

ALEA III

Contemporary Music Ensemble in residence at
Boston University since 1979

Theodore Antoniou, *founder*

ALEA Contemporary Guitar Series

Marsh Chapel at Boston University
735 Commonwealth Avenue
April 17, 2026, 7:00 p.m.

48th Season
2025-2026

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Contemporary Music Ensemble in residence at
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Theodore Antoniou, founder

Adam del Monte

Alan Mearns

ALEA III Guitar Series

A stylized graphic of a guitar body in shades of blue and red, with white strings extending from the bridge on the right. The graphic is partially obscured by the text and other elements on the page.

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10 Country Lane
Sharon, MA 02067
(781) 985-6448

aleaiii@bu.edu

OFFICE

855 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215

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ALEA III was founded by Boston University faculty members and has been operating in close affiliation with the University, benefiting from significant intellectual, artistic, and financial contributions from its faculty, students and alumni.

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The Greek word *alea* taken from Homer, means "to wander." In Latin, it refers to "dice used for playing at games of chance." The term *aleatoric music* indicates music based upon the principles of indeterminacy as evidenced by certain random and/or statistical procedures of composition. In regard to the ensemble, *aleatoric* is concerned with the expression of a multiplicity of musical directions, historical styles, and performance practices.

-- Theodore Antoniou

ALEA III

Alea III is the contemporary music ensemble in residence at Boston University, a group devoted to promoting, playing, and teaching music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Founded in 1978, Alea III is the third such group organized by Theodore Antoniou. The ensemble is consistent with the music it embraces--flexible in size, open to experimentation and exploration. Over the years, Alea III has offered world-première opportunities for dozens of contemporary composers, often under the composer's direction, and with extended program notes or comments. The group has performed 1,645 works by 906 composers---most of them living, and has collaborated with 1379 performers. Frequent international touring has enhanced the relationships of American performers with their colleagues and composers from other parts of the world. With its inspiration, several other contemporary groups have been formed, offering growing opportunity to young composers and musicians to play and comprehend contemporary music.

-Theodore Antoniou, *Founder*

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ALEA III

Theodore Antoniou, *Founder*

ALEA III Contemporary Guitar Series

Friday, April 17, 2026, 7:00 p.m.

Marsh Chapel at Boston University
735 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston

Curated by
Apostolos Paraskevas

PROGRAM

Part I

Adam del Monte
guitar

A Pepe “Habichuela” – Soleá
Sombras del Paraíso – Minera

Adam del Monte

Torre Berméja
Sevilla

Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909)

A Manolo Sanlúcar – Sevillanas
Aires Habanos – Guajira
Sambule
Cádiz – Buleria

Adam del Monte

Guitar by Erez Perelman

Part II

Alan Mearns
guitar

Homenaje a Mompou
Cancion
Danza

Alan Mearns (b. 1977)

Serenata Andaluza
Nana

Manuel de Falla (1876 - 1946)

Oración
Cantos
Perpetuo

Alan Mearns

Chaconne BWV 1004

J. S. Bach/A. Mearns

Guitar by Zebulon Turrentine

The logo for Alea III, featuring the word "Alea" in a stylized, bold, black font. The letter "A" is significantly larger and more prominent than the other letters, and the "a" at the end has a small vertical line extending downwards from its base.

Tonight's artists



Adam del Monte is widely recognized as one of the leading flamenco and classical guitarists and composers of his generation. His work is defined by a lifelong dedication to both genres, shaped by deep traditional training and an openness to global musical influences. His compositions and performances reflect a unique voice—rooted in flamenco heritage while continually evolving through cross-cultural exploration and innovation.

