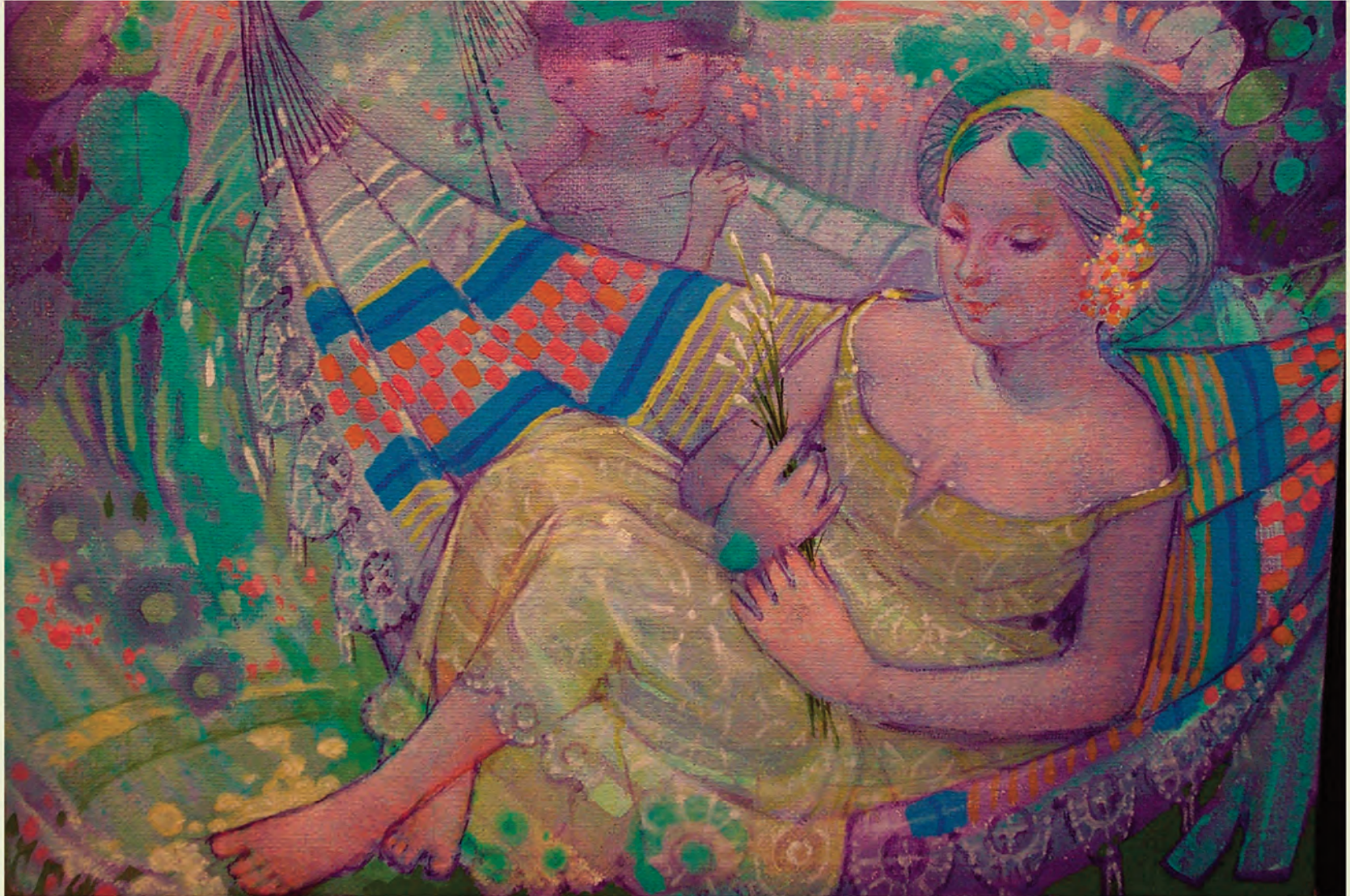


Venezuela Alegre

The music of Carlos Atilano



Gregg Nestor, guitar



Album Produced by Gregg Nestor

**Recorded at Penguin Recording,
Eagle Rock, CA. July 2010**

Engineer: John Strother

Digitally Mastered by Chris Doremus

Album Art Direction: Mark Banning

**Mr. Nestor's Guitar by luthier Ron Hachez,
Courtesy of Jonathan Marcus
www.guitarsbyronhachez.com**

**Front Cover:
Esteban Villaparedes
www.villaparedes.com**

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Nancy Atilano for Carlos' portrait**

