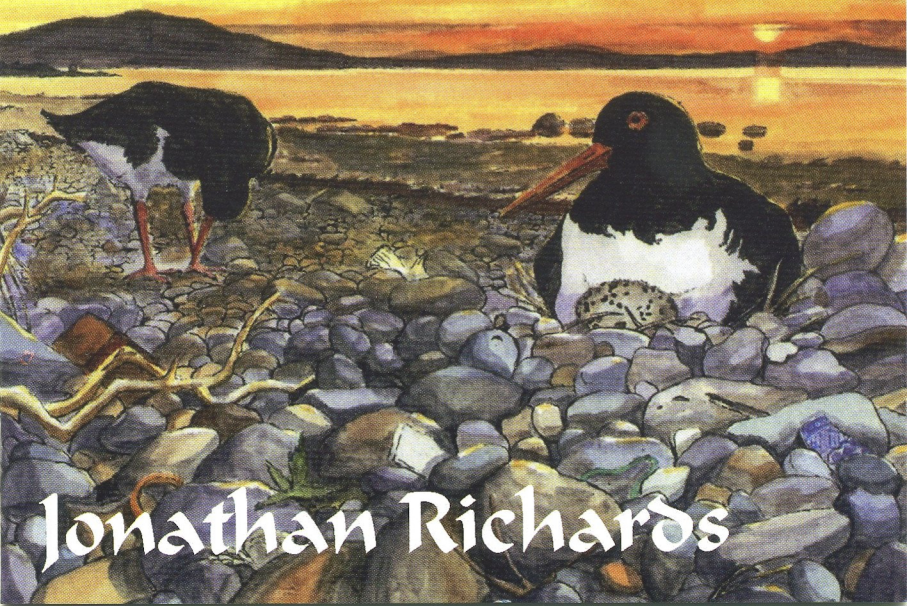


# "forever"



30 romantic guitar miniatures



Jonathan Richards

## “Forever” - 30 Romantic Guitar Miniatures

With its curvaceous shape and seductive tone, the guitar is a most romantic instrument. This programme consists of short and sweet items which, while not all necessarily coming from the Romantic period of musical composition, are unmistakably romantic in spirit. As we just want you to enjoy the music for its sound, we are not writing lengthy technical notes: more information can be found on many of the composers on the Internet.

The music is divided into four sections:

### 1. “Spanish Romance” (tracks 1-10)

Apart from the neglected *Tonada* of Moreno Torroba, these pieces are well known. They all demonstrate the tender, poetic side of Spanish music, rather than the rhythmic, somewhat aggressive aspects. We start with a tune probably known to almost everyone: the anonymous *Romance*. In its simplicity yet heartfelt romanticism, it typifies the genre.

Tracks 2 and 4 come from Torroba’s *Castles of Spain*, though *Romance de Los Pinos* was originally published as a separate work. *La Pastora* is from the same composer’s suite *Aires de la Mancha*.

Enrique Granados is perhaps best known for his *Goyescas* and his music can often be dark and turbulent: not so here in his set of six *Poetic Waltzes* originally written for piano. The Spanish section of our programme ends with another of the world’s best-known pieces, the *Tango* from Isaac Albeniz’s *España*.

### 2. “From Russia with Love” (tracks 11-14)

After Segovia’s guitar version of Scriabin’s haunting *Prelude* there are three Russian originals. Russia is hardly the first country that springs to mind when the word “guitar” is mentioned, but in fact the land of the balalaika also contains a wealth of guitar culture which, until recently, was more for home

consumption than for export. These pieces were given to Jonathan by Vladimir Chernov, an excellent Russian student he used to teach. (Thank you, Vladimir, wherever you are now!). *Dream of the Weeping Willow* (alternatively *The Weeping Willows are Slumbering*) is by a composer named B.B. Baron, about whom we have been able to discover nothing. The piece was written at the end of the nineteenth century (the score carries the remark “Passed by the Censor in St. Petersburg 1<sup>st</sup> April 1896”) and was originally a song setting for voice and piano of a poem by A. Timofeyev. The transcription for guitar is by O. Fridom.

Better known in their homeland than in the West are our next two composers. Yuri Alekseyevitch Smirnov was born in 1935 in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). He studied with P.I. Izakov and Yadviga Kovalevskaya. He completed his musical studies at the Rimsky Korsakov School of Music in the guitar class and then the Leningrad Institute of Culture in the orchestra class. He has written many original pieces and transcriptions for guitar. Smirnov is also well known in theatrical circles – for more than 30 years he worked in the Tovstonogov Bolshoi Drama Theatre in St. Petersburg. His *Mazurka* is one of several pieces popularised through the St. Petersburg magazine *Composer*.

