

Mp3 Randall Avers - Puerto Viejo, Music Of Spain

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"an earnest musicality and desire to see the guitar as, ultimately, a vehicle for artistic statement" - A. Hull, guitarramagazine.com 13 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Traditional Details: Spanish composers of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries found themselves torn between two almost irreconcilable poles of musical influence, those of Spanish nationalism and French modernism. The musical and artistic magnetism of Paris was inescapable for European composers in the nineteenth-century. Indeed by the time Isaac Albeniz arrived there to pursue childhood piano studies in 1867, Paris had already been the musical capital of Europe for some forty years. In light of this fact it is not surprising that all but one of the Spanish composers represented on the present album was affiliated with the French capital at one time or another. The Parisian experience afforded promising young Spanish composers the opportunity to interact with their peers from elsewhere in Europe and this interaction served to elevate the status of Spanish music on the international stage. While the modernized Spanish music that grew out of the Parisian experience was well received abroad, however, it was often received in Spain with suspicion, if not outright hostility. In late-nineteenth-century Spain, a period of intense nationalism was underway. In music, the nationalist sentiment found its most potent expression in the mentoring of composer and musicologist Philippe Pedrell (1841-1922). Under Pedrell's influence, young Spanish composers such as Albeniz and de Falla were encouraged to look to the Spanish traditions for both their inspiration and their compositional materials. Thus in the compositional idioms of late nineteenth century Spanish composers, there existed a tension between their sense of fidelity to their Spanish heritage and their urge to incorporate the most compelling aspects of contemporary Parisian music into their compositions. This duality of late-nineteenth-century Spanish music found expression differently in each composer's work. The musical styles of some of these composers alternated in phases between the nationalist and modernist poles, while others attempted to reconcile the two influences by fusion. The unique character of each piece on the present album can therefore be understood as one manifestation of this ongoing interplay of French and Spanish musical influences in the musical language of a particular Spanish composer at a particular moment in his career. Of the Spanish guitar music on the present album, that of

Federico Mompou (1893-1987) most readily demonstrates a fusion of the Spanish modal style with the progressive harmonic writing of the French composers. While many Spanish composers around the turn of the century traveled to Paris to study and to work for short periods, Mompou truly embraced Parisian musical life and made his home there continuously from 1911-41. He moved in influential musical circles in the city and was acquainted with important French composers such as Debussy and Ravel. Mompou's *Secreto* evinces his particular affinity for the music of Erik Satie. This short but imaginative piece comes from the *Impresiones Intimas*, Op. 1, a collection of simple children's pieces. In this piece, Mompou combines a simple ostinato bass with a modal melody in the upper voice. Mompou's characteristic French-Spanish fusion is very much in evidence in his *Cancion y Danzas*. Dance 5, written in 1942, and dances 6 and 7, both written in 1944, come from the larger set of 13 dances and have been transcribed for guitar by Randall Avers for this recording. Like the *Secreto*, they embody Mompou's characteristic combination of the diatonic melody characteristic of Spanish folk song with the extended harmonies of the French impressionists. Throughout this set, Mompou evokes Spanish folksong both by borrowing folk melodies and by writing his own original melodies in the Spanish folk style. A champion of Spanish musical nationalism, Joaquin Rodrigo's (1901-1999) reputation was made with the premiere of his famous *Concerto de Aranjuez* for guitar and orchestra in 1940. That concerto embodies many key aspects of Rodrigo's musical style and the famous *Adagio*, in particular, is a testament to his supreme talent as a melodist. Rodrigo's *En los Trigales* ("In the Wheat Fields") is an extroverted work heavily flavored by Spanish folk music and stands in stark contrast to the impressionistic French-Spanish fusion cultivated by Mompou in *Secreto*. Throughout out this piece, Rodrigo writes very idiomatically for the guitar, making use of rapid repeated notes in the outer sections and exploiting the guitar's singing bass register in the middle. Rodrigo's *Pajaros de Primavera* ("Birds of Spring") marks a rare departure from the Spanish traditionalism that characterized most of his compositional output. In contrast to both -*En los trigales*, and the *Concerto de Aranjuez* mentioned above, *Pajaros* is infused with both a mood and a harmonic palette that is decidedly impressionistic. Like the famous *Adagio*, this work showcases Rodrigo's considerable melodic gift and makes extensive use of the guitar's delicate upper register as it winds its way through a series of impressionistic vignettes depicting the birds of the title. Beginning with the 1940 premire of the *Aranjuez*, Rodrigo enjoyed largely uninterrupted popularity throughout his career. He received innumerable accolades at home and abroad and many in Spain considered him to be the rightful

