

**PARTITA** by *Andriy Andrushko*  
Editions Orphée, 6 pages.

This is an advanced four-movement work for solo guitar from a Ukrainian guitarist/composer. Though in a key signature of one sharp throughout the harmonic language is very free, though never totally atonal.

The opening *Prelude* introduces a chromatic motif, which recurs through the whole work, and while slow, it has a somewhat restless quality coming from almost ceaseless quaver movement. The following *Fugue* derives its subject from the opening motif and is if anything even more anguished and fraught than the opener. Even the ensuing *Lullaby* is not exactly very calming, and the normally requisite singing quality is hard to identify.

While everything so far has been rather self consciously contrapuntal the concluding *Toccata* works by a headlong rush of semiquavers punctuated by chords and bursts of percussion.

As quite often of late, I find myself asking for more fingering, as there are several passages where some composer's guidance would be helpful in determining effect. Everything is reasonably playable despite some rather strange fingerboard activities.

The strange and rather obsessive atmosphere in this piece makes it rather hard to like at first, though there is quite a lot going on under the surface and it is the sort of thing that grows on you with further acquaintance. It is bold and honest in what it wants to do, and with the exception of occasional questionable moments has a fine air of the craft of composition.

For bold professional players or the exceptionally curious post-grade 8 amateur only.

Stephen Kenyon

## SUITE BUENOS AIRES

for guitar and string quartet  
by *Máximo Diego Pujol*  
Editions Henry Lemoine.

29 pages score, parts.

Máximo Diego Pujol is known and frequently discussed in these pages to compose in the footsteps of the departed Piazzolla: most of this work falls firmly into that tendency. Whether or not that is a good thing, a worthwhile aim on this composer's part, would be a matter for a different forum.

What can confidently be stated is that much here could be mistaken for genuine Piazzolla, at least in the recognition of those superficial characteristic musical features that define the senior composer's style. Of the four movements, *Pompeya*, *Palermo*, *San Telmo* and *Microcentro*, only the third seems to possess a more personal voice.

Despite the four-part structure, Pujol does not entirely manage to avoid what is to some the very wearily predictable habit of alternating fast with slow sections. The first movement is interrupted by a recurring reflective passage, and the final movement bears a restatement of the slow music of the second movement. Structurally, though, these do not constitute the same degree of predictable alternation often found in Piazzolla whilst also not engendering any particular sonata-form expectations, again, despite the four movement form which seems to be asking for it.

The work is written in a well-proportioned chamber music manner, with the guitar occupying the place of the welcome guest, rather than lofty soloist or integrated permanent member. Very experienced amateur ensembles would find it approachable, but the main market for this sort of work has to be professional. Apart from those incurably allergic to the Piazzolla-led style, any appropriate ensemble should add this to their list of things to try.

Stephen Kenyon

## CICLOS

by *Daniel Akiva/Haim Permont*  
Mel Bay Publications.

56 pages staff notation, with CD.

Subtitled *Music of the Sephardic Jews for Classic Guitar*, this album is a mixture of solos and guitar trios, and also mixes arrangements of old Jewish melodies with original compositions more-or-less in that style. One composition is by Permont, the rest being the work of Akiva who presumably also performs on the accompanying CD, though this is not made clear, and if so also presumably multi-tracked the trios.

The solos are quite practical and take a direct and accessible approach to the material in most cases, some however veering away into a more developed language. Taken in one sitting the sameness of manner soon wears thin, with the

reappearance of similar textures and melodic inflections: like many things this stuff is best taken in smaller amounts. The trios seem rather out of place in practical terms, since they are interspersed between the solos and only presented in score. Both solos and trios require a fairly high level of technical accomplishment.

If it became the norm for books to be accompanied by recordings for purposes of exemplification it might make the reviewer's job easier in many cases, though as here one would sometimes be left with the task of wondering whether the score or the CD was to be considered as the final intention, given the occasional differences between the two.

Half the book is taken up with tablature versions of the pieces but this is kept separate from the proper music and so doesn't add to the page turning. Presentation is adequate if unaesthetic.

I am sure those interested in this area of repertoire will find this edition of interest: I'm not sure that it would be a good way to make a first acquaintance.

Stephen Kenyon

## INFLUENCES 21 INTERMEDIATE ETUDES

by *John Hall*

Editions Orphée, 18 pages.

John Hall is an American guitarist and composer with strong links to jazz, and the stated aim of this set is to combine jazz harmony with classical procedures of voice-leading. They are also supposed to act as a transition from 19th century studies to those of Villa-Lobos, which I find a strange and unsubstantiated notion, but that is not of importance to the music.

Virtually everything here comes across successfully and with a more-or-less immediate appeal, relying largely on the jazz side of the writing to communicate a sense of connection with the pieces. The use of jazz idiom is somewhat evolved and never absolutely 'authentic', and the jazz harmonies are deployed with discretion and good sense rather than simply as a means to an easy effect. The writing is indeed very classical in its concern to tie up the lines, more so in fact than much contemporary writing, and the figures of Sor and to an extent Carcassi, do loom in the background.

Over these 21 pieces the technical standard does vary somewhat between middle and upper grades, and while in a couple of places there are stretches knocking the difficulty appreciably higher, these are to an extent optional from the fingering point of view. There is nothing here as hard as the toughest Sor studies and nothing that resembles Villa-Lobos (hence the concern expressed above), but these pieces do a good job of linking proper technique with informal contemporary sounds.

