

Guitar Divas by Heike Matthiesen

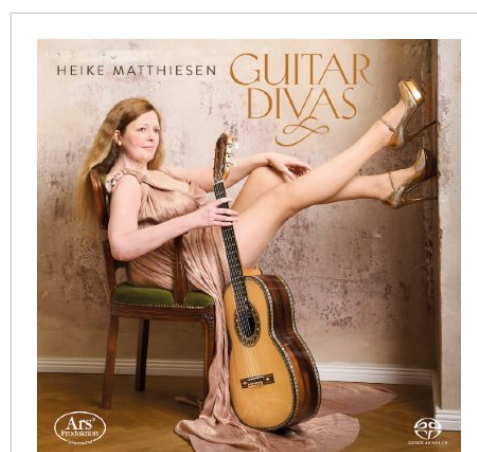
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It's always a pleasure to see a new disc of guitar music by women guitarists and composers and performed by another woman guitarist. Since Marcia Citron, Susan McLary and Lucy Green, among others, opened up the history of women in music and music education, studies on women composers and performers have emerged on every continent.

Studies on the great female pianists soon began to appear, such as those led by Professor Helena Marinho in Portugal. Studies on historical women guitarists also began to appear more widely. Today, many women guitarists dedicate their time to making our predecessors known: Annette Kruisbrink, Chris Bilobram, Gaëlle Solal and the young Maria Beatriz Oliveira, among others, and researchers like Eulalia Pablo Lozano.

Last May, the German guitarist Heike Matthiesen and the ARS Produktion label, created by Annette Schumacher, launched the CD "Guitar Divas" with the interpretation of original works composed by women guitarists of the 19th century. The debate is back on why the works of Emilia Giuliani-Guglielmi (1813-1850), Anne Emmerich (1802-?), Catharina Josepha Pelzer (Pratten) (1821-1825) or Maria Dolores de Goñi (1813-1892) are still not systematically played in conservatoires.

These are the authors recorded by Matthiesen on a disc full of power that invites us to continue studying music made by women. "Guitar Divas" highlights the preludes, serenades, dances, sketches and variations by female composers, that were known performers in their time, never as highly esteemed as the men, and who long before their death were already forgotten and their works left in the most absolute indifference in a world where the only valid music was that of male composers, sometimes their fathers,



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Guitar Divas. Heike Matthiesen, guitarra. Emilia Giuliani-Guglielmi, Prelude No.1 and Variazioni Su Non Più Mesta di Rossini Op.5. Anne Emmerich, Six Variations Pour La Guitar Seule. Catharina Josepha Pratten, Carneval De Venise, Rambling Thoughts, Fairy Sketches: Queen Mab and Puck, Dance Of The Witches (Fantasia Grotesque), 5th Divertimento (Variations On A Theme By Mozart), Serenade, Spanish Dance and Moorish Dance. Maria Dolores De Goñi, La Jota Aragonesa, Carnival Of Venice and L'Adieu. Recorder: 20.6.–22.6.2022, Kulturzentrum Immanuel, Wuppertal, by Manfred Schumacher. Producer: Annette Schumacher. SACD, Hybrid, Multichannel, Album. Ars Produktion – ARS 38 355 1:52 14

brothers, partners or neighbours.

In the 21st century, we women guitarists know what it's like to study works from the canonical repertoire. The effort, the hours, days, months of study, the emotions that impregnate the interpretative process from reading the first notes to the final performance, all this labour has been focused on works composed by men who don't know anything about that talented women playing their music.

But with women composers the process is different. We know about each other, we understand the steps taken, we see the documentaries, we have the CDs and the academic works, we follow the processes and we know the reasons for one repertoire and another, we resolve the conflicts and we play, renovate and encourage composition for our instrument and for other instruments. It's a guitar sorority that is beginning to flourish at a time when feminism is already understood as an unavoidable democratic element in the daily life and culture of all human societies, which opens up a new and happier time for women.

We are grateful that Heike Matthiesen gives us this power with her excellent work, accompanied by a booklet explaining each of the works and the composers. Matthiesen takes music that has been buried before its time and revives the guitar of women who came before us, completing the picture of the 19th century, showing us how interesting they were, how true and beautiful their music is, and how they are models of artistic perfection for today's guitar players.