

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information, visit www.frankwallace.com

Composer/Guitarist Frank Wallace Performs New Works

Recently described as “an authentic expressive voice” by Fanfare Magazine, composer/performer Frank Wallace has created “... a brilliant collection of new repertoire” [Guitar Review]. He is the winner of the 2001 and 2006 New Hampshire Council on the Arts Fellowship Awards and has written over 80 songs for voice and guitar in the past five years. His CDs on the Gyre label have been praised for their “...elegant virtuosity and Gyre’s gorgeous sonics...” [www.classicstoday.com] Wallace, member of the internationally acclaimed Duo LiveOak, will perform his new works for classical guitar and voice at the VENUE in LOCATION on DATE at TIME. Tickets are _____ at the door. Call _____ for reservations and further information.

As poetic reflections on his own passionate journey through life, Wallace’s compositions are a refreshing departure from the standard repertoire. With influences ranging from Dowland, Schubert, Britten, Ravel and de Falla, his decades-long immersion in early music, and his love of popular American music, Wallace explores universal themes: young love, the birth of a child, and the well-earned wisdom of age. Wallace’s concerts feature virtuosic solos and he self-accompanies his own baritone voice.

His many works for voice and guitar include **Father Said:** (16 songs for baritone and guitar), a major contribution to the growing body of art song with classical guitar; **Speak Love**, seven songs on the poems of San Francisco poet Henriette de Saussure Blanding; **Voices in the Dark** for lute and medium, voice. Wallace has also written many works for his wife and partner, mezzo-soprano Nancy Knowles, with whom he performs as Duo LiveOak. **Father Said:** is a group of extraordinarily intimate vignettes of the life of an early American family and its connection to nature, a powerful combination of the profound nineteenth century folk wisdom of Wallace’s great-grandfather Joel Sylvanus Wallace, as remembered in the elegant twentieth century poetry of grandfather Frank C. Wallace, set to the compelling twenty-first century compositions of his musician namesake, Frank A. Wallace. His stout independence proclaims in **Ingenuity** – “*He found no shade, but made his own, / So shade and shine he had together; / He turned his back to break the sun, / Or face it, so to change his weather.*”

Classical Music Listing

Who: composer/guitarist/baritone **Frank Wallace**

What: Recital of his own songs and solos for classical guitar

When:

Where:

Cost:

For more information call:

Recently described as “an authentic expressive voice” by Fanfare Magazine, Frank Wallace has created “... a brilliant collection of new repertoire” [Guitar Review]. He has written over 80 songs for voice and guitar and numerous guitar solos in the past five years. His CDs on the Gyre label have been praised for their “...elegant virtuosity and Gyre’s gorgeous sonics...” [www.classicstoday.com]

Frank Wallace

guitarist, lutenist, baritone, composer

Frank Wallace has distinguished himself not only as a dynamic soloist and accompanist on classical and romantic guitars, but he is also recognized as a leading player of the *vihuela de mano** and lute. Possibly his most astounding skill is as a master of self-accompanied song, singing and playing the solo songs of renaissance Italy and Spain, Elizabethan England and Schubert with equal attention to the subtleties of melody, words, and accompaniments. Those who know the sophistication of both the sung melodies and their accompaniments in these repertoires as well as in his own song works are invariably in awe of this rare skill.

"He is an impressive talent in every respect; he is a strong guitarist, a composer with a distinct voice, and a confident vocalist..." Soundboard Magazine

Since 1997, **Frank Wallace** has been emerging as a formidable composer of both solo and song repertoire for guitar and lute. Wallace's compositions (published by Gyre) reflect his colorful career, drawing on influences ranging from avant garde to medieval to the blues. A 21st century composer in the tradition of Schubert and Britten, but with a 21st century diversity in style, Wallace writes songs that glory in rich, complex accompaniments and lyrical melodies. In 2004, his ensemble Duo LiveOak released **Woman of the Water—songs of Frank Wallace** (Gyre 10082*), for which he received a second Fellowship award (2006). His previous recordings can be heard on Titanic Records, Musical Heritage Society, and Centaur Records.

