



476 5744



SLAVA GRIGORYAN | SHADOW DANCES

MUSIC FOR GUITAR BY NIGEL WESTLAKE

NIGEL WESTLAKE b. 1958

1	Hinchinbrook Riffs for guitar and digital delay	8'30
	Jovian Moons for guitar and piano	[16'09]
2	Ganymede	4'11
3	Europa	3'33
4	Callisto	3'57
5	Io	4'28
	Michael Kieran Harvey <i>piano</i>	
6	Songs from the Forest for two guitars and double bass	6'59
	Leonard Grigoryan <i>guitar II</i> , Joel Westlake <i>double bass</i>	
7	Flying Fish for guitar quartet	4'07
	Saffire – The Australian Guitar Quartet (Antony Field, Slava Grigoryan, Gareth Koch, Karin Schaupp)	
8	Shadow Dances for guitar and orchestra	12'31
	Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Nigel Westlake <i>conductor</i>	
	Antarctica – Suite for guitar and orchestra	[23'45]
9	The Last Place on Earth	7'39
10	Wooden Ships	4'37
11	Penguin Ballet	3'14
12	The Ice Core – Finale	8'17
	Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Nigel Westlake <i>conductor</i>	
	Total Playing Time	72'01

Slava Grigoryan *guitar*

Composer Nigel Westlake might have started his musical career as a clarinetist (following in the footsteps of his distinguished clarinetist-father Donald), but it's the guitar that always brings out the best in his original music. In his celebrated suite for orchestra, *Antarctica*, the solo guitar captures the glistening ice-floes of the southern continent, while the many works that he's composed for guitarists Timothy Kain, Slava Grigoryan, John Williams and others possess a striking originality.

In part the fascination stems from his earliest days of composition when legendary guitar hero and avant-garde composer Frank Zappa exerted a profound influence. If Zappa's actual guitar sound is not reproduced explicitly in Westlake's music, his spirit of irreverence certainly is. One only needs to hear the famous 'Penguin Ballet' section in *Antarctica* to realise that Westlake, like Zappa, is that rarest of creative animals – a 'serious' composer with a sense of humour.

From that formative encounter with Zappa's music, through his establishment of the jazz-rock-classical fusion Magic Puddin' Band in the late 1970s, and on to his tours as a guest member of John Williams' group ATTACCA, Westlake has always been surrounded by guitars and guitarists. He wrote his first guitar work, the quartet *Winter in the Forgotten Valley*, in 1989 and has never really stopped since, his collaborations with Timothy Kain, Slava and Leonard Grigoryan, John Williams and Karin Schaupp notable for the degree of player-specific

detail which he imparts into each score. Names of guitar groups like Sapphire and Guitar Trek are dotted throughout his biography, and the affinity he has with them and their instruments is obvious, not just in the number of works he's composed for them, but in the very musical character of the pieces themselves.

Throughout his career, Westlake has been loosely aligned with the minimalist school, although in truth the connection is tenuous – the *moto perpetuo* (perpetual motion) qualities of some of his works often owe more to African drumming than they do to any conscious attempt to mimic Philip Glass or Steve Reich. The guitar, with its natural ability to sustain long arpeggiated rhythmic lines, suits the Westlake style well. It is no surprise that this most rhythmically-adept of Australian composers has written masterpieces not just for guitar but also for percussion. (His *Omphalo Centric Lecture* is regarded as a modern classic for percussion ensemble.) In both cases, the instrumental choice guarantees a rhythmic, percussive foundation to all that goes on top.

Everyone knows of Westlake's exciting rhythms – having written circus music as a young man he's never ashamed to strike up the band and put on a show. But the defining characteristic of his music is rather more subtle, in that he is one of Australia's supreme instrumental colourists, his scores filled with nuance and subtleties of timbre and tone. Again, the guitar is ideally suited to this exploration of tonal colour. His

guitar scores are littered with devices designed to distinguish one instrumental sound or gesture from another of the same pitch or character – not just rapid harmonics and snapping strings but dramatic juxtapositions between hard and soft touches, and an almost synaesthetic ‘colouring’ of the fabric of individual notes. It’s like music you can touch.

