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Saffire

THE AUSTRALIAN GUITAR QUARTET



ANTONY FIELD | SLAVA GRIGORYAN | KARIN SCHAUPP | GARETH KOCH

Saffire

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|-----------|---|---------|
| | GARETH KOCH (b. 1962) | |
| 1 | Rumba Flamenca | 3'31 |
| | PETER MAXWELL DAVIES (b. 1934) arr. Jan-Olof Eriksson | |
| 2 | Farewell to Stromness | 4'06 |
| | MAXIMO DIEGO PUJOL (b. 1957) | |
| 3 | Grisés y Soles | 7'55 |
| | ENRIQUE GRANADOS (1867-1916) arr. Jan-Olof Eriksson | |
| | from 12 Danzas Españolas | [16'58] |
| 4 | No. 11 Zambra | 6'48 |
| 5 | No. 4 Villanesca | 5'11 |
| 6 | No. 6 Rondalla aragonesa | 4'56 |
| | PHILLIP HOUGHTON (b. 1954) | |
| | Opals | [9'35] |
| 7 | I. Black Opal | 2'26 |
| 8 | II. Water Opal | 4'10 |
| 9 | III. White Opal | 2'59 |
| | STANLEY MYERS (1930-1993) arr. Antony Field | |
| 10 | Cavatina from <i>The Deer Hunter</i> | 4'15 |

RICHARD CHARLTON (b. 1955)

Stoneworks[†]

- | | | |
|-----------|---|---------|
| | | [17'18] |
| 11 | I. Stones of Light ... sapphire blue, diamond white | 3'56 |
| 12 | II. Stones of Desire ... emerald green, ruby fire (Romanza) | 4'51 |
| 13 | III. Standing Stones ... the mysteries of circles & runes | 5'12 |
| 14 | IV. Stones of Power ... granite gods, marble thrones | 3'19 |

[†] WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

Total Playing Time 64'06

Saffire *The Australian Guitar Quartet*

Gareth Koch, Antony Field, Karin Schaupp, Slava Grigoryan





The sexy and joyous flamenco rumba, or rumba gitana (gypsy), is an immensely popular style, stemming from Cuba by way of the port of Cádiz. A critic once called the rumba, with its suggestive hip movements, “musical pornography”. There are many types of rumba – and all share the characteristic of being able to incorporate popular musical themes within their structure. In **Rumba Flamenca** it is the well-known traditional anonymous melody, *Spanish Romance* which is integrated into the opening measures. The piece is literally brimming with ‘borrowed’ material, in keeping with the time-honoured convention of pinching popular melodies when composing flamenco rumbas. Set in the traditional format of three repeated sections, *Rumba Flamenca* is perhaps best described as an erotic, mischievous, salsified cante (song). Flamenco fundamentalists however, think rumba isn’t real flamenco. Yet the rumba is closely related to the flamenco tango – one of the four basic cantes, along with the siguiriya, solea and buleria. Rumbas are one of the most accessible flamenco styles, because they are always danceable and light-hearted.

Farewell to Stromness by Peter Maxwell Davies reveals the British composer’s strong connection to his environment and the

community of the Orkney Islands. The piece was written in protest against the threat posed to the economy and ecology of the islands by proposed uranium mining. The Orkney landscape is rich in history. Megalithic tombs, built so as to allow the setting sun at midwinter to reach through long entrance passages and cast its dying rays deep in the heart of the tomb, are living features of the landscape. The great ring of Brodgar and the incomparable Neolithic village of Skara Brae surely fire the imagination and provide artistic inspiration. Davies has said of the Orkney landscape: “Not only did I feel the place blessed, I was bowled over by the place and the people and soon settled, renovating the smallest and most remote of the roofless cottages.”

Twentieth-century Argentinean music is an idiom in which classical and popular music often blend, and where the lines of distinction between the two can become blurred. Maximo Diego Pujol is a prolific composer for the guitar whose **Grises y Soles** (Light and Shade) is infused with the street life and heart-racing energy of his native Buenos Aires. Pujol paints scenes in music, and his genius lies in the deft contrasting of urban bustle with the calm serenity of Buenos Aires’ parks. *Grises y Soles*

is cast in six sections, with pulsating tangos pitted against ephemeral passages of sensual longing.

The *Danzas Españolas* (Spanish Dances) by Enrique Granados, written between 1892 and 1900, are amongst his most attractive pieces, each of them evocative of Spain and its proud melancholic soul. The *Danzas Españolas* require great interpretive skill, and demand the utmost in rhythmic vitality, colour, imagination and poetic feeling. Granados combines the elements of dance and folksong, which lie at the heart of Spanish music, with great elegance and charm. It is this heady mixture of Gypsy song and Andalusian folk music which permeates the work of so many Spanish composers.

