



Since founding KITHARA DUO in 2002, FERNAND VERA AND OLGA AMELKINA-VERA have performed together in Europe and in North and South America. They have been featured guest artists in many established concert venues, in schools, and in music festivals across the United States. Both hold Master and Doctorate degrees in music from the University of North Texas, and are prize-winning performers, composers, scholars, and teachers. For more information, please visit www.kitharaduo.com.

“Fernand Vera and Olga Amelkina-Vera are flawless guitarists possessing musical taste and refinement in the highest degree. Their performances show a beautiful command of the entire range of sounds, dynamics, and effects of which the guitar is capable, together with a deep understanding of the repertoire. I consider them one of the best guitar duos I have heard in terms of perfect ensemble, naturalness of expression, and sheer musicality.”

—Robert Guthrie, *Southern Methodist University*



“The duo impressed with touching musicality, elegant presentation and seamless coordination.”

—Fort Worth Star-Telegram

“[The duo] wove a dreamy spell in Piazzolla’s *Lo Que Vendrá*.”

—Dallas Morning News



Our debut disc presents a selection of compositions for guitar duo by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Olga Amelkina-Vera, as well as an arrangement for guitar duo of Astor Piazzolla's *Lo Que Vendrá*. This all-modern program showcases a wide range of moods and compositional styles, as well as a variety of delicate instrumental colors only possible in guitar duo.

Lo Que Vendrá is an excellent example of Piazzolla's highly personal style that blends Argentinean tango and European art music. Like many of the composer's works, this piece is at times seductive and melancholy, at other times recklessly passionate.

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *Well-Tempered Guitars, Opus 199* is a monumental collection of works for guitar duo. Written in 1962 for the legendary duo of Ida Presti and Alexandre Lagoya, these 24 pairs of preludes and fugues, one in each major and minor key, follow the example of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Out of this rich and varied collection, we have chosen four sets, some relatively unknown, some well established in the guitar duo repertoire. The solemn, forlorn solo opening of *Prelude and Fugue in E-flat minor* leads to a soaring melody, unfolding unhurriedly over cascading accompaniment. The fugue opens with a sober, gloomy chromatic subject, which is stated several times before an imitative episode of interlocking downward arpeggios. *Prelude and Fugue in B-flat major* presents a bright contrast to the preceding work. The carefree dance rhythms of the prelude, marked by the composer as "alla rumba," are followed by the humorous interplay of the fugue's burlesque march, reminiscent of a circus procession of mimes and clowns. *Prelude and Fugue in B minor* is characterized by a noble and serious tone throughout, ranging in mood from anxious and agitated to serene and resigned. Especially beautiful is the fugue, full of elided phrases and continuously-flowing counterpoint. The famous *Prelude and Fugue in E major* is an exquisite example of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's romantic musical language and solid compositional technique. The prelude's ethereal opening is one of the truly magical moments in guitar duo literature. The fugue's cheerful chatter brings welcome variety after the lush romanticism of the prelude.



This disc is the first recording of my works for guitar duo. The earliest of these is *Gustav's Dream*



(2008), written in homage to Gustav Mahler, whose music I fell in love with several years ago. I had the sound of his symphonies and songs in mind when composing this piece. I tried to imagine what a guitar duo by Mahler might have sounded like, had he written one. I thought of the process of falling asleep as represented in the ABA form of the piece. The first A section is the initial pleasant slumber, followed by a vivid and restless dream (B section), finishing with the deep sleep phase (the return of A material).

Beings (2009), a programmatic work, was conceived as a suite in which each movement depicts a mythological creature. The figure of *Minotaur*, the monstrous half-man/half-bull from Greek mythology has long fascinated me. The tragic and grotesque nature of his unfortunate birth, his imprisonment in a labyrinth, and his death at the hand of Theseus were all inspirations behind my choices of textures, scales, harmonies, and special effects used in this first and darkest movement of the suite. *Sylphs*, the second movement, is evocative of the air spirits of Medieval European alchemy. Without weight or physical bodies, myriads of these spirits fill the air around us. I wanted to convey extreme lightness and a feeling of airy spaciousness in this movement. The last movement, *Salamander*, is inspired by a Medieval European belief in a lizard whose blood is so cold that it is able to live in fire. The minimalist, uncoiling patterns in this composition are intended to be reminiscent of the hypnotic effect that watching fire has on many of us.

Prelude and Bagatelle (2009) is a short work meant to be, in accordance with its title, a musical whim, trifle, caprice. It is capricious because of its many fleeting moods and ephemeral turns of harmony. For this composition, I experimented with placing capos on different frets for each guitar; guitar 1 has a capo on the first fret, and guitar 2 on the fourth. This allowed me to create sonorities and colors not normally available in standard open tuning.





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Produced by: Fernand Vera and Olga Amelkina-Vera

Executive Producer: Frank Koonce

Recording Engineer and Digital Editor: Fernand Vera

Mastering Engineer: Dave Shirk, Sonorous Mastering

Program Notes: Olga Amelkina-Vera

Original Album Artwork: Olga Amelkina-Vera

Design, Layout, and Typography: Leanne Koonce

Photographs of Kithara Duo: Bradley Newton

Kithara Duo play guitars by Gregory Byers.

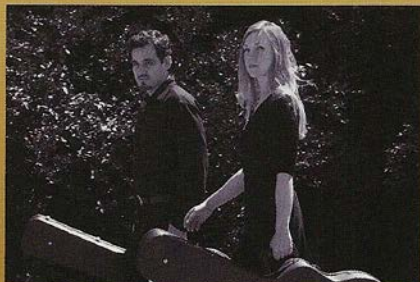
Olga Amelkina-Vera uses Savarez strings.

Fernand Vera uses Augustine strings.

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For further information, please visit www.kitharaduo.com



Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

1. Lo Que Vendrá - 4:14

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968)

Prelude and Fugue in E-flat Minor

2. Prelude - 2:57
3. Fugue - 2:39

Prelude and Fugue in B-flat Major

4. Prelude - 2:19
5. Fugue - 2:10

Olga Amelkina-Vera (b. 1976)

6. Gustav's Dream (2008) - 5:05

"Beings" Suite (2009)

7. Minotaur - 3:39
8. Sylphs - 3:33
9. Salamander - 3:46

Prelude and Bagatelle (2009)

10. Prelude - 1:48
11. Bagatelle - 2:18

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco

Prelude and Fugue in B Minor

12. Prelude - 3:07
13. Fugue - 2:48

Prelude and Fugue in E Major

14. Prelude - 3:08
15. Fugue - 2:14

KITHARA
DUO
BEINGS



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