

# Jose Luis Merlin

## Guitarrista/Compositor

Jose Luis Merlin was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1952. He began playing the guitar at age of five under the tutelage of Maestro Vincente Degese, continued with Maestro Abel Carlenaro, and was performing in Argentina by the time he was nine years old. He has been a concert artist, composer and guitar teacher since 1967, as well as a researcher and teacher of instrumental technique.



Merlin has made more than twenty international tours which include: Spain, Austria, USA (over 100 concerts), Canada, Cuba, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Brazil and Uruguay. He has given concerts in such renowned halls as the Centro Cultural de la Villa (Madrid, Spain), the United Nations (New York, USA), the Meridian House (Washington, D C, USA), the Museums of Art in Dallas and Detroit (USA), the Teatro Juan Bravo (Segovia, Spain), the Teatro Nacional Cervantes (Buenos Aires), as well as on public radio and television in Ohio, Michigan, Oregon, California, Texas (USA), and on the international channel of Deutsche Welle (Germany). He has been invited on five occasions to give classes and lectures at universities in the USA and Germany.

Merlin has played as a soloist with the Symphonies of Rosario and San Juan (Argentina), and has performed chamber music with the following quartets: Buenos Aires, Sudamérica, Sudamericano, Musicámara, del Plata, and the Grupo Merlin. He is co-founder and first president of the Association Integración Guitarrística Argentina. He has published over ten recordings in the USA, Japan, Austria and Argentina.

As a composer he has given workshops on instrumental techniques, rhythmic folklore of Argentina, insights and analyses of South American composers, as well as lectures at universities in Texas, Southern California, Oregon and Michigan. He composed the music for Travesía (The Guitar, Witness to Five Centuries), an oratorio for recitative, singing voice, mezzo-soprano and chamber orchestra (texts by José Tcherkasky). Merlin has composed works for solo guitar, guitar and violin, guitar and string quartet, piano and voice, etc. He has arranged and adapted works by Beethoven, Scarlatti, Bach and Piazzola, and has set to music the poetry of Nicandro Pereyra and Antonio Esteban Agüero.

More accomplishments defining Merlin's extraordinary career include his founding the Centro de Estudios Musicales Merlin for the teaching of guitar, piano, singing, chorale singing, flute, saxophone, harmony, composition and percussion. He is currently the Director of the Music Department and a Guitar professor of the Mundo-Velázquez School of Music in Madrid, Spain.

A newspaper in Keil, Germany ([Kieler Nachrichten](#)) summed up beautifully Merlin's mastery of the guitar:

*"What guitarist J.L.M. extracted from a simple guitar this Thursday evening was something outside all human comprehension. With a traditional guitar, he linked two cultures — the Argentine and the Spanish. An artist like J.L.M. needs no certificates of his mastery over the strings of his guitar, since the composer does more than simply dominate the instrument. It is a kind of symbiosis. . . . The measure of sound of his guitar knows no limits. . ."*

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## Professional Reviews

By Yamila Bortnik

Written in press release for Suenos de Argentina Album Presentation

*“This artist, of long and solid career in the interpretation as much as the composition, gives us a classical music with strong folkloric roots, in which malambos, zambas, chacareras, carnavalitos, joropos, and sad ones are found. Throughout his prolific career, Merlin has composed and interpreted songs related to his home and his people, reflecting the subtle mixture between the classical and the popular.”*

Victory Music Review, Seattle, Washington—February 2002

Jose Luis Merlin: Dreams of Argentina

*“Classical guitar at its finest. When you sit quietly and listen to each note being played here, you feel and see the poetry of the Argentina landscape. Human, romantic, emotional. This man, Jose Luis Merlin, could be sitting there right in front of you. You can feel his fingers on the strings. With help from the liner notes you are led to see horses galloping on the pampas, stars in the night sky, a one thousand year old tree providing flowers, fruit, leaves, shade and nests—a cathedral of the birds. Then a herd of horses playing in a river. Particularly fine is “Insects, Birds and Clouds” which clearly buzzes with the wings of insects hovering, birds flying higher, and higher still the clouds drifting by—three planes of sky above the child lying on his back, on the ground, looking up at the sky. Each of the three dimensions is defined by the mood of the guitarist’s fingers. Merlin is a superb guitarist who plays with great warmth and emotion. From Argentina and now living in Spain, he has released this album as his first in the United States. A very profound, poetic listening experience.”*

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