



WORLDWIDE GUITAR  
CONNECTIONS

wgc beyond



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## Welcome to the Worldwide Guitar Connections!

The WGC is a creative project founded in 2011, and from its very beginning it counted with partners from all over the world in a vast array of activities. The idea of WGC is to tie together innovative possibilities and offer a fresh approach to the making and consumption of music. The first phase of WGC was divided into three seasons, running from 2011-2017, and comprised commissions, recordings, world tours, and outreach work. One of WGC's ground rules is to support the creation of high-quality new works for guitar, and for that purpose a select group of composers from many countries has been invited to write for each season of the project, always working under a specific concept.

In 2013 WGC started a new phase. What we had done in the first season proved to us how far we could go, geographically and conceptually. We then started to deal with the need to go further, to explore other possibilities, and to get exposed to new ideas because that's how we can really improve. I asked all composers involved in this season to go beyond their own craft, and to find inspiration elsewhere. This request was matched with exciting and challenging new works, and we then came up with ways to present these works in order to offer our audiences another level of engagement with what they were experiencing, either through recordings or in live performances.

We now embark upon a new challenge: to go Beyond. Shall we?

### **Fabricio Mattos**

WGC Founder & Artistic Director

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## Connection, Nick Norton

Nick Norton's compositional output makes clear his multi-layered artistic personality. From studies at L'École Normale de Musique de Paris and King's College (London), to a whole bunch of garages, studios, apartments, backyards, beaches, mountains, bars, libraries, clubs, restaurants, and deserts, a pinch of everything he has done echoes in his music. Nick's compositions have been referred by New Music Box as "visceral sonic haiku" after a show in New York. Nick's collaboration with WGC started in 2011, when I visited Los Angeles during a layover when flying from New York to Auckland during WGC's first world tour. Nick's words best depict the initial phase of this exciting collaboration:

"Fabricio and I met when he visited Los Angeles on the first Worldwide Guitar Connections tour, and while we were talking about his travels he mentioned that he'd kept a recorder with him and captured the sounds of the various places he'd visited, and that he wanted to commission a piece to tie all of the recordings together. We said go, and he sent me his recordings the next day. Instead of accompanying the recordings, I'd write a musical structure and narrative on the guitar, and use the recordings, with some minimal manipulations, to accompany it. The recordings used are from quite a few locations all over the world. I hope that, by combining them in the way I did, their geographic significance disappears and we hear them as being all part of the same place."

Nick decided to entitle the piece Connection, and this is a very important part of WGC Beyond, as it connects distant countries and cultures from around the globe, featuring recorded sounds from different places such as USA, Thailand, China, Brazil, New Zealand and Iceland. The guitar is the mediator connecting the sounds of the world to listeners, and Nick has successfully dissolved geographical borders, resulting in seven minutes of a kind of musical "Pangaea".





## Night View, Kelvin Fung

Kelvin Fung is a young composer who has recently graduated from the Music Conservatorium of the University of Melbourne. Learning the piano since the age of six, he has integrated the textures of this instrument as part of his soundscape. Under the tutoring of composers such as Stuart Greenbaum and Elliott Gyger, Kelvin has developed a style of writing that incorporates both contemporary and popular elements in his music, as well as oriental influences that he has taken from the eighteen years spent in Hong Kong. Much of Kelvin's compositional output is of a particular nature: mellow, tranquil and soft spoken in terms of dynamics and tone colour. However, it is not uncommon to find a twist that brings his pieces to sudden and dramatic changes, depicting qualities that are entirely in contrast with each other.

Kelvin's piece featured in WGC, Night View, is just like its title describes: a work that depicts the view of the night. It is structured as 'moment form', a concept widely spread by the piece Kontakte, by Stockhausen, who defined it as a structure that...

"...neither aim at the climax, nor at prepared (and consequently expected) multiple climaxes, and the usual introductory, rising, transitional and fading-away stages are not delineated in a development curve encompassing the entire duration of the work. On the contrary, these forms are immediately intense and seek to maintain the level of continued 'main points', which are constantly equally present, right up until they stop".

Night View portrays the different elements of the night in a number of episodes: the feeling of tranquility, moments of unrest, haunting sounds coming from nowhere, and the soft glow from the moon stemming from the light arpeggios.

*PS: this track has some special effects that can be better appreciated on headphones, or in a parked car in a silent place!*

## La Divina Commedia, Jan Meisl

Dante's 'La Divina Commedia' is considered one of the pillars of universal literature, not just for its literary merit, but also for the range of subjects approached by the author in terms of society, religion, politics, and human nature.

In terms of the artistic depiction of Dante's creation, William Blake was perhaps one of the most successful creators in dealing with the thematic engagement, symbolic content, and use of colours. Another aspect that conveys a precise idea of Blake's rendering in his series of illustrations is his gestural conception of the main characters, Dante and Virgil. All these aspects generate a very rich image of an already rich literary work, despite the centuries separating their act of creation. Based on that, I was very keen to continue a 700 years bridge from Dante's original to Blake's illustrations and the 21st century. I invited to this task the Czech composer Jan Meisl, whose work I had been following for some time, and who briefly describes his work below:

"I decided to compose a Sonata in three movements with addition of Preludio, Postludio and two Interludios. The Preludio and the Postludio represent the eternity without any space and time, and both Interludios the space and time between the Inferno, the Purgatorio, and Paradiso. There is also an interesting result of the formal construction: the Paradiso reflects the exact mirror of the Inferno."