The Stubborn Oak, one of Wallace's major compositions for solo classical guitar, was published in October 2000 by Tuscany Publications and is distributed

worldwide by Theodore Presser. In 2003 Gyre Publications launched an ambitious publishing project, *Frank Wallace Editions*. Most of Wallace's compositions are now available in print as part of this series.

As an outstanding young classical guitarist from San Francisco Conservatory in the 70's, Wallace joined the guitar faculty at New England Conservatory, while also studying early music with Marleen Montgomery. In the early 80's, he began full-time performance of medieval and renaissance music with his ensemble LiveOak and Company. He has performed at many of the leading early music festivals including Utrecht, Regensburg and Boston, and has also performed, lectured and taught at a number of Lute Society of America Seminars, the Holland Festival/ Utrecht, Amherst Early Music Week and the Guitar Foundation of America Festival. Wallace currently performs with mezzo-soprano Nancy Knowles as Duo LiveOak** and occasionally as a soloist. Their concerts span the ages from medieval to contemporary, with guitar and its ancestors, featuring Wallace's own works and arrangements. In 2000 the duo founded the Gyre* record label as a way to best represent the broad spectrum of their work.

"... a brilliant collection of new repertoire performed by its composer, who happens to play with equal amounts of grace, sensitivity, and virtuosity." Stephen Griesgraber, Guitar Review, 2001

"The breadth of his musical activity recalls an earlier age, when a complete musician engaged in a broad range of creative activities as a matter of course...Wallace's music is exciting, unpredictable, and fresh..." Steven Rings, American Record Guide, 2001

* www.gyremusic.com

**www.duoliveoak.com

Frank Wallace

guitarist, baritone, composer

"All of the music is in various ways delightful... [Wallace] makes a persuasive case for the music and the instrument by playing with skill, style, and fantasy."

—Richard Dyer, **The Boston Globe**

"The concert by Frank Wallace was a veritable *tour de force*"

—Tom Kerstens, **Classical Guitar** (London)

"Wallace excels; he exhibits great sensitivity to the music and brings finesse to the subtleties of phrasing, dynamics, and tempo."

—**Guitar Review**

"Meet Frank Wallace. He composes, sings, plays a formidable classical-romantic guitar and lute, and produces exquisite-sounding recordings."

—Jerry Bowles, **Sequenza21.com**

"This was graceful musicmaking of a high order."

—Arthur Hepner, **The Boston Globe**

"Frank Wallace's renditions of instrumental works and song accompaniments are exemplary."

—Laird, **American Record Guide**

"Frank Wallace displayed the *vihuela* both as solo and as accompaniment to his own intimate, sweet singing, then, after intermission, leapt four centuries ahead to "real" guitar music — compellingly played — of Albeniz and Mompou."

—Richard Buell, **The Boston Globe**

"[Their] eloquence could not have been improved upon...the baritone Frank Wallace, in the final song by the troubadour Riquier, captured the pain of an older man looking about at a fraudulent world to which he has "come too late".

—Edward Rothstein, **The New York Times**

"It is easy to feel an intimate connection to the ethereal beauty of Frank Wallace's compositions not only because of their individual splendor, but also because of the lush tone and sensitive perfection with which Wallace executes his

music....Wallace's writing reveals interests in early music, American folk music, and the blues, as well as a more contemporary language. His music also clearly reflects a thorough knowledge of the guitar's repertoire; the works sound idiomatic, though never to a fault, and his harmony and counterpoint bring out some of the richest sonorities that the guitar has to offer... a brilliant collection of new repertoire performed by its composer, who happens to play with equal amounts of grace, sensitivity, and virtuosity."

—Stephen Griesgraber, **Guitar Review**

"A former professor of classical guitar at the New England Conservatory, Frank Wallace is a New Hampshire-based guitarist and vocalist who [performs with Duo LiveOak]. His own guitar music is crafted with idiomatic skill and sensitivity, abetted by his keen ear for textural variety...the composer's elegant virtuosity and Gyre's gorgeous sonics help ensure a pleasant and comfortable 64-minute listening experience."

