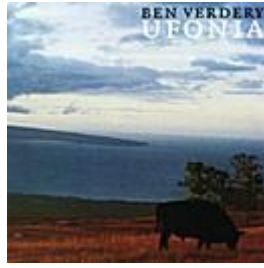


Mp3 Ufonia - Ben Verdery Ufonia



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Ufonia is a group of five virtuoso musicians performing on guitar, flute, oboe, percussion and bass. The music borrows from world, jazz and classical styles and the recording quality is both intimate and pristine. 11 MP3 Songs

WORLD: World Traditions, JAZZ: World Fusion Details: During a rehearsal in 1991 (for my CD *Some Towns and Cities*), I looked up and realized that strumming loudly in a rhythm section along with Harvie Swartz and John Marshall, accompanying Keith Underwood and Vicki Bodner was ridiculously fun! The rehearsal brought back warm and fuzzy memories of my band days in elementary and high school - some of them with John Marshall. As we rehearsed the piece *Seattle*, I thought why not form a band with these very people, as they were playing the piece better and more beautifully than I could have imagined. Luckily for me, the D'Addario String Company presented a wonderful series that booked us for a small tour. Until the last minute, we had no name, which can be tension producing. One day, I went off to the zoo with my then infant son, John, and wife, Rie, and in the tropical room, I saw a bird called Violet Euphonia (I actually didn't see the bird, but I read the plaque). I thought, Euphonia - now there's a name. We changed it to Ufonia, because that is what people did in the 1990's. Since that time there has been some "Ufonying" around Seattle, WA, Watsonville, Santa Cruz and Half Moon Bay, CA, Litchfield, CT, Washington, DC, Milwaukee, WI, Tidewater, VA, South Hadley, MA, Keene, NH, Staten Island and New York, NY. Ufonia has also performed on PBS and NPR. Sometimes at the end of concerts, the audiences will stand and cheer and we can be known to treat them to the urtext version of *I Feel Free* by the English Baroque trio, Cream. After a few years I had written enough pieces for a CD and asked my fellow Ufonians if they could put aside three days to record. Four years later, with the great generosity of Soundtrack Studio owner, John Kiehl, and Jim D'Addario of D'Addario Strings, we have completed our debut CD, entitled *Ufonia*. Ben Verdery To a composer working in the so called classical

tradition, a CD such as this can be baffling - the playing is elegant and the music is charming, to say the least, but WHAT IS IT? One raises an eyebrow with a tad of suspicion when hearing such clearly Hybrid music. What is its authenticity? Its purity? Well, not to worry, for, as Lou Harrison once said, all good music is hybrid (actually, what he said in his Music Primer was: "don't underrate hybrid music BECAUSE THAT'S ALL THERE IS.") Well, some music is more obviously hybrid than others, or at least its hybridness is of more recent vintage. So, the question still begs: what is it? To me, its a kind of chamber music which lies not solely in the Brahms-Mozart tradition but is informed also by other music. The playing is always precise, beautifully intoned and phrased by players who inhabit New York's classical music performance world and those of jazz and world music as well. So it has that performative shine we always listen for in classical chamber music, but its not to be taken too seriously! It's fun, giddy and joyous - "uforic" in the best sense. So let's not worry about what it is exactly, but admire the playing, dig the togetherness and enjoy the music. File, simply, under Ufonia. Ingram Marshall In addition to being brilliant performers, the members of Ufonia are all recognized as great pedagogues. Collectively they are on the faculties at the Yale School of Music, The Manhattan School of Music and Mannes College of Music. They have taught masterclasses at conservatories and festivals throughout North America, Europe and Japan. Rarely has such a skilled group of teachers been assembled in one ensemble. Ufonia believes that if live music is to survive in today's world it must be made available to students of all ages. Because of their passion for their work, diverse backgrounds and unusual instrumentation, they have been a tremendous success with the students they have taught, as individuals and as an ensemble.

