

MUSICAL PRAYER

MARK HILLIARD WILSON

*St. James Cathedral Guitarist*

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*Magic Serenade*

Bryan Johanson  
b. 1951

Composer and classical guitarist Bryan Johanson was born and raised in Portland, Oregon. He studied composition with Charles Jones and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer William Bolcom. Johanson's compositions feature four symphonies, concertos for violin, cello and piano, numerous chamber works, song cycles and choral works, and compositions for solo instruments.

*Toccata Arpeggiata  
Canario*

Johannes Hieronymus Kapsberger  
c. 1580–1651

Johannes Hieronymus Kapsberger, also known as Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger, was an Austrian-Italian composer and virtuoso player of the *chitarrone* (theorbo). *Toccata Arpeggiata* is from his collection *Libro primo d'intavolatura di chitarrone*, published in 1604 in Venice. The second selection, from his fourth book of chitarrone music published in 1640, is a Canario, or a Canary dance. This joyful couples dance that was popular in the Renaissance era drew from a traditional dance of the Canary Islands.

*Prelude and Fugue in A minor*

Philip Quackenbush  
1936–2014

Seattle composer and guitarist Philip Quackenbush wrote a collection of preludes and fugues for guitar entitled *The Even-Tempered Guitarist*, which he completed in 2013. Mark H. Wilson writes: "Philip Quackenbush wrote these the year before he died. As I have waded deeper into playing these pieces so has my regret at not reaching out immediately to him to play them for him and discuss with him what he was thinking, his inspirations, his plans...I only got to meet him three times, and each time felt so brief. I knew I liked his pieces and by the time I started to dig in and play them, about three weeks after meeting him, I was told he passed away." Wilson plans to publish and record the complete collection.

*A closed world of fine feelings and grand design* (1997)

Graeme Koehne  
b. 1956

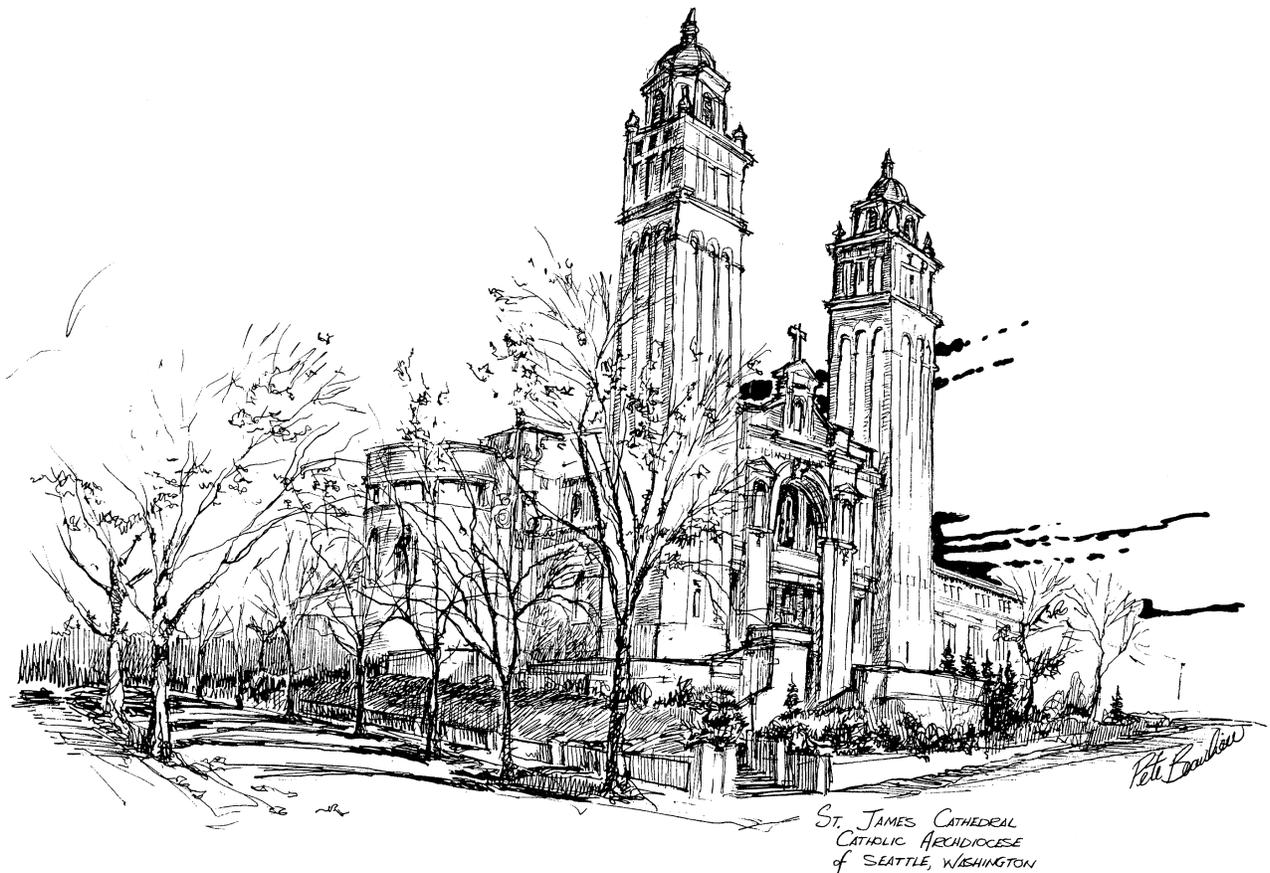
Mark H. Wilson wrote the following when he first played this for his April 9, 2021 Musical Prayer: I can think of no other piece than this final one by Australian composer Graeme Koehne that captures the conflicting emotions of our muted joy at getting to the "beginning of the end" of this, while looking soberly at what we have ahead of us in the future. Over the last year we have done so much work with acknowledging racial injustice and sexism and worked to learn more and understand more. I am hopeful that we can work together to make our world better for all, and to me, *A closed world of fine feelings and grand design* epitomizes the feelings of incredible gratitude for the gifts we have received and the understanding that they are so fleeting. Peace be with you.