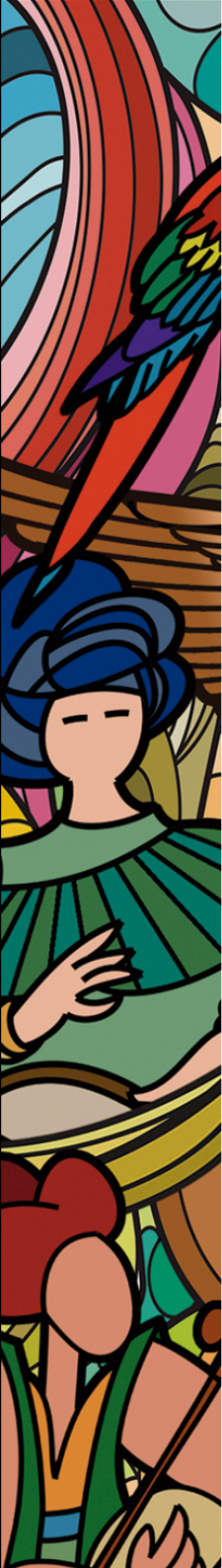
After having received Jan's work I decided to conduct a more detailed analysis of the gestures depicted by Blake in some of his illustrations, and to try and bring it to the live performances of Jan's piece in order to complete my initial idea of connecting the 14th, the 19th, and the 21st centuries. These gestures, which could be seen in WGC live performances, complemented some of Jan's musical gestures inserted throughout the piece, such as the symbolic use of tritons - considered for some centuries 'diabolus in musica' (Devil in music) - and the fact that the Paradiso is structurally a 'mirror' of the Inferno. Dante's plural and extemporal art thus keep expanding the horizons of human imagination, and in Jan Meisl's work for WGC Beyond it receives yet another surprising and uniquely imaginative interpretation.

### **Metamorphose, Ralf Bauer-Mörkens**

Metamorphosis is a widespread concept within many human activities, from science to mysticism, from philosophy to art. It permeates imaginative thoughts of all kinds, and had its own definition and symbolism associated to it transformed throughout history. Despite its widespread presence in so many cultures, metamorphosis remains one of the humanity's biggest mysteries.







Ralf Bauer-Mörkens is a plural artist: born in Bonn from Italian and Czech parents, he studied classical guitar, lute, and Composition in Cologne, as well as Mathematics. Bauer's musical influences go deep into other cultures, as well as different styles of pop music, and European and Asian aesthetics. In order to depict musically the phenomenon of metamorphosis, Ralf looked for inspiration in one of the most famous musical works ever written: Bach's Chaconne in D minor for violin (BWV 1004). Considered by many performers the technical and expressive climax of the piece, the arpeggio section of the Chaconne has been a source of inspiration for composers and artists for centuries. In the following lines Ralf refers to the influence of this work in his artistic output:

"When I was a child I heard the Chaconne from the Partita in D minor by J.S. Bach and the arpeggio part controls me till today. For the guitar I intended to compose an arpeggio that leads the guitarists to their limits, like what happens with the violinists in the Partita. The title, *Metamorphose*, means that harmony flows – from yesterday – to today – to tomorrow."

In his musical rendering of metamorphosis Ralf knew how to be wholeheartedly inspired by Bach in order to create a breathtaking piece that really brings the guitarists to their limits of technical stamina and concentration.

### **Suite Sudamericana, Fabiano Borges**

Fabiano Borges is a Brazilian guitarist and composer who holds a special bond with South-American culture. Fabiano's music often revisits tradition with a modern twist, and his work for WGC Beyond, *Suite Sudamericana*, is a perfect example of his passion and commitment to music and art from that continent. It is divided into four movements, each portraying a different rhythm or mood. As Fabiano explains:

"The first movement consists of an Andean invocation. In the central theme two independent voices appear in a kind of invention in two voices. It is a short piece that sets the mood of the listener to the Andean style of the second movement, a *huayno*, typical genre from Southern Peru. There are several types of *huayno*. One of its most important characteristics is the damped sound of the bass, following a bright soprano line, like the playing of Peruvian guitar master Raúl García Zárate."

The third movement nourishes the work with an air of Argentinean tango and milonga. The second part is a reference to the music of Astor Piazzolla. The fourth movement, the last of the suite, is based on a genre called landó, which is rhythmically very complex. In this movement, the harmonics serve to guide listeners towards the rhythm that is coming next.”

The ‘landó’, genre that closes the Suite, was taken to South-America by Angolan slaves, and there it was mixed with European dances, resulting in the South-American ‘landó’ we have today. In his suite, Fabiano explores the South-American colours with an impressive artistic control, and offers us another opportunity to get to know the history and relevance of these unique cultures.

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