February, 2001 ----- Personnel BENJAMIN VERDERY classical guitar, steel string guitars VICKI BODNER oboe, English horn JOHN MARSHALL dumbek bodhran riq udu gaval darbukka ocean drum zanz Venezuelan maraca HARVIE SWARTZ acoustic bass vertical bass KEITH UNDERWOOD c flute alto flute bass flute African wooden flute bass recorder tenor recorder Irish whistle panpipes ----- Individual Biographies Benjamin Verdery has performed and taught masterclasses throughout Europe, Mexico, Canada, Cuba, Japan and South America, and has recorded and performed with such diverse artists as Frederic Hand, Leo Kottke, Anthony Newman, Jessye Norman, Paco Pea, Hermann Prey and John Williams. He regularly gives flute and guitar concerts with the Schmidt/Verdery Duo and with his ensemble Ufonia. Workshop Arts has published the solo works from his recording Some Towns and Cities. The recording of the same title includes fifteen original

compositions, and won the 1992 Best Classical Guitar Recording in Guitar Player Magazine. In 1996, John Williams recorded Mr. Verdery's duo version of Capitola, CA for Sony Classical. His Scenes from Ellis Island, for guitar orchestra, has been extensively broadcast and performed at festivals and universities in America, Canada, New Zealand and Europe and the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet performs it on their CD Air and Ground (Sony Classical). Workshop Arts (distributed by Alfred Music) has also released Mr. Verdery's book, Easy Classical Guitar Recital as well as his instructional video The Essentials of Classical Guitar (nominated for Best New Instructional Video by Music and Sound Retailer, 2000). Benjamin Verdery's recordings include Bach: Transcriptions for Guitar (GRI); John Williams Plays Vivaldi (Sony Classical) performing Vivaldi's Concerto in G Major for two mandolins; Reverie: French Music for Flute and Guitar (Sony Classical); Some Towns and Cities (Sony Classical); Ride the Wind Horse: American Guitar Music (Sony Classical); The Enchanted Dawn (GRI), Ben Verdery Ufonia and Soepa: American Guitar Music (Mushkatweek). Since 1985, Benjamin Verdery has been chair of the guitar department at Yale University

JOHN MARSHALL, percussion John Marshall did graduate work in Ethnomusicology at Wesleyan University. He studied North African, Middle Eastern, South Indian and Western classical percussion with a number of master drummers, including Paul Price, Doug Wook Park, Norman Grossman, Royal Hartigan and most recently Glen Velez. As founder of the percussion group, Rhythm Exchange, John writes original music for West African, Afro-Latin and Arabic instrumentation. His ensemble has performed throughout the Northeast, Minnesota and New Mexico at various universities, schools and festival events. John Marshall has recorded with Rhythm Exchange, the jazz trio Harbinger and Benjamin Verdery. John pioneered a world music curriculum at the high school level and teaches Middle Eastern hand drumming techniques through workshop series. Currently John Marshall is working in collaboration with multi-percussionist, Scott Hanna, and Kalimba harpist, Mark Ingram, on Mask and Drums, a stage show and TV series for PBS. Among the instruments that John enjoys performing with are the doumbek, bodhran, tar, doira, bendir and the Nigerian udu drum.

HARVIE SWARTZ, double bass One of the most versatile and accomplished bassists of our time, Harvie Swartz has recorded and performed with such musical giants as Kenny Barron, James Brown, Pacquito D'Rivera, Al DiMeola, Mick Goodrick, Jim Hall, Kirk Lightsey, Pat Metheny, David Sanborn, John Scofield, Zoot Sims, Mike Stern, Toots Thielmans and Grover Washington Jr. Mr. Swartz' longtime association with Shelia Jordan has set the standard for vocal-bass duos. They have played many of the major jazz festivals throughout the

world, and have performed and been interviewed on numerous national and international radio broadcasts. They were featured performers in the acclaimed PBS television series, *Women In Jazz*. They have recorded three albums in the vocal-bass format and five in a group format, their latest American release being *Lost And Found* (Muse Records, 1990). A prolific composer with over 40 original compositions recorded, Mr. Swartz has also written the theme music for the television jazz series, *Trumpet Kings*, *Piano Legends* and *John Coltrane*. Since 1984, Harvie Swartz, a graduate of the Berklee School of Music in his native Boston, has held the chair of Jazz Bass Instructor at the Manhattan School of Music. He has served as the Artist-In-Residence at the Cologne Hochschule, the Eastman School of Music, McGill University and numerous other national and international institutions. Harvie Swartz has received two significant performance grants from the National Endowment For The Arts, as well as awards from ASCAP, Meet The Composer, and CAPS.

