de Aranjuez* is one of the most popular concertos for any instrument of the twentieth century, new music ensembles commonly include the guitar, and virtually every major composer of our time now attempts to write for the instrument. In fact it can be argued that, for the first time, the current repertoire and performance level of the guitar rival that of any instrument. And such is the embarrassment of riches that many players are seeking out unique corners of the repertoire, becoming specialists in transcription, or nineteenth-century repertoire, or new chamber music. In short, guitarists face the daunting task of finding a voice in this crowded field, which is populated by relatively young players and teachers. But even the youngest players seem to be unfazed, as the number of students entering academic institutions to study the guitar, against all financial reasoning, appears steady.

In this chapter I will connect the major points of the guitar's extraordinary development in the twentieth century, and discuss what are, to me, some of the most promising developments for the future. Since I am foremost a performer, recording artist, and teacher of the guitar – not a musicologist – this essay reveals the thoughts of a player trying to realize his own vision of the instrument. Consequently, this is a personal, rather than an objective view.

## Andrés Segovia and Francisco Tárrega

The most influential figure in the development of the classical guitar after 1900 is undoubtedly Andrés Segovia. Born in 1893, Segovia heard his calling after hearing Tárrega's *Preludes* when he was just twelve:

> I felt like crying, laughing, even like kissing the hands of a man who could draw such beautiful sounds from the guitar. My passion for music seemed to explode into flames. I was trembling. A sudden wave of disgust for the folk pieces I had been playing came over me, mixed with a delirious obsession to learn "that music" immediately . . . I had been captured for life by the guitar. With complete dedication, I have been totally faithful to it all my life. Faithful to only the guitar.[2]

This willpower and all-consuming passion would ultimately inspire generations of guitarists in the twentieth century. But the world he encountered during the century's first decades was very different from today. Revolutionary changes were occurring in music during Segovia's youth, but few of those developments included the guitar. Of all the important late-Romantic and early twentieth-century composers, only Mahler, Schoenberg, Webern, and Stravinsky used the guitar at all, and the repertory they produced amounts to just a few chamber pieces. In fact, the greatest ebb in the guitar's history is the late nineteenth century, since the forces required and harmonic language during this period were clearly beyond the guitar's reach. Despite some remarkable transcriptions, the late nineteenth century remains the least played period of classical music on the guitar.

What Segovia did encounter was a small but thriving guitar subculture formed around the work of Francisco Tárrega (1852–1909), the leading guitar figure of the late nineteenth century. Tárrega was by all reports a shy man who played relatively few concerts and did not travel much internationally; his days were spent entirely with the guitar in his hands, practicing and adapting music to it, as we know from his student Pujol's precious description:

> Every morning after getting dressed, Tárrega lights a cigarillo, takes his guitar and sits down on his small working chair, in a corner of the dining room. Adjusting the tuning, he stretches his fingers by caressing the strings with improvised harmonies . . . Breakfast interrupts the monologue, while the guitar rests on the Maestro's knees. After this, without any further preamble, to work! A matchbox on the table holds up the chromatic scales, diatonics, in thirds, sixths . . . Another hour of arpeggios, the same time for runs and trills and one or more hours for difficult positions or rebellious passages . . . Thus passes the morning. After lunch, once more the guitar, but the work is different. The complete works of Schumann for the piano are on the table . . . Tárrega skims through them, stops at a page, and rests it on the guitar to see if it will lend itself to transcription . . . Every day, toward evening, some intimate friends and aficionados come to hear him play . . . Then at night, after dinner, when everybody is asleep in the house, Tárrega plays for himself. This is the moment when the guitar and the artist are one. How many hours pass like this?[3]

Tárrega ended up composing more than 300 works, made countless transcriptions, and left a legacy of playing through numerous students, the most famous being Miguel Llobet and Emilio Pujol. Llobet himself composed many works in a style similar to Tárrega and played concerts internationally, while Pujol detailed the Tárrega school in the most thorough method book of the time, and also made scholarly critical editions of early vihuela, lute, and guitar music. Inevitably, perhaps, antipathy developed between Segovia and members of the Tárrega school, especially with one of Tárrega's last students, Daniel Fortea. Segovia called them the guitar's "jailers,"[4] and felt they were too insular. Llobet had indeed expressed doubts about the guitar's ability to project in large halls, in direct contradiction to Segovia's quest to place the guitar on the world's main classical stages. Although Llobet's friends included Debussy, Ravel, Fauré, Falla, and Granados, he eventually worked only with Falla on one small piece.[5] The self-taught Segovia still learned much from the Tárrega school, particularly from Llobet, with whom his interpretive style had many similarities.

But most importantly, Segovia personified the artist of great courage who would not accept the current opinion that the guitar was an "inferior" instrument.[6] As Segovia immodestly said: "I found the guitar almost at a standstill – despite the noble efforts of Sor, Tárrega, Llobet, and others – and raised it to the loftiest levels of the musical world."[7] Segovia gave his first public recital at age sixteen and his last at age ninety-four, thus completing a career that spanned almost the entire century. He felt that the key to validating the instrument was through repertoire. He was one of the first guitarists who was only casually interested in composing himself, unlike even the members of the Tárrega school, and his focus on performance led him to seek new works from other composers. He began by creating a body of work from composer friends and colleagues whose music spoke of their time and place.

The first composer he contacted was Frederico Moreno Torroba, and he followed with fellow Spaniards Joaquin Turina and Joaquin Rodrigo, the Italian Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, the Mexican Manuel Ponce, and the Brazilian Heitor Villa-Lobos. At the same time, Segovia was adamant in his dislike for the modernist stream of composition, resulting in a missed opportunity for guitar works from the likes of Stravinsky or Bartók. Schoenberg even offered to write for Segovia but was turned down.[8]

Ultimately more than 500 pieces were dedicated to Segovia, and he took pride in not having paid for a single one, which may partly account for the lack of great composers in his original repertoire. The many criticisms of his choice of commissions,[9] and the cavalier manner in which he changed the music composers wrote for him without ever consulting them persisted even after Segovia's death.[10] Those criticisms must be taken in perspective.

Segovia was attempting single-handedly to globalize the guitar and validate it in the classical world. His message needed to be personalized and distilled, and Segovia was playing music he believed in. At a Segovia concert, few people commented about the choice of program as they do now. His audience went for one thing, one message, even one name. His interpretations had an unbridled vigor and character, but perhaps the strongest impression he made was with his sound: a deep, beautiful tone that struck many hearts. Refusing to use amplification, even during concertos, Segovia played many concerts in his later years in oversized halls. I saw him more than once stop a concert to ask someone to refrain from coughing or rustling a program, insisting that large crowds should make the effort to hear him – and they did.

