

INDIE SCENE



Ralph Zanker

Raughi Ebert, Muriel Anderson, Leo Henrichs

TIERRA NEGRA & MURIEL ANDERSON

Worlds collide—and a vibrant new brand of flamenco is born

GUITAR MAVEN MURIEL ANDERSON'S initial encounter with Tierra Negra came when she visited the booth at a European music festival where the German flamenco duo was selling its signature line of handmade guitars. "When we got there one morning, we found Muriel with one of our guitars playing her song 'Angelina Baker,'" recalls Tierra Negra's Leo Henrichs. "We immediately grabbed guitars as well, and started jamming with her for the very first time. You could say that the first communication between the three of us was nonverbal—it was musical."

The three had so much fun together they met up for another jam during a break in Anderson's European tour. They spent nearly three days at Henrichs' apartment, "making music together and interrupting our playing only to get another bottle of red wine," he recalls. The duo kept writing independently after Anderson departed, working out arrangements and sharing their ideas with her via Skype. "It was one of those discoveries," says Anderson, the first and only woman to win the National Finger Style Guitar Championship. "When I first heard Tierra Negra, I knew this was something world-class and unique. I had

heard many flamenco players, but nothing like this before. I could feel something filled with joy and love in their music."

The collaboration has now resulted in a studio album, a set of instrumental pieces aptly dubbed *New World Flamenco*. "We weren't looking to create a new genre," Anderson says. "But when we brought our music together, we found a fresh energy coming from our combination of sounds and influences. Of course there is a process where you try all kinds of things, but it wasn't difficult to find solid ground. Although we all come from different musical backgrounds, somehow the music works together." The trio was backed for the recording by drummer Danny Gottlieb and bass players Mark Egan and Victor Wooten.

Anderson, Henrichs and Tierra Negra's Raughi Ebert all contributed equally to the songwriting on *New World Flamenco*, composing together and apart. "We were looking for a color that adds something to the music without overloading it," says Ebert. "Out of Muriel's amazing variety of techniques we found elements that make the music sound more alive." One element that added color was Anderson's

harp guitar, an instrument with extra non-fretted bass strings that was popular in America in the early 20th century. "The sound of the steel strings resonates very well with the flamenco guitars, and the country influence creates great counter-melodies," says Anderson, an Illinois native who now lives in Nashville. "Even when I play on my nylon-string guitar, my sound is a little different. When Raughi and Leo add their guitars, there is this great driving rhythm that immediately makes you want to get up and dance."

Now Anderson and Tierra Negra are making plenty of other people feel the same way during their current tour. "It's a dream to play this music with them, and we are continuing to find ways to explore our music together," says Anderson, a respected solo artist who learned her craft from guitar greats like classical virtuoso Christopher Parkening and country legend Chet Atkins. "What we've found while on tour that we didn't know before is that people everywhere can hear the fun that we have and feel the love of life."



—Lee Zimmerman