*La Catedral*  
Preludio saudade  
Allegro solemne

Agustín Barrios Mangoré  
1885–1944

Paraguyan composer and guitarist Agustín Barrios Mangoré (born Agustín Pío Barrios, he added Mangoré to his name around 1930) composed *La Catedral* in 1921. The original version, which included only the second and third movements, was published with the subtitle “Distico Sacro” (“Sacred Couplet”). Tonight’s program offers the first and third movements. The first movement, “Prelude saudade,” was written in 1938 in Havana, Cuba, and added to the work the following year. Agustín Barrios had been touring incessantly and was homesick—he borrowed the Portuguese word *saudade*, which means longing or extreme nostalgia. After he wrote this, he left Cuba to embark on what was to be a short residency in El Salvador, but the dictator there would not allow him to leave and he died there in 1944.

The second movement, not played tonight, “Andante religioso” was inspired by hearing the music of Bach on an organ in a grand cathedral in Montevideo, Uruguay. The last movement, “Allegro solemne,” features a bustling sixteenth note figuration that depicts his leaving the quiet and serenity of the cathedral full of Bach’s music and his entry onto the busy city streets of Montevideo. There is a repeated rising melodic figure that is supposed to represent his feeling of commonality with his fellow humans on the street. *La Catedral* is often referred to as Agustín Barrios Mangoré’s greatest work. It is my favorite and also one of my favorite stories in music: one of a young man finding success and traveling the world with his guitar only to reach the end of a life of incredible accomplishment, but a terrible desire to return home. —*Mark Hilliard Wilson*





Classical guitarist **MARK HILLIARD WILSON** curates programs that explore the experiences of the heart through the ages, hoping to share some insight and reflection on our common humanity. He brings joy and technical finesse to the listener while integrating music from diverse backgrounds and different ages with a compelling story and a wry sense of humor. Performing regularly at festivals and concert series, Wilson has distinguished himself as a unique voice with programs that feature his own transcriptions of both the well-known and the obscure. Wilson's

compositions for the guitar have been appearing on stages throughout the Northwest US and Canada for over 15 years. He works in is the relatively unexplored genre of an ensemble of multiple guitars as the conductor, composer, arranger, and music director to the Guitar Orchestra of Seattle. Wilson has taught at Whatcom Community College and Bellevue College.

Wilson's CD *El Sueno del Camino* is the product of a series of concerts he played along the Camino de Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain. Wilson has been busy promoting his latest CD, a Guitar Orchestra recording that features compositions for 10 guitars, inspired by the pilgrimage to Spain as well as pilgrimages closer to home: Chuckanut Drive and the Edmund Pettis Bridge. Since the start of 2019 he has produced concerts for the Guitar Orchestra of Seattle in fun and unusual venues for the classical guitar, such as the restored bar "The Rendezvous" in The Jewelbox Theater (built in 1932 as a movie theater); the experimental cafe theater Cafe Nordo; and the former Elliot Bay Book Company location in Pioneer Square. Solo engagements have taken him to numerous living rooms and gardens across Seattle through the organization Groupmuse. The summer of 2019, Wilson was engaged in 10 concerts over an 8-week spread, where he played solo concerts, a concerto written for him and the Octava orchestra, and a series of concerts in Portland with the soprano Jessica Israels and baritone Erik Hundtoft. Shortly after this, Wilson was the guest guitarist with the Sun Valley Symphony.

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