successor to Manuel De Falla (1876-1946) as the dean of Spanish composers. Rodrigo's *Invocacion et danse* for guitar was written in homage to De Falla. It won Rodrigo first prize in a composition contest organized by the French broadcasting company in 1961 and it is still regarded as one of his best works. The piece opens in an atmosphere of mystery and gradually builds in direction and intensity until finally the dance begins. Rodrigo juxtaposes the rustic strains of the polo dance with segments of tremolo to create a mood, at once of promised resolution and building agitation, which drives the piece through this climax and inevitably back towards the mysterious atmosphere of the opening. A noted pianist throughout his career, Isaac Albeniz, was by far the most cosmopolitan of the composers in the present group. A child prodigy on that instrument, Albeniz traveled widely in Europe and the Americas from a very early age. His early studies alone took him from Barcelona to Paris to Leipzig and even to Brussels. While he eventually composed in many genres, including that of Zarzuela (Spanish Opera), Albeniz's earliest successes as a composer were in the composition of "salon pieces" for piano. The *Capriccio Catalan*, *Tango*, and *Zortzigo* from Albeniz's *Espaa Op. 165* exemplify this genre. Written in 1890, just as Albeniz was establishing himself as an international pianist and composer, the pieces of *Op. 165* provide a conventionally romantic perspective on the Spanish tradition. The *Capriccio Catalan* is unpretentiously beautiful and typifies Albeniz's "salon" style. Its transparent texture combines with Albeniz's characteristically clean melodic lines to charming effect. The *Tango* and *Zortzigo* are both constructed over bass ostinato patterns, a characteristic common to many Spanish folk dances. The *Tango* is unabashedly romantic in character. The *Zortzigo* is Albeniz's interpretation of a Basque dance from northern Spain. The word *zorti* in basque means "eight" and the work *ko* means "of." Thus the *zortziko* is a dance "made of eight parts." Besides its exotic origin, the *Zortziko* is unusual in that it is cast in a 5/8 meter, an uncommon feature for a piano piece from this era. In *Cordoba*, the only one of the present four pieces not from the *Op. 165* set, Albeniz evokes a romantic longing through a his subtle use of the romantic technique of "overreaching" melody. He nevertheless maintains formal clarity throughout this piece as he combines this romantic melody with Spanish Dance rhythms and hints of folk modality.

Manuel De Falla (1876-1946) is widely regarded as the most important Spanish composer of the 20th century. His career spanned approximately fifty years, during which time he explored the qualities of both the French and the Spanish styles. As a resident of Paris from 1907-14 De Falla became well acquainted with Parisian musical luminaries such as Debussy, Ravel, and Dukas, all of whom encouraged him in his

compositional efforts. After his years in Paris, De Fallas musical style alternated by degrees back and forth between the French and Spanish poles. His famous Spanish ballet *El amor brujo* (1915), for instance, in which he drew heavily on Spanish gypsy music for his inspiration, was followed in 1916 by his *Noches en los jardines de Espana* for piano and orchestra, a work steeped in impressionism. Falla's *Homenaje "Le tombeau de Debussy"* very concisely combines the French and Spanish aspects of his musical personality in to a single guitar solo. Written at the invitation of *La revue musicale* in 1918, this piece is remarkable as an homage by the greatest Spanish composer of its age to the memory of the greatest French composer. It is very Spanish in its harmonies and atmosphere throughout, breaking from this mood only briefly to quote from Debussys own piano piece *Soiree dans Grenade*. Federico Moreno Torroba (1891-1982), like Rodrigo, was drawn very strongly to the musical elements of his native Spain. In fact, Torroba is the only composer represented on the present album who never studied in Paris. Torroba drew musical inspiration from the folk music of Navarra and Castile in his native Spain and wrote a great deal of guitar music by virtue of his friendship with the great Spanish guitarist Andres Segovia. Torroba's accessible, lyrical style is well represented by his simple but very beautiful *Burgalesa* for guitar of 1928.

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