



Solo
MUSICA



Peter Katona / Zoltan Katona **guitar**
La Chapelle Musicale de Tournai **orchestra**
Philippe Gérard **conductor**
Wietse Beels / Gudrun Vercampt **violin**
Vincent Hepp **viola**
Martijn Vink **cello**

ALHAMBRA INSPIRATIONS KATONA TWINS GUITAR DUO

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Alhambra Inspirations

The Alhambra Palace was built in the early Middle Ages, in the city of Granada, following the Arab conquest of Spain. With its impressive mosaics and sun-drenched gardens, it inspired the creation of many wonderful compositions throughout the centuries.

While several works of Francisco Tárrega, Isaac Albéniz and Joaquín Turina have a direct connection to the Alhambra Palace, the Arabian influence is evident in most pieces on this Album.

1. Albeniz for Two – Asturias

The title of Albéniz's original piano piece, 'Asturias', was given posthumously by its German publisher but the piece was described by the composer's biographer Walter Aaron Clark as "pure Andalusian flamenco". The main theme even mimics a special guitar technique of alternating the thumb and index finger of the plucking hand, which is probably the reason for the popularity of this piece on the guitar. The version recorded on this album features several additions to the original, enhancing its Arabic and flamenco roots. A short introduction, reminiscent of a religious call to prayer, a flamenco style guitar percussion, several complementary melodies and special guitar effects were added to the composition.

The Tarrega Double Concerto

2. I. Gran Vals

3. II. Alhambra Inspiration

4. III. Capricho Arabe

Francisco Tárrega was a Spanish composer and classical guitarist of the late Romantic era. He is often called, 'The Father of Classical Guitar' and is considered one of the greatest guitarists of all time. My students often play his pieces. While listening to their performances, I started

imagining several additional melodies. At some point I wrote them down, so that I could play these wonderful works together with my brother. Besides the completely new second guitar part, I have also extended each piece with some related but new musical material. Once I finished the version for two guitars, I felt that including more instruments would add colour and an extra dimension to these individual pieces and I decided to turn them into a double concerto.

Even audiences that have never heard of Francisco Tárrega will surely recognise at least one part of his Gran Vals as it became famous in the nineties as the Nokia Ringtone for mobile telephones. I have picked up that idea but turned it on its head as if the Nokia ringtone inspired Tárrega to compose Gran Vals although it was obviously exactly the other way around.

Recuerdos de la Alhambra is possibly the most famous classical guitar piece ever written for solo guitar. I added a short rhythmic introduction, played by the second guitar at the beginning and later by the tambourine, envisioning a caravan of camels arriving from the Arabian desert. The descending melody, played by the oboe, imitates a snake charmer who would have likely performed in the bazaar just outside the Alhambra palace. As the title of the last movement suggests, Capricho Arabe also has a strong connection to Andalusia's Moorish past. For dramatic effect, I included a fast and virtuosic Cadenza at the end of the last movement. I hope that the Tarrega concerto will show these well-known guitar pieces from a new perspective.

5. Oriental

One of the most beautiful early works of Enrique Granados, 'Oriental' is the second of his 'Twelve Spanish Dances' composed in 1890. It was inspired by the Spanish National School of Felipe Pedrell who himself studied the guitar and was deeply influenced by the guitarist Francisco Tárrega. Besides Isaac Albeniz, Granados was one of Pedrell's first students which is why playing this piece on two guitars feels like returning it to its original source of inspiration.

Scarlatti Double Concerto

6. I. Allegro

7. II. Aria

8. III. Scarlatti's Metamorphosis

We first performed a crossover version of Domenico Scarlatti's Toccata in D minor at the Night of the Proms 'Pop Meets Classics' concert tour in arenas across Europe in 2009. However, the idea of adding two more sonatas and developing them into a Double Concerto occurred to me only recently. The work is based on three individual sonatas composed for harpsichord by Domenico Scarlatti. The first movement, 'Allegro', stays fairly close to the original but it is arranged for modern orchestra and two guitars. The second movement, 'Aria', is extended with a counterpoint melody and a new part in D major. It is followed by a dramatic cadenza, no longer in the baroque style, before returning to the original simple melody. The final movement 'Scarlatti's Metamorphosis' turns the concerto, towards the end, into a heavy metal piece breaking down all stylistic barriers with rock improvisations and a percussion solo played on two guitars."

9. Mallorca

Mallorca is one of the early works of Albéniz, a hauntingly melodious barcarole depicting the beautiful island with Moorish influence. It is probably best described by the composer himself, commenting on his earlier works: "I now note that there is less musical science, less of the grand idea, but more colour, sunlight, flavour of olives. That music of youth, with its little sins and absurdities that almost point out the sentimental affectation ... appears to me like the carvings in the Alhambra, those peculiar arabesques that say nothing with their turns and shapes, but which are like the air, like the sun, like the blackbirds or like the nightingales of its gardens."