The first time I heard him was in an acoustically dry movie theater in suburban New York, and that evening that my life's work became clear to me. The last time I saw him was in San Francisco, where a young and cultish crowd had filled the hall, as they did every year. Now in his nineties, he was impossibly old to be playing a guitar concert, and his facility was understandably diminished. But his willpower remained resolute; he was going to fight in order to communicate something to his audience, and he succeeded.

It may be true that Segovia did not want to share the stage with a living equal: besides his unwillingness to work with great composers, he also never promoted or played music by a living guitarist-composer, such as Barrios, as I will discuss later. His many editions, though full of character and color, are below the level of scholarship exhibited by Pujol or Artur Schnabel. As a teacher Segovia attracted and nurtured the greatest of the next generation, but films and other evidence suggest an inflexibility concerning issues of interpretation. On a political and humanitarian level, Segovia supported Franco, and his letters to Ponce contain disturbing anti-Semitic statements – issues that now stand out when compared to the generosity and humanity exhibited by contemporaries such as Casals and Menuhin.

Still, it must be remembered that Segovia made all things possible for the classical guitarist. He transformed a landscape. In the process, he brought world fame to leading luthiers like Hermann Hauser, Jose Ramirez, and Ignacio Fleta, and he worked with Albert Augustine to introduce nylon strings for classical guitar after World War II (one of the most important developments of the century concerning the guitar). Eventually, most of the composers he worked with gained a level of world renown through their guitar works that none of their other music, to this day, has achieved. Though the music of these composers figures less in the repertoire of concert guitarists since Segovia's death in 1987, this is still a significant body of work for the guitar, which I will now examine in some more detail.

## Torroba, Turina, and Tedesco

Frederico Moreno Torroba (1891–1982) was the first composer to write for Segovia, his total output for guitar comprising over 100 works that are both difficult to play and musically simple. Despite a limited harmonic vocabulary and choice of keys, his guitar pieces display a keen melodic sense and gentle nationalistic flavor that have found them a secure place in the repertoire. Torroba's Sonatina in A, with its beautiful middle movement and bright outer movements, is perhaps his most captivating piece. Joaquin Turina (1882–1949) wrote much less music for guitar, all of it solo, but he emphasized (and perhaps overused) a flamenco character. Thus, his works tend to be cast in minor keys and frequently employ *rasgueado* and other flamenco techniques. They have also found themselves a lasting place in the repertoire. His *Sevillanas* and *Fandanguillo,* well-composed pieces that capture the flavor of Spain, have achieved the status of guitar classics. Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895–1968) also wrote nearly 100 works for guitar, composed over a period of some thirty-five years. Some of these were important landmarks, including the first concerto written for Segovia in 1939. Perhaps reacting to persistent negative criticism about the quality of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's works, Segovia included them less often in his programs from the 1950s, and Castelnuovo-Tedesco in turn began dedicating his works to a wider array of guitarists. His works have found less favor from later generations, but they are a significant contribution to the repertoire.

## Manuel Ponce

The second composer to respond to Segovia's call, and ultimately becoming Segovia's favorite, was the Mexican Manuel Ponce (1882–1948). Ponce met Segovia in 1923 and soon composed for him the *Canciones Mexicans* and *Sonata Mexicana*, both written in a simple harmonic language and heavily influenced by Mexican folk music. But then Ponce made a courageous decision. At forty-three years of age and already widely recognized in Mexico, he went to Paris to study with Paul Dukas between 1925 and 1933. Among his classmates there were Rodrigo and Villa-Lobos, and among his fellow Parisians was Segovia. These studies led to a new use of chromaticism and an expanded harmonic language, leading Ponce to produce the bulk of his guitar works at this time. He would go on to compose more than eighty works for guitar and would be eulogized by Segovia as having "saved the guitar."

There are two main reasons that Segovia seems to have preferred working with Ponce. First, Segovia's own compositional style was closest to Ponce's,

so this music spoke to him. Second, Ponce was willing to accept Segovia's modifications with little or no objection.[11] With three recording projects of his complete guitar works currently underway,[12] Ponce's position in the repertoire seems destined to endure.

## Heitor Villa-Lobos

Of the many compositions that were inspired by or dedicated to Segovia, the most enduring are by the Brazilian composer Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959). An astoundingly prolific composer, Villa-Lobos learned the guitar at seven or eight, and his first guitar compositions were written five years later. Segovia and Villa-Lobos met at a party in 1924 and quarreled about Villa-Lobos's use of the fifth finger of the right hand in his guitar music. According to guitar historian Brian Hodel, that meeting might have been the "most important event in the modern history of the guitar."[13] Villa-Lobos would go on to write more than fifty guitar works spanning his creative career, works that produce a big, robust sound, ever-influenced by the *choros*, characterized by finger patterns for both hands. Segovia compared Villa-Lobos's *Douze Etudes* to the Chopin piano études in importance, saying that Villa-Lobos "knows the guitar perfectly," and they remain the only advanced studies in the general repertoire. As such, they deserve a brief discussion.

The *Etudes* were probably conceived of as a set, as there is an extended circle of fifth cycle in major keys in the first part, and a corresponding one in minor keys in the second part. Because of that, the final note (as in nos. 7 and 8) or chord (as in nos. 9 and 10) of one étude can act as a kind of dominant to the next. (Etude 5 begins with the same two notes that ended Etude 4.) But there are also marked differences between the first six and the last six. For one thing, the earlier studies use Italian expression marks, and the first four contain patterns whose purpose is mostly explained in subtitles. The first étude has become a classic arpeggio study that guitarists practice with various fingerings, and which other composers have imitated as well; the second étude is probably the hardest of the set and might be the most difficult study in the repertoire, brilliantly challenging the coordination of the hands. The études in the second half of the set, with French indications, tend to contain more than a single challenge per piece, and are more fully developed. The last four contain some wonderfully unique sounds, textures, and motivic developments: the famous eleventh étude is the best thumb study in the repertoire, and the texture in the middle of the tenth study, employing an upper line that moves eight times faster than the same material below, is unique. Recently, a 1928 manuscript of these studies has become

available. It contains fascinating changes from the well-known published version, and it has already captured the imagination of guitarists, resulting in scholarly articles and recordings. Finally, Villa-Lobos's *Concerto, Preludes* and *Suite popular brasileira* are also mainstays of the repertoire.