Del Monte recorded the featured flamenco guitar part in Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar* (Deutsche Grammophon, 2006), a double Grammy Award-winning opera starring soprano Dawn Upshaw and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Robert Spano. He has since toured internationally with the production, performing at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, the Los Angeles Opera, Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Barbican Centre (London), the Colorado Music Festival, the Chicago Symphony, Teatro Real in Madrid and other prominent venues.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, del Monte composed and co-produced *Relampíños*, a Virtual Guitar Orchestra piece performed by 117 guitarists worldwide—including Angel Romero and Eliot Fisk—marking the largest known collaboration between classical and flamenco guitarists. On February 16, 19, 21 & 23, Del Monte premiered *Llantos 1492*, a flamenco opera commissioned by Opera Southwest, which ran to four sold-out performances in Albuquerque, NM. This groundbreaking work integrates flamenco with classical operatic form—musically, aesthetically, and rhythmically. A pre-debut workshop performance of select scenes was presented at the Tucson Desert Song Festival in January 2019. Del Monte has represented the United States at the Euro Strings International Guitar Festivals in Hungary and Bosnia, with support from the U.S. Embassy. He has also collaborated with celebrated Persian vocalist Homayoun Shajarian and the Pacific Symphony under conductor Carl St. Clair.

His international performance career includes appearances in Hong Kong, China, and Australia with the Altamira Guitar Festival. In 2019, he was invited to perform at the Shanghai Guitar Festival. Del Monte's second flamenco guitar concerto, *Paisajes*, was commissioned and premiered by the St. Monica Symphony in 2012. It has since been performed with the Moscow State Symphony at Tchaikovsky Hall and the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra in Caracas, Venezuela. His first concerto, *Ensueño Flamenco*, was premiered by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, conducted by Gil Rose. He has contributed to several major film scores, including *Munich* (John Williams), *Knight and Day*, *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* (John Powell), and *Toy Story 3* (Randy Newman). He has also performed with flamenco greats Enrique Morente and Lole y Manuel, as well as the

Madrid Symphony Orchestra.

Throughout his career, del Monte has been committed to pushing the boundaries of flamenco, drawing from jazz, classical, and world music to shape his personal approach. His original flamenco work *Cambio de Aire* was commissioned by the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, and he has collaborated with jazz innovator Yusef Lateef and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra at the National Black Arts Festival. His debut flamenco album, *Viaje a Un Nuevo Mundo* (Sonifolk, 1998), was praised by leading Spanish music critics including Ángel Álvarez Caballero (*El País*), Miguel Mora (*El País*), and Alfredo Grimaldos (*El Mundo*). Other releases include a Mel Bay Artist Video Series, a classical and flamenco recital, and *Ezordio*, a classical CD released by GSP.

Del Monte's early training began with his father and continued with flamenco masters such as Pepe Habichuela, Paco Cortés, Niño Miguel, and Gerardo Núñez. His classical studies included training with Menashe Baquiche in Israel and Gordon Crosskey at Cheatham's School of Music and the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England. He studied at the Thelma Yellin High School for the Arts in Tel Aviv.

He has performed at a wide range of venues, including the Mark Taper Forum, the Wilshire Theater, Disney Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, Teatro Real and Conde Duque in Madrid, the Manuel de Falla Auditorium in Granada, and international festivals in Israel, France, Brazil, Argentina, India, Malaysia, and the United States. Del Monte was the first prize winner of the 1997 "Stotsenberg International Classical Guitar Competition" and has since maintained a career at the forefront of flamenco and classical guitar performance. He has taught at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music since 2000, where he specializes in flamenco and classical guitar.

Adam del Monte performs on custom-made classical and flamenco guitars by Israeli luthier Erez Perelman.

Learn more: www.adamdelmonte.com



Irish guitarist-composer **Alan Mearns** is internationally recognized for performances of exceptional musical imagination, technical virtuosity, and expressive depth. Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Mearns pursued advanced musical studies in the United States, where he was the first guitarist to be awarded the prestigious Fletcher Scholarship for his undergraduate work with Dr. Douglas James at Appalachian State University. He later completed his graduate degree under the mentorship of renowned artist, performer, and scholar Stanley Yates at Austin Peay State University, whose influence is reflected in Mearns' approach to musical interpretation, structure, style, and creative expression.

Alan continues to expand the expressive range of the classical guitar not only as a performer and arranger but also as a composer. Among his recent works are *Oración* and *Lorca*, the latter featured on his newly released album of the same name, a project that he describes as “flowers at the tomb of Federico Garcia Lorca, the poetic soul of Andalucia.”