10. Introduction & Fandango

Boccherini was an Italian cellist whose compositional style is characterised by rococo charm, lightness and optimism, exhibiting melodic and rhythmic invention. In 1768 Boccherini moved to Madrid and two years later started working for King Charles III of Spain's younger brother. Influences from the guitar tradition of his adopted country are apparent in his famous Fandango, composed originally for string quartet and one guitar. The addition of a second guitar, recorded on this album, emphasises the Spanish character of this piece. The guitars, in this arrangement, play a much more prominent and technically demanding role than in the original version where the guitar is used more for colour, rhythm and accompaniment.

11. La Oracion del Torero, Op. 34 for String Orchestra

Joaquín Turina wrote several pieces for the guitar. Apart from the Andalusian influence, Debussy's and Ravel's impressionistic style is apparent in much of his work. 'La Oracion del Torero' 'The Prayer of the Bullfighter' was originally composed for four Lutes. Turina soon arranged the popular piece for string quartet and later expanded it to a full string orchestra. This is the version which is recorded on this album. The music begins quietly, one can easily picture, perhaps even smell the scent of the bullring and the tense atmosphere as the toreador approaches his potentially fatal opponent. Drama and tension rise, affecting and extending the main theme, before the piece ends as it began, quietly and stoically as a prayer.

Biographies

KATONA TWINS (Peter and Zoltan Katona)

Peter and Zoltán Katona have given recitals in major concert venues throughout the world including performances at Carnegie Hall in New-York, Wigmore Hall in London, The Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, The Konzerthaus in Vienna, Suntory Hall in Tokyo and The Philharmonie in Cologne in Germany. They effortlessly transfer from strictly classical, into more popular musical genres.

In 2009, as the soloists of the 'Night of the Proms', they performed live to half a million people in arenas across Europe. They played together with renowned musicians such as Yo-Yo Ma and world class ensembles such as the BBC Concert Orchestra and the London Sinfonietta.

The twins have won over ten international prizes at major competitions in New York, London, Germany, France and Hungary. Their arrangements and recordings featured in the US blockbuster TV series ' Fargo ' and in the Broadway show ' The River ' featuring Hollywood star Hugh Jackman. They have been invited on numerous occasions to record and perform for international television and radio stations such as the BBC (UK), EÉN (Belgium), KDFC (USA), SWR (Germany), VPRO (Netherlands), RTÉ (Ireland) and MITV (Hungary).

The twins were born in Hungary and went on to study in Germany and in London. They now live in Liverpool, in the U.K. 'Alhambra Inspirations' is their eleventh CD recording.

www.katonatwins.com





Philippe Gérard

The Belgian conductor Philippe Gérard is the permanent director of the chamber orchestra "La Chapelle Musicale de Tournai". He completed his studies at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, winning first prize in conducting and obtaining a master's degree in piano and chamber music. He has collaborated with several orchestras in Belgium, such as 'The Belgian National Orchestra' and the Royal orchestras of Liège and Wallonia. He performs regularly as a conductor and a pianist in Belgium, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and China. He is regularly invited to conduct the orchestras of the great opera houses of Belgium such as 'La Monnaie' and 'The Opéra Royal de Liège'. He is professor emeritus of orchestral conducting at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, where he was awarded the 'J.de la Haut' prize in 2008 for his exceptional accomplishments as a teacher.

La Chapelle Musicale de Tournai

The Belgian Chamber Orchestra of Tournai was founded in 1978 and is recognised and sponsored by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (FWB). As well as concerts in Tournai, the orchestra often performs across Belgium, France and England. Their wide repertoire spans from Baroque to contemporary music. In addition to supporting emerging artists, they often give concerts with celebrated soloists as well. Together with their permanent conductor Philippe Gérard, they are open to all musical styles from oratorios to jazz and have performed in jazz festivals in Liège and Tournai. La Chapelle Musicale de Tournai features on several CD recordings with music written by Mozart, Britten and the Cuban composer Leo Brouwer.

www.chapellemusicaletournai.be



String Quartet

WIETSE BEELS violin
GUDRUN VERCAMPT violin
VINCENT HEPP viola
MARTIJN VINK cello

Solo
MUSICA

Produced by Katona Twins guitar duo

Solo Musica Executive Producer: Hubert Haas

Recording Engineer: Frédéric Briant

Editing: Katona Twins and Frédéric Briant

Mastering: Frédéric Briant

Recording producer/Director: Boris Gaquere

Recording Venues: Conservatoire de Musique and St-Paul Church in Tournai, Belgium

Date: 2-4 February 2024

Picture Cover: Katona Twins

Pictures Booklet: Katona Twins; Pixabay: Peter H; Enrique; Alex B, Juan de Dios Sáez

Booklet Text: Katona Twins

Artwork & Layout: Barbara Huber, cc-construct.de

Made in Austria

Recording supported by Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles

 **FÉDÉRATION**
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SM465

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