—Jed Distler, **classicstoday.com**

"This recording of original compositions was written and played by Frank Wallace, who is an outstanding guitarist... He plays with authority, exhibits a great deal of acoustic presence, and offers clear, uncompromising musical ideas. His sound is simply wonderful... the tone of the guitar is luxurious..."

—Stephen Waechter, **Soundboard**

"In over 25 years of writing about music on recordings and in concerts, I have rarely been as captivated and enchanted by any item as this new CD from Duo LiveOak, a new - to me - ensemble established in 1976... This is a first-rate chamber music duo with a new and refreshing twist... Wallace's songs and duets, deftly accompanied, evoke memories of our distant cultural past, ever so gently wrapped in occasional quasi-contemporary enhancements...The CD's only major drawback is its brevity, for it ends sooner than any reasonable person who hears it would wish..."

—John W. Lambert, **Classical Voice North Carolina**

"Frank Wallace is an accomplished lutenist and vihuelist, a specialist in medieval and Renaissance music, a self-accompanying singer, and a fine guitarist. As though this weren't versatility enough, he is also a composer...The breadth of his

musical activity recalls an earlier age, when a complete musician engaged in a broad range of creative activities as a matter of course. The works are melodically attractive and rhythmically exuberant... His playing is solid and expressive, with a commitment to every phrase...Wallace's music is exciting, unpredictable, and fresh, as in the "Prelude and Fantasy" from *Quadrangle*. In its more introspective moments it can also be quite touching, as in several of the slow movements...Guitarists will be interested to hear these pieces, and they will certainly appeal to a broad listening public."

—Steven Rings, **American Record Guide**

[LiveOak] gave a superb concert...notable in that all of the music was written by Frank Wallace. Wallace has a wonderful baritone—dark, fast, agile, and never overbearing. The [instrumental] part was demanding throughout—one can only marvel how he can sing as well as he does and play as well as he does, all at the same time...They are fully the equal of any of the best chamber ensembles active today. Wallace has developed a formidable compositional palette for voice and plucked string instruments, one that incorporates influences from early music to the latest avante-garde techniques. The twentieth century repertoire for voice and guitar includes many outstanding pieces by some of the century's best known composers...Wallace's work in this genre stands up well to the competition."

—Robert Margo, **Boston Classical Guitar Society Newsletter**

"The new CD, **Frank Wallace, his own new works**, by Frank Wallace is a vital and uplifting creation by an artist who has persistently focused his energies to bring audiences music that enriches life. Mr. Wallace has been performing for more than a quarter century. He is a formidable classical guitarist...The diversity in Wallace's composition is impressive...What the music has in common is a well-developed sense of melody. This is evident in the simple monophonic Etude 7 played on a guitar by Manuel Soto y Solares of Sevilla from around 1860. It is equally evident in the elaborate contrapuntal textures found in other movements that are masterfully written and expertly played. In fact, counterpoint is meaningless if melody is weak. It is the strength of Wallace's melodies in both content and rendering that make this CD a joy for this reviewer..."

[He] is emerging as a performer and composer who is creating music of substance and beauty. We are fortunate to witness this creative process."

—Louis Arnold, **Boston Classical Guitar Society Newsletter**

"...one of the best vihuelists working today...Wallace also sings...His renditions of *fantasías* by Narváez, other instrumental works, and song accompaniments are exemplary, bringing the kind of polish to the music that must have been prized in the Spanish noble houses."

—Laird, **American Record Guide**

"His playing...is vivid and bright, but with soft inward-looking colors. His singing is robustly dramatic and clear, but armed with an ability to subtly convey the most complex and private of human emotions."

—Jonathan Richmond, **The Tech** (MIT)

"It is extremely unusual to listen to a self-accompanying singer...I cannot but congratulate [Wallace] for infusing new life into this neglected art. [He] plays these [solo] pieces with a secure and confident technique, and with a clear and bright sound...Mr. Wallace performs the songs with evident relish and gusto; his voice is warm and expressive and his accompaniment is nicely balanced, allowing the listener to discern the polyphonic interplay between the vihuela and voice...I believe he has done a remarkable job...According to the Mexican proverb, the best praise for the cook is to ask for another helping. Mr. Wallace, could we have more?"

