

BRAITHWAITE & KATZ

Communications

NEWS RELEASE

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New York-Based Composer/Guitarist Ken Hatfield Releases Book/CD *12 Preludes for Solo Guitar*

Available July 15 on Arthur Circle Music

“Ken Hatfield can easily be called the modern day Fernando Sor.” – Gene Bertoncini

“It’s a treat to stumble across fresh guitar sounds and novel concepts, and guitarist Ken Hatfield offers both... Hatfield’s playing is brainy, dynamic, and relentlessly melodic.”

– Andy Ellis, *Guitar Player*

“There’s something different about Hatfield, whose name I’d never run across until his publicist sent me this CD [*String Theory*]; it’s a name we’d all be seeing, if justice ruled the music biz.”

– Fred Kaplan, *The Absolute Sound*

Award-winning composer and guitarist **KEN HATFIELD**’s *12 Preludes for Solo Guitar* (Arthur Circle Music) exhibits the imagination, creativity, and formidable technique that have become Ken’s trademark and have earned him widespread recognition as a musician of extraordinary talent and originality. In 2006 the ASCAP Foundation honored Ken with its prestigious Vanguard Award in recognition of his “innovative and distinctive music that is charting new directions in jazz.” Ken’s new book/CD *12 Preludes for Solo Guitar* provides a captivating glimpse into his musical world for fans and fellow guitarists alike.

Some may question releasing a book/CD package in the digital age. Given that composers naturally want other musicians to perform their works, and considering how—from Sergei Rachmaninoff to Thelonious Monk—composers’ performances of their own works have often been revealing, insightful, and enjoyable, Hatfield has chosen this format for his latest release. Although the book and CD are sold together, fans can also purchase the CD separately, exclusively at www.kenhatfield.com

While Ken is best known as a jazz musician, his choice of the classical guitar as his primary instrument and his many compositional commissions have found him with a foot frequently planted in the classical world. This dual musical personality has become a prominent enough feature of Hatfield’s recent compositional work that some now associate him with the Third Stream musical movement championed by the late Gunther Schuller. In many respects *12 Preludes for Solo Guitar* is as much an embodiment of this musical dual citizenship as it is a reflection of the guitar’s unique harmonic capacities in a solo acoustic context.

Preludes are one of the earliest examples of a style or form developed specifically for instrumental music. Historically, they have served as introductions, at least until Chopin began writing *stand-alone* preludes. In their stand-alone capacity, Ken’s preludes belong to Chopin’s tradition.

There is a long established practice of improvising preludes. Classical musicians of earlier eras routinely improvised preludes as introductions to larger movements or pieces, just as many jazz musicians today improvise introductions to the standards that make up a large part of their repertoire. Hatfield’s preludes are designed to use these traditions as a springboard to explore harmonic ideas and relationships, as

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well as techniques and the sonorities of the nylon string guitar, while investigating a variety of styles and forms ranging from Baroque (Prelude 3), to Samba in 3 (Prelude 6), to blues-based forms and content (Prelude 4), to rhapsodic serenades (Prelude 11), to modern uses of dissonance and odd meters (Prelude 9). The results will enchant both player and listener.

Besides their pedagogical value, these preludes also reflect an ongoing concern that Hatfield has addressed in much of his recent compositional work—the nexus between the through composed and the improvised, and how any distinction between the two is perceived by one listening to a recorded performance. While at one level such concerns are about process, it is through such explorations of process that these preludes came into existence. Some of them feel like improvisations, while others feel like recited works. It is in the places where these approaches reveal themselves to be far less divergent than is often assumed, that the inspiration for these marvelous musical gems originated.

Sometimes tragedy can be the impetus for creative catharsis. Many in the guitar world, including Ken, were shocked and saddened by the untimely passing of world-renowned luthier Thomas Humphrey in 2008. In some very real ways, the remarkable 1991 Humphrey Millennium guitar that Ken plays on the recording of these preludes inspired their creation as a testament to the genius of his late friend.

Many things are required to create a musical project like this one. Everything from inspiration to hard work to the application of skills and knowledge must come together. Yet in the final analysis the music must speak for itself. Any and all who listen attentively will find that these 12 Preludes speak as eloquently of life and love as they do of joy and loss.

KEN HATFIELD's compositional experience covers a wide range of styles and instrumentations. In addition to composing jazz works for his own ensembles, he has written chamber pieces that range from solo classical guitar to mixed ensembles of various sizes. He has composed choral works and ballet scores, including commissioned works for Judith Jamison, the Washington Ballet Company, and the Maurice Béjart Ballet Company. And he has written scores for television and film, including Eugene Richards' award-winning documentary, *but, the day came*. Arthur Circle Music has published six books of Hatfield's compositions, and in 2005 Mel Bay published his book *Jazz and the Classical Guitar: Theory and Application*, which is designed to demonstrate Ken's unique approach to playing jazz on a classical guitar. Ken has released nine CDs as a leader on the Arthur Circle Music label. All feature him performing his original compositions, five in ensemble settings.

In addition to performing as a solo artist and with his ensembles at prestigious venues such as The JVC Jazz Festival, The Knitting Factory, The Classic American Guitar Show, The Smithsonian Jazz Café, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the Whitney Sculpture Court, and the North Wales International Jazz Guitar Festival, Hatfield has performed and/or recorded with artists and ensembles as diverse as The New York Pops, Charlie Byrd, Jack McDuff, Chico Hamilton, Jimmy McGriff, Charles Aznavour, Bob Cranshaw, Grady Tate, Harold Mabern, Marcus Miller, Kenny Kirkland, Dom Salvador, Claudio Roditi, João Donato, Duduka da Fonseca, Marlena Shaw, and Toni Braxton.

www.kenhatfield.com

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Books, CDs, JPEGs available.

CD available separately, exclusively at www.kenhatfield.com