

Works by Carlos Surinach  
New World 80428-2

Carlos Surinach is an American composer whose Spanish heritage, together with the rigors of German musical training, has enabled him to produce an oeuvre that "achieves an effect of novelty by exploiting all the familiar clichés of the 'Spanish idiom' with new technical resources and with a completely non-impressionistic sensibility," as Gilbert Chase wrote in *Music of Spain*.

Born in Barcelona in 1915, Surinach began his studies with his mother, a pianist, and continued with José Camirals and with Enrique Morera at the Conservatorio Superior de Música de Barcelona. By the age of twenty-four he had published three songs based on texts by Federico García Lorca and Antonio Machado. He then took off to study abroad—not in France, the traditional training ground for his countrymen, but in Germany—with Hugo Balzer at the Schumann Conservatory in Düsseldorf, and then with Max Trapp at the Prussian Academy in Berlin.

On returning to Spain, Surinach became active as a conductor of the Barcelona Philharmonic Orchestra, and was also director of the Teatro del Liceo. After a stint of conducting in Paris from 1947 to 1950, he emigrated to the United States, and became a citizen in 1959.

Throughout his life, Carlos Surinach's musical sensibilities have remained profoundly Spanish. "His work draws much from the raw, clipped rhythms and colors of his native country which, however, he transcends." This acute observation occurs in program notes for Surinach's ballet *Quimera*, presented in Geneva in 1989. The writer further points out that thanks to Surinach's larger world view, rigorous technique, and above all, his integrity, he has never allowed his music to go the easy route and take on the post-impressionist sentimentality that characterizes much of Spanish music. Rather, his course turned to the ballet: "Citing Cervantes, Surinach [points out], 'If you're Italian, you sing. If you're German, you play an instrument. But if you're Spanish, you start dancing right after you're born.'"

And it is for the dance that Surinach has produced some of his most notable works, starting with *Ritmo Jondo* (Deep Rhythm), based on the flamenco style, which was choreographed by Doris Humphrey for the José Limón company in 1953. This led to commissions from some of the most outstanding choreographers and dance companies of this century: Between 1958 and 1963 he composed the music for *Embattled Garden* and *Acrobats of God* for Martha Graham, *Hazaña* and *A Place in the Desert* for Ballet Rambert at Sadler's Wells, *Feast of Ashes* for the Joffrey Ballet, and *David and Bathsheba* for the John Butler Ballet.

Traits of music for the dance—a strong rhythmic pulse and shapely melodic continuity, mood and dramatic narrative—mark Surinach's other compositions as well. In fact, he has adapted some of his other works for the dance; he based *Hazaña* and part of *Feast of Ashes* on his Doppio Concertino (Double Concerto) of 1954, the first piece heard on this recording.

Like Manuel de Falla's Harpsichord Concerto, the work is basically neoclassical, with the influence of Spain insistently woven throughout. The Concertino received its premiere at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City with the composer

leading a chamber group and the sisters Anahid and Maro Ajemian as violin and piano soloists.

This piece is marked by crisp, spare textures and an adventuresome use of ostinato figures, both rhythmic and melodic. A long-held repeated note sustained by the violin creates a haunting effect at the close of the second movement. The Concertino ends with an exuberant and festive third movement that pulls together all the elements into a brilliant and satisfying finale.

*Flamenco Cyclothymia*, written in 1967 and dedicated to the violinist Sidney Harth (Dean of Music at Carnegie-Mellon University, where Surinach was a visiting professor), displays elements of guitar-like arpeggios for the piano, not unlike those used by Falla in *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, and an evocation of the Spanish Gypsy violin style, earlier explored by Sarasate. Characteristically, however, Surinach makes these allusions entirely his own. As in the Concertino, repeated arching single notes on the violin are an outstanding feature.

The Concerto for String Orchestra is a 1978 reworking of his 1974 String Quartet, originally commissioned by the De Vos Quartet of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Because of the vigorous character of the music, it is easy to imagine how the idea of using the sonority of a string orchestra attracted him.

Echoes of Spain emerge in the first movement of this Concerto, with its Iberian chord changes and intricate configurations. The second movement presents a contrast with a long, recitative-like melody, much like a *solea*, for the cello. The third movement returns to multilayered interchanges, with a slower, plaintive midsection. A folk song is cited—"El Café de Chinitas," from a collection of poems by Garcia Lorca.

