THE EUROPEAN GUITAR
TOCCATA NEXT
Music by
Barbara
Ángel Cabral
Dušan Bogdanović
Dinos Constantinides
Peter Maxwell Davies
René Eespere
Kostas Grigoreas
Eddie McGuire
Charles Trenet
Eleftheria Kotzia, guitar
INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

THE EUROPEAN GUITAR

Hugh Millington

When thinking of the guitar in Europe, there are vast legacies and traditions which could be drawn upon, across many countries and over several centuries. But unlike the familiar repertoire of the Spanish guitar, Eleftheria Kotzia's programme here takes the listener across the fringes of Europe, from Greece and Serbia to Scotland and France via Estonia. Even more prominent is the powerful influence of folk music and popular song, showing the importance of the many cultures and traditions that enhance its classical identity. The repertoire here was expressly chosen to exploit the expressive range of the instrument, its extraordinary breadth of colours, variety of influences and its capacity of transformation, with each composition connecting deeply with her own personal and musical journey. But Eleftheria Kotzia was also inspired by various external themes when creating the album: love and loss; peace and friendship; the need for protest; women's pride and honour; the eternal figure of the mother; and of songs concerned with the feeling of belonging to another land. The latter theme is particularly important to her: both sets of her grandparents were immigrants from Asia Minor, an issue touched upon by the *Levantine Suite* 3–7. The album combines rarely performed pieces by major guitar composers 3–7 9 11 with arrangements of popular pieces for the guitar, from both classical and popular music 1 2 10 13, showing two very different and yet complementary sides of the instrument. Supplementing this cornucopia are two works for guitar and cello 8 12, here receiving their first recordings.

The album begins in France with an arrangement of the song *Göttingen* 1 by the French singer and popular icon known as **Barbara** (1930–97), whose real name was Monique Andrée Serf. Born into a Jewish family, she spent the German occupation of France during the Second World War in hiding in central France. After the war, her family returned to Paris and she started singing lessons, and later became a cabaret

singer in Paris, performing to ever-larger audiences. Shaped by her experiences in the war and by family trauma, her songs portray a sense of melancholy and emptiness.

Hastily written in 1964 during a visit to the German city of Göttingen in Lower Saxony and polished on her return home, this song has since been credited as an important work of post-war reconciliation between France and Germany. Barbara gave a successful concert there before deciding to extend her stay, composing the song on the afternoon of her last full day there and premiering it in the concert that very evening. It first appeared, as a single and an EP, in 1965, and later that year was included on her album *Le Mal de vivre*;[1] a German version followed two years later.[2] The work is a deeply personal reflection on Franco-German reconciliation in the post-war period:

O faites que jamais ne revienne
Le temps du sang et de la haine
Car il y a des gens que j'aime
À Göttingen, à Göttingen.

O may it never return,
The time of blood and hatred,
Because there are people I love
In Göttingen, in Göttingen.

Et lorsque sonnerait l'alarme
S'il fallait reprendre des armes,
Mon cœur verserait une larme
Pour Göttingen, pour Göttingen

If the alarm were to sound,
If we had to take up arms again,
My heart would shed a tear
For Göttingen, for Göttingen.

The lyrics were later quoted by German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (b. 1944) in a speech in 2003 to mark the 40th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty of reconciliation between France and Germany – he had been a student at Göttingen University when the song was first released and was much affected by it.

[1] Philips 437 152 BE (EP); B 77.859 L (LP).
[2] Released on the album *Barbara Singt Barbara*, Philips 842 151 PY.

