

DAVID RUSSELL RECORDS FIRST DISC OF SOLO CONTEMPORARY WORKS

***For David* includes compositions by Sergio Assad, Steve Goss,
Francis Kleynjans, Phil Rosheger and Ben Verdery**

**All pieces written for – and dedicated to – the world renowned guitarist
(tour dates below)**

Classical guitarist David Russell, whose career spans three decades and more than a dozen highly acclaimed recordings, is recognized around the world for his superb musicianship and inspired artistry. In his New York debut, *The New York Times* proclaimed that “Mr. Russell possesses a talent of extraordinary dimension.” Indeed, the breadth and scope of his virtuosity has captured the imagination of not only audiences and listeners, but also the music press and mainstream media.

Though the repertory for classical guitar extends well back into the Renaissance, the instrument continues to inspire a wealth of music from a wide variety of internationally recognized composers, many of them also performers of virtuoso caliber. *For David*, Russell’s new recording set for release on March 24, 2009, contains some of the finest contemporary works written for, and dedicated to, this brilliant instrumentalist. Composers featured in *For David* represent a range of cultures and styles. Sergio Assad (Brazil), Francis Kleynjans (France), Benjamin Verdery (United States), Steve Goss (UK) and Philip Rosheger (United States) each contribute compositions that showcase Russell’s stunning virtuosity.

The recording – Russell’s first collection of solo contemporary works – opens with *Aquarelle*, a piece by Assad that consists of three movements: *Divertimento*, a fantasy crafted in four sections; *Valseana*, a gentle and dream-like waltz; and the brief but technically brilliant *Preludio*.

“*Aquarelle* is the French word for watercolor,” Assad explains. “The first time I saw a watercolor being painted, I was impressed by the number of techniques employed to spread colors in different textures that give an ethereal look.”

Written in 1986, the piece was Assad’s first attempt at composing for solo guitar. “That same year, I met David Russell at a guitar festival in Israel and showed him the piece,” says the composer. “I had always been impressed by his excellence as a performer, and was very pleased that he promptly decided to include *Aquarelle* in his repertoire.”

Russell follows Assad’s *Aquarelle* with Kleynjans’ *Arabesque en Forme de Caprice sur le Tombeau de Tárrega*, composed in 1988. *Arabesque* is a musical tribute to the Spanish guitar virtuoso and composer Francisco Tárrega (1852-1909). In a French tradition extending back to the 17th century, the “*tombeau*” – literally a “*tomb*” – is a memorial piece in which composers honor deceased colleagues in music.

Goss’ *El Llanto de los Sueños* (The Weeping of Dreams), a piece in three movements composed in 2007, draws on ideas and imagery of Spanish poet Federico García Lorca (1898-1936). The music suggests a dream-like nostalgia for the Andalusia of the 1920s and early 1930s. The third movement, *Alborada*, is based on Lorca’s poem *Baile*, which depicts an old and slightly unhinged Carmen dancing through the streets of Seville at dawn, frightening the inhabitants.

“She is a little deranged and only half remembers the dances of her younger days,” Goss explains. “Her

attention flits quickly from one memory to another, and the character of the music darts from mood to mood. Eventually she gives up and starts her final dance, which builds to a frenzied climax.”

Verdery’s *Now and Ever* is a two-movement work in which the interval of a minor second plays an essential part, appearing at the beginning of the first movement and the end of the second. “The interval in my mind represents the struggle and sorrow of so many repressed peoples throughout the ages,” says Verdery. “The piece is my musical statement against slavery of any kind.”

Now and Ever was written for and dedicated to both Russell and Russell’s wife Maria. “For years, they have been true friends and an inspiration to me both individually and as a couple,” says Verdery.

For David closes with three separate pieces from Rosheger: Waltz No. 7, “Lullaby To Wake Up To” and “Good Luck Waltz.” Like many of his compositions, these three originally came to Rosheger in dreams. “Sometimes I have total recall of the especially clear dreams, and all I have to do is copy them out note for note,” he explains. “For ‘A Lullaby To Wake Up With,’ for example, I dreamed the melody one night in 1991, woke up, got out of bed, and completed the piece in a few hours.”

“The Good Luck Waltz,” Rosheger’s final piece on the album, “was composed at the guitar with David Russell in mind while I was in Venice, California, right before a concert in Santa Monica in August 1993,” he recalls. “I had this sensuous and full-bodied tone, facile technique and warm personality in mind when I wrote it.”

Rosheger first heard Russell perform this piece at the Herbst Theater in San Francisco in 1996. “I dropped it from my repertoire and have not played it since,” says the composer. “Why should I? David does it better! It has become *his* piece. He made great and satisfying changes, and I like it more his way. So it is with all the music he plays. It sounds as though he always seats himself in the composer’s chair, and does so with passion. What more could one ask?”

Engaging and innovative. Superb technique. Lyricism on a par with inspired poetry. In any discussion of David Russell, it’s difficult to discern where the music ends and the musician begins. Listen to the latest recording by this guitar virtuoso and understand why some of the most talented contemporary composers in the world are eager to craft music *For David*.

Tour Dates:

March 14	Recital for the Dallas Guitar Festival
March 21	Recital for Queens University, Charlotte, NC
March 28	Recital for Omni Foundation – Herbst Theatre - San Francisco, CA
March 31	Recital for the Mobile, AL Chamber Music Society
April 4	Recital at Spivey Hall, Marrow, GA
April 17, 19	Recitals at University of Arizona in Tucson

David Russell’s *For David* (CD-80707) is due at retail on March 24, 2009.

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