



SOMMCD 0130



GYPHY BALLAD

Eleftheria Kotzia *guitar*

Federico Moreno Torroba (1891-1982)

Suite Castellana

- | | | |
|---|--------------|------|
| 1 | Fandanguillo | 1:51 |
| 2 | Arada | 3:46 |
| 3 | Danza | 2:54 |

Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-1999)

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|------|
| 4 | Junto al Generalife | 5:30 |
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Dusan Bogdanovic (b. 1954)

from *Six Balkan Miniatures*

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|------|
| 5 | Široko (Wide Song) | 1:27 |
| 6 | Sitni Vez (Tiny-Knit Dance) | 1:44 |

arr. **Lily Afshar** (b. 1960)

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|------|
| 7 | Dareneh-Jaan /Aziz-Joon | 4:03 |
|---|-------------------------|------|

Iakovos Kolanian (b. 1960)

- | | | |
|---|---------------|------|
| 8 | Noubar Noubar | 4:44 |
|---|---------------|------|

Miroslav Tadic (b. 1959)

- | | | |
|---|------------|------|
| 9 | Walk Dance | 3:34 |
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Ulrik Neumann (1918-1994)

- | | | |
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| 10 | Love Waltz | 3:17 |
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Sylvie Bodorová (b. 1954)

- | | | |
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| 11 | Gypsy Ballad | 10:29 |
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Ernesto Cordero (b. 1946)

Two Pieces Afro-Antillanas

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|------|
| 12 | Nana para una Negrita | 2:55 |
| 13 | El Cumbancherito | 3:35 |

Antonio Lauro (1917-1986)

- | | | |
|----|------------|------|
| 14 | El negrito | 1:38 |
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Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959)

- | | | |
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| 15 | Valsa Concerto No. 2 | 4:22 |
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Gerardo Hernán Matos Rodriguez (1897-1948)

- | | | |
|----|---------------|------|
| 16 | La Cumparsita | 2:59 |
|----|---------------|------|

Angel Villoldo (1861-1919)

- | | | |
|----|-----------|------|
| 17 | El Choclo | 2:22 |
|----|-----------|------|

Isaias Sávio (1902-1977)

- | | | |
|----|----------|------|
| 18 | Serões | 2:31 |
| 19 | Batucada | 3:12 |

Total playing time **67:00**

Recorded with the kind support of Andrew Hirons

Recording location: Holy Trinity Church, Weston, Herts on 22 October 2012 & 25, 26 February 2013

Engineer/Producer: John Taylor

Guitar: Christopher Dean Strings: Savarez

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GYPHY BALLAD



Eleftheria
Kotzia
guitar



Gypsy Ballad

The wide variety of repertoire here illustrates the diversity and versatility of the contemporary classical guitar. Composers of many nationalities have discovered in the instrument an expressive voice capable of evoking their individual dance traditions and songs.

Federico Moreno Torroba, born in Madrid, learned music with his father, José Moreno Ballesteros, a well known organist, and later studied composition with Felipe Pedrell (1841-1922) and the composer, Conrado del Campo (1878-1953). In 1918 the composer met Segovia, who commented in his autobiography: “*Then there was a ‘first’ in the field of the guitar: for the first time, a composer who was not a guitarist, wrote a piece for the guitar. It was Federico Moreno Torroba...It did not take us long to become friends, nor for him to accede to my suggestion: Would he compose something for the guitar? In a few weeks he came up with a slight but truly beautiful Dance in E major. In spite of his scant knowledge of the guitar’s complex technique, he approached it accurately by sheer instinct and, to my joy, the work remained in the repertoire.*”

The composer continued to write for guitar during the rest of his life, producing some eighty works. The three movements of *Suite Castellana* comprise *Fandanguillo*, a lively dance based on a folk song, *Arada*, an evocation of the Spanish countryside, and *Danza*, reputed to be the first piece Torroba ever wrote for the guitar and premiered by Segovia in the Teatro de la Comedia, Madrid, on 4 April, 1922.

Joaquín Rodrigo, composer of the *Concierto de Aranjuez*, was one of the great Spanish composers of the twentieth century. His contribution to the guitar is now appreciated as one of the central pillars of the repertoire. Rodrigo explored the Spanish nature of the guitar, responding to the history of plucked instruments back to the sixteenth century. Though his solo compositions comprise only some 25 titles, his output is greater than the sum of its parts, perhaps due to his deep understanding of the instrument, which he had developed over decades of research.

