

The Latin Muse

Piazzolla | De Falla | Granados | Albeniz | Ginastera



Nancy Tsou | piano

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ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921-1992)

- 1 Oblivion 4'23"
- 2 Milonga del Angel 5'25"
- 3 Libertango 3'17"

ENRIQUE GRANADOS (1876-1916)

- 4 Andaluza - Spanish Dance Op 37 no 5 4'36"
- 5 Intermezzo (de Goyescas) 4'20"

MANUEL DE FALLA (1876-1946)

- 6 Danse du Meunier (The Miller's Dance) 2'08"
- 7 La Vida Breve (The Brief Life) 3'30"

ISSAC ALBENIZ (1869-1909)

- 8 Asturias (Prelude) No1 from 'Cantos d'Espana' Op 232 6'26"
- 9 Sous le Palmier No 3 from 'Cantos d'Espana' Op 232 4'26"

ALBERTO GINASTERA (1916-1983)

Danzas Argentinas Op 2

- 10 Danza del viejo boyero (Dance of the old herdsman) 1'24"
- 11 Danza de la moza donosa (Dance of the delightful young lady) 2'30"
- 12 Danza del gaucho matrero (Dance of the artful herdsman) 3'31"

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The music of Spain and Latin America – scarcely has it begun before we know exactly where it comes from. A few notes and we are transported to the world of fiestas and flamenco, to the high plains and a proud people. We do not need to hear the sound of guitars or castanets, the melodies and harmonies are enough. It is music as crisp and spare as modern architecture, but with a richness of melody and invention not heard since Bach.

Nancy was brought up in the Argentine, and has an uncanny sympathy for the Latin idiom. Each version of each piece has been selected for one quality only – its intensity of feeling. The fire and tenderness of a great repertory, this is what Nancy Tsou conveys.

On this recording, the music has been played on the instrument for which it was composed. Except for the music of Piazzolla. The arrangements for both Oblivion and Milonga del Angel are by Zunini and Cosentino.

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921-1992)

1 Oblivion

In 1984 Piazzolla composed Oblivion as music for Marco Bellochio's 1984 film "Henry IV, the Mad King". It captures perfectly the essence of its central character, encapsulated in the nostalgia-drenched long melodic lines. It is hauntingly beautiful and arguably the soundtrack's high point.

2 Milonga del Angel

This piece was written in 1965 and used as incidental music in a play, Tango del Angel, by Argentinean playwright Alberto Rodríguez Muñoz. This concerns an Angel, who having come down to heal the souls of a Buenos Aires slum neighbourhood is slain in a knife fight. Poignantly and dramatically captured by Piazzolla.

3 Libertango

This is one of Piazzolla's most popular compositions. The title alludes to Piazzolla's conscious artistic shift – or liberation from the classical tango and signals a new direction, "tango nuovo", one of rhythmic complexity, combined with soaring, romantic lyric lines, intrinsic to the tango.

ENRIQUE GRANADOS (1876-1916)

4 Andaluza - Spanish Dance Op 37 no 5

One of the most wistful of Spanish pieces on the program, written in 1890. Andaluza is an evocation of southern Spain in its most gentle moments, interspersed with brief dramatic episodes.

5 Intermezzo (de Goyescas)

This Intermezzo comes from Granados' opera "Goyescas" of 1915. In the three parts, without breaks between them, it transforms itself with the greatest ease from one lovely melody to another. This is Goya of the majas and the royal portraits rather than the dark paintings.

Granados was happiest in a spontaneous, atmospheric mode.

MANUEL DE FALLA (1876-1946)

6 Danse du Meunier (The Miller's Dance)

This dance comes from the opera "The Three Cornered Hat" of 1919 and demands a bravura performance. The energy of the piece establishes immediately the flamboyant national spirit of the program.

7 La Vida Breve (The Brief Life)

This is an intermezzo from de Falla's first opera of the same name which was first produced in 1913. It is one of the liveliest and most memorable of all Spanish melodies, as well as being deftly organised and inventive.

ISAAC ALBENIZ (1869-1909)

8 Asturias (Prelude) No 1 from 'Cantos d'Espana' Op 232

This is a flamenco dance which is equally at home in the palaces of the nobility, in the streets and in the gypsy caves. It is a flamenco first and last with an interlude between. The leaps and crashing chords at the climax are breathtaking.

