

L.A. GUITAR QUARTET

Dances from
RENAISSANCE
to
NUTCRACKER





ORIGINAL DIGITAL RECORDING

THE LOS ANGELES GUITAR QUARTET
DANCES FROM RENAISSANCE TO NUTCRACKER
*John Dearman, William Kanengiser,
Scott Tennant, Andrew York*

DE 3132



PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY [1840-1893]

[1] NUTCRACKER SUITE, Op. 71a (20:51)

MICHAEL PRAETORIUS [ca. 1571-1621]

[9] DANCE SUITE (10:02)

PETER WARLOCK [1894-1930]

[17] CAPRIOL SUITE (8:21)

THOMAS MORLEY [ca. 1557-1602]

[23] FOUR DANCES (7:18)

GIOVANNI GABRIELI [1557-1612]

[27] FOUR INSTRUMENTAL PIECES (11:22)

Total Playing Time: 58:17



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DANCES FROM RENAISSANCE TO NUTCRACKER
John Dearman, William Kanengiser, Scott Tennant, Andrew York

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY [1840-1893]

NUTCRACKER SUITE, Op. 71a (20:51)

1. **Overture Miniature** (2:54)
2. **March** (2:36)
3. **Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy** (1:55)
4. **Russian Dance** (1:00)
5. **Arabian Dance** (3:29)
6. **Chinese Dance** (0:59)
7. **Dance of the Reed Pipes** (2:25)
8. **Waltz of the Flowers** (5:12)

MICHAEL PRAETORIUS [ca. 1571-1621]

DANCE SUITE (10:02)

9. **Bransle** (0:41)
10. **Volte I** (0:39)
11. **Bouree 1 & 2** (1:47)
12. **Courante 1** (1:14)
13. **Courante 2** (0:50)
14. **Ballet** (1:14)
15. **Gavottes 1, 2, 3, & 6** (2:34)
16. **Volte II** (0:50)

PETER WARLOCK [1894-1930]

CAPRIOL SUITE (8:21)

17. **Basse-Danse** (1:11)
18. **Pavane** (1:45)
19. **Tordion** (0:47)
20. **Bransles** (1:39)
21. **Pieds-en-l'air** (1:50)
22. **Mattachins** (0:54)

THOMAS MORLEY [ca. 1557-1602]

FOUR DANCES (7:18)

23. **My Lord of Oxenfordes Maske** (0:55)
24. **Galliard "Can She Excuse"** (0:57)
25. **Response Pavin** (3:56)
26. **Joyne Hands** (1:16)

GIOVANNI GABRIELI [1557-1612]

FOUR INSTRUMENTAL PIECES (11:22)

27. **Canzon per sonar primi toni** (3:27)
28. **Sonata XIII** (1:48)
29. **Canzon XI** (2:36)
30. **Canzon VI** (3:22)

Total Playing Time: 58:17

Executive Producer: *Amelia S. Haygood*
Recording Producer: *Carol Rosenberger*
Recording Engineer: *John Eargle*
Assistant Engineer/Producer: *Stephen Basili*
Production Assistant: *Phyllis Bernard*

Digital Recording: *Sony*
Digital Editing: *Sony DAE 3000*
Monitor Loudspeakers: *JBL 4413*

Microphones: *Sanken CU41, Sennheiser MKH20*
Console: *Soundcraft 200B*

Recorded at the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles, April 28-29 and May 21, 1992

Cover Photo: *Blake Little*
Design: *Tri Arts, Inc.*
Graphic Implementation: *Steven Dudeck*

Brandenburgs to Bluegrass, fantasias to fandangos... from brilliantly realized transcriptions of masterworks to ground-breaking new music, the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet is one of the most exciting chamber ensembles on the concert stage today. Acclaimed for its inspired musicality, magnetic stage presence and innovative programming, the Quartet has become a favorite of audiences worldwide. Among the LAGQ's recent appearances as of this writing are New York's Lincoln Center, the Istanbul and Singapore Arts Festivals, Chicago's Orchestra Hall, England's Brighton Festival, and an extensive tour of Spain.

The LAGQ was formed in 1980 at the University of Southern California, by guitar virtuoso Pepe Romero. Tours in North America, Europe and the Far East followed; and soon the group had launched its program of enriching the guitar quartet repertoire through stunning transcriptions and commissioning of new works. The Quartet was the first group of its kind to be a prizewinner at the Concert Artists Guild International Competition.

