

# FESTIVAL DE PARIS 2005

By DANIELLE RIBOUILLAUT

WITH THE fourth Festival de Guitare de Paris festival scheduled for this November, this report (delayed by an editorial mishap, unfortunately) may give some idea of the quality of the programme to be expected. - Ed.

Organised by Tania Chagnot, the 3-day event featured six concerts in the Salle Cortot, a visit to the Salon de Lutherie, two master-classes (Elena Papandreu and Raphaëlla Smits) and a lecture given by the author of this article about the evolution of interpretation in the 20th century. This was dedicated to all demanding guitar players of today, and was the first attempt to elaborate a history of the aesthetic of guitar playing.

The concerts: Marco Meloni (Italy) studied with Javier Hinojosa at the Schola Cantorum in Paris, and developed an original approach to early music. He played baroque pieces by Bartolotti, Santa Cruz, Carlos Calvi and Gaspar Sanz, using a lot of campanellas and ornaments with the shape of the Canarios pattern in many of them, and a Bach Chaconne in the same style.

In Takemitsu's *In the woods*, Elena Papandreu (Greece) came close to the impressionistic spirit of its atonal lyricism. The main attraction was the new piece Roland Dyens dedicated to her: *Triaela*. A pure French musical style, inherited from Satie and Ravel, light in spirit, never heavy and demonstrative but luminous, evocative and peaceful, suited the Japanese aesthetic very well. The strange touch of a far off Brazil is part of the associations of such distant elements wanted by the composer. Subtle humour in the second movement was typical of Roland Dyens, and there was a strong sense of musical syncretism giving birth to a new language joined to an impressive ability to renew guitar technique in itself. Gismonti is in the third movement, but at the same time an omnipresent Dyens is easily recognisable.

The Astor Duo (Gaëlle Chiche and Francisco Sanchez Bernier) gave a beautiful and musically committed concert, with an obvious experience of the stage. Bogdanovic's *Sonata Fantasia* mixes Balkan and jazz elements with percussive effects and irregular rhythms in an atonal pattern. Very interesting too was Arnaud Dumond's *Comme une image de Ravel*, with its scordatura in a wonderfully dreamy climate. In general this duo renews the narrow repertoire of this formation in an excellent way. However, it can be a mistake to play Busoni's Bach *Chaconne* after just having retuned to a scordatura. I prefer Busoni's piano version to that of the two gui-

tars (and even more the original violin solo), but isn't it amazing that such a giant's music should be performed on such small instruments? Bach did it. And this contrast is so moving, the simplicity so skilfully achieved that it seems that nothing can be done afterwards. Tenderness and a sense of timbre were present in Ginastera's *Milonga*, so well balanced. In

Tárrega's *Recuerdo de la Alhambra*, a rare unity of tremolo was achieved on two guitars.

Raphaëlla Smits, an uncommon artist, goes deep in her interpretations, knowing how to catch the essence of the works she offers to us. Wim Henderckx's *Saeta* is in seven parts, dedicated to a religious meditation on the last day of Jesus: a long mystical development that ends with the resurrection in harmonics. Is this the first programmatic guitar music with a religious theme?

Bach's *Chaconne* was a convincing version for solo guitar, not far from the violin and full of spiritual intensity. Her encores followed a similar pattern, inspired and passionate through pieces by Manjón (sumptuous) and Cardoso (deli-

cious), who was present in the concert hall and extremely satisfied.

The Duo Palissandre gave the premiere of Ourkouzounov's *Reflets 1 and 2*, and pieces by Scarlatti, Sor and Pierre Petit. Ourkouzounov's work is tinted with Bulgarian memories of his youth, and there is charm in his lyricism. He is an excellent young composer who is evolving very quickly in his musical thoughts and writing in the best way, uncovering a real internal world, sensitive and rich.

Alvaro Pierri's playing is always more personal, always freer and original, always creating for each composer he touches a world of his own. He knew in Da Milano's *Ricerca* how to express the distant past with a freshness comparable to the Duc de Berry's miniatures of the 15th century. A fantastic rubato worked totally with the romanticism of Paganini's *Grande Sonata*. The same can be said for Maza's pieces or Ginastera's *Sonata*: effects of surprise, a taste for expressive pizzicato, a very personal aesthetic of the accentuation, the whole with a feeling of perfect relaxation, of extreme easiness. That is great art!

The event on the whole was a great success, with the Salle Cortot full to the last seat and a great participation of the public in all the activities.

With the next edition about to begin, these notes may serve as an appetiser.

<http://www.festivalguitareparis.com>

