

SPRING 2017

SPECIAL FOCUS: INJURY & RECOVERY

CLASSICAL GUITAR

7-STRING
RUSSIAN
GUITAR

PLAY A
BARRIOS
PRELUDE

JON GJYLACI

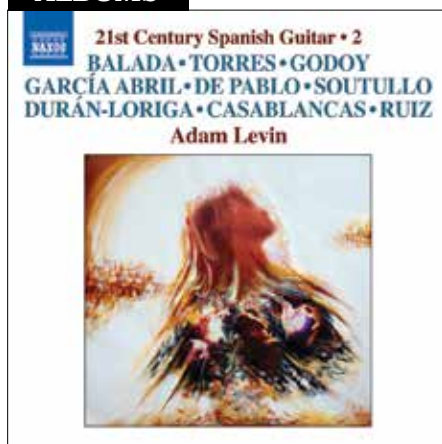


MURIEL ANDERSON

BEYOND CLASSICAL GUITAR

ANTONIO
DE TORRES
A 200TH BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION

ALBUMS



21st Century Spanish Guitar 2

Adam Levin
Naxos

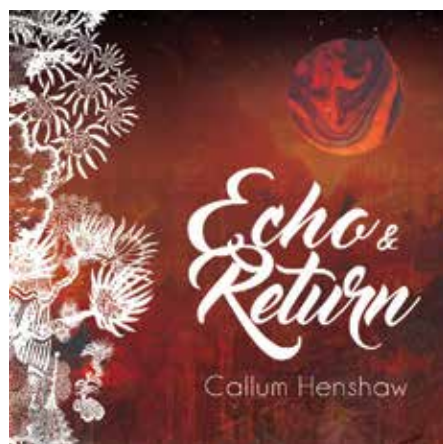
Second offering continues great work

Resplendent in a slip-case displaying a painting by Leo D'Lázaro commissioned by the performer, this enterprising release forms part of what will be a series of four discs. The first was reviewed in *CG* July 2013, so no one can accuse Levin or his record company of rushing them out. All the works here were composed within the past decade, and all except *Dos Cantares* by Antón García Abril, are claimed as premieres. This said, none of the composers could be described as being at the start of their careers, the youngest being Eduardo Soutullo and Juan Manuel Ruiz (both b. 1968). The oldest is Luis De Pablo (b. 1930), who is one of three octogenarians on the program.

Despite being subtitled *Abstractions of Granados*, the opening *Caprichos No. 11* by Leonardo Balada can be a little spiky at times, the quick-fire repeated note figures in the final movement providing an impressive showcase for Levin's considerable technical prowess. In contrast, the sumptuous soundscapes of *Interiores* by Jesús Torres offer a wider canvas for Levin's expressive powers. In the program as a whole, the language is occasionally challenging but never indigestible. *Elegía Otoñal* by Marc López Godoy even contains moments that take us back to the world of Segovia, as does the wonderfully retro offering by Antón García Abril. Only in the epic valedictory *Orión* by Juan Manuel Ruiz could the term "heavyweight" be applied.

A landmark recording by an outstanding practitioner.

—PF



Echo & Return

Callum Henshaw
callumhenshaw.com

Australian's packed disc is top-notch from start to finish

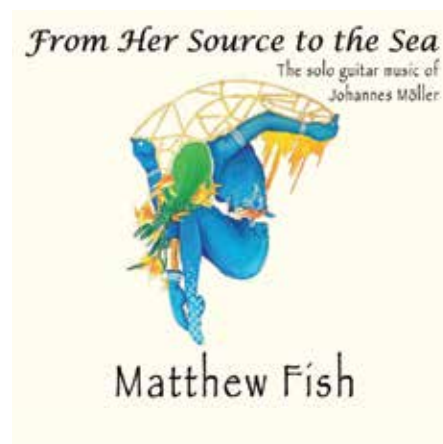
A project spanning three years and "interrupted" by a serious injury (which, coincidentally, he describes on page 66) *Echo & Return* has running through it conceptual strands of "theme and variations", "absence and return", the memories of which are both nostalgic and full of hope.

Australia has a penchant for producing world-class guitarists, and Callum Henshaw appears to show no sign of bucking that trend. His command of the instrument is immediately apparent with the opening *Valses Poéticos* by Granados. His athletic approach is fluid and relaxed without losing focus on the music's demands.

Le Départ by Napoleon Coste (1805–1883) is a slice of mid-19th century narrative depicting the final episode of the Crimean War—although there are no "battle" special effects (à la Barrios) here.

The disc is positively crammed, with 70 minutes of music: After the 16 minutes of Granados, there is Manuel Ponce's monumental *Variations sur la 'Folia de España' et Fugue* (at 25:48). I, like its dedicatee, Andrés Segovia, have great affection for it and Henshaw treats each variation with great care, producing a significant amount of coloration and dynamic shading. *From Kakadu* by Peter Sculthorpe (1929–2014), one of Australia's premier composers, follows, and the most "modern" piece, *Bleed-through*, for guitar and laptop (!) by Samuel Smith (b. 1985) conclude the proceedings; the latter being stylistically far-removed and not out of place as a soundtrack to a good horror movie.

—TP



From Her Source to the Sea: The Solo Guitar Music of Johannes Möller

Matthew Fish
Soundset

Sterling interpretations of Swedish composer's unique works

When I first came across Swedish guitarist Johannes Möller's music, it was obvious that he was a truly individual writer whose music looked and sounded like no one else's. His emotional compositions involve many complex arpeggiated patterns, usually with open strings interwoven with a very high tessitura, and an ethereal quality that is both very hard to read on the music, but wonderful to listen to when played by a master, as here in this recording by San Francisco guitarist Matthew Fish.

Typical of Möller's work is *Song to the Mother*, which has a nearly arrhythmic folk-like melody that almost sounds Celtic. Harmonics fly in and out, and together with bended notes and the arpeggio patterns, all make for a compellingly beautiful opening that truly sounds like nothing else you have ever heard.

A Star in the Sky, a Universe Within is another outstanding track on the album; among other unusual techniques, it requires the player to continue a rising tremolo pattern off the fingerboard, and to keep moving upwards. It sounds gimmicky, but really works. A selection from Möller's *24 Preludes* prove to be more compact but just as musically convincing, but it is more likely that you will return again and again to the longer works. Wonderfully played by Fish, and expertly recorded, this disc of Möller's music is a constant joy, at once unusual, unique, and always satisfying.

—CD