The music of Australian composer Phillip Houghton is conceived not only in terms of sound, but very much in the realm of colour. This approach could well be due to the composer's background as a visual artist. In describing *Opals* Houghton says: "The black opal is a stone of fantastic colour. Against a dark matrix, electric purples, blues and greens predominate, refract and collide in a fiery rainbow of splinters and light. Found in black opal is the 'harlequin checkerboard' which describes block patterns of colour which I heard as block patterns of sound. You could say opal is

made from water, and in this movement, 'Water Opal', I imagined a kaleidoscope of floating, watery colours. Set against a white matrix, the lighter colours of white opal are brilliant and translucent. Evident in this stone is an effect known as 'pinfire' (glittering points of greens and reds) and the 'rolling flash' which describes layers of colour that ripple abruptly and sparkle when the stone is moved."

Stanley Myers was one of Britain's most prolific film composers who began his career in television writing music for such series as *Dr Who* and *Z Cars*. Once he had a foothold in the movie business, he worked at an incredible pace and achieved over 100 film and television scoring credits. Myers was a highly versatile composer who is perhaps best known for his music for the 1970 film *The Deer Hunter*, particularly the moving *Cavatina* which brought him international fame.

The philosophical ideas behind *Stoneworks* touch upon profound themes, in particular that of humanity's relationship with stone. Australian composer Richard Charlton says of his work: "The first two movements deal with precious stones and the colours and light which they refract, with the Romanza dealing with emotions of desire and envy. The third movement attempts

to capture some of the ancient mystery that caused mankind to erect great circles like Stonehenge. The final movement deals with the power that stone has given man – the great monuments, temples, gods and objects of great beauty hewn from marble and granite." *Stoneworks* was commissioned by Saffire, and premiered at the Newcastle Conservatorium as part of The 2nd Australian Guitar Competition & Festival in December 2002.

Gareth Koch



Saffire

The Australian Guitar Quartet

The individual members of Saffire, The Australian Guitar Quartet, are four of the most successful and talented guitarists that Australia has produced – Gareth Koch, Antony Field, Karin Schaupp and Slava Grigoryan. Following a special performance in 2002, the quartet decided that Saffire should become a permanent ensemble. In coming together, the group has discovered a dynamic that goes well beyond the music. Saffire brings a moving and unique listening experience for music lovers and fans of the guitar.

Gareth Koch has released many solo albums in a career encompassing flamenco, classical, new age and world music styles. Reviewing his 2000 release, *Journey to the Otherworld*, Britain's *Classical Guitar Magazine* commented: "This is possibly the best CD I have ever reviewed". Gareth Koch trained in Sydney, Madrid and Vienna and holds a PhD in music. He is Artistic Director of the Australian Guitar Competition & Festival.

Antony Field studied at the Canberra School of Music with Timothy Kain, graduating in 1995 with First Class Honours and winning the "Most Outstanding Graduate" award. He has won prizes in

national and international guitar competitions and tours internationally as a chamber musician. Since 1998 Antony Field has been head of the guitar department at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne.

Karin Schaupp won prestigious international prizes while she was still in her teens. She tours regularly throughout Europe, Australia, Asia and the US, performing as a recitalist, soloist and festival guest, as well as making many television appearances. A German review stated that her playing is "so perfect, so complete, that it seems like a miracle". Karin Schaupp's albums are released internationally through Warner Music.

Slava Grigoryan has performed extensively throughout the world. Reviewing his New York debut, the *New York Times* said: "A remarkable recital ... what comes across here is guitar playing of uncommon originality and authority". His 1996 debut at Wigmore Hall also received rave reviews. He began studying guitar with his father and made his professional debut at 14. His recordings are available through Sony Music and ABC Classics.

GARETH KOCH | ANTONY FIELD | KARIN SCHAUPP | SLAVA GRIGORYAN



Executive Producers Robert Patterson, Lyle Chan
Editorial and Production Manager Hilary Shrubbs
Recording Producer Isolde Schaupp
Associate Producer Karin Schaupp
Recording and Mastering Engineer David Neil/
Jumpstart Productions, Brisbane
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Photography Bridget Elliot, except p.9
by Ingrid Kaiser

Instruments used on the recording

Karin Schaupp – classical guitar by Simon Marty
Antony Field – classical guitar by Greg Smallman
Slava Grigoryan – classical guitar by Simon Marty
Gareth Koch – eight-string classical guitar by
Simon Marty, flamenco guitar by Lance Litchfield

The members of Saffire would like to say a huge thank you to Isolde and Heinz Schaupp, Giac, Lotte, Karin Koch, Dave Neil, Oliver Friedrich, The University of Queensland School of Music, Musiclab Brisbane, Owen Orford and TPA, and Patrick Togher and his team. Without all of you this project would not have been possible.

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