One of the late twentieth century’s more influential examples of musical maximalism,
guitarist-composer-conductor Glenn Branca's 1981 masterpiece The Ascension laid the
groundwork for high-volume, alternately tuned, feedback-friendly guitar groups like
Sonic Youth, Swans, Godspeed You! Black Emperor, My Bloody Valentine, and
countless lesser shoe gazers. Tonight's premiere of Branca's The Third Ascension signals
both the durability and perseverance of his unusually coherent harmonic vision. Although
this work for five guitars and drums is scaled down from his pair of 100-
guitar symphonies, it promises to make up in volume what it might lack in personnel.

by Richard Gehr