



Master guitarist Roberto Capocchi returns to Las Vegas

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By Ronald Maltais
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Roberto Capocchi

Roberto Capocchi is no stranger to Las Vegas. In past years he served as a guitar teacher at the United World College USA and at New Mexico Highlands University.

In March 2018, he performed in a house recital in Las Vegas to help benefit Meadow City Academy of Music. Now, Las Vegas will have the opportunity to hear Capocchi perform a solo recital at the First United Presbyterian Church featuring works of Bach, Mertz, Regondi, Villa-Lobos, Pernambuco and Gismonti.

Capocchi is recognized throughout New Mexico and beyond for his dynamic interpretations of classical and contemporary guitar works. He received a graduate scholarship to the University of Arizona after winning numerous guitar competitions in his native Brazil and has since performed in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Belgium. To date he has recorded three CDs.

Local engagements include the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra, New Mexico Performing Arts Society, New Mexico Classical Guitar Festival, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Santa Fe Community Orchestra, and Southern Arizona Symphony Orchestra. Capocchi currently teaches at the Santa Fe Guitar Academy, and leads the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival's "Guitars in Our Schools" program at Kha'p'o Community School at Santa Clara Pueblo.

When asked about his early music development, Capocchi said, "I started studying piano at age nine or ten, and about a year later, walked myself to a little conservatory a few blocks from my house in São Paulo, Brazil, and signed myself up for guitar lessons. I don't remember exactly, and I'm sure my parents came by later for the details, but I remember just going by myself at first.

"From the beginning, I enjoyed practicing. Years later, when I was going to college, I was still struggling technically to the point that the required repertory for the audition for São Paulo University was beyond me, so I went to a small music college, searching for the best coaches I could find. My parents encouraged my practicing, and I had early teachers who were very nurturing of my dedication to the guitar, even if our efforts did not shine early on.

"After a few years more of practice, I got a lucky strike in a string of small competitions around Brazil, and leveraged that, together with a nice demo tape recorded in the bathroom, into a graduate scholarship at the University of Arizona, and spent my first year there living with Ivan Rijos as a roommate. Ivan was the most absurdly gifted musician I had ever met, and as hard-working as anybody else. Just witnessing that level of playing on a daily basis was a game-changer for me.

"As part of my work at the Santa Fe Guitar Academy, I offer a lot of online coaching, and I've seen surprising results. So, when four years ago, one of the finest players in the world today, Jorge Caballero from Peru, started offering lessons like that, I remembered reading about Luciano Pavarotti's vocal coach, and realized that even such a luminary in the field had that sort of support, just like the best athletes. I've had the pleasure of picking Jorge's brain since, and it's been very helpful."

Capocchi's solo recital will take place at 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 27, at the First United Presbyterian Church. Admission will be \$20 for adults at the door. The event is free for students. It is presented by the Meadow City Academy of Music.