Each piece has a dedicatee, in many cases connected with its content: these include Brouwer, Fux, Charles Postlewaite (but only needing the normal type of fingering), Bill Evans, Schenker and Joe Pass.

Stephen Kenyon

## TEN SHORT STUDIES IN KALEIDOSCOPE

by *Mark Delpriora*

Editions Orphée, 9 pages.

I have previously only encountered the works of this American composer at the very highest end of the technical spectrum, so it is interesting to see what he does when aiming to keep the difficulty more under control. These studies are indeed mostly quite short, and aimed at discerning, musically inquisitive players of at least a middle-grades proficiency. The kaleidoscope reference in the title is explained as the turn of each page bringing 'something different to entertain, amuse and consider.'

Certainly there is little here that smacks of the populist or superficial: in common with some other composers of 'difficult' music, even in the intermediate levels Delpriora's writing here usually takes some investigation to find out what's going on. Which is all to the good, because then what is found is well worth the trouble, and I'd rather that than immediately accessible music which contains nothing of interest.

By definition these studies are all very different and it would be over-indulgent to dissect each one, but they range from a jazzy *Ballad for Baden* to a bizarrely Webernian *Hommage à Slim Pickens* given as lasting nine seconds. I can't say I've quite got the point of everything here but I'm going to keep looking and I recommend this collection to the adventurous and confident.

Stephen Kenyon

## TROIS GYMNOPÉDIÉS

by *Éric Satie*

Arranged for guitar orchestra

by Jacques Joubert.

Les Productions D'Oz 572.

Score 10 pages plus separate parts. The *Trois Gymnopodiés* by the French composer Éric Satie are perhaps that composer's most well-known and loved works. Originally written for piano they have been transcribed or arranged for almost every conceivable instrument or combination of instruments, indeed I remember doing an arrangement for ondes Martenot and guitar many years ago. The three pieces are marked *Lent et douloureux*, *Lent et triste* and *Lent et grave*.

The present offering is for a guitar orchestra of four parts plus contrebasse. The only way to arrange this music is as a melody with accompaniment and in this edition this has been done most skilfully to ensure a performance that is faithful to the original spirit of the score. The players do however need to be aware that while the parts have no great difficulties they need to be prepared to spend time balancing and voicing the chords otherwise their musical sense can be lost.

John Arran

## FOUR POEMS OF JOHN CLARE

for voice and guitar

by *Stephen Dodgson*

*Trotty Wagtail; The Peasant Poet;*

*Turkeys; The Fox.*

Cadenza Music 05-98-16

Now 79 years old Stephen Dodgson (he will celebrate his 80th birthday in March 2004) has, over many years, written for every conceivable combination of instruments. His substantial guitar portfolio covers works for guitar with small string orchestra, two cycles of songs, solo guitar music, guitar duets, guitar ensemble, and guitar chamber music, guitar combined with flute, viola, harpsichord, cello and string quartet. He does not play the guitar himself but has consulted with players/teachers such as Hector Quine and John Williams, who premiered many of his guitar works, including the first *Partita* and the first *Guitar Concerto*.

The connecting theme in the poems of John Clare is one of observing rural life. In numbers 1 and 3, the poet describes with great affection the antics of two very different types of birds. *The Peasant Poet* is a tender description of a man who has two identities, summed up

in the last line of the poem, 'a peasant in his daily cares, a poet in his joy'. The last song tells the tale of the capture and subsequent escape of a cunning old fox.

The verbose texts give a strong challenge to the singer to communicate the words to the audience. The keys used are C with frequent accidentals, and the songs are pitched for a medium high voice. Both parts contain plenty of movement, over a wide range of notes. Lightly scored chords in the guitar part, allow the guitarist to remain agile. The score contains no fingerings or positions, but falls easily under the fingers, as he uses plenty of repeat sequences and recurring motifs. He also adds plenty of dynamics and musical terms to guide the performers. As the vocal and guitar lines are independently interwoven, both performers would need to have a secure sense of pitch and rhythm. Therefore the standard would be grade 6 and above for both singer and guitarist.

Stephen Dodgson has a deep understanding of the guitar's capabilities and composes in a contemporary style which some may think is an acquired taste. His music is skilfully structured and he tries to coax the wit and humour out of the poems. As a bonus the guitarist can be confident that everything that he writes is playable.

Sandra Hambleton Smith

## 7 CAPRICES DE LA MUSE

for 3 guitars by *Adrien Politi*

Editions Delatour.

27 pages + parts

Argentinian guitarist Politi moved to France in 1986 and it was there, the cover notes say, that he discovered composition and tango.

This collection begins with a cheeky little *prelude* with a bouncy accompaniment and parts one and two chasing each other in a rhythmic tussle that arrives in a *pascaille* that mixes 2/4 and 3/4 over a light jazz chord sequence. A slow *fantasie* is much more demanding, with all parts accelerating in semiquavers in free time. The *interlude* mixes 3/8 and 2/4 in a straightforward and fun piece that leads into a *promenade* in 12/8 time – a curious mix of walk and shuffle feel to it. The *burlesque* is very much under the fingers provided that one doesn't balk at the flats, and the parts interlock securely to make the rhythms very effective. The *postlude*