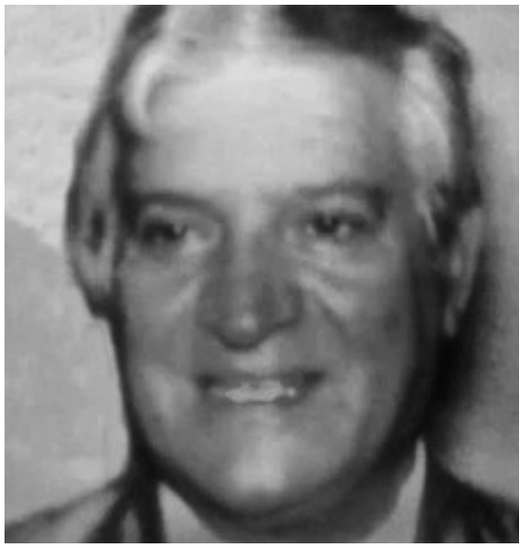
Roland Dyens (1955–2016) was one of the leading French guitarists of the past century, particularly noted for his ability to arrange music on the guitar using all strengths of the instrument, even going beyond them. He was an unusually gifted improviser, often beginning a concert in this manner, and many of his arrangements grew out of improvisations. He had a taste for a wide range of musical styles (jazz in particular), showcasing them alongside traditional classical-guitar repertoire in his concerts. His scores are meticulously notated in a way that tells the performer exactly how to play the music while making the music once again sound free and improvised. The arrangements he published in his album *Chansons françaises*[3] are especially admired.

Göttingen (published in 1990) is in the key of A minor, using the open-string resonances so natural to the guitar. The arrangement begins with the lyrical refrain, with each line ending with an appoggiatura – a leading note in this case rising up, giving a sense of longing and melancholy. After the refrain is played twice, a couplet from the song is heard, consisting of repeated notes leading emotively to another rising appoggiatura, giving a sense of urgency. Dyens plays with textures and registers throughout his arrangement, later introducing the refrain in the middle voice of the guitar, harmonised with a chromatic line descending from high E down a major seventh to F, while the lyrical melody continues below. After various transformations, the melody finally appears in harmonics before drawing to a close in a melancholy state.

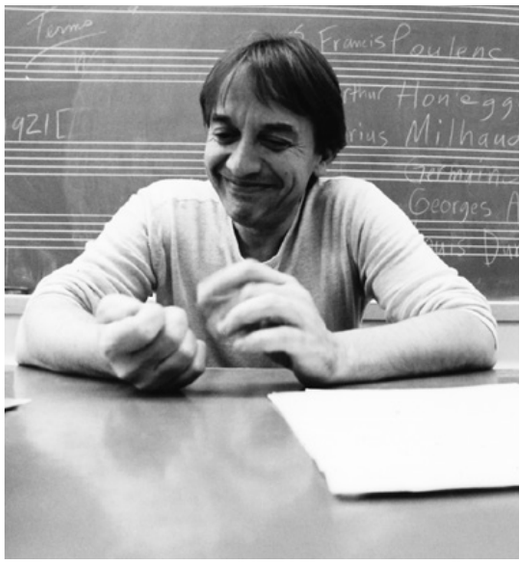
The album continues with a piece originally written by Ángel Cabral (1911–97), an Argentinian guitarist, composer and singer born in Buenos Aires. Cabral composed over 200 songs during his career, including music in a variety of styles, ranging from tangos and milongas to his very popular Peruvian waltzes, such as 'Que Nadie Sepa Mi Sufrir' ('Let No One Know my Suffering'). Although not itself European, this song took on a new life in France. In 1953, Edith Piaf performed in the Teatro Ópera in Buenos Aires.

[3] L'Empreinte Digitale ED13061 (1997).

During her visit, she heard 'Que Nadie Sepa Mi Sufrir' and, out of admiration, took the song back to France and worked on it with her songwriter Michel Rivgauche, who rewrote the lyrics and changed the title to 'La foule' ('The Crowd'); it turned out to be hugely successful.



Like Piaf and her songwriter, Roland Dyens also adapted Cabral's original song into an imaginative and characterful guitar arrangement. *La Foule* [2] is a Peruvian waltz in $\frac{6}{8}$ (as opposed to the European waltz, which is usually in $\frac{3}{4}$). The theme begins with a chromatic line rising in octaves before reaching a syncopated melody with *staccato* bass and a chordal accompaniment. Dyens' arrangement, which dates from 1995, uses drop D *scordatura* (the low E string tuned down to D to expand the range). The *staccato* and spiky opening is contrasted with the next section, which flows lyrically, with arpeggios across the guitar. There are many rhythmic contrasts – for example, where four semiquavers are played over three quavers, giving a sense of rhythmic freedom and *rubato* flexibility expected in vocal performance. The arrangement ends with a lively *rasgueado* section, incorporating a percussive effect achieved by striking the strings with the right hand to produce a drum-like sound against the fretboard.



