



Agustín Barrios Mangoré

MANGORÉ

I

"Tupá, the supreme spirit and protector of my race, one day found me in a flourishing forest and said: "Take this mysterious box and discover its secrets." And enclosing in it all songbirds of the forest and the resigned soul of the plant kingdom, left it in my hands. I took it, obeying Tupa's command, keeping it close to my heart; hugging it spent many moons at the edge of a fountain. And one night, Jasy, portrayed in the liquid crystal, feeling the sadness of my Indian soul gave me six silver rays to - with them - discover their arcane secrets, and the miracle occurred: from the bottom of the mysterious box sprang the wonderful symphony of all virgin voices of America's nature.." Mangoreré

II

Somewhere in America they call Paraguay, long since lived a gentleman of those with a musical soul, a burning passion for the guitar and a mission. He grew up between songs, dances and devotional readings and since the guitar, that pilgrim instrument, never turns a deaf ear to the call of its fate, like an old troubadour he and his music began walking unstopably along the roads of America.

But he didn't sing songs like those medieval troubadours, he enjoyed those of others and stored them in his magical box. In his *mysterious box* he kept the zapateados enjoyed, the choros, the chamamés. He included waltzes, cuecas, tangos, milongas and all the dances of Latin America. Afterwards, alone, in the light of the moon, with his art he would patiently transform them into delicate musical pieces, short musical stories narrating the forest, the Andean night, the Caribbean

breeze, *the virgin voices of America's nature*. And then he turned them into charming concerts he would perform on his miraculous guitar.

His mission: to bring beauty to all corners. Spread sounds on the wind like pollen. Play in big theaters and simple spaces. Play for the educated and uneducated. No stopping. Play, play. Play as Agustín or Nitsuga. Play. Be Barrios, be Mangoré on a small island in the Caribbean and in Madrid, Havana and Paris. With bow tie around the neck or feather headdress. Keep creating music to illuminate the world.

One hundred, two hundred, three hundred pieces so the guitar may sound and be great, respected and enjoyed, following its course towards modernity. Concert guitar, *mystery box with six rays of silver*. No stopping. Play in a tuxedo or as a Guarani Cacique. Play. Enchant. Own works and European classics. Compose, live that romantic madness in the twentieth century to leave a multitude of admirers, followers, worshipers: a legend.

It is good to know therefore, that this aforesaid Guarani gentleman when he wasn't walking with his guitar (the least time of the year) gave himself up to reading books on philosophy, books of theosophy and whatever interesting word found him, and he did so with such ardour and avidity, that he began writing himself and wrote countless poems and short, well-composed texts full of beauty, of poetry. Beauty molded in Castilian and also in Guarani, his beloved language. Much was lost, little remains.

In the same manner his music was scattered. Only a few were published because his detachment was such that he composed and gave his originals away in gratitude for attentions received or to honor personalities, without making copies. Even today many of these pieces are treasures held by descendants of friends and acquaintances, treasure scattered to the four winds of Latin America. Much has been compiled and published as has been done with articles, photographs, writings, concert programs, correspondence and records, thanks - first and foremost - to the devotion of his twelve disciples of El Salvador, where he lived his final years transmitting the secrets of his mysterious box.

The age of this gentleman of ours was bordering on sixty, when fate stopped the swift turning of his vane and ever since his Art has enlightened our America and roamed the Earth like a fantastic comet.

III

THE BOHEMIAN

Agustín Barrios Mangoré

How swift is my turn! I am the vane
That moved by the impulses of destiny
Goes dancing in the crazy whirlwind
Towards the four winds of the planet.

I hold the plasma of a restless life
And in my uncertain wandering, pilgrim,

Art illuminates my way

As if a fantastic comet.

I am a brother in glory and pains
Of those medieval troubadours
Who suffered romantic madness.

Like them, also, when I am dead,
God only knows in what distant port

I will meet my rough grave!