No wonder then, that guitarists are as attracted to Westlake’s music as the composer is to them, with his commissions for the instrument mounting constantly. This new CD features the key works that he’s written for the instrument, either in massed ensembles of the instrument or for guitar and orchestra. Each piece captures a landscape or an environment within musical form – an indication of Westlake’s ability as a writer of ‘descriptive’ music, an ability also realised in his highly-acclaimed film scores, especially that for *Babe*, and fostered in the close creative associations Westlake has formed with directors like George Miller and John Weiley. Not that there’s anything particularly lush or clichéd in Westlake’s musical landscapes. It’s as if the visual worlds are not so much trapped in musical form as they are used as starting points for Westlake’s creative imagination.

Hinchinbrook Riffs for guitar and digital delay demonstrates both the rhythmic and colouristic sides of Westlake’s personality. A kind of *moto perpetuo* in which dazzling harmonics shimmer like the tropical ocean around the island of the title, it consists of a string of ‘motifs’ or ‘riffs’

that are digitally copied within the delay and then repeated 600 milliseconds (about half a second) after they have been performed live. With the performer maintaining a strict tempo of 100 beats per minute, the riffs are designed to intersect and trip over themselves, creating rhythmic and melodic variants that surge and ebb in wave-like formations. It’s the musical equivalent of a 60-foot ketch sailing before the wind, and in fact the piece is based on Westlake’s teenaged experiences of sailing the ocean of the Great Barrier Reef with his family.

‘I first encountered Hinchinbrook Island while cruising the coral coast on my father’s yacht in 1975, and I was awestruck and inspired by the overwhelming grandeur of the rugged peaks and lush tropical gorges,’ he says of the rainforest-clad island which lies off the Cardwell Coast midway between Cairns and Townsville. Now part of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area, it’s Australia’s largest island National Park. ‘A number of musical motifs or “riffs” immediately came to mind, which I notated.’ That initial encounter came as part of a trip during which, further south, he and his family faced a near-fatality when hit by a storm at sea. In the calmer waters to the north, his immediate musical inspiration at the sight of Hinchinbrook Island was his equivalent of Mendelssohn’s encounter with Fingal’s Cave, and he incorporated it into one of his earliest compositions for his garage band at the time. In adulthood, he returned to the island for a walking expedition with his son Joel, and

decided to revisit the musical fragments collected all those years ago, incorporating them into *Hinchinbrook Riffs* with all the virtuosity and glistening tonal splendour of the tropical paradise itself.

Hinchinbrook is on the main tourist route, but one of Westlake’s great skills as a composer is his ability to depict in music the most remote regions of the planet and solar system. **Jovian Moons**, like *Antarctica*, is his extraordinary evocation of a world remote in time and space, the spiky piano figures from Michael Kieran Harvey – whose performance of Westlake’s Piano Sonata has achieved critical acclaim – set against hypnotic guitar figures to create a compelling sense of alienation.

Essentially a set of four fantasies for piano and guitar, *Jovian Moons* was commissioned in 2001 by Musica Viva Australia for Slava Grigoryan and Simon Tedeschi, and was then revised in 2002 for performances by Slava Grigoryan and Michael Kieran Harvey, who perform it here. Westlake was inspired to compose the piece by evidence uncovered during the Galileo and Voyager missions which revealed a vast amount of new information about the so-called ‘Galilean satellites’ (named after Galileo Galilei, who discovered them in 1610). The missions revealed that each moon is quite distinct in character from the others, and Westlake’s work seeks to capture the nature of each, as he himself writes:

Ganymede is the largest satellite in the solar system. If it orbited the sun instead of Jupiter it

could be classified as a planet. Ganymede’s mantle is most likely composed of ice and silicates and its crust is probably a thick layer of water ice. It has mountains, valleys, craters and lava flows and certain regions exhibit a bizarre, grooved surface of complex patterns.

Europa is bright and smooth with an almost complete absence of craters. Its surface looks like broken glass that has been repaired by an icy glue oozing up from below. Low ridges, straight and curved, crisscross the surface. Flows and fractures, pits and frozen puddles all hint at a unique geologic history. It is thought that volcanoes of liquid ice may be a regular event on Europa.