VICKI BODNER, oboe Solo oboist with Orchestra New England, The Music Project, Musical Elements, Michael Gordon Philharmonic and John Zorn, Vicki Bodner is also currently performing in the Broadway production of *The Secret Garden*. A frequent soloist in the New York, New England area and on the West Coast, she has appeared on National Public Radio and Television, WNEW-TV and has performed at the Aspen, Rome, White Mountains, Caramoor, Waterloo and Next Wave Festivals. Vicki Bodner has recorded for CBS, Sony, CRI, Koch International, New World, Newport Classic and Opus One labels and records in New York and Los Angeles for films and documentaries. Vicki Bodner studied at the Juilliard School and has since been on the faculties of Wesleyan University and the University of Bridgeport.

KEITH UNDERWOOD, flute Keith Underwood has been active in New York musical life since he received his Masters Degree from Yale School of Music in 1976. He is also flutist of the New York Chamber Soloists, the Contemporary music groups Parnassus and Musical Elements, JazzAntiqua, the Arcadia Baroque Ensemble and the Riverside Symphony. He has appeared extensively with many of New York's most prominent musical organizations, including the New York Chamber Symphony, the American Composer's Orchestra, the Orpheus Ensemble, the Orchestra of Saint Luke's, the Brooklyn Philharmonia and the New York Philharmonic (with which he toured the Far East in 1984). In 1986, Keith Underwood was the recipient of a Fulbright Grant to Brazil where he taught flute at the Universidade Federal de Campinas and gave recitals and masterclasses throughout Brazil. He was also in Brazil in 1981 and 1982, teaching and performing at the Festival de Inverno in Campos de Jordao, Sao Paulo. Keith Underwood has appeared at the Spoleto Festival, the

Madeira Bach Festival and the Vermont Mozart Festival. Since returning from Brazil, Keith Underwood has been active as a teacher of breathing techniques, working with both wind instrumentalists and singers privately and in classes. He has spent a great deal of time recording for films and television in New York and Los Angeles. He has recorded for the RCA, CBS, Musical Heritage Society, CRI and New World labels. ----- What The Critics Say "Fantastic, Terrific. Hot, really hot. These were just a few of the words the audience used to describe the rhythmic sounds of Ufonia. They brought a diverse menu of classical, jazz, and a mix of ethnic tones and rhythms together through 11 very different musical pieces. The music was uplifting and performed with an enormous amount of enthusiasm. Marshall's drum solo captivated the audience, taking them to a foreign land with his assortment of Middle Eastern and West African drums, rattles, and Brazilian shakers." VOICE (Santa Cruz, CA) "The concert had the feel of personal music shared among friends. The delight they took in their work, and their way of welcoming the audience into their circle, made this a warm, human experience in addition to a fine concert. This music is about the sparkling, dazzling moment." THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL "His carefully constructed, harmonically adventurous compositions have heart and soul, two elements often missing in contemporary classical music." PULSE MAGAZINE "Every few years a band comes along that defies all those rigid categories known as classical, jazz, pop, folk, worldbeat and new age. Crackling with energy and overflowing with musical know-how, Ben Verdery's Ufonia is such a group. These seasoned musicians love playing live and those of us in the audience can't help but feel their infectious spirit. A Ufonia concert has something for everyone, and I urge you to treat yourself to the extraordinary talents of this ensemble. Just leave your expectations out in the lobby with the coat check person and get ready for a truly unique musical experience." RAY WHITE, WQCD/CD 101.9, NY, NY

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