

PRESS REVIEWS

- **Neue Musikzeitung, 09/2026 - 75th Volume**

New Sheet Music 2025/09 – Mixed Instrumentation from Duo to Sextet

Rafael Catalá: Triage. Piano Trio No. 1

Author: Stefan Drees

Rafael Catalá: Triage. Piano Trio No. 1 (2021)

Verlag Neue Musik Berlin. NM 4319 (Score and parts)

Style and General Character:

Due to its unpredictable shifts between sharp and raw, melodically intense, or sonically fleeting moments, this tonally conceived music undergoes a constant change of expression, communicating itself as a tension-filled oscillation between opposites.

Form and Structure:

The composition consists of sections following one another without transition, which can be assigned to four movements. Although characteristic moods dominate in each of these parts of the work, the music is generally infused with many surprising turns.

Notation, Duration, and Difficulty:

The piece contains several effectively deployed extended playing techniques, the notation and execution of which are explained in a brief preface.

Duration: approx. 19 minutes

Level of difficulty: difficult

Commentary:

The piano trio combines the virtuosic character of three individual voices into a harmonious overall result, in which individual interpretative freedom balances the demand for rhythmically precise, sonically balanced interaction.

- **Triage. Zadig Trio, Paris June 7, 2025. Singer-Polignac Festival. Medici TV**

<https://www.medici.tv/fr/concerts/the-trio-zadig-performs-catala-schumann-mendelssohn-festival-singer-polignac-2025>

"Triage" by Rafael Catalá is a work that shakes up our reference points. Its incisive, sometimes raw, sometimes evanescent language plunges us into a living, unpredictable soundscape. Playing this music means accepting the loss of footing, allowing the unexpected to emerge.

Zadig Trio: "'Triage' by Rafael Catalá is a work that shakes our accustomed points of reference. Its sharp, at times raw, and then again fleeting language leads us into a vivid, unpredictable world of sound. To play this music means losing your grip and letting the unexpected emerge."

- **ORF Radio Steiermark (Recorded on January 25, 2022, in the Stephaniensaal of Congress Graz)**

Kultur Spezial – Edition of January 30

Side by Side: A Chamber Music Evening of a Special Kind

• **Kleine Zeitung, Jan 27, 2022.**

Journey into the Unknown

Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, and Catalá in the KUG Subscription Series.

"Side by Side" is the name of the concert format at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, which brings together students and faculty in chamber music works. This time, the piano trio "Triage" by the Spanish-Styrian composer and instrumentalist Rafael Catalá Sr. was among the pieces heard in Graz's Stefaniensaal. In the introductory talk with Ulla Pilz, Catalá describes composing for himself as an "uncertain journey where I often do not know where it will end." In his dynamic work for violin, cello, and piano, Maija Karklina-Kern, Ivan Glebov, and Rafael Catalá Salvá shifted between dense unity and loose support among one another.

The dense shimmering image of Prokofiev's Overture on Hebrew Themes, Op. 34, was followed in the second part by Tchaikovsky's String Sextet in D minor. The formation of professors and students, featuring the sensitive Jevgenijs Cepoveckis on first violin, placed the unifying power of this "Souvenir de Florence" as an immovable pillar at the center of their interpretation.

• **ORF Radio Steiermark (Recorded on January 29, 2022, in the Hugo-Wolf-Saal of the Leibnitz Cultural Center)**

Edition of February 13

Radio Steiermark on Sunday – Kultur Spezial Concert

Violin, Violoncello & Piano – A Young Piano Trio Introduces Itself

The ensemble "Triade," founded two years ago by three young students from the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, selected a program of piano trio compositions by Haydn, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Henze, and Catalá (Triage) for its "home game" as part of the Leibnitz.KULT events.

• **Meerschein Concerts / Styriarte**

Kleine Zeitung, March 11, 2025

"Mare Nostrum": A sensitive mix for the finale

"Even as a trio, Catalá, Ambrosini, and Coskun effortlessly managed to captivate the audience with their sensitive Western-Eastern Mediterranean mix spanning from the 16th century to the present."

Kronen Zeitung, March 11, 2025

Minoritensaal Graz: Música Ibérica at the Meerschein Concerts

From one sea to another

"Excuse me? A Swedish nyckelharpa playing Spanish Baroque music? Curb your outrage: the Trio Música Ibérica knows exactly what it is doing. The group transforms Gallardas, Fandangos, or Folias from Iberia—originally written for solo guitar—into small sonic jewelry boxes in their arrangements: winding runs on the guitar by Rafael Catalá merge with the buzzing bowed tone of Marco Ambrosini on the aforementioned nyckelharpa. Discreetly yet thoroughly innovative, the musicians span the framework from one sea to another: a Baroque Recercada by Diego Ortiz is shipped off to Latin America by means of rumba, while the Turkish percussionist Murat Coşkun drums up the Orient. His sonic language on the various frame drums is so tightly clocked and species-rich in its originality! The conclusion of the sea voyage: an Italian tarantula bite."

