**Music Web international**

**Zane Turner**

***Angels in the Street***
**Eduardo MARTIN (b. 1956)**
 Iliana Matos (guitar)
 **GPS 1030CD** [64:31]

The review disc is interesting from a number of aspects but two in particular. All the music is from the pen of one composer: Cuban guitarist/composer Eduardo Martin. There are few modern composers for guitar who can maintain the attention of this reviewer through twenty-seven tracks of music constituting eight different compositions.

Eduardo Martin may be prolific and renowned as a guitarist, but it is quite evident from the liner-notes, the majority of which he wrote, that featured guitarist Iliana Matos is the artist the composer considers best equipped to play these compositions. The observation that ‘it takes one to know one’ is reflected in Martin’s comments: ‘*She is a true artist, gifted with a magnificent technique. She possesses a clear and brilliant tone- while intimate and powerful - always used expressively. As the composer I feel very fortunate to listen to this album. I feel that in Iliana’s hands my pieces reach a higher level. The authenticity of her interpretations, energizes, renews and recreates them.’*

Eduardo Martin was born in 1956. He studied guitar with Jesus Ortega and composition with Ángel Vázquez Millares and Alfredo Dieznieto, graduating from the Instituto Superior de Arte de Cuba in 1985

As a concert guitarist he has toured throughout Latin-America and Europe and his discography exceeds fifteen recordings. As a composer he has won numerous awards and commissions including Radio France International Competition and the American Composer’s Orchestra Festival. His works have been published in Europe, Cuba and the USA.

Eduardo Martin’s compositions are strongly influenced by the music of his native Cuba, but he also provides insights into other important sources of influence. *Preludio, Son y Allegro* (2, 3, 4) has two major influences: popular music of Cuba and the works of J.S. Bach. It is from Bach’s *Preludio, Fugue and Allegro* for Lute (BWV 998) that Martin derived much of his inspiration for this composition.

Written for Iliana Matos, the title track, *Angels on the Street,* was inspired by street musicians of different backgrounds, styles and cultures and in many parts of the world. ‘These musicians give their heart and soul in every performance without rigid formality nor compromises for whoever is listening - true Angels who make their living in this way daily.’

To ensure the liner-notes by Eduardo Martin can be fully interpreted, a glossary of terms is included e.g. ‘*Son*’ (3) refers to a popular Cuban dance.

There are so many interesting and intriguing aspects of the music presented on this disc that a discrete review, dedicated exclusively to the music *per se*,would be justified.

Iliana Matos graduated from the Instituto de Arte Superior de Cuba in 1991. Among her guitar teachers we find such illustrious names as: Francisco Rosa, Gabriel Estarellas, Miguel Bonachea, and Jesús Ortega. The list of those in whose master class she has participated includes: Leo Brouwer, David Russell, Sharon Isbin, Tania Chagnot, and Costas Cotsiolis.

Ms. Matos made history by becoming the only woman to win the prestigious ‘S.A.R La Infanta Doña Cristina’ International Guitar Competition. She is currently studying with Ricardo Gallen at the Extremadura University for the first Master of Music in Classical Guitar. Iliana also maintains an active concert career

It has been noted that musicians often excel in interpretation of music from their mother country. The endorsements and accolades from Eduardo Martin are justified in every track of the review disc: compositions inspired by Cuban popular music, from the pen of a Cuban composer and played by a Cuban guitarist synergistically weave magic.

The music is not easy to define and one hears elements of folk, jazz and classical; given the aforementioned sources of inspiration this is not surprising.

Those familiar with jazz/hybrid guitarist Earl Klugh will hear echoes of his style in *Inevitable* (5) and *Lobison* (7).

Much of the music would be eminently suited to the sound track of a quality movie, and the last item, *Para Sonar Contigo* (26), reminds one of the Villa-Lobos composition, *Sentimental Melody*, written for the film *Green Mansions*. On my particular disc, track 23 (Octubre) has been worn out - a brief audition will explain why.

It should be noted that Iliana Matos’ superb interpretive skills are not limited to Cuban music. Her rendition of the Chaconne from Bach’s Suite for Solo Violin (BWV 1004) elicited the following observation: ‘ *Her beautiful diction of the* *cantabile in the Andante section made history’* - El Mercantil Valenciano Castellón,
1996.

Iliana Matos exhibits high musicality, a very refined technique, and a strong sense of rhythm. Listen to the Cuban dance *Son del Barrio* (26) to hear how she embraces these rhythms, combining them with percussive sounds made by striking the body of the guitar. Her beautiful tone is complemented by an instrument from the hands of luthier Paco Santiago Marin. For aficionados who may be interested, on this recording Iliana chose to use Hannabach Silver-special High Tension, Set 815 HT nylon strings.

It is with reluctance that I describe the work of a current generation guitarist as magnificent because it leaves little latitude for the future but on this occasion there is no other synonym that is more appropriate.

Regarding the future, one must recognise that fate and circumstance are not always kind to great artists. For all their magnificence, the names of past guitarists such as Angel Iglesias, Rey de la Torre and Jose Luis Gonzalez remain in relative obscurity.

If circumstances are kind to Iliana Matos, she has sufficient of all credentials necessary to take her place in the annals of guitar as one of its truly gifted and outstanding exponents. **Zane Turner. *©* 2007. MusicWeb International.**