—Antonio Corona-Alcalde, **Lute Society of America Quarterly**

"Frank Wallace is very much at his ease here, and his joy in the literature is easy to glean from his impassioned approach...these rapturous meditations, which Wallace delivers with deep appreciation, seem to me unsurpassed in early music for plucked string."

—Peter Milford, **Boston Early Music News**

"Frank Wallace has a rich and agile baritone with a falsetto extension that carries him without break into an alto's range. He is also a skilled instrumentalist, whether accompanying himself or others..."

—Stephen Tooker, **Folio**

2005 **Sketches**

miniatures for solo guitar
Frank Wallace, guitar, composer
Gyre CD 10052

2004 **Delphin**

Music for Solo Vihuela de Mano
Frank Wallace, vihuela de mano
Gyre CD 10042

2003 **Woman of the Water**

Songs by Frank Wallace
Duo LiveOak
Nancy Knowles, soprano
Frank Wallace, lute, guitar, baritone
Gyre CD 10082

2002 **Piva**

Renaissance Songs of Spain and Italy
Duo LiveOak
Nancy Knowles, soprano
Frank Wallace, lute, vihuela de mano, baritone
Gyre CD 10032

2001 **Schubert and Mertz**

Duo LiveOak
Nancy Knowles, soprano
Frank Wallace, 19th century guitar, baritone
Gyre CD 10022

2000 **Frank Wallace, his own new works**

Frank Wallace, classical guitar
Gyre CD 10012

1996 **Lanterns of Fire:**

Love and the Mystic in Renaissance Spain
LiveOak and Company
Grant Herreid, Jane Hershey, Nancy Knowles,
Frank Wallace, voices, viols, vihuelas de mano
Centaur Records CD - CRC 2316

1994 **The Lost Spindle**

*Theatrical Music from the Courts
of Ferdinand and Isabella*
(Re-issue - see below)
LiveOak and Company
Steven Yakutis, Nancy Knowles, Frank Wallace,

voices, flutes, psaltery, vihuelas de mano,
percussion
Musical Heritage Society
CD - 513558K

1992 **¡Ay de Mi!**

Music for Vihuela and Voice
Frank Wallace, baritone, vihuelas de mano
Centaur Records CD - CRC 2112

1992 **The Art of Flemish Song**

Duo LiveOak
Nancy Knowles, soprano, flute
Frank Wallace, baritone, vihuelas de mano
Centaur Records CD - CRC 2109

1989 **The Lost Spindle**

*Theatrical Music from the Courts of
Ferdinand and Isabella*
LiveOak and Company
Nancy Knowles, Frank Wallace,
Steven Yakutis, voices, flute, psaltery,
vihuela de mano, percussion
Titanic Records CD - TI 178

1983 **Don Alfonso the Wise**

Music of Medieval Spain
Trio LiveOak John Fleagle, Nancy Knowles,
Frank Wallace, voices, medieval strings
Titanic Records LP - MN 4

1982 **Star Shining on the Mountain**

Trio LiveOak
John Fleagle, Nancy Knowles, Frank
Wallace, voices, oud, cornetto, flute,
vihuela de mano, rebec, percussion
Titanic Records LP - MN 2

1978 **LiveOak Live**

LiveOak Consort
Michael Blackwell, Margot Chamberlain,
John Fleagle, Nancy Knowles, Frank
Wallace, voices, medieval and renaissance
instruments
Encina Records LP - 2037