Another song from the Lorca anthology, "Las Tres Hojas," is worked into the finale of the Piano Quartet, composed in 1942, the earliest piece on this recording. As in the *Bachianas Brasileiras* of Heitor Villa-Lobos, the composer leads off with an energetic first movement that seems to be a tribute to the contrapuntal spirit of Bach. By the end of the Quartet, this energy has been transformed into a looser, more vernacular form. Reviewing the work, Virgil Thomson wrote: "Clarity and tenderness are [Surinach's] especial gift; brilliancy and instrumental imagination are his charm.... His Piano Quartet... has a structural integration rare in Spanish music and a loveliness of sentiment rare in any." —JOHN W. FREEMAN

*John W. Freeman, a composer; has been associate editor of Opera News magazine since 1960, and served for ten years as board chairman for the Bronx Arts Ensemble.*

PABLO ZINGER, Uruguayan-born conductor and pianist, has lived in New York City since 1976. He has been Musical Director of the Spanish Repertory Theatre since 1980, conducting productions of Zarzuelas, musical anthologies of Cuba, Puerto Rico and Mexico, and operas, including Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Consul* and Manuel de Falla's *La Vida Breve*. He was musical director for Astor Piazzolla's *Tango Apasionado*, and recorded the music for the show with the composer and Paquito D'Rivera. He has conducted the Bronx Arts Ensemble in numerous performances, and has been guest conductor with the Montevideo Philharmonic and Pro Opera in Uruguay. This CD marks his recording debut as a conductor. Mr. Zinger is founder and Artistic Director of Musica Hispana, and a recognized authority on the music of Spain and Latin America.

ISRAEL CHORBERG was born in Uruguay. In 1960 he was awarded the first scholarship given to a Latin-American musician to study at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow. He has performed in the former Soviet Union, South America and the U.S., where he has been concertmaster of the Mostly Mozart Festival, American Ballet Theatre, the Martha Graham Dance Festival, the Dance Theatre of Harlem, the Stuttgart Ballet, the Royal Festival Ballet of London, and the Royal Danish Ballet. Mr. Chorberg has recorded for National Radio of Uruguay (SODRE), for Moscow Radio, and as a soloist and with various chamber ensembles for many of the major U.S. labels.

THE BRONX ARTS ENSEMBLE presents concerts throughout the Bronx which are both affordable and reflect the ethnic makeup of its audiences. The Ensemble maintains a residency at Fordham University and performs at a number of Bronx locations, including the Van Cortlandt House Museum, Wave Hill, the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, and Hostos Community College. The Ensemble has presented world premieres of the music of Robert Baksa, Max Lifchitz, Roberto Sierra, and others, and has recorded for New World Records, the Musical Heritage Society, CRI and Newport Classic.

#### SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

*(Tres) Cantos Berberes; Ritmo Jondo (Suite)* (revised version); *Tientos*. MGM Chamber Orchestra, Carlos Surinach conducting. MGM E-3268.

String Quartet. New World String Quartet. VOX SVBX-5109.

*Melorhythmic Dramas*. Louisville Orchestra, Jorge Mester conducting. Louisville Orchestra First Edition Records. LOU-68-1/LS-68-1.

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra. Alicia De Larrocha, piano; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Fruehbeck De Burgos conducting. London CS-6990.

#### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chase, Gilbert. *Music of Spain*. 2nd Edition. (Illus.) New York:Dover; 1960.

Hoyo, A del., ed. *Federico García Lorca: Obras Completas*. Madrid, 1957; rev. 1963, with music.

Produced and engineered by Adam Abeshouse

Piano Quartet recorded at House of Sound Studio, September 13, 1992.

All other tracks recorded at SUNY Purchase Recital Hall, September 15 and 16, 1992

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1-3 DOPPIO CONCERTINO (15:41) (publ. Broude Brothers)

4 *FLAMENCO CYCLOTHYMIA* (9:05) (publ. Associated Music Publ..)

5-7 CONCERTO FOR STRING ORCHESTRA (26:59) (publ. Associated Music Publ.)

8-10 PIANO QUARTET (21:17) (publ. Peer-Southern Music)  
Total time: 73:23

DOPPIO CONCERTINO

Israel Chorberg, *violin*  
Pablo Zinger, *piano and conductor*  
Katherine Fink, *flute and piccolo*  
Marsha Heller, *oboe and English horn*  
Paul Gallo, *clarinet*  
William Scribner, *bassoon*  
Sharon Moe, *French horn*  
Lorraine Cohen-Moses, *trumpet*  
Dean Crandall, *bass*  
Mark Sherman, *percussion*  
Barry Centanni, *percussion*

PIANO QUARTET

Andrew Schaw, *violin*  
Susan Follari, *viola*  
Eliana Mendoza, *cello*  
Pablo Zinger, *piano*

CONCERTO FOR STRING ORCHESTRA

Pablo Zinger, *conductor*  
Andrew Schaw, *violin*  
Victoria Stewart, *violin*  
Nancie Lederer, *violin*  
Sandra Billingslea, *violin*  
Alice Poulson, *violin*  
Helene Bergman, *violin*  
Isadora Kohon, *violin*  
Susan Follari, *viola*  
Katherine Sinsabaugh, *viola*  
Sally Shumway, *viola*  
Eliana Mendoza, *cello*  
Eugene Briskin, *cello*  
Peter Sanders, *cello*  
Dean Crandall, *bass*

FLAMENCO CYCLOTHYMIA

Israel Chorberg, *violin*  
Pablo Zinger, *piano*

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