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"Three Venezuelan Pieces" Catalog #T 6118

"Three Pieces for Guitar" Catalog #T 6120

"En Cumana" Catalog #T 6119

"Suite de Antiguas Danzas" Catalog #T 6116

**"Calido Sur" published by Eres Edition, D-28859 Lilienthal/Bremen Germany
Fingered and Edited by Oliver Eidam, Catalog #Eres-2977**



Most of the classical guitar lovers in the world knew very little about Venezuelan guitar music until Andrés Segovia in the early 1950s recorded Antonio Lauro's "Venezuelan Waltz No 3," also called "Natalia." The magic novelty inherent in the Venezuelan waltz comes from various sources. On the one hand it is a typical 3/4 waltz. However, at the same time it sustains a beautifully syncopated undercurrent beat that reminds us of African slave drums. This distinctive syncopation is created by a hemiola in which two measures of 3/4 become a single measure of 3/2. It's as if the "criollo" generation (the mixing of European, African and native indigenous peoples) had given the European waltz a new face. Guitar lovers now make a clear distinction between "a waltz" and "a Venezuelan waltz." Today the guitar world is not only aware of the music of Antonio Lauro, but also of a host of other composers who have been seminal in creating guitar music unmistakably Venezuelan. The grandfather of various generations of guitar composers in Venezuela is clearly Raul Borges (1882-1967), a renowned Venezuelan pedagogue, guitarist and composer. The second generation brings to mind, among others, Antonio Lauro, Alirio Diaz, and Antonio Ochoa who, in turn, influenced and educated a host of contemporary Venezuelan musicians.

Carlos Atilano is a direct descendant of this historical line of musicians. Guitarist, composer and educator Carlos Atilano was born in Caracas,

Venezuela on July 7th, 1952. Very early in his childhood he learned to play his national folk music on the "cuatro," a small four course guitar from Venezuela. After almost completing his studies with Antonio Ochoa at the music conservatory in Caracas, he obtained a Venezuelan government scholarship to study at The Boston Conservatory of Music in Massachusetts, where he received his Bachelor of Music. He presently lives with his wife Nancy and his sons Carl and Thomas in Claremont, California where he teaches privately.

Carlos Atilano's guitar pieces almost invariably have their roots in the folklore of Venezuela. He proudly says: "All the pieces that I have written were inspired by pure love for my native land. Being away from Venezuela brings in me that nostalgia which comes from longing for my homeland, its music, its places and the aroma of the tropics."

The musical glory of the Venezuelan waltz is clearly demonstrated in Carlos's compositions. The bass syncopation is effectively stressed in the "Valse" from "Three Venezuelan pieces." "El Vals de Gregorio," composed in 1991 and dedicated to guitarist Gregg Nestor, displays forceful accentuation and staccato effects in the melody. The hemiola effect, so characteristic of Venezuelan music, is well represented in "El Vals de Vladislav" dedicated to guitarist Vladislav Blaha from the Czech Republic, and also in "Vals Ingenuo," first published in *Classical Guitar* magazine in 2008 and dedicated to Frederick Noad. "El Vals de



Villaparedes” was composed in honor of Carlos Atilano’s uncle and artist Esteban Villaparedes, who is the author of the painting featured in the cover of this CD. While all the previously mentioned waltzes are typically Venezuelan, “El Vals de Alirio” and “Vals de Adam y Eva” bring to mind feelings closer to the romantic European waltz tradition.