Dušan Bogdanović (b. 1955) is a Serbian composer, guitarist and pedagogue, whose compositional output boasts over 200 works, ranging from solo-guitar to full-orchestral scores and multimedia projects. As a composer, he is particularly known for his distinctive musical voice, which synthesises music from various genres and cultures, most notably classical, jazz and world music, including African and Balkan elements. This compositional style sees him incorporate complex polyrhythms and improvisation-like passages into his carefully notated guitar music.

His *Levantine Suite*, set in five movements, was written in 1995 for solo guitar and dedicated to our performer, Eleftheria Kotzia. Here Bogdanović synthesises the musical traditions of the Levant – the Eastern Mediterranean region comprising Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Israel – with his western compositional background. He stipulates that the lowest string be tuned to F (instead of the usual E), providing a low, rich drone.

The piece begins with a Prelude [3], which historically refers to an improvised instrumental movement that provided the performer with a chance to tune up the instrument and set the mood. This prelude likewise has an improvised feel and is marked to be played *rubato*, allowing the performer to push and pull the tempo. There are neither time-signature nor firm bar-lines in this movement (as in some Baroque preludes), which, along with the *rubato* marking, helps to create the feeling of improvisation. The low F open string functions as a drone throughout the prelude, which has a modal quality, as it alternates between using the note B flat and B natural (the former evoking a major scale and the latter a Lydian mode). Precisely notated polyrhythms in various groups of triplets, quintuplets and sextuplets further create an improvised feel leading to a lyrical and pensive mood.

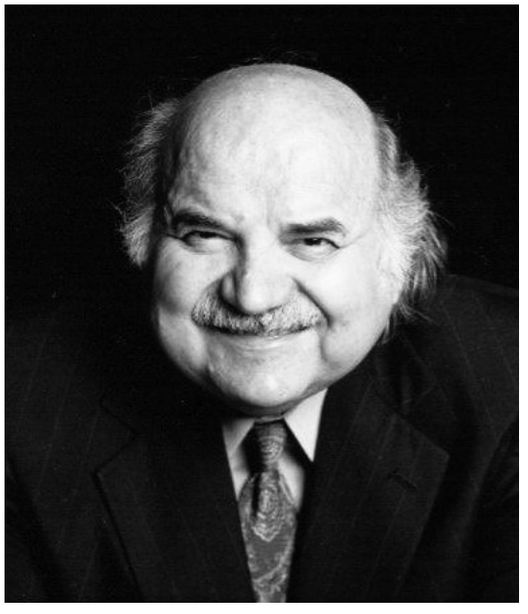
The second movement, Dance [4], is rhythmically intricate and complex, using the time-signature of $\frac{7}{16}$ (seven semiquavers per bar), which sits outside the standard metres of western music. The bars are generally subdivided into a group of three semiquavers followed by another of four semiquavers, creating an asymmetrical rhythmic pattern, evoking an eastern-Mediterranean dance. This pattern is changed temporarily to a group of five semiquavers followed by two semiquavers before the movement reaches a climax and returns to the material of the beginning. The variety of rhythmic figures gives the piece a sense of propulsion and momentum throughout, broken only in a couple of instances where the bass part plays alone. Unlike conventional guitar music, this movement is notated on two staves rather than one, to give visual clarity to the complex rhythmic nature of the piece.

The third movement, Cantilena [5], the expressive centre of the Suite, is lyrical and song-like. Like the Prelude, this movement is also marked *rubato* but also *quasi*

un recitativo, imitating the flow and spontaneity of spoken language. There is again no time-signature in this movement, and no bar-lines except at the end of each of the nine musical phrases. Each phrase ends on a chord held as a pause by a *fermata*, giving a meditative effect like a vocal lament or introspective chant.

The fourth movement, Passacaglia 6, is written in five beats per bar, with the bass line consisting of a pattern of three followed by a pattern of two. Each iteration of the ground bass sees a complex rhythmic development of the upper parts, which, combined with the bass, makes up three-part counterpoint. As with the second movement, these upper parts use complex polyrhythms, including groups of threes, fives and sevens layered over duplets, portraying a sense of rhythmic intensity and complexity of musical texture.

