



# SEGUE

**Walter Auer, flute**  
**Janez Gregorič, guitar**

The CD *Segue* seamlessly combines the familiar with the unfamiliar. Original compositions pair the golden sound of the solo flutist of the Vienna Philharmonic Walter Auer with Janez Gregorič's seven-string Kreul-Carlevaro guitar.

Astor Piazzolla's *History of Tango* and Claude Debussy's *Syrinx*, both twentieth-century masterpieces, along with Luna Alcalay's *En Passant* and the first recordings of compositions by Janez Gregorič come together to produce an inspiring whole. *Segue* can be interpreted as sound in transition.

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

## **Syrinx for flute solo**

"*Syrinx*" is indisputably one of the most famous works for the flute. It is almost surprising that this distinction can be seemingly effortlessly claimed by a two-page three-minute-long composition. But it is not always about length or gravity – unlike any other composer, Claude Debussy grasps the very essence and the spirit of the flute.

Music for flute typically tends to go in one of two possible directions: either it leans toward extremely virtuosic, bravura music, or it is more plaintive and sound oriented. The latter approach comes closer to the historical role of the flute in the evolution of music and of mankind in general: as a spiritual instrument often seen as the voice of ancestors or as a means of connecting to the spirit world. Debussy always built his compositions around the sound of particular instruments or combinations of them. In "*Syrinx*" he appears to let the flute simply be – improvisationally searching for shorter

and longer motives, using a scale that has neither focus nor particular emphasis, flowing rhythmically, especially in time to the musician's breathing.

It is common knowledge that "*Syrinx*" was conceived as part of the incidental music to Gabriel Mourey's "*Psyché*" and premiered in 1913. A well-known fact is, furthermore, that the piece was not performed ON stage but behind a paravent. It is worth envisioning what this means for the performance, how much the focus shifts to the sound itself and away from the flutist. The flute tells its own story, brought into being by the musician's breath that almost becomes an entity of its own.

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

## **Histoire du Tango for flute and guitar**

Astor Piazzolla's "*L'Histoire du Tango*" was written in 1985 – somewhat surprising when one considers the often very demanding, intellectual and often not easily accessible way of writing commonly associated with the avant-garde of the decade. "*L'Histoire du Tango*" sounds completely different: it is playful, entertaining and very accessible, making it – not only in its original version for flute and guitar but also in a number of arrangements – a popular mainstay of many chamber music programs.

Tango wasn't only the root of Piazzolla's artistic output but his musical ecosystem. At the beginning of his studies with Nadia Boulanger he felt somewhat obliged to deny this for a while, but she forcefully encouraged him to go "back to the roots" and to use his mastery of classical compositional techniques within in the framework of tango compositions. This is exactly how "*L'Histoire du Tango*" works. Written in four movements that describe the evolution of tango from 1900 to a non-specific "today", the traditional tango style is increasingly enriched with harmony and modern stylistics. Piazzolla achieves this without wagging a professorial finger at the listener, but by taking great pleasure and pride in presenting this rich musical tradition.

The flute and the guitar are challenged but never technically overwhelmed. The work is all about playful communication and variety. "*L'Histoire du Tango*" is not meant to be a "great masterpiece" in the grave, Eurocentric sense, but simply presents music making in its own right.

Luna Alcalay (1928-2012)

## **En Passant for flute solo**

"*En passant*", admits Walter Auer, to whom the piece is dedicated, certainly does not open up to you the first time you listen to it. It seems to want to convey something, but what? The piece is uncompromising; it demands conscious listening and careful thought.

How are we to interpret the more than thirty subtle changes in tempo, which do not rely on obvious contrasts, but take place on a small scale? Why is the pulse never calm but always agitated? There is a repetition of motives on all levels, tonal centers cluster around A – does that stand for Alcalay or is it part of the dedication: A for Auer?

Those who knew Luna Alcalay will recognize quite a bit about her personality in this piece – her uncompromising standards, her persistence, and by all means her brusqueness, too. She was serious about art, existentially serious in fact. This might be explained to some extent by her biography, for she was a Sephardic Jew and a woman at a time when this presented an enormous obstacle in one's artistic career. She was by no means calmly compliant to the fact that despite the high quality of her work and her great effort and absolute dedication she never got her big break. One senses her revolt against personally perceived injustice in every note.



Janez Gregorič (\*1965)

While the dual role of composer and interpreter was quite common well into the nineteenth century, one no longer encounters this combination very readily anymore. Janez Gregorič, however, still upholds the tradition of the “all-round musician” who interprets, teaches, and composes. In his particular case, he also plays an influential role as the artistic director and initiator of numerous musical activities: concert series, festivals, and workshops in Carinthia. Among others, several works in connection with Carinthia have been selected for this CD. Their designation “in K” refers to Kärnten, the German name for Carinthia.

### **Suite in K for guitar solo**

With “Suite in K” for solo guitar, Janez Gregorič has combined four pieces composed over a period of more than 25 years. It traces and accompanies his musical path, and he has fittingly dedicated this suite to his wife and longtime companion Lydia Gregorič.

The first movement “Cantilena in K” was written in the early 1990s in Graz as an etude that took its cue from the pattern of sixteenths throughout the piece. The second movement, “Die Zeit im Kirschgarten” (Time in the Cherry Orchard), was inspired by a painting by Rudi Benétik – and one might add that Janez and Lydia Gregorič own a large collection of contemporary Carinthian art. The centerpiece, which hangs in the kitchen, is the abovementioned Kirschgarten. The composition follows the seasons in a (Carinthian) cherry orchard: it starts out with the call of the cuckoo in spring. The red cherries in summer are conveyed to us by way of reference to a Slovenian folk song with the following lyrics: “I wish I were a little ‘Gypsy’, but I have no red cap”. This song is also well known in Tyrol and Styria as the “Vogelfängerlied” (Birdcatcher’s Song) with its refrain “Ziwui, Ziwui” – which happens to be quite fitting, since the red cherries attract many birds. The long autumn is expressed in E minor with a slight hint of melancholy, before we sense the sparkle of winter ice approaching. The piece ends with the call of the cuckoo –and the promise of spring once again.

