

ACOUSTIC GUITAR

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playlist

Ben Verdery, perhaps America's most open-minded and uninhibited classical guitar virtuoso, presents 26 original guitar pieces on his new CD *Start Now*. Seeking to break new musical ground, Verdery integrates traditional classical guitar sounds with alternate tunings and an array of natural and electronic effects on his Smallman classical, Chris Carrington electric classical, bajo bass, Portuguese cavaquinho, and Aria 12-string. He broadens the sonic palette through the use of loops, digital delay, and BBow, as well as bottleneck slide, paper clips, and chopsticks. The music blends modern harmonic and melodic ideas with African, Indian, flamenco, and American popular musical elements. Of note are the *Eleven Etudes*, which are not technical workouts, but evocative character pieces that vary widely in mood and texture. *Saryagraha*, based on an eight-note raga, showcases Verdery's Eastern and Western influences, paying homage alternately to Pakistani singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Johannes Brahms. The tuneful *Capivola*, originally penned as a guitar duet for John Williams and Timothy Kain, appears as a solo that preserves all of its original charm. The rollicking *Midwaukee* recalls the playing of its dedicatee Leo Kottke. Throughout the disc, Verdery plays with striking color, control, and sensitivity.

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