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## RADOŠ MITROVIĆ

**Darko Karajić** (Baroque Lute,  
Theorbo, Baroque Guitar, Archlute):  
*Journey: Music of the XVII and  
XVIII Centuries*  
**Publisher: Edition Lilac, 2015**

In his fertile performance career, the guitarist and lutenist Darko Karajić has enjoyed opportunities to perform actively with ensembles specialized in so-called early music, such as Musica Antiqua, Renesans, Anonimus, and Levant. Over the years, those collaborations, especially the one with the ensemble Renesans, have yielded a large number of published audio recordings, which qualify as unique, pioneering ventures on our scene. Interestingly, however, Karajić published his first solo CD only in 2015, enriching thereby not only his own biography, but, above all, the musical scene of Serbia with a unique release. The album comprises pieces spanning across a century, from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, providing a sort of cross-section of Baroque lute music. Karajić opted for composers whose oeuvres are linked with the three central Baroque traditions: Italian, French, and German. The ordering of the CD presents the pieces chronologically, as well as according to a logical dramaturgy.

The album thus begins with works by authors who lived in two cities that were

important for the development of the Baroque: Rome and Bologna. These are Johannes Hieronymus Kapsberger (1580–1651) and Alessandro Piccinini (1566–1638). Both of them composed music during the transition period between the Renaissance and the Baroque, writing and publishing, around the same time, collections of pieces for the *chitarrone*. Karajić chose Kapsberger's *Toccata arpeggiata* and *Canario*, as well as Piccinini's *Chiaccona*. These works still exhibit a conservative approach to composing, especially the *Toccata arpeggiata*, whose form its German-Italian composer would further develop in his later works. Piccinini's *Chiaccona* comes from the first of his two collections, written in 1623 and 1639 (*Intavolatura di liuto et di Chitarrone, libro primo*), which also contain detailed instructions about playing the lute and the *chitarrone*. By listening to Piccinini's and then Robert de Visée's (c. 1655–1732/33) chaconne, likewise featured on Karajić's album, one notices differences that attest to the evolution of that form. The chaconne of de Visée, one of the most important Baroque performers and composers, contains traits of the French style and its significantly different texture and characteristic ornaments depart from the transparent texture of Piccinini's work. De Visée was also one of the first authors to write Baroque suites, which would become popular toward the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century; Karajić's album includes one of those suites, the D-minor suite from 1686, interpreting it on the Baroque guitar. Unlike de Visée, about whom there is ample information and whose activity is attested to by numerous works, that of Giovanni Zamboni Romano (1664–1721) remains largely unknown. He is known to have lived and

worked in Pisa, leaving behind a modest oeuvre. The nine sonatas of his collection *Sonate d'intavolatura di leuto*, Op. 1, written in 1718, constitute one of his most mature achievements, made only a few years before his death. Also, they are the only works on this album that are performed on the archlute. Karajić concludes the release with two works by Sylvius Leopold Weiss (1686–1750), an important German Baroque figure, a contemporary of J. S. Bach and G. F. Handel. On account of its scope and complexity, Weiss's oeuvre occupies a central place in lute music. Karajić chose his D-minor Suite, in character contrasted to de Visée's suite, and Weiss's Fantasy in

C minor, which is one of his best known pieces, often performed in guitar transcription. Those two pieces, performed on the German theorbo, bring this deftly conceived and realized album to its dramaturgical climax, at the same time providing it with an appropriate closure.

*Journey* is not only an album that takes us through the aesthetics of various 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century authors, but also a release that represents a part of Darko Karajić's own intimate artistic *journey*. The album's sleeve notes conclude with the following words from the artist: "Some 30 years ago, I set off on an uncertain journey that is still ongoing..."