Just as Janez Gregorič is often inspired by his enthusiasm for visual arts, sometimes the dedicated music instructor also bases his pieces on a didactic idea: in the case of “Romanza” he assigns varying tasks to the same fingers. A catchy pop melody encourages students to want to practice.

Finally, “Rondo in K” makes reference to another Slovenian folk song. Commissioned in 2007 by the Slovenian Cultural Club in St. Michael/Šmihel for its 100-year anniversary, the piece is based on a

song about loneliness, “In St. Michael hab ich eine kleine Keusche” (I have a little cottage in St. Michael). The theme “alone, alone” characterizes the recurring motif in the movement.

### **In K for flute and guitar**

Also “In K” are the two movements “Preludio” and “Pastorale” for flute and guitar, which were composed for an exhibition opening in the 1990s. In the prelude, Janez Gregorič refrains from making direct reference to “K” by way of a Carinthian folk song and instead alludes to the general melancholic mood of the clearly Slavic character typical of Carinthian folk music. The pastorale offers a more direct reference to “K” in that it is based on a rhythmic variation of the folk song “Pojdám u Rute” (I’m going to Greuth). A third movement was originally planned, but in his own words Janez Gregorič “got stuck” in the middle, and as one can’t force the muse or inspiration, the two movements have stood alone ever since.

### **Übergänge / Prehodi for flute and guitar**

“Übergänge – Prehodi” (Transitions) for flute and guitar holds a special place in Janez Gregorič’s list of works. The piece is dedicated to his mother, who died one year before its completion. The emotional reaction to the diagnosis of her terminal illness gave rise to the opening motive of the first movement of this deeply personal work. The theme “Himmelfahrt” (Ascension) of the multidisciplinary event TRIVIUM | tri poti | drei Wege (Three Paths) held on the mountaintop of Hemmaberg inspired Janez Gregorič to address this aspect of the concept of “transition” and to continue working on his composition. His mother’s initials G and H\* (Helena Gregorič) lead quite naturally to the first movement’s main key of E minor, while the second movement revolves densely and almost obsessively around the two tones themselves. In a brief pause we again encounter the opening motive. The transition to the actual “ascension” takes place in the third movement – with unfamiliar and no longer melodic or harmonious (in other words “earthly”) sounds created through the use of so-called bottlenecks in the guitar part, the composition moves steadily, somewhat like a march, “upward” toward A. In the end what remains is a simple melody, a hopeful acceptance and farewell.

\*The note H is synonymous with note B.

*Text Julia Auer*

*English translation, Julia Auer, Kimi Lum*



Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)	<b>Histoire du Tango</b> für Flöte und Gitarre	
	1   Bordel 1900	3:45
	2   Cafe 1030	6:59
	3   Nightclub 1960	5:55
	4   Concert d'aujourd'hui	5:11
Janez Gregorič (*1965)	<b>Suite in K</b> für Gitarre solo	
	5   Cantilena in K	3:27
	6   Die Zeit im Kirchgarten	4:43
	7   Romanca	1:38
	8   Rondo in K	3:42
Luna Alcalay (1928-2012)	<b>9   En Passant</b> für Flöte solo	8:03
Janez Gregorič	<b>Übergänge   Prehodi</b> für Flöte und Gitarre	
	10   I. Lento meditare, fluido	5:17
	11   II. Vivo	4:49
	12   III. Cantabile	6:02
Claude Debussy (1862-1918)	13   <b>Syrinx</b> für Flöte solo	2:59
Janez Gregorič	<b>In K</b> für Flöte und Gitarre	
	14   Preludio	2:08
	15   Pastorale	2:33

Recording Producer: Julia Auer

Recording, Balance Engineer & Digital Editing: Bruno Singer, sonus-media

Recorded: 2021/2022 at Konzerthaus Klagenfurt, Carinthia, Austria

Graphic Design: Kiki Gregorič

Cover Art: Gustav Januš 2017

Photo: Ferdinand Neumüller 2021 at Konzerthaus Klagenfurt

Translations: Kimi Lum

Made in Austria 2023

**sonus**

© sonus, SM23081

Total time: 1:07:20

Die CD Segue verbindet im nahtlosen Übergang Bekanntes mit Unbekanntem. Originalkompositionen vereinen den goldenen Klang des Soloflötisten der Wiener Philharmoniker Walter Auer mit der siebenstimmigen Kreul-Carlevaro-Gitarre des Gitarristen Janez Gregorič.

Astor Piazzollas Geschichte des Tangos und Claude Debussys Syrinx, beides Meisterwerke des 20. Jahrhunderts, ergeben mit Luna Alcalays En Passant und den Ersteinspielungen der Kompositionen von Janez Gregorič ein inspirierendes Ganzes.

Segue liest sich als Klang im Übergang.

The CD Segue seamlessly combines the familiar with the unfamiliar. Original compositions pair the golden sound of the solo flutist of the Vienna Philharmonic Walter Auer with Janez Gregorič's seven-string Kreul-Carlevaro guitar.

Astor Piazzolla's History of Tango and Claude Debussy's Syrinx, both twentieth-century masterpieces, along with Luna Alcalay's En Passant and the first recordings of compositions by Janez Gregorič come together to produce an inspiring whole.

Segue can be interpreted as sound in transition.

