

## Pedro Soler & Gaspar Claus “Barlande”

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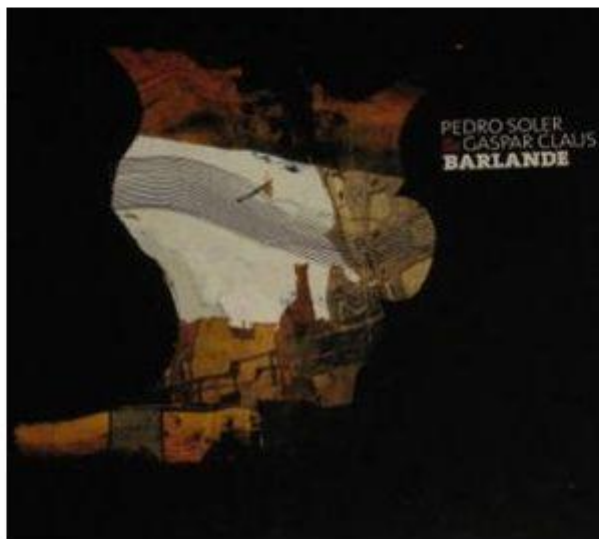
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### PEDRO SOLER & GASPAR CLAUS - BARLANDE

Submitted by **Richard Foster** on Mon, 09/19/2011 - 17:15

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A beautiful record, Barlande, and the result of an off-the-cuff collaboration between a father and his son. Dad - Pedro Soler – is a flamenco guitarist of long standing repute whilst fils – Gaspar Claus - plays cello in a variety of unorthodox ways. The glitzy world of rock and roll finds its own unique expression on the record through Sufjan Stevens, who plays harmonium now and again, and National guitarist Bryce Dessner who produces.

The overall précis seems to be that dad provides a flexible and sympathetic structure to the gymnastics performed on the cello. Flamenco – something I really do know jack shit about – seems on repeated listen to this record, to be a medium that allows a great deal of expression through accepted or pre-defined sonic rituals and pathways; the guitar part can keep a piece rigidly to a score, or allow it to wander. Following a set rhythm doesn't seem to be an issue, setting a suitable mood does. The scratchy, spooky elements of cello part sometimes reminds me of the exertions Teagrass get up to on Iren Lovasz's LP *Wide is the Danube*, but that's just me.

As to the music on the record; *Insomnio Mineral* is a stately and relaxed opening; a languorous melody on the guitar supports a soaring and at times ghostly cello part. It's a brilliant if meditative opening piece, and one that changes tack to something more jolly towards the end. Following that, *Guajira Borrachita* has a more traditional flamenco feel until the droopy cello part expands and leads the track into a faerie-like tail out. And the title track is a moody, sometimes forceful workout that starts to deny time and space once it gets going.

Elsewhere, *Caminos* is a subdued meditation whilst *Caballitos de Mar* starts off as a happy stroll but develops into something more complex courtesy of a scouring, abrasive cello part. *Sueños Indecisos* is a maudlin and hesitant piece whereas *Rostro Descolorido* is a funeral march of sorts. *Encuentro en Brooklyn*, with help from Stevens and Dessner, is a marvellously invigorating and widescreen finish to the LP.

Surprising and thoroughly enjoyable.