



HARTFORD
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA®

JANUARY 2020

Prelude



MASTERWORKS #4:

THE FOUR SEASONS JANUARY 17 – 19, 2020

Juxtaposed with the ever-popular *Four Seasons* by Vivaldi, composed in the early 18th century, the exhilarating music of Alberto Ginastera of Argentina (20th century) and Clarice Assad of Brazil (21st century), demonstrates the extraordinary versatility and breadth of symphonic music over the span of 300 years.



Alberto Ginastera

of 18 years, he had already won first prize from the music society *Unisno* for his piano composition, *Piezas Infantiles*.ⁱ Alberto's musical talents were evident from the age of seven, when he began piano lessons.ⁱⁱ At age 12, he began formal study at the Williams Conservatory in Buenos Aires and within a few years of his admission to the National Conservatory as an undergraduate in 1936, his music received national acclaim.ⁱⁱⁱ Almost immediately upon graduation, Alberto was invited to join the faculty of the National Conservatory and in 1940, his ballet music, *Panambi*, was awarded his country's national prize.^{iv} Ginastera's notable students included Argentinian composer Astor Piazzolla (whose works include *Libertango*, performed by the HSO during the 18-19 season), who studied with Ginastera in 1941.^v

In 1942, Ginastera was awarded a Guggenheim scholarship to study in the United States, but his trip was delayed until the end of World War II in 1945.^{vi} He studied with Aaron Copland at Tanglewood, then he returned to



Ginastera at Tanglewood

Alberto Ginastera, along with Brazilian composer, Heitor Villa-Lobos, is considered one of the most important Latin American classical composers. Ginastera was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1916, and by the age

Argentina where he co-founded the League of Composers.^{vii} But life in Argentina was not without conflict for Ginastera. His open criticism of his own government and Argentinian President Juan Perón placed him at odds with Perón, who forced Ginastera's resignations at the National Military Academy and the National University of La Plata.^{viii} Ginastera did not regain his position at the University until after Perón was removed from power in 1955.^{ix}

International interest in Ginastera's music was on the rise in the late 1950s and the 1960s and several of his works were presented in premiere performances in the United States. Specifically, his Piano Concerto was performed in Washington, D.C., his Violin Concerto was performed by the New York Philharmonic under the direction of Leonard Bernstein, his Harp Concerto was performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy, and his opera, *Don Rodrigo*, was performed by the New York City Opera.^x The daring nature of some of Ginastera's music was ground-breaking. In particular, the 1967 performance of his opera, *Bommarzo*, in Washington, D.C. raised eyebrows because of its unrestrained and sensational portrayal of sexual violence. The opera was actually banned in Argentina until 1972.^{xi}

In the early 1970s, the progressive rock band, Emerson, Lake & Palmer, brought Ginastera to the world beyond symphonic music.^{xii} The group adapted the fourth movement of his first piano concerto, and presented the arrangement under the title "Toccata".^{xiii} In 1973, as the group was recording the piece to

continued on next page...





Ginastera and his second wife, Argentinian cellist Aurora Nátola

about to scrap the project when Ginastera's wife intervened to explain that her husband fully approved. Ginastera reportedly explained, "You have captured the essence of my music, as no one's ever done before."^{xiv} The story is detailed in the liner notes for the group's album, "Brain Salad Surgery".^{xv}

be included in their upcoming new album, Keith Emerson met with Ginastera at his home in Switzerland and played a recording of the arrangement for him. Ginastera, who spoke almost no English, responded, "Diabolico!" which Emerson took to mean "awful". Emerson was



Emerson, Lake & Palmer's album, *Brain Salad Surgery*

Ginastera passed away in 1983 at the age of 67, just as Brazilian composer Clarice Assad, then a young child of five, was starting her own musical journey. Born in 1978 into a musical family, Clarice is the daughter of guitarist Sergio Assad, and her uncle is guitarist Odair Assad.^{xvi} With the help of her father, Clarice began to create music at age six. As a child, she sang jingles for radio and television and recorded tracks for pop star Luiz Caldas and others.^{xvii} When Clarice was eight years old, her parents split up and her father, Sergio, left for Paris. Distraught by the loss of her father, Clarice abandoned music completely, but luckily, it was a temporary hiatus. "For so long," she remembered, "I didn't make any music at all because I connected it with him."^{xviii} In time, she returned to music: "I realized I was doing it for myself."^{xix}

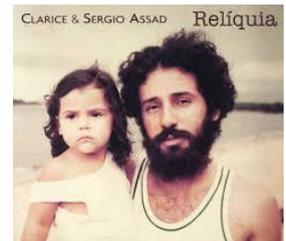
In 1993, Clarice, then 15 years old, moved to France with her younger brother, Rodrigo, to live with her father. Under her father's guidance, she studied piano and improvisation and



Clarice Assad with her father, guitarist Sergio Assad

began to compose and arrange music.^{xx} On her return to Brazil, Clarice found work composing and arranging for numerous well-known popular musicians. She left Brazil in 1998 to study film scoring at the Berklee College of Music^{xxi} and has enjoyed an international career that spans several decades.