- **Pizzicato Magazine**

Baroque Associations

13/06/2024

Mare nostrum; Rafael Catala: Mediterraneo; Francisco Guerau: Trece Diferencias de Gallarda; Santiago de Murcia: Fandango, Villanos, La Jota; Folias Gallegas; Alessandro Piccinini: Toccata VI; Giovanni Kapsberger: Canario; Gaspar Sanz: Preludio; Marizapalos; Jacaras; Zarabanda; Canarios; Diego Ortiz: Recercada alla Rumba; Musica Iberica, Rafael Catalá; # Christophorus CHR77478; Recording 05.2023, Release 07.06.2024 (57'42) – Review by Norbert Tischer

The Spanish guitarist Rafael Catalá combines guitar, oriental frame drums, the Swedish nyckelharpa and a baroque violone and mixes baroque lute music with elements of Spanish dances, enriched with oriental rhythms and elements of improvisation. The result is an original CD with unfamiliar sounds, freer and more idiosyncratic than what a Jordi Savall had to say on the same subject with a different and more authentic approach.

- **SWR Kultur Alte Musik**

New CDs Presented by Bettina Winkler

Broadcast: July 28, 2024, 4:04 PM | Editors: Dr. Bettina Winkler

Production: SWR 2024

Guitarist Rafael Catalá, percussionist Murat Coskun, nyckelharpa player Marco Ambrosini, and violone player Jan Krigovský—together they are the ensemble Música Ibérica, and "Mare Nostrum" is the name of their first joint CD on the Christophorus label.

And here, the four performers combine very different musical elements into a fascinating sonic concoction: 16th-century music with flamenco rhythms and Catalá's own motifs and melodies. As if through an umbilical cord, 500 years of musical culture are tied together—a successful experiment full of vitality and momentum.

This album also scores points with its mysterious sounds, played in a thrilling and exciting manner by four thoroughbred musicians who take joy in improvising and combining.

- **Ö1 Introduced**

Music from the Mediterranean and the Middle Ages

The musical confluence of two new releases: "Mare Nostrum" by the Ensemble Musica Ibérica and "Ostium" by flutist Dimitris Kountouras

July 11, 2024, 11:30 AM

Equally Mediterranean and drawing from a sea of past melodies, the new album "Mare Nostrum" takes shape. Lute and guitar compositions from the 16th and 17th centuries are skillfully fanned out here: accompanied by Oriental percussion, Spanish and classical guitars, the medieval nyckelharpa, and the historical violone resonate. Occasionally, guitarist Rafael Catalá also enriches his arrangements of historical music with elements of Flamenco.

Service

Current recordings:

"Mare Nostrum"

Featuring music by Francisco Guerau (1649–1722), Santiago de Murcia (1682–1732), Alessandro Piccinini (1566–1639), Giovanni Kapsberger (1580–1651), Gaspar Sanz (1640–1710), Diego Ortiz (1510–1558)

Rafael Catalá (guitar), Musica Ibérica
Christophorus

• **Radio Steiermark on Sunday – From the World of Music**

September 9, 2025

The New, the Beautiful, the Unknown – Guitarist Rafael Catalá's new CD "Mare Nostrum"

Hosted by: Werner Ranacher

New CD by Rafael Catalá & Música Ibérica

• **"Mare Nostrum", Bizarre Ocean Sounds at Seggau Castle**

June 27, 2024, 11:01 AM

The numerous visitors at the latest Seggau Castle Matinee were gifted with bizarre ocean sounds by the ensemble "Mare Nostrum". Their new, globally released CD was also presented.

LEIBNITZ.

It is thanks to Rafael Catalá that the Seggau Castle Matinees, organized by LeibnitzKult, have now gained recognition far beyond district borders, with almost every date being completely sold out. This time, the artistic director of the Seggau Castle Matinees and outstanding guitarist stood on stage himself with the group "Mare Nostrum" in the historic wine cellar of Seggau Castle.