## Joaquin Rodrigo

Segovia's relationship with Rodrigo (1901–99) was more complicated. Although he dedicated numerous works to Segovia, it remains curious that the greatest and most popular of all guitar concertos was not dedicated to the pillar of twentieth-century guitar. Rodrigo wrote the *Concierto de Aranjuez* in 1939, during the same time that both Ponce and Castelnuovo-Tedesco wrote concertos for Segovia, but the concerto was dedicated to Regino Sainz de la Maza, and it was Narciso Yepes who performed the piece around the world in its early life. Later, Pepe Romero became most closely associated with the work. The *Aranjuez* was instantly popular (Victoria Rodrigo reports that after an early performance in Madrid Rodrigo was carried through the streets on the shoulders of his admirers, a scene unimaginable for a classical composer anywhere today) and has gone a long way toward bringing the guitar to the attention of symphonic audiences, providing much work for professional players. Perhaps to make amends for the dedication of the *Aranjuez*, Rodrigo dedicated his next piece for guitar and orchestra, the *Fantasia para un Gentilhombre*, to Segovia in 1954. Although Rodrigo was certainly guilty of borrowing from himself in his guitar repertoire, he left a unique and challenging body of works, of which the *Invocacion y Danza* and *Trés Piezas Españolas* are among the best.

## Agustín Barrios

The most significant achievement for the guitar in the first part of the century outside of Segovia's influence is found in the life and works of Agustín Barrios Mangoré (1885–1944), regarded by many as the greatest guitarist-composer of all time. Born in Paraguay in 1885, he was a remarkable guitarist and a composer of striking originality and spirit. Barrios's frustrating career was spent mostly in Latin America and included a few trips to Europe. Desperate to achieve more recognition, he wore for a time an Indian headdress and reversed the spelling of his first name, calling himself Nitsuga, the Paganini from the jungles of Paraguay. His recordings, the first ever by a guitarist, reveal an astonishing technique and fluency, especially considering

the mediocre instruments and bad metal strings he was using. He ultimately made more than thirty records and wrote over 300 pieces. His music has the earthiness and the sadness of much Latin American literature. His *Un Sueño en la Floresta*, which extends the guitar's range downward with scordatura and upward with a high C, is beginning to rival Tárrega's *Recuerdos de l'Alhambra* as the most popular tremolo piece. Roughly translating as "A Dream in the Forest," *Un Sueño en la Floresta* uses the parallel minor–major relationship of *Recuerdos de l'Alhambra*, but Barrios ingeniously stops the dream in the middle, giving relief to the tremolo effect and setting up the climactic ending section.

*La Catedral*, perhaps Barrios's most famous piece, brilliantly recreates his experience of hearing Bach on a church organ as he walked away down the street. The Prelude he added twenty years later was one of his last pieces. Though he never cast his music in large forms or experimented with any of the harmonic developments of his time (if he even knew they existed), Barrios's place in the guitar pantheon seems only to grow more secure with each new year. The revival of his music was started by Richard Stover, who published the first large compilation of the composer's works and wrote the first biography.[14] Barrios's reputation was solidified in the 1970s by John Williams, who was introduced to the Barrios canon and brought his works to a large public through recordings.

The Segovia–Barrios relationship is a subject of much debate. Barrios met Segovia, played for him for several times, and repeatedly gave him music. Segovia was very cordial when they first met, but less so later, leading a snubbed Barrios to say that Segovia was "deaf in the heart."[15] Legend has it that Segovia promised to help Barrios but purposely did nothing. And Barrios's continual frustration with his career was constantly coming up against the growing worldwide fame of Segovia: in 1928, for instance, Barrios scheduled three concerts in Buenos Aires but had to cancel the last two owing to a sparse crowd in the first, while at the same time across town Segovia was embarking on nine successive sold-out concerts. It is therefore ironic that although Barrios never gained great renown in his lifetime, he is more of a living presence for many young guitarists now than is Segovia.

## Other early-century works

The twentieth century began with no major non-guitarist composers writing for the guitar, and it ended with almost all of them using it in one form or another. The first non-guitarist composer to accept the challenge seems

to have been Manuel de Falla in 1920. Responding to a request from the periodical *La Revue Musicale* to write an article commemorating the death of Debussy, Falla chose to write the small but brilliant *Homenaje: Le Tombeau de Claude Debussy* for guitar. Working with Miguel Llobet, Falla constructed an intricate, finely detailed and colored miniature that remains one of the guitar's finest pieces. Whereas many of the Spanish composers writing for Segovia worked to evoke Spain in their music, this quintessential Spanish composer looked to France in his single effort for guitar. Perhaps not trusting that enough players would play it, Falla orchestrated his *Homenaje*. He ultimately went to Segovia's Paris debut, and in 1932 they traveled together. It is unfortunate that although Falla planned another guitar piece, he never wrote again for the instrument.

A similar fate awaited Frank Martin's *Quatre Pièces Brèves* (1933). Hearing no response from Segovia, Martin initially assumed that the piece did not work for guitar, so he made it a piano piece called *Guitare* and later orchestrated it as well. Finally published in 1953, Martin's piece was recorded by Julian Bream and now has a solid place in the repertoire. Other important, but brief, compositions for the guitar from early in the century include Poulenc's simple *Sarabande*, Darius Milhaud's *Segoviana*, Albert Roussel's *Segovia*, and Ernst Krenek's twelve-tone *Suite*.

## Mid-century

By the middle of the century, Segovia was in his sixties. His career had grown steadily and he had won grudging respect for the guitar. In the 1950s, the guitar began to enter into the consciousness of a growing number of composers, and simultaneously into the masses through pop culture. Because of the decades of labor Segovia had put in up to that point, he was positioned to benefit from that trend. But it was the work of the next generation that would fully push the guitar into the mainstream classical world, by commissioning great composers, playing more chamber music, and in the case of John Williams, bringing down the barriers between the classical and pop worlds. Among the many brilliant players of this generation, mention must be made of Ida Presti – "a miracle of facility and grace," according to Pujol[16] – who dazzled audiences, but whose career was hindered by the war. Ultimately she performed in the Presti–Lagoya Duo, one of the greatest guitar duos ever, until her untimely death in 1967.

A set of ambassadors of the guitar emerged in mid-century when Spanish guitarist Celedonio Romero, who was imprisoned by Franco and later restricted from traveling and performing internationally as a guitarist, moved his family in secret to Southern California in 1957. There, with his three

sons Celin, Pepe, and Angel, he formed the first guitar quartet, and for the next decades they would play all over the world as The Romeros. Pepe and Angel would eventually go on to successful solo careers, with Pepe being the most famous member of the family. He achieved widespread popular appeal and promoted the music of Spain, becoming the guitarist most closely associated with Rodrigo. A third generation of Romeros is now touring with the quartet, continuing the legacy of this remarkable family.

