

**Review of CD worldwide bass
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German virtuoso Christine Hooch presents a stunning collection of music from around the world in her latest album. The arrangements are inventive and diverse, the playing is expressive and precise, and the pieces are a well-chosen mix of different styles and moods. Christine's rich malleable tone compliments the various ensemble settings. The album has a travel theme, each piece evoking a particular location and feeling, ranging from Argentina to Iceland.

The disc opens with a propulsive rendition of Astor Piazzolla's famous *Libertango*. Dietmar Lowka is heard playing what sounds like percussion on his bass to open the track with a thrilling rhythmic drive. He then switches to an aggressive Jazz pizzicato that complements and pushes the ensemble. This arrangement features the Argentinean-sounding trio of bass, accordion (playing the role of bandoneón), and melody instrument—Christine Hooch on solo bass. The relentless rhythm relaxes suddenly yet inevitably in the B section of the melody then accelerates to a climactic ending with some thrilling ponticello effects. Hooch's tone always retains its depth and richness, even venturing to the edges of the timbral spectrum.

Hooch and Nußbaum take us to Turkey next with Erdal Tugcular's *Colours of Anatolia*. The pair could not be more finely balanced. The melodic line is nicely inflected with some subtle glissandi. *Nara Yama* is our stop in Japan. Glenn Moore joins in with his rich, percussive, clear pizzicato sound. The melodic and accompanimental roles are passed around among the trio. Before the recap, Moore and Hooch take turns in expressive unaccompanied cadenzas. Lebanese composer Rabih Abou-Khalil's *You Take My Slippers, I'll Take Your Socks*, features bass and percussion only. Complex rhythmic passages and amazing control of timbre and dynamics make this piece stand out. Ralph Towner's *Distant Hills* works perfectly as a bass and piano piece. Hooch soars on the plaintive melodic line over the polytonal arpeggios in the piano. The 1 1/8 meter gently rolls. Haunting and effective. We journey to Germany by way of South America in Dietmar Lowka's *Giovanni Tranquillo*. The composition features again the lovely blend of solo bass, accordion, and jazz bass. Then a surprise: Piazzolla's *Flora's Game* is played by Nußbaum alone. She showcases her depth of tone colors and expressiveness.

Völvæði, by Arni Egilsson is an amazing, gripping composition, full of spikey dissonance contrasted with lovely melodies. It is beautifully performed by Hooch and Nußbaum. They navigate the lightening-quick transitions between manic aggression and delicate icy passages with complete commitment and persuasive musicality.

The familiar Arabic melody *Miserlou* is given a mysterious and spooky treatment by Hooch, Nußbaum, and Moore. Arni Egilsson's sweet simple composition *To Dorette* closes the disc.

World Wide Bass is an absorbing and enjoyable album. Hooch's passionate playing and creative collaborations make this CD an important addition to any bassist's collection. Hooch's liner notes begin with the maxim "Do not follow where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." In this recording, she does indeed blaze new trails: through new repertoire, incorporation of world and jazz styles, and intriguing instrumental combinations.

- Review by Mark Urness