

Zagreb Guitar Quartet

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Tomislav Vasilj; Krunoslav Pehar; Melita Ivković; Mak Grgić

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Short biography

This experienced ensemble of young musicians - Tomislav Vasilj, Krunoslav Pehar, Melita Ivković, Mak Grgić - has given a multitude of concerts in Croatia and in other countries, from Canada to India, from Russia to South Africa. It has successfully appeared at several prestigious international competitions, premiered 10 dedications by contemporary Croatian composers, and has given a world premiere of Johann Sebastian Bach's *The Art of the Fugue* arranged for four guitars, receiving rave reviews from the well-known magazine *Classical Guitar*: *one of the most extraordinary and vivid experiences including the guitar I can remember.*

For more information about the Zagreb Guitar Quartet, please visit: www.guitar4.com

Full Biography

Zagreb Guitar Quartet is an experienced ensemble of young musicians - Tomislav Vasilj, Krunoslav Pehar, Melita Ivković and Mak Grgić - whose work has greatly contributed to the recognition of the quality of the Croatian guitar scene within the European framework.

The quartet has given a multitude of concerts in Croatia and in other countries, from Canada to India, from Russia to South Africa – including appearances at the Austrian Parliament in Vienna, Pontificio istituto di musica sacra in Rome, Palazzo Pitti in Florence, Kamani Auditorium in New Delhi, Teatro Verdi in Trieste and Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow. It has successfully appeared at several prestigious international competitions, winning first prize at Trofeo Kawai in Tortona, Italy (1996) and at Simone Salmaso in Viareggio, Italy (1998), as well as the Grand Prix at the Ghitaralia Festival Competition in Przemysl, Poland (1998, when Zbigniew Dubiella wrote in *Swiat Gitary: For more than few years I haven't heard something so exciting - after their performance, all that one could do was to get out and scream: Viva guitarra!*). At the Varaždin Baroque Evenings in 1998, the Quartet won the Ivan Lukačić Award for the best performance of the festival.

Two years later at this same festival, the Quartet treated the audience to the world premiere of Bach's The Art of the Fugue arranged for four guitars, receiving rave reviews from Colin Cooper, the editor of the well-known magazine *Classical Guitar: it was one of the most extraordinary and vivid experiences including the guitar I can remember.*

The Quartet has mastered a huge repertoire ranging from Renaissance and Baroque masters to contemporary composers. It is not afraid to make excursions into jazz and other music, and has made brilliant arrangements of traditional compositions from the Croatian coast and mainland. The Zagreb Guitar Quartet members are also distinguished by the special attention they pay to living Croatian composers amongst whom Željko Brkanović, Miroslav Miletić, Anđelko Klobučar, Vlado Sunko, Adalbert Marković, Sanda Majurec, Tomislav Uhlík, Ivo Josipović, Krešimir Seletković and Ivan Josip Skender have all dedicated original works to this artistically inquisitive ensemble.

In 2005 the Zagreb Guitar Quartet has released the CD *Da fuga a milonga*, published by the Zagreb Concert Agency.

The current concert program includes a selection of *contrapuncti* from Bach's *The Art of the Fugue*; three works dedicated to the ensemble by contemporary Croatian composers Miroslav Miletić, Adalbert Marković and Tomislav Uhlik; *Five Gypsy Dances* by Spanish impressionist Joaquín Turina; Jewish songs originating from diverse areas such as Bosnia and Uzbekistan which bring a unique flavor to the Quartet's repertoire; and three pieces from *Canadiana Suite* by Oscar Peterson. All of these compositions (except for the Croatian compositions) were arranged for four guitars by the Quartet's founder, Ante Čagalj.

Ante Čagalj is one of the most renowned European guitar teachers; his work has influenced the careers of several generations of Croatian guitarists, among whom are the members of the Quartet and soloist Robert Belinić who is famous as the first guitarist to win the prestigious Young Concert Artists International Auditions in New York in 2002. Čagalj's students have won more than 20 international and 50 national awards. Čagalj, a guitar composer himself, has transcribed a lot of music originally composed for organ, piano, harpsichord, violin and orchestra for guitar solo and guitar ensembles. All of these have assisted in creating and maintaining the unique image of the Croatian guitar school which is considered among Europe's finest.

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Reviews

For more than few years I haven't heard something so exciting - after their performance, all that one could do was to get out and scream: VIVA GUITARRA!

Świat Gitary, Poland

The performances by the Zagreb Guitar Quartet mesmerized the audiences.

Asian News International, India

World-class level ensemble

Jutarnji list, Zagreb

Guitarists capture music's intelligence

The Citizen, Johannesburg

The rich tone, intense involvement and perfect coordination were brilliant.

The Telegraph, Calcutta

The Zagreb Guitar Quartet performed Bach's The Art of Fugue in its entirety in Zagreb when I happened to be there, and it was one of the most extraordinary and vivid experiences including the guitar I can remember.

Classical Guitar Magazine

Current Program (2007-08)

*arranged by: Ante Čagalj

Georg Friederich Händel
(1685-1759)

Suite E major no. 5
Prelude-Allemande-Courante-Air

Jean-Philippe Rameau
(1683-1764)

Gavotte and Variations

Johann Sebastian Bach*
(1685-1750)

The Art of the Fugue
BWV 1080 (selection)
Contrapunctus 1
Contrapunctus 2
Contrapunctus 3
Contrapunctus 4

Tomislav Uhlík
(1956)

Quartetto concertante
Allegro alla marcia
Larghetto
Allegro

Miroslav Miletić
(1925)

Suite du bourdon
Preludium
Aria
Danza
Dialog
Finale

Adalbert Marković
(1929)

Three Impressions of Osor
Morning
Cypresses at Noon
Mistral

Joaquín Turina*
(1882-1949)

Cinq danses gitanes, op. 84
Fiesta de las calderas
Circulos ritmicos
Invocación
Danza ritmica
Seguiriya

Alberto Ginastera*
(1916-1983)

Tres danzas argentinas
Danza del viejo boyero
Danza de la moza donosa
Danza del gaucho matrero

Jewish Songs*

Hakotsrim (Harvesters)
Hora Ali (Round Dance)
Simhat Tora (Rejoicing of the Torah)
Shir hanoded (Wanderer's Song)

Oscar Peterson*
(1925)

Canadiana suite (selection)
The Laurentide Waltz
Land of the Misty Giants
Place st. Henri