

Seven Serenades for Scalloped Fretboard Guitar

by Matthew Montfort

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The Serenades

1. Gauri the Golden (Montfort. 8:43)
2. Sangria (Mariah Parker. 6:03)
3. Soul Serenade (Montfort.6:28)
4. Michelle's Star (Montfort.5:50)
5. Celtic Raga (Montfort.8:43)
6. Purple Raga (Montfort.5:59)
7. Lilalit (Montfort. 14:21)

Total running length: 56:25

Seven Serenades Concept

Seven serenades following the muse on the path of improvisation, inspired and informed by the great musical traditions, but not bound by them. Improvisations becoming compositions of longing captured at the moment of conception.



Scalloped Fretboard Guitar



Already well known as the leader of the trendsetting world music group Ancient Future, Matthew Montfort's long awaited debut solo recording showcases his pioneering work on the scalloped fretboard guitar. In late 1978, luthier Ervin Somogyi carved out the wood between the frets of Montfort's Gibson SJ Deluxe so that the pads of his fingers touch only the strings, reducing friction while bending them to produce ornaments more characteristic of the sitar. While visually subtle, the difference in sound is striking. Montfort had his fretboard scalloped in order to play various forms of world music that require intricate note-bending ornaments while still being able to play chords. He uses the South Indian vina method of bending notes: the strings are pulled across the frets in order to raise the pitch.

Ancient-Future.Com Records
World Fusion

Contact: info@ancient-future.com. 1-888-823-8887. 415-459-1892.
Ancient-Future.Com Records P.O. Box 264, Kentfield CA 94914-0264





Biography

As leader of the world music group Ancient Future, Matthew Montfort has devoted himself to the scalloped fretboard guitar since 1978. Montfort immersed himself in an intensive study with vina master K.S. Subramanian in order to fully apply the South Indian gamaka (note-bending) techniques to the guitar. He is also known for his work as a composer and performer on Glissentar (11-string fretless guitar), electric guitar, flamenco guitar, mandolin, charango, sitar, and gamelan. He has worked with many world music legends, including tabla phenomenon Zakir Hussain and Chinese zither master Zhao Hui. He has performed hundreds of world music and jazz concerts worldwide since 1978, from New York City's Carnegie Recital Hall to the Atlantis nightclub in Beirut, Lebanon. His scalloped fretboard work was featured in 2003 and 2005 at the Festival Internacional de la Guitarra on the golden coast of Spain near Barcelona, which showcases top guitarists from all over the world. He toured India in 2006 and 2008, performing at prestigious events such as the

Festival of India in Mumbai with sitar master Pandit Habib Khan and tabla maestro Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri. He holds a B.A. in World Music and Composition and an M.A. in Arts and Media Technology from Antioch University. For his M.A. thesis, Montfort wrote the book "Ancient Traditions -- Future Possibilities: Rhythmic Training Through the Traditions of Africa, Bali, and India," which has been used by many musicians to improve their rhythm skills.

Quotes

"Matthew Montfort conjures lovely Asian zither-like inflections with a scalloped fretboard guitar." –GUITAR PLAYER

"The most beautiful, soulful guitar I have ever heard!!" –Chandi Devi, Editor-in-Chief, Karmacaffe.com

"Master of the scalloped fretboard guitar." – J. Poet, EAST BAY EXPRESS

"I first realized Matthew Montfort was a true guitar wizard when he called me on the phone and played me one flawless Hendrix riff after another. We were in the seventh grade. By the time we escaped high school, Matt had gone acoustic, turning coffee house basements into his own planet with fierce improvisations. Now a pioneering master of world fusion, his knowledge and depth are staggering, yet he doesn't let it get in the way of the joy and spirit and soul that we like about music in the first place." – Jello Biafra, Dead Kennedy singer turned spoken word artist,

"Matthew Montfort is an American Ravi Shankar on guitar." –Pandit Habib Khan, sitarist

"Matthew Montfort's synthesis of styles and sounds isn't superficial -- he plucks the essential musicality of several traditions without discounting them. Beautiful world fusion music." – Roger Carlberg, ELECTRONIC MUSICIAN

"A giant, a leader, a bound-and-determined self described fanatic for world music." – NEW COLORADO

"Guitarrista multipremiado, Montfort es un pionero de la scalloped fretboard guitar." – PUTUMAYO RECORDS

"Matthew Montfort plays a special, scalloped fretboard acoustic instrument that lets him get the bends of an Indian sitar. He uses it to weave seductive melodies." – John Diliberto (host of Echoes, syndicated on PRI stations)

"Guitar is seldom featured in Indian classical music – yet Montfort is a pioneer of such and uses the scalloped fretboard guitar to bring out the best in Indian sounds. His background as a student of the notoriously-difficult sitar lends to translations which shine on guitar" – WorldDiscoveries.net

more info:

www.matthewmontfort.com • www.myspace.com/matthewmontfort • www.ancient-future.com

The Serenades: Track List

1. Gauri the Golden. Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard guitar), Patti Weiss (electric violins), Alan Tower (didjeridu). As an invocation to these serenades to my muses, this improvisation draws from North Indian raga, employing a tonal framework using notes common to both Rag Bhairav (associated with Shiva in Hindu mythology) and Rag Gauri (associated with Shiva's consort, Gauri). The didjeridu provides an intense drone bed while the guitar's plaintive calls and the violin's soaring responses create a contemporary interpretation of the North Indian musical form known as alap (a rubato exploration of melody without rhythmic accompaniment).

