



Mara! meets Marais

Mara! and The Marais Project

Pierre Bouteiller ♣ John Dowland ♣ Marin Marais ♣ Martin Codax

“A remarkable, genre -defying CD that brings together some of Australia's most innovative musicians.”

‘Mara! meets Marais’ unites the talents of three members of the renowned World Music ensemble, Mara! (Mara Kiek - voice, Steve Elphick, double bass and Llew Kiek bouzouki & gittern) and Australia's masters of the viola da gamba repertoire, The Marais Project, (Belinda Montgomery voice, Tommie Andersson renaissance lute & theorbo and Jennifer Eriksson and Catherine Upex viola da gamba).

The collaboration is built around Mara Kiek's re-working of a hauntingly beautiful 13th century song cycle, Cantigas de Amigo, by Portuguese troubadour, Martin Codax. Music fans have associated Kiek with the Cantigas since her original acclaimed 1987 UK recording of the songs with her award-winning ensemble Sinfonye.

“Over the past 25 years my influences have greatly broadened through engagement with Eastern European folk music, world music and jazz, the synthesis of which I've explored through the Mara! band and the Martensita Choir”, Mara related, “So I felt very comfortable including bassist Steve Elphick as part of the Codax arrangement along, of course, with Jenny Eriksson and the fantastic musicians of The Marais Project who I've known for years and respect deeply.”

Virtuoso viola da gambist and founder of The Marais Project, Jennifer Eriksson, has similarly felt the need to explore music and collaborations outside the realm of traditional early music.

“Almost from the beginning of The Marais Project I knew I did not want to get stuck just playing mainstream viola da gamba repertoire. For this reason, alongside our core repertoire we've worked with jazz pianist Kevin Hunt, commissioned and recorded many new works and performed arrangements of songs as diverse as Padam, Padam, made famous by Piaf, and more recently, even The Chattanooga Choo Choo!” “The Codax provided another wonderful and rewarding challenge.”

Mara! and The Marais Project first appeared together in 2008 and followed this up with a single, intense day of recording the Codax and several other works at the ABC's Ultimo studios under ABC Producer Andre Shrimski. “I will never forget that session”, Eriksson mused, “We worked incredibly hard and the level of engagement between the musicians was inspiring”. Mara Kiek agrees, “It was a great day and we captured so much of what we wanted to do in first takes which is very rare.”

‘Mara! meets Marais’ is available from: www.maraisproject.com.au and www.maramusic.com.au



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