

CALLUM HENSHAW



FOREST OF DREAMS

Agustín BARRIOS MANGORÉ (1855-1944)			
1. Un Sueño en la Floresta	7:48		
Phillip HOUGHTON (1954-2017)			
Stélé	13:39		
2. I. Stélé (4:28)			
3. II. Dervish (2:08)			
4. III. Bronze Apollo (4:44)			
5. IV. Web (2:20)			
Miguel LLOBET (1878-1938)			
Four Catalan Folk Songs	9:48		
6. Canço del Lladre (2:06)			
7. El Mestre (4:06)			
8. L'Hereu Riera (1:28)			
9. El Noi de la Mare (2:08)			
Graeme KOEHNE (b. 1956)			
10. A Closed World of Fine Feelings	6:33		
Leo BROUWER (b. 1939)			
Sonata del Decamerón Negro	20:38		
11. Guijes y Gnomos (5:06)			
12. Treno por Oyá (5:47)			
13. Burlesca del Aire (4:04)			
14. La Risa de los Griots (5:43)			
Niel GOW (1727-1807)			
15. Niel Gow's Lament	2:57		
Total Duration	61:21		
		<p><i>Forest of Dreams</i> represents the culmination of two years' consistent, dedicated study and performance (not to mention the 20-something years prior!). When pondering what connects the music, what draws the creative thread between the pieces' disparate musical spheres, the ideas of <i>story telling</i>, <i>lament</i>, and <i>mythology</i> emerge. Each composition conjures scenes, at times delicate, at times forceful, yet recurrently exquisite, that play upon these motifs.</p> <p>Perhaps most majestic is the opening work by Paraguayan guitarist-composer, Agustín Barrios Mangoré. World War I interfered with his progress to the international concert stage, forcing him to remain in South America rather than travelling Europe. Having missed this opportunity, both he and his music fell into obscurity, and were almost forgotten. Luckily, the dedication of Barrios scholar Richard Stover and performer John Williams resurrected Barrios'</p>	<p>work nearly half a century later. This work, whose title translates to "a dream in the forest", takes us on a beautifully flowing and ethereal journey.</p> <p>Barrios' sweeping romanticism contrasts starkly with Australian composer Phillip Houghton's synesthetic, impressionistic imagination. <i>Stélé</i> is inspired by Greek landscape, art, and mythology. Houghton wrote that, in particular, the "stark blue of the Mediterranean, warm breezes, island mists and the colour and scent of the olive tree" are infused into the work. The eponymous first movement, <i>Stélé</i>, draws its expressive force from a monument depicting a lost sailor, seated alone on a cliff, his head buried in his hands. Of the word <i>Stélé</i>, Houghton wrote that it "describes a headstone or monument in memoriam of sailors and travellers lost at sea ... they were beacons for lost souls." In contrast, the ecstatic dance of <i>Dervish</i> is inspired by the motion of whirling Dervishes and a statue of a mad, galloping horse.</p>

Bronze Apollo (awakened by the bronze figure *Piraeus Apollo*) takes the listener on a meditative journey through slowly changing waves of arpeggiated chords. The final movement, *Web*, compresses, weaves and augments elements of the previous three movements to close the solo.

The stories told in the Four Catalan Folk Songs bring us back to more familiar territory, with graceful, humorous and loving themes paired with simple melodies. Originally, each of these short songs was a simple vocal line with words. Between 1899 and 1920, Catalonian guitarist-composer Miguel Llobet took these modest melodies and turned each into a miniature masterclass in the sonic variety and capability of the classical guitar. In *Canço del Lladre* (Song of the Bandit) the narrator sings their life story from childhood to their present predicament in prison, awaiting their fate on the gallows. *El Noi de la Mare* (The Mother's Baby Boy) is a soft lullaby and traditional Catalonian

Christmas song. The joyous *L'Hereu Riera*, named after the son of a rich family in rural Catalonia, tells of his ecstatic dance at the waking of his lover from grave illness. There are many variations on this legend, including some where the fate for the lover is far from fortunate. The last and most intricate song in this bracket, *El Mestre*, tells of a love letter from a student to their master. Despite its taboo subject, the song's exceptionally beautiful melody ensured that it was very popular on the Catalonian streets.

At the centre of the album is a particularly emotional work. Commissioned by Tim Kain, Australian composer Graeme Koehne's slow, entrancing elegy was composed in poignant memory of a dear friend. It is imbued with the tinges of sorrow, longing and positivity that come when remembering those who have touched our lives, but whom we have lost. The more lively middle section offers celebration, with a vibrancy that is quietly subdued by the outer passages. Although it

may have a solemn provenance, the overarching sentiment is one of affectionate hopefulness, in honour of a life well lived.

Written in 2012 by Cuban composer Leo Brouwer, the *Sonata del Decamerón Negro*, is a highly evocative *tour de force* that plunges the listener into the world of African and Cuban-Caribbean mythology and story-telling. *Güijes y Gnomos* is a jocular and contrast-filled opening, which interlocks the characters of the *Güije*, a bulging eyed, tangle-haired yet kindly elf, and the gnome. The second movement, *Treno por Oyá* is a yearning lament for the spirit of winds, lightening, violent storms, death and rebirth. In it, an insistent *lento* habanera rhythm is abruptly interrupted by a tempestuous *vivace*. Yet, unperturbed, the habanera revives and breathes new intensity in the closing moments of the movement. *Burlesca del Aire* captures the Spirit of Air in a *scherzo*, filled with wild rhythm and flourish. Closing the work, *La*

Risa de los Griots, captures themes, motifs and sentiments from the rest of the work and retells them through the voice of the *Griot*, an African story-teller. The *Griot* often tells origin stories accompanied by the *Kora*, a type of lute-harp, the sonic traces of which emerge in the music.

The final work of the album, *Niel Gow's Lament for the Death of His Second Wife*, is a simple yet heart-achingly sorrowful eighteenth-century dirge. The melody was written for Margaret Urquhart of Perth, to whom Gow was happily married for thirty years.

Callum Henshaw,
Canberra, June 2018

Canberra-born classical guitarist Callum Henshaw is considered one of Australia's leading young players. He has performed around the world as an artist in international music festivals, including the Tirana International Guitar Festival, the Saigon International Guitar Festival, the Melbourne International Guitar Festival and the Canberra International Music Festival. He has had success in major national and international competitions, including First Prize at the 2012 Cordoba International Guitar Competition; the 2014 Tirana International Guitar Competition; and the 2015 Friends of the Australian National University School of Music Chamber Music Competition (with Andrew Blanch); Best Performance of an Australian Work at the 2013 Melbourne Guitar Competition; and Third Prize at the 2014 Adelaide International Guitar Competition. He also won the First Prize and the People's Choice Prize at the 2016 open instrumental Whitworth Roach Classical Music Competition. Most recently, Cal placed first in the 2017 Melbourne International Concert Artist Guitar Competition.

Cal began the guitar at the age of six, studying with Australia's leading teachers, including Minh Le Hoang, and completed his honours degree at the ANU's School of Music under world-renowned guitar performer and teacher, Timothy Kain.

In 2012 Cal released his first commercial recording. In 2016 he released *Echo & Return* to critical acclaim.

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Photograph of Cal
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-In loving memory of Helen Crompton-



