geoffrey gordon - the earth is blue

Like an orange or not, **The Earth is Blue** brings together four arresting chamber works by British-American composer **Geoffrey Gordon**, each shaped by a powerful encounter with visual art, archaeology, architecture, and poetry. Across violin and cello, string quartet, guitar and mandolin, and an expansive double-quartet meditation, Gordon creates a vivid, highly crafted musical world: sensuous yet rigorous, richly harmonic, and alive with dramatic contrast.

At the core of the album is the relationship between image and sound. Gordon's music responds not by illustrating its sources, but by transforming their atmosphere, tension, structure, and emotional force into a distinctive musical language.

Aphrodite and Eros (fighting off the advances of Pan): Inspired by the celebrated Hellenistic sculpture from Delos, this duo captures the sculpture's charged scene of resistance, desire, vulnerability, and movement. Aphrodite's poise, Pan's intrusion, and Eros's urgent intervention become the basis for a concentrated dramatic exchange between viola and cello. Performed by violinist Callum Smart and cellist Benjamin Hughes, the work balances lyric beauty with physical intensity.

The title *Abaciscus* derives from an archaic term for a tessellated paving tile. Its four movements—"Circus Scene," "Orpheus," "Bikini Girls," and "The Angel before Saint Joachim"—take their names from mosaics in Sicily's Villa Romana del Casale and Piazza Vittoria in Palermo, alongside the medieval mosaic of Daphni Monastery in Athens. Gordon draws a philosophical line between sacred and profane imagery, underlining the contrast with fleeting references to the Beach Boys' "California Girls" and Pérotin's *Viderunt Omnes*. Friction Quartet brings precision, color, and theatrical energy to this mosaic-like sequence.

Originally written for the German duo Ahlert & Schwab and premiered at the 2003 La Guitarra California Festival, *Interiors of a Courtyard* responds to the paintings of Danish artist Vilhelm Hammershøi. Known for muted palettes, architectural clarity, and haunting light, Hammershøi's interiors and courtyards inspire a five-movement work of strict formal design and quiet emotional depth. Fabio Gallucci and Antonio Pilato reveal the music's intimate play of resonance, shadow, geometry, and suspended time.

Named for Paul Éluard's Surrealist poem, "The earth is blue like an orange," *La terre est bleue comme une orange No. 1* explores repetition, temporal displacement, and continually changing perspective. Two identical string quartets perform the same music five minutes apart: the B section of one overlaps with the A section of the other, then reverses as the cycle continues. Designed to be repeated at the performers' discretion, the score creates an evolving field of sonority in which material continually acquires new meaning. Quartetto Maurice's recording embraces the piece's hypnotic, open-ended architecture.

Geoffrey Gordon is a composer whose music combines modern tonal language, romantic expressiveness, virtuosic instrumental writing, and vivid extra-musical inspiration. His works have been performed and broadcast internationally by organizations including the Philharmonia, BBC Philharmonic, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Radio France, Brussels Philharmonic, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

His music has appeared on labels including BIS, Orchid Classics, Naxos, Signum, Toccata Classics, Coviello, and Neuma Records, and has been featured by BBC Radio 3, BBC Four, Radio France, German Radio, and Danish Radio. Gordon's recent large-scale works include concertos for bass clarinet, bassoon, harp, oboe, trumpet, and English horn; his chamber music retains the same sense of dramatic narrative, luminous orchestration, and formal imagination.

"Gordon's music is incredibly impressive; it is a wonder he is not yet a household name..." – Colin Clarke, *Fanfare*

1 **Aphrodite and Eros** 5:33
Callum Smart, violin
Benjamin Hughes, cello

Abaciscus
Friction Quartet
2 I. **Circus Scene** 3:47
3 II. **Orpheus** 5:31
4 III. **Bikini Girls** 2:58
5 IV. **The Angel before Saint Joachim** 6:52

Interiors of a Courtyard
Fabio Gallucci, mandolin
Antonio Pilato, guitar
6 **Prelude** 4:46
7 **Interlude I** 2:48
8 **Interlude II** 1:41
9 **Interlude III** 3:36
10 **Postlude** 4:08

11 **La terre est bleue comme une orange No. 1** 25:10
Quartetto Maurice

>66:50<

GeoffreyGordonComposer.com

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