Frank Wallace
His Own New Works v.1
GYRE 10012

reviewed by Stephen Griesgraber



It is easy to feel an intimate connection to the ethereal beauty of Frank Wallace's compositions not only because of their individual splendor, but also because of the lush tone and sensitive perfection with which Wallace executes his music. This disc features twenty tracks of Wallace's own compositions ranging from longer multimovement works such as *Quadrangle* and *Sweet Lady'slipper*, with the hauntingly beautiful *Pavane for a Dying Prince*, to shorter etudes and preludes from his *Sketches*. Wallace's writing reveals interests in early music, American folk music, and the blues, as well as a more contemporary language. His music also clearly reflects a thorough knowledge of the guitar's repertoire; the works sound idiomatic, though never to a fault, and his harmony and counterpoint bring out some of the richest sonorities that the guitar has to offer. This recording is a must own for anyone who is interested in discovering a brilliant collection of new repertoire performed by its composer, who happens to play with equal amounts of grace, sensitivity, and virtuosity.



Woman of the Water **Frank Wallace**

Although tons of people are writing art songs all the time, the genre rarely comes to mind as a well-spring of new music. Certainly most American music aficionados are aware of the wonderful songs of Ned Rorem, but for most new music fans the song is something of an anachronism or something best left to pop music. Sure, there are exceptions—like the recent political songs of Phil Kline—but these seem more about making connections to pop music than continuing the art song tradition.

Then there's New Hampshire-based Frank Wallace, for whom at times it seems not only did the 20th century not happen, neither did the 19th or the 18th. Imagine contemporary musical emancipation emanating out of John Dowland, rather than Richard Wagner, and you'll begin to get an idea of where this music is coming from. But, that's a terrible over-simplification, since his lute songs and guitar songs at times also hint at flamenco and Japanese koto traditions and at one point I thought I was hearing harmonies reminiscent of *Tristan*, plus the poetry he sets is mostly contemporary: Theodore Roethke, Robert Creeley, etc.

As Duo LiveOak, Wallace accompanies pure-voiced mezzo-soprano Nancy Knowles (who also has written many of the texts) and occasionally joins her in song with his baritone voice. Wait a minute? Isn't that starting to sound like a pop album, albeit an unplugged one? Perhaps this album is further proof of the meaninglessness of such terms as "classical" and "pop." Give it a listen for yourself and then decide if such distinctions still matter to you.

— Frank J. Oteri



Wallace *Sketches*

This recent release was sent to me for review, although it falls somewhat outside my usual purview. I am not especially fond of classical guitar music; hence I am not terribly knowledgeable about it. I was on the verge of simply discarding the disc, when my compulsive conscience coerced me to give it a fair listening. I must say I found it quite enjoyable, so I decided to bring it to your attention, with the explicit disclaimer that I presume no expertise in this area of the repertoire.

Frank Wallace is a versatile figure: Now in his mid 50's he was born in Houston, and studied at the San Francisco Conservatory. In addition to composing and playing the guitar (and lute), he also sings, functioning as half of what is known as Duo LiveOak. The other half is his wife, the soprano and poet Nancy Knowles, and they make their music available on the Gyre label (www.gyremusic.com).

Sketches comprises nearly 50 tiny pieces, collected into some nine different groupings based on fairly casual linkages. The music was composed between 1996 and 2004, and reflects the diverse influences of Medieval and Renaissance lute music, and an array of ethnic styles ranging from Spanish and gypsy music to some vernacular American flavors. What appeals to me about the disc is how well these influences are integrated into a varied and fairly eloquent language free of jarring incongruities, how consistently it displays an authentic expressive voice, and how high a standard of musical interest is maintained throughout the entire program. Furthermore, Wallace is clearly a master of this genre, and each selection demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the techniques and usages that show the guitar to best advantage. Wallace performs these pieces with flawless technical proficiency. My only reservation-and for me this is the limitation of the entire genre: despite its high aesthetic standards and expert execution, the music seems so inevitably destined to serve as aural wallpaper, i.e., its impact remains unalterably in the background. But I am aware that fanciers of guitar music feel otherwise. Highly recommended to *aficionados* of the genre.

Walter Simmons **Fanfare**, Nov/Dec 2005

Woman of the Water.
Duo LiveOak:
Nancy Knowles (soprano) and
Frank Wallace (guitar, lute, baritone)
(works by Wallace) © 2003 Gyre 10082

This is a very unusual recording. Not only does Frank Wallace play guitar or lute on this recording of original works, he also sings. He is an impressive talent in every respect; he is a strong guitarist, a composer with a distinct voice, and a confident vocalist.

