

Mp3 Iakovos Kolanian - Bohemio: Guitar Masterworks Of Agustin Barrios



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Award-winning Greek Armenian classical guitar virtuoso Iakovos Kolanian performs 16 pieces by revered guitar composer Agustin Barrios in an electrifying new CD. 16 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Traditional, LATIN: General Details: {artist bio} Iakovos Kolanian was born in Greece in 1960, to an Armenian father and a Greek mother. At the age of 13, influenced by the musical currents of the time (pop, rock, as well as classical) he started his musical journey that eventually led him to the National Conservatory of Athens. There, he studied classical guitar with noted professors Evangelos Assimakopoulos and Lisa Zoe, and graduated in 1985 with the top award and a special honor for exceptional performance. Since that time, he has attended various special seminars and master classes in Greece and abroad, broadening his knowledge of the instrument from distinguished teachers such as Oscar Ghilia and Leo Brouwer. Throughout the years he has toured in Europe, Asia and Latin America, where he has presented to audiences a large part of the classical guitar repertoire. He also regularly takes part in important international festivals (Vienna, Milan, Athens, Israel, Cyprus and Yerevan) by giving individual recitals or acting as soloist with symphonic orchestras and ensembles of chamber music. He has performed as a soloist with Athens State Orchestra, Thessalonica State Orchestra, Symphonic Orchestra of Greek Broadcasting Corporation (ERT), The Camerata Orchestra of Athens, Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as with numerous ensembles of chamber music. He has been regularly featured in well-known television and radio programs such as BBC, ORF, Radio France, ERT, RIK. One of these collaborations, in 1991, resulted in the recording and release of a CD of Loris Tjeknavorian's Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra with the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra with the composer himself as the conductor in a production of the Austrian Television (ORF). Most recently, in 2004, Kolanians Shoror:

Armenian Folk Music for Guitar was released by Pomegranate Music. It was preceded by his recording of the Lute Suites of J.S.Bach which was released in 2003 on the Eros label. In addition to his career as a soloist and recording artist, Iakovos Kolanian has been the head of the Classical Guitar Department at the Contemporary Athens Conservatory since 1992, and is an honorary professor at the Armenian Academy in Yerevan. {end} {Producers notes} A Note on Barrios and His Music I am a brother of those medieval troubadours who, in their glories and despairs, suffered such romantic madness. This line comes from a sonnet that Agustn Barrios recited to his audience before playing what turned out to be his last concert in his native Paraguay in 1925. He titled the sonnet that he himself had composed Bohemio, which summed up, in poetic terms, the mental and emotional state the forty-year-old musician found himself in. He was, by then, a well-established guitarist who had spent the previous fifteen years living and touring in Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil, and had impressed his audiences with his virtuosity and his masterful compositions. It was no wonder that Barrios had been embraced like a national hero upon his return to Paraguay. To his countrymen, he was a veritable poet with a guitar or, as some would say much later, the saint of the guitar. Yet, despite the outpouring of admiration, Barrios failed to obtain financial backing for a concert tour in Europe: a long-time dream of his that would give him the opportunity, at long last, to perform on a global stage. In fact, it would take many more years of peregrination, musical and otherwise, before Barrios found his way to Europe near the end of his life and claim his place as one of the most inventive and passionate composers for the guitar. Barrios spent the remaining years of his life after bidding his final farewell to Paraguay mostly performing, teaching and writing music in South and Central America. He lived, for extended periods of time, in Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil, Mexico, Guatemala and El Salvador. After his death, in 1944 at the age of 59, his music was largely forgotten or ignored outside the small circle of guitar aficionados; and it wasnt until the early 1970s when internationally-renowned guitarist John Williams and noted Barrios scholar Richard Stover began to record and share his compositions with a wider audience to set in motion a revival still under way today. It would indeed be hard to think of any serious listener not to be touched by the expressiveness and the compelling romanticism of Barrioss music. In an age of generic classical music and recycled programming of a handful of greatest hits, his compositions sound very immediate and refreshingly idiosyncratic. Perhaps more importantly for the players and the listeners of the guitar, it also reflects a special awareness of the instruments potentialboth in technique and tonal nuance. The special magic of Barrios is that this

