Enrique Granados - 12 Danzas Espanolas, Op. 5 (2006)



1. Galante - Minueto 2. Oriental 3. Fandango - Zarabanda 4. Villanesca 5. Andaluza 6. Rondalla aragonesa - Jota 7. Valenciana 8. Sardana - Asturiana 9. Mazurka Romántica 10. Danza Triste - Melancólica 11. Zambra 12. Bolero – Arabesca Angel & Caledonio Romero – guitars

Granados's piano music is a familiar stamping ground for guitarists but, though they have done more than their fair share of keeping it alive through its earlier recession, it is only pianists who have hitherto recorded all 12 of the Danzas espanolas, wrongly described on this recording as Op. 5. Several of these dances are long familiar as guitar solos but many defy satisfactory transfer to that medium, and in consequence are commonly allotted to two or even three guitars. A single player, be he/she a pianist or a guitarist, has sole domain over the rubato that is a vital part of this music and it is hard to share it freely between two (let alone three) players of an essentially percussive instrument, which the guitar is, yet two are needed. Three things can be very helpful: Spanish blood, kinship between the two players, and unconstrained technical command, and they are all possessed by the Romeros.

The original keys of the dances are preserved—ten are in very 'guitaristic' keys anyway, as are, equally faithfully, the elements of sweetness, fire and flexibility. What is added is a range of tone-coloration beyond anything one piano can offer, and in music such as this it is (when applied tastefully, as here) enhancing rather than distracting or inappropriate. Their accord in ensemble is 100 per cent; that in tuning is occasionally a little less, despite which I cannot but recommend this record of superbly played, romantically sanitized vignettes of Spanish life. They make an interesting complement to either of the two complete piano versions you will find in your Classical Catalogue. --- John Duarte, Gramophone

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