

Newdance ~ 18 Dances (1996-97)

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|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1 | Stephen Jaffe: <i>Spinoff</i> (1997) | (1:58) |
| 2 | Jorge Morel: <i>Reflexiones Latinas</i> (1997) | (5:35) |
| 3 | Elliott Carter: <i>Shard</i> (1997) | (2:37) |
| 4 | Mario Lavista: <i>Natarayah</i> (1997) | (2:52) |
| 5 | William Bland: <i>Rag Nouveau</i> (1996) | (4:34) |
| 6 | Bent Sørensen: <i>Angelus Waltz</i> (1996) | (1:40) |
| 7 | John Anthony Lennon: <i>Gigolo</i> (1996) | (2:25) |
| 8 | Steve Mackey: <i>San Francisco Shuffle</i> (1997) | (3:07) |
| 9 | Richard Wernick: <i>Da'ase</i> (1996) | (2:52) |
| 10 | Apostolos Paraskevas: <i>Chase Dance</i> (1996) | (2:33) |
| 11 | John Duarte: <i>Valse en Rondeau</i> (1997) | (2:39) |
| 12 | Milton Babbitt: <i>Danci</i> (1996) | (2:22) |
| 13 | Michael Starobin:
<i>The Snoid Trucks Up Broadway</i> (1997) | (1:39) |
| 14 | Jonathan Harvey: <i>Sufi Dance</i> (1997) | (1:50) |
| 15 | Per Nørgård: <i>Serenita</i> (1996) | (2:26) |
| 16 | Poul Ruders: <i>Chaconne</i> (1997) | (4:48) |
| 17 | Paul Lansky: <i>Crooked Courante</i> (1997) | (2:16) |
| 18 | Bryan Johanson: <i>Open Up Your Ears</i> (1997) | (2:04) |

David Starobin, guitar

Total Time: 51:03

Notes by David Starobin

It gives me great pleasure to write about these eighteen new dance compositions, collected under the title *Newdance*. This project was initiated by my wife, Becky, who contacted eighteen of our composer-friends and requested a short dance or a piece containing dance elements. What an exquisite joy it was for us, when one by one, the scores to these little gems waltzed up to the mailbox or came winding off of the fax machine. Our heartfelt appreciation to all of the composers who contributed.

The music on this disc was written within the space of a year—during 1996 and 1997. The stylistic range and confident writing speaks well for the health of guitar music in the late twentieth century. In this collection, the cartoon music of a Michael Starobin dances along side the introspective utterance of a Poul Ruders; the open-eyed innocence of a William Bland 'Rag' next to the jazzy abstraction of a Milton Babbitt tune. The mediator here is, of course, the guitar—a superb conveyor of pop and 'less popular' musical styles, and a great vehicle for intimate and passionate expression.

1 Stephen Jaffe's *Spinoff* opens with a bounce, combining chords strummed "reggae style" with a teasing two-note motif that runs the length of the composition. *Spinoff's* energy melts down abruptly, fading quickly away.

Stephen Jaffe was born in 1954, in Washington D.C..

2 Jorge Morel's *Reflexiones Latinas* is a rondo-like fantasy featuring the infectious Argentine dance rhythms that have made Morel's compositions favorites among guitarists and their audiences. A wonderful guitarist himself, Morel composes for the instrument with consummate skill.

Jorge Morel was born in 1930, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

3 Elliott Carter's *Shard* begins afire, cools briefly, and then flames up again for a final fast and furious dance combining unpredictable accentuation and loudly strummed chordal interjections. Written in the composer's 90th year, *Shard* certainly disproves the notion that 'older means slower'.

Elliott Carter was born in 1908 in New York City.

4 Mario Lavista's *Natarayah* unfolds with a muffled guitar ostinato evoking distant drums. A louder, richly harmonized melody soon interrupts, with the alternation and development of these two elements forming the entire basis of the piece. *Natarayah* takes its title from Hindu mythology, in which *Natarayah* is the name of the cosmic dancer.

Mario Lavista was born in 1943 in Mexico City.

5 William Bland's *Rag Nouveau* is a sweetly gentle evocation of a traditional 'Rag' à la Scott Joplin. I particularly enjoy the pungent "B" section, with its chromatic inner voices and striding bass line creating a 'dirty' effect, unusual in classical guitar music.

*William Bland was born in 1947,
and grew up in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.*

6 Bent Sørensen writes that the title of his *Angelus Waltz* came to him "out of my fascination with a picture by the French painter Jean-Francois Millet, 'L'Angelus'—two people praying while listening to evening bells. My angelus bells were later squeezed into a waltz-like rhythm." The bizarre ending of this little piece adds a final touch of surrealism to the proceedings.

*Bent Sørensen was born in 1958,
and resides in the countryside of Sealand, Denmark.*

7 John Anthony Lennon's *Gigolo* flirts throughout its brief duration with Tango rhythms and brightly colored guitar 'licks'. *Gigolo's* idiomatic approach melds pop and classical guitar riffs into a stylish evocation of the great Latin American dance.

John Anthony Lennon was born in 1950 in Mill Valley, California.

8 Steve Mackey writes: "I never compose away from home, but during one week in the spring of 1997 *San Francisco Shuffle* just sort of 'fell out' while exploring its namesake. The city's gentle groove, the waft of eucalyptus and something vaguely oriental just took over." Mackey's gleeful guitar writing includes: tapping, note bending, and snap pizzicati.

Steve Mackey was born in 1956 in Frankfurt, Germany, to American parents.