## Bream and Williams

Two guitarists emerged from England in the late 1950s and early 1960s who would dominate the guitar field for several decades to come: the native Julian Bream and the Australian John Williams. For decades, Bream and Williams would be mentioned in the same breath, as a sort of Apollonian (Williams)–Dionysian (Bream) entity which contained the full reach of the guitar. Their careers represent an interesting dichotomy of the possibilities of the classical guitar. Bream stayed within a narrow, traditional definition of the instrument and investigated every aspect of the repertoire in great depth. He worked with the most important composers of his time and directly helped create what may be the greatest legacy of music that any guitarist has left, far more diverse and adventurous than what was written for Segovia. And John Williams, who had by all reports mastered the guitar repertoire by age twelve, quickly started to jump over the normally held bounds of the instrument, in one act foreshadowing a very popular trend and alienating Segovia. As performers with such different approaches but at the same time friends and occasional duet partners, Bream and Williams represented for many a kind of attraction of opposites that led to endless discussions, which in turn led to high record sales, concert ticket purchases, and an increased awareness of the guitar.

## Julian Bream

Bream has never been the greatest technical guitar player, which he admits in his characteristically modest fashion, but his playing is full of color, originality, and imagination. He juxtaposes great contrasts in sound color – to this day many players associate extreme *ponticello* playing with "a Bream thing" – and watching his concerts one sees more right-hand playing over the fingerboard, and general right-hand wandering for color than practiced by most guitarists. These contrasts particularly make his readings of music from the classical period come alive.

In the opinion of many of today's leading lute players, Bream's Renaissance lute playing, while not considered "authentic," inspired a whole generation of "authentic" players by its pure spirit.[17] His *Music of Spain* recordings revealed a convincing take on Spanish music, but his most enduring legacy will be the many composers he inspired. One of the earliest collaborations in Bream's career was also one of the most fruitful. Bream started accompanying the British tenor Peter Pears, and soon Pears's partner Benjamin Britten contributed his *Songs from the Chinese* (1957) to their repertoire. Songs by Walton, Berkeley, Peter Maxwell Davies, and others were to follow. In 1958 Pears and Bream premiered Henze's *Kammermusik*. Finally, Bream asked Britten for a solo piece, and received the monumental *Nocturnal*, one of the finest pieces ever written for the guitar. Britten originally thought of calling the piece *Night Fancy*, and even considered writing it for Bream's lute, but the final version ended up being a set of variations on the John Dowland song *Come, Heavy Sleep*. The *Nocturnal* breached new ground by employing a sustained and unified structure lasting some eighteen minutes. Using the interval of a perfect fourth as a catalyst, the *Nocturnal* portrays a psychic experience of night, beginning with gentle musing, moving into more restless, disturbed areas, and ending in a brilliant Passacaglia, a kind of primal battle between a force of stability and wild, disturbing creativity. These distinct elements merge, and finally resolve, into Dowland's song, the work's theme, coming at the end. One of the great qualities of the *Nocturnal* is that it is not overly difficult to play; in fact, its musical difficulties are greater than its technical ones, which is a rarity in the guitar repertoire. According to guitar historian Graham Wade, "the beginning of the end of Segovia's domination over the twentieth century repertoire may be dated from the Aldeburgh première of the Nocturnal."[18] Bream included the *Nocturnal* on a ground breaking album, *20th-Century Guitar* (1967), that also included Henze's *Drei Tentos*, the Frank Martin *Quatre Pièces Brèves*, and *El Polifemo d'Oro* by Reginald Smith Brindle. After that, some of the most important contemporary composers lined up to write for Bream. They included William Walton, Richard Rodney Bennett, Michael Tippett, Peter Maxwell Davies, Henze again, Toru Takemitsu, Malcolm Arnold, and many others. They created a repertoire of striking depth and richness, and moreover it was music that avoided the ever-present influence of Spain. Each instead found a unique sound world in the guitar, exploiting the instrument's depth and dimension. While Bennett and Smith Brindle explored serialism, and Walton contributed his characteristic lighter, tonal style, perhaps the most important compositions written for Bream were by Toru Takemitsu, Hans Werner Henze, and Peter Maxwell Davies. These three composers each used the guitar as a solo and chamber instrument, and except for Maxwell Davies, wrote concertos as well.

## Maxwell Davies, Takemitsu, and Henze

Peter Maxwell Davies (b. 1934), who spoke specifically of wanting to avoid Spanish influence, wrote three solo guitar works of increasing proportions in his dark, quixotic style; the most effective of those is the one recorded by Bream, *Hill Runes*. Maxwell Davies dares an amazing degree of counterpoint on the guitar, and while his works have not found a large place in the repertoire, they are brilliantly crafted and create a truly unique sound. Besides his solos and a striking work for guitar and voice, *Dark Angels*, Maxwell Davies included the guitar in many pieces created for his ensemble, The Fires of London.

The guitar works of Toru Takemitsu (1930–96) include four solos, a set of twelve song arrangements originally intended as études, three concertos, and numerous chamber works that, to various degrees, have found a niche in the repertoire of guitarists. Takemitsu was deeply interested in the guitar and its repertoire. (In 1991 I participated in a guitar festival he directed in Japan and it remains to this day the most interesting and diverse guitar festival I have ever attended.) He counted among his friends several guitarists, such as Norio Sato and Kiyoshi Shumura, and even remarked that his first piece, *Folios,* makes some caustic remarks about the guitar repertoire, reflecting his frustration with guitarist-composers who were afraid to either leave tonality or fully embrace it. He told Julian Bream that of all the instruments he wrote for, he loved the guitar the most.[19] Bream in turn has said that of all the composers he worked for, Takemitsu had both the best ear and also the most catholic tastes. Perhaps the strongest symbol of how important the guitar was to Takemitsu was the last piece he wrote, *In the Woods*. Takemitsu was ill throughout 1995, and wrote little. His last orchestral piece, *Spectrum Canticle*, for guitar, violin, and orchestra was completed earlier in the year. He finally was released from the hospital, and in November felt able to compose. With some of his last energy he then wrote *In the Woods*, his largest solo guitar work and one of our greatest pieces. The repertoire Takemitsu left us represents one of our instrument's strongest, a music that uses silence and color, particularly exploiting the darker range of the spectrum. Takemitsu uniquely blended Western and Eastern influences, and as he aged his music included more pop influences. His pioneering sense of cross-cultural fusion was ahead of its time, and in the guitar he found a perfect vehicle to express his world.

