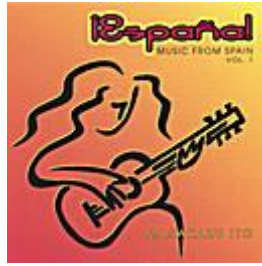


Mp3 Masakazu Ito - !espana!



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Critically acclaimed CD recording by the virtuoso classical guitarist performing 20th century masterpieces by Spanish composers, including Rodrigo, Turina and Sainz de la Maza. 15 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Traditional, CLASSICAL: Contemporary Details: Masakazu Ito is recognized as one of today's top guitarists, acclaimed by musicians, composers, conductors, and critics for his mastery of the instrument and its repertoire. "He has it all," says guitarist Ricardo Iznaola, "virtuosity, musicality and flair. He is certainly a name to watch." Since his professional debut in Tokyo 1987, Ito has won top prizes in seven major international guitar competitions, including the Andres Segovia International Guitar Competition, the Tokyo International Guitar Competition, the Guitar Foundation of America International Guitar Competition, and the Seto Ohashi International Competition. Ito is active as a performer, teacher, composer, and recording artist. A recital in Germany marked his 1995 European debut. The following year, he performed at the Cal-State Luckman Theatre in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Times noted, "Ito displayed conspicuous skill and tonal range . . . [he] proved himself to be a clean and technically adroit player, whizzing through thorny passages with aplomb." Ito has been featured as soloist with symphony orchestras throughout Japan and the United States. Most recently, he appeared with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, of which the Denver Post wrote, "Guitarist Masakazu Ito further contributed to the overall spellbinding performance." Ito has also been a guest at festivals such as the Musikfest in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, the Methow Valley Music Festival in Twisp, Washington, the International Guitar Week at the University of Denver, and the Colorado Music Fest at Colorado State University, Pueblo, among others. In March of 2003, Ito was chosen by the Japanese government to celebrate 150 years of US-Japan relations by presenting a solo guitar recital at the official residence of the Japanese Consul General in Denver, Colorado. He has also performed world premieres of works by three

prominent American composers: Daniel Pinkhams Sagas, for guitar and cello, at the Rocky Mountain Music Festival in 1997; Quiver Songs, a work by Stephen Everett for shakuhachi and guitar, at the Modern Festival in 1998, which featured Japanese portraits at a world music concert; and Ricardo Iznaola's Musique de Salon No 8 for guitar and string quartet, which was written for and dedicated to Ito in 2003. As a teacher, Ito currently holds a position at the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music, where he received his master's degree under the guidance of Ricardo Iznaola. A unique dimension of Ito's career involves his friendship with popular Japanese musician Kitaro. The two collaborated in an outdoor duo concert presented in 1991. In 2000, Ito recorded guitar parts for Kitaro's album, "Thinking of You" (Domo Records). The recording won a Grammy in January, 2001 for Best New Age Album. Kitaro has been an influence on Ito's own work as a composer: Ito's 1996 album, "Intimate Guitar," contains some of his own compositions. His second CD release, "A Truly Classical Christmas," features Ito's arrangements of popular holiday songs as well as his original works. Ito's solo repertoire is notable for including works by Japanese composers such as Takemitsu, Yoshimatsu and Yocoh. His favorite guitar music, however, comes from Spain. "Espana! Music from Spain," is his latest recording project. December 1997 saw the release of "Espana Vol. 1," a CD that Classical Guitar said "is a recording of depth . . . [and is] most musically satisfying" (1999). ***** Classical Guitar Magazine (London, UK) May 1999

By Tim Panting !Espana! Music from Spain, Volume 1 This is a cleverly put together volume of works that all have serious weight as compositions. Their quality assures a recording of depth that is one of the most musically satisfying I have heard in ages. The highly consistent sound production is marvelous. Ito's tone is commanding and his phrasing feels very natural. The Turina Sonata, Op. 61 is a forceful statement with the unmistakable Spanish idioms that I almost associate with the sound of Segovia. The openness of the guitar harmonies and rugged melodic lines are played with a marvelous control. What I like about Ito's playing is that he sails close to the edge and appears to be smiling as he does so. Not reckless, but not reticent, either. Rodrigo's Zarabanda Lejana is a beautifully plaintive work that deserves to be heard more in concert. The tricky chord voicings are here played with precision. The Fandango from Tres Piezas Espanolas with Rodrigo's signature layers of rhythm and complete use of the fingerboard is taken at a perfect tempo. Each piece is made musical sense of, thus making the listening experience most enjoyable. The Passacaglia and Zapateado are given equally positive treatment. That Ito has an affinity with this music beyond mere understanding is in no doubt. First the first chimes of the Invocacion y Danza

and the subsequent storm that is brewed Ito lets the guitar breathe fire. Inserted for pure pleasure is Ito's transcription of Dedicatoria from Cuentos de la Juventud, Op. 1 by Granados. The inspiration that Sainz de la Maza evoked in those around him is well noted. Here we can hear some of his valuable contributions to the guitar repertoire. You can tell Ito loves this music. It is rare to hear a recording work so well and want for nothing. Roll on Volume Two!

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