

The Cross-Eyed Pianist

GENERAL

Meet the Artist.....Maria Camahort, guitarist

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Who or what inspired you to take up the guitar, and pursue a career in music?

Listening to a friend of mine, when I was 9 years old (and so was she), playing the cello when she just started... which probably didn't sound exactly wonderful... but to me it did!! And I decided I wanted to start music, and that I wanted to learn the guitar. Since that day that I listened to my friend, I kept saying to my parents during a whole year that I wanted a guitar... and finally I got one for my birthday!

To decide that music would be my career, happened later, at 18 years old. I was starting Bmus in ESMUC (Superior School of Music of Catalonia, in Barcelona), and at the same time Journalism and Public Relations. However my studies at Conservatoire started one week before the University... and during that week I fell in love with the Conservatoire... so on my first day at University (during my first 2 hours of lessons!) I decided to give up Journalism and dedicate myself entirely to Music.

Who or what were the most important influences on your musical life and career?

My main two influences were two teachers I had during my studies in Barcelona. I studied with them for several years, and I think it was from studying with them that I developed my own personality as a musician. Feliu Gasull (<http://www.feliugasull.com>), Spanish composer and guitarist with a very interesting music language that combines the complexities of contemporary themes and variety of Spanish folk idioms. And Emilio Molina (<http://emiliomolina.com/>)

lang=en), a pianist specialized in classical improvisation, who is entirely dedicated to change Music education in Spain with a method that he created and that introduces Improvisation from the very beginning of the music learning process.

What have been the greatest challenges of your career so far?

I think the greatest challenge for me has been focusing my career in chamber music and collaborative projects. As a classical guitarist, the main training you get during your studies is as a soloist, and your career is mainly focused in solo repertoire, with only a few projects on the side that involve more musicians. What I love is to learn from playing with other musicians, and that's what I decided to focus on, before coming to London. And yes, it's been a challenge!

However, this great challenge has allowed me to broaden my musicianship, as it lead me arranging repertoire (in order to be able to play repertoire that I liked with different ensembles), collaborate with other artistic disciplines (as it is the case of theatre), and actually start composing my own little songs / themes.

Which performance/recordings are you most proud of?

That's an easy one... our Quintet debut album "Iberian Colours", about to release!

Which particular works do you think you play best?

The works I arrange / create myself, without doubt. The process of arranging / creating repertoire makes you learn those particular pieces in a deeper level that if you approach a piece directly from a score already written.

How do you make your repertoire choices from season to season?

Usually I work with projects that have already a defined theme, as it is the case of the Quintet (we focus on music by Spanish composers that was influence by traditional songs and dances). If that's the case, that's what decides the repertoire.

Sometimes just because I would like to learn a particular piece...

...And many times I listen to the suggestions from the musicians I work with, and go along with them.

Do you have a favourite concert venue to perform in and why?

I like venues that bring different genres of music, or even different artistic disciplines in the same space, and also that they do so in an informal setting although always with respect towards the events and the artists. I think The Forge venue, in Camden, could be a good example of this. But there are many others in London!

Favourite pieces to perform? Listen to?

There's one that always gives me goosebumps when playing, at a particular point of the piece; it is Asturiana by Manuel de Falla. Also, the works by Feliu Gasull always interest me and they are always challenging, technically and musically, so I love to work on them.

Listen to...I don't know where to start with... Orchestral music always amazes me, so does flamenco... I listen to very different styles of music, I wouldn't be able to decide!! Lately I've been listening to Iberia by Albéniz... and also different works by Walton, the ones written for guitar but also other major works, like the Cello Concerto.

Who are your favourite musicians?

This is going to sound like an easy compliment, but it's actually true... the ones I work with!

What is your most memorable concert experience?

I don't think I can choose one in particular, and the ones I remember well it's not because the concert itself, but because the complexity of the project/the hours spend on making the performance happen! I could say about the UK premiere of Feliu Gasull (it involved 15 musicians and lots of music learning), about the collaboration with Guildhall Drama department on the production of Blood Wedding by Federico García-Lorca, and many of the concerts involving the Quintet. Also a concert I did last January in Paris, at Salle Cortot, together with wonderful flutist Lucy Driver.

Again, these memories are not about the concert itself, but what I've learnt from the projects...

What do you consider to be the most important ideas and concepts to impart to aspiring musicians?

It's about making them develop their own music personality, ... so those ideas and concepts would vary depending on who is the aspiring musician. One thing for sure to say is that during their studies, apart from learning the core repertoire, the required technique, etc... they really need to ask themselves what is that they would like to achieve, and what they would like to work on in the future. Music studies are very demanding, especially from Undergraduate onwards... it could happen that with all that huge amount of hours of practising the repertoire for the auditions and exams, there is no much time left to question yourself what you really would like to focus your music career on.

What are you working on at the moment?

Various things: Obviously working on the quintet project! Preparing our Cd release in June and our forthcoming performances in July. I'm at the moment arranging a piece from flamenco genre this time, which will be our new one to add on repertoire for the concerts we have at Buxton Festival and Arts in Action.

A concert in 18th June with Soprano Laura Ruhi-Vidal at Instituto Cervantes, which will feature works by catalan composers, especially Roberto Gerhard.

And a collaboration with theatre, with the company Little Soldier Productions, on their mad adaptation of the work Don Quixote de la Mancha, by Miguel de Cervantes.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

I think there is no concept of perfect happiness...but if I would have to describe it, I think the trick is about finding things that makes you smile and projects (professionals and personal!) that make you excited about the future. And to try to be always awake, working towards keeping that energy that children have and share so easily...

The Maria Camahort Quintet's album 'Iberian Colours' is launched on 16th June at a concert at Brixton East. Further information and tickets here (<http://us9.campaign-archive1.com/?u=d26b65e26a9fce1d533bded7f&id=187108ac9d>)

Maria Camahort is a guitarist, ensemble leader, composer and teacher. Graduating with a distinction in MMus Performance from the Guildhall School of Music, and awarded with the Guildhall Artist Fellowship 2010-12, her career has broadened vastly during the last five years. Her exceptional knowledge of her instrument and her devotion towards chamber music and collaborative projects have given her the opportunity to perform in a great variety of genres, settings and contexts.

Maria has performed in several festivals such as Barcelona Guitar Festival, City of London Festival, International Conservatoire Week Festival, Bath Guitar Festival, London Guitar Festival, Kings Place Festival, Edinburgh Guitar & Music Festival, etc. She has performed in venues of many cities, such as Barcelona, Madrid, London, Paris, St Petesburg, Warsaw, Cracow, Sevilla, Valencia, Oxford, Edinburgh, Brighton, Orléans, etc. In London, she has performed at Bolivar Hall, St Luke's, St James's Picadilly, The Forge, Bishopsgate Institute, Barbican Centre Pit Theatre, The Blue Elephant Theatre, Jackson's Lane Theatre, Kings Place, St Martin in the Fields and Southbank Centre among others.

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1. **Alan Coady** says:

[JUNE 12, 2015 AT 12:35 PM](#)

Thanks for the pointers to Feliu Gassul; very interesting music.

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