9 Sous le Palmier No 3 from 'Cantos d'Espana' Op 232

A quiet lyrical walk under the palm trees of the promenade, taking the evening air after the heat of the day. It and the

previous piece were written in the early 1890s as parts of a suite Chants d'Espagne.

ALBERTO GINASTERA(1916-1983)

Danzas Argentinas Op 2

10 Danza del viejo boyero

(Dance of the old herdsman)

11 Danza de la moza donosa

(Dance of the delightful young lady)

12 Danza del gaucho matrero

(Dance of the artful herdsman)

These three dances, written in 1937, clearly comprise a single work musically and dramatically. The work begins with the dance of the old cowboy, elegant, restrained, brief. The dance of the young lady, a long drawn melody several times repeated and shot through with moments of fire. Last, the climax, the dance of the shrewd gaucho, a tour de force of rhythmic invention.



Pianist Nancy Tsou has been described by Kenneth Hince of The Age as “Her work had a true vision of the Romantic spirit of the music – its inner poetry as so many people call it.” Nancy has enjoyed an extensive performing career throughout Australia, Asia and USA.

Highly acclaimed performances overseas include recent performances in Houston Texas, USA. In China, Nancy has performed solo recitals and given master classes at five of the most prestigious conservatoriums, among them the Shanghai Conservatorium and the Central Conservatorium in Beijing. In Taipei, she performed to a packed audience

at the Taipei Arts Centre. Professional engagements have also included solo recitals on several tours with the Victorian, Queensland, NSW, and ACT arts councils. Performing extensively in each state to reviews full of praise. She has also taken part, and is a returning guest in many Arts Festivals.

However, Nancy also likes to share her playing with smaller audiences, thus creating the atmosphere reminiscent of the soirees of the 19th century. Among these highlights are several series of Piano Recitals she performed in Como House, Toorak,

Recipient of the Australian Chinese Achievers Award for her services to music. Nancy has also made TV appearances in Australia and China. Her previous CD release “Chopin Nocturnes” enjoys broadcasts on ABC Classic FM, as well as regional radio stations. Nancy Tsou has served on the Music Faculty at the University of Melbourne, Monash University and Wollongong University.

“The Concert began with an electrifying performance of Asturias by Albeniz. During the course of Nancy’s performance, the audience was transported to the vital centre of a great and ancient land, experiencing tremendous excitement; the pageantry; the gaiety; the zest for life; as well as the scented dream of an Arabian Andalusian nights ... listening in rapt silence to Nancy’s performance, the extraordinary range, depth and penetration of her work and the incredible power of her delivery, have left audiences breathless ...”

M. HALPIKE – ARTS ON FIRE MAGAZINE

“Mozart always triumphed. The bittersweet opening theme and its ingenious variations constituted ‘a gem of purest ray serene’ as Ms Tsou caressed each lovely phrase. She is patently in love with this Rondo, and convinced her audience of its radiance and beauty.”

PROFESSOR D WALTER, JUILLIARD SCHOOL OF MUSIC, NEW YORK. CHINA DAILY

“Nancy’s Chopin is stunningly beautiful. I cannot tell you how impressed I am. I’ve spent too much time on Bach and Beethoven that I play Chopin with a German accent. Not Nancy. Her playing is spot-on gorgeous.”

NICK SHUMWAY, FRANCES MOODY NEWMAN PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF SPANISH, RICE UNIVERSITY

“ ‘ The performer’s task is to lead the members of her audience to the place where they are transfixed by the genius and nobility of the composer.’ Nancy certainly achieved her stated aim with her playing at last Saturday’s piano recital.”

B. BUTLER. THE GUARDIAN

“Nancy Tsou is no stranger to Bendigo audiences. She is a superb pianist, who plays with such disciplined passion that the audience holds its breath during a performance. She was wonderful at the concert, truly magical.”

D. LEADBETTER. BENDIGO ADVERTISER

“She left an afterglow after the concert which made it impossible for me to listen to recorded music for several days, not wishing to efface the deep impression which her live performance had made on me.”

C. OPIE. KYNETON REVIEW

This recording is dedicated to the late Dr Roger Swarder