



SMARO
GREGORIADOU

Reinventing guitar II



SCARLATTI
BACH
HANDEL

Double-course pedal guitars
Single-stringed scalloped pedal guitar



SMARO GREGORIADOU

Reinventing Guitar II

KERTSOPOULOS AESTHETICS

- Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)**
- 01-05 *5 Harpsichord Sonatas* 21:23
Sonatas K322/L483 in A major, K1/L366 in D minor,
K481/L187 in F minor, K198/L22 in E minor*,
K491/L164 in D major*
- Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)**
- 06-08 *Preludio, Fuga e Allegro in E-flat major, BWV 998* 10:53
09-12 *Toccatà in E minor, BWV 914* 8:22
- George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)**
- 13 *Air and Variations "The Harmonious Blacksmith"* 5:13
*(from Suite No. 5 in E major, HWV 430)**
- 14 *Chaconne No. 2 in G major, HWV 435* 7:47
- 15 **Reference track** 7:12
*Analytical presentation of all tunings; samples of program
pieces performed on the standard classical guitar
in nylon trebles and ordinary tuning*
- TOTAL PLAYING TIME** 61:09

All works arr. Gregoriadou for double-course pedal guitar
or single-stringed scalloped pedal guitar (soprano/alto versions)

*: recording premieres



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SMARO GREGORIADOU

Reinventing guitar II

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)

5 Sonatas for harpsichord	21:23
01 Sonata K322/L483 in A major (A)	3:12
02 Sonata K1/L366 in D minor (A)	2:59
03 Sonata K481/L187 in F minor (A)	6:23
04 Sonata K198/L22 in E minor (A) *	3:32
05 Sonata K491/L164 in D major (B) *	5:17

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Preludio, Fuga e Allegro in E-flat major, BWV 998 (B)	10:53
06 Preludio	2:47
07 Fuga	4:51
08 Allegro	3:15

Toccata in E minor, BWV 914 (A)

09 (Introduction)	0:39
10 Un poco Allegro	1:58
11 Adagio	2:30
12 Fuga (Allegro)	3:15

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

13 Air and Variations "The Harmonious Blacksmith" <i>(from Suite No. 5 in E major, HWV 430) (B) *</i>	5:13
14 Chaconne No. 2 in G major, HWV 435 (B)	7:47

15 Reference track **7:12**

Analytical presentation of all tunings; samples of program pieces performed on the standard classical guitar in nylon trebles and ordinary tuning

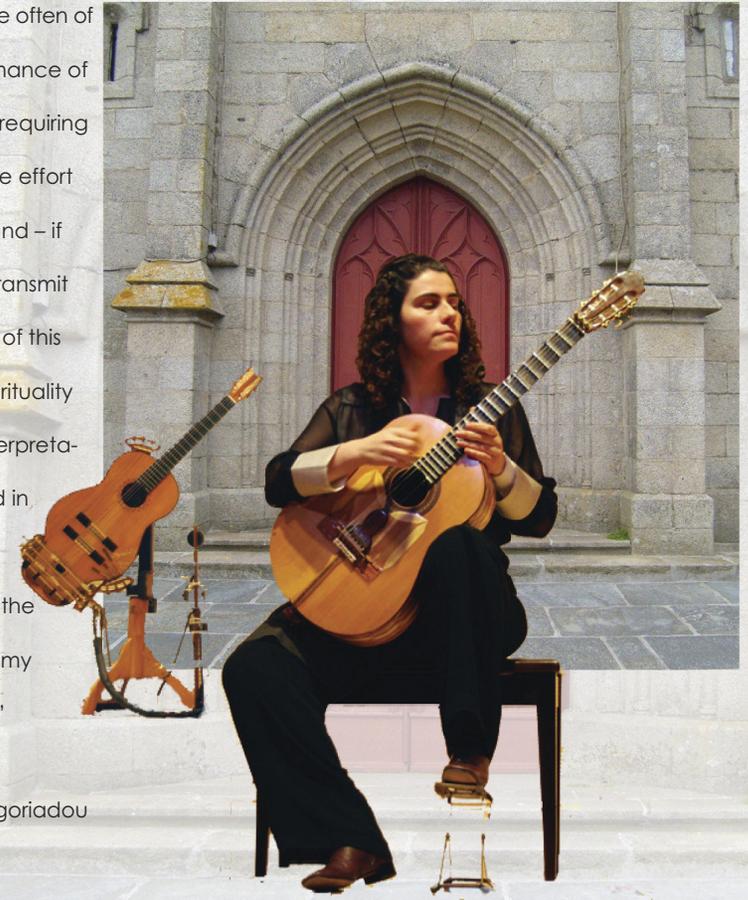
TOTAL PLAYING TIME **61:09**

All works arr. Gregoriadou for double-course pedal guitar (A) or single-stringed scalloped pedal guitar (B) (soprano/alto versions)

*: recording premieres

"Bach spoke often of the performance of a piece as requiring gravitas. The effort to reveal, and – if possible – transmit the energy of this inherent spirituality through interpretations rooted in the mother sonorities is the essence of my approach."

Smaro Gregoriadou



NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

“REINVENTING GUITAR!” – HOW AND WHY

“Speak a new language, so that the world will be a new world” — J. Rumi
A few years ago I introduced the title “Reinventing guitar” as a summation of my artistic and pedagogical activities in the field of classical guitar. This is also the title of my first CD for Delos (DE 3398). Now, on the occasion of this new CD, the term and process return to reveal novel guitar sonorities for traditional repertoire.

“Reinventing guitar” is not merely an attempt for historically informed interpretations. It expresses the dynamic process of assimilation by which a contemporary artist re-creates in his own terms the masterpieces of the past¹. Thus the objective is not as simplistic as making a modern guitar sound like a harpsichord or a baroque lute. The aim is to discover some vital but long-neglected aspects of guitar’s tradition and historical milieu, and to incorporate them into our current interpretive logic and mentality.

