LAND of GUITARS

Despite the political situation in Catalonia during the Reapers War and Siege of Barcelona, the musical culture does not take a downfall, on the contrary, it thrives and the popular songs and dances of the time rekindled the damaged villages. The Spanish and Catalan guitar, known today as Baroque guitar,
was the most popular instrument. Almost everyone had one and played many of the dances that were popular at that time. Since that time, the “guitarrística” culture has been unstoppable.

This program highlights a variety of the most important composers of the Crown of Aragon and the Crown of Castile, including: Gaspar Sanz, Francesc Guerau, Santiago de Murzia and Antonio de Santa Cruz. Of the latter composer, David Murgadas has transcribed and performed many of the original manuscripts in concert.

David Murgadas is one of the most prolific Catalan guitarists of his time, with classical training under Professor William Barnabas in Rubí, in the Musical Arts Luthier School in Barcelona and with Professor José Tomás, a pupil of Andres Segovia at the Conservatory of Music of Alicante. He specializes in the Renaissance and Baroque period with the ancient instruments of pulsed-string vihuela, lute, theorbo and Baroque guitar at the Conservatory of Toulouse. He is a renown classical guitar teacher and a Master in the practice of the interpretation of baroque and classical music.

Since 2008, he is professor and artistic director of the SOUNDS LIKE a GUITAR course, an orchestral guitar course and international competition for young guitarists. He is also a professor at the Professional Conservatory of Music in Igualada, Catalonia since 1995.

International renown, David Murgadas, performs concerts, courses and conferences around the world. He is the creator of several chamber music ensembles and has made several Cd recordings, include the CODEX Cd with works of Santiago de Murzia, where he has orchestrated several version of the original works adding several instruments of the Catalan culture: bagpipes, viola, flute and percussion.

He performs the 17th and 18th century repertoire, still relatively unknown, in the form of concerts and lectures. For this concert David Murgadas utilizes a historical instrument, the Baroque guitar, built in 2007 by the Australian, Peter Bifin.

1714 GUITAR LAND is a concert with entertaining and historical commentary.

A BIT OF HISTORY

At the end of the 16th century, guitars and violas of the Renaissance were transformed into simpler and more versatile instruments. In 1586 Barcelona, the famous doctor and guitarist, Juan Carlos Amat, published the first instruction manual for the Catalan guitar. He describes the guitar of five orders (4 strings and a simple fold), and how to play the instrument. This resulted in a rapid diffusion of the instrument in the 18th century which could now be used to play the most sophisticated music of the times. Charles i Amat’s instruction manual is the first written for the Spanish guitar, which has been known in Europe since the beginning of the 16th century. On a technical level, the book, for the first time references the “rasgueado” technique in contrast to the traditional plucking of the viola or lute.

Johannes Tinctoris, a Flemish composer at the service of the Court of Naples and one of the great Renaissance music theorists, claims in his work, “ Inventione et usu musicae” (1483-1487), that the guitar is an instrument of Catalan origin. Be that as it may, the fact remains that this instrument had a wide diffusion throughout the Catalan land and beyond, during the 15th and 16th centuries, due to the great technical contributions, teachings and compositions related to this instrument.

Compared to guitars from the Romantic period, Baroque guitars were smaller and had a narrower frame with softer strings. The designs, however, varied according to the builder and the place of origin: the Italian, French and German had the most luxurious décor, while the Spanish were of a more simple design.

The Baroque guitar par excellence is that of Francisco Guerau (1649- 1717), native of Mallorca. Ferran Sors, born in Barcelona at the end of the 18th century, was considered the greatest guitarist of his era. He was the author of the famous *Methode pour la guitare,* his work as a guitarist started a period of splendor for this instrument that would reach its climax with the guitarist and composer from Vila-real, Francisco Tárrega, considered the creator of the classical guitar technique in the 20th century. The disciples of Tàrrega spread his method throughout the world. With them, the guitar reaches its peak.

Barcelona becomes the principal stage where this instrument is popularized with the main and most well known guitarists of the 20th century; Andrés Segovia, Narciso Yepes or Regino Sainz de la Maza to perfect their technique by masters such as Miguel Llobet, Tarrega's disciple,  to whom we owe the first recordings of classical guitar, in 1925.