Hans Werner Henze (b. 1926) writes a social music (his first book of essays is called *Music and Politics*) that is largely affected by his young life in Nazi Germany, when he was forced to serve in the army, and the memories of his father, a Nazi officer, waving his knife while drunkenly singing songs about killing Jews. Henze finally left Germany for Italy in 1951, but those early

memories were seared into him. His music is usually programmatic, and it almost always sides with the oppressed. His *Kammermusik*, for instance, is set to poetry by Hölderlin, who spent the last forty years of his life in and out of mental institutions. This work contains the solo guitar pieces *Drei Tentos*, some of the most effervescent music ever written for the instrument. After Henze declared himself a communist in the 1960s, he moved to Cuba and wrote the monumental guitar work *El Cimarrón*, in 1969–70. This work sets the story of Estabon Montejo, a runaway slave who experienced tremendous hardship as he embodied the history of Cuba for 100 years. When he finally told his story as a bitter old man of 102, it represented a perfect tale for Henze, and he set it as an evening-length drama for baritone, guitar, percussion, and flute. The guitarist in this case was Leo Brouwer, who was intricately involved in devising the unique notational system used in *El Cimarrón*, and in creating the guitar part. The piece involves much improvisation – each player is also a percussionist – but more than that, the players become *El Cimarrón*, and reflect his emotions and experiences as he tells his tale.

In the 1970s Julian Bream felt he wanted a larger, more monumental solo piece, as he had been receiving many works consisting of shorter movements. He approached Henze, known for his long works, and jokingly suggested something on the scale of Beethoven's enormous "Hammerklavier" sonata. Henze had been thinking of setting Shakespeare, and he came up with *Royal Winter Music, Sonata no. 1*, a thirty-minute extended *Sonata on Shakespearean Characters*. Five years later he completed the cycle with *Royal Winter Music, Sonata no. 2*, resulting in the longest solo guitar piece up to that time. In the introduction to the first sonata, he writes:

> The guitar is a "knowing" or "knowledgeable" instrument, with many limitations but also many unexplored spaces and depths within those limits. It possesses a richness of sound capable of embracing everything one might find in a gigantic contemporary orchestra; but one has to start from silence in order to notice this: one has to pause, and completely exclude noise. The *dramatis personae* of this piece enter the sound of the guitar as if it were a curtain. Through masks, voices and gestures, they speak to us of great passion, of tenderness, sadness, and comedy: strange events in people's lives. Into this, the whispering voices of spirits are mingled.[20]

The guitar indeed becomes a big, emotional instrument in this large work. The characters Henze chooses to depict are mostly not the powerful, but the wounded. The cycle begins and ends with madness and dissonance with "Gloucester" (Richard III) and "Mad Lady Macbeth," and reaches its most passive and tonal moments in the middle, with "Oberon" and "Sir Andrew Aguecheek." It is a monumental and important piece for guitar.

Henze has conceived a unique sound world in each of his major guitar pieces, he has extended the guitar beyond previously imagined limits, and he has helped reveal once again how large are the dimensions of this simple, idiosyncratic instrument.

While *El Cimarrón* brilliantly expanded the sound range of the guitar by using effects, the solo guitar music of Henze, Takemitsu, and Maxwell Davies calls for few special techniques, little scordatura, and not much unusual notation. On the other hand, Alberto Ginastera's brilliant 1976 Sonata employs several special notations to indicate indeterminate high pitches, whistling sounds, and several special tamboras derived from Argentinian folk music. Nikita Koshkin began his twenty-seven-minute long *Suite: The Prince's Toys* when he was only eighteen – it took six years to write – and he decided early that it would be an exercise in giving "effects some meaningful character." He ultimately decided upon a literary theme, and the piece tells the story using unusual effects and notations throughout. In 1967 the iconoclastic Italian composer Giacinto Scelsi (1905–88) wrote a twenty-minute, still unpublished piece called *Ko-tha* in which the guitarist lays the instrument on his or her lap and makes various percussive and string sounds. Perhaps the most extreme use of altered notation is in the monumental (but rarely performed) *Les Six Cuertas* by Alvaro Company, which employs a notation of six staves, one for each string.[21]

## John Williams

> I am not primarily interested in the problem which preoccupies many guitarists: the expansion of the guitar repertoire . . . The great thing that the guitar can do is to get in "with both feet" to the music that is going on in our and almost anybody else's society; and in a way that belongs to the spirit of what almost all people feel in music.[22]

John Williams has worked with composers throughout his career, the most significant being the Australian Peter Sculthorpe and Takemitsu, but his most enduring legacy is the standard of technical excellence he has maintained with such remarkable consistency through more than forty years of high-level concerts. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Williams is undoubtedly at the top of the classical guitar field, commanding a higher fee and enjoying more popularity, by far, than any other player. And he has always seemed remarkably unfazed by it all.

What makes Williams's career so ground-breaking is his ability to exist both inside and outside the traditional boundaries of the classical guitar. After establishing himself as the dominant young guitar player of his time, he decisively stepped away, shocking many and alienating Segovia, who had virtually anointed Williams as his successor. In the 1980s he toured with

his own rock band, Sky, and since then he has kept at least one foot in the pop world. Was it boredom? Foresight? Simple musical desire? Probably some of each. In the guitar world now, the boundaries between styles are thankfully disappearing. Groups like the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet and the Assad Duo have considerably broadened their audience base; they are marketed as groups that belong as much to the formerly defined pop world as they do to the classical one. Perhaps the strongest vision in this direction came from the Kronos Quartet, which forever changed the landscape of the string quartet, but Williams had anticipated all of this, doing what he wanted and crossing over stylistic borders freely. And of course, he played the perfect crossover instrument. The guitar, now played by more peoples of the world than any other instrument, belongs happily to different stylistic and cultural worlds. The nylon-string guitar certainly has a tradition of crossover players, such as Charlie Byrd and Laurindo Almeida, but they did not have as powerful an effect as did Williams, who was already at the top of the classical guitar field.

As to the classical guitar repertoire, Williams played and recorded the Segovia repertoire, focused heavily on Albeniz, recorded all the Bach lute suites, and then found the music of Barrios, which had a profound effect on him. His playing is characterized by rhythmic drive and propulsion, clarity, and flawlessness. It is not burdened by an overly nuanced "classical" approach or much affect. Given his wide musical influences, it is curious that his own transcriptions and editions reflect more conservative musical tastes than, say, Bream. Williams tends to play fewer notes and reduce effects to their essence; but what he does play is so powerful that he is known, justifiably, as the greatest guitar player of our time.

Even with all that Bream and Williams have done for the guitar, they have not been immune to criticism, as expressed by Eliot Fisk:

> My rebellion in truth is against Bream and Williams. Because I have to confess I'm a bit disappointed in both of them. From time immemorial, it has been the practice of one generation to pass on to the next what it learned. But my generation has almost no guitar fathers. Ghiglia and Diaz teach and are accessible, but Bream and Williams are not . . . I was very saddened by their inaccessibility. I feel that my generation lost a lot because of that.[23]

As always, there is another side. Bream once told me that what he felt he brought to the table was freshness, which comes from his ability to actually pull away from the guitar from time to time and recharge his batteries. I think that the same can be said of Williams, who has been careful not to let himself become overexposed. For many years, even at the height of his career as a Columbia artist, he chose to appear only rarely in the United States, largely

because of his political convictions. But his reputation through recordings only seemed to grow in America during that time, and consequently each rare performance became magnified. I do not wish to defend inaccessibility, but in the case of Bream and Williams what was disappointing to guitarists may also have made them, paradoxically, better artists.