The “Reinventing guitar” process involves two tasks. Firstly, to study *retrospectively* the history, repertory and traditions of the classical guitar, placing facts in their proper background. And once this data is properly assembled and digested, to activate all necessary artistic forces so as to provide realistic, coherent, and yet fresh period interpretations of the classical guitar repertoire, at the same time “alive” and compatible. Bach spoke often of the performance of a piece as requiring *gravitas*. The effort to reveal, and – if possible – transmit the energy of this inherent spirituality through interpretations rooted in the mother sonorities is the essence of my approach.

We cannot sound entirely authentic today, but we can certainly endeavor to follow retrospectively the stages of the guitar’s evolution, allowing all the historical forms and idiomatic sounds of this great instrument to appear before us. And since we realize that this portrait is obscured by countless layers of “over-painting,” like a Minoan fresco, these layers will have to be peeled away, one by one, so that guitar’s true nature and genuine beauty, now indistinct and even distorted, will come forth naturally.

Careful retrospective thought is important because we often tend to see the past exclusively in the light of later development. For example, conditioned as we are to the neutrality of our twelve-tone equal tempered scale, we often tend to consider most historical tunings, like the renaissance mean-tone or the numerous unequal temperaments of the baroque era, as “mistuned,” “awkward,” or even “non functional”! How would we perceive the subtle microtonal shades of any 17th century instrument, if we were to hear it today?

Another example concerns string materials. Today the characteristic mellow timbre of nylon is generally appreciated as the optimum quality of the classical guitar’s sound. Historical string materials like gut or wire are considered harsh, too “immediate,” or excessively brilliant; in other words, irrelevant to the instrument’s “culture of sonority” as we perceive it today. How objective is this viewpoint? The guitar’s firm association, especially with gut, remained a long-standing tradition that was to end only on the eve of the

¹ Many performers developed a similar way of thinking in our recent history of music. In the early 1900s, Wanda Landowska (1879-1959) “reinvented” the harpsichord, this marvelous antique instrument that had been almost completely supplanted by the piano. Her unique Pleyel harpsichord, a hybrid based on her own specifications, was certainly not an authentic reproduction of any keyboard instrument built in the baroque era. But her pioneering interpretations, still exemplary in their insight and technical precision, definitely contributed to the rediscovery of the baroque spirit, the re-evaluation of the baroque repertory, and, above all, the harpsichord’s regained popularity.

Second World War, when Andrés Segovia (1894-1987) tried to respond to the limited availability and high cost of gut with the introduction of the recently invented nylon. Although the dim tone quality of nylon was anything but popular at that time, Segovia managed to establish this material as the new standard. But the sound of the instrument was modified considerably thereafter, and this rather sudden transition gradually constrained the modern player’s aesthetic criteria and taste to a significant degree, despite the indisputable advantages of nylon.

This change in aesthetics was neither fortuitous nor exclusive to the guitar. While in the past musicians used to make their own strings, this age-old custom had already become impractical by the beginning of the 20th century, as musicians started to rely increasingly on the big string companies. “The guitarist must be master of the strings,” wrote Dionisio Aguado (1784-1849) in his *Method*, meaning a painstaking control over all the working parameters of the strings – from the collection and draining of the organic materials to the choice of tensions, diameters, weight, winding methods and timbres. As it is now obviously impossible for this obsolete tradition to be restored, Aguado’s statement sounds outdated. But there are many misunderstandings, prejudices and absolutes that classical guitar players could certainly guard against. For example, many guitarists today erroneously believe that the no-nail technique of Fernando Sor (1778-1839) produced a mellow, nylon-like sound that approaches the *sul tasto* effect of our contemporary guitar; while in reality Sor’s guitar had gut strings that yielded a brilliant and penetrating timbre, so nails were unnecessary, at least to him.

In this album I present my synthetic concept of the Scarlatti sonata, the Bach suite or toccata, and the Handelian variation form, arousing a critical, reflective inquiry into certain performance attitudes that up to now have been considered non-negotiable in the realm of classical guitar. My interpretations cannot fully demonstrate what this music actually was, but they can hopefully help to show what it *could* have been! Hence the several new ways to interpret baroque music on the guitar, and — in addition — the different angles from which I approach the same composer or genre, based on the scientific and technological achievements of *Kertsopoulos Aesthetics*, a platform of original inventions in guitar and string construction.

The “Reinventing guitar” approach obviously does not impose solutions. Instead, it attempts to present a healthy and creative *symbiosis*, a *modus vivendi* faithful to the requirements of scholarship, while remaining responsive to the true needs of artistic performance. At the same time, it cultivates an ethos centered on what seems to be the most imperative necessity in the world of classical guitar today: the modern guitarist’s determination to step outside the established style whenever this may contribute to the evolution of the instrument — or communicate more eloquently the intrinsic healing power of music, both of which are, to my mind, an open, interdependent and challenging process!

KERTSOPOULOS AESTHETICS:

A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS RESOLVING SERIOUS INTERPRETIVE DILEMMAS

There is a substantial dilemma in the performance of early music. On one hand we have musicians who express the necessity for authenticity and original sonorities². On the other hand are the benefits of modern instrument construction: mainly accurate intonation and powerful volume³. So do we use outmoded, awkward or to some degree deficient antique instruments or replicas for the sake of authenticity, or do we enjoy the acoustical advantages of advanced instruments available today that provide historically uninformed performances? Both sides are right, and both have exhibited interpretations with a wide range in quality, from the slight and insignificant to the magnificent and highly artistic. Think of Casals' Six Cello Suites or Segovia's Chaconne by Bach. These legendary interpretations radiate from the first to the last notes, yet the tonal qualities of Segovia's guitar or Casals' cello – as well as the interpretive universe of both maestros – are quite far-removed from the baroque ideals for sound as generally acknowledged nowadays.