9 Richard Wernick writes that "*Da'ase* is the term used for a traditional Yemenite wedding dance that is constructed in units of seven beats. In this highly abstracted *Da'ase*, the meter does deviate slightly from the rigidity of the original pattern, but its syncopated spirit is maintained throughout."

Richard Wernick was born in 1934 in Boston.

10 Apostolos Paraskevas's *Chase Dance* begins with a slow introduction which soon gives way to pounding dance rhythms and ornamented melodies. The dance concludes with a wild run up to the top of the guitar's fingerboard.

Apostolos Paraskevas was born in 1964 in Volos, Greece.

11 John Duarte writes of his bittersweet *Valse en rondeau*: "I decided to make reference to my origin as a jazz musician (the 'language'), and to my interest in early music (the *rondeau* form), and to exercise my unshakable belief in melody. As Donald Tovey wrote: 'Musical form is melody, writ large'."

John Duarte was born in 1919, in Sheffield, England.

12 Milton Babbitt's *Danci* takes its title from the Esperanto word, "to dance". In *Danci*, Babbitt sprays fragments of nearly recognizable dance rhythm and gesture against a canvas of continually shifting colors, dynamics, and registers. The exhilarating effect is a little like imagining a wild dance on a trampoline—the torso continually bounced in unexpected directions.

Milton Babbitt was born in 1916, in Philadelphia.

13 Michael Starobin's *The Snoid Trucks Up Broadway* describes the mis-adventures of a cartoon character drawn by the 60s underground cartoonist, R. Crumb. "Snoids" were barely civilized "lowlifes," and this dance, with its "big fat boogery bass notes," does little to rehabilitate their reputation.

Michael Starobin was born in 1956, in New York City.

14 Jonathan Harvey writes that his *Sufi Dance* "is not really a folk song arrangement, more a memory of a Sufi song heard some time ago." Harvey also speaks of "the passionate flavour of divine longing so characteristic of Sufi music." *Sufi Dance's* exotic palette includes having the guitar (de)tuned microtonally (in fifth tones), as well as extensive percussive effects.

Jonathan Harvey was born in 1939 in Sutton Coldfield, England.

15 Per Nørgård notes that "*Serenita* (Italian for contentment, tranquility) refers partly to the soft gracious dancelike rhythm—and partly to *Serenita's* companion piece *Daggry*, "a kind of love song—but for after lovemaking."

Per Nørgård was born in 1932 in Gentofte, Denmark.

16 Poul Ruders's *Chaconne* is the slowest dance in this collection, and along with the Per Nørgård *Serenita*, contains the disc's most intimate music. With its magical "halo" ending, *Chaconne* seems to me an elevated addition to the guitar's repertoire.

Poul Ruders was born in 1949, in Ringsted, Denmark.

17 Paul Lansky writes that "the finger-picking style of *Crooked Courante* reveals years of my childhood spent playing folk guitar, and trying to emulate the techniques of Merle Travis *et alia*." Lansky's coolly beguiling guitar writing seduces the ear with its ringing fullness and warmth.

Paul Lansky was born in 1944 in New York City.

18 Bryan Johanson's *Open Up Your Ears* borrows its title from a Jimi Hendrix lyric. Johanson has composed "a notion of what Hendrix might have played like, had he played on a nylon-string 'classical' guitar." In *Open Up Your Ears*, the guitarist, much like the incandescent Jimi, is asked to go from hot to hotter.

Bryan Johanson was born in 1951 in Yakima, Washington.

Stephen Jaffe's *Spinoff* is published by Merion Music (Theodore Presser Company), Bryn Mawr, PA.

Jorge Morel's *Reflexiones Latinas* is published by Ashley Mark Publishing Co., Blyden on Tyne, England.

Elliott Carter's *Shard* is published by Hendon Music, a Boosey and Hawkes Company, New York, NY.

William Bland's *Rag Nouveau* is published by Guitar Nova Editions, Fairfax, VA

Mario Lavista's *Natarayeh* is published by Ediciones Mexica de Musica, Mexico City.

Bent Sørensen's *Angelus Waltz* is published by Wilhelm Hansen Edition, Copenhagen.

John Anthony Lennon's *Gigolo* is published by Roseanne Music, New York, NY.

Steve Mackey's *San Francisco Shuffle* is published by Boosey and Hawkes, New York, NY.

Richard Wernick's *Da'ase* is published by Theodore Presser Co., Bryn Mawr, PA

Apostolos Paraskevas's *Chase Dance* is published by Musical Editions Papagrigoriou-Nakas, Athens, Greece

John Duarte's *Valse en rondeau* is published by G. Schirmer, Inc., New York, NY.

Milton Babbitt's *Danci* is published by CF Peters Corp., New York, NY.

Michael Starobin's *The Snoid Trucks Up Broadway* is published by Starma Music, Mt. Kisco, NY.

Jonathan Harvey's *Sufi Dance* is published by Faber Music, Ltd., London.

Per Nørgård's *Serenita* is published by Wilhelm Hansen Edition, Copenhagen.

Poul Ruders's *Chaconne* is published by Wilhelm Hansen Edition, Copenhagen.

Paul Lansky's *Crooked Courante* is published by Grim Tim Music, Princeton, NJ.

Bryan Johanson's *Open Up Your Ears* is presently in the composer's manuscript.

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Guitars:

Gary Southwell, Nottingham, England, 1996: 63 cm string length, adjustable action, spruce top, on tracks: 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 18

Gary Southwell, 1997: 64 cm string length, adjustable action, spruce top, on tracks: 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17

Strings: Augustine blue basses, Augustine regal trebles

To Bobby and Allegra with love from Mom and Dad

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