Yevgeny Dimitrievitch Larichev was born on 13<sup>th</sup> January 1934 in Moscow and is a well-known guitarist and performer, composer and teacher. He completed his studies at the School of Music at the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatoire in the guitar class of A.M. Ivanov-Kramskoy. In 1959 he was a soloist for Mosconcert. He toured many cities in Russia and the former USSR. He is the author of “Teach Yourself the Six-Stringed Guitar”, original compositions, transpositions and adaptations and the composer of many collections for guitar. He has recorded for the Melodiya label in Russia.

### 3. “Beautiful British Brevities” (tracks 15-22)

Jonathan has a great liking for the sadly neglected Victorian guitarists. Ernest Shand (1868-1924), composer of *Forever*, *Air for the Guitar* and many other short pieces, in particular, should be far better known than he is. He wrote Edwardian parlour songs and recorded some of them himself. Herbert J. Ellis was better known as a composer of light pieces for banjo and ukelele, several of which, such as *Rosina*, were popular in the early years of the 20th century. Of the three composers from this era, the

most important overall is Madame Sidney Pratten, despite the fact that most of her compositions are now thought to be lightweight and unremarkable. She was born Catharina Josepha Pelzer in 1821, and in 1854 married the famous flautist Robert Sidney Pratten, renowned for the design of the “Pratten’s Perfected Boosey” flute still used today. She died in 1899, leaving her greatest legacy, a series of guitar tutors and manuals which led the way to the popularisation of the instrument in Britain. *Daisy*, despite its genesis in such a tutorial, is a gentle little work of genuine delight.

These four pieces are typical of the lovely works which have been almost totally forgotten, like so many other short pieces of light music which until the 1930s were standard recording fare. The *Impromptu* of Terry Usher, who among other things taught at the Royal Manchester College of Music, came later, being published in 1948 and the other items are of much more recent vintage, but just as romantic in tone.

Terence Croucher’s *Solway Banks* began life as *A Little Christmas Trifle* and was sent by the composer as a Christmas greeting, then being persuaded that it was good enough to be an “official” work of some merit. Brian Harrison was the father of Jonathan’s good friend, composer Tim Harrison. His piece called *In Memoriam: Rondo for Guitar*, sketched in 1995 as a tribute to Brian’s late brother Ron, also a guitarist, was given to Jonathan on Brian’s death in 1996. Sadly, Brian had been unable to complete the full Rondo, so the piece now stands as a short prelude, and a tribute to the composer himself. Jonathan Richards’ own *Romance* was published in the July 2005 issue of Classical Guitar magazine, in case anyone would like to try it out!

#### 4. “**Music of the Masters**” (tracks 23-30)

These guitar arrangements cast an attractive new light on some of the best loved melodies of all. The pieces were originally either vocal or piano pieces, often transposed to a different key for the guitar. The exception is the delightful *Dance of the Blessed Spirits* from Gluck’s opera *Orfeo ed Euridice*, also the earliest work on the disc.

Schumann is thought by many to exemplify Germanic Romanticism; he wrote several *Romanzas* for

piano, and this arrangement by Andres Segovia is a classic of its type. The following track is from Schumann's *Kinderszenen*, the original title being *Von fremden Ländern und Menschen*.

Another of the exemplars of romantic music writing is Chopin, and we have here two tiny *Preludes* from his Op.28 set. Schubert's *Das Fischermädschen* comes from his renowned song-cycle *Schwanengesang*, D. 957 and was arranged by J K Mertz. The final track is also originally a song by name, though not with voice. Mendelssohn wrote the sixth of his Op. 19 *Songs without Words* under the title of *Venetian Gondola Song (Andante sostenuto)*; the guitar version by Francisco Tarrega gained the very apt title *Barcarola*. Sandwiched between these European works we have the universally known and loved *To a Wild Rose*, from Edward MacDowell's *Woodland Sketches*, Op. 51. This American piece of nostalgia shows that romanticism is universal as is music itself.

*Notes © 2006 Stephen Sutton and Jonathan N. Richards*

**Jonathan Richards** was born in 1964 and started learning the guitar at the age of eight. His first teacher was Frank Humphries. Later, after a period of self-teaching, he studied with John Arran amongst others, gaining a Performer's Diploma from Trinity College, London, in 1983.

