



# GRACE-ST. LUKE'S

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E P I S C O P A L C H U R C H

MUSIC IN MAY  
BENJAMIN MINDEN-BIRKENMAIER, GUITAR  
MAY 17, 2020 5:30 PM  
VIA LIVESTREAM

***Elegy for Guitar Solo***

Johann Kaspar Mertz  
(1806-1856)

*Johann Kaspar Mertz was an Austro-Hungarian guitarist and composer who was married to the concert pianist Josephine Plantin. It is thought that his compositions were influenced by listening to his wife perform romantic piano pieces by composers such as Liszt, Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Schubert. His “Elegy for Guitar Solo” makes use of pianistic arpeggios and a simple, repeating melody to evoke a mournful tone.*

***Un Sueno en la Floresta***

Agustin Barrios Mangore  
(1885-1944)

*Agustin Barrios Mangore was a Paraguayan guitar virtuoso and prolific composer who was responsible for some of the first recordings of the classical guitar in 1910. He melded Paraguayan folk influences with the compositional styles of the Baroque and Romantic periods to create complicated pieces with soaring melodies. “Un Sueno en la Floresta”, which translates to “A Dream in the Forest”, utilizes a tremolo technique to maintain a continuous melody throughout the piece.*

**Benjamin Minden-Birkenmaier** grew up in the city of St. Louis, where he began studying the guitar at the age of 6. As a member of the St. Louis Classical Guitar Society, Ben played in numerous masterclasses with such notables as Christopher Parkening and Los Romeros, performed with the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and the Metropolitan Orchestra of Saint Louis, and played at numerous weddings, fundraisers, and other events. In 2014, Ben graduated from Saint Louis University, where he was a recipient of the Arion Award for Music Performance. In April 2017, Ben won 1st place in the Beethoven Club Young Artist Competition (Senior Guitar Division). Ben recently received his PhD in biomedical engineering at the University of Memphis. Ben performs regularly with the Beethoven Society and Luna Nova, and until the COVID pandemic could be found playing at The Cove every Wednesday evening.