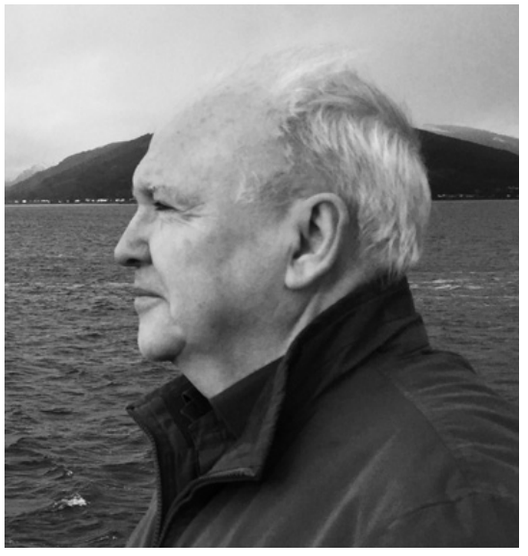
The final movement, Postlude 7, returns to the sound-world heard in the Prelude. The rhythms drive the movement forward like an improvised Baroque movement, and again there are no bar-lines. The drone F and the alteration between B flat and B natural are heard again, alluding to the music of the Prelude. This introspective movement combines old and new, past and present, and historical-sounding chants with modern forms and rhythmic devices.



Dinos Constantinides (1929–2021) was a Greek composer, conductor, violinist and pedagogue who studied violin at the Athens Conservatory before moving to the USA to study at the Juilliard School in New York. He later went on to teach composition at Louisiana State University for over 50 years. His compositional output reflects his Greek heritage by mixing Greek styles with a more modern musical language.

Divine Song 8 was composed in 2020 for guitar and cello, only a year before the composer's death. It was written for and dedicated to his grandson, who plays the guitar. The piece is also part of Constantinides' Symphony No. 9. The cello line is highly lyrical and Romantic, beginning with an expressive four-bar melody, accompanied by simple

octaves in the guitar part. This melody is then repeated with the guitar part switching to cello-like arpeggios. These arpeggios later leap upwards and contain both B natural and B flat, giving a sense of uncertainty as to whether the piece is moving to G major, and yet it ends up staying in the dark key of G minor. The piece then becomes fragmentary, feeling as if it is drawing to a complete close and conclusion before a new section leads to the climax, which begins with a dramatic cello *glissando* up to a high E flat note before sliding down to an E, almost a whole octave lower. This gesture is accompanied by a dramatic E minor chord strummed on the guitar (the only time the guitar uses the strumming technique throughout the piece). The main melody then returns, only with more momentum in the guitar accompaniment, before drawing to a close with the original four-bar theme.

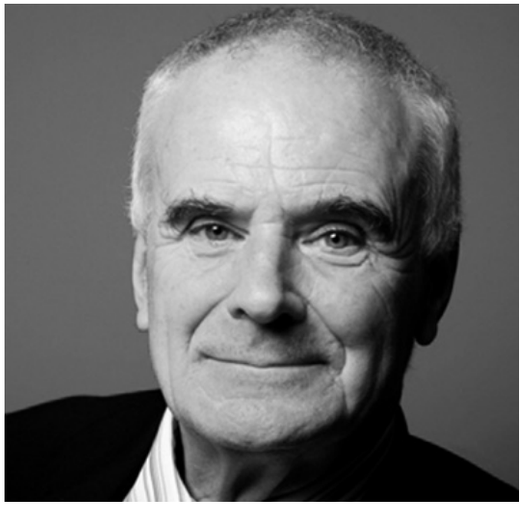


Eddie McGuire (b. 1948) is a Scottish composer and acclaimed folk-musician known for combining traditional Scottish musical influences with contemporary classical styles in a wide-ranging musical language often characterised by narratives and themes of cultural history and storytelling. His compositions span chamber music, music theatre and pieces inspired by historical and literary subjects. He is also an active performer, playing flute in the ensemble The Whistlebinkies, which preserves traditional Scottish musical practices.