With its African and European influences, the joropo is Venezuela’s national dance. It is also an excellent example of Venezuela’s “música criolla.” A traditional joropo band is normally composed of harp, cuatro, bandola (a pear-shaped four course guitar) and maracas. The joropo displays enchanting polyrhythmic patterns by alternating 3/4 and 6/8 tempos. Carlos Atilano’s joropos, beautifully performed by Gregg Nestor, bring about the true essence of this dance. “Golpe Tuyero,” is a joropo from Valle del Tuy in the center of Venezuela. “Golpe de las Muchachas” was inspired by Keti and Boyana Stoyanova, two charming Bulgarian young twin sisters who formed a guitar duo. The “Pajarillo,” which begins with a “Tonada” theme, is the liveliest joropo of the three. The “Tonada y Pajarillo” was dedicated to Gregg Nestor. Finally “Aire Criollo” is not quite a joropo and not quite a Venezuelan waltz; rather it straddles the two musical genres since the listener can hear elements of both.

From the viewpoint of rhythmic structure, the Venezuelan merengue, a very different dance from the 2/4 beat Dominican merengue, follows an intricate 5/8 beat. This juxtaposition of 3 against 2, which provides its characteristic lilt, is a frequent pattern in most Venezuelan music. Atilano’s four merengues (“En Cumaná,” “Tia Petrica,” “Don Alejandro,” and “El Editor”) are good examples of this enticing rhythm. Cumaná is the capital of the Venezuelan State of Sucre. “Tia Petrica” was composed as an homage to his aunt Petrica Milano who livened Carlos’s childhood and family gatherings with her joyous spirit and dancing. While “Don Alejandro” is dedicated to the Venezuelan musicologist Alejandro Bruzual, “El Editor” is dedicated to Colin Cooper, the editor of *Classical Guitar* magazine.

The four pieces in the “Suite del Sur” are inspired in Argentinian musical genres. “Calido Sur,” dedicated to German guitarist Oliver Eidam, opens with a prelude which slowly hints a tango and then gradually turns into a mournful and poetic “milonga campera,” which is normally used to accompany sorrowful poems. While “Querida Soledad,” dedicated to Polish guitarist Krzysztof Meisinger, brings all the classic features of a tango, “Mi Querida Andina” is an Argentinian bahuala (i.e., a slow highly expressive lament). Finally the last piece in the suite, “Milonga Giocosa,” is a lively and fast-paced dancing milonga

dedicated to Bernard Hebb, guitar professor at The University of The Arts in Bremen.

This collection contains two serenades. “Lamento” is dedicated to Rodrigo Riera, one of the most prominent guitarist in Venezuela, and “Cancion,” was composed in honor of Antonio Ochoa, Carlos’s first guitar teacher. “Entre tu Olvido,” “En tu Lejanía,” and “Atardecer en Caracas” are slow sentimental melodies which exemplify Carlos’s longing for his homeland and nostalgic feelings for places and time past. Aguinaldos are melodies sung during Christmas in Venezuela. When Carlos composed “Aguinaldo Caraqueño,” he was inspired by a memory of his childhood when he saw a joyous group of small children singing aguinaldos on a Caracas TV program. It was dedicated to the well known guitar virtuoso and music professor Eliot Fisk.

Though Carlos Atilano has made many guitar arrangements of famous melodies, only one of those is included in this collection. “Como llora una estrella” is an extremely popular Venezuelan song composed by mandolin player Antonio Carrillo in 1915.

Como Lloro una Estrella

Recuerdos de un ayer que fue pasión,
del suave titilar que ayer yo vi,
de tu dulce mirar tu amor sentí,
tu cara angelical, rosa de abril.
Como quisiera yo amar y ser
la mística oración que hay en ti;
pero al no sentir tu raro amor de ayer
tu estrella solitaria llorará de amor.

Dame la tierna luz que tiene tu mirar,
que es como el titilar de una estrella de amor;
y en éxtasis profundo de pasión
mis versos tristes yo te brindaré;
y en tu lozana frente colgaré
la estrella de este gran amor.

The Crying of a Star

Memories of a fervent yesterday,
of the soft twinkling that yesterday I saw
of your sweet gaze, your love I felt,
your angelical face, April rose.
How would I like to love and be
the mystic prayer that is in you!
But not feeling your unique love of yesterday
your lonely star will cry of love.

