

Cleveland Classical Guitar Society: Ana Vidović at Plymouth Church (Oct. 24)

by Yevhen Gulenko, *guest writer*



Have you ever heard a guitar tell a story? The thought may sound silly until you have heard the Croatian master Ana Vidović play.

She is the rare musician who can make her instrument sound sublime, whether interpreting the Baroque works of Bach or performing arrangements of modern popular classics by Toru Takemitsu.

On Saturday, October 24, 2015, Ana Vidović delivered a dazzling

performance to the audience in the comfortably-filled sanctuary of Plymouth Church in Shaker Heights, performing works by Fernando Sor, Federico Moreno Torroa, Agustin Barrios Mangore, Isaac Albeniz, J.S. Bach, Toru Takemitsu, and Antonio Lauro. The concert was part of the Cleveland Classical Guitar Society's International Series.

From the first note, Vidović's audience was captivated by her virtuosity and expressivity — her musical phrasing flowed so distinctly, yet so smoothly, as if to paint a story. One could feel the moving touch of the music with each delicate plucking of the strings. Vidović was able to suddenly raise herself to the summits of true pathos and strike at the hearts of her listeners with uncanny power.

There were times while listening to the melodic sounds of Agustin Barrios Mangore's *Una Limosna por el amor de Dios* that one could see not merely a poor beggar crying for "An alm for the love of God," but further feel the strongest sensations of redemptive bliss.

The experience felt like a humbling transfiguration, a buffering from a busy, yet dull and seemingly invisible reality, to uncover a fresh awareness of life, liberated and true to oneself.

Vidović was able to take her listeners on this transcendent journey, molding her phrasing so accurately, precisely and vividly that her execution of *Una Limosna*'s tremolo could be used as a weapon for melting cold hearts.

It is interesting that the emotional whirlwind of Vidović's playing was juxtaposed with her consistently very relaxed and almost passive body language throughout the evening.

For the sake of proper pedagogy and focused precision, guitarists must strive for relaxation in their playing and in their thinking. Perhaps through this quiet concentration, Vidović is able to become the breath through which the guitar can sing. Whether the result of pedagogic concern or the scrupulous pursuit of perfection, Ana Vidović truly enthralled her audience with her musical voice of crystalline clarity and undeniable passion.

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