## Leo Brouwer

The Cuban Leo Brouwer, who worked with both Williams and Bream, and won great respect from Takemitsu and Henze, is certainly the most popular and performed guitarist-composer of our time. Born in 1939, Brouwer began writing in 1955, and his compositions from age seventeen are still performed today. His only composition studies took place in the United States in 1960–61, sending him into an avant-garde, atonal direction that influenced his music throughout the 1960s. Many guitarists regard works from this period such as *Canticum, Elogio de la Danza*, and *Eternal Espiral* as his strongest. During the 1970s Brouwer wrote less and performed more, but near the end of the decade he sustained a hand injury that effectively ended his performing career. In the early 1980s he began a prolific period of new writing in a more tonal, popular style. This reflected the general tendency in classical music, which, led by the American minimalists, was veering back toward tonality and a steady pulse. Brouwer's second set of *Estudios Sencillos* and *El Decameron Negro* embody this new style, which he calls his New Simplicity. Brouwer has continued in this vain for the past twenty years, writing a remarkable amount of music, including numerous concertos, solos that are performed frequently, and much more. It seems that whatever style he employs appeals to audiences. Part of the secret to Brouwer's success is how playable his music is; the music works so well on the instrument, that, contrary to most of the repertoire, Brouwer's music sounds harder than it is.

## The 1960s and 1970s

> My life's ambitions are fulfilled. A whole new generation of classical guitarists have been born to carry on my work, and they will have their hands full. The classical guitar is just beginning. SEGOVIA[24]

The 1960s were a phenomenal time for the guitar. As rock became a global musical language, Segovia benefited from its guitar-oriented approach and reached the height of his popularity. The virtuoso twosome of Bream and Williams occupied a place of distinction as highly successful and creative

recording artists. The first generation of Segovia students was emerging with Christopher Parkening in America, Oscar Ghiglia in Italy, Carlos Barbosa-Lima from Brazil, the Venezuelan Alirio Diaz was dazzling audiences, and Leo Brouwer was already a cult figure in Cuba. Many classical guitarists began initially with rock and roll, but eventually looked for something else, and discovered the classical guitar through one of these inspiring presences, usually Segovia.[25]

Thus a new and large generation of classical guitarists was bred, now middle-aged, that began to make its mark in the 1970s. They are now teaching in virtually every guitar department in the world, recording and touring, and resembling a small army that finds good composers and seduces them to write for guitar. The generation is so big and the field has become so crowded that guitarists have begun to explore many new repertoires and practices, breaking new stylistic ground in the process.

## Scholarship

Besides continuing the Tárrega tradition of transcribing Albeniz and Granados for the guitar, Segovia also elevated the guitar through his transcriptions of the music of other great composers, particularly Bach. In fact, it was the ubiquitous presence of Bach on his programs that separated Segovia from his contemporaries. However, while Emilio Pujol was producing scholarly, critical editions of the vihuelists, Segovia's editions were highly personalized transcriptions, with the Bach Chaconne (from the D minor Violin Partita) in 1935 being perhaps his landmark achievement. Guitarists of the time generally followed his directions, often customizing editions with slight changes. But in the next years, good critical editions of Sor and Giuliani began to appear, and as the years passed, this scholarly trend turned into a deluge, to the point where now one can obtain the complete works of almost all the major and minor nineteenth-century guitar figures. The new high level of guitar scholarship and research led to some wonderful discoveries, such as a strong Sonata by the Spanish composer Antonio José. While the old editions of Segovia and others are valuable in revealing the aesthetics of great artists, guitarists are no longer enslaved to those editions, and often find their own interpretations by starting with what the composers actually wrote. From our perspective, the editions of Segovia reveal a kind of living performance practice that has significant historical value. Though few guitarists now use the Segovia version of, say, the Prelude and Fugue BWV 998 of Bach, in a comparison of the unedited Ponce Preludes with Segovia's vast and colorful changes, to these ears the Segovia edition is far more vivid.[26]

A strong trend emerged, promoted and perhaps begun by John Williams, to reduce and even omit the fingerings offered in guitar editions. Though this is by no means universal, Williams has expressed his reasons:

> I don't think guitar editions should be published solely for their fingering . . . If you want to play a note on the second string, play it on the second string. There's no great musical reason why you should play it on the first or third string. I think guitarists generally read badly and in an unmusical way in part because they tend to read fingering.[27]

## Lutherie

In the early part of the century, virtually all classical guitarists played instruments built by Spanish luthiers, and most of the best luthiers came from the workshop of Manuel Ramirez. Then, following the guitar acquisitions of Segovia, a few major figures dominated the landscape – Hauser, Fleta, and then Ramirez. In the 1960s Ramirez was the guitar of choice, but soon new luthiers could be found in practically every corner of the world. As guitar audiences grew, luthiers tried to make louder instruments, perhaps culminating in the revolutionary design of Greg Smallman, the Australian luthier made world famous by John Williams. Later, after the death of Segovia in 1987 and with the advent of better technologies, guitarists began to use amplification, even in solo recitals. That is another trend pioneered by John Williams, who very successfully enhances his solo recitals in large halls. Though Pepe Romero and Manuel Barrueco continue to play the Rodrigo concerto as he preferred it, unamplified, many soloists and groups, such as the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, now amplify, even in medium-sized halls. (The quartet members feel that their popularity increased dramatically when they started to amplify.) And while volume is still a goal of luthiers, the increase in guitarists using amplification has meant that luthiers do not have to sacrifice refinement and subtlety in their instruments for this ever elusive loud guitar. Additionally, there have been experiments with adding strings and changing the basic design of the guitar during the century, but few of these attempts resulted in widespread adoption. Narciso Yepes played a ten-string guitar, and received some brilliant music for it by Maurice Ohana, but the instrument is virtually unplayed today. The Swedish guitarist Goran Sollscher has long played the eleven-string Alt-Guitar, but while he has a few imitators, no widespread movement exists there either. There are several eight-string guitars, including a very inventive instrument played by Paul Galbraith, which has one higher and one lower string than normal, and an end-pin that fits into a resonating box on the floor. The one invention that seems to have taken hold is the Millennium design of Thomas Humphrey. Inspired by some nineteenth-century guitar designs,

the Millennium features a slanted guitar face which facilitates access to the upper positions. Millenniums are played by many top performers, the design has been adapted to various degrees by numerous luthiers, and Martin Millenniums are now being mass produced.

