

Emily Shaw, guitar

Emily Shaw is a classical guitarist, teacher, and luthier currently living in Ottawa, Ontario. She studied guitar with her father, Mike Shaw until university, at which point she moved to London, Ontario to study with Wilma van Berkel at the University of Western Ontario. Emily completed a master's degree (MMus) in guitar performance in 2016 under the tutelage of Patrick Roux at the University of Ottawa. Emily spends much of her time working with students in her home studio where she teaches classical and acoustic guitar and piano. As a luthier, Emily has built a variety of guitar-type instruments including classical guitars, steel-string acoustic guitars, period instruments, and a ukulele. In performance, Emily strives to engage her audience with expressive interpretations of music from across the centuries. She is attracted to emotionally charged, lush harmonies and amusing character pieces. When not practising, teaching, or building guitars, Emily enjoys hiking, cooking, and playing in her garden.

Vespers is my idea of evening music, weaving nocturnes and dances with pieces about remembrance and love. The music was recorded on 5 different guitars: 4 of my own construction, and one built by my father. The pairing of music and guitar was a combination of what seemed appropriate and what was convenient.



I recorded three pieces on the guitar that my father, Mike Shaw, built. This is a very traditionally built guitar—7 fan braces arranged in a pattern designed after the famous 19th-century Spanish guitar builder, Antonio de Torres with a spruce soundboard and Indian rosewood back and sides. This guitar has a wonderful rich bass sound, and it has been my main concert guitar since it was completed in 2008.

I think that the traditional sound of this guitar suits Bach's much-loved **Chaconne** particularly well. Bach wrote this piece after the death of his first wife and it is full of religious imagery, memories, and love. It was originally written for violin as the last movement of Bach's 2nd violin partita, but it translates very well onto the guitar. Although there are several arrangements available for this piece, I decided to play it directly from the violin score, just adding an occasional extra bass note.

I started playing Anne Lauber's *Arabesque* when I started my master's degree at the University of Ottawa in 2014. My teacher, Patrick Roux, suggested this piece to me, and I decided to include it in my first year recital; I have loved it ever since. Lauber's guitar writing is exquisite—challenging yet idiomatic. According to the composer, *Arabesque* is “an idea of decorative style and movement without reference to a particular form of music”

The third piece that I recorded on my father's guitar was John Gordon Armstrong's ***Last Waltz in Boston***. This is one of the longest single-movement works in the guitar repertoire, and it is a challenging and rewarding piece to play. It was written in 1988 for the Toronto-based guitarist William Beauvais and is (in John's own words) “a rhapsodic set of variations based on an original waltz in the style of Chopin.” The theme is woven throughout the piece but Armstrong delays the satisfaction of hearing the melody in the traditional waltz style until near the end.

Emilia Giuliani-Guglielmi (1813-1850) was an Italian 19th-century guitarist and composer. She was the daughter of the better-known Mauro Giuliani. The ***Sei Preludi*** (Op. 46) were likely written in 1841, and are her last surviving compositions. Each prelude is two pages long and displays a different virtuosic technique. I chose to just include my 3 favourite preludes on this CD: the first, a seemingly simple arpeggio etude; the third, an exciting and ferocious movement; and the sixth, a beautiful triple meter dance.

I decided to record these pieces on a small guitar that I modelled after the 19th-century Spanish guitar builder Antonio de Torres. Emilia did not play a Torres guitar as far as I know, however, he was only 4 years her junior, so I thought it appropriate to record her preludes on this instrument.

016 short-scale 19th-century guitar (2017)
Quilted Maple, Italian Alps Spruce
Bracing and design after Torres SE117
scale length: 604mm
tracks 1-3



Craig Visser's *Vespers* is his interpretation of evening music and was written for me for this recording project. The concepts for both the piece and the album were developed on many walks around our neighbourhood, and it is hard to say which inspired the other. *Vespers* is a collection of four short pieces that explore alternate tunings and the quieter and more intimate textures of the classical guitar.

This guitar was commissioned by a local guitar enthusiast who wanted a guitar with a slightly shorter scale length that did not sacrifice volume or tone. When it was completed, I loved the sound of the guitar so much that I asked if I might keep it a couple of extra days to include it on my recording. This guitar is probably my most resonant to date, which worked well for the many harmonics in Craig's piece.

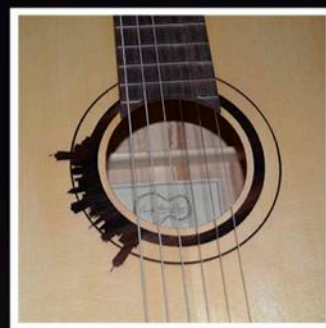


022 classical guitar (2019)
Ziricote, Italian Alps Spruce
Bracing after Bouchet
scale length: 640mm
tracks 4-7

I built this guitar to donate as a prize for the 2018 Hamilton Guitar Festival competition and wanted to fit a couple of recording sessions in before handing it off to the first prize winner. I recorded both Ida Presti's Etude and my arrangement of John Field's Nocturne on this guitar.

Ida Presti played a guitar built by Robert Bouchet, so I thought it appropriate to record her **Etude No. 3 en pensant à Bach** on a guitar that took inspiration from his design. This etude is one of the last pieces that Presti would have written, and, as far as I know, it is unpublished and rarely performed. Despite all of this, it is my favourite piece that I have encountered so far by Presti.

The Irish composer John Field (1782-1837) has been credited with inventing the nocturne, so I felt that it was important to include him on an album of evening music. His **Nocturne No. 5** in B \flat major is one of his most loved works for piano, and, once transposed to D major, I think that it suits the guitar just as well because of the guitar-like arpeggio texture in the piano's left hand.



017 classical guitar (2018)
Spalted maple, Engelmann Spruce
Bracing after Bouchet
scale length: 650mm
tracks 9, 11



013 Classical Guitar (2017)
Indian Rosewood, European Spruce
Bracing after Garcia/Simplicio
scale length: 635mm
track 13



Nocturne Op. 9, No 2 is one of Chopin's most loved and played pieces. I started playing this piece on guitar when I learned the Francisco Tarrega arrangement in the second year of my bachelor's degree. Since then, I have played the piece on and off, never being completely satisfied with the liberties that Tarrega took in his arrangement. When I decided that I was going to include this piece on this album, I finally decided that it was time for a re-arrangement, so I pulled out an edition of the original piano piece and made some changes to Tarrega's interpretation.

I recorded this piece on a guitar that was designed after the guitars of Enrique Garcia (1868-1922) and his student, Francisco Simplicio because Tarrega was known to have played guitars by Garcia. I think that the gentle warm tone of this guitar also suits the character of this piece quite well.



Credits/Acknowledgements

Track 8 recorded with permission of SODRAC

Tracks 4-7 recorded with permission of Craig Visser

Track 12 recorded with permission of John Gordon Armstrong

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Produced by Andrew Brittain and Emily Shaw

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All tracks performed by Emily Shaw

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