

present...

MANUEL BARRUECO | Guitar

Saturday, May 3, 2025 | 7:30pm

Herbst Theatre

BACH*(trans. Barrueco)***Suite in D Major, BWV 1007***Prelude**Allemande**Courante**Sarabande**Minuet I & II**Gigue***PONCE****Sonata Clásica, Hommage a Fernando Sor***Allegro**Andante**Ménuet**Allegro***INTERMISSION****PIAZZOLLA***(trans. Barrueco)***Tango-Études***Number 2 in C Major**Number 3 in A Minor***VILLA-LOBOS****Prelude No. 1****Chôros No. 1****TURINA****Sonata, Opus 61***Allegro**Andante**Allegro vivo*

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ARTIST PROFILES

San Francisco Performances presents Manuel Barrueco for the 16th time. He made his *San Francisco Performances'* debut in 1989 and last returned in October 2019. Mr. Barrueco was *SF Performances'* first Guitarist-in-Residence (1997–2001).

Legendary guitarist **Manuel Barrueco** is internationally recognized as one of the most important guitarists of our time. His unique artistry has been continually described as that of a superb instrumentalist and a superior and elegant musician, possessing a seductive sound and uncommon lyrical gifts.

His career has been dedicated to bringing the guitar to the main musical centers of the world and his commitment to contemporary music and to the expansion of the guitar repertoire has led him to collaborations with many distinguished composers.

Manuel Barrueco has appeared on a wide array of television programs including *CBS Sunday Morning*, *A&E's Breakfast with the Arts*, and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. He was featured in a Lexus car commercial, and his work in music inspired Michael Lawrence's biographical documentary: *Manuel Barrueco: A Gift and a Life*.

Barrueco's recording of Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* with conductor and tenor Plácido Domingo was cited as the best recording of that piece in *Classic CD Magazine*. He received a Grammy® nomination for "Best Instrumental Soloist Performance" for his *Solo Piazzolla*, the first recording to be released on Tonar Music. *Sounds of the Americas* in collaboration with the Cuarteto Latinoamericano received a Latin Grammy Award for "Inca Dances" by Gabriela Lena Frank. *Tárrega!* and *Medea*, which includes Barrueco's arrangement of the ballet by flamenco guitarist Manolo

Sanlúcar, both received a Latin Grammy nomination for "Best Classical Album." His latest release is *Music from Cuba and Spain*.

Manuel Barrueco began playing the guitar at the age of eight in his native Cuba and he immigrated with his family to the United States in 1967 as a political refugee. He completed his advanced studies at the Peabody Conservatory, where he now shares his love for music with a small number of exceptionally gifted young guitarists from all over the world.

Manuel Barrueco is the recipient of the United States Artist Fontanals Fellowship for Artistic Excellence.

PROGRAM NOTES

Suite in D Major, BWV 1007

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(1685–1750)

Bach's six cello suites consist of a group of Baroque social dances that Bach transforms, without disrupting the element of dance, into personal and profound spiritual statements. In these works Bach creates the illusion of a full harmonic and contrapuntal texture by means of single melodic lines which outline or suggest an interplay of independent voices—a technique originally developed by lute composers and perfectly suited to the guitar.

The *Suite in D Major, BWV 1007* is the first of this set. The *Prelude* is a joyous exploration of resonating open strings which flows into an exultant cascade. The *Allemande* highlights a melodic line that features the freedom of soaring melodic arabesques and the discipline of latent body rhythms. The *Courante* is an exuberant and comic piece that rejoices in its own energy. The *Sara-*

bande, with its ceremonial rhythm and poignant harmony, is suffused with the sweet sadness of nostalgia and is the emotional center of gravity of the suite. The pair of *Minuets* brings us back down to earth with their rhythms reminiscent of the refined entertainment of aristocratic courts. The *Gigue* embodies an earthy, peasant energy which provides a rousing conclusion.

Sonata Clásica, Hommage a Fernando Sor

MANUEL PONCE
(1882–1948)

Manuel Ponce was a close friend and frequent collaborator with the great Spanish guitarist Andrés Segovia. While his primary musical style blends classical European structures, the vital musical ideas of twentieth century modernism, and an earthy reliance on Mexican folk roots, *Sonata Clásica, Hommage a Fernando Sor*, reflecting Ponce's background as a pianist, has much in common with Mozart's piano works inspired by Italian opera.

