

El Aleph

PEYROT: Preludes; BARRIOS: Prelude; Las Abejas; Aire de Zamba; Danza Paraguaya 1; PONCE: Variations; HENZE: 3 Tentos; KOSHKIN: Toccata; HICKEY: Tango Grotesco; EESPERE: Tactus Spiritus; RAK: Temptation of the Renaissance; GREGORIADOU: El Aleph

Smaro Gregoriadou, g; Open Source Guitars/ Helmut Oesterreich—Delos 3490—59 minutes

Gregoriadou has released two previous discs, both titled *Reinventing Guitar*. I reviewed both warmly (N/D 2012 & N/D 2009). She is a thorough virtuoso, expressive and inventive. The solo part of her program here combines modernist pieces (Fernande Peyrot and Hans Werner Henze) with more traditional material (Barrios and Ponce), and she is comfortable with each voice. Her Ponce Variations is even more inventive than Judicael Perroy's (reviewed in this issue in the composer section), though she only plays the 1928 version.

Her own piece is fascinating—almost a theatre piece for narration (in the first movement) and Open Source Guitars, the 10-member guitar ensemble for the National University for Music in Trossingen, Germany. It has a minimalist influence, with a wide range of sounds that the various guitars can produce— one of the most interesting such works I've heard.

I'm still at a loss to explain what a "pedal guitar" is. I understand that the pedal can change the shape of the sound box for subtle acoustic reasons, but no more. I also believe she uses guitars of different tunings—one a fourth higher, another a fifth higher—to good effect in works like Barrios's 'Danza Paraguaya 1'. And she uses different tunings, with A as either 428 or 438—not that this can make a difference in works for a solo instrument. Perhaps all this can make a difference in person—or perhaps on really sophisticated (and expensive) playback equipment. But it's just not audible on this recording.

Still, understanding what the differences might be is not really important. Gregoriadou is a first-rate artist who presents a fascinating, varied program, executed at a consistently high level.

KEATON

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