The top-class musicians, celebrated throughout Europe—Murat Coşkun (Oriental percussion, overtone singing), Marco Ambrosini (keyed fiddle), Jan Krigovský (violone), and Rafael Catalá (guitars)—took the visitors on a very special musical journey to the Mediterranean. And the hearts of classical music fans were truly warmed, even though the cool temperatures in the wine cellar demanded everything from the musicians.

Iberian, Oriental, Adriatic

It quickly became clear that this was a very special matinee. With these exceptional musicians, the shores of the Mediterranean expanded, revealing its most diverse faces: Iberian, Oriental, Adriatic, and more.

With incredible sensitivity, the ensemble immersed itself into the world of early to late Baroque and Flamenco. This included the unique variety of frame drums and other percussion instruments of Oriental origin by Murat Coşkun, occasionally garnished with overtone singing; the mysterious sound of the keyed fiddle—the nyckelharpa—by Marco Ambrosini, like a magical call from times long past; the 400-year-old violone of Jan Krigovský, caressing like a deeply touching breeze; and the guitar of Rafael Catalá, embedded between Flamenco sounds and Mediterranean chants.

• **NÖ Nachrichten (Lower Austria News)**

Eckartsau Castle

"Mare Nostrum" Opened the Castle Concerts

The 49th Eckartsau Castle Concerts opened with the program "Mare Nostrum". In a fully packed Imperial Hall (*Kaisersaal*), a top-class ensemble ensured an impressive start to the concert series.

The 49th Eckartsau Castle Concerts kicked off brilliantly on April 26 at Eckartsau Castle. The opening concert was titled "Mare Nostrum" and led the audience musically into southern and Iberian soundscapes. The Imperial Hall was filled to the very last seat.

Guitarist Rafael Catalá presented works whose roots reach far into the past. The pieces were specially arranged by him for the ensemble and convinced through their sonic diversity and expressiveness. The warm, southern-influenced melodies shaped the character of the evening.

Historical Instruments and Virtuoso Playing

Jan Krigovsky caused amazement in the audience on the violone, a precursor to the violoncello. With great virtuosity, he gave the historical instrument a special presence and contributed significantly to the ensemble's unique timbre.

Another highlight was delivered by Marco with his virtuoso playing on the nyckelharpa. This rare

stringed instrument, which had been widespread in many parts of Europe since the Middle Ages and is today mainly played in Scandinavia, gave the concert an extraordinary touch.

Percussion and Overtone Singing as Highlights

Murat Coskun brought a wide palette of percussion instruments to life. His playing felt almost magical and complemented the ensemble in an impressive way. His overtone singing also left a particular impression, holding the Imperial Hall in rapt attention.

- **"MÚSICA IBERICA"**

Rarities Under the Walnut Tree

(Walther Neumann, *Kleine Zeitung*, June 21, 2021)

"After the crowd of listeners took their seats under the mighty walnut tree, the top-class instrumental quartet began to play in front of the bell tower. In the Iberian-flavored program, the adoptive Spaniard Luigi Boccherini provided a promising introduction with a 'música nocturna madrileña'. Credit for the expertly adapted program variety, featuring works by the likes of Santiago de Murcia, Gaspar Sanz, and Diego Ortiz, goes to guitarist, composer, and arranger Rafael Catalá. The other fellow musicians offered an instrumental panopticon: alongside Ján Krigovský on the six-string violone, the Italian Marco Ambrosini stole the show on his nyckelharpa; finally, percussionist Murat Coskun left a further stamp on the proceedings with self-built drums and the ringing of bells."

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"EL SILENCIO IMPOSIBLE"

Remy Franck

Pizzicato, April 2020

Atmospheric Program of Silence

El silencio imposible (The Impossible Silence) is highlighted as an intimate, stylistic musical program featuring works by John Dowland and Georg Friedrich Händel alongside striking Sephardic songs, praised for the countertenor's warm timbre and the ensemble's expressive instrumentation. © 2020 Pizzicato. (The full review can be found in the referenced documents).

Charles Brewer, American Record Guide, April 2020

American Record Guide

Atmospheric Program of Silence

The recording features an eclectic mix of styles, opening with John Dowland's 'From Silent Night' arranged for countertenor, cello, and guitar with jazz interludes. The centerpiece is Rafael Catalá's contemporary, dissonant work 'El Silencio Imposible', combining multiphonics and sprechstimme.

Ö1 Des Cis from April 8, 2020. Andreas Maurer

Shh!

Music of silence with the Eratos Trio.

The Eratos Trio (Nicholas Spanos, Rafael Catalá, Florian Eggner) addresses everyday noise through a live CD spanning Dowland, Handel, and Sephardic songs, blending chamber music with a homage to peace and contemplation.