The CD encompasses a broad range including both song cycles with guitar or lute accompaniments as well as guitar solos. The recording begins with a lute song that sounds as if it might have come from Elizabethan times, but for the fact that it includes two voices with lute accompaniment instead of one. Singing and accompanying himself seem to present no difficulty whatsoever for Wallace on this lovely song. The first guitar solo, *Dake's Song*, is dedicated to the Northwest luthier, Dake Traphagen. It is a brief and somber piece in the style of a lament, and is written to give the performer an opportunity to exploit the instrument's timbral qualities. The other solo, *Debil del Alba*, was written originally to accompany a dance but it is effective as a solo also. The piece has impressionistic elements including its use of repeated chords and whole tone scales.

The most ambitious compositions on this disc are the three song cycles, *A Single Veil*, *Bestiary*, and *Woman of the Water*. *Bestiary* includes musical representations of animals including a sloth, bear, cow, and a mole. The pieces are wonderfully expressive, at times humorous, and very entertaining. Wallace evokes the sloth's slow movements perfectly in the plodding rhythms of the opening song, and each successive characterization is equally adept. The most ambitious of the cycles is *Woman of the Water*, a cycle of nine songs set to the poetry of Theodore Roethke. Wallace's accompaniments for this cycle are on a ten-course lute rather than guitar, allowing for an extended range. The songs in this cycle are stark and intense, and the set progresses through a range of emotions from longing to anger to joy. Even though this cycle has a completely different character from *Bestiary*, it is as convincing.

Throughout this recording Wallace has as his partner soprano Nancy Knowles. Her voice is especially well suited to the guitar. She has a pure, unaffected delivery that delivers every text clearly and with conviction. This is a truly exceptional disc!

—James Reid

Classical Voice North Carolina

March 2004

Classical Voice North Carolina
online classical music journal

<http://www.cvnc.org/CDreviews.html>

Frank Wallace: *Woman of the Water*. Duo LiveOak (Nancy Knowles, (mezzo)soprano/poet, & Frank Wallace, baritone/guitar/lute). Gyre 10082 (<http://www.gyremusic.com/>). (59:51).

In over 25 years of writing about music on recordings and in concerts, I have rarely been as captivated and enchanted by any item, and particularly an item sent on spec, as this new CD from Duo LiveOak, a new – to me – ensemble established in 1976. The group was recommended to us by none other than Richard Motylinksi, the NCS' stellar percussionist, whose alter ego dwells in the era of early music – really early music. Don't be misled by the name, which may conjure up images of traditional music, for better or worse. This is a first-rate chamber music duo with a new and refreshing twist. Its artists are steeped in early music, and Wallace's songs and duets, deftly accompanied, evoke memories of our distant cultural past, ever so gently wrapped in occasional quasi-contemporary enhancements. Cynics might brand the Dowland-inspired results "cross-over"; would that all such products were as worthy as this one! The CD's only major drawback is its brevity, for it ends sooner than any reasonable person who hears it would wish. The texts are by Knowles, better-known authors including Rumi and Rothehe, and names that may not be as familiar – Shem Tov Ben Palquera, Eugène Guillevic, and Robert Creeley. Wallace accompanies himself (in two instances) and Knowles, wrapping the texts in music of exceptional beauty, using lute or guitar with the skill of a master. Two short pieces round out the CD, the chief attractions of which are three substantial groups of songs – "A Single Veil," a six-part guitar-accompanied set, "Bestiary," also consisting of six numbers and involving both vocalists with guitar, and the nine-number title work, "Women of the Water," for mezzo-soprano and lute. The CD opens with a moving duet with lute accompaniment, "Pearly Everlasting," written in memory of the Duo's former partner and co-founder, John Fleagle. The two solo guitar pieces are "Dake's Song," for guitar builder Dake Traphagen, and "Débil del Alba," the title of which comes from poet Pablo Neruda. All these works were composed between 2001 and 2003. HIP (that's "historically informed performance") readers will want to know that the instruments used are guitars by Ignacio Fleta (1964) and Traphagen (1997) and a lute by Joel van Lennep (1980). The recording venue was the Hillsborough (NH) Congregational Church. The CD comes with extensive notes and song texts (tucked into an inside pocket and easy to overlook), and the whole thing is in an environmentally friendly package (not a jewel box). Go for it!