Alan has presented masterclasses throughout the United States and the United Kingdom, including at Yale University, the Dublin Conservatoire of Music, Oberlin Conservatory, the University of North Texas, and the New York Classical Guitar Society, as well as at numerous guitar festivals and concert series.

In addition to his career as a classical musician, Alan maintains a parallel songwriting career under the name *Yes the Raven*, releasing multiple albums rooted in folk and Americana traditions. While distinct from his classical work, this songwriting voice informs his expressive impulse as a classical musician.

Alan Mearns' artistry bridges tradition and individuality, scholarship and intuition. Whether interpreting Bach or presenting original works, he brings a compelling and unique voice to the classical guitar shaped by curiosity, expressive depth, and a commitment to musical creativity. His recent performance of the Bach Chaconne at the Guitar Foundation of America Convention was described as “*amongst the greatest performances of the work I've ever heard. To say the audience went wild at the end would be a tremendous understatement.*” (Soundboard Magazine)

Acclaimed virtuoso David Leisner wrote of Mearns' New York debut, “*I'm impressed and moved by his daring original take on things and his virtuosity. The Albéniz was especially spectacular, maybe the best I've ever heard.*”

Alan's critically acclaimed recording *J.S. Bach, Sei Solo*, brought international attention and entered the Billboard Classical Music Charts at No. 8. The album has been praised for its originality and artistic conviction by numerous leading musicians and scholars:

“Bach-Godowsky, Bach-Busoni, Bach-Leonhardt. And now, Bach-Mearns, for no transcription of Bach deserves a hyphen more than the guitar transcription presented here. It is a fearless examination of the potential of Bach on the guitar, the originality of which is not to be underestimated.”

Mark Delpriora (The Juilliard School)

“I haven't been as nicely surprised for many, many years! What an achievement!”

Sergio Assad
multi-Latin-Grammy-winning composer/guitar virtuoso

“Simply brilliant!”

Steve Goss
Royal Academy of Music

“...a revelation. Mearns reveals himself a singular artist of extraordinary imagination... truly a next-generation phenomenon.”

Stephen Aron
Oberlin Conservatory of Music

“Mearns' virtuosic recording is a thrilling adventure for the hands and ears... reminding us of how exciting the guitar can be as a solo instrument when it suggests something greater than itself.”

Jonathan Leathwood
editor, *Soundboard Scholar*

Learn more: <https://www.alanmearns.com/>

Tonight's program

Part I

A Pepe "Habichuela"–Soleá by Adam del Monte

The *Soleá* stands as one of the central pillars of the flamenco tradition. Structured around a 12-beat *compás*—the cyclical rhythmic framework that governs flamenco forms—it is widely regarded as one of the most profound and introspective styles in the repertoire. Its expressive character often conveys solitude, existential reflection, and restrained intensity.

This work is dedicated to my maestro, Pepe Habichuela, whom I have known since the age of fourteen. The *Soleá* was the form through which our lessons would invariably begin. Beyond its pedagogical function, it served as a shared musical space—an invocation of tradition and a means of establishing artistic bonding.

-AdM

Sombras del Paraíso–Minera by Adam del Monte

The *Minera* belongs to the family of *Cantes de las Minas* (also known as *Cantes del Levante*), song forms that emerged in the mining regions of southeastern Spain, particularly Murcia, Cartagena, and La Unión. Characterized by its dark tonal palette—often associated with the G♯ Phrygian mode and the Andalusian cadence—the *Minera* evokes the resonant depth of the mines themselves. Its traditional texts frequently address themes of hardship, labor, and human endurance.

In this composition, I integrate classical and contemporary harmonic language within the flamenco idiom. The *falsetas*—self-contained melodic episodes within the larger structure—extend beyond customary phrase lengths, intentionally departing from the more concise, *cante*-oriented formal conventions. This expanded architecture allows for broader thematic development while maintaining the essential expressive gravity of the form.

-AdM

Isaac Albéniz was born on May 26, 1860, in Camprodón, Spain. His musical gifts were apparent early, as evidenced by his first public piano performance at age 4. When he was 6, Isaac's mother took him to Paris to study privately with Antoine Marmontel. In 1868, his family moved to Madrid, where he was acclaimed as Spain's greatest prodigy. Young Isaac soon became impatient with his studies, and legend has it that he ran away from home to perform in South and North America. It is more likely he was accompanied on his travels by his father, a Spanish customs inspector who was transferred to Havana, Cuba, in 1875.