In the particular case of the classical guitar, there is a highly debatable area concerning early music interpretation, due to a strong historical paradox inherent in its tradition. Modern classical guitar has passionately embodied in its repertoire music from several major composers who never wrote for guitar and only obliquely affected it. Transcriptions of Dowland, Scarlatti or Bach form a major part of the instrument's literature; and since Tarrega's time, everybody has played, recorded and enjoyed such transcriptions. But at the same time, the instrument has been almost entirely removed from its own rich heritage of forms, constructional philosophy, tuning ranges and playing techniques that flourished in the same historical periods in Europe, but are now obsolete. The contemporary guitar that is used to play transcriptions from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries sounds totally unrelated to the original sonorities of that time.

This historical paradox can be resolved with approaches that seek to achieve a faithful rendering of the sound of the renaissance, baroque and classic periods, while remaining within the advanced instrument building standards of today. *Kertsopoulos Aesthetics*⁴ is just such an approach. It is an internationally acclaimed platform of original inventions in guitar and string construction, from which are drawn all of the instruments as well as the stringing, trebling and tuning options that are used in this recording. Its contribution extends not only to the revival of older performance practices with a remarkable variety of string materials and working tensions for historical tunings, but also to the improvement of the contemporary guitar's sound, for which it proposes new and exciting ideas.

TRANSCRIPTIONS – INSTRUMENTS – TUNINGS

Guitar transcriptions involve an inevitable departure from the means and procedures that were at the old masters' disposal; a departure that I believe is justifiable, as long as the new rendering retains a sufficient historical analogy to the letter and spirit of the original composition⁵. With my transcriptions, I have tried to fulfill two goals: not to upset the musical proportions of the original piece as a whole, while at the same time avoiding the sacrifice of the specific sound advantages of the new medium; even to project them as much

² The argument of authenticity –that in truth has been present since the mid-1800s– is based on a philosophy of investigation into long-neglected techniques of playing, instrument construction, string materials and diameters, ensemble sizes, choice of tempos and a variety of other textual and interpretive issues (tunings, temperament, timbre, etc) that can illuminate often-heard compositions anew by using instruments similar to those in use at the time the music was first composed.

³ According to this argument, the field of instrument construction nowadays is too advanced to be ignored, and additionally all conditions concerned with musical praxis have been so radically changed that the search for authenticity is no more than a utopian notion. This side consciously sacrifices authenticity for the fuller (in terms of volume) and more accurate (in terms of intonation) sonorities of the modern concert instruments.

⁴ www.kertsopoulosaesthetics.blogspot.com

as possible. Hence my meticulous choice of each particular guitar, with which I aim to exhibit the form, idiom and propensities of the music as well as the timbre, frequency range and stringing or trebling patterns of the original instruments: in this album, harpsichord and lute.

In this recording I play two guitar types of Kertsopoulos' construction, each type appearing in soprano and alto versions.

Type A: Double-course guitars (tracks 1-4, 9-12; see pictures on inside front cover). These astonishing instruments have timbres that are particularly well suited to the Renaissance and Baroque repertory, plus an impressive sonority and an extra-wide range. They possess a right-forearm pedal, which alters at will the volume, sustain, sonority and attack of the sound during playing. The courses are tuned in unison, octaves or double octaves. The chanterelle is always single. In **Example 1** are given the two main tunings of each double-course instrument and their variants. (Guitar sounds one octave lower than written. Numbers in circle indicate course numbers; in frames the alternative doublings of the variant tunings).

Type B: Single-stringed guitar (tracks 5, 6-8, 13, 14; see pictures on inside back cover).

This guitar has a distinctively clear and well-articulated sound, and requires an extremely demanding left-hand technique due to its scalloped fret board. Apart from the above-mentioned right-forearm pedal, it possesses a movable back pedal that alters the air cavity while playing. The very unusual function and purpose of the scalloped fingerboard probably deserve an explanation here. In the case of a conventional guitar neck, when the left-hand finger presses a string in any of the frets, it also touches the wood of the neck; it thus transmits its heat to the wood and acts as a dampener for the inactive rear part of the string. This adds warmth, roundness, softness and mellowness to the sound, which are absolutely desirable, particularly for Spanish and romantic music. A scalloped fret, on the contrary, does not permit to the finger to touch the wood, similar to the strings of a harpsichord, which – following the monochord principle – are fastened between only two fixed points, the bridge and nut. This allows them to vibrate freely, without touching any other part of the soundboard – yielding an extra-clear, brilliant, dry and distinct coloration and articulation, which are particularly relevant to the baroque timbre.

I will now attempt to explain more about the instruments' extraordinary sound potential as distilled by my transcribing and interpreting criteria.

i. Double stringing: 'polyphony within polyphony'

The art of stringing an instrument in pairs flourished all over the world as a primary feature of traditional lutherie. Renaissance and baroque lutes, like most plucked instruments of that time, had double strings. Harpsichords could also have multiple choirs of strings

⁵ This was not always the case with some of the idiosyncratic transcriptions of Andrés Segovia –who incidentally used to call harpsichord "a guitar with a cold" much to Landowska's annoyance. His various arbitrary interventions (dynamic indications, addition or exclusion of notes), while maybe effective in terms of the mid 20th century 'guitarism' (and by no means unmusical, given Segovia's vigorous aesthetic standards of playing), often resulted in pulling the musical structure of this beautiful repertory ruthlessly apart.