Tango-Études

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA
(1921–1992)

By nationality Astor Piazzolla was Argentine but all four of his grandparents were Italian immigrants and he was something of an uprooted migrant himself. Raised in New York he also lived at various times in Argentina, Rome and Paris. He studied composition in Paris with Nadia Boulanger and made his career as a composer inspired by the traditional Argentine tango. Like flamenco and the blues, tango developed as the voice of a disadvantaged social group. A product of the musical tango culture of Buenos Aires, Piazzolla used the influences of nineteenth century opera, jazz and 20th century classical composers to create a more urgent, passionate extension of the genre, his own contemporary chamber music. He liked to quote Tolstoy who said, "tell the story of your village and you tell the story of the world." Piazzolla remained true to his roots, but he told his story so skillfully that musicians and audiences throughout the world have discovered him. His primary medium was a quintet of bandoneon, violin, guitar, piano, and bass.

The six *Tango-Études* were composed for unaccompanied flute toward the end of Piazzolla's career in 1987 and have subsequently

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Sat., May 3, 2025 7:30 pm | Herbst Theatre

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tangent



become popular in arrangements for violin, saxophone and guitar. An excellent example of Piazzolla's mature style they are marked by tonal ambiguity and frequent metrical changes. His only composition for an unaccompanied purely melodic instrument, the *Tango-Études* create an implied polyphonic texture in a manner similar to Bach's unaccompanied works for flute, violin, and cello.

Étude No. 2 in C Major creates a slow, reflective and even anxious mood. It opens with a three note motive surrounded with elaborate ornamentation and followed by a descending chromatic line. It is in ABA form that uses the lush extended harmonies typical of American jazz and features an unusually long and complex middle section.

Étude No. 3 in A Minor begins with an energetic section using the typical 3+3+2 tango rhythm. This is followed by an exuberant quotation of a popular song by Chilean composer Sergio Ortega, "El pueblo unido jamás será vencido" ("The People United Will Never Be Defeated"), best known to American audiences for its use in a massive set of variations for solo piano written by composer Frederic Rzewski. A contrasting middle section is lyrical and slower but again characterized by the propulsive 3+3+2 tango rhythm and is followed by a return of the opening music.

Prelude No. 1 Chôros No. 1

HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS
(1887-1959)

The great Brazilian composer Heitor Villa Lobos was also a guitarist and wrote with both knowledge and love of the instrument. *Prelude No. 1 (Lyric Melody)* is one of the Villa-Lobos' most popular compositions. The opening section features a melancholy melody on the low strings which reflects the composer's training on the cello. The middle section is lively celebration of the folk music of the Brazilian interior.

As a boy, Villa-Lobos played the guitar in street bands at weddings, carnivals, cafes and theaters and his *Chôros No. 1*, written during this period, is alternatively witty, and sentimental but always heart felt. He defined the *chôros* as "a new form of musical composition, a synthesis of the different forms of Indian and popular music, always transformed by the composer's personality." Villa-Lobos went to Paris in 1923 "not to study, but to show what I have accomplished," but the textures and harmonic practices in the music of Debussy and his contemporaries made a profound

impression on him. The ensuing music of Villa-Lobos is an engaging combination of European classicism, Brazilian popular, and indigenous Indian music.

Sonata, Opus 61

JOAQUÍN TURINA
(1882-1949)

The Spaniard Joaquín Turina was one of the first contemporary composers who, in response to an appeal from the outstanding guitarist Andrés Segovia, composed a small but influential repertoire for the guitar equally influenced by his love of traditional form and by the Spanish national style first explored by Albéniz. Turina's *Sonata, Opus 61*, is perhaps his masterpiece. It begins with a strong, powerful gesture followed by a scale passage that makes a dramatic movement downward to the low notes of the guitar. The second movement is in the form of a highly ornamented flamenco song with guitar interludes. The final *Allegro vivo* is based on the traditional flamenco *Bulerías*.

—Program notes by Scott Cmiel