On his return to Spain in 1876, Isaac obtained a royal stipend for a course of study at the Brussels Conservatory, which he completed with a first prize piano performance. After leaving the conservatory, Albéniz toured the principal cities of Spain, giving concerts and managing a traveling zarzuela (Spanish operetta) company. In 1883, he studied with Felipe Pedrell, sometimes described as the father of Spanish music. A brilliant teacher, composer, and musicologist, Pedrell impressed Albéniz with his conviction that Spanish composers should write music rooted in Spanish culture. During this time, Isaac married one of his pupils, Rosita Jordana, with whom he had three children. He composed a considerable amount of music during this period, including concert etudes, concertos, dances, and instrumental music influenced by Spanish folk songs and dances.

He also developed close friendships with distinguished European composers such as Dukas, d'Indy, Fauré, and Bordes. In 1905, suffering from an incapacitating kidney disorder, Albéniz moved his family to France and began composing his masterpiece, *Iberia*, a set of twelve piano pieces in four books. Two months after completing *Iberia*, Isaac Albéniz died on May 19, 1909, in Cambo-les-Bains, France. He was buried in Barcelona, Spain, leaving a prolific body of work that influenced composers such as Debussy and Ravel.

Torre Berméja by Isaac Albéniz

Torre Berméja means *Crimson Tower*, which is the final piece in a series of 12 *Characteristic Pieces* Op. 92.

Albeniz wrote mostly for the piano, several operas (many of them in English) and songs for voice and piano. Although he never composed for the guitar, in many of his pieces we hear his love for the national instrument, drinking from its endless fountain of inspiration. Conceived as a Serenade, this piece showcases a full-fledged sense of romanticism and lyrical drama. The present guitar arrangement was prepared by my teacher in England, Gordon Crosskey, and seeks to reveal the guitaristic essence latent within the original piano score.

-AdM

Sevilla by Isaac Albéniz

Inspired by the popular social dance of the Sevillanas, *Sevilla* is one of Albeniz's most well-known pieces. It is part of the Suite Española Op.47 for piano. Albeniz possessed a unique talent for channeling the spirit of every city in Spain, for which he wrote many pieces for their namesakes, capturing it in the essence of his melodies. The fast section draws upon the spirit of Sevillanas, refracted through a Romantic pianistic idiom. Albéniz appears to approximate the effect of *rasgueado*—the flamenco strumming technique—within the limitations of the keyboard. The slow part is inspired by the *couple* singing style, which is not exactly flamenco but rather a more popular none-Gypsy style of singing, being a sort of hybrid of flamenco and classical known as Classical-Spanish.

-AdM

A Manolo Sanlúcar – Sevillanas by Adam del Monte

This composition pays homage to the distinguished guitarist and composer Manolo Sanlúcar. My inspiration derives in part from his celebrated Sevillanas duet with Paco de Lucía in Carlos Saura’s film *Sevillanas*. Traditionally structured in four coplas (verses), Sevillanas frequently feature striking modulations between sections. Although often regarded as lighter within the flamenco spectrum, the form permits considerable expressive range from festive exuberance to poignant lyricism. Their moods can vary from very frivolous to somewhat melancholic and melodramatic. This form is considered on the lighter side of the flamenco idiom, but its complexity is in the hands of each composer/performer.

-AdM

Aires Habanos – Guajira by Adam del Monte

The Guajira is part of the category known as *Cantes de Ida y Vuelta* (“songs of departure and return”), which includes forms such as the Colombiana, Vidalita, Milonga, and most famously, the Rumba. These styles originated in Spain, traveled to Latin America and the Caribbean during the 19th and early 20th centuries, and were subsequently transformed by local musical practices before returning to Spain in newly hybridized forms.