Double-course instruments: TUNINGS and VARIANTS

The image shows musical notation for double-course instruments. It consists of three systems of two staves each. The first system is labeled 'Double-course instruments: TUNINGS and VARIANTS'. The first staff of each system has six notes, numbered 1 through 6 in circles above them. The second staff of each system is labeled 'or:' and shows alternative doublings for the first two courses, indicated by a box around the first two notes. The first system is for tracks 2 and 3, the second for tracks 9-12, and the third for track 4. The third system also has a box around the first two notes of the second staff, labeled 'or:' and 'Track 1'.

Example 1

tuned to be the same pitch, or to an octave apart. Medieval, renaissance and baroque guitars were made with double and occasionally triple strings, the number of courses increasing progressively from four to five. A six-course instrument finally appeared around 1770 in Spain, known as the ‘Spanish guitar’. During the early 19th century, double-course guitars were increasingly overshadowed by the single-stringed instruments of the builders Pagés, Panormo, and Lacôte. The final standardization of the modern guitar’s form, overall dimensions, string number and string length came in the mid 19th century, with the next generation of luthiers, notably Antonio de Torres.

Double courses, especially when tuned in octaves, open to the interpreter a broad perspective that I like to call ‘polyphony within polyphony’. This possibility illuminates the melodic, harmonic and contrapuntal structure of the music, as well as the crucial interpretive parameters of voice distinction, articulation, phrasing, and ornamentation (Example 2). Old compositional devices, like the *campanella* effect or the *linear polyphony* of Bach, are impressively projected. Among the major achievements of Kertsopoulos Aesthetics is an efficient extension of a guitar’s range both upwards and downwards (de-

pending on the tuning employed, as well as of the octave doublings one is using). This extension is not only quantitative, but also qualitative, since the co-action of the two adjacent strings, in producing a complex double tone, serves to widen the range and harmonic partial content of this tone considerably, while strengthening the phenomenon of sympathetic resonance in the overall sonic spectrum of the instrument. This translates into richer sonority and a greater wealth of tone color.

ii. Range and register expansion: restoring lost areas of the guitar’s sonority

The register and octave span in which a piece is composed are seldom chosen randomly, and this is closely related to the instruments available in every era. For example, the harpsichord’s negligible ability for dynamic differentiation occasionally led Baroque composers to write their melodic lines in an extra high

register in order to make them distinctively audible (engaging or disengaging at will at least two strings for each key), or in order to enrich the emotional content of their music.⁶ The *Prelude* BWV 997 is such a case. The modern classical guitar levels such subtle differentiations; it shrinks the range of the voices within its own span of practically three octaves, and also produces automatic one-octave-lower transpositions due to its specific range – lying, as it does, between those of the viola and the cello. In this recording the listener may enjoy the nobility and delicacy of the high frequencies, as well as the sobriety and austere inwardness of the middle or lower ones. All these characteristics, especially the long-abandoned high tunings that have been a vital part of guitar’s sound for more than four centuries, can now be revived and explored anew.

iii. Polychromatic exploration: ‘a counterpoint of timbres’

“I dream my painting, and then
I paint my dream” – Vincent van Gogh

⁶ The laws of acoustics determine that the high-sounding registers have much wider harmonic-partial content compared to the low-sounding ones. The wider the span of the harmonic partials, the richer the platform of information and interest for the conception, the reasoning and the comprehension processes of the mind.

The use of many a multi-timbre instrument for interpreting works of the same composer (as in Bach), or of the same genre (as in the Scarlatti Sonata), is a primary stylistic decision in this album. Does this reflect a lack of continuity or structural and aesthetic coherence in performance?

Evidence shows that in the Europe of the 17th and 18th centuries, restless and endless experimentation in forms and sounds was taking place from country to country and among builders of every family of instruments. For example, the typical baroque German harpsichord evolved into a heavier, deeper-sounding, and more solidly built instrument than its Flemish and French counterparts. It is also clear that baroque composers were apparently less concerned with assigning a composition to a single instrument or medium than the average 20th century composer or scholar; they mostly conceived their compositions for any of a variety of instruments. Thus, Bach’s BWV 914 Toccata – like all toccatas of Bach’s time – was interchangeably performable on all three available keyboard instruments: harpsichord, clavichord, or organ. Similarly, the BWV 998 Preludio, Fuga e Allegro was intended for lute, keyboard, or the gut-strung harpsichord known as the *Lautenwerk*. As for baroque keyboard works, we are in most cases uncertain about their composers’ timbre preferences or the instrument-building background of each period. We know, for example, that several harpsichords and fortepianos existed in the royal collection of instruments of Scarlatti’s pupil and patroness, Princess Maria Barbara of Portugal. But very little is known about the building of such instruments in the Mediterranean countries at that time, or which of them Scarlatti preferred to play. In the particular case of the Scarlatti Sonatas, it is exactly their broad imaginary orchestration and tone color diversity that would certainly allow what the listener may experience here as a ‘counterpoint of timbres’. To my mind, we can only imagine the ideal sounds of the baroque. And as Kirkpatrick wrote, “nothing is more fatal than allowing the musical imagination to be restricted by the limits of two or three colors or the limitations of any instrument one is using”⁷.

COMPOSERS and WORKS

Scarlatti, Bach and Handel saw tremendous perspectives in music and expressed their subjectivity to an extent that bordered on the limits of human inventiveness. Whether we attribute their common year of birth (1685) to divine intention, pure coincidence, or a blend of both, and despite their considerable differences, they were to act as a vast combined force – not only for their own period, but timelessly; not merely for the geographical limits of their native or adopted lands, but everywhere; not exclusively for music, but for every art.

The life and work of **Domenico Scarlatti** (1685-1757) are fraught with unanswered questions. For example, it is impossible to isolate the creative spark that suddenly led him, in his maturity, to obsessively explore a single genre: the one-movement Sonata in binary form. Was it the Iberian charm, the death of his father Alessandro in 1725, or perhaps even the invention of the fortepiano? Was it an inner compulsion to break free of his own musical past, marked as it was by his rather insignificant exploration of already well-trodden musical paths? What were his preferences on harpsichord construction and performance? What tunings was he using in 1750? Why did he stop publishing his music after his successful first edition of *Essercizi per gravicembalo*?