It has often been remarked that the Quartet's informal style, humor and immediate rapport with live audiences make an "event" out of an LAGQ concert. From the first note of the LAGQ's enchanting performance of the Nutcracker Suite, it is apparent that the animating spirit which can infuse a musical group and make it live

and breathe as an entity, can permeate an audio recording as well.

Among the LAGQ's considerable assets are the arranging skills of each of its four members. All four have contributed arrangements for this recording. Each player comments on the music, and on his experience in arranging it for guitar quartet.

Virtuoso guitarist **ANDREW YORK** is also a talented composer whose original works have been performed and recorded by John Williams and Christopher Parkening. York comments on his delightful arrangement of Tchaikovsky's perennial favorite, the *Nutcracker Suite*:



It is easy to be enamored of music that was an important part of one's childhood; and Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite" was such a piece for me. Tchaikovsky's great melodic gift and talent for creating evocative character pieces made this work a magic addition to each Christmastime for me as a boy.

The 1992 season marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the Nutcracker. A century ago the ballet was commissioned by Ivan Vsevolozhsky, who had also commissioned Tchaikovsky to write "Sleeping Beauty." Choreographer Marius Petipa had already developed the scenario for the ballet to such a degree that much of the music had to be composed within forms and

phrases of pre-set length; a task which Tchaikovsky performed with great proficiency.

From February 1891 to April 1892 Tchaikovsky worked on the *Nutcracker*. During this time, he discovered in France a newly invented instrument, the celeste, which he described as “something between a small piano and a glockenspiel, with a divinely beautiful voice.” He was worried that Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov would compose for it first; so he arranged with his publisher (Jürgenson) to have a celeste sent to Moscow in secrecy. The suite of eight pieces from the ballet (the only suite which Tchaikovsky himself put together) was completed and premiered before the ballet, largely to introduce the sound of the celeste before anyone else had a chance to do so. The premiere of the *Nutcracker Suite*, on March 19, 1892 in St. Petersburg, was an immediate success.

In deciding to transcribe this work, I first arranged “Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy” for solo electric guitar. Though I did record it, the piece was monstrously difficult to play; so I embarked on a two-guitar arrangement, first of this dance, and ultimately of the entire suite. Musically, the two-guitar arrangement worked astonishingly well; but it, too, was extremely difficult to play.

The ideal solution was to redo the work for guitar quartet, allowing a more complete translation of the complexities of the orchestral score, which could be balanced among four guitars. Two dances remain as duets — the “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy,” played here by Bill Kanengiser and Scott Tennant; and “Arabian Dance,” in which John Dearman and I are the players.

Seven-string virtuoso **JOHN DEARMAN**, who won a nationwide audition to perform in the historic Andres Segovia Master Classes in 1981, demonstrates his talents as an arranger in the lively suite of Praetorius dances:

As a 19-year-old wet-behind-the-ears classical guitarist and first year college music student, I spent a fair amount of time honing my rhythmic skills by tapping out rhythms on a special machine to the accompaniment of various musical excerpts. After weeks of excerpts my enthusiasm was beginning to hit bottom, when over the headphones came a lively, swinging tune played by a band of grumbling, raspy, cantankerous instruments in a bizarre and delightful juxtaposition. It wasn't until a couple of years later that I learned that I had on that day been introduced to the music of Michael Praetorius, and that the excerpt was “La Bouree,” * arranged by David Munrow for a choir of instruments with the apt name “racket!” My experience was not unique: most music fans know this prolific master by way of the three hundred or so dances contained in his collection “*Terpsichore*,” despite the fact that the rest of Praetorius' well over a thousand compositions were sacred vocal music!

The dances in “*Terpsichore*” (named for the Greek muse of dance) are typical of German dance music of the time: they were not stylized “art” music, but could actually be danced to. Most of the dances are for four or five players of unspecified instrumentation, or in the words of Praetorius, “several persons with all sorts of instruments.” Though we are “several persons,” four guitars don't quite constitute “all sorts of instruments,” so in



* Note: Although the usual spelling of this dance is *Bourrée* with two “r”s, the edition of the Complete Works of Praetorius spells the dance *Bouree*, with one “r” and no acute accent.

these arrangements we rely on the many wonderful coloristic capabilities of the guitar, including percussive effects. The seven-string guitar helped a great deal in extending the range of the ensemble, especially in "La Bouree" where I emulate Munrow's whimsical arrangement. Most of the pieces played here are in two or three sections, with each section repeated at least once. With a large, mixed ensemble of instruments which are blown, bowed, plucked and beaten, the repeats are usually played by contrasting groups of instruments. With four guitars, we draw on the tradition of ornamenting the written music to provide variety in the repeats. This lends an improvisational aspect to the performances, which makes for a good deal of spontaneity and interplay within the ensemble.