romantic musicality is expressed by a far more imaginative and developed guitar technique than anything that had gone before, says John Williams in his introduction to his path-breaking recordings of Barrios music. In this he was a great original, a kind of Chopin of the guitar. Although rooted in large part in the popular idiom, Barrios compositions come adorned in all the harmonic and contra-puntal sophistication of classical music. Indeed, it is this very combination of these two worlds, popular and classical, that makes his music so complex and challenging for all performers. No one familiar with the rigors of the instrument would dispute that one has to be a solid guitarist with a strong technique to perform his pieces for Barrios himself was a virtuoso performer who composed with the instrument in his hands. Yet, despite the difficulty of playing his music, many skilled guitarists have been drawn to his works over the last three decades and have virtually made Barrios a rallying point, or a guitarist's guitarist, that few other composers in the recent history of the instrument have become. Incorporating a few selected pieces from Barrios into one's repertoire would be one thing, but attempting to record an entire album dedicated to his music is quite another. It is an undertaking that requires passion, insight, imagination, stamina and a sense of drama. In fact, one could reasonably argue that it's almost necessary to have some of that romantic madness to be able to pull it off. It is no exaggeration to say that few guitarists besides Ljovica Kolian today have the preparation and the mettle to accomplish this feat. Given his mastery of both idioms and his technical prowess already on display in his earlier recordings of the Lute Suites of J.S. Bach as well as Shoror, Armenian Folk Music for the Guitar, Kolian was almost preordained to make this album. He embraced Barrios music in his own manner: bringing to the project his innate musical perceptiveness coupled with that formidable technique and, most notably, his inspiration. From the opening notes of *Preludio en Do menor* to the closing *Medallon Antiguo*, Kolian invites the listener to go along on a musical pilgrimage into the magical world of Agustín Barrios seldom seen or heard before. His interpretation of this music is aptly poetic and almost pianistic in the sense that it reminds one of the passionate, well thought-out, highly individualized renditions by the virtuosos such as Schnabel, Rubinstein or Serkin of the Romantic repertoire. The album brings together a choice of Barrios' best pieces to illustrate his greatness and versatility as a composer for his favorite instrument, through which he gave free reign to his musical imagination. His creativity is evidenced, to cite just a few examples, in the weaving of melody and harmony across the strings in *Mazurka Appassionata*, his inventive use of the open strings in *Vals No. 4*, the unusual chord progressions he finds with the bass strings tuned down in *Choro*

de Saudade, the shifting harmonies and contrasting melodic lines in Una Limosna por el Amor de Dios and his simple combining of the drumming sound with chord changes in Cueca. At the heart of the album is La Catedral, a staple of the Barrios repertoire which the composer penned in tribute to J.S. Bach. The piece opens with a movement marked andante religioso, which includes broad, horizontal chords intended to evoke the composers feelings as he entered the Cathedral of San Jose in Montevideo (Uruguay) and heard an organist playing Bachs music. In contrast, the second movement, marked allegro solemne, tracks Barrioss departure from the peaceful place of worship and uses a repetition of arpeggio figures to suggest a return to the noise and confusion of the outside world. Twenty years after its original conception, Barrios added a third movement, a preludio, which he wrote in Havana. Its a little known but interesting fact that Barrios was also one of the pioneers of recorded music for the guitar. In fact, a performance by Barrios in 1912 may represent the first recording on vinyl by a classical guitarist anywhere in the world. Barrios went on to make at least thirty 78-rpm recordings, all of them remarkably clean and error free for an era when music was recorded directly on vinyl without benefit of editing and mixing. Standing out among these are recordings Barrios made for Radio Deutschland during his visit to Europe in 1935, including the first performance on vinyl of the Bach Lute Suites from his own transcriptions. In the end, this enigmatic and one-time self-proclaimed Guarani chief (for a period of three years Barrios adopted the onstage identity of a chief named Mangor, to whom he attached the name Nitsugahis own first name spelled backwards) left a legacy that today resounds far beyond his native Paraguay. And it may be now safe to say that his personal eccentricities do not seem to have interfered with his creativityand, if anything, it may very well have enriched it. Kevork Imirzian

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