



Dusan Bogdanovic

CANTICLES

*I dedicate  
this recording  
to the memory of my father  
Caslav Bogdanovic  
who taught me how to play  
my first Abyssinka guitar*



A richly gifted composer, improviser and guitarist, Dusan Bogdanovic has explored musical languages which are reflected in his style today – a unique synthesis of classical, jazz and ethnic music.

As a soloist and in collaboration with other artists, Bogdanovic has toured extensively throughout Europe, Asia, Japan and the United States. His performing and recording activities include work with chamber ensembles of diverse stylistic orientations: the De Falla Trio; harpsichord/guitar duo with Elaine Comparone; and jazz collaborations with James Newton, Milcho Leviev, Charlie Haden, Miroslav Tadic, Mark Nauseef, Anthony Cox, and others.

Dusan Bogdanovic's recording credits include several albums, on ESS.A.Y, Sony/Global Pacific, M.A Recordings, GSP, Intuition, Concord Records, and other labels, ranging from Bach Trio Sonatas to contemporary works.

His compositions are published by Guitar Solo Publications in the US, Doberman-Yppan, Canada and Berben Editions, Italy. Among his most recent commissions are a ballet-poeme *Crow*, premiered by the Pacific Dance Company and performed at the Los Angeles Theater Center; a sextet *Sevdalinka*, written for the Newman-Oltman guitar duo with the Turtle Island Quartet; *Over the Edge*, composed for the Lafayette Trio, as well as solo guitar works written for Alvaro Pierri, David Starobin, Eduardo Isaac, Scott Tennant and William Kanengiser.

Bogdanovic was born in Yugoslavia in 1955. He completed his studies of composition and orchestration at the Geneva Conservatory with P. Wissmer and A. Ginastera and in guitar performance with M. L. São Marcos. Early in his career, he received the only First Prize at the Geneva Competition and gave a highly acclaimed debut recital in

Carnegie Hall in 1977. He has taught at the Geneva Conservatory and the University of Southern California and is presently engaged by the San Francisco Conservatory.

His theoretical work for guitar includes *Polyrhythmic and Polymetric Studies*, as well as a bilingual publication covering three-voice counterpoint and Renaissance improvisation with a structural analysis of motivic metamorphoses in composition and improvisation. He has also collaborated on multi-disciplinary projects involving music, psychology, philosophy and fine arts.



More than is the case with other instrumentalists, guitarists often compose for their instrument. But only a small percentage go beyond the minor genre of idiomatic solos to broader horizons such as scores for full orchestra, or string quartet. Classical guitar's history is full of 'great' composers who wrote only for solo guitar, using short simple forms. Guitarists universally acclaim Tarrega and Barrios as great composers, despite the fact that they never wrote beyond the guitar. Here is a case for musicological study: how much does the fact that the composer was a guitarist affect the style of his works? For example, could we tell from his orchestral scores that Berlioz was a mediocre guitarist? Composers who use the guitar, not the piano, as a means and not an end are in a separate category.

Giuliani, from his vantage point as a virtuoso guitarist, was able to control a chamber orchestra, and surely it's to this kind of musician we must refer when considering contemporary composers who have also expanded their world, guitar in hand.

Unlike those of us whose concerns end with the writing of the last note on the staff, Dusan is not at peace until he can create an example for others to follow. He feels compelled to compose as well as perform, so that others might understand and appreciate his works. The reason for this happy compulsion is, to quote him, because his music is 'complex'. I prefer to say 'elaborate', since he achieves a unity of style from a rich variety of sources. The interpreters of such 'elaborate complexity' have yet to appear on the horizon, and the good intentions of the pioneers have to be guided by example. Bogdanovic performs his duties with a rare dedication, pursuing the development of a unique philosophical system through performance and composition, which is clearly expressed in his works.

*Angelo Gilardino*

*“My music follows in my footsteps. Sometimes like a ghost, sometimes like the bloody trail of an emotional massacre.”* With this characteristically dramatic statement Dusan sums up the process of composing which is both physically and emotionally exhausting, yet ultimately fulfilling. All of the works in this recording reflect multi-layered human 'motifs': thought, memory and feeling. Musical motifs or 'cells' are the foundations for Dusan's compositions, producing works with unique identities, and in this sense his music is a true fusion of elements.