Today, at age 41, Assad is a Grammy-nominated composer, pianist and vocalist. Described by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as a "serious triple threat," Assad is a composer, performer, and band leader. She is fluent in Portuguese, French and English and sings in all three languages, as well as Spanish and Italian.^{xxii} She has released seven solo albums and has appeared on or has had her works performed on another 30.^{xxiii} Her work as both a popular and classical artist is now well-established. In 2016, Clarice and her father released their joint album, *Relíquia*. She has been the Composer-In-Residence for the Albany Symphony and, off stage, works with young people in schools in both the United States and Brazil under her initiative, Voxploration, which helps young girls gain confidence to express themselves freely.^{xxiv}



Relíquia, collaboration between Clarice and Sergio Assad

Join us!

Please join the Hartford Symphony Orchestra for ***The Four Seasons*, January 17 - 19, 2020**, and along with one of the most well-known pieces in classical music, experience the rich and textured sounds of Ginastera and Assad, two of the most innovative and thrilling Latin American composers.



WONDERING HOW THE MUSIC WILL SOUND?

Try HSO'S Listening Guide, with links to the pieces you'll hear on our concert stage – and more!

Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* featuring Alexandra Conunova with the Orchestre International de Genève:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnDLlajMxyo>

Listen to Ginastera's *Variaciones Concertantes* Op 23:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWm3U_kPneg

Assad's *Suite for Lower Strings* is featured on the composer's Sound Cloud account:

<https://soundcloud.com/clarice-assad/sets/suite-for-lower-strings>

To hear more of the works of Clarice Assad, we recommend:

Sergio and Clarice Assad: hear father and daughter perform a popular Brazilian tune, *Se Você Jurar*, by Ismael Silva:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-G3rUDn9ams>

Clarice Assad's Concerto for Guitar and Chamber Orchestra:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Soqd2BYqll

If you need more to become a real fan of Assad's work, please enjoy her arrangement of Paul McCartney's *Blackbird* for guitar quartet, scat singer and piano:

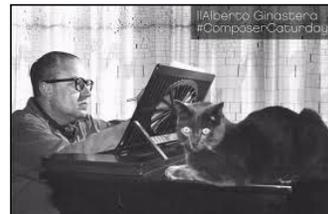
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrsGZMcZw2g>



Clarice Assad



Clarice and Sergio Assad



Alberto Ginastera

THE HSO'S MASTERWORKS SERIES IS SPONSORED BY:

The Edward C. & Ann T.
ROBERTS
FOUNDATION

CLY-DEL
1939 - 2019
80 Years of Excellence

RICHARD P. GARMANY FUND
at
Hartford Foundation
FOR PUBLIC GIVING
Together for good!

**GREATER HARTFORD
ARTS COUNCIL**

Connecticut Department of Economic and
Community Development
Office Of The Arts

FALCETTI PIANOS

**Did you borrow this Prelude?
Get your own free copy!**

Whether you're a ticket buyer, donor, curious about the music, or know someone who is, just send an email to rsovrnsky@hartfordsymphony.org. We'll make sure you receive Prelude by email, in advance of each HSO Masterworks concert!

Casey's
Classics

Want the best recordings of the pieces you'll experience on the concert program? Coleman Casey, HSO's dear friend, Director Emeritus and beloved in-house audiophile, offers his recording recommendations of selections featured in our upcoming Masterworks Concert.

If there has ever been a lovelier and more charismatic recording of Vivaldi's perennial *Four Seasons* than Alan Loveday as soloist, with Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, I have yet to hear it, and although the recording is now fifty years old, the engineering is everything one could wish for (DECCA).

Ginastera's dashing *Variaciones Concertantes* has surprisingly been rarely recorded, but Gisele Ben-Dor (once an HSO music director candidate, many years ago) and the London Symphony Orchestra set your pulse racing (NAXOS).

There is no recording of *Assad's Suite for Lower Strings*.



REFERENCES

- i. <https://www.bach-cantatas.com/Lib/Ginastera-Alberto.htm>
- ii. <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/06/27/obituaries/alberto-ginastera-dead-at-67-leading-argentine-composer.html>
- iii. <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/alberto-ginastera-mn0000739363/biography>
- iv. <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/06/27/obituaries/alberto-ginastera-dead-at-67-leading-argentine-composer.html>
- v. <https://www.bach-cantatas.com/Lib/Ginastera-Alberto.htm>
- vi. Ibid
- vii. Ibid
- viii. <https://www.allmusic.com/artist/alberto-ginastera-mn0000739363/biography>
- ix. Ibid
- x. https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Albert_Ginastera
- xi. Ibid
- xii. <https://www.bach-cantatas.com/Lib/Ginastera-Alberto.htm>
- xiii. Ibid
- xiv. Ibid
- xv. Ibid
- xvi. <https://clariceassad.com>
- xvii. Ibid
- xviii. <https://soundsandcolours.com/articles/brazil/crazy-sweet-life-claric-assad-41039>
- xix. Ibid
- xx. <https://clariceassad.com>
- xxi. Ibid
- xxii. Ibid
- xxiii. Ibid
- xxiv. Ibid