Zalongo Dance Elegy 9 was written in 1992 and commissioned by Eleftheria Kotzia, who premiered the piece, with funds by the Scottish Arts Council; the composer revised it in 2018 and it is that version which is heard here. The piece takes its inspiration from 'Ο χορός του Ζαλόγγου', the Dance of Zalongo, a historical episode in which a group of Souliotes (an Orthodox Christian Albanian tribal community of women) were trapped on Mount Zalongo (in Epirus, in north-western Greece) during the Ottoman invasion of 1803 and faced capture. Rather than submitting to the invaders, these women threw themselves and their children off the edge of the mountain while dancing and singing in an act of bravery against the invader. *Zalongo Dance Elegy* tells this story and is based

around the folksong melody 'Dance of Zalongo'. The piece has seven beats per bar, giving the sense of asymmetrical and tribal-style dance. It begins with a percussive-sounding group of repeated E notes, hammering onto the same note an octave higher in a rhythmic pattern consisting of 3–2–2, alluding to the sound of ritualistic tribal drumming. The folksong melody is then heard as fragments separated by this drumming sound. A lyrical section follows, where the melody is played in high registers on the lower strings, with fast arpeggiated open-string accompaniments, before returning to a new iteration of the melody. McGuire later introduces the melody in a chordal texture played with the *tambura* effect, in which the guitarist strikes the strings near the bridge using the thumb to create a drum-like sound. There is a sense of ritualistic dancing throughout as the music moves through different registers, always with a sense of that driving rhythm. A dramatic climax leads to a chordal section where the guitarist strums a mixture of normal notes and harmonics.

In a slower section, the guitarist plays a series of trills on the lowest string, before playing the melody as a series of slurs from the melody note to the low open E string with a sense of drama and violence. During this time the performer also hums the melody notes, creating an eerie atmosphere where voice and guitar blend into one. After some freer sections featuring harmonics with clear iterations of the melody, the music returns to the original drum-like material, only this time gradually drawing to a close before ending on a chord of six harmonics, suggesting the end of the dance as the last of the women has thrown herself from the mountain.



Born in Salford in Greater Manchester, **Peter Maxwell Davies** (1934–2016) first came to prominence as a leading voice of the post-war avant-garde, associated with the so-called 'Manchester School'. In recognition of his contribution to British music, he was made a CBE in 1981, knighted in 1987 and appointed Master of the Queen's Music in 2004. He lived for many years on the Orkney Islands off the north coast of Scotland, which had a significant influence on his creative output.

Farewell to Stromness 10 was written in 1980 as a piano interlude in his cabaret-style work, *The Yellow Cake Revue,* composed in response to a proposed uranium mine in Orkney: 'Yellow Cake' refers to the form of uranium found on the island. Unlike his usual modernist and complex musical style, the musical language of this movement is simple, cast as a song-like meditation. Though outside his usual compositional style, this piece is by far his best-known work. It begins in D major with a lone bass line, rising and repeating as a ground bass while a simple and lyrical melody is played on top. A contrasting middle section in B minor features a melody harmonised in repeated chords before moving to the key of B major and back to B minor. This section perhaps depicts the sense of change and loss in the landscape, before the beautiful original D major melody returns. The transcription presented on this album was made in 1981 by the South African-born, London-based guitarist Timothy Walker (1943–2021), to whom Maxwell Davies dedicated his guitar Sonata (1987).

René Eespere (b. 1953) is a prominent Estonian composer whose output spans orchestral, chamber, vocal and solo works. Born in Tallinn, he studied composition at the Tallinn State Conservatoire and then, as a postgraduate student, at the Moscow Conservatoire under Aram Khachaturian and Aleksey Nikolayev. Eespere's music is shaped in part by questions of cultural and national identity, given Estonia's position within the Soviet Union before it became independent.

Evocatio 11, written in 1996, is an introspective work, with a meditation-like atmosphere. The beginning is marked *Andante*, without a time-signature, and bars vary in length, giving a spontaneous and improvised quality. There are several phrases, which are separated by short pauses, each building in rhythmic intensity until, after a short pause, reaching an *Allegro* section, which introduces a winding line punctuated by insistent repeated chords. The texture continues to build with different sections interspersed, adding layers until a pause is reached. As the movement progresses, there

is a series of repeated chords, which then turn into a powerfully strummed rhythm that rises in pitch. This section then leads to one in harmonics before a melody is heard over a series of pensive chords. The piece retreats to a calm and quiet state before the strong rhythmic pattern from earlier in the piece re-enters, ending on a very strong chord. Rather than progressing toward a clear resolution, *Evocatio* creates an atmosphere of contemplation, in which sound itself becomes the focus of attention and meaning is suggested through nuance and stillness.