2. Sangria. Mariah Parker (santur), Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard guitar), Patti Weiss (violin). Mariah Parker surprised me with this very beautiful piece in 7/8 she composed for this project. Captured fresh, the piece was new to me when we recorded it, so I was sight reading the melody and the rest of my part was improvised in the moment, inspired by her soulful composition in D minor.

3. Soul Serenade. Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard guitar). This improvisation in E minor captures the feeling of the initial emergency drive-by serenade that inspired this recording.

4. Michelle's Star. Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard guitars). Written as a gift of longing, the recording equipment was turned on during the composition process, capturing the very moments this song in 5/8 was conceived.

5. Celtic Raga. Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard guitar). There are many parallels between ancient Celtic and Vedic traditions. For example, both Irish music and North Indian raga are modal and make use of drones and extensive ornamentation. But improvisation in Irish music concentrates on changing the ornamentation of a set melody, while North Indian raga prescribes a set of conditions to create an improvised melody. This improvisation applies Indian melodic exploration techniques to a prominent scale used in Celtic music, commonly known as the Greek mixolydian mode, which corresponds to Khammaj that (pronounced 'tot') in the North Indian scale classification system.

6. Purple Raga. Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard guitar), Alan Tower (didjeridu). An Indian raga is a melodic recipe for a mood, a "super scale" using a set of notes in ascending and descending order, a hierarchy of note importance, and a key phrase that shows the heart of the movement of the raga. I was inspired to create a modern "raga" based on the music of Jimi Hendrix after seeing a photograph of Jimi in the front row of an Indian music concert, his mouth agape in awe of what he was experiencing. Each raga has a patron god or goddess, which in this case has to be the god of rock guitar. So I serenaded to the spirit of Hendrix while improvising within the raga rules I created inspired by the guitar solo in Purple Haze. Underneath the didjeridu drones a chord in overtones: a D7#9, also known as the "Jimi Hendrix chord."

7. Lilalit. Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard guitar). This serenade for Lila falls within the scale of Rag Lalit, a raga often portrayed in ragamala paintings as a lover looking back as he departs from his sleeping beauty before sunrise.



1. Gauri the Golden (Montfort) 8:43. Formats: World, Indian. [PLAY AUDIO ▶](#) Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard guitar), Patti Weiss (electric violins), Alan Tower (didjeridu). The didjeridu provides an intense drone bed while the guitar's plaintive calls and the violin's soaring responses create a contemporary interpretation of the North Indian musical form known as alap (a rubato exploration of melody without rhythmic accompaniment).

2. Sangria (Mariah Parker) 6:03. Format: World. [PLAY AUDIO ▶](#) Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard guitar), Mariah Parker (santur), Patti Weiss (violin). Mariah Parker composed this soulful 7/8 composition in D minor for this project.

3. Soul Serenade (Montfort) 6:28. Formats: Solo Guitar, World. [PLAY AUDIO ▶](#) Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard guitar). This improvisation in E minor captures the feeling of the initial emergency drive-by serenade that inspired this recording.

4. Michelle's Star (Montfort) 5:50. Formats: Acoustic Guitar, World. [PLAY AUDIO ▶](#) Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard guitars). Written as a gift of longing, the recording equipment was turned on during the composition process, capturing the very moments this song in 5/8 was conceived.

5. Celtic Raga (Montfort) 8:43. Formats: World, Celtic, Indian. [PLAY AUDIO ▶](#) Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard guitar). This improvisation applies Indian melodic exploration techniques to a prominent scale used in Celtic music.

6. Purple Raga (Montfort) 5:59. Formats: Progressive, Jam, World, Indian. [PLAY AUDIO ▶](#) Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard guitar), Alan Tower (didjeridu). A modern "raga" based on the music of Jimi Hendrix. Underneath, the didjeridu drones a chord in overtones: a D7#9, also known as the "Jimi Hendrix chord."

7. Lilalit (Montfort) 14:21. Formats: World, Indian. [PLAY AUDIO ▶](#) Matthew Montfort (scalloped fretboard guitar). This serenade for Lila falls within the scale of Rag Lalit, a raga often portrayed in ragamala paintings as a lover looking back as he departs from his sleeping beauty before sunrise.