

Mak Grgic

Guitarist



Touted as a “gifted young guitarist” by the *New York Times*, and “a guitarist to keep an eye on” by the *Washington Post*, **Mak Grgic** [GER-gich] is a star on the worldwide stage. An expansive and adventurous repertoire attests to his versatility and wide-ranging interests. From the ethnic music of his native Balkans to extreme avant-garde and microtonal music, his roles as soloist, collaborator, and recording artist are fueled by curiosity, imagination, and boundless energy. As a testament to his versatility and wide-ranging appeal, in 2018 **MAK** was invited by legendary singer-songwriter k.d. lang to perform as the opening act for the North American leg of her *Ingénue Redux* Tour.

As both soloist and collaborator, **MAK** averages eighty-five performances a year — nearly two bookings per week. He is a founding member and active performer in two duos—the Flamenco-style “Duo Deloro” with Adam Del Monte, and the new music-focused “FretX Duo” with Daniel Lippel, guitarist of the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE). As Young Artist in Residence with the Da Camera Society of Los Angeles, he founded “DC8,” an octet declared “an inspiring addition to the contemporary music landscape in Los Angeles [*Los Angeles Times*].” Other ongoing collaborations include the JACK Quartet, The Assad Brothers, violinists Augustin Hadelich, Martin Chalifour and Chee Yun, and cellists Jay Campbell, Joshua Roman, John Sant’Ambrogio, and Clive Greensmith, formerly of the Tokyo String Quartet, as well as a residency with the Slovenian Philharmonic.

In 2009 at the age of 22, **MAK** made his professional debut in Russia, performing the Rodrigo *Concierto de Aranjuez* with the St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra under Vladimir Lande. The following spring, while on tour in the U.S. with the Zagreb Guitar Quartet, he performed with Christopher McGuire, guitarist and artistic director of the Allegro Guitar Series in Austin, Texas. That summer, at the Lancaster Festival in Ohio, he performed Rodrigo’s *Fantasia para un Gentilhombre* with the Festival Orchestra, as well as Boccherini’s famous *Introduction et Fandango* with the Festival String Quartet.

MAK makes two regular tours to Asia each season and performs in Europe every other month. Recent engagements include performances and residencies at the Musikverein and the Konzerhaus in Vienna; several venues in Portugal; Teatro Cervantes de Bejar in Castilla-Leon/Spain; the Sarajevo Music Academy; several venues in Slovenia; the Paris Guitar Foundation; Zurich University of the Arts; and the Hong Kong International Guitar Festival.

In North America, he has performed at Austin Classical Guitar; Beyond Microtonal Music Festival/Pittsburgh; the Dallas Opera for performances of Peter Maxwell Davies’s *The Lighthouse*; Dumbarton Concerts/Washington, D.C.; Kitchener-Waterloo/Ontario; Mainly Mozart/San Diego; the National Gallery of Art; NAMM Show/California; Strathmore Hall/Maryland; the New York Classical Guitar Society; Triangle Guitar Society/North Carolina; and numerous other venues and guitar societies across the globe.

An enthusiastic recording artist, **MAK**’s albums capture a probing and continuous exploration of the world of guitar and all its possibilities. His latest recordings, “Balkanisms” for Naxos Music and “MAKrotonal” for MicroFest Records, explore a vast repertoire spanning ethnic music, microtonal, new music and early music on re-fretted instruments, such as a “zig-zag fretted Bach prototype guitar” that captures the temperaments of the Baroque period. **MAK** is also featured on another Naxos release “La Buena Vida”, with flamenco guitarist Adam del Monte. Other albums in progress include an homage to Ligeti, spotlighting gamelan-inspired guitar arrangements, “City of

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Angels," Mak's first recording of his own compositions, and on the Avie label, an all-concerto recording including Rodrigo's "Concierto de Aranjuez" and "Balkan Suite," a new concerto based on music from "Balkanisms."

Also an active entrepreneur and educator, **MAK** is director of several organizations including the European Guitar Festival Collaborative; the Zagreb Guitar Festival; Roots & Notes Interactive Music Festival in Croatia; EuroStrings, a consortium of seventeen guitar festivals in Europe; and Music@Rush Hour in Los Angeles. He serves as an adjunct faculty member at Mount St. Mary's University in Los Angeles, and director of the Elemental Guitar in Santa Monica, a program designed especially for young people. As a response to the Covid-19 pandemic, he founded the Virtual Guitar Orchestra, gathering 500 guitarists from more than 50 countries to date. VGO is a community-oriented project, recognized by the Library of Congress for its cultural contributions. Additionally, he co-created a virtual Eurostrings festival, connecting guitar festivals from seventeen European countries.

Born in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in 1987, **MAK** studied guitar in Zagreb with the revered Ante Cagalj at the Elly Basic Music Academy. By the age of 14, he was balancing his world champion status in karate with his love for the guitar. Throughout his high school years, he concertized in Ljubljana and Zagreb, splitting his weeks between the two cities, as well as competing in professional martial arts contests across Europe and Asia. Following an injury to his left thumb, he made the decision to focus solely on a career in music, going on to complete a bachelor's degree with Alvaro Pierri at the University for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna.

Pursuing advanced studies in the U.S., **MAK** was one of the first students to apply for USC Thornton's new Arts Leadership graduate program, which he incorporated into his doctoral studies in guitar. He has been a student of William Kanengiser and Scott Tennant of the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, in addition to Brian Head, artistic director of Guitar Foundation of America. In the fall of 2017, he began the Artist Diploma program at USC, the first guitarist in the university's history to be admitted to this elite program.

MAK plays and endorses an array of outstanding concert guitars made by diverse craftsmen, including German Antonius Müller, Chinese master luthier, Hanson Yao, Bosnian Slavko Mrdalj, Slovenian Samo Sali, as well as a 1966 José Ramírez, all of these in addition to other re-fretted and remodeled guitars.

MAK Grgic is also proud to be involved with the Bosana Foundation, an organization that raises money for Bosnian youth. He also regularly awards education-furthering scholarships to select students across South America.

www.makgrgic.com

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"...a superb, finely detailed reading that showed Grgic is a guitarist to keep an eye on."

THE WASHINGTON POST



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