Kostas Grigoreas (b. 1957) is one of Greece's leading guitarist-composers, known for a large body of work contributing to Greek instrumental music, particularly focusing on the classical guitar. Born in Athens, he has been active both as a performer and as a composer, writing extensively for the guitar as well as for chamber ensembles and voice. His music frequently draws on elements of Greek musical tradition while integrating a modern harmonic language.

'On Marco's Steps' 12 is the second movement of his *Aegean Sketches* (2013), a set of two pieces for solo guitar. The Marco in question is Marcos Vamvakaris (1905–72), who was one of the pioneers of the *rebetiko* song genre. This urban folk-music form became popular in Greece in the early twentieth century with communities of immigrants from Asia Minor, who had injected new passion into Greek urban popular music. 'On Marco's Steps' is performed here in the version for guitar and cello. With nine beats per bar, it opens with the guitarist playing a solo percussion effect using both the soundboard of the guitar and the percussive sound of the metal bass-strings to create this drum-like effect. The guitar then plays a high *tremolo* effect of repeated notes with a melody underneath, sounding more like a traditional Greek string instrument, such as the bouzouki. The cello then accompanies the guitar with its own percussion effects before playing the main melody with the guitar in octaves. This melody repeats throughout the piece with the guitar playing various chordal, tremolo and arpeggio accompaniments. Towards the middle, there is a section in a different key where a variation of the melody

is accompanied by broken chords. Finally, it reaches a dramatic climax with loud strumming from the guitar supporting a powerful iteration of the melody from the cello.

Charles Trenet (1913–2001) was one of the defining figures of the twentieth-century French *chanson* style, having composed the music and lyrics for almost a thousand songs during his career, which spanned over 60 years. Born in Narbonne in the south of France, he rose to prominence in the 1930s and became known for his distinctive sound, subtly blending various jazz influences. He was nicknamed 'Le Fou Chantant' ('The Singing Madman') for the exuberant gestures which enlivened his energetic performances. *Revoir Paris* 13 was released in 1947 and tells the story of returning home to Paris, where his mother is waiting for him, with his child-like memories shaping this bittersweet depiction of the city. Roland Dyens' 1995 arrangement for solo guitar captures the original lyrical and bittersweet feel of the song, with the melody clearly singing over an accompaniment of rich chords. A reflective middle section presents a free melody in the lower register of the guitar, giving a feel of melancholy before returning to the main register in which the melody returns, presenting Paris almost as if it were a memory, blurred between reality and imagination.

Hugh Millington has given a number of lecture recitals on historical guitars. Recent engagements have taken him to the Wigmore Hall and the Wiltshire Music Centre, with concerto performances including Rodrigo's Concierto de Aranjuez *with the Alina Orchestra conducted by Hilary Davan Wetton and Malcolm Arnold's Guitar Concerto with the Orchestra of London Choral Sinfonia, conducted by Michael Waldron. He graduated from the University of Cambridge with a degree of Master of Philosophy in Musicology (2020); there he was awarded the prestigious Waldmann Music Award at Sidney Sussex College. He previously studied at the Royal Academy of Music, where he was awarded the John McAslan Prize, the Timothy Gilson Guitar Prize and the LRAM teaching diploma. He recently featured in a recording of Timothy Bowers' guitar music for Toccata Classics.*
www.hughmillington.com

Described by *USA Review* as doing for the Greek soul what flamenco does for the Spanish, **Eleftheria Kotzia** has performed in many of the most prestigious halls in the world, including the Merkin Concert Hall and Carnegie Recital Hall (New York), the Herbst Theatre (San Francisco), the Wigmore Hall and South Bank Centre (London), the Megaron Concert Hall (Athens), Les Halles and the Amphithéâtre Richelieu-Sorbonne (Paris), the Jubilee Hall of the Raffles Hotel (Singapore) and The Rudolfinum (Prague). She has frequently toured, taught and adjudicated in international competitions in Europe, Canada, the United States, South America, North Africa, Australia, New Zealand and the Far East. She was herself the winner of the first prize in the Milan International Guitar Competition.

