

Favorite Tracks, Vol. 2
David Starobin, guitar

- 1 **Natarayah (1997) (2:50)** Mario Lavista
David Starobin, guitar (b. 1943)
- Three Poems of Robert Frost (4:45)** Elliott Carter
(1942-44, orchestrated, 1975) (b. 1908)
- 2 Dust of Snow (1:21)
3 The Rose (1:19)
4 The Line Gang (1:58)
Patrick Mason, baritone; Speculum Musicae
David Starobin, conductor
- 5 **Changes (1983) (6:58)** Elliott Carter
David Starobin, guitar
- 6 **Tell Me Where is Fancy Bred (1938) (3:26)** Elliott Carter
Rosalind Rees, soprano
David Starobin, guitar
- Carillon, Récitatif, Masque (1974) (9:29)** Hans Werner Henze
(b. 1926)
- 7 Carillon (1:21)
8 Récitatif (1:19)
9 Masque (1:58)
Peter Press, mandolin; David Starobin, guitar; Susan Jolles, harp

Sunday Song Set (1984) (13:24)
(arr. Michael Starobin)

Stephen Sondheim
(b. 1930)

- 10 Color and Light (4:18)
11 Finishing the Hat (2:53)
12 Lesson #8 (2:10)
13 Putting it Together (3:51)

Patrick Mason, baritone
David Starobin, guitar

- 14 **Chase (1987) (4:35)** Michael Starobin
(guitar and electronic sound) (b. 1956)

David Starobin, guitar

- Two Practical Cats (1953) (10:26)** Humphrey Searle
(1915-1982)
- 15 Macavity: The Mystery Cat (4:47)
16 Growltiger's Last Stand (5:37)

Patrick Mason, narrator; Susan Palma Nidel, flute/piccolo
David Starobin, guitar; Timothy Eddy, cello

Trio, Op. 33 (1932) (11:16) Sándor Jemnitz
(1890-1963)

- 17 Allegretto (3:09)
18 Lento (4:43)
19 Molto vivo (3:14)

David Starobin, guitar
Benjamin Hudson, violin; Kim Kashkashian, viola

During the course of the 20th century the guitar underwent tremendous growth in the areas of instrument construction, classical technique and repertoire expansion. The nine works that comprise this collection give a taste of the compositional variety and genres in which composers have employed the guitar, including solo pieces, vocal music, and chamber music. The recordings were made between 1975 and 1997.

Natarayah, by the Mexican composer Mario Lavista, was composed and recorded in 1997 for a collection of 18 new dance pieces for guitar, issued on a CD called *Newdance* (BRIDGE 9084). I had a great time learning and playing these works, all 18 of which came about through the lobbying efforts of my wife, Becky. Pictured on the cover of this CD, Becky has been inextricably bound to the tracks that have run through my life. Her love and support have made my work possible, and my life, a joy. *Natarayah* features muted (pizzicato) figures alternating with chords that climax at the top of the guitar's fingerboard. The piece takes its name from Hindu mythology, where Natarayah is the name of the cosmic dancer.

Last month, a vigorous Elliott Carter celebrated his 100th birthday. Astonishingly, he is still producing inspired and fresh new work. I first met Elliott in 1969 on a visit he made to Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, where I was a student. I soon began to play his Shakespeare setting, *Tell Me Where is Fancy Bred* (1938) for voice and guitar, recording it in 1976 with the wonderful Rosalind Rees. Composed for Orson Welles's Mercury Theater production of "The Merchant of Venice" in 1938, this was the song's first commercial recording.

In June of 1980, Elliott made this winning orchestration of his early *Three Poems of Robert Frost*, dedicating it to Rosalind Rees and her husband Gregg Smith. Elliott included a guitar part for me to play. We initially recorded it with Ros singing and

Gregg conducting (issued on a GSS LP and then a CRI CD). On this recording, Pat Mason sings and I conduct *Speculum Musicae*.

Hans Werner Henze's neo-classical *Carillon, Récitatif, Masque*, was composed in 1974. At times light-hearted, at times bittersweet, Henze uses the three plucked instruments felicitously, both in ensemble and in solo cadenzas. The movements of this triptych become progressively shorter, with the good-natured last movement fading away to a wispy *pppp*. This recording was made in 1981 for an LP entitled *New Music with Guitar, Vol. 1* --the first recording issued by fledgling Bridge Records.

In 1984 my brother, Michael Starobin, had the privilege of collaborating with Stephen Sondheim, composing orchestrations for the Broadway musical, *Sunday in the Park with George*. "Sunday" features lyrics and music by Sondheim and a book by James Lapine. *Sunday Song Set* draws two songs from each of the show's two acts. Pat Mason, my beloved duo partner of some 40 years, premiered *Sunday Song Set* with me at London's Wigmore Hall. A few weeks later, honored by the composer's presence at the session, we made this recording. *Sunday Song Set* was arranged by Michael Starobin, in 1984, with final revisions made by Stephen Sondheim.

