



In The Night

Emily Shaw, guitar

for Rosie



The Project

In the Night developed out of a passion for new music and the desire to discover new sound possibilities on the guitar. The resulting album includes a mixture of traditional solo guitar works, a multi-tracked experimental work, and an electro-acoustic work. The title for the album was inspired Elizabeth Jennings' poem of the same name.



The Guitar

The guitar was designed to be a versatile instrument that would allow the composers (Amy Brandon, Anya Gowan, and Elissar Hanna) to experiment with sound in ways not possible on a standard classical guitar. The fingerboards are removable and interchangeable; on this recording I use a standard equal-tempered fingerboard as well as a fretless fingerboard. The fretless fingerboard is decorated with abstract wood inlay to allow for the integration of extra-musical app-controlled imagery for live performances of *Points of Light*. A pickup allowed for experimentation with looping and direct recording in *Dreams in Hand*. I also made a soundhole in the back of the guitar so that the guitar strings could be played with a violin bow for the same piece. The neck is removable for travel.

The Music

Amy Brandon is a Canadian composer, guitarist, and researcher with training in jazz and classical styles. She is currently pursuing an interdisciplinary PhD in motor control, guitar performance, and augmented reality at Dalhousie University. Her composition *Points of Light* is a 3 movement work performed on fretted (movements 1 and 3) and fretless (movement 2) guitars. The first movement opens with a wall of “disorienting” sound, punctuated with “points of light”—accented high notes. This is contrasted by an intimate second movement that uses quarter tones and fretless slides to create a haunting sound world. Movement 3 alternates between swift moving lines and more delicate harmonics, and also makes use of quarter-tone tuning. amybrandon.ca

Anya Gowan is an Ottawa-based guitarist-composer. Her work, *Two Short Pieces*, is (in Anya’s words) “a pair of motivically linked character pieces, which can be played separately or together.... The main motive in Dawn is an inversion of the motive in Dusk, and the harmony/texture is similarly contrasted. Both are through-composed but in an iterative fashion.” anyagowan.com

I transcribed the Prelude from **Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre**’s *Suite in D minor* for this project. The piece, originally for harpsichord, sits beautifully on the guitar in its original key. The prelude opens with an improvisatory unmeasured section. This is followed by a bright and metered imitative section, before returning to free harmonic arpeggiation. Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729) was a French Baroque composer known for her ability to improvise and for her appointment as a court musician to Louis XIV.

Award-winning Hamilton-based composer, **Christina Volpini** wrote *for emily* as part of the 2018-19 Class Axe workshop hosted by the Canadian Music Centre. Christina was fascinated by the flexible tuning possibilities of the guitar, and the possibility to play the same pitch in different places on the guitar (fretted and harmonic) with different colours and slight variances in tuning. The piece *for emily* exploits these differences to create a shimmering sonic experience which is further coloured by an

electronic part played through a large glass jar. The electronic part was made by processing the recorded guitar part through the jar several times over until sufficient distortion was achieved. Christina would like to acknowledge the contributions of guitarist collaborators Rob MacDonald and Emily Shaw (the guitarist for whom the piece is named). The combined expertise of these guitarists was vital to the creation of this piece. **cvolpini.com**

An Old Love Tale, Op. 21, no. 1 was composed by Canadian-born composer **Gena Branscombe** (1881-1977) and appeared in various forms—for violin and piano, for voice and piano, and for cello, violin, and piano. I arranged this piece for solo guitar for this project, and I think that it suits the instrument well. Gena Branscombe is known for her choral compositions and work as a piano teacher and choir conductor.

Elissar Hanna is a Canadian composer, singer, and dancer. Her works are inspired by her love of the natural world and by her studies in Sufism. *Dreams in Hand* was originally conceived as a piece for fretless guitar and looping pedal, but soon progressed to be much more as I started to experiment with Elissar's composition to add more percussive layers (tapping the guitar body and strings), slide and bowed guitar, and background tremolando harmonies. Simply put, *Dreams in Hand* was an adventure in sound experimentation—all of the sounds on this recording were created on one instrument. In Elissar's words, "Dreams in Hand is about holding our dreams in our hands and walking forward on our path, realising the hopes that live in our souls."

Clara Schumann, née Wieck (1819-1896) was a German pianist, composer, teacher, and mother. Notturmo is part of a collection of six miniatures for piano, *Soirées Musicales*, Op. 6, which was written when she was a very young woman in 1836, the year before Robert Schumann asked for her hand in marriage. My arrangement has taken some liberties with the original piano score, but I hope that it maintains the essence of this beautiful work.

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. As a full-time musician, Emily now divides her time between performing, recording, teaching, and guitar building.

As a luthier, Emily builds guitars by commission and has supplied instruments to guitarists around the world. She is particularly interested in building unique instruments that cater to the aesthetic and physical needs of individual players as well as in building historically inspired guitars after builders such as Stradivarius, Torres, Fleta, Bouchet, and Simplicio. Emily writes a blog about her adventures in guitar building that can be viewed on her website emilyshawguitar.ca.

In performance, Emily strives to engage her audience with expressive interpretations of music from across the centuries. She has a weakness for emotionally charged, lush harmonies, amusing character pieces, and new works for the classical guitar. With the support of the Ontario Arts Council, Emily released her debut CD, *Vespers*, in 2019 featuring a variety of evening music from across the centuries.

When not practising, teaching, or building guitars, Emily enjoys hiking, cooking, spending time with her family, and gardening.

Credits/Acknowledgements

Recording by Emily Shaw in Ottawa, ON January-February 2021
Recorded with Aston Starlight microphones
Produced and edited by Emily Shaw
Editing and Mixing: Julian Bertino Sound julianbertinosound.com
Mastering: Sage Kim lacquerchannel.com
All tracks performed by Emily Shaw

Tracks 1-3 recorded with permission of Amy Brandon
Tracks 4-5 recorded with permission of Anya Gowan
Track 7 recorded with permission of Christina Volpini
Track 8 recorded with permission of the copyright holders
Track 9 recorded with permission of Elissar Hanna

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