## Education

The year 1964 saw the first degree program for the guitar in the United States at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. When I was looking for college guitar programs ten years later, there were still only a handful, but a decade after that there were dozens, and now virtually every major music school has a guitar program. This has led to a more educated generation of guitarists, one that more easily can enter the mainstream classical world through chamber music and by commissioning the best-known composers. Through discussion and interchange, technical ideas have become standardized for the first time in the history of the guitar. For instance, almost all players now position the right hand with a straight wrist. Teachers and players are also working to ease the strain of guitar playing on the body; many guitarists are demanding 65 cm string length guitars or smaller, though the standard size was 66 cm or more twenty years ago. Also, devices to replace the footstool are being invented constantly, and more and more players are using them. Another encouraging trend for pedagogy is that a body of interesting repertoire has emerged at easier playing levels, making it more enticing to learn and teach the beginning levels of guitar. Guitar faculties at conservatories and universities have evolved into two different and successful patterns: perhaps the most common has a primary professor aided by other teachers, assistants, or graduate students who primarily teach the professor's way. Another model has several peers, usually directed by a chairperson, who teach in quite different ways from each other, so that students contact diverse approaches. Among many outstanding teachers around the world, Aaron Shearer of the United States, Abel Carlevaro of Uruguay, and Isaias Savio of Brazil must be cited for producing numerous high-level professionals.

## New works

The force and conviction of this generation has been so great that for the first time, every major composer of our time has written for the instrument, with a few exceptions such as György Ligeti, Arvo Pärt, and Philip Glass. Certain guitarists have been highly focused in this area, and it seems

that every country has at least one major player who specializes in and is committed to playing new music. The German guitarist Reinbert Evers has worked with many composers and has particularly supported younger composers. In Sweden, Magnus Anderson has done similar work. In France there is Rafael Andia, in Japan Norio Sato, in Denmark Erling Møldrup, and in Italy Angelo Gilardino. In the US David Starobin has a remarkable record of working with major composers, and formed his own record company, Bridge, to help promote these pieces. Although Starobin has commissioned a steady stream of works for decades, with the particular help of Rose Augustine and the Albert Augustine Company, it was Elliott Carter's work *Changes* from 1983 that unleashed a stream of American works for Starobin. Still in his forties, Starobin has had more than 300 pieces written for him and he has received many awards for this work, including the first ever Avery Fisher Career Prize for a guitarist. In the middle of all these activities, he developed an interest in the nineteenth-century repertoire for the guitar on original instruments. I have done similar kinds of work with composers, and some of the results have been a concerto from Henze, *Ode an Eine Äolsharfe*, three works from Pulitzer Prize winner Aaron Jay Kernis (including one for guitar with string quartet, *100 Greatest Dance Hits*, that seems to be entering the repertoire), and a projected series of twenty-six pieces from Terry Riley. Sharon Isbin proudly proclaims that she has had more concertos written for her than any other guitarist. She has performed the concerto *Troubadours* by John Corigliano some thirty times. Luciano Berio wrote his *Sequenza XI* and *Chemins V* for Eliot Fisk (who has also worked with Robert Beaser, Nicholas Maw, and George Rochberg), Alberto Ginastera wrote his Sonata for Carlos Barbosa-Lima, and Astor Piazzolla wrote *Cinco Piezas* for Roberto Aussel and *Tango Suite* for the Assads, to name a few of the most celebrated pieces.

As part of this generation, there exist a number of guitarist-composers who are very popular, in the tradition of Sor, Giuliani, Barrios, and Brouwer. Mostly European, they include Roland Dyens, Nikita Koshkin, Carlo Domeniconi, Dusan Bogdanovic, Stepan Rak, Francis Klenyans, and Andrew York. All play programs featuring their own music. Most of these composers have a "hit single," a particular piece that is performed much more than their other works. Their music is very idiomatic and enjoyable to play, which attracts performers and audiences. Certain composers have had particular champions: Vladimir Mikulka catapulted to guitar fame by introducing the works of Rak and Koshkin, and David Russell brought Klenyans and Domeniconi to wide attention by touring their works. The guitarist-composer trend is growing, as many young players are composing as well, and much of this music blurs the formerly held lines of classical and pop.

With all due respect to these composers, my personal interest has been more in working with non-guitarist composers for the very reason that their music is not as idiomatic. I enjoy collaborating with composers who do not play the instrument because they often have to reach further to imagine sound on the guitar, and also because I become much more involved in the creation of the music and its realization on the instrument.

## Latin America; chamber music

The greatest integration of classical technique and style with more popular styles comes from the long guitar tradition of Brazil.[28]

While many Brazilian guitarists use classical right-hand techniques on either electric or nylon-string guitars, and many folk guitarists there study classical methods, a style of composition has emerged that interweaves European classical guitar tradition with jazz and native styles. Thus, an earlier generation led by Baden Powell, Dino Setecordas, and Antonio Carlos Jobim bred a younger generation including Egberto Gismonti Amim Nader Yussef Bon Nader (better known by his first two names), Luis Bonfá, Sergio Assad, and Paulo Bellinati. In Argentina a similar blended music was heavily influenced by the national tango, as the non-guitarist Astor Piazzolla achieved widespread prominence in the guitar literature through a few original compositions and many transcriptions. Argentinian guitarist-composers Eduardo Falu and Jorge Morel were followed by Jorge Cardosa and Maximo Diego Pujol.[29]

In Venezuela the work of Vincente Emilio Sojo bred that of Antonio Lauro. Uruguay has had a fertile guitar scene which Segovia helped seed by his residence in Montevideo during the war, and which ultimately led to the prominence of guitarist-composer Abel Carlevaro. Often this music sounds more traditional than classical, but it finds a natural home on the nylon-string guitar, and it is performed internationally by classical guitarists. In fact, this repertoire has filled a gap, providing an audience-satisfying alternative to the Segovia repertoire or the more modern compositions written for Bream, a music that speaks more of place than does the music of the guitarist-composers mentioned above. And it has found its particular champions, such as Alirio Diaz playing Lauro, or the Assad brothers duo playing Brazilian music.

Chamber music groups like the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet and the Assad duo are playing at high levels of precision and cohesion, and have developed large popular followings. Guitar orchestras have proliferated, especially in Japan, and transcriptions abound for these groups at varying levels. Steve Reich wrote his *Electric Counterpoint* for guitar soloist with

fourteen prerecorded guitars on tape, but that is now routinely done by fifteen live guitarists. A significant repertoire has been developed for flute and guitar, featuring excellent pieces by Astor Piazzolla, Takemitsu, and Robert Beaser. In fact, one can now find interesting duo repertoire for guitar with any conceivable instrument, as well as, of course, for two, three, four, and more guitars. And the larger ensemble repertoire continues to grow, with certain combinations, such as guitar and string quartet, really flourishing.