The Guajira underwent particularly significant development in Cuba. Originally, it was called *Punto Cubano* and was in 6/8 time. Once it was reabsorbed in Spain, the rhythm and time signature transformed into the classic flamenco *compás* of 12/8, with accents on beats 3-6-8-10-12, or 6/8–3/4, much like the Bulería. Its melodic and rhythmic character absorbed Afro-Cuban influences. In this piece, I explore that transatlantic dialogue, preserving the elegance of the traditional form while subtly extending its harmonic language.

-AdM

Sambule by Adam del Monte

Whilst living in Madrid in the late 80s and early 90s, I got a position teaching flamenco guitar at a jazz school. It was a run-down old place in an old neighborhood called *La Latina*. However, some of Madrid’s finest jazz and Latin music teachers called it their home. As I was trying to teach my students the sounds and rhythms of all sorts of jazz, Samba, Bebop, and Blues would seep through the thin, precarious walls of that institution. The end result was the inspiration for this piece. ***Sambule*** was originally conceived as a fusion of Samba and Bulería, or a kind of Brazilian vibe, but over the years it evolved into a more modern, jazz-laced composition.

-AdM

Cádiz – Bulería by Adam del Monte

The Bulería is the most rhythmically complex and virtuosic form in all of the flamenco repertoire. This piece is in the Style of *Bulería de Cadiz*, which is usually in the key of E

major. The Bulería is typically played in the Phrygian/Andalucian key of A. It is an inspiration from one of the most iconic flamenco albums ever created by Manolo Sanlúcar called *Tauromagia*. Here I have collected a variety of musical elements ranging from Bach, John McLaughlin (Shakti group), and Django Reinhardt to whatever else I could find in the kitchen sink, all bundled up into a joyous Bulería, which is all about having fun!

-AdM

Part II

Homenaje a Mompou by Alan Mearns

In contrast to the bombastic revolution of Stravinsky and the occupation of the academy by serialism, Mompou retreated to a monkish solitude and continued the lineage of Satie and Debussy’s “beautiful revolution”. ***Homenaje a Mompou*** echoes the simple form of “Cancion y Danza” for which Mompou was famous. The piece is dedicated to Mearns’s teacher and mentor Dr. Stanley Yates.

Born in 1876 in Cadiz, the historical seaport town at the southern-most tip of Andalusia, **Manuel de Falla** has been called the greatest Spanish composer of the 20th century. His formal musical education began with piano lessons, and when de Falla was 20, his family moved to Madrid, where he studied with the distinguished teacher José Tragó. He then went on to study composition with Felipe Pedrell, the teacher and scholar who led the revival of Spanish music towards the end of the nineteenth century. He was also influenced by Louis Lucas’ theories of deriving harmonies from natural resonances.

De Falla’s aim was “truth without authenticity,” and he had realized it by the time he was 29, when he wrote his first masterpiece, *La Vida Breve (Brief Life)*, a spare, tragic zarzuela about a young Gypsy woman, forsaken by her lover, who comes to his wedding feast to die. De Falla moved to France a few years after writing it, and when it was performed there, in 1913, it brought him instant recognition. In France, he completed several chamber works and began work on *Noches En los Jardines de España (Nights in Gardens of Spain)* before the outbreak of war in 1914 compelled him to return to Spain. By the time he wrote *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* in 1915, de Falla had learned more about expanding folk sources from Russians like Rimsky-Korsakov. All his life, he continued to adopt new ideas as he was exposed to other approaches to musical nationalism. The lively and cheerful *El sombrero de tres picos (Three-Cornered Hat)* plainly shows the influence of Stravinsky, as does the exuberant puppet opera *El Retablo de Maese Pedro*, which was based on an episode from *Don Quixote* and is often compared to Stravinsky’s *Histoire du Soldat*.

Following the deaths of his parents in 1919, he settled in Granada, where he remained

until the end of the Spanish Civil War (1939). He composed several of his most important works, including *El retablo de maese Pedro* (*Master Peter's Puppet Show*), *Psyché*, and *Concerto per clavicembalo* (*Harpichord Concerto*). An ardent pacifist, disillusioned by the Spanish Civil War and World War II, he moved to Argentina and worked there until his death in 1946, just a few days before his 70th birthday. Influenced by Latin American folk traditions, he began writing a vast oratorio, *Atlántida*, about the lost continent of Atlantis and exploration in the New World. It remained unfinished at the time of his death.