Sunday in the Park with George is a semi-autobiographical examination of the creative process itself, portrayed through the vehicle of Georges Seurat's painting, "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte". Seurat (1859-91) developed the technique now called "pointillism," where small dots of color rather than brush strokes create a concerted image in the perception of the viewer. Much of Sondheim's score and text is constructed in the same manner--as a flow of points of sound.

The first two songs of *Sunday Song Set* are from Act 1, set in Seurat's studio and in the park where he is sketching. In "Color and Light," George sings to himself about the objects and characters in his painting, including his mistress, Dot. Still addressing himself in "Finishing the Hat" George rationalizes losing Dot because of his obsession with painting. The third and fourth songs are from Act 2, which is set in the present. Here, the great-grandson of Seurat, another George, struggles again with the questions and self-doubts of artistic expression. In "Lesson #8" George visits the Island of La Grand Jatte, now urbanized. His link to the past is a French grammar book, given to his grandmother by her mother, Seurat's mistress, Dot. "Putting it Together" takes place at a museum cocktail party after a showing of George's latest sculpture, "Chromolume No. 7". The text is a biting commentary on doing the "business of art" while trying to maintain an artistic vision.

A few years after *Sunday Song Set*, brother Mike and I were sharing a studio on 72nd Street in Manhattan. I prevailed upon him to write me *Chase*, a short piece for guitar and synthesized sounds. I remember asking for a short 'curtain raiser' and he came through with this highly charged concert rondo. The piece is dedicated to my two children, Robert and Allegra, and at one point, the guitarist plays harmonics, spelling out Allegra's name. I gave the first performance of *Chase* in London's Wigmore Hall.

In 1971 I wrote to Humphrey Searle in England, inquiring about the score of his *Two Practical Cats*. He generously mailed me a copy of the work, and its companion piece, *The Owl and the Pussycat* (1951), written for the same combination of narrator, flute, guitar and cello. *Two Practical Cats* was composed in 1953 and sets two poems from T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939). Eliot penned these light-hearted verses for his god-children Tom Faber and Alison

Tandy. Searle's settings perfectly underscore the mock-terror of "Macavity," and indulge in humorously melodramatic text painting to describe "Growltiger's" antics.

Sándor Jemnitz was a student of Max Reger and Arnold Schoenberg. It is difficult to explain the near complete absence of performances and recordings of his excellent catalog, except to point to the disruptions of the second World War, and the turmoil of the communist era in Jemnitz's native Hungary. Jemnitz's unpublished *Trio*, Op. 33, composed in 1932, is a singular work in the guitar's chamber repertoire, and might not have survived, but for a fortuitous 1938 meeting between Jemnitz and the violinist Louis Krasner in Vienna. Krasner left for the United States shortly after that meeting, carrying the parts to the *Trio* with him. I am indebted to William Anderson, then my guitar student, who convinced Mr. Krasner to allow me to perform and record the work. Jemnitz's *Trio*, much like the best Hungarian chamber music of this period, is an inspired blend of expressionism and native Hungarian elements. It uses all three instruments with confident virtuosity and offers compressed forms full of imaginative detail and high spirits.

David Starobin, January 2009

Three Poems Of Robert Frost

Dust of Snow

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

The Rose Family

The rose is a rose,
And was always a rose.
But the theory now goes
That the apple's a rose,
And the pear is, and so's
The plum, I suppose.
The dear only knows
What will next prove a rose.
You, of course, are a rose-
But were always a rose.

The Line Gang

Here come the line-gang pioneering by.
They throw a forest down less cut than broken.
They plant dead trees for living, and the dead
They string together with a living thread.
They string an instrument against the sky
Wherein words whether beaten out or spoken
Will run as hushed as when they were a thought
But in no hush they string it: they go past
With shouts afar to pull the cable taut,
To hold it hard until they make it fast,
To ease away—they have it. With a laugh,
An oath of towns that set the wild at naught
They bring the telephone and telegraph.

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Tell Me Where is Fancy Bred

William Shakespeare
from "*The Merchant of Venice*"

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?

Reply, reply.

It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle, where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell;
I'll begin it – Ding, dong, bell.

Ding, dong, bell.

Sunday Song Set

lyrics and music by Stephen Sondheim

Color and Light

from *Sunday in the Park with George*
Order. Design. Composition. Tone. Form.
Symmetry. Balance.
More red...
And a little more red...
Blue blue blue blue
Blue blue blue blue
Even even...