Since then, he has been active as a guitar teacher and concert performer, working from his base in North Wales. He has recorded previously for the Sain, Serendipity and Meridian labels as well as Divine Art. Jonathan has also composed prolifically for the guitar, including the works recorded here, a set of "Variations on a French Folk Tune" for guitar and string orchestra, songs and a guitar quartet which has been regularly performed. As well as giving solo recitals, he plays in a duo with pianist John R Williamson, and also with flautist Andi Edmondson.

Jonathan's repertoire is extensive and covers much of the standard literature of the instrument, from the baroque works of Bach, Rameau and Weiss, through the classical period exemplified by Sor and Diabelli, and the Romantic output of composers such as Mendelssohn. Spanish and South American music is particularly well represented including regular performances of works by Albeniz, Barrios, Falla, Granados, Llobet, Mompou, Villa-Lobos and many others.

However, as well as playing conventional guitar repertoire, Jonathan has also made a speciality of new and unusual music. He has given several British premières, and world premières of works by Judith Bingham, Terence Croucher, John Franklin, John Williamson and of course his own compositions.



**JONATHAN RICHARDS**

Jonathan plays a cedar and maple guitar made by Mel Watson-Owen.

Cover painting: "Oystercatchers on Bowness-on-Solway Shore" by Gilly Walton.

Photo of Jonathan Richards: John Pilling.

"I would like to dedicate this recording to my girlfriend Debbie Barker. Thanks for everything, Debs;  
I am sure I play this sort of music better since I met you." JNR

We also thank all the people who subscribed to this issue right at the beginning – you have helped to make it possible.

Recorded at St. Oswald's Church, East Harlsey, North Yorkshire, England on March  
30, 2006, by kind permission of the churchwardens and Parochial Church Council.

Recording engineer: Paul Baily

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# "forever"

30 romantic guitar miniatures

jonathan richards

- |    |                                                    |        |
|----|----------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1  | Romance (anon)                                     | [1.56] |
| 2  | Romance de Los Pinos (Torroba)                     | [2.13] |
| 3  | Tonada (Torroba)                                   | [1.59] |
| 4  | Siguenza (Torroba)                                 | [2.08] |
| 5  | La Pastora (Torroba)                               | [2.23] |
| 6  | Poetic Waltz no. 1 (Granados, arr. Abe)            | [1.46] |
| 7  | Poetic Waltz no. 3 (Granados, arr. Abe)            | [2.15] |
| 8  | Poetic Waltz no. 5 (Granados, arr. Fukada)         | [2.06] |
| 9  | Poetic Waltz no. 6 (Granados, arr. Fukada)         | [1.49] |
| 10 | Tango (Albeniz, arr. Sadleir)                      | [2.23] |
| 11 | Prelude (Scriabin, arr. Segovia)                   | [1.25] |
| 12 | Dream of the Weeping Willow (Baron)                | [1.34] |
| 13 | Mazurka (Smirnov)                                  | [2.16] |
| 14 | Russian Folk Song (Larichev)                       | [1.28] |
| 15 | Forever (Shand)                                    | [2.18] |
| 16 | Air for the Guitar (Shand)                         | [2.18] |
| 17 | Daisy (Pratten)                                    | [2.07] |
| 18 | Pensée Fugitive (Ellis)                            | [2.08] |
| 19 | Impromptu (Usher)                                  | [2.30] |
| 20 | Solway Banks (Croucher)                            | [1.46] |
| 21 | In Memoriam (Harrison)                             | [2.06] |
| 22 | Romance (Richards)                                 | [2.10] |
| 23 | Dance of the Blessed Spirits (Gluck, arr. Segovia) | [2.39] |
| 24 | Romanza (Schumann, arr. Segovia)                   | [1.41] |
| 25 | Of Foreign Lands and Peoples (Schumann, arr. Dyer) | [1.47] |
| 26 | Prelude no. 7 (Chopin, arr. Llobet)                | [1.28] |
| 27 | Prelude no. 20 (Chopin, arr. Bonelli)              | [1.20] |
| 28 | The Fisher Maiden (Schubert, arr. Mertz)           | [2.39] |
| 29 | To a Wild Rose (MacDowell, arr. Criswick)          | [2.14] |
| 30 | Barcarola (Mendelssohn, arr. Tarrega)              | [2.34] |



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total playing time [61.41]

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East Harley  
North Yorkshire  
on 30 March 2006

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