-Based on articles by Chester Music and the New York Times

Serenata Andaluza captures the essence of Falla's early Spanish tradition. The influence of Albeniz, Granados, and Chopin is still evident, as is Falla's burgeoning native Andalusian flair. Manuel de Falla was a quiet, sincere Catholic. This work however, expresses a latent eroticism mixed with a mystical, if not Mephistical quality (metaphysical?). The confluences and contradictions of magic and religion in Andalusia are innumerable, and this archetypal thread can be noted throughout Falla's oeuvre, perhaps most explicitly in his *Ballet El Amor Brujo* (*Love, the magician, or Love the Sorcerer*).

Nana, a traditional lullaby from *Siete canciones populares españolas*, is imbued with delicate melancholy and is often performed on the violin and cello.

Oración by Alan Mearns

Oración (*Prayer*) is Mearns' original composition in two movements. *Cantos* evokes ancient, chant-like melodies that seem to echo across time. *Perpetuo* explores a more urgent and rhythmically-driven sound, embodying a sense of spiritual searching. The composer notes: "While working on Baroque ornaments, I happened upon a rather strange and novel arpeggio technique. I knew it would manifest as a composition eventually and tucked it away in the back of my mind. A few months later, I was repeatedly listening to Gilels' incredible performance of the Bach/Siloti B minor Prelude. This must have generally influenced the tone and key of the piece. I can't say more about it because music arrives unexpectedly and for its own reasons." The piece is written with a lute tuning, the perfect symmetry and resonance of which the composer finds very appealing. It is dedicated to the great Cuban virtuoso Rene Izquierdo.

Chaconne BWV 1004 by J. S. Bach/A. Mearns

***The only Chaconne that compares
With the Bach Chaconne
Is the Chaconne of the moon.***

A cornerstone of the solo violin repertoire, **Bach's** Chaconne is a monumental exploration of variation form and emotional range. In this guitar transcription, Mearns brings new resonance and color to the work, highlighting the instrument's capacity for contrapuntal richness and lyrical depth. The Chaconne stands as a timeless testament to the power of solo music to convey the full spectrum of human experience. Personal notes and two short poems by Alan Mearns are included.

"I can't help but psychologically frame Bach's Chaconne and second violin sonata as inextricably linked together and to the tragic, unexpected death of his first wife. The magnitude of the Chaconne in the context (and out of context!) of the partita itself is so glaring that, even on paper, it looks like an outburst, an anomaly, a breach, a tombeau. This is purely conjectural, but I discovered a structural element in the Chaconne that altered my arrangement and performance of it. I feel that Bach had initially finished his piece at the conclusion of the first minor section. When examined in this way, we can see a perfectly executed chaconne with a virtuosic conclusion and a recapitulation of the "overture" theme. We know that the schematic descending chromatic line is linked to lamentation and sometimes referred to as "The Way of the Cross" — this fits into many theories that assert the whole group of pieces as representative of the life of Christ. With the Chaconne as the central passion, the piece would end there, at 33 variations; that is, the life of Christ. It is interesting to note in the same parallel context that his wife, Maria, died at 33 years of age. The number three is also theologically significant in other ways, but I feel this "ending" sheds further light on the ensuing variations. When playing through the 33rd variation, I felt a compulsion to end the last "unison" chord on a rolling suspension ornament, perhaps subconsciously, as the entire variation is a series of suspended appoggiaturas. The resolution afterwards then gives the satisfying resolution of a standard Picardy third" major-mode cadence, one we would expect from such an extended piece. The ensuing parallel-major section, then, no longer begins abruptly and strangely, but the ending becomes the beginning, so to speak, and the reluctant flame of hope in the "afterlife" is gently blown and caressed until it reaches the heights of trumpets and cherubic choirs. Bach is then "thrown back to earth" after this beatific vision for the last quarter to deal with the existential reality of his temporal loss."

***How then should we enter
The Bach Chaconne?
Like Orpheus entering Hades?
Like Theseus entering the Labyrinth?
Or Like Picasso's 'Old Guitarist'
- By way of the cross?
Yes, yes and yes.***
