

**“I SPEND MY LIFE ASKING EVERYONE FOR PIECES FOR MY GUITAR.
REJECTING SOME OF THEM IS SOMETHING WHICH CAUSES ME REAL PAIN.”**

-letter from Andrés Segovia to French composer Henri Collet

The Andrés Segovia Archive consists of a series of compositions written for the great Spanish guitarist that he largely did not perform during his lifetime, including pieces by composers familiar to guitarists (e.g. Alexander Tansman, Federico Moreno Torroba) as well as singular works by important composers from the early twentieth century (e.g. Cyril Scott). The series was edited and published by the Italian guitarist and scholar Angelo Gilardino, who began sorting and cataloging the materials at the Andrés Segovia Foundation in Linares, Spain in 2001. Many of the works in the archive were written in the period that encompassed Segovia’s successful tours of Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. In particular, his debut performance in Paris in 1924 resulted in a rich tranche of new compositions from leading composers of the time, several of which are included in this recording. While a small selection of the works in the archive have entered the standard repertoire, many others have been performed and recorded rarely. These lesser-known works represent a significant contribution to the solo guitar literature of the twentieth century, as well as an enrichment of Segovia’s legacy.

LENNOX BERKELEY (1903-1989): QUATRE PIÈCES

Lennox Berkeley’s music is familiar to guitarists, as the guitar music he wrote for his fellow Englishman, Julian Bream, forms part of the standard repertoire for the

instrument from the second half of the twentieth century. Berkeley spent the late 1920s and early 1930s in Paris, where he studied composition with Nadia Boulanger and also saw Segovia perform. The *Quatre pièces* date from this period, and are one of the major discoveries from the archive. The four pieces are remarkably idiomatic for a first work by a non-guitarist, and are recognizably the music of the composer of the *Sonatina* (1957) and *Theme and Variations* (1970). The first piece in the set begins and ends with a lively dance-like theme in triple meter, bookending a harmonically adventurous central section with quickly repeated melody notes in triplets. The sedate second movement employs a thinner texture, with occasional forays into more thickly harmonized melodies and fleet passagework. The third movement is a slow Sarabande that evokes the baroque dance with its slow triple meter, descending minor-key bass lines and improvisatory scalar figuration. The final piece is an exuberant toccata-like finale with constant swirls of running eighth-note arpeggios.

ALOÏS FORNEROD (1890-1965): PRÉLUDE OP. 13

The Swiss composer Aloÿs Fornerod composed his *Prélude* for Segovia in 1926-27. Segovia never performed the piece, and Fornerod later repurposed the composition as a solo piano work. A similar fate befell the lone guitar work by Fornerod's Swiss contemporary Frank Martin, who made both a piano adaptation and an orchestral version of his well-known *Quatre pièces brèves*. The *Prélude* contains two repeated sections with related thematic material and employs a musical language that is straightforwardly tonal for European music of the 1920s. The writing is effective, and is remarkably idiomatic for the guitar considering that it was Fornerod's sole attempt at composing for the instrument.

PIERRE DE BREVILLE (1861-1949): FANTASIE

The French composer Pierre de Breville encountered Segovia in Paris in the 1920s and completed his untitled solo guitar work in 1926 (the title *Fantaisie* is editorial). Breville studied with César Franck in Paris, and later taught at the Paris Conservatory. The *Fantaisie* is a substantial work consisting of three sections: a rhythmically driving running eighth note theme, a slow middle section marked by slowly moving chords paired with a uniquely syncopated melody, and a final virtuosic flurry based on material derived from the initial theme.

FERNANDE PEYROT (1888-1978): THÈME ET VARIATIONS

Fernande Peyrot was a contemporary of fellow Swiss composers Frank Martin and Aloÿs Fornerod who wrote several solo works for guitar. The *Thème et variations* was likely written in the 1930s when Segovia lived in Geneva, and was first discovered at the opening of the Segovia Archive in 2001. The piece is a significant addition to the guitar repertoire of the era, as it employs a more modern and unique harmonic language than many of the better-known works of the time. The austere theme is followed by six vividly characterized variations, the last of which is a particularly effective fugue.

PIERRE-OCTAVE FERROUD (1900-1936): SPIRITUAL

Pierre-Octave Ferroud is often remembered in connection with his friend and fellow French composer Francis Poulenc, whose sacred work *Litanies à la Vierge noire* was inspired by Ferroud's untimely early death. Ferroud met Segovia after one of the guitarist's Paris concerts in 1926, and subsequently wrote *Spiritual*. Segovia never

performed the composition, and Ferroud later adapted the work in piano duet and orchestral versions (similar to Frank Martin and Aloÿs Fornerod's guitar compositions mentioned previously). The musical language of the piece is notably more adventurous than most of the works in the Segovia Archive, and makes a forceful statement despite its brevity.