Note: LiveOak performs tonight (3/21) in Raleigh. See our calendar for details.

John W. Lambert

Frank Wallace: his own new works, volume 1

Frank Wallace, guitar

gyre music © 2000

- Frank Wallace: From the Windy Place (The Pilgrim's Road, Sand and Sky, In the Shadow of the Church/The Gift), Sketches—Etude 7, The Stubborn Oak (Prelude, Adagio & Chorale, Fugue), Sketches—Prelude 1 & 4, Sweet Ladyslipper (Prelude, Pavane for a Dying Prince, Complainte, Estampie, Cantiga, Zar), Quadrangle (Prelude and Fantasy, Rhapsody, Meditation, Blues Too), Suite Blues

This recording of original compositions was written and played by Frank Wallace, who is an outstanding guitarist as this disc exemplified. He plays with authority, exhibits a great deal of acoustic presence, and offers clear, uncompromising musical ideas. The most enjoyable aspect of this recording is the sound of his guitar(s). His sound is simply wonderful and just hearing the quality of sounds he produces is total "guitar pleasure." Without regard to the effectiveness of his compositions, the tone of the guitar is luxurious.

Wallace's compositions are worthwhile and quite engaging. They sound idiomatic without being cliché-ridden or trite. He claims his works are not programmatic, but reading the liner notes and learning the context in which the pieces were composed adds significantly to the comprehension and enjoyment levels upon listening.

My personal favorites are Sweet Ladyslipper and Quadrangle. Both of these works would work well in concert for any competent performer and should become reasonably popular as the guitar world becomes familiar with them. As a potential encore piece, Suite Blues could be a nice addition to the encore repertoire. The weakest offerings are the excerpts from Sketches (Etude 7, Prelude 1 & 4). They struck me as underdeveloped sketches that seem out of place alongside his larger works.

This is certainly a disc worth acquiring. Not only is the guitar playing very good, but the repertoire presented is listenable and worth performing. Tuscany Publications is in the process of publishing Wallace's works and would be a worthwhile addition to any serious player's library and playlist.

Stephen Waechter

GFA Soundboard
(Guitar Foundation of America)

Summer 2001

WALLACE: *Guitar Works*

Frank Wallace—Gyre 10012—65 minutes

Frank Wallace is an accomplished lutenist and vihuelist, a specialist in medieval and Renaissance music, a self-accompanying singer, and a fine guitarist. As though this weren't versatility enough, he is also a composer, as this release of his solo guitar works demonstrates. The breadth of his musical activity recalls an earlier age, when a complete musician engaged in a broad range of creative activities as a matter of course.

The works are melodically attractive and rhythmically exuberant. His style is harmonically conservative, with a pervasive modal accent, though there are also moments of mild tonal daring, such as in the multi-movement works *Sweet Ladyslipper* and *Quadrangle*. In both of these pieces, and elsewhere on the program, one also encounters overt references to the blues, creating a blurring between popular and classical styles that no doubt results from Wallace's experience as a player of early music. His playing is solid and expressive, with a commitment to every phrase.

At its best, Wallace's music is exciting, unpredictable, and fresh, as in the 'Prelude and Fantasy' from *Quadrangle*. In its more introspective moments it can also be quite touching, as in several of the slow movements. In the less inspired passages, the music suffers from a harmonic sameness and lack of direction. Part of the tonal stasis stems from the idiomatic nature of the guitar writing, which consistently favors certain keys, such as E minor. In fact, nearly every piece on the recording is in a minor key. But these shortcomings are generally balanced by rhythmic vitality and by Wallace's charismatic playing. Guitarists will be interested to hear these pieces, and they will certainly appeal to a broad listening public.