Junto al Generalife (Close by the Generalife) was dedicated to the German classical guitarist and composer Siegfried Behrend, who edited the piece for the German publishers Bote & Bock, Berlin (published 1957). The Generalife was the garden of the palace of the kings of Granada, its name derived from the Arabic, Gennat-Alarif – ‘the garden of the architect’.

Rodrigo offered this comment: “*Everyone knows of the magical gardens of the Generalife connected to the Alhambra; there can be found the gentle rustle of perfumed breezes, a distant tinkle of bells, and flowers which shelter behind the myrtle bushes. And there, also, the guitar reposes and dreams.*”

Dusan Bogdanovic, born in Belgrade, began playing guitar at the age of twelve. Later he studied composition with Alberto Ginastera and Pierre Wissner, and guitar with Maria Livia São Marcos at the Geneva Conservatoire, making his USA debut at Carnegie Hall, New York, in 1977. From 1990 to 2007 he taught at the San Francisco Conservatory and now teaches at the Geneva Conservatory. His compositions combine classical, jazz and ethnic influences. His *Six Balkan Miniatures* are dedicated to World Peace. *Tiny-Knit Dance* alludes to the nimble fingers of the accordion or flute players who participate in village festivities.

Lily Afshar, born in Teheran, Iran, studied guitar from the age of ten. After graduating from the Boston Conservatory, she studied for her doctorate at Florida State University. In 1986 she played for Segovia in master classes at the University of Southern California. Lily is head of the University of Memphis guitar faculty. *Dareneh-Jaan/Aziz Joon*, from *Five Persian Ballads*, begins with expressive harmonics before developing the theme through the use of tremolo.

Iakovos Kolanian, Armenian-Greek composer and recitalist born in Pireus, the port near Athens, studied with Evangelos Assimakopoulos at the Athens Conservatory. He has toured widely as a concert artist throughout Europe, the USA, Latin America, etc., performing solo recitals and with leading orchestras, and has released several very

successful recordings. Kolanian is Head of the Guitar Department at the Contemporary Athens Conservatory and is currently also teaching at the Athenaeum Conservatory. *Noubar-Noubar*, from *Six Armenian Dances*, is an Armenian folk song.

Miroslav Tadic studied in Italy and the former Yugoslavia, before moving to the USA. A prolific composer since 1985 he has taught at the California Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles. *Walk Dance* from a traditional Macedonian dance entitled *Kalajdzisko oro* (Coppersmith's Dance), is based on the movements of coppersmiths while making metal dishes and plates.

Ulrik Neumann, an accomplished guitarist in many styles (including finger-style jazz as well as classical) and film actor, appeared in nineteen films between 1940 and 1966. From 1959 until 1961 he was a member of the trio Swe-Danes and also played with the Jack Hylton orchestra. *Love Waltz*, a poignant dance was written for the Swedish movie 'Vaxdockan' in the 60s.

Sylvie Bodorová, born in the Czech town of Ceské Budejovice, studied in Bratislava, Brno and Prague She taught at the Janáček Academy in Brno and in the 1990s in the University of Cincinnati where for two years she was composer in residence. Her music has been performed world-wide with commissions from many countries. *Gypsy Ballad*, an extended work of considerable virtuosity, dedicated to María Isabel Siewers, was inspired by the gypsies of Prague. Written without time-signature, it explores many guitar sonorities such as rapid arpeggios, passages in octaves, *cantabile* sections, *glissandi*, and strummed chords.

Ernesto Cordero, born in New York of Puerto Rican parentage, studied with Regino Sainz de la Maza, Renata Tarragó, and Alirio Díaz. He is acknowledged as one of the outstanding composers for guitar within Latin America, and teaches at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras. *Nana para una Negrita* and *El Cumbancherito* evoke the sonorities of the Afro-Antillan culture of Puerto Rico, Cuba and Santo Domingo. Diverse techniques are involved including crossed strings, percussive blows, quarter-tones, *pizzicati*, and harmonics.

Antonio Lauro dedicated himself to the guitar after hearing a recital by Agustín Barrios Mangoré. For many, Lauro is the authentic voice of Venezuelan music, especially in his waltzes. Lauro's love of the waltz is exemplified in *El Negrito*, written for the birth of his son, Luis Augusto.