“Who owns these questionable brains?” asks *Crow* in Ted Hughes' powerful poem which he began writing in 1966. In it Hughes created his own folk-mythology with a god whose nightmare produced the mythical trickster figure who questions: “Who begat God?”. The sequence of poems challenges traditional interpretations of the story of Creation. *Crow* finds nothing more powerful than death, except: “Me, evidently.” For Dusan, Hughes' poem is about

survival, and the endurance of life: “a black rainbow bent in emptiness over emptiness, but flying”. Hughes wanted to “just write the songs that *Crow* would sing. In other words, songs with no music whatsoever, in a super simple and super ugly language.” *Crow's* unusual combination of instruments, with a kind of insouciant 'Balkan blues' blending Gospel, a touch of Charlie Mingus and Dusan's recurring African and Balkan rhythms, creates an emotionally complex soundscape. Commissioned and premiered in 1990 by the Pacific Dance Company, this ballet-poeme included nine dancers, who were choreographed by Gilberte Meunier, the musicians were James Newton on flute, Nmon Ford-Livene vocals, Denise Briese on bass, and Dusan Bogdanovic on guitar. The set at the Los Angeles Theater Center included large stage sculptures by Steve Freedman.

*Two Legends* introduces the wretched, black, horrible little nothing which God finds upon waking. This musical theme is developed in *Lineage*, where

the ensemble builds on the opening statement almost symphonically, by using the compositional technique of additive phrases.

Dusan's music often combines the static with the dynamic, as in the flowing and 'utterly clear' *How Water Began To Play*.

The playful dialogue between guitar and flute in the *Prelude to Examination at The Womb-Door* precedes the climax of the work which arrives with the following *Examination*, in which Dusan uses the opposite compositional technique to *Lineage*, that is, subtractive phrases. Here, the flute is the driving force, building to the climax with written-out improvised lines, while the voice, bass and guitar act as one organism.

After arguing with God as to the adequacy of his creation and finding man's 'occasional wakefulness' inadequate, the Crow poem sequence concludes in *Littleblood*, where God finally invites Crow: "grown so wise, grown so terrible" to "sit on my finger, sing in my ear, O littleblood".

*Quatre pièces intimes* (1979) is an early example of Dusan's synthesis of distinct styles, he combines Levantine music with the rhythms and pentatonic melodies of the Bibayak pygmies of Gabon. Today, Dusan regards with nostalgia the youthful enthusiasm embodied in these pieces dating from what he likes to refer to as his 'early period' – the days of the Geneva Conservatoire where he met and worked with cellist Walter Despalj, for whom these delicate pieces were written.

*País de la ausencia* (1991) 'Land of Absence' by the Chilean poet and Nobel prize winner Gabriela Mistral, expresses the deep melancholy of one who misses her homeland and for whom a homeland is missing. When Vismaya Lhi introduced the poem to Dusan, he found the words 'Y en país sin nombre me voy a morir' (In a land without name, I shall die) carried the same meaning as the Diamond Sutra: 'Cosmos is merely a figure of speech'. The immediate empathy he felt with the poem, regardless of cultural or linguistic barriers, meant this composition came: "without any effort whatsoever".



*Canticles* was commissioned in 1998 by the Gruber-Maklar duo. Each Canticle is an elegant transformation of themes inspired by Byzantine, Hebrew and Gregorian chant. The same vocal theme is present throughout, transformed by rhythmic and modal permutations including African polyrhythmic 2:3 proportion, which often sounds improvised. Almost entirely polymetric, the multitude of voices intertwine yet preserve their identity within a harmonious whole.

Written in 1994 *The Native American Songs* weave an atmospheric sound fabric. The animistic beliefs of the Modoc and Omaha people are evident in *I the Song* which transports the singer to embody the song, while the Omaha fragment of a ritual *In The Midst of The Paths* speaks of the inanimate rock as an analogy to human wisdom. Dusan reinforces the irony of *The Agaya Crab*, a saucy dance from the Carib people of the island of Dominica, by separating the syllables of the words for an angular, crab-like rhythm. Here

as in many of these songs, the guitarist has to imagine he's playing a drum rather than plucking a string.

*Balkan Mosaic* was originally called *Six Balkan Miniatures* (published by Guitar Solo Publications), written for William Kannengiser in 1991. Of his arrangement, Claudio Morbo said: "As a composer, I was interested in Dusan's music and I recognised its strength and incredible refinement. I thought these pieces would sound good for orchestra. All I did was colour a black and white photo." Clearly based on Folkloric dances and tunes from Dusan's 'neighbourhood', these works date from a time when the war in the ex-Yugoslavia led him to dedicate the *Balkan Miniatures* to World Peace. In their new identity as a *Balkan Mosaic*, they come even closer if that's possible, to embodying the rich and unique culture rooted in this painfully castigated part of the world.

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Vismaya Lhi



Korean-born soprano Vismaya Lhi graduated with honours from the University of California at Santa Cruz and then continued her studies with Lillian Loran. She has sung in Canada, Mexico and across the United States and has performed new works by various composers at the Santa Cruz New Music Works, the Carl Djerassi Foundation, and in Kathryn Roszak's *Anima Mundi*. She has premiered several compositions written for her, including *Five Songs* on poems by Gabriela Mistral by Dusan Bogdanovic. Currently, Ms. Lhi is working with Joaquin Nin-Culmell and is preparing the first American recording of his songs.