Callisto is the outermost of the Galilean satellites and orbits beyond Jupiter’s main radiation belts. It is a cold, icy ball, densely covered in craters and thought to have been dead for billions of years.

Io is the most volcanically active body in the solar system. The gravitational influence of the large moons Europa and Ganymede on Io’s orbit of Jupiter create tremendous tidal forces that are the cause of immense volcanic activity. Oceans of liquid sulphur lie beneath the crust and the surface is constantly renewing itself, filling in any impact craters with molten lava lakes and spreading smooth new floodplains of liquid rock. The surface is very colourful, mottled with red, yellow, white and orange-black markings.

The fearsome virtuosity of the concluding *lo* creates a sense of outer space which is cold, forbidding and yet spellbinding. The transition from this hostile landscape to the **Songs from the Forest**, for two guitars and double bass, therefore couldn't be more compelling. The commission from Timothy Kain for a duo featuring himself and John Williams came in 1994 after Kain and Westlake had toured the UK and Australia with Williams' group Attacca.

Where *Jovian Moons* is remote and strange, *Songs from the Forest* is all warmth and vitality, its engaging spirit making it a favourite among musicians, several of whom have requested extended adaptations of it for a variety of different instruments. This version for guitar duo and double bass is in a single movement, the guitars trading off melodies and rhythms with blissful dexterity, almost jazz style, while the middle section is more elegiac, serving the function of a traditional slow movement. It's difficult on hearing it to imagine it in any other configuration than that heard here – so distinctive is the writing for guitar.

On the other hand, **Flying Fish**, extracted from the *Six Fish* suite for four guitars, began life as a kind of technical exercise, exploring the balance between the various guitar types of the four-member Saffire ensemble. As Westlake says, 'With *Six Fish* I wanted to address the guitar ensemble issue of disproportionate output. (Four guitars frequently do not sound like one guitar x 4, in terms of volume output or

complexity of sound and texture...at least to me!) Saffire saw this as an issue that we should address with the *Fish* commission.'

The unusual ensemble chosen for the piece consists of two traditional guitars joined by dobro and a 12-string steel guitar, whose colour and texture Westlake exploits cleverly throughout the piece. Westlake says that the movements are meant to sound as if they are 'submerged' and he's tried to 'wet up' the sound using open string sonorities and sustained resonances. Using Richard Flannigan's *Gould's Book of Fish* as his reference guide, Westlake set out to create the teeming life of the aquarium or coral reef, with its flashing colours and sense of a dazzling ecosystem within a confined space. 'Generally a rare sight in southern Australian waters, the appearance of a flying fish off Jervis Bay struck me as being a good omen,' Westlake says, 'and after years of reading about them, I couldn't get this idea out of my mind when I started work on the piece.'

Westlake often revisits works, to revise, re-orchestrate or expand them, or to tailor them to the needs and personalities of individual performers. **Shadow Dances**, for instance, began its life in 2000 with the title *Images*. Premiered by long-term collaborator Timothy Kain with the Academy of Melbourne, it was then revisited by the composer four years later when, as the holder of the H.C. Coombs Fellowship at the Australian National University, the composer found the opportunity to rework it

for Slava Grigoryan, who performs it here. Opening with an abrupt explosion of orchestral colour, *Shadow Dances* is a dissonant work at first, whose snatches of melody build toward the decisive entry of the soloist. As the piece proceeds, however, things become gentler, the dialogue between soloist and orchestra achieving an intimacy that then breaks out into an extended free-form cadenza. This serves as the bridge to the 'dance' proper, described by the composer as 'a pulsating, high-energy sequence of rhythmic invention based on repetition and variation'. An extensive exploration of guitar sonorities, it works its way through idiomatic guitar figurations that sometimes sound like they might have come from Rodrigo or Villa-Lobos.

Westlake is best known, though, for two film scores – the multi-award-winning *Babe* and the Ima documentary **Antarctica**. Originally he intended to use John Williams as guitarist in the latter score, but when that proved impossible, he subsequently wrote a concert suite – effectively a concerto – using discarded material as well as excerpts from the film score itself. The resultant Suite for guitar and orchestra, entitled *Antarctica*, was completed in 1992. Commissioned with funds from the Australia Council to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, it was premiered by John Williams with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, and quickly established itself as an audience favourite, with the whimsical 'Penguin Ballet' section achieving

instant cult status. It's now been performed many times, including by Williams with the London Symphony Orchestra and by Slava Grigoryan (the performer on this recording), and is a set score on the syllabus of both the NSW Higher School Certificate (HSC) and the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE).

