FACULTY CONCERT SERIES

Featuring

ALEXANDER DUNN
GUITAR

Saturday, October 18, 2014 • 8:00 p.m.
Phillip T. Young Recital Hall
MacLaurin Building, University of Victoria
Admission by donation
Prelude D. 98
A Fancy D. 73
Resolution D. 13
Mrs. Vaux Galliard D. 32
Mr. Dowland’s Midnight D. 99
Fantasia D. 71

Variations sur Folia de España et Fugue

Preludio
1 – Poco vivo
2 – Allegretto mosso
3 – Lento
4 – Un po’ agitato
5 – Andantino
6 – Allegretto espressivo
7 – Andante
8 – Moderato
9 – Andantino affettuoso
10 – Presto

11 – Andantino
12 – Animato
13 – Sostenuto
14 – Allegro non troppo
15 – Allegro moderato, energico
16 – Moderato
17 – Allegro ma non troppo
18 – Allegro scherzando
19 – Vivo e marcat
20 – Andante

Fuga

Intermission

Studies for Guitar

Weeping Willows
A Summer Breeze
Le Gibet de Ravel
Luminous Sunset
Images of Nature
Still Waters

Children playing
Frost and Dew
Reflections
Choral
The Bells of Notre Dame
A Gale is blowing

Guitar by Antonius Mueller, Aarbergen, Germany, 2014
JOHN DOWLAND

Dowland’s genius is apparent through his five books of songs for voices and instruments, his Seven Teares collection for viol consort, and a large body of works for solo Renaissance lute—matched only in sheer volume by its unerring musical quality. As lutenist to the Danish royal court and in close acquaintance with many figures in Queen Elisabeth’s circle, Dowland was a well-traveled singer and lutenist highly regarded in Europe, who never attained the position of lutenist to the Queen. Through political machinations he was somehow accused of embroilment in an assassination plot to kill the monarch—possibly because to his Catholic faith.

The set of works on this program begin with an exploratory Preludium—an unusual form in the Dowland canon. Dating from his younger years, a sprightly contrapuntal Fancy (fantasia) follows, featuring a rousing tremolo finale. Dowland’s fantasias are remarkable blends of English vocal polyphony and Italianate instrumental practices. A gorgeous pavan called Resolution is followed by Mrs. Vaux Galliard. The brief and mysterious character piece Mr. Dowland’s Midnight sets a sober tone leading into an extended chromatic fantasy. This set is an apt likeness of Dowland, who ranges from brilliant virtuosity to darker chromatic inflection, and is a fitting portrait of one of Renaissance England’s most revered and influential musicians.

MANUEL PONCE

The soft-spoken composer from Mexico City never attained the international status of his countrymen Carlos Chavez or Silvestre Revueltas. Yet Ponce, who studied in Paris in the 1920’s with Paul Dukas, and absorbed French impressionistic traits, brought a neo-Romantic sensibility and formal structure to his generous output for guitar.

The Folia Variations—one of his larger guitar works—takes the familiar folia chord progression through a series of twenty brief variations. Its genesis began in 1928 when Spanish guitarist Segovia requested a large set of variations: “I would like you to make some brilliant variations on the theme of the Folias of Spain…. If you don’t want to sign it we can ascribe it to Giuliani, of whom many things remain to be discovered.” In 1929, Ponce produced a powerful work, destined to become one of the most important guitar works of the early 20th century. According to correspondence between Segovia and Ponce, it originally included a prélude: “Whenever I write I am tempted
to explain why I haven’t offered the Prélude, Folias and Fugue to Schott’;
and, in another letter concerning a performance at the Paris Opera during 1931, “I am thinking of including the Variations on the Folias, without the
Prélude, but with the Fugue.” Segovia considered some variations unplayable
and altered the work with several cuts.

ANDREW ALLAN WILLCOCKS
Willcocks hailed from Canterbury where as a child he was encouraged
to study the guitar with Giulia Pelzer, sister to the most important female
guitarist of the nineteenth century. He later devoted his attention to piano,
organ and composition. Study in Paris under Paul Dukas exposed him to
the French style and it was there he formed deep friendships with Manual
Ponce, Cyril Scott, and other notable musicians. Indeed these influences and
especially Ravel, can be discerned in his blending of impressionist syntax with
expert instrumental writing.

12 Miniature Preludes for guitar also date from his Paris years alongside the
Studies, which were discovered and published in 2012. The first, Weeping
Willows, dedicated to the Mexican composer Ponce, is largely based on
the whole-tone scale, moodily ranging across the instrument, and marked
‘dreary’. A Summer Breeze is a fluid arpeggio study, lightly dispelling any mood
of gravity.

An expressive highlight of the cycle, Le Gibet de Ravel, is a stark re-imagining
of the second movement of Ravel’s monumental Gaspard de la Nuit. It is
a monotonic tableaux on Alois Bertrand’s poem Le gibet (The Gallows),
whose translation of the first and last couplet read:

Ah! What do I hear, was it the north wind that screeches in the night,
or the hanged one who utters a sigh on the fork of the gibbet?