RINGS

**FRANK WALLACE GUITAR
WORKS VOL. 1**

*From the Windy Place; Etude 7
(from Sketches); The Stubborn
Oak; Preludes 1 and 4 (from
Sketches); Sweet Ladyslipper;
Quadrangle; Suite Blues.*

Frank Wallace

Gyre Music: 10012

Classical Guitar Magazine

London, May 2001

Most of the titles in this totally self-penned CD have several movements, so there is a little over 65 minutes of music here. I must confess to not having heard this man's music before, so I was pleasantly surprised by such a large amount of quality music.

The recording is very lively, with just the right amount of reverberation and all the music has a very evocative quality that makes it compelling listening. The opening *From the Windy Place* is in three movements and has a certain melancholy Spanish quality in much of its passagework. If you think of Mompou's *Suite Compostelana*, you are quite close to the style of much of this work. *The Stubborn Oak* is another three-movement piece, this time based on a Shaker tune, and the first movement *Prelude* is a haunting piece that stays with you long after the CD has finished. *Sweet Ladyslipper* is in six movements and yet again has some lovely ideas in its marathon 25 minutes. Written for an ill friend who subsequently died, it runs through a variety of emotional moments and many varied styles before the final movement, entitled *Zar*, that is percussive, angry and a fitting conclusion to it all.

There is much to enjoy in this interesting CD, and it is admirably performed and recorded. One criticism would be that the majority of the material is in the minor key, and so after a long spell of unremitting minor key music I was beginning to long for a happy piece in a major key. Well, maybe they are on volume 2, which I nevertheless eagerly look forward to.

Chris Dumigan

Festival Highlights

Duo LiveOak's Performance*By Robert Margo*

Many of the best guitar ensembles are related by blood or marriage. The Duo Assad and the Katona Twins are examples of the former (brothers) and the Presti-Lagoya Duo is an example of the latter. Assuming the "fundamentals" (technique and musicianship) are right, growing up together or living together as a couple seems to impart an advantage. In some lines of work familiarity might breed contempt but not, it seems, on the guitar.



The husband and wife team of Frank Wallace (guitar, lute, and voice) and Nancy Knowles (voice) make up Duo LiveOak. They gave a superb afternoon concert at Wellesley's Jewett Auditorium. The concert was also notable in that all of the

music, some of it for solo guitar, was written by Frank Wallace.

The concert began with "Voices in the Dark" for baritone voice (Wallace's) and 10-course lute. Wallace has a wonderful baritone—dark, fast, agile, and never overbearing. The lute part was demanding throughout—one can only marvel how he can sing as well as he does and play the lute as well as he does, all at the same time. "Voices" was followed by "Woman of the Water," a premiere, for soprano and lute. Based on the work of the American poet Theodore Roethke, it had a mysterious quality that fit the poetry well. It, too, was sung superbly, this time by Knowles, with excellent diction, dramatic flair, great timing, and finely spun phrasing. The first half closed with a duet for soprano and baritone, "Pearly Everlasting," again performed simultaneously on the lute by Wallace.

The second half featured two of Wallace's compositions for solo guitar, the second of which ("Harlequin in Love") made a strong impression. It also featured another recent song cycle, "A Single Veil," based on poetry written at a workshop held at the duo's farm in southern New Hampshire, and another work based on Roethke's poetry, "Bestiary," for baritone, soprano, and guitar. These song cycles were also given outstanding performances.

If you have a chance to hear Duo LiveOak in concert, don't miss them. They are fully the equal of any of the best chamber ensembles active today. Wallace has developed a formidable compositional palette for voice and plucked string instruments, one that incorporates influences from early music to the latest avant-garde techniques. The twentieth century repertoire for voice and guitar includes many outstanding pieces by some of the century's best known composers (for example, Britten, Rodrigo, and Walton). Wallace's work in this genre stands up well to the competition.



Frank Wallace
guitarist, baritone, composer

photograph by Elsa Voelcker

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