



Gonzalo Bergara **Porteña Soledad**

For years, friends and fans have begged Gonzalo Bergara to record. Finally, he has a debut CD - and it's been worth the wait.

Bergara hails from Argentina but is based in California. Both locales infuse his music; a nostalgic melancholy weaves through, a lasting impression of Buenos Aires and a rainy day tango in the district of Palermo, perhaps. At the same time, there's a wide open sense of possibilities - the other side of the coin, thanks to the wonders of California.

Bergara has honed his chops as John Jorgenson's rhythm guitarist of choice over the past several years. And Jorgenson lends clarinet to one track here. But still, Bergara's music is all his own,

There are no covers of Django tunes, no overplayed American jazz or Gypsy jazz classics. Instead, there are all originals - and they are the better and more intriguing for that.

The album kicks off with the rol-licking swing of "B-612", displaying Bergara's hot licks, just in case you had any doubts. With his playing established, he then moves off to explore other avenues. "Elena's Bossa" rides a stylish Latin rhythm while "Charcos" is an introspective, bluesy ballad. Throughout out, the emphasis is on musicality. His playing is virtuosic, sure. But there is so much more.

The album ends on a sentimental note with the title track, which recalls nuevo tanguero Astor Piazzolla's Verano Porteño suite, an ode to the moods of Buenos Aires. Coco Trivisonno adds Bandoneon along with Benedikt Brydern's violin, and with Bergara's Gypsy guitar leading the way, they create a glorious and lasting melody.

In all, this album is a masterpiece of a new kind of Gypsy Jazz, taking Django's work as a starting point for creating very personal music. - *Michael Dregni*