

A Tre are a German guitar trio formed in 1984 There is little original repertoire for this combination of instruments so this recital consists mainly of arrangements of a variety of different types of music.

It was inevitable, I suppose, that they would start with 'Carmen'. Bizet's French-inspired Spanishisms prove surprisingly effective when transferred to guitar. The trio play an arrangement based on the 2nd Carmen Suite (Prelude, Habañera, Entr'acte) with the addition of the Chanson Bohème. All three players are technically adept and deal easily with the tricky arrangement. The results are most enjoyable and guaranteed to bring a smile to the face.

The following two items on the disc also play on the guitar's Spanish links. In this case both composers, Granados and Albeniz, were Spanish and the sound and style of the guitar is more intimately linked to the music.

According to the liner notes, Haydn did write duos and trios for lute although none have survived. Here, the trio play an arrangement of an early string quartet, Opus 2 no. 2. The result is more effective than I would have thought possible and the trio play with style. But the guitar's ability to hold a sustained line is vastly different to that of a bowed instrument. This means that the whole sound-world and harmonic basis of the pieces are affected; really all you can do is forget Haydn and sit back and enjoy some fine musicianship.

The Hungarian composer Ferenc Farkas studied in Rome with Respighi and he has some seventy film scores to his name. His 'Citharoedia Strigoniensis' is an original work for three guitars using musical themes from 18th century Esztergom. It is a pleasant three movement neo-classical work, very effectively written for this rather unusual combination of instruments.

With Astor Piazzolla we are moving away from pure classical music. Though he studied with Nadia Boulanger, Piazzolla created his own synthesis with the traditional Argentinean tango to produce 'Tango Nuevo'. Essential to the sound of Piazzolla's music is the bandoneon, a kind of overgrown accordion. Though, of course, this is missing in A Tre's arrangements, the performances, with their interesting sonic and percussive effects, are fascinating and entertaining.

The final work on the disc is an arrangement of a piece by the Belgian jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt. I am never sure about notated arrangements of jazz pieces, but this little work is charming and effective.

I can highly recommend this disc. It is full of attractive arrangements, entertainingly played.

Robert Hugill Classical Music Web

http://www.musicweb.uk.net/classrev/2004/Apr04/Three_guitars.htm