

## IMPROVISATION ON PREPARED GUITAR

*Marco Cappelli*

*classic amplified guitar, uboingee and live electronic*

*Improvisations on Prepared Guitar* is a synthesis of what Marco Cappelli gained after several years of interaction with the avantgarde New York scene, as interpreter, band leader, session man and improviser active in the Big Apple: a work in progress always updated.

This program is remarkable for the use of unusual instruments, such as a classical guitar with 8 sympathetic strings and the metal/spring guitar “uboingee” (created by Mark Stewart).



**The UBOINGEE** was born thanks to the creativity of Mark Stewart, whom I have involved in the EGP (Extreme Guitar Project). When I met Mark in New York I didn't know that he was, in addition to an extraordinary musician (guitar and cello player) whom I knew through the records of Bang on a Can, a clever "inventor of musical instruments." We have spent hours together improvising, several times during my visits to New York, in the chaotic space he lives and works in the Lower East Side, using any type of "deviltry" created by his musical and mechanical genius. In the end, when it was time for him to write, he was very busy with the rehearsals for the historic reunion of Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel, being the band's guitarist and artistic director. Thus confirming his originality, Mark thought to interpret my commission by giving me the score of his ETUDE #1 and also his UBOINGI – or guitar with springs - with the recommendation to introduce his music with one of my improvisations: I had asked for a masterpiece created by his genius, and his interpretation seemed to me absolutely exceptional. The time came that I had to return his instrument, and after having listened to the recording of my execution, Mark insisted that I had my own UBOINGI, offering to cover all the expenses with the commission he had received for my piece. It was a case of immense generosity, and I will never stop to be grateful. As I am grateful to Glenn Wyllie – creator of the wood keyboard - and to Uli Schempp – blacksmith and inventor of the body in metal. The results are still unknown but yet promising.

When young the **Extreme Guitar** was a "humble but honest" Yahiri 90 for studio playing, an instrument made in Japan; the first guitar of some value that my parents gave me as a present when still in high school after having successfully passed the school year. The first few years it was an object of veneration, but then it fell into disgrace because, while beginning serious studies of classic guitar, it was obscured by more precious concert instruments. Classified for years as a "beach party instrument", it started to rise up again in the second half of the 90s when I needed an amplifiable classic guitar. At the same time, all those "genetic experiments" started and they brought her to its current look. At the beginning the changes only involved the application of a "LR baggs duet", to amplify the sound. The bad friendships with improvisers of different species brought back the memory of the cover of an old LP of John Mc Laughlin with Shakti, which portrayed the famous British guitarist with an instrument with the strings of resonance, that he needed to create a "sitar effect." My unaware friend, the lute maker Renato Barone accepted to act as Doktor Frankenstein, realizing only when it was way too late that he had put himself in a real mess: at the end he had to dismantle the bottom, reinforce the chains and install a new bottom to place in the biggest possible extension the 8 strings of resonance that I had requested (8 because you get a complete mode, or 2 groups of 4 or maybe because I could not fit more than that). At first, the monstrous newborn had two problems: 1) Renato – excellent builder of classic guitars – had not thought about the necessity to change the battery of the internal pre-amplifier: I will spend several years in Purgatory for the blasphemies yelled the day that – right before the beginning of a concert – I tried to substitute the inaccessible 9v. battery. 2) The added strings did everything except having a pleasant resonance effect so then I inevitably had to ask myself: "and now what do I do with this guitar?" It's known that many important histories start by mistake. And so this is how I started to experiment new techniques that involved the contemporary use of the two sets of strings; I found a set of minimal electronic that extended its possibility, I received several pieces written specifically for this instrument (names in New York as "Extreme Guitar" by composers involved in the Extreme Guitar Project). Thanks to the precious help of my friend, the lute maker Alessandro Marseglia (as you can see the friend who is a lute maker is a necessary figure in the realization of your own musical perversities), the system of amplification has been integrated with the esaphonic system RMC and the inaccessibility of the internal batteries has been solved as "our ancestors did": a round hole at the bottom covered by a turning cap. So the old Yahiri is to this day the guitar that I use the most and that better identifies my path, without forgetting all the others whom I know will not get offended.