



## Richter Uzur Duo *String Theory* Album Review

By: Brad Conroy

Brad Richter (guitar) and Viktor Uzur (cello) are musicians of the highest caliber, and on their latest recording, *String Theory*, these two accomplished performers are at their absolute best, shining throughout. Never before has the guitar and cello duo captured such a wide range of expression, beauty, excitement, and artistry. Each a virtuoso in their own right, when they come together as a duo it's easy to hear how closely these two are connected. They blend classical music,

rock music, and improvisation, all with exquisite original compositions, producing a sound that is all their own.

One of the many highlights on *String Theory* is the arrangement Richter and Uzur do of the Led Zeppelin song "Kashmir". It opens with Uzur playing a bass line on his cello while Richter adds a percussive groove by tapping on the body of the guitar. This piece continues its long crescendo into a section where Uzur shreds away on his cello while Richter accompanies him with a hard grooving rhythm. The individual parts work so well together, and are performed with such passion they create an enormous sound that almost resembles an orchestra.

"Facing East," an original composition by Richter, is a mesmerizing and tranquil homage to the Eastern sounds many of us seem to be drawn to. The piece opens with an "alap" type unaccompanied cello solo that Uzur performs with the most incredible tone, delicate touch, and vibrato. When Richter steps in with the "tala," or rhythmic accompaniment, the piece moves from the realm of the beautiful to just plain awesome. Richter is full of creative ideas on the guitar, and his accompaniment figures mix arpeggios and tapping in a tasteful fashion. The effect is so subtle, but it really adds to the contemplative mood of the piece.

"Circles" is another incredible composition that the duo performs with effortless precision and musicality. It opens as a kind of musical loop where Uzur is tapping percussively on his cello while Richter is supporting with harmonics on the guitar. The interplay between the two is playful yet stunning, as each takes a turn playing the melody while the other holds down the groove. This piece is reminiscent of a Ravel string quartet; it grooves, it sings, it's fresh, and exciting; this piece has it all.

The next set of pieces, the "Romanina Folk Dances" of Bela Bartok, really demonstrates this duo's ability to perform music from many diverse genres. They also perform the "Bumblebee" by Rimsky-Korsakov and do some "mash-ups" and a very cool sounding eastern take on David Bowie's "Man who sold the world."

Richter and Uzur give their all on *String Theory* and prove to be one of the most exciting duos on the scene today. From Led Zeppelin to Albeniz, from Bartok to Bowie, these two are pushing the boundaries, and no doubt exciting their listeners with such a captivating performance.