World Music in the Best Sense

Kleine Zeitung Steiermark, Jan 15, 2018, Eva Schulz

Rafael Catalá, Jan Krigovsky, and Murat Coskun demonstrated free mastery of genres at the Meerscheinschlössl, opening with Diego Ortiz and blending early music with Dowland and Piazzolla under the motto "Come again".

Guitar Foundation of America, Soundboard XXXV, No.3

Rafael Catalá contributes significantly to the classical guitar with exquisite tone colors, daring innovation, and a dynamic performance style driven by improvisation and musical variety.

Classical Guitar, London.

Catalá's performance was ravishing, brilliant, and convincing, supported by a royal technique and exciting dynamic ideas.

ABC, Madrid.

The Valencian guitarist and composer combines a Mediterranean background with a Central European education, ennobling the music with his subtle timbre.

Levante, Valencia.

Teresa Berganza and Rafael Catalá inspired deep passions at the Tokyo Opera Concert Hall, where Catalá performed solo works by Falla and Tárrega.

Ad Qouds, Jerusalem.

The Spanish artist captivated the audience with his musical maturity and sensitivity.

Art of the Record, Tokyo.

Catalá demonstrates a secure technique, great temperament, and rare expressive interpretation.

Orpheum Graz, Austria.

Alongside classical pieces, Catalá won over the packed Orpheum with his own compositions, joined by percussionist Roger Blàvia and bassist Albert Kreuzer.

Codaex, Belgium.

Catalá translates his feelings into perceptible sounds, accompanied by subtle percussion and double bass lyricism.

- **MUSIC FESTIVAL: Journey to the South**

- **MAZ/POTSDAM -**

Once you have heard Flamenco played by Rafael Catalá and Rafael Bonavita, you wouldn't want to hear it any other way. Flamenco has many faces. Sometimes it sounds joyful, as in the Caracoles danced only by women, and sometimes dark and solemn, like the oldest style, the Seguiriyas. In the New Chambers (Neue Kammern), the foundational instrument of this music took center stage: the guitar. No castanets, no singers, no dancers. Catalá and Bonavita brought together traditional pieces and their own compositions to present Flamenco as a virtuoso art form, far beyond any cliché. And they truly succeeded. Performing solo and in two-part harmony, they played pieces by the gifted guitarist Santiago de Murcia (1682-1732) and songs by his contemporary Gaspar Sanz, as well as a Soléa by Ramón Montoya (1880-1949).

The baroque guitarist Bonavita and the flamenco virtuoso Catalá are both constantly searching for new forms of expression for their instruments. They experiment with compositions, layering two dances from different centuries over one another to create something entirely new. Catalá's own composition, an improvisation in the form of a Seguiriya, sounds like a session of "free jazz meets flamenco." One thing became clear that evening: classical guitar music, and not just flamenco, is Spain's contribution to international music history. (By Sonja Bördner and Antje Rößler)

- **St. Florian Monastery: Fiori Musicali – Opening Concert with Rafael Bonavita and Rafael Catalá, guitar, May 2nd**

OÖN Rating: *****

On Sunday morning, Rafael Bonavita and Rafael Catalá, two Spanish stars of classical, baroque, and flamenco guitar, opened the 10th Fiori Musicali Festival. The tension between baroque music and the here and now also fascinates Rafael Catalá, who clearly sees the roots of later Flamenco in 17th and 18th-century Spanish guitar music. Thus, the highly rhythmic dances of the Baroque era were connected with modern ones. This creates occasionally highly interesting combinations, which became all the more gripping because two exceptional musicians were at work here. Plenty of applause for an atmospheric and, at the same time, educational concert.

- **Matinée classique, Kissinger Winterzauber**

"(...) following two perfectly interlocking dances by Santiago de Murcia, Bonavita and Catalá beautifully illustrated the true essence of the 'Folia' (...)"

(Thomas Ahnert, Saale Zeitung, January 11, 2011)

- **Freistil, 4-2015**

"..On this trio's journey, the boundaries between conventional genres like classical and jazz dissolve, becoming permeable, atmospheric, and immediate. Tones that seem somehow familiar yet fresh are enticingly offered. Indeed, more than that, one is directly addressed, sung to, and invited both to linger and to dance. A breeze of flamenco also blows along the journey, generating a unique blend of a very special kind, mixed by three ingenious musical 'alchemists'. Anyone who has never been a nomad will likely want to become one after listening to this CD. Listen to it and set off into a country that is beautifully unfamiliar yet intimate."