Antoine Garth



Antoine Garth maintains a busy schedule as a professional soloist in the San Francisco Bay Area. His exceptional versatility allows him to perform a wide variety of musical styles and periods ranging from the Renaissance to 20th Century. As a leading proponent of New Music, Antoine has regularly performed in many premieres, including the American Premiere of Thomas Ades' *Powder Her Face* with Kent Nagano conducting the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra and the world premiere of Sidney Corbett's *Portals* at the Festival of New American Music.

## André Papillon



André Papillon contributes in many ways to the musical life of Québec as a performer on the Boehm and the baroque flute, as a teacher, choral conductor and singer. A regular collaborator of Les Violons du Roy since 1986, he is featured in their critically-acclaimed recordings of Bach secular cantatas, and was the soloist during their 98-99 American tour. André Papillon is a graduate of the Conservatoire national supérieur de Paris and holds a doctorate in performance from the Université de Montréal. He is a professor at the Université Laval Faculty of Music and also teaches at the Domaine Forget Flute Symposium.

## Rafael Hoekman



Rafael Hoekman began studying the Suzuki cello method at the age of three, in New Foundland. In 1993 he began his studies with Theo Weber at Memorial University, and in 1996 he moved to Montreal where he studied at the University there with Yuli Turovsky. In 1998 Rafael was the first prize winner in the Orford International Music Competition and second prize winner in the international Stepping Stones competition of the Canadian Music Competition. He now performs regularly in chamber concerts and solo recitals throughout Canada, and has recorded the Boccherini cello Concerto with I Musici de Montréal.

## Gruber-Maklar Duo



The German guitar duo Christian Gruber and Peter Maklar formed their duo partnership in 1985, having met during their studies in Augsburg and Heidelberg/Mannheim, where their teachers were Helmut Hehl and Walter Schumacher-Löffler. They have held scholarships from the Villa Musica of Mainz and been sponsored by the Yehudi Menuhin Live Music Now programme. Gruber and Maklar completed their studies with masterclasses by Alvaro Pierri, Angelo Gilardino, Leo Brouwer and the Assad Brothers. Their international career began after winning the 1991 Montelimar International competition for guitar duos in France, with numerous invitations to participate in festivals which led them to concert tours throughout Europe. They have performed for many German radio stations and have three highly acclaimed CDs to their credit.

## TME Ensemble



The TME Ensemble was founded in 1993, dedicated to contemporary music of all styles regardless of musical language or culture. Their concerts present pop influenced works alongside jazz and the classical repertoire, establishing an unconventional dialogue between the audience and musicians. TME's repertoire ranges from accompanying movies such as *Der Kabinet des Dr. Kaligari*, and *Charlie Chaplin* with the works of Darius Milhaud, to Stockhausen's *Stierkreis* for ballet.

Members of TME are Marco Carretta, flute, Andrea Chenna, oboe, soprano sax and programmations, Efex Puleo, violin, Margherita Monnet, cello, Francesca Lanza, voice, Paola Poncet, keyboards and samplers, Claudio Morbo, conductor.







from FIVE SONGS

**PAÍS DE LA AUSENCIA**

*País de la Ausencia,  
extraño país,  
más ligero que ángel  
y seña sutil,  
color de alga muerta,  
color de neblí,  
con edad de siempre,  
sin edad feliz.*

*No echa granada,  
no cría jazmín,  
y no tiene cielos  
ni mares de añil.  
Nombre suyo, nombre,  
nunca se lo oí,  
y en país sin nombre  
me voy a morir.*

*Ni puente ni barca  
me trajo hasta aquí,  
no me lo contaron  
por isla o país.  
Yo no lo buscaba  
ni lo descubrí.*

*Parece una fábula  
que yo me aprendí,  
sueño de tomar  
y de desasir.  
Y es mi patria  
donde vivir y morir.*

**LAND OF ABSENCE**

*Land of absence,  
strange land,  
lighter than angel  
or subtle sign,  
color of dead algae,  
color of falcon,  
with the age of all time,  
with no age content.*

*It bears no pomegranate  
nor grows jasmine,  
and has no skies  
nor indigo seas.  
Its name, a name  
that has never been heard,  
and in a land without name  
I shall die.*

*Neither bridge nor boat  
brought me here.  
No one told me  
it was island or shore.  
A land I did not search for  
and did not discover.*

*Like a fable  
that I learned,  
a dream of taking  
and letting go,  
and it is my land  
where I live and die.*

*Me nació de cosas  
que no son país;  
de patrias y patrias  
que tuve perdí;  
de la criaturas  
que yo vi morir;  
de lo que era mío  
y se fué de mí.*