Westlake says of the film version – one of four Ima projects on which he's worked with director John Weiley: 'It was a film about the spirit of enquiry, about looking beyond the known – past the edge of everything. My brief was to compose music that captured the awe-inspiring grandeur, beauty, desolation and harshness of the images.'

He started by sketching some ideas for solo guitar and orchestra but in the end the film score would only use fragments of guitar music, performed on the soundtrack by Timothy Kain. The film score was elemental, with simple ideas and raw orchestration, with lots of percussion and glistening instrumental textures as if reflecting the stark beauty of the icy landscape. The reworked Suite is much more formally structured, consisting of four movements, the last comprising two sections joined by a short cadenza.

And yet even though the piece works perfectly on the 'abstract' level, traces of the original visual medium are obvious throughout. For instance, 'The Last Place on Earth', which opens the suite, depicts the ice cap, seen at midnight

in an aerial shot which, owing to the midnight sun, is in full daylight. 'Wooden Ships' which follows is a tribute to the first Antarctic explorers who came in flimsily constructed vessels. (Note that this is just one of many maritime references on this CD.) Of the 'Penguin Ballet', the composer says, 'Emperor penguins are seen as never before by human eyes in a kind of ballet underneath the ice cap. They leave the water at fantastic speeds through a hole in the ice to avoid being eaten by leopard seals.'

And then in 'The Ice Core/Finale', Antarctic scientists are to be seen drilling into the ice core to research changes in the earth's atmosphere and the extent of the hole in the ozone layer. The Finale has an upbeat sense of optimism – a reflection of the fact that as the film was being completed, the Antarctic Treaty, protecting the last great wilderness for future generations, was signed.

Martin Buzacott with additional material by Nigel Westlake

Slava Grigoryan with Nigel Westlake



Slava Grigoryan

Slava Grigoryan was born in 1976 in Kazakhstan and immigrated with his family to Australia in 1981. A major prizewinner at the Tokyo International Classical Guitar Competition, he has performed around the world, including appearances in the UK at the Brighton International Festival, Guitar Festival of Great Britain, Harrogate International Arts Festival, Newbury Festival and the Wirral International Guitar Festival, and at the Dresden Musikfestspiel, the GFA (Guitar Foundation of America) Festival in La Jolla, California, the Al Bustan Festival in Beirut, the New Zealand and Hong Kong Arts Festivals, the Darwin International Guitar Festival, the Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and City of London Festivals and the Queensland Biennial of Music. He has also appeared at WOMAD festivals in Australia, England, South Africa and the USA.

He has appeared with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Northern Sinfonia, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Israel Symphony Orchestra, Dresden Radio Orchestra, the Klagenfurt Symphony Orchestra in Austria and the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester, UK. In Australia, he has performed with the Melbourne, Sydney, Tasmanian and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, The



Queensland Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, the Australian Youth Orchestra and the Australian String Quartet.

Slava Grigoryan has also toured Australia extensively with his brother Leonard, with pianist Simon Tedeschi, with Saffire – The Australian Guitar Quartet, and with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and has performed in Japan with baritone José Carbó. He regularly collaborates with musicians outside of the classical genre including Leo Kottke, Paco Peña, Trilok Gurtu, Ralph Towner, Wolfgang Muthspiel and Al Slavik. He is a founding member of Saffire.

In 1998 Slava Grigoryan was named Young Australian of the Year for the Arts, and in 2001 he received the 'MO' award for Instrumentalist of the Year.

His debut classical album for ABC Classics, *Sonatas and Fantasies*, was named Best Classical Album at the 2002 ARIA Awards; he won a second ARIA the following year with *Saffire – The Australian Guitar Quartet*. He has recorded five other discs on the ABC Classics label: *Play* and *Rodrigo Guitar Concertos* (with Leonard Grigoryan), *Brazil* (with flautist Jane Rutter), and *Nostálgica* and *Renaissance* with Saffire.