Scarlatti tried to speak a new language, compared to everything around or within him. The five Sonatas presented here reflect different aspects of this innovative and markedly individual language; one characterized by his perfect handling of the art of modulation and multifarious rhythmic explorations, as well as a wealth of thematic invention, orchestral devices and instrumental allusions – and, above all, by an intentional abandonment of the stylized courtly

⁷ Ralph Kirkpatrick, Domenico Scarlatti, Princeton University Press, 1983.

Double-course instruments: HARMONIC EXPANSION in EXECUTION

Written:



(a) Notation of a simple A minor chord

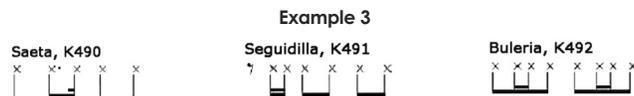
Sounds:



(b) Acoustical realization of the same chord if executed as notated on a double-course guitar tuned in octaves

Example 2

dances of the baroque suite and the French-style influences of his time. The *Sonata in A major*, **K322/L483** was written around 1756 or 1757. It opens with a cheerful, unhurried theme in limpid, two-part writing. The twice-presented expository material follows the development section, which – as was typical of Scarlatti’s structure – appears in the second half of the work. It is interpreted here on a soprano double-course pedal guitar (①=g[#]). *Sonata in D minor*, **K1/L366** belongs to the aforementioned set of thirty sonatas, *Essercizi per gravicembalo* (London, 1738): the only pieces whose publication was supervised by Scarlatti himself⁸. Sonata K1 is a graceful and energetic toccata at a brisk pace, probably dating from the second or third decade of the 18th century. I perform it on an alto double-course pedal guitar (①=d[#]). *Sonata in F minor*, **K481/L187** is an example of Scarlatti’s arresting ability to resourcefully handle the entire tonal palette available at his time, while sometimes even extending it quite unpredictably. This most expressive Sonata has a timeless quality, with Baroque, romantic, and even modern characteristics. It contains the highly unusual brief restatement of the opening theme at the end of the second half. I use an alto double-course pedal guitar (①=d[#]) for this one. *Sonata in E minor*, **K198/L483** is a toccata in two-part writing, with a pedal point in the development and certain chords in the closing cadences. As in Sonata K1, the tonal layout proceeds straightforwardly. The intensive repetition of certain motives infuses the general flow with an electric tension that is finally resolved in the closing passages of the work’s sections – especially the sonorous cadences. This sonata is performed here for the first time on a soprano double-course pedal guitar (①=g[#]). *Sonata in D major*, **K491/L164** together with its previous K490 and subsequent K492 forms a brilliant triptych, distinguished by a consistent use of Spanish popular dance rhythms: the saeta in K490, the seguidilla in K491, and the buleria in K492 (**Example 3**). The Sonata K491 springs from a tiny, boldly ornamented three-note cell, and proceeds to the main thematic material, which – unusual for Scarlatti – is separated from the secondary theme by a significant pause. The style, writing, inventiveness and disciplined expressiveness of this Sonata reflect both the classical tradition and Spanish folk-style. I personally rank it among the finest of all the Sonatas. I play it here – again for the first time – on a soprano six-stringed pedal guitar with scalloped frets & movable back (①=g[#]).



One must view **Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750) and **Georg Frideric Handel** (1685-1759) through different sets of eyes, even though their music definitely offers universal experience to people from all walks of life and all shades of faith! The primary differences between them are found in their music’s respective content, purpose, and (consequently) form. Bach’s subject, the mystery of Christianity, was beyond question and measure; for Handel, the subject is man and his world full of questions demanding answers. For Bach, the artistic conception of the Passion of Christ is not a visible or historical one; it is contemplative and invisible because the drama is inward. In Handel’s oratorios, it is not so much the religious significance of the Old Testament that is glorified, rather human ideals: warm, plausible, and comprehensible. Euphony is the ‘mysticism’ of Handel, whereas Bach worked with more severe musical principles and a much stricter architecture in order to express his complex multi-linear thought, even when the medium was reduced to a single unaccompanied string instrument.

⁸ The musicologist and harpsichordist Ralph Kirkpatrick, whose 1950s critical edition of the 555 Sonatas is generally considered the most authoritative, put *Essercizi* at the beginning of his catalogue, based on the chronological sequence of the sources. Nevertheless, it is likely that Scarlatti had chosen those thirty pieces amongst many other compositions whose existence was to be revealed only at a later date.

