

L.A. GUITAR QUARTET

# Evening in Granada



DE 3144  
1993  
DELOS  
20th  
Anniversary

DE 3144

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**THE LOS ANGELES GUITAR QUARTET**  
***Evening in Granada***

**Luigi Boccherini : Introduction and Fandango (5:57)**

**1** Introduction (1:21)

**2** Fandango (4:35)

**3** **Ian Krouse: Folías (15:34)**

**Manuel de Falla: El amor brujo (21:16)**

**4** Introduccion y escena (:29)

**5** En la cueva — La noche (1:43)

**6** Canción del amor dolido (1:15)

**7** El aparecido (:12)

**8** Danza del terror (1:50)

**9** El circulo mágico — Romance del pescador (1:57)

**10** A media noche — Los sortilegios (:27)

**11** Danza ritual del fuego (Para ahuyentar los malos espíritus) (3:33)

**12** Escena (1:01)

**13** Canción del fuego fatuo (1:25)

**14** Pantomima (3:43)

**15** Danza del juego de amor (2:14)

**16** Final (Las campanas del amanecer) (1:12)

**17** **Claude Debussy: La soirée dans Grenade (Evening in Granada) (4:48)**

**Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov : Capriccio Espagnol (14:31)**

**18** I Alborada (1:14)

**19** II Variazioni (3:56)

**20** III Alborada (1:13)

**21** IV Scena e canto Gitano (4:40)

**22** V Fandango Asturiano (3:20)

**TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 62:28**



**Also by the LAGQ:**

**Dances from Renaissance to**

**Nutcracker: Tchaikovsky - *Nutcracker***

***Suite • Praetorius - Dance Suite •***

***Warlock - Capriol Suite • Morley -***

***Four Dances • Gabrieli - Four***

***Instrumental Pieces [DE 3132]***

The Los Angeles Guitar Quartet has become one of the most exciting and dynamic chamber ensembles on the concert stage today. Formed in 1980 at the University of Southern California by guitar virtuoso Pepe Romero, the LAGQ was the first group of its kind to be a prizewinner at the Concert Artists Guild International Competition. Soon the Quartet was delighting audiences throughout North America, Europe and the Far East with their unique blend of virtuosity, versatility and precision.

In live performance, the Quartet's informal style, humor and immediate rapport with audiences make for a memorable concert event. This human dimension, symbolic of the players' particular brand of communicativeness, also seems to make itself felt in their recordings.

But it is the LAGQ's stunning musical achievement which accounts for its international stature. "For the first time in the brief history of the guitar quartet," wrote reviewer Reinhard J. Brembeck in Munich's *Tages Zeitung*, "there is an ensemble which can compete with the great string quartets."

Each member of the group is a talented soloist as well: John Dearman, the Quartet's seven-string virtuoso, was selected by nationwide audition to perform in the historic Andres Segovia Master Classes in 1981; Scott

Tennant won first prize in the 1989 Tokyo International Guitar Competition and a silver medal in the International Competition of Radio France in Paris; Bill Kanengiser won the Concert Artists Guild New York Competition and the Toronto International Guitar Competition; Andrew York, who joined the Quartet in 1990, is a talented composer-performer whose works are performed and recorded by classical guitarists John Williams and Christopher Parkening.

As the *American Record Guide* commented in a recent review, "These former USC students of Pepe Romero are all amazing soloists, so when they join forces, ideal interpretive coordination is the result. Their dynamic control and crescendos...re-define what a guitar is capable of.... the musicianship is among the very best the guitar has to offer..."

Among the Quartet's considerable assets are the arranging skills of each of its four members. The group's first recording for Delos, *Dances from Renaissance to Nutcracker*, contained arrangements by each of the players. The present recording offers arrangements by Bill Kanengiser and Scott Tennant. With their brilliantly realized transcriptions of masterworks and ground-breaking new commissions, the LAGQ has greatly enriched the guitar quartet repertoire.



Spain, with its provocative dance idioms and gypsy lore, has for composers an allure that crosses international boundaries and spans virtually all musical periods. Spanish rhythms, cadences, modes and sonorities are stylishly evoked by a diverse group of composers in this recorded program, presenting musical portraits of Spain. The works in this multinational Spanish program receive equally stylish performances here by the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet.

