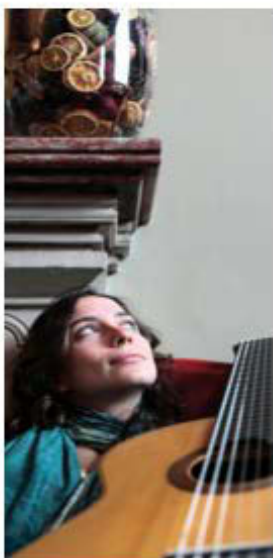


María Camahort: “Making classical music accessible does not mean simplifying it”

🕒 DECEMBER 3, 2012 12:18 AM 💬 0 COMMENTS

María Camahort's guitar arrangements crosses boundaries by ensuring nineteenth century compositions remain in force. She does this through self-discipline and with the four accompanying musicians that make up her quintet.



Courtesy of María Camahort

Olga Briasco

It is easy to move to the sound of her beat, and be inspired by the sound of her guitar. She truly has music in her heart and, as she says, is the “odd one out” in her family for being the only one who plays a musical instrument.

María discovered this interest of hers thanks to a childhood friend who attempted (as well as she could) to play the cello. “At that age it was almost impossible to play it well and it sounded “very bad” she emphasizes with a smile that lights up her face.

Maybe that screeching sound of the cello made her choose to opt for playing the Spanish guitar. She nagged her parents for a whole year for them to buy her a guitar until they eventually did, along with sending her to specific classes. That day would mark the rest of her life for she could no longer be separated from her guitar, or her capo and pick.

In fact, the guitar is the thing that moved her from city to city. The lack of training opportunities in her hometown of Castellón led her to Barcelona. “My family has roots in Catalonia so it was not difficult to move there,” she said whilst confessing that “my mind was more in Barcelona than in Castellón.”

Her eagerness to learn and to be continuously trained made her time in Barcelona, musically speaking, rather short. “I never thought I would move away but one day I just had the need to leave in order to continue to learn,” says Camahort on the reasons that prompted her to come to London.

With her guitar and her suitcase, she arrived in London in September 2008 and enrolled at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD). Her free character and spontaneity meant that she soon made her way onto the London music circuit. “Since school we had played gigs, which made it much easier,” she confirmed.





Courtesy of Maria Camahort

It was April when she faced her first concert in London: "The big difference from the Spanish public is that Londoners come up to you after the show and say: 'That was lovely'. The first time this happened it confused me a little however it now seems normal.

"It doesn't matter to me where I play as long as people enjoy themselves and I feel good about myself and my work." emphasises the guitarist. This leads her to not overestimate the reactions of the audience or the way in which she shows her approval and also helps her to focus on "the responsibility of being comfortable with what I do."

This principle leads her to be very picky with her work and to collaborate in other musical or theatrical projects. This is the case of the Galiu Quartet, The Voice of Strings, Magnetic Tango, Currency Farce, The L5Y or, among others, Maria Camahort & Jamie McCredie.

As she explains, she has a special interest in the field of chamber music which is "not very familiar" to the public.

She arranges or writes classical music to bring it "closer" to the audience. "Making classical music accessible does not mean simplifying it but to change its pitch or register in order to make it known," she quickly clarifies to avoid confusion.

It is easy to spot the competition in the group Maria Camahort Quintet, where it is thanks to "our sound and our musical approach that we play classic songs to the public." This artist usually makes arrangements to nineteenth century composers such as Manuel de Falla, García Lorca, Federico Mompou or Enrique Granados.



Enrique Granados



The group is accompanied by Violeta Garcia (voice and violin), Laura Ruhi (soprano), Sergio Serra (cello) and Pablo Domínguez (percussion). "I really enjoy working with them and they are partly responsible for what I have learned to write" emphasizes the guitarist, who does not hesitate to thank them for their efforts in "making themselves free to rehearse together."

Together they have spent a year sharing music, stories and the taste of Spanish composers with various audiences. "Since I have been in London I prefer Spanish music even more," she jokes.

Her contribution in spreading the work of these composers led her to win the Lukas awards in 2011, which were designed to highlight the efforts of Latinos in London in different areas and sectors.

Maria has no plans as such to leave London in the near future, though surely her passion along with the chords of her guitar will one day lead her career to continue enlightening everyone with Spanish music in many other cities around the world. Only time will tell.

Canciones Populares, F. García-Lorca

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Manuel de Falla