The dances I've chosen here represent a typical sampling of dance suites of the time, arranged in alternate triple and duple meters. The Bransle is of French origin, and has a rustic character (the English name for it is Brawl!) "Volte" is a wild dance in three, featuring a flamboyant move in which the male dancer thrusts the woman high into the air. This led to its banishment from the French court for its indecorum, and prompted at least one contemporary writer to wonder "whether in the Volte both honor and health are not concerned and threatened." A Bourree is counted in four, with the phrases always beginning on the fourth beat. Courantes (literally "running") appear in a variety of rhythms and styles — here, one fluid and peaceful, the other more rhythmic and vigorous. "Ballet" refers to a piece in duple meter of moderate tempo, with a tuneful quality. The "Gavotte" here is actually a series of short Gavottes strung together much like the more familiar Baroque Gavottes, which

are comprised of a series of related musical episodes.

As a solo virtuoso, **WILLIAM KANENGISER** was winner of the Concert Artists Guild New York Competition and the Toronto International Guitar Competition. He has this to say about his beautiful arrangement of Warlock's Capriol Suite:

Although he had no formal musical education, Peter Warlock became well known in the 1920s for his settings of English folk songs, and for his scholarly editions of early music. Equally recognized as an expert in poetry and prose, Warlock (born Philip Heseltine) aptly fit the description of "Renaissance Man;" in fact, many of his original compositions reflected his deep interest in the culture of the Renaissance.

The Capriol Suite remains one of Warlock's most popular works, and is based upon dance tunes from Arbeau's 1598 treatise on Renaissance dance, "Orchesographie." Written in 1926, the suite is a fairly straightforward setting of six French dances laced with some surprisingly modern gestures (the final movement, in particular, ends with raucous strummed chords reminiscent of Jimi Hendrix!) Originally scored for string orchestra, the suite lends itself most gratefully to a guitar quartet rendition, partially due to the crisp articulations and frequent use of pizzicato in the original. The democratic nature of a guitar quartet allows for the melodies to be freely passed from one player to the next, especially in the haunting "Pavane" and the lovely "Pieds en l'air." This gives each of us a chance to play the lead!





SCOTT TENNANT's international recognition as a solo virtuoso include first prize in the 1989 Tokyo International Guitar Competition, and the silver medal in the International Competition of Radio France in Paris. He, too, is an outstanding arranger, as demonstrated in the Morley group, about which he comments:

Thomas Morley was a publisher, composer, arranger and entrepreneur. Because he was the last person to be awarded the exclusive royal printing patent in 1598, he was an influential man in the publishing business. He enjoyed considerable success by publishing some of the most popular songs and instrumental pieces in Europe at that time. One of his most popular items, the First Booke of Consort Lessons, made by Divers Exquisite Authors, for Six Instruments to Play Together, was published in 1599. A typical consort consisted of the lute, the pandora, the cittern, the bass viol, the treble viol and the flute or recorder.

I found this combination ideal for arrangements in a four-guitar setting. I've been in love with the music of Renaissance England since first hearing some of it on a recording when I was about ten years old. There was an undeniably festive quality about a consort; a bell-like clarity which, I suppose, always conjured up feelings of the Christmas season.

The inspiration behind a good chunk of this music, though, was far from festive. Much of it was based on texts dealing with the usual unrequited love, sadness, death, and other unfortunate circumstances — written, however, with a fashionable pathos it seems only the Elizabethan poetic soul could love. All the horrors and miseries of the medieval "black plague" had

nothing over a good love song!

But as the English were morose in their grief, they could be equally joyous in their ecstasy (or perhaps ecstatic in their grief...) It is music from one of these upward mood swings which we have recorded here. This could not be more apparent than in the first piece, "My Lord of Oxenforde's Maske." Morley was notoriously sloppy in crediting the composers of his consort arrangements, but this one is probably by William Byrd. As in most of the other consort lessons, the lute has the florid lines, which serve to ornament the melody. The strumming is in imitation of the cittern, a small, steel-strung instrument which, when strummed, sounds something like our banjo.