Heitor Villa-Lobos produced a vast body of works for orchestra, choirs and piano but it is his guitar music that has often received the widest admiration. His capacity for writing memorable themes congruent with the instrument's natural patterns enabled him to develop a unique personal style. *Valsa Concerto No. 2*, from a manuscript in the Villa-Lobos Museum, Rio de Janeiro, was the first piece Villa-Lobos wrote for guitar.

Born in Montevideo, Uruguay, Gerardo Hernán Matos Rodriguez began composing in 1917. Though he wrote many pieces in similar style, *La Cumparsita* became his most famous work. Rodriguez travelled widely throughout Europe and collaborated in a film with the great tango exponent, Carlos Gardel in the 1930s. He worked for a while as Uruguayan consul to Germany.

Ángel Villoldo, born near Buenos Aires, a pioneer of Argentinian tango was recorded as early as 1912 singing *El Choclo* ('The Corn Cob'). As with Gerardo Rodriguez, Villoldo has become famous as the result of one particular composition, *El Choclo* taking its title reputedly from a nightclub. The work was first played at the restaurant, El Americano, Buenos Aires, in 1903, and has been popular ever since.

Isaias Savio was born in Montevideo and moved to Brazil in 1931. He was appointed professor of guitar at the São Paulo Conservatoire. As well as being a prolific composer, he gave dozens of recitals in Brazil and throughout South America. *Serões* and *Batucada* are characteristic pieces from Savio's *Scenes of Brazil* suite. The first is a *modinha*, a sentimental love song. The *batucada* is a samba with exciting cross-rhythms, and various techniques of a percussive kind being used.

Eleftheria Kotzia

Described by USA Review as doing for the Greek soul what flamenco does for the Spanish, Eleftheria Kotzia has toured regularly in Europe, Canada, the United States, South America, North Africa, Australia, New Zealand and the Far East. She has performed as a soloist and with orchestras at many of the great international festivals. Born in northern Greece, in Alexandroupolis, Eleftheria Kotzia studied guitar at the National Conservatory in Athens, the Conservatoire National Supérieure in Paris, and finally at the Guildhall School of Music in London. She won first prize in the 6th International Guitar Competition in Milan. Among her teachers were Julian Bream, Alexandre Lagoya, Dimitri Fampas, David Russell and Timothy Walker.

When Eleftheria made her London debut *The Times* admired her skill, her beguiling tone and her ability to vary her touch with fluency. Since then she has performed for various radio and TV stations, including the BBC and WNYC and given recitals at some of the most prestigious concert halls including Carnegie Hall, New York, the Herbst Theatre, San Francisco, the Wigmore Hall and the South Bank Centre, London, among others.

Eleftheria Kotzia has an impressive list of recordings to her credit. Among them the first recording of Michael Tippett's *The Blue Guitar*, which was selected by *Gramophone* magazine as Critic's Choice. John Tavener's only solo guitar work, *Chant*, was also recorded for the first time by Eleftheria, in a special adaptation made for her by the composer.

Kotzia was selected to represent Greece in London's *Millennium Celebrations: String of Pearls*. She played the guitar part in the first performance of John Tavener's cantata, *Fall and Resurrection*, in St Paul's Cathedral, London.

An important initiative has been her encouragement of non-Greek composers to write Greek -influenced music for her. Her uniquely pioneering work has resulted in

compositions by such composers as Stephen Dodgson, Carlo Domeniconi, John Duarte and Edward McGuire, each influenced in their different ways by the richness of the Greek musical heritage. She has also presented numerous works by Greek composers in recitals around the world. Other compositions dedicated to Kotzia include the *Levantine Suite* by Dusan Bogdanovic, and works by the Chilean composer Edmundo Vasquez. The concerto '*Visiones, Tres Clavi in Crucem*' for guitar and string orchestra by Estonian composer Rene Eespere, was dedicated to her. She premiered and recorded the work in 2009.

Eleftheria Kotzia teaches at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and gives master classes around the world. She is a frequent judge in international guitar competitions. Within the Catalogue of *Lathkill Music Publishers* she directs the Eleftheria Kotzia Series, which features new contemporary music for guitar. Since 2007 Eleftheria has been Course Director of the International Guitar Festival in Ligoure, France.



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