Give me the tender light of your gaze,
which is like the twinkle of a love star
and in a profound ecstasy of passion
I will offer you my sad verses
and on your youthful forehead I’ll place
the star of this immense love.



It might seem strange to have a suite of baroque dances in a CD entitled “Venezuela Alegre.” However, they are included here because these pieces are particularly dear to Carlos since they were a turning point in his life. The “Suite de Antiguas Danzas” was composed during a very difficult time while he was studying music in Boston. An accidental injury prevented him from playing guitar for many years. But then Carlos tells that “one night in 1982 this music came to me as if I had already played it in another life. This may sound crazy, but I felt as if I had once been a 18th century lutenist somewhere in Europe.” The quality of these compositions was such that they were officially approved for performance by the head of the composition department, Christopher Roze. Encouraged by the acceptance of his “Danzas,” he went on to revise some Venezuelan pieces he had composed back home. They were all equally received with great enthusiasm at the Boston Conservatory. This sudden burst of success effectively became the springboard to his composing career. The “Suite de Antiguas Danzas” was dedicated to Christopher Parkening, one of Segovia’s most famous students.

Armando Baltra (Ph.D.)

Internationally acclaimed guitarist **Gregg Nestor** has built a strong following for his abilities as soloist, accompanist and arranger. Finalist in the 1981 New York Concert Guild Competition held at Carnegie Hall, Gregg has recorded and broadcast in Holland, Belgium, Spain and for the BBC in London. In his London debut, The Times critic commented on his being “uncommonly communicative, a real artist in timing and shading, in stylish fluency and tact besides wholehearted communication with his composers.” Many works arranged by Gregg Nestor for solo/duo guitars or with various ensemble have been published. In 1986 Gregg was the recipient of the Sonata for Guitar, Op 42 by Hungarian concert and film composer Miklós Rózsa, published by Associated Music (G. Schirmer). It is recognized as one of the landmarks of 20th century literature for the guitar.

Venezuela Alegre: The music of Carlos Atilano

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THREE VENEZUELAN PIECES

- | | |
|-----------------|------|
| 1. Aire Griollo | 1:26 |
| 2. Canción | 2:00 |
| 3. Valse | 1:51 |
| 4. Tía Petrica | 2:08 |

THREE PIECES FOR GUITAR

- | | |
|----------------------------|------|
| 5. El Vals de Alirio | 2:58 |
| 6. Lamento (Bolero) | 4:41 |
| 7. El Vals de Villaparedes | 2:00 |
| 8. El Editor | 1:31 |
| 9. Atardecer en Caracas | 1:53 |

TRIPTICO

- | | |
|-------------------------|------|
| 10. En Gumaná | 1:37 |
| 11. Aguinaldo Caraqueño | 1:33 |
| 12. El Vals de Gregorio | 1:47 |
| 13. Golpe Tuyero | 2:03 |

SUITE DE ANTIGUAS DANZAS

- | | |
|---------------|------|
| 14. Prelude | 1:50 |
| 15. Allemande | 2:16 |
| 16. Courante | 2:32 |

- | | |
|---|------|
| 17. Sarabande | 2:18 |
| 18. Minuet | 2:41 |
| 19. Gigue | 2:35 |
| 20. Como Lloro una Estrella
(composed Antonio Carrillo, arr. Carlos Atilano) | 2:49 |

SUITE DEL SUR

- | | |
|-----------------------|------|
| 21. Cálido Sur | 6:00 |
| 22. Querida Soledad | 3:44 |
| 23. Mi Querida Andina | 3:04 |
| 24. Milonga Giocosa | 2:48 |
| 25. Entre tu Olvido | 3:01 |

TRES VALSES VENEZOLANOS

- | | |
|--------------------------|------|
| 26. Valse Ingénuo | 2:00 |
| 27. Vals de Adam y Eva | 3:03 |
| 28. El Vals de Vladislav | 1:52 |

VENEZUELA ALEGRE

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| 29. Don Alejandro | 1:40 |
| 30. El Golpe de Las Muchachas | 1:27 |
| 31. En tu lejanía | 2:50 |
| 32. Tonada y Pajarillo | 3:12 |
| Total Time: | 79:18 |



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