The second selection is a Galliard based on the popular song "Can She Excuse my Wrongs" by John Dowland. Dowland later arranged the song for solo lute and dedicated it to Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex, a wealthy patron of his. The ill-fated Earl was the last of Queen Elizabeth's persistent suitors. The lyrics to the song are based on some of the Earl's poetic verses to the Queen, which came to an abrupt halt in 1601 due to his execution.

Richard Allison's "Response Pavin" (beautifully arranged here by Bill Kanengiser), is appropriately named for its repetitive quality; each phrase is answered in a slightly ornamented fashion.

"Joyne Hands" is one of the few selections by Morley himself that was included in this collection. It is based on Morley's three-part canzonet "See, see myne own sweet jewell." In this work, the lute maintains an accompanimental role, playing the chords while the two upper voices, played here by Bill and John,

are given the rapidly moving, imitative lines. Andrew plays the bass viol part, along with a few extra notes that were left over.

WILLIAM KANENGISER's gifts as an arranger come to the fore once again in the Four Instrumental Pieces by Gabrieli:

Giovanni Gabrieli is regarded as the master of the Venetian polyphonic style; and his instrumental pieces, originally conceived for the grandeur of St. Mark's Cathedral, remain popular to this day. The architecture of St. Mark's, with choir sections on opposite sides of its spacious interior, lent itself to an antiphonal style of composition; that is, having opposing groups of instruments echo and imitate each other. Gabrieli refined his imitative style to an unmatched degree, and was innovative in his use of dynamics and textures to bring out the contrasts between sections of his canzoni and sonate.

Like many of his contemporaries, Gabrieli rarely specified the instrumentation of his pieces. Modern performances of this music are most frequently heard on brass instruments, but the common practice of "intabulating" the canzon on plucked instruments of the day suggests that Gabrieli would not have objected to having them played on four guitars. The call and response effects that Gabrieli employed are realized by having duos within the group echo each other, changing timbre to imitate the distinct entrances. While demanding for their virtuosic passagework and delicate counterpoint, these pieces are a delight to play.

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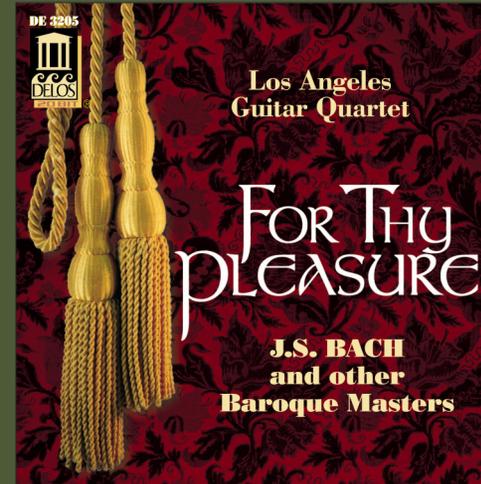
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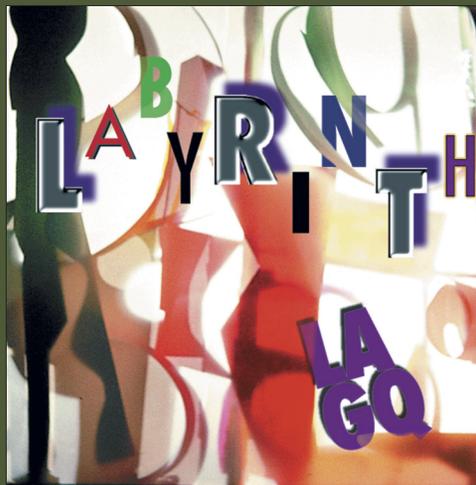
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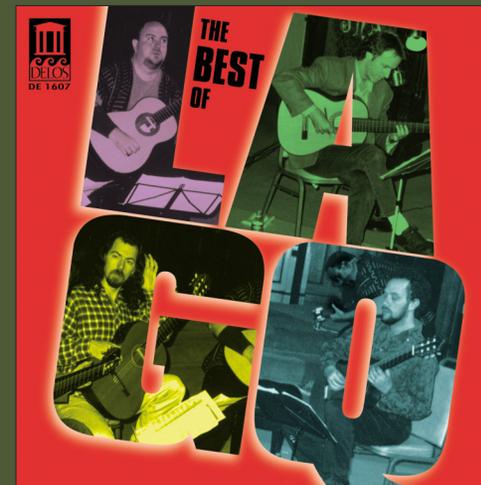
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