Several pieces among Bach’s enormous output have been only rarely performed. The *Toccatina in E minor*, **BWV 914**, "per strumento a tastiera" (for keyboard instrument) is such a case. It was written as early as around 1710 and — although it reflects different compositional criteria than those of his late masterpieces — it is still an exceptional work. It alternates, most substantially, between the two keystones of the toccata genre: formal counterpoint with a varying number of imitative or fugal sections, and the freer, almost improvisational material that reflects independence and expressive spontaneity. This one is maybe the simplest of all Bach’s seven toccatas (BWV 910-916). It starts with a brief contemplative introduction built upon a recurring quasi-pedal ostinato bass. Then follows a strict, highly chromatic and tonally restless fugato movement, marked *un poco allegro*. The following fantasia-like *adagio* bears the title 'Praeludium' in one of the manuscripts, which has led many scholars to believe that this section plus the closing fugue comprised the original work. The piece ends with a majestic fugue: a paraphrase of a work attributed in one source to Benedetto Marcello (Naples Biblioteca del Conservatorio Ms 5327). I play the piece here on an alto double-course pedal guitar (①=d[#]). *Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E-flat major*, **BWV 998** was apparently written sometime between 1740-45. This glorious triptych has survived in various manuscripts, either in lute or keyboard tablatures. Although long thought to have been an unfinished suite, Bach – in all likelihood – intentionally sought to symbolize the number three. We have three movements, the first and last of which are written in triple meter (12/8 for the Prelude, 3/8 for the Allegro). The fugue is in three voices and arranged in three parts. The key signature has three flats, a feature often evoking the Holy Trinity, or the Birth, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ, or relevant subjects of the Lutheran catechism. The triple symbolism, as further seen in the triptych of “thesis, antithesis and synthesis” (or “exposition, conflict and resolution” of ancient Greek drama), might hint at the latent laws of human nature — an allusion that Bach was probably well aware of. This is apparently reflected in the title page inscription to Bach’s *Clavier-Übung II*, (which contains a keyboard version of BWV 998), "Composed with the intention of restoring the spirit..." The Prelude, as if loaned from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, has a descending arpeggio pattern that flows toward several tonal destinations, until it reaches a significant fermata over a third-inversion seventh chord just prior to the coda. The fugue is developed from the simplest of subjects — all in quarter notes — standing, like Dorian columns, as a foundation of forceful counterpoint from which flourish the vivid melodic fluctuations of the exposition and succeeding episodes. The Allegro is an up-tempo dance in binary form, at a pace that suggests triumphant redemption. The piece is performed on an alto six-stringed pedal guitar with scalloped frets & movable back: the only instrument in this album to employ standard classical guitar tuning (①=e’).

Of all of Handel’s works, it is in most of his solo harpsichord pieces that we may get a glimpse of his creative youth. But in others, we meet him in his full maturity, as the master to whom Beethoven would declare: “To him I bend the knee!” Among this great music’s immense interpretive challenges are a distinct undercurrent of haughtiness and pride, eloquent sculpting of the “Umlinie,” élan, and — above all — euphony. Handel — particularly in his explorations of the baroque variation form — often intensified the inner potential of a basic melodic idea by means of progressively denser rhythmic variation of its thematic core, woven into increasingly demanding writing, both musically and technically. The joyful *Air and Variations* is the last piece of the *Suite No. 5 in E major*, **HWV 430** that belongs to the first authorized publication of Handel’s harpsichord music (London, 1720). This collection consists of eight suites, which have been universally recognized as the summit of his keyboard output. Their success was phenomenal; they were the most popular compositions of their sort in all of Europe. Air

and Variations became famous under the title “The Harmonious Blacksmith,” although the likely roots of the piece are found in the English folk song, “Four Days Drunk.” The piece belongs to the first type of the baroque variation form, which was built upon a simple and recognizable melody in two sections. Four variations follow, forming two rhythmic pairs, respectively in semiquavers and triplets – leading to the fifth variation, a sparkling finale. Here, the piece is recorded for the first time on a soprano single-stringed pedal guitar with scalloped frets & movable back (Ⓢ=a’). In 1733, a second volume of harpsichord music appeared in London, this time without Handel’s consent. It contained nine works, the best known of which was not actually a typical multi-movement suite, but the *Chaconne No. 2 in G major, HWV 435*. This belongs to the second type of the baroque variation form that was constructed upon an unchanging bass theme, as in a passacaglia. It has a symmetrical theme consisting of a passage of eight bars in two groups (g-f#-e-d, B-c-d-G), governed by the characteristic pulse of the Chaconne. Above this bass line, Handel fashions twenty-one variations in the French

manner: major (variations one to eight), minor (variations nine to sixteen), and major (last five variations). The piece is performed on a soprano single-stringed pedal guitar with scalloped frets & movable back (Ⓢ=a’).

I decided to include in this album a **reference track** with an analytical presentation of all the tunings of the featured guitars, as well as samples of my CD program performed on the standard classical guitar with nylon trebles and ordinary tuning. This will hopefully be useful for listeners who might be interested in deepening their understanding of the similarities and significant differences between the standard classical guitar known today and the pioneering achievements of Kertsopoulos Aesthetics in the field of guitar and string construction that have inspired and continue to support my “Reinventing guitar” approach.

Smaro Gregoriadou

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

SMARO GREGORIADOU

Greek guitar soloist and composer Smaro Gregoriadou attempts a redefinition of the classical guitar’s sound and technique through the “Reinventing guitar!” project that she introduced in 2009, based on Kertsopoulos Aesthetics platform of inventions. Her innovative artistic and pedagogical approach has generated enthusiastic response worldwide.

Following several years’ research on the essence of the musical phenomenon in composition and solo guitar interpretation, Smaro Gregoriadou has studied with many distinguished and inspiring specialists of our time, including pianist-conductor George Hadjinikos, guitarists George Kertsopoulos, Jesus Castro-Balbi, Paul Galbraith and Roberto Aussel; also composers George Sioras, Theodore Antoniou and Dinos Konstandinidis. She has been awarded a Senior Exhibitioner Scholarship to continue her postgraduate classical guitar studies with Carlos Bonnel at the Royal College of Music, London. She won numerous international music awards both for composition and solo guitar interpretation, which have enabled her to present her work in Europe,

Canada and the USA – and to appear as soloist with major Greek and other orchestras abroad, as well as chamber music groups. Her compositions have been premiered by ALEA III (Boston), Ensemble Octandre (Bologna), Helsinki Chamber Ensemble, and commissioned by several artistic institutions including Biennale Rome and the Athens Byzantine and Christian Museum. Today she devotes her time mainly to solo guitar performance, music composition and teaching – as well as conducting classical guitar workshops and multi-disciplinary artistic projects in Greece and abroad. She is a founding member of Choriavmos Theatre Company, a creative platform for research into and presentation of the ancient Greek drama’s musical form, essence and identity. She is member of the Greek ISCM (Greek Composers Union). Her first CD, Smaro Gregoriadou: reinventing guitar! (DE 3398) was released in 2009 by Delos, and has been highly acclaimed. Guitar International Magazine publishes her article series “Issues on Classical Guitar Interpretation.” Her composition “Balkan Dances for solo guitar” was published in 2011 by Brandon Music Ltd.