She made the first recordings of Michael Tippett's *The Blue Guitar* and John Tavener's *Chant*, and in 2002 played the guitar part in Tavener's *Fall and Resurrection* in St Paul's Cathedral, London, which was televised live and subsequently issued on CD/DVD.

Aiming to expand the guitar repertoire, she has commissioned and premiered new works by Carlo Domeniconi, Dušan Bogdanović, Stephen Dodgson, John Duarte, Eddie McGuire and Edmundo Vasquez. She has presented numerous works by Greek composers and premiered and recorded the guitar concerto (2003–7) by the Estonian René Eespere.

Her recordings – on Chandos, Harmonia Mundi-Mandala, Somm and Pavillion records – reflect her special interest in twentieth-century and more recent guitar repertoire. Her album *The Blue Guitar* (Pearl, 1989) was selected by *Gramophone* magazine as a Critic's Choice 'Recording of the Year'.

She was a Lecturer in Guitar in the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff (2000–17). She is the author of the guitar method for children and beginners *Le cahier de ma guitare* (International Music Diffusion, three volumes). She also records educational videos for the 'Guitar by Masters' platform and directs the Eleftheria Kotzia Series for Lathkill Music

Publishers, which features new music for guitar. She has directed the guitar course and festival 'Guitare en France' (now held in the Château de Celon in the Loire Valley) since 2007.
www.eleftheria.info

Evva Mizerska is an award-winning cellist acclaimed as a recitalist, chamber musician and soloist. Hailed as a 'rising star' by *The Strad*, she has performed across the UK, Europe, Brazil and the USA, with broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 and Polish Radio. Born in Poland, she studied with Andrzej Zielinski and Piotr Hausenplas at the Chopin University of Music in Warsaw, and completed her Master's degree with Richard Markson at Trinity College, London. Her awards include First Prize at the International Leoš Janáček Competition in Brno and the Vivian Joseph Cello Prize, and the Leonard Smith Duo Prize at Trinity College, London. She is a founding member of the Veles Ensemble and, more recently, the Arts Council-supported Zemlinsky Trio. A passionate advocate for Polish, contemporary and underrepresented composers, she has commissioned and premiered new works and released multiple recordings on Toccata Classics as well as on Naxos, Dux and SOMM.
www.evvamizerska-cellist.co.uk/

Recorded on 17 November 2019 (McGuire, Trenet), 8 July 2021 (Constantinides, Eespere),
16 and 17 November 2025 (Barbara, Bogdanović, Cabral, Davies) and 18 November 2025 (Grigoreas)
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THE EUROPEAN GUITAR

BARBARA
France, 1930–97
arr. Roland Dyens
France, 1955–2016
1 ***Göttingen*** (1964, arr. 1990) **4:37**

ÁNGEL CABRAL
Argentina, 1911–97
arr. Roland Dyens
2 ***La foule*** (1936, arr. 1995) **3:55**

DUŠAN BOGDANOVIĆ
Serbia/USA, b. 1955
Levantine Suite (1995) **10:55**
3 I Prelude 1:15
4 II Dance 2:02
5 III Cantilena 3:10
6 IV Passacaglia 2:56
7 V Postlude 1:32

DINOS CONSTANTINIDES
Greece/USA, 1929–2021
8 ***Divine Song* for guitar and cello** (2020)* **6:23**

Eleftheria Kotzia, guitar
Evva Mizerska, cello 8 12

EDDIE MCGUIRE
Scotland, b. 1948
9 ***Zalongo Dance Elegy*** (1992, rev. 2018*) **9:29**

PETER MAXWELL DAVIES
England/Scotland, 1934–2016
arr. Timothy Walker
South Africa/England, 1943–2021
10 ***Farewell to Stromness*** (1980, arr. 1981) **4:08**

RENE EESPERE
Estonia, b. 1953
11 ***Evocatio*** (1996) **9:06**

KOSTAS GRIGOREAS
Greece, b. 1957
***Aegean Sketches* for guitar and cello** (2013)
12 II. On Marco's Steps* 4:35

CHARLES TRENET
France, 1913–2001
arr. Roland Dyens
13 ***Revoir Paris*** (1947, arr. 1995) **3:57**

TT **57:08**

* FIRST RECORDING