Good...
Bumbum bum bumbumbum
Bumbum bum...
More red...
More blue...
More beer...
More light!
Color and light.
There's only color and light.
Yellow and white.
Just blue and yellow and white.
Look at the air, miss-
See what I mean?
No, look over there, miss-
That's done with green...
Conjoined with orange...

Aren't you proper today, miss?
Your parasol so properly cocked,
your bustle so perfectly upright.
No doubt your chin rests just at
the proper angle from your chest.
And you sir. Your hat so black.
So black to you, perhaps.
So red to me.
Red red red red
Red red orange
Red red orange

Orange pick up blue
Pick up red
Pick up orange
From the blue-green blue-green
Blue-green circle
On the violet diagonal
Di-ag-ag-ag-ag-ag-o-nal-nal
Yellow comma yellow comma
Numnum num numnumnum
Numnum num...
Blue blue blue blue
Blue still sitting
Red that perfume
Blue all night
Blue-green the window shut
Dut dut dut
Dot Dot sitting
Dot Dot waiting
Dot Dot getting fat fat fat
More yellow
Dot Dot waiting to go
Out out out
But No no no George
Finish the hat finish the hat
Have to finish the hat first
Hat hat hat hat
Hot hot hot it's hot in here...
Sunday!

Color and light!
There's only color and light.
Purple and white...
And red and purple and white.
Look at this glade, girls,
Your cool blue spot.
No, stay in the shade, girls.
It's getting hot...
It's getting orange...
Hotter..
Damn...
The Follies....
Will she yell or stay silent?
Go without me or sulk in the corner?
Will she be in the bed when the hat
and the grass and the parasol
have finally found their way?
Too green. Do I care?
Too blue. Yes.
Too soft. What should I do?
Well....red....

Finishing the Hat

from *Sunday in the Park with George*

Yes, she looks for me . . . Good.
Let her look for me to tell me why
she left me

as I always knew she would.
I had thought she understood.
They have never understood,
 and no reason that they should.
But if anybody could . . .

Finishing the hat--how you have
to finish the hat.

How you watch the rest of the
world from a window
while you finish the hat.

Mapping out a sky . . . what you
feel like, planning a sky . . .

What you feel when voices that
come through the window
go, until they distance and die
Until there's nothing but sky.

And how you're always turning back too late
from the grass, or the stick, or the
dog, or the light

How the kind of woman willing
to wait's not
the kind that you want to find waiting
to return you to the night, dizzy
 from the height

Coming from the hat
Studying the hat

Entering the world of the hat
Reaching through the world of
 the hat like a window
Back to this one, from that.
Looking at a face . . . stepping
 back to look at a face
Leaves a little space in the way,
 like a window
But to see . . . it's the only way to see

And when the woman that you
wanted goes,
you can say to yourself, "Well, I
give what I give!"
But the woman who won't wait
for you knows
that however you live, there's a
 part of you
always standing by, mapping out the sky

Finishing a hat.
Starting on a hat.
Look, I made a hat--
Where there never was a hat!

Lesson #8

from *Sunday in the Park with George*

George looks around
He sees the park
It is depressing
George looks ahead
George sees the dark
George is afraid
Where are the people
Out strolling on Sunday?

George looks within
George is adrift
George goes by guessing
George looks behind
He had a gift
When did it fade?
You wanted people out
Strolling on Sunday--
Sorry, Marie...

See George remember how George
used to be,
Stretching his vision in every direction
See George expecting to feel a
 connection
When all he can see

Is maybe a tree--
The family tree--
Sorry, Marie...

George is afraid
George sees the park
George sees it dying
George too may fade,
Leaving no mark,
Just passing through
Just like the people
Out strolling on Sunday...

George looks around
George is alone
No use denying
George is aground
George has outgrown
What he can do
George would have liked to see
People out strolling on Sunday...

Putting it Together

from *Sunday in the Park with George*

All right, George. As long as it's your night, George. You know it's in the room, George. Another Chromolume, George. Its time to get to work. Art isn't easy. Even when you're hot. Advancing art is easy. Financing it is not. A vision's just a vision if it's only in your head. If no one gets to see it it's as good as dead. It has to come to light. Bit by bit, putting it together. Piece by piece, only way to make a work of art. Every moment makes a contribution, every little detail plays a part. Having just a vision's no solution, everything depends on execution. Putting it together, that's what counts. Ounce by ounce, putting it together. Small amounts, adding up to make a work of art. First of all you need a good foundation, otherwise it's risky from the start. Takes a little cocktail conversation, but without the proper preparation, having just a vision's no solution, everything depends on execution. The art of making art is putting it together, bit by bit. Art isn't easy. Overnight you're a trend, you're the right combination, then the trend's at an end, you're suddenly last year's sensation. So you should support the competition, try to set aside your own ambition, even while you jockey for position. If you feel a sense of coalition, then you never really stand alone. If you want your work to reach fruition, what you need's a link with your tradition, and of course a prominent commission, plus a little formal recognition, so that you can go on exhibi-, so that your work can go on exhibition. Be nice, George. You have to pay a price, George. They like to give advice, George. Don't think about it twice, George. Be new, George. They tell you till they're blue, George. You're new or else you're through, George. And even if it's true, George. You do

