

Marta Topferova & Edmar Castañeda

Original compositions by Marta Topferova, Edmar Castañeda & songs from Latin America



Marta Topferova - vocals, cuatro, percussion
Edmar Castañeda – Colombian harp

Marta Topferova is one of the finest singers and songwriters of her generation. She has been heavily influenced by Latin American folk music, as well as her native Czech roots. Her powerful voice and spirited songs are rooted in traditions ranging from Venezuelan vals and merengue, Argentine folklore, Cuban Trova, as well as Slavic folk music. As a steady creative force on the New York music scene for sixteen years, Marta has collaborated with some of the best musicians from the Latin, jazz and classical circles, and this experience has forged a unique mix of styles in her work.

Colombian harpist Edmar Castañeda has been among Marta's most inspiring collaborators, and this duo recorded on Marta's album "La Marea", which was highly praised by critics and listeners all over the world.

Marta recently returned to her homeland, the Czech Republic, in order to conceive and launch an ensemble of Czech and Slavic music - Milokraj - meaning "beloved land". The result is a new collection of original songs, featuring an all-star Eastern European line up: Slovak violinist Stanislav Palúch, Moldavian cimbalom player Marcel Comendant, Czech guitarist David Doruzka and Slovak bassist Robert Ragan. Their debut CD was funded by the Czech Ministry of Culture as well as Prague's City Hall, and ranked among the top ten groups on the World Music Charts Europe. To date, Marta has released seven albums: "Milokraj" (2013 Animal Music), "The Other Shore" (2011 World Village), "Trova" (2009 World Village), "Flor Nocturna" (2006 World Village), "La Marea" (2005 World Village), "Sueño Verde" (2003 Circular Moves) and "Homage to Homeland" (2002 self-produced). Marta has toured the US, Canada, Europe, Argentina and Thailand, enchanting fans worldwide for over a decade.

"Topferova sings with an elegant longing in her voice" – New York Times

"One of the most graceful interpreters of Latin American folk music" – The Times, London

"A leading light of the nueva canción movement of today" – BBC

WEB www.martatopferova.com

Edmar Castaneda was born in 1978, in the city of Bogotá, Colombia. Since his move to the United States in 1994, he has taken New York and the world stage by storm with his virtuosic command of the harp - revolutionizing the way audiences and critics alike consider the instrument. A master of beautifully complex timing, lush colors and dynamic spirit, Edmar has been called *"almost a world unto himself"* - **The New York Times**.

"The Colombian plays the harp like hardly anyone else on earth. His hands, seemingly powered by two different people, produce a totally unique, symphonic fullness of sound, a rapid-fire of chords, balance of melodic figures and drive, served with euphoric Latin American rhythms, and the improvisatory freedom of a trained jazz musician...captivating virtuosity, but in no way only virtuosity for its own sake." - **Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung**

"Mr. Castañeda strummed, plucked, rubbed, jabbed and pounded on his cobalt blue Llanera harp as he conjured different shaped notes, harmonic textures and steady bass rhythms from the instrument's 34 strings. About the only thing he didn't do was light it on fire." - **Wall St Journal**

The legendary Paquito D'Rivera, Edmar's frequent collaborator, describes him as

"an enormous talent. With his versatility and enchanting charisma, he has taken his harp out of the shadows, and become one of the most original musicians in the Big Apple."

Not unlike other exceptional musicians who have transformed their lives through art, Castaneda's journey has humble, inspiring beginnings. The son of a musician and a mother who nurtured Edmar's obvious natural talents, he embraced the noble folkloric traditions of his native Colombia. The joropo dance classes he attended with his sister were a masterclass in movement, accompanied by the harp. In the mid-1990s, he moved to New York, and studied jazz trumpet, before returning to the harp. Today, on stages all over the world, it is remarkable how Edmar's body engulfs his Colombian harp as he crafts almost unbelievable feats of cross- rhythms, layered with chordal nuances to rival even the most celebrated flamenco guitarists, and an incredible blend of musical influences.

"His music draws on the traditional joropo music of the grasslands he absorbed early, as well as tango, Brazilian and flamenco guitar, West African kora and virtuoso jazz pianists like Art Tatum. That's a fascinating mix, but his technique is the real astonishment. Castañeda juggles lead, rhythm and bass lines, using a variety of hard and soft string attacks to keep those voices distinct — all without giving up the groove." - **NPR Music**

Edmar Castaneda's performing career has recently included feature spots at Paquito D'Rivera's Carnegie Hall tribute, the DC Jazz Festival, Jazz at Lincoln Center, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Tanglewood Jazz Festival, the 10th World Harp Congress, and numerous other dates with artists such as D'Rivera, Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, John Scofield, Chico O'Farrill's Afro- Cuban Jazz Big Band, John Patitucci, and many more. Edmar has been Marcus Miller's special guest, and he has also opened for Ricki Lee Jones, Diana Krall, The Yellowjackets, & Paco De Lucia.

A committed teacher, Edmar's residencies have included a week long initiative and performance at The Banff Centre with fellow faculty member Dave Douglas and other jazz luminaries, as well as an interactive workshop at the Berklee College of Music. This focused on Latin culture, culminating in a full-on tribute to the late great Mambo King, Israel "Cachao" López. He is frequently invited to give masterclasses and workshops in diverse musical contexts worldwide, and is also increasingly recognized as a composer.

Edmar has released three recordings, collaborating with artists such as John Scofield, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Miguel Zenon and Marshall Gilkes, and catching the attention of reviewers and legions of fans alike. His latest album, "Double Portion", was described as *"redefining depth, skill and emotion"* by Rob Young in **Urban Flux Magazine**. About his previous disc, "Entre Cuerdas",

Jeff Tamarkin wrote in **JazzTimes** *"it is hard to imagine the Colombian musician has much contemporary competition. That the harp sounds so natural in this context makes you wonder why so few have thought to utilize this many-stringed instrument as a viable lead instrument."*

Together with the French manufacturers, Camac Harps, Edmar Castaneda has developed a new instrument. **The E C Llanera** is a state-of-the-art version of the traditional arpa llanera of Colombia and Venezuela. Alongside its many structural improvements, it is also the first llanera harp with levers. This increase the instrument's potential for chromaticism and unlocks new musical potential for the instrument and Latin American music.

To find out more about Edmar, please visit: www.edmarcastaneda.com