www.smarogregoriadou.com

GUITARS

Type A
DOUBLE-COURSE pedal guitars
soprano & alto
[Tracks 1-4, 9-12]



front



bridge detail



head



rosette



Type B
SINGLE-STRINGED pedal guitar
soprano & alto
[Tracks 5-8, 13, 14]



front

scalloped frets



side detail

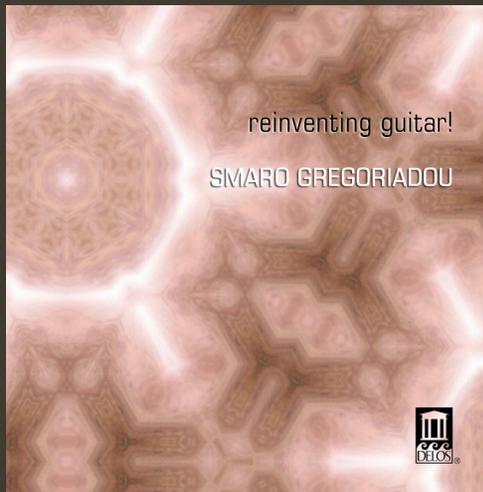
back



Movable
back-pedal



ALSO AVAILABLE ON DELOS



Reinventing Guitar! • DE 3398

Smaro Gregoriadou's first Delos recording began her fascinating foray into the history and evolution of the classical guitar that continues with the current album. This is must-have material for those who wish to follow the artist's ongoing investigation (and practical application) of factors like instrumental design/construction, string materials/configurations, and tuning schemes — and how they affect performance techniques, interpretive possibilities and sonic qualities.

REVIEWS

“The sound is fascinating, the playing is exemplary...the sounds of the three guitars grip the listener throughout. A guitar recital I would not have liked to have missed...” Classical guitar, UK

“A world-class guitarist and musician...” Classical Music Sentinel, Canada

“A guitar edition that changes the flow of the history of the guitar ...the recording masterwork of the decade”. Jazz & Jazz, Greece

“A glimpse into the future acoustic possibilities of the guitar...” Contrapuntist, USA

“Performances much finer than competent, an excellent grasp of the works' architecture”. AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE, USA

“An authentic phantasmagoria of timbre, an uninterrupted musical flow, dense, smooth and vital”. MUSICA, Italy

“A fascinating CD for any classical music enthusiasts, a definite must-have for any serious classical guitar fans”. CLASSICAL MUSIC SENTINEL, Canada

“Heartily recommended for its exciting approach to Bach, Scarlatti and modern music”. FANFARE, USA

“The essence of the word 'reinventing', many virtues that exhibit the sound possibilities of the guitar at their very best”. DIFONO, Greece

“An ambitious album title, well justified”. CLASSICAL MUSIC MAGAZINE, UK

GUITAR INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE INTERVIEW

SMARO GREGORIADOU INTERVIEWED BY GUITAR INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE - EXTRACTS¹ By: **Dr Matthew Warnock**¹

*At first glance, many people might be taken aback by the title of Smaro Gregoriadou's latest album *Reinventing guitar!* [DELOS DE 3398]. From the outset it seems like a bold statement, made by a young player who's looking to make a splash in the modern classical world, but once one puts the record on, delving into Smaro's music and artistic intention, the meaning behind the provocative title becomes clear. While most people would shy away from learning new instruments, even though they fit into the guitar family, before recording an album, Gregoriadou rises to the occasion and produces a record full of enjoyable performances, shedding light onto her work as an arranger and soloist as well as the new instruments that she's playing. All of the pieces are performed on instruments built by the modern luthier Yorgos Kertsopoulos, guitars that are designed to not only evoke new sounds from the guitar, but to greatly expand the range and harmonic possibilities of the instrument. [...]*

Guitar International recently sat down with Smaro Gregoriadou to talk about her latest album, the instruments she's playing on the record and get her thoughts on the modern, classical guitar scene.

Matthew Warnock: The title of your album is pretty provocative. Why did you choose to name your latest album *Reinventing Guitar*?

Smaro Gregoriadou: Well, more than an album title, the name summarizes my overall interpretive perspective, which is to project on an international scale the need for a re-definition of the classical guitar's sound and technique. This is necessary in order to bridge the enormous distance that guitar retains from performance practices of earlier periods and achieve historically coherent, convincing interpretations of Renaissance and Baroque repertory, original or transcribed. [...] Our modern classical guitar sounds radically different from all early plucked instruments that had double, and occasionally triple, courses of gut or metal strings, a wide range of tunings, and a remarkable diversity in tone-color. And since early music transcriptions make up a major part of today's guitar repertoire, it's necessary for contemporary guitarists to be able to retrieve the aesthetic experience of all these different historical forms. This is the essence of the word "reinventing" that constitutes the core of my effort. Now, there is an internationally acclaimed platform of original inventions that stands as a basis of my work. It is called Kertsopoulos Aesthetics, named after Yorgos Kertsopoulos, a guitarist, luthier, string maker and researcher. It involves

a series of pioneering achievements aiming to connect the contemporary guitarist with obsolete forms and stringing traditions for the guitar, and also to expand the instrument's sound limits. [...] All these are presented for the first time on record on *Reinventing guitar*. This is maybe an ambitious name, even provocative as you say, but well justified, I believe.