*Perdí cordilleras  
en donde dormí;  
perdí huertos de oro  
dulces de vivir;  
perdí yo las islas  
de caña y añil,  
y las sombras de ellos  
me las vi ceñir  
y juntas y amantes  
hacerse país.*

*Guedejas de nieblas  
sin dorso y cerviz,  
alientos dormidos  
me los vi seguir,  
y en años errantes  
volverse país,  
y en país sin nombre  
me voy a morir.*

*It was born to me of things  
that are not of land,  
of kingdoms and kingdoms  
that I had and I lost,  
of all things living  
that I have seen die,  
of all that was mine  
and went from me.*

*I lost ranges of mountains  
wherein I could sleep.  
I lost orchards of gold  
that were sweet to live.  
I lost islands of indigo  
and sugar cane,  
and the shadows of these  
I saw circling me,  
and together and loving  
become a land.*

*I saw manes of fog  
without back or nape,  
saw sleeping breaths  
pursue me,  
and in years of wandering  
become a land,  
and in a land without name  
I shall die.*

from *LIKE A STRING OF JADE JEWELS*  
*Six Native American Songs*

**I THE SONG**

I  
the song  
I walk here

**IN THE MIDST OF THE PATHS**

*unmoved from time without end*  
*you rest*  
*there in the midst of the paths*  
*in the midst of the winds*  
*you rest*  
*covered with the droppings of birds*  
*grass growing from your feet*  
*your head decked with the down of birds*  
*you rest*  
*in the midst of the winds*  
*you wait*  
*Aged one*

**THE AGAYA CRAB**

*...the agaya crab will crawl up a girl's leg*  
*and make her pregnant for him*  
*oh it likes women*  
*the agaya*  
*so sing*  
*touk-teka-touk*  
*cric-crac*  
*tim-tim*  
*and make the spirits dance...*

*Special thanks,  
my gratitude and friendship to  
Paul Gerrits and Marie Lévesque without whose  
appreciation, effort and perfectionism  
this recording would not have seen the light,  
Nicky Stephens for her love and persistence,  
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Christian Gruber and Peter Maklar for inspiring me  
to write the Canticles,  
Antoine Garth for making Crow finally come to life,  
Daniel Toussaint for his patience,  
Claudio Morbo for his imaginative arrangement of my music,  
and Sylvain Lemay for  
his dedicated engraving of my music.*

**D.B.**



Scores of the works performed on this CD are available at  
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c.p. 2021 Saint-Nicolas QC G7A 4X5, Canada  
WWW: <http://pages.infinet.net.doyp>



## CANTICLES CHAMBER MUSIC OF DUSAN BOGDANOVIC

DUSAN BOGDANOVIC PROVES AGAIN TO BE ONE OF THE TRUE ORIGINALS OF THE GUITAR.  
HIS MUSIC SHOWS A COMPLETE MASTERY OF ETHNIC FOLK, JAZZ AND CLASSICAL TRADITIONS.

## CROW 22'45

- 1 Two Legends - Lineage 8'20
- 2 How Water Began to Play 5'46
- 3 Prelude to the Examination 2'44
- 4 Examination at the Womb-Door 2'49
- 5 Littleblood 2'58

*Antoine Garth, tenor*  
*André Papillon, flute*  
*Yanick Chênevert, double bass*  
*Dusan Bogdanovic, guitar*

## QUATRE PIÈCES INTIMES 9'37

- 6 Prière 1'55
- 7 Mouvement 2'58
- 8 La Harpe de David 2'33
- 9 Chant 2'05

*Rafael Hoekman, cello*  
*Dusan Bogdanovic, guitar*

## FROM FIVE SONGS

- 10 País de la ausencia 5'57

*Vismaya Lbi, soprano*  
*Dusan Bogdanovic, guitar*

## CANTICLES 9'49

- 11 Allegro trasparente 4'09
- 12 Adagio espressivo 2'49
- 13 Allegro brillante 2'41

*The Gruber Maklar Duo*

## FROM LIKE A STRING OF JADE JEWELS 5'08

- 14 I the Song 1'59
- 15 In the Midst of the Paths 1'50
- 16 The Agaya Crab 1'15

*Vismaya Lbi, soprano*  
*Dusan Bogdanovic, guitar*

## BALKAN MOSAIC (arr. C. Morbo) 9'33

- 17 Utarnje Kolo (Morning Dance) 1'02
- 18 Zalopojka (Lament) 1'25
- 19 Vranjanka (Dance from Vranje) 1'33
- 20 Makedonsko Kolo (Macedonian Dance) 0'47
- 21 Siroko (Wide Song) 2'49
- 22 Sitni Vez (Tiny-Knit Dance) 1'47

*The TME Ensemble*  
*conducted by Claudio Morbo*

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