Nigel Westlake

Nigel Westlake studied clarinet with his father Donald Westlake, then Principal Clarinet of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and bass clarinet with Dutch contemporary music specialist Harry Sparnaay. He completed studies in Music for Film at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School and in 1993 received a grant from the Australia Council to study composition with Richard Meale and composition and conducting with Richard Mills.

His performance career has included solo engagements with John Williams, Geoffrey Parsons, Yvonne Kenny, Stephen Isserlis, Kathryn Selby, Synergy, Michael Kieran Harvey and the Melbourne, Tasmanian and Hunter Symphony Orchestras. In 1980, again with financial assistance from the Australia Council, he formed the Magic Puddin' Band, dedicated to the performance of new music. From 1987 to 1992 he was a core member of the Australia Ensemble (resident at the University of NSW), touring, performing and recording in Australia and abroad. In 1992 he was both performer and composer with John Williams' ensemble ATTACCA, touring Australia and the UK. In 1995 he was the soloist in performances of his bass clarinet concerto *Invocations* with symphony orchestras around Australia.



His composing credits include commissions for ABC TV and radio, The Flying Fruit Fly Circus, Synergy Percussion, the Australia Ensemble, Guitar Trek, Bell Shakespeare Company, The Seymour Group, SBS Television, the Sydney, Melbourne, Tasmanian and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, Australian Youth Orchestra, Royal Australian Navy Band, the Elektra and Goldner String Quartets, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Adelaide Chamber Orchestra, and Saffire – The Australian Guitar Quartet. He is also a prolific film and television composer, with award-winning scores for *The Celluloid Heroes*, *Children of the Revolution*, *The Nugget*, *Hell Has Harbour Views* and *Babe*, as well as the Imax movies *Antarctica*, *The Edge* and *Solarmax*. In 2005 his piece *Six Fish* for guitar quartet was named Best Instrumental Work at the APRA–Australian Music Centre Awards; that year he was also offered an H.C. Coombs Creative Arts Fellowship at the Australian National University. Recent works include a percussion concerto *When the Clock Strikes Me*, a percussion quartet *Kalabash* and music for the telemovie *Stepfather of the Bride*.

Nigel Westlake made his conducting debut with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra in 1997. He has since conducted film scoring sessions and performances in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Tasmania.

For further information about Nigel Westlake visit www.rimshot.com.au.

Executive Producers Robert Patterson, Lyle Chan
Recording Producers Jeremy Alsop [1], Stephen Snelleman [2]-[5], [8]-[12], Jon Russell [6], Isolde Schaupp [6]

Recording Engineers Jeremy Alsop [1], Jim Atkins [2]-[5], [8]-[12], Jon Russell [6], David Neil/Jumpstart Productions, Brisbane [6]

Editing Nigel Westlake [2]-[5]

Mastering Michael Letho

Supervising Producer Nigel Westlake

Editorial and Production Manager Hilary Shrubb

Publications Editor Natalie Shea

Booklet Design Imagecorp Pty Ltd

Cover Photo Ingrid Kaiser

Photo p10 John McCormick

Recorded 23 May 2003 [2]-[5] and 15-16 July 2004 [8]-[12] in the Iwaki Auditorium of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Southbank Centre, Melbourne; November 2003 [6] at Avalon Studio; June 2004 at Jumpstart Studios, Brisbane [7]; and May 2006 [1] at Jeremy Alsop's studio.

Slava Grigoryan uses D'Addario J46 strings.

ABC Classics thanks Alexandra Alewood and Melissa Kennedy.

Antarctica – Suite for Guitar and Orchestra © 1992,
Songs from the Forest © 1994, *Jovian Moons* © 2001, *Flying Fish* and *Hinchinbrook Riffs* © 2003, *Shadow Dances* © 2004 N. Westlake (APRA) / Rimshot Music Australia P/L.

© 2006 Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

© 2006 Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Distributed in Australia and New Zealand by Universal Music Group, under exclusive licence. Made in Australia. All rights of the owner of copyright reserved. Any copying, renting, lending, diffusion, public performance or broadcast of this record without the authority of the copyright owner is prohibited.