HENRI MARTELLI (1895-1980): QUATRE PIÈCES, OP. 32

The French composer Henri Martelli wrote his *Quatre pièces* for Segovia in the early 1930s, and the piece remained unknown and unseen in Segovia's archive until its discovery at the Segovia Foundation in 2001. The work evokes the music of the eighteenth century, notably in the contrapuntal texture found in the first movement and the slow, Sarabande-like third movement. The second movement is especially delightful with its virtuosic sequences of quick and quiet arpeggios.

RAYMOND PETIT (1893-1976): SICILIENNE

French composer Raymond Petit's *Sicilienne* is one of the few works in the archive that Segovia performed publicly, in this case with the title *Andantino* during a Paris concert in 1926. Petit's catalogue includes a second guitar work, *Nocturne*, published in 1928 and dedicated to the Spanish guitarist Emilio Pujol. The *Sicilienne* is in keeping with Petit's essentially conservative musical aesthetic – a review of Segovia's premiere performance noted that the piece “recall[s] a little the style of the lute” and “borrows its rhythmic scheme from the *sicilienne*.” The score bears Petit's charming dedication, “to Andrés Segovia, if he does not find it too ugly.”

CYRIL SCOTT (1879-1970): SONATINA

Cyril Scott was friends with the great French composers Debussy and Ravel, and is often referred to as the “English Debussy” due to his similar use of impressionistic harmony. His *Sonatina* was perhaps the most celebrated discovery in the Andrés Segovia Archive, as the piece was considered lost until the initial opening of the collection in May 2001. The piece was composed in 1927 and was Scott’s only work for guitar. Segovia performed the first movement under the title *Rêverie* in 1928, but privately disparaged the piece in a letter to his frequent collaborator, the Mexican composer Manuel Ponce. The first movement employs an altered sonata form, and resembles the music of Debussy in its use of pentatonic and whole tone scales and sliding parallel chords. The second movement also uses impressionistic harmony and a jaunty rhythmic pattern to often droll effect. The raucous finale employs whole tone and chromatic scales, sliding parallel chords and off-kilter rhythms, bringing the *Sonatina* to a triumphant conclusion. Scott appears to indicate an openness to changing the ending in a note appended to the manuscript, but as Segovia never performed this movement it remains as originally written.

Matthew Slotkin is an acclaimed performer, teacher, and scholar, and has appeared in leading venues on six continents. A commitment to contemporary music has resulted in premieres of numerous works by composers including Olga Amelkina-Vera, John Anthony Lennon, Scott Lindroth, John Orfe, and many others. Festival performances include concerts at the Peabody Summer Guitar Intensive, Piccolo

Spoletto Festival, the Walled City Music Festival, the Monadnock Music Festival, the Chautauqua Institution, the Guitar Foundation of America, and the World Saxophone Congresses in Croatia, Scotland, Thailand and Slovenia. He has performed on numerous classical guitar society concert series including New Zealand (GANZ), Montreal, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Iowa, Northeastern Pennsylvania, and the Great Lakes. He has given performances with many prominent chamber ensembles including the Atlantic Guitar Quartet, Cantata Profana, Manhattan Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, Metropolis Ensemble, Mallarmé Chamber Players, Duo Montagnard, and Dez Cordas. Recordings on the Summit, Centaur, New Focus and Liscio labels have been praised as “wonderful...a very enjoyable disc” (Soundboard), and “a magnificent achievement...the concept of this program is brilliant” (American Record Guide). Soundboard magazine called him an “exceptional” player, and a concert review from the Classical Voice of North Carolina states that “Slotkin performed brilliantly.” Slotkin is an Associate Professor of Music at Bloomsburg University, where he has directed the guitar program since 2004. He has given masterclasses at numerous institutions and festivals including the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Northwestern University, Victorian College of the Arts (Australia), ESMAE (Portugal), National University of La Plata (Argentina), the Alexandria Guitar Festival, and many others. In 2016 and 2024 he taught at the Eastman School of Music as a partial sabbatical replacement for Nicholas Goluses. He received the Doctor of Musical Arts, Master of Music, and Bachelor of Music degrees from the Eastman School of Music.

WWW.MATTHEWSLOTKIN.COM