The album features arrangements of some classic works by Bach and Scarlatti. Why did you pick these pieces to record and what inspired you to arrange them rather than playing a standard edition of these pieces?

What I aimed for was to present these renowned pieces in a fresh yet well substantiated way. So my first priority was to respect the sound identity of the original instruments, lute and harpsichord. The lute in the time of Dowland or Weiss was a double-course instrument; for every note heard the player played two strings, which were tuned either unison or in octaves. This fact drastically widened the resonance and harmonic perspective of the instrument, allowing a rich blending of overtones to come forth. In order to achieve a faithful rendering of the original sound, tonality and frequency range, I arranged and performed this piece on a triple-double-single stringed guitar tuned in octaves. As for Scarlatti's Sonata K380/L23, I chose a high-tuned pedal guitar with scalloped frets and movable back. Its explosive and colorful temperament approaches the dryness and brilliance of the harpsichord. The extraordinary sound potential of these guitars is admittedly far removed from the standard instrument, but much closer to the intentions of the composers.

You also included two original pieces on the album; did you write these works specifically for the recording session or have they been a part of your repertoire for some time now?

I played my "Balkan Dances" for some time, yes. But I included them as an opportunity to exhibit my approach to modern music. Here I use a new string material called metallonylon, introduced by Kertsopoulos in 1994. It takes the place of nylon trebles, combining nylon's tenderness with wire's brilliance, largeness and sustain. [...] Puzzling though it may initially sound even to specialists, the bright, silver timbre provided from gut, metal and now metallonylon strings, has been a part of the guitar's tradition much longer than nylon. Catgut strings, made from dried lamb or bull intestines despite the strange name, were traditionally used as early as the Middle Ages, and were in common use for centuries. When, in 1948, Segovia introduced nylon strings for the first time, he faced significant backlash against its dim tone quality and slow response. Of course his sublime playing and the definite advantages of nylon compared to catgut managed to convince

¹ *The complete interview is available at www.guitarinternational.com*

guitarists to adopt this new material. But eventually any prior acoustic experience was gradually leveled. Nowadays, research is directed towards the development of materials that possess the acoustic characteristics of gut, without its disadvantages, namely its high cost of production, instability in changing climates and poor durability. So, if today's performer can have a viable alternative for their various interpretations, I consider it of crucial importance.

Do you feel that classical guitarists have to be able to write new material, and write new arrangements of older works, in order for them to be successful in today's musical climate?

Definitely, yes. Not only in order to be competitive or for personal improvement. The guitar needs to be instilled with the flavor of great composers that never wrote for the instrument, like Handel, Brahms, Debussy or Bartok. But apart from that, there's a ton of Baroque transcriptions that were ill-served in the 19th or 20th century and deserve to be restored according to our modern ideals with meticulous study of the sources and scores, thorough knowledge and documentation of historical data, perfect acquaintance with performance practices of several instruments and periods, and above all, a fine taste and judgment to combine all of these aspects together. [...] I certainly don't mean that what we should aim for is a dry, academic authenticity, "You can't be both authentic and convincing" as Leonhardt put it. Here, a "reinventing" perspective is again needed, for example, using modern means and approaches that, after having sufficiently assimilated the tradition, can convey wonderfully our present aesthetics.

Besides being a challenge to learn, does playing these unorthodox instruments inspire you to explore new arrangements and textures in your playing?

Well, these instruments never stop to excite my creativity, as of any interpreter with a love for color and alternation, I believe. They provide a new meaning for every single texture in my playing, but above all, they highlight and resolve some crucial matters of technique and interpretation. Only when I practiced on a double-course guitar, I realized why music so beautifully written by Sanz or de Visée for the five-course guitar, by Fuenllana for vihuela, or by Dowland and da Milano for the lute, often sounds incoherent when performed on a modern classical guitar. [...] Furthermore, the exploration of the Kertsopoulos' versatile, all-frets tuning system yields some quite new and interesting results in my playing. By just changing my tuning, I can efficiently play any old or recent piece up to twelve or even fifteen semi-

tones higher, which is around the violin's range. I can also reach the original tonalities, as in most of Bach's pieces. Or I can choose the timbre that I wish to prevail according to the case. So for example, a Scarlatti Sonata can be played in various ways, all of which can faithfully transmit different atmospheres of the baroque era. These possibilities can charge in an unbelievable degree the emotional content of the various interpretations and expand tremendously the performer's horizons. The overall technique and all parts of it, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, ornamentation, hand mechanics etc., are constantly reformed and even pushed to unaccustomed edges. As you see, an open-architecture methodology is promoted here, a culture of creating one's own aesthetic preferences for any given case, no copies, no dogmas. This calls for fingers and maybe spirits of great independence, but it is definitely worth the effort.

Now that you've been working with these instruments for some time, do you ever see yourself going back to playing a standard classical guitar in the future?

Well, I don't feel I ever abandoned this superb instrument. It has advantages that can't be undervalued. But, untouched by any kind of sentimentality, I see that we should definitely face the challenge for novel guitar interpretations, and, as you probably are aware, many specialists and critics share the same skepticism worldwide. Guitarists are searching for flexible alternatives. They either increase their string number up to 8 or 10, or shift to authentic instruments or replicas. Here, I tried to exhibit my own path. I confess that sometimes playing the standard guitar makes me feel exactly as you described, going back. Sometimes going back is necessary; other times it limits your evolution. A balance is again indispensable. [...] I'm totally aware that all these novelties may sound strange, even confusing to most guitarists that have been raised and educated with the sound of the "standard" classical guitar, as you also characterized it. Besides, I'm one of those people. But I invite them to reflect on the fact that our "standard" guitar of today cannot however incorporate all the extraordinary forms and sounds that have been a vital part of the instrument's historical evolution. An evolution that continues with no end to it, luckily!