Because of its brief history, the guitar quartet as a genre is without an extensive repertoire of its own. But, in the tradition of those earliest musical periods which saw the birth and development of the instrument, the members of the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet lend their considerable expertise to the task of transcribing and arranging. Typically, early composers of instrumental music specified only which clef or key was required, the implication being that whatever was available would suffice. Or, as Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) put it, the pieces in question should be played by "several persons with all sorts of instruments..." The tradition of transcribing from one medium to another continued from Bach, who arranged his own music as well as that of other composers, through all succeeding musical periods to our own time.

Italian composer and cellist **Luigi**

**Boccherini** (1743-1805) is known particularly for his chamber music. Having served as court composer in Madrid, he experienced Spanish culture first hand, which is perhaps what gives his **Introduction and Fandango** its air of authenticity. Originally the final movement of his String Quintet, Op. 40, No. 2, the Introduction and Fandango was arranged by Boccherini himself for guitar and string quartet. This version for guitar quartet is by Jeremy Sparks.

A short introduction (Grave assai) prepares the way for a lively fandango, filled with colorful harmonies and rhythmic vitality. Popular in both the Castilian and Andalusian regions, the fandango is a courtship dance in three-quarter time and moderately fast tempo. It reached the height of its popularity in the late 18th century, even finding its way into the drawing-rooms of the aristocracy and bringing renewed respectability to the guitar. Authorities trace its origins to Ibero-Moorish, West Indian or Latin American roots. It appears in stylized versions in Gluck's ballet "Don Juan," Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro" and even in Beethoven's sketchbook of 1810.

American composer **Ian Krouse**, a graduate of Indiana University and the University of Southern California, was an outstanding performer on the guitar until a muscular dys-



function disabled his right hand. In his remarkable **Folías**, which he composed in 1992 for the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet and for this recording, Krouse set out to add a work evocative of Spanish style to a distinguished tradition of "folias" which includes works by Marais, Bach, Vivaldi, Corelli, Paganini, Rachmaninoff, Ponce and Lutoslawski, among others. About his own *Folías* the composer writes:

*The folia was popular in Spain as a sung dance accompanied by guitar and sonajas — metal disks attached to a wooden ring. The word folia means "mad" or "empty-headed," for the dance was so fast and noisy that the dancers seemed out of their minds. My version is set in the usual form of variations, but with two twists. First, the theme itself is not presented until almost halfway through the piece and — even then — it is stated in several forms. Second, the variations start out quite long and gradually become shorter...they continue to accelerate until they move so fast that each takes only a few beats to complete. The piece concludes with a festive series of variations based on a form of the folia which was popular in the late Renaissance.*

The compositional style of Krouse's **Folías** is an eclectic circle. It is described by the composer as a kind of "time travel," beginning with improvisatory, neo-minimalist murmurings reminiscent of flamenco style. The music

develops backward in time, stylistically, to a statement of the theme in Baroque style, then back further to neo-Renaissance style, and finally comes full circle back to the present. One hears the theme emerging gradually until its full statement at the gravitational center of the piece, designated by the composer "*Follia* after Corelli" [at 8:25]. Shortly thereafter [at 10:31] the theme is stated in minor, this time quoting the "*Folias* of Sanz." As the variations draw to a close, the score indicates that the players should, each in turn, leave the stage, in an elaborate visual, as well as aural, diminuendo.

First presented in Madrid in 1915, **El Amor Brujo** of **Manuel de Falla** (1876-1946) was a theatrical piece of the type called 'gitaneria,' which included dances, songs and spoken passages. Later the composer reshaped it into a ballet with songs. The subject matter is steeped in folk lore and reveals Falla's interest in "canto jondo," primitive song of Andalusia. This example of imaginary folk art is the musical equivalent of Lorca's "*Romancero gitano*," in which Eastern and Western currents intermingle. The score contains some of the composer's best known music, including "*Danza ritual del fuego*" (Ritual Fire Dance), arranged here by Ian Krouse, and the "*Canción del fuego fatuo*" (Song of the Will-o-the-wisp)



arranged by Scott Tennant. The other movements were arranged by William Kanengiser.