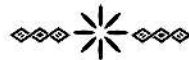
what you can do. Bit by bit, putting it together. Piece by piece, working up a vision night and day. All it takes is time and perseverance, with a little luck along the way. Putting in a personal appearance, gathering supporters and adherents. Mapping out the right configuration, starting with a suitable foundation, lining up a prominent commission, and an exhibition in addition, here a little dab of politician, there a little touch of publication, till you have a balanced composition, everything depends on preparation, even if you do have the suspicion, that it's taking all your concentration. The art of making art, is putting it together. Bit by bit. Link by link. Drink by drink. Mink by mink. And that is the state of the art.



David Starobin was called by *Soundboard* "arguably the most influential American classical guitarist of the twentieth century." Composers including Elliott Carter, George Crumb, Poul Ruders, Gunther Schuller and Milton Babbitt have dedicated new works to him, producing a repertoire of more than 350 new scores. Starobin has performed these works throughout the world, collaborating with ensembles including The New York Philharmonic, National Symphony, Houston Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, St. Louis Symphony, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Danish Radio Orchestra, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the Emerson and Guarneri Quartets.



David Starobin began his guitar studies at age 7, with the Puerto Rican guitarist Manuel Gayol, later working with Albert Valdes Blain, and Aaron Shearer at the Peabody Conservatory of Music. While a student at Peabody, Starobin worked closely with pianist Leon Fleisher, and was a frequent participant in the Marlboro Music Festival. Among his many honors are a Harvard University 'Fromm Foundation Grant'; Lincoln Center's 'Avery Fisher Grant'; ASCAP's 'Deems Taylor Award', and Peabody Conservatory's 'Distinguished Alumni Award'. Between 1993 and 2004, Starobin was the chairman of the guitar department at the Manhattan School where he still teaches. In 1981, David Starobin founded the record label, Bridge Records, Inc., which he served as President until 2005. Starobin's work for Bridge as performer, producer and executive producer has earned three Grammy awards and eighteen Grammy nominations.



Speculum Musicae personnel, *Three Poems of Robert Frost*:

Susan Palma Nidel, flute; Ronald Roseman, oboe; Allen Blustine, clarinet 1; Robert Yamins, clarinet 2; Donald MacCourt, bassoon; Oren Fader, guitar; Aleck Karis, piano; Benjamin Hudson, violin 1; Carol Zeavin, violin 2; John Graham, viola; Eric Bartlett, cello; Donald Palma, contrabass

Producers: Becky Starobin (*Natarayah*); David Starobin (*Changes, Carillon, Récitatif, Masque, Sunday Song Set, Chase, Two Practical Cats*); Gregg Smith (*Tell Me Where is Fancy Bred*); Judith Sherman (*Three Poems of Robert Frost*); Yehudi Wyner (*Trio, Op. 33*)

Engineers: David Merrill (*Natarayah* recorded December 1997, Mastersound, Astoria, New York); David Hancock (*Tell Me Where is Fancy Bred*, recorded 1976, The Academy Institute of Arts and Letters, New York City, *Carillon Récitatif, Masque*, recorded 1980, *Sunday Song Set*, recorded January 1985, *Trio, Op. 33*, recorded November 1986; *Two Practical Cats*, recorded November 1987, Holy Trinity Church, New York City); Paul Zinman (*Three Poems of Robert Frost*, recorded October, 1987, RCA Studio A, New York City; *Chase*, recorded July, 1990, Hip Pocket Studios, New York City)

Associate Engineer: Paul D. Lehrman (*Sunday Song Set*)

Editors: David Hancock, Michael Calvert, Paul Zinman, Silas Brown

Transfer Engineer: Charlie Post

Mastering Engineer: Adam Abeshouse

Design: Douglas H. Holly

Annotator: David Starobin

Photograph of David Starobin: Becky Starobin

Executive Producer: Becky Starobin

Guitars: Herman Hauser Jr., 1968 (*Tell Me Where is Fancy Bred*); Thomas Humphrey, 1981 (*Changes, Carillon, Récitatif, Masque, Sunday Song Set*,); Thomas Humphrey, 1986 (*Two Practical Cats, Chase, Trio*,) Elliott Carter, 1983 (*Changes*), Gary Southwell, 1997 (*Natarayah*)

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Sunday in the Park with George, is published by Revelation/Rilting; *Chase* is published by Editions New Rochelle; *Two Practical Cats* is published by Oxford University Press; *Trio, Op. 33* is in manuscript.

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