## Early music

There has been a corresponding explosion of lute playing, with a brilliant generation achieving world fame, led by Paul O'Dette, Nigel North, Hopkinson Smith, Konrad Junghänel, and Jakob Lindberg. In fact, much early music seems to have been ceded to lute players, and the Renaissance period is one that may be less frequently performed on guitar now than a few decades ago. As for Baroque music on classical guitar, all of the Bach solo works for lute, violin, and cello have become common fare. But not content with that, and hungry for more Bach, guitarists have pushed the boundaries back. Recently a recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations by Kurt Rodamer, using anywhere from two to four guitars, became a popular recording on Sony, and that was topped by a recording and publication of the entire Goldberg Variations on one guitar played by József Eötvös. Two trends have evolved in the playing of Bach on the guitar, both of which directly contradict the lute technique of Bach's time. The first is an attempt to articulate trills more clearly by playing them on two strings, a so-called cross-string trill. (Interestingly, there is apparently only one such cross-string trill in the voluminous works of Bach's contemporary, the great lutenist Sylvius Leopold Weiss.) The second, probably started by Leo Brouwer in the 1970s, is to reduce or even omit all left-hand slurs as a way of avoiding unintended accents or groupings. However, the tablature of Weiss and his colleagues clearly shows a plethora of slurs as well as scale passages notated across strings that create a campanella effect. In fact, successive notes fingered on the same string (as many current Bach guitar editions call for) produce a sound that Weiss went out of his way to avoid.

## The nineteenth century and transcriptions

Nineteenth-century works have been played frequently by guitarists, sometimes on earlier instruments, and when guitarists finally looked beyond Sor and Giuliani, composers such as Legnani, Mertz, Regondi, and Coste saw the light of day. One of the great discoveries was made by the indefatigable

scholar (and retired airline pilot) Matanya Ophee, who unearthed *10 Etudes* by Giulio Regondi, which is arguably the finest nineteenth-century guitar work. Still not fully content, and still searching – perhaps both for musical reasons and to come up with a unique career niche – guitarists transcribed anything and everything. Manuel Barrueco opened up many ears with his ground-breaking recording of Albeniz and Granados in the late 1970s, which led to a career that has kept Barrueco near the top of the field for years. In 1981 a young Japanese guitarist named Kazuhito Yamashita exploded onto the scene with a previously inconceivable transcription of Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition.* Utilizing new techniques and sounds as if it was a new composition, the transcription garnered world attention for Yamashita and seemed to smash the boundaries of what was possible. Yamashita went on to transcribe Dvořák's *New World* Symphony, Beethoven's Violin Concerto, and many other works.

## The 1980s

One theory has it that the classical guitar reached a peak of popularity in the 1980s and has gradually lost its audience since then. The problem with this argument is that it is hard to define exactly what is the "classical" guitar anymore. In the 1980s New Age music, played mostly on steel-string guitar, became immensely popular and satisfied some listeners' needs for an intimate, unplugged repertoire. Some classical guitarists like Andrew York and Benjamin Verdery have even moved in that direction, finding a niche writing and playing music that is indistinguishable from some New Age guitarists. Other players, from Barrueco and Sollscher to Ichiro Suzuki, have released Beatles records, and collaborations between classical and pop guitarists are more common. So just as listeners may have moved to the popular side of the guitar, classical guitarists seem to be going there also.

Another factor that has affected the guitar's popularity is the decline of solo recitals over the last quarter century. Consequently, guitarists now rely more than ever on guitar societies for solo recitals, and while these societies are healthy and thriving in many places, they do little toward moving the guitar into the mainstream of classical music or generating large audiences. In short, as some classical guitarists seek a specific niche for themselves, others – for both musical and professional reasons – are trying to inhabit as many musical worlds as possible. Collaborating with pop artists, playing chamber music, working with composers, and playing solo recitals for guitar societies all serve to broaden a guitarist's musical horizons, and they can provide enough work to combine into a full schedule.

## The 1990s and the challenges of the new generation

A new generation is now emerging that is more numerous, more educated, and technically at an even higher standard than the previous one – and this is a healthy development. Naturally, there are the same praises and criticisms about this new generation as there are about other young instrumentalists: that while they are so technically good and facile, they are also not readily distinguishable from each other. Certainly it is a very different world from that of the early and mid twentieth century, when all instruments were dominated by a few distinct personalities. One could always recognize Segovia on the radio, or Casals, or Rubinstein – or Bream, for that matter. Composers may even be happier now, as younger artists impose less artistic personality on their works. Nevertheless, there are big challenges for younger guitarists today. One of the main ones is the scarcity of teaching positions. The relatively young age of the majority of guitar professors in colleges and conservatories suggests that they will still be teaching in their jobs for at least another twenty years. That fact, along with the decrease in the allure of solo recitals and the larger number of aspiring guitarists, makes existing in the field a daunting task. Indomitable will, risk-taking, luck, and above all, great music making are necessary ingredients.

The classical guitar itself also faces challenges. This is an instrument that is experiencing an erosion in the popularity of the traditional Segovia repertoire. There is the sense for some that, since "anything goes" and all styles seem to be merging, there are no moorings, no anchors. Certainly there are no great Beethoven sonatas to define us. And there is the tendency to define ourselves by remaining in the same insular world that we have always lived in. Thus, one can attend guitar festivals that consist largely of solo recitals consisting of music by guitarist-composers for other guitarists, a throwback to the small pre-Segovia world of Tárrega and some of his followers. We still do not take enough chances, we still do not have enough women guitarists, and there can be a dulling sameness to our efforts.

## Conclusion

Accepting an honorary doctorate at Florida State University in 1969, Segovia listed "five purposes aiming at the redemption of the guitar":

> My prime effort was to extract the guitar from the noise and disreputable folkloric amusements. This was the second of my purposes: to create a wonderful repertoire for my instrument. My third purpose was to make the guitar known to the philharmonic public all over the world. Another and fourth purpose has been to provide a unifying medium for those

> interested in the development of the instrument. This I did through my support of the now well-known international musicological journal, the *Guitar Review*, developed by Vladimir Bobri. I am still working on my fifth and maybe the last purpose, which is to place the guitar in the most important conservatories for teaching the young lovers of it, and thus securing its future.[30]

If we step back and scan the past hundred years, it is an amazing view. Not even the visionary Segovia could have foreseen the landscape of today. And he would certainly not like all that he saw. But all of his life's missions have been met, and the guitar is already speaking to the people of yet another century.