The following is a synopsis of the scenario as it appears in the score:

*Candelas, a young, very beautiful and passionate woman, has loved a wicked, jealous and dissolute, but fascinating and cajoling gypsy. Although having led a very unhappy life with him, she has loved him intensely and mourned his loss, unable ever to forget him. Her memory of him is something like a hypnotic dream, a morbid, gruesome, and maddening spell. She is terrified by the thought that the dead may not be entirely gone, that he may return, that he continues to love her in his fierce, shadowy, faithless and caressing way. She lets herself become a prey to her thoughts of the past, as if under the influence of a spectre; yet she is young, strong, and vivacious. Spring returns and, with it, love, in the shape of Carmelo.*

*Carmelo, a handsome youth, enamoured and gallant, makes love to her. Candelas, not unwilling to be won, almost unconsciously returns his love, but the obsession of the past weighs against her present inclination. When Carmelo approaches her and endeavours to make her share in his passion, the Spectre returns and terrifies Candelas, whom he separates from her lover. They cannot exchange the kiss of perfect love.*

*Carmelo being gone, Candelas languishes and droops; she feels as if bewitched, and her past love seems to flutter heavily round her like malevolent and foreboding bats. But this evil spell has to be broken and Carmelo believes to have found a remedy.*

*He has once been the comrade of the gypsy whose spectre haunts Candelas. He knows that the dead lover was the typical faithless and jealous Andalusian gallant. Since he appears to retain, even after death, his taste for beautiful women, he must be taken by his weak side and thus diverted from his posthumous jealousy, in order that Carmelo may exchange with Candelas the perfect kiss against which the sorcery of love cannot prevail.*

*Carmelo persuades Lucia, a young and enchantingly pretty gypsy girl, the friend of Candelas, to simulate acceptance of the Spectre's addresses. Lucia, out of love for Candelas and from feminine curiosity, agrees. The idea of a flirtation with a ghost seems to her attractive and novel. And then, the dead man was so mirthful in life! Lucia takes up the sentinel's post. Carmelo returns to make love to Candelas, and the Spectre intervenes...but he finds the charming little gypsy, and neither can nor will resist the temptation, not being experienced in withstanding the allurements of a pretty face. He makes love to Lucia, coaxing and imploring her, and the coquettish young gypsy almost brings him to despair. In the meantime, Carmelo succeeds in convincing Candelas of his love, and life triumphs over death and over the past. The lovers at last exchange the kiss that defeats the evil influence of the Spectre, who perishes, definitely conquered by love.*

**La soirée dans Grenade** (Evening in Granada) of Claude Debussy (1862-1918) is the middle movement of a set of three piano pieces called "Estampes," or prints, and subtitled *Mouvement de Habanera* (In the rhythm



of a Habanera). Composed in 1903, *La soirée dans Grenade* was undoubtedly inspired by Ravel's "Habanera," which was composed in 1898 for two pianos. The habanera is a dance and song of Cuban origin, presumably from Creole and Negro tunes called *tonones*. Eventually, the dance became popular throughout Europe, particularly in Spain. When sung, the shrill, high-pitched singing style of Spanish flamenco is evident.

Debussy, who presumably never visited Spain, was nevertheless able to capture the mysterious and insinuating essence of this characteristic dance. Manuel de Falla wrote that "the power of evocation concentrated in those few pages of the *Evening in Granada* approaches the miraculous ...it is Andalusia itself that we see..." *La soirée dans Grenade* has particular significance to guitarists because, on the death of Debussy, Falla wrote a guitar piece called "Homenaje 'Le tombeau de Claude Debussy'" (1920), in which Falla quotes Debussy's theme. This arrangement for guitar quartet is by James F. Smith.

Like Debussy, **Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov** (1844-1908 ) wrote music startlingly evocative of Spain without having visited there. His five-movement orchestral piece, **Capriccio espagnol** is based on Galician and Asturian songs from the first volume of Jose Inzenga's "Cantos y bailes populares de España." "Alborada," a traditional morning serenade, begins the work and reappears as the third movement. The second movement, "Variazioni," is slow and melodic, and varies the accompaniment as the melody is repeated. Descriptive of the bullfight, the fourth movement is entitled "Scena e canto gitano" (Scene and gypsy song). Here, numerous cadenza-like solo passages give evidence of the fact that the work was originally conceived as a vehicle for violin with orchestra. Finally, "Fandango Asturianas" brings the piece to a close, but not without a last hearing of the Alborada. The arrangement is by William Kanengiser.

Neil Stannard

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Executive Producer: *Amelia S. Haygood*  
Recording Producers:  
*Stephen Basili, Carol Rosenberger*  
Recording Engineer: *John Eargle*

Recorded: *December 1-3; 9, 1992 at the First  
Congregational Church of Los Angeles.*



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Digital Recording & Editing: *Sony*  
Monitor Loudspeakers: *JBL 4313*  
Console: *Soundcraft Delta 200*  
Microphones: *Sanken CU41; Sennheiser MKH20*

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



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