

Sergio and Odair Assad Duo Guitarists

Saturday Evening, November 14, 1992, at 8:00
Rackham Auditorium, Ann Arbor, Michigan

PROGRAM

- *Three Sonatas D. Scarlatti
 K. 162 in E Major
 L. 466 in E Major
 L. 465 in D Major
- Pieces from *Iberia* Isaac Albéniz
 Evocación
 El Puerto
- Pieces from *Dolly*, Op. 56 Gabriel Fauré
 *Berceuse
 *Kitty valse
 *Le pas espagnol
- Tonadilla Joaquin Rodrigo
 Allegro ma non troppo
 Minuetto pomposo
 Allegro vivace

INTERMISSION

- Movements from *Suite Troileana* Astor Piazzolla
 *Escolaso
 *Bandoneon
 *Zita
- *Chôro No. 5 "Alma Brasileira" H. Villa-Lobos
- *Rhapsody in Blue George Gershwin

*arranged by Sergio Assad

Sergio and Odair Assad appear by arrangement with Shaw Concerts, Inc., New York
Recordings: Nonesuch Records

PROGRAM NOTES

Three Sonatas

Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757)

Born the same year as Bach and Handel, Scarlatti was an excellent keyboard artist. Although he composed in many genres, his fame rests upon the more than 550 *esercizi* (exercises or diversions) he wrote for the harpsichord and which are today called “sonatas.”

Pieces from *Iberia*

Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909)

Iberia ranks as one of the great and most difficult works in the 20th-century piano repertoire. A monumental suite of “impressions” of Spain, it requires a high level of virtuosity and is notable for its dynamic range, from quintuple *piano* to quintuple *forte* (with the instruction, at one point, to play *plus fort encore si possible* — even louder if possible).

“Evocación” and “El Puerto,” the first two pieces in the work, never get that loud but feature dynamic extremes nevertheless. Both of them fade to near silence as they end.

Pieces from *Dolly*, Op. 56

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

A pupil of Saint-Saëns, Fauré began teaching composition at the Paris Conservatoire in 1896 and served as the school’s director from 1905 to 1920. In his early years, Fauré was quite audacious, but in later life he favored refinement and classical poise and balance. “Berceuse,” “Kitty valse,” and “Le pas espagnol” belong to a suite named *Dolly*, composed in 1894–97 as a piano duet for his daughter.

Tonadilla

Joaquín Rodrigo (b. 1901)

Albéniz’s compatriot, Rodrigo, continues to compose for the guitar in the charming and traditional style that has ensured his ever-popular *Aranjuez* concerto a secure place in the repertoire. The *Tonadilla* was dedicated to the Presti-Lagoya guitar duo. It shows a fecund melodic and rhythmic imagination married to a broad knowledge of the guitar’s capabilities.

Movements from *Suite Troileana*

Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992)

A student of the great French pedagogue Nadia Boulanger, pianist and composer Astor Piazzolla wrote some chamber music, an opera, and numerous film scores in addition to his important contribution to Argentinian popular music. In 1980 he wrote his first pieces for guitar — five original works dedicated to the Argentinian guitarist Roberto Aussel. In 1984, his enthusiasm after hearing Sergio and Odair Assad led him to compose the “Tango Suite” and dedicate it to them.

Internationally recognized as the King of the tango, Piazzolla played in Anibal Troilo’s famous tango orchestra for many years after joining it at the age of 12. The *Suite Troileana*, inspired by Troilo, was composed for a movie called *Lumiere*.

Chôro No. 5 “Alma Brasileira”

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959)

Villa-Lobos was an extremely prolific composer whose output includes symphonies, concertos, choral and chamber music, as well as solo instrumental pieces. Through his efforts the vitality of Brazilian culture found full expression. Yet it is his guitar music that attracts the most fervent popularity. His deep understanding of the guitar enabled him to create a unique voice for the instrument. Villa-Lobos possessed a remarkable gift for writing memorable themes, using the natural patterns of open strings against fretted notes to develop a distinctive personal style.

Rhapsody in Blue

George Gershwin (1898–1937)

Born in Brooklyn of Russian-Jewish immigrant parents, Gershwin won early fame as a composer for Broadway and Tin Pan Alley, the bastions of mainstream American show business and popular music. Throughout his life, he was drawn to the music of African-Americans. In *Rhapsody in Blue*, his first extended instrumental composition, he incorporated elements of jazz and blues. At its premiere in 1924, the work was billed as a “jazz concerto.”



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

"I believe we were always meant to be a team right from the first time we picked up our guitars. We began playing guitar at exactly the same time, we always studied with the same teachers and learned the same music and techniques. Such interaction can only really happen with brothers, because we shared every aspect of our musical education together."

—from the Assads' *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* interview (October 1991)

The twentieth century has produced a number of guitar duos formed by happenstance or recording-company intervention. But for Brazilian-born siblings Sergio and Odair Assad, the roots obviously go much deeper. Today's foremost guitar duo, the Assads have been credited with *doublehandedly* reviving Brazilian music for the instrument. Gnattali, Nobre and Mignone have dedicated pieces to them, as have the Russian Nikita Koshkin and Argentinian Astor Piazzolla.

As children, the Assads' mandolinist father guided their discovery of Brazilian music. Their uncanny ability to play guitar together soon showed itself, and seven years of study with the classical guitarist and lutenist Monina Tavora (a disciple of Andres Segovia) followed.

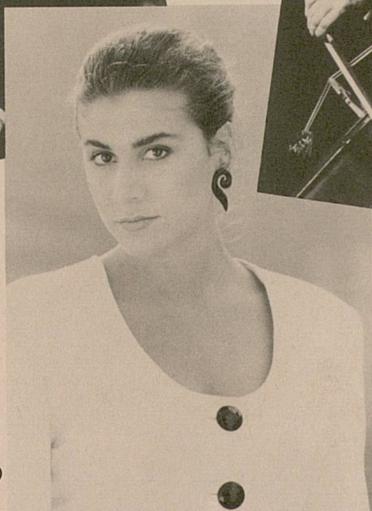
The Assads' American career began in 1969, under the "Youth for Understanding" aegis. A major prize at the "Rostrom of Young Interpreters" in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, launched their European career. In 1973, they won the Brazilian Symphonic Orchestra competition for young soloists.

They have performed in recital and with orchestras throughout Europe, Australia, the Far East, and their native Brazil. This fall they are making their fourth consecutive North American tour, including appearances in New York, Washington, and San Francisco. Their Carnegie Hall debut highlighted their 1991 tour.

The duo's most recent Nonesuch recording features works by Rameau and Scarlatti. Their previous two discs for the label featured music by Latin-American composers.

Tonight marks their Ann Arbor debut.

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