... It is the bell that tolls from the walls of a city, under the horizon,
and the corpse of the hanged one that is reddened by the setting sun.

Willcocks begins with a direct quote of the Ravel, slowly evolving into origi-
nal music, but somehow combining elegance with utter dread.

Luminous Sunset—prolonging the setting of dusk—scatters the hex with a
spacious treatment of harmonics and flowing arpeggios. It fades gently into
high-pitched harmonics, resolving the anxiety of Le Gibet.
Images of Nature exists in a physical realm with dynamic figuration, and chiaroscuro shifts of brightness and shadow. It relaxes into a meditative state, but only to recall the forceful exclamation of its opening.

Inspired by Charles J. Pahlmie’s Silent Water—a darkly hued oil on canvas landscape in which the partially obscured moon is reflected in a deep, placid lake—Still Waters is a calm, unruffled meditation on beautiful sonorities, dedicated to the Spanish virtuoso Miguel Llobet.

The frolicsome Children Playing echoes Mussorsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition and Debussy; hurried musical motives scamper across its pages. Frost and Dew also draws its inspiration from a painting—Peter Scott Purvil’s Frost and Dew—contrasting a snow-covered lakeside with the slow thaw of early spring. In this study, Willcocks begins with frigid major seconds, slowly expanding into a radiant conclusion. Reflections recalls Debussy’s piano work Images (Vol. 1) with its sumptuous harmonies. It begins with a sense of breathless urgency, soon relaxing into spacious octaves and a drooping, expressive motive. In Choral, we are invited to the fleeting memory of a Ravelian waltz emerging from bell-like harmonics. The clamorous The Bells of Notre Dame emerge from and retreat into a fog and in its expanse recalls Frost and Dew, but with the weighty and imperious tolling of cathedral bells. This set of Willcocks’ Studies ends with A Gale is blowing, its oppressive gusts subside only at its very conclusion.

Program notes by Alexander Dunn
BIOGRAPHY

ALEXANDER DUNN

Canadian classical guitarist Alexander Dunn has performed to enthusiastic acclaim in Canada, the USA, Cuba, New Zealand, Mexico, Brasil, Southeast Asia, China, South Africa, western and eastern Europe, and Russia. In solo recital, concerto, and chamber music he is consistently praised for his musicality, technique and rich sound. An experienced chamber musician, he has worked with principal players from the Pacific Baroque Orchestra (Vancouver), Seattle Baroque Orchestra, Tafelmusik (Toronto), in duo concerts with guitarists Pepe Romero, and with numerous other musicians and vocalists. He has been a featured soloist with the CBC Vancouver Radio Orchestra, Victoria Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Pacific Baroque Orchestra, La Jolla Symphony, Malaga Sinfonico, New England Symphony, and many major US orchestras as a guest artist with Los Romeros.

Dr. Dunn holds a Bachelor and Masters Degree in Performance from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and a Ph.D. in Musicology from the University of California, San Diego, where he was a protégé of Pepe Romero. His ground-breaking dissertation, *Robert de Visée’s Theorbo Works: An Introductory Study*, is highly regarded, as is his research into nineteenth century performance practice. Dr. Dunn’s extensive summer studies included nine years at the Aspen Music Festival under Oscar Ghiglia and four summers at the Salzburg Mozarteum. He is a popular adjudicator and competition judge whose students have taken prizes in international competitions or have gone on to study at respected institutions in Europe, the US, and Asia.

Dr. Dunn is on the Board of Examiners for the Royal Conservatory of Music Toronto, and currently heads what is considered one of Canada’s top guitar programs at the University of Victoria.
UPCOMING EVENTS
At the School of Music

Sunday, October 19, 2:30 p.m. ($18/$14)
FACULTY CONCERT SERIES
From Krommer to Klezmer: A Concert in Celebration of 25 Years at UVic
Patricia Kostek, clarinet
Join Patricia Kostek, her colleagues and former students, as she celebrates
25 years at the School of Music. Featuring traditional wind repertoire
infused with world music.
Phillip T. Young Recital Hall

Tuesday, October 21, 12:30 p.m. (Admission by donation)
TUESDAYMUSIC
Take an afternoon break to enjoy a concert of varied repertoire and
instruments featuring School of Music students.
Phillip T. Young Recital Hall

Friday, October 24, 12:30 p.m. (Admission by donation)
FRIDAYMUSIC
Featuring School of Music brass students
Phillip T. Young Recital Hall

Friday, October 24, 8:00 p.m. (Admission by donation)
STUDENT COMPOSERS CONCERT
Featuring original compositions by students in the School of Music Composition program.
Phillip T. Young Recital Hall

Tuesday, October 28, 12:30 p.m. (Admission by donation)
TUESDAYMUSIC
Take an afternoon break to enjoy a concert of varied repertoire and instruments featuring
School of Music students.
Phillip T. Young Recital Hall

Tickets available at the UVic Ticket Centre (250-721-8480),
online (www.tickets.uvic.ca) and at the door.

To receive our On the Pulse brochure and
newsletter by email, contact: concert@uvic.ca

finearts.uvic.ca/music/events