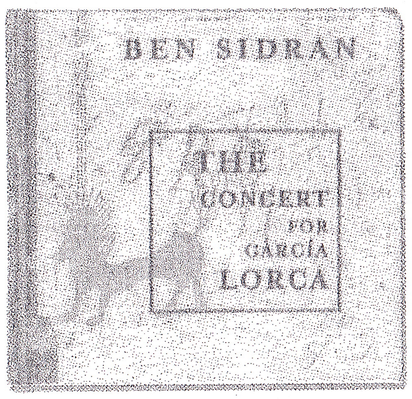
# Sidran's Lorca CD is Grammy nominee

By Kevin Lynch
*The Capital Times*




Madison jazzman Ben Sidran's CD "The Concert for Garcia Lorca" has been nominated for a Grammy Award for best packaging. It is Sidran's first-ever nomination.

The 104-page, hardbound book is lavishly illustrated with texts, drawings, photographs and ornamental paper, and holds the disc in a slip in the rear cover.

The package documents Sidran's 1999 live concert tribute to Federico Garcia Lorca, the eminent Spanish poet and playwright who was murdered by fascists during the Spanish Civil War.

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# Sidran

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The CD, on Sidran's own Go Jazz label, will compete for the record industry award against "Machina/The Machines of God" by the Smashing Pumpkins; "Music" by Madonna; "The Shaming of the True" by Kevin Gilbert; and "Zenith" by the Jigsaw Seen.

The package includes the entire text (in English and Spanish) of the concert, which featured Sidran adapting Lorca texts and commenting on his legacy, as well as adapting several jazz standards.

The package also is graced with photographs of Lorca and his home. The cover and inner pages also include artwork done by Lorca.

The packaging design was conceived and produced by Dan Ibarra and Kevin Wade of Planet Design (now Planet Propaganda) of Madison.

"The two of them really developed that look, including Lorca's drawing of the lion on the cover," Sidran said. "We wanted the cover to look like a poster on an old wall."

On the recording, Sidran sings and plays Lorca's own piano at his home in Granada, Spain.

He is accompanied by his son Leo Sidran on drums, Bobby Martinez on saxophone and Manuel Calleja on bass.

Though the CD's distribution has been sporadic and "frustrating," according to Sidran, it has received good reviews and some best-of-the-year notices.

Jazz critic Don Heckman of the Los Angeles Times recently chose the CD one of the 10 best of the year.

It was also named as "Best Local Jazz CD" by the Madison Newspapers Inc. Rhythm section and "Best Jazz/Literary CD" by The Capital Times.

However, Sidran has been frustrated because "Concert for Garcia Lorca" has not been consistently stocked by Madison record stores.

"There's no reason why they shouldn't have it," he said of the CD, which is available wholesale through a distributor of independent labels.

"Barnes and Noble talks about having local music. I'm so completely frustrated, which I've told them."

The CD is available through Amazon.com and the label's Web site, *www.gojazz.de.com*.

"That's part of the problem, that Amazon always has it," Sidran said. "That competition is going to eventually kill the local stores."

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**Serendipity:** Lorca's daughter Laura Garcia Lorca gave Sidran access to Lorca's artifacts after the Madison pianist-singer performed the concert during the centennial of Lorca's death.

The record came about from extraordinary and "serendipitous" circumstances, Sidran said today.

Laura Garcia Lorca had organized a number of leading artists to do centennial Lorca concerts, including Bob Dylan, Van Morrison, Paco De Lucia and Elvis Costello who was to perform with the Brodsky String Quartet.

However, when Costello canceled his concert, Lorca turned to Sidran, whom she had met a few years earlier.

"I agreed to perform, but I didn't know enough about Lorca to do him justice," Sidran related. "I had three months to prepare for the concert."

Sidran received help from Robert Skloot, a UW-Madison professor of theater and drama, who did his doctoral thesis on Lorca.