

CARLOS SURINACH
Ritmo Jondo

New World Records 80505

Carlos Surinach might well be called the Universal Spaniard. Although he studied for three years in Berlin, lived in Paris for four, and has been an American citizen since 1959, his Barcelona birthright is reflected in most of his compositions. Not without musical cause did the Spanish government in 1972 name him Knight Commander of the Order of Isabella of Castile.

Of the works on this recording, only the affectionate spoofery of *Hollywood Carnival* (1956) has American inspirations (with occasional tonal bows to Strauss, Rossini, and other European friends); the spirit of Spain clearly surges through all the others. The earliest--in fact one of the first of Surinach's scores to be published--is *Tres Canciones* (1952), using texts of Federico García Lorca and his older contemporary Antonio Machado, the most recent is another song trilogy, the *Tres Cantares* of 1971 on poems of Lope de Vega (after Cervantes, the most famous literary figure in Spain). Surinach himself conducted the premiere of *Ritmo Jondo* at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1952, also the year of the Berber songs. *Tientos* followed in 1953.

Dates, however, need not detain us long, since Surinach has maintained a continuum throughout his long and fruitful career, studiously avoiding the trend-chasing experimentations and stylistic flip-flops characteristic of so many of his contemporaries. The following biographical memories and musical commentaries are in the composer's own words, taken variously from my "Listening Room" broadcasts on WQXR, and a telephone conversation with the Maestro in February of 1996. On the latter occasion, for the first time to my knowledge, Mr. Surinach also spoke about the four years he spent in Nazi Germany during World War II.

—Robert Sherman

Robert Sherman *has been a broadcaster for WQXR for twenty-five years, writes a regular weekly column for The New York Times, and is on the faculties of Juilliard and the Manhattan School of Music.*

I have been writing music since I was twenty, and I'm still writing music at age eighty-one. I'm a little lazier now and a little slower--the hands don't go so fast, nor the mind--but still I write.

At the beginning I wrote at the piano. I was a pianist, after all. I began lessons with my mother, who won first prize at the Madrid Conservatory, but then I began to put the piano in my brain, so I no longer needed it for inspiration, or to work out a score. Now the piano sits here in my room and I never even look at it.

I was born in Barcelona (March 4, 1915) and I 'feel' Spanish--although I adore the USA very much too--but from the beginning I didn't like Spanish cabaret music, the kind they play in the bars in Seville. I wanted to put that kind of music, and flamenco too, at a concert level, to tame its raw energy with the better manners of classical music. However, I very rarely quote folk tunes or use actual flamenco rhythms: They may inspire me, but the mood comes into my imagination; once I hear a theme, I digest it and dissolve it into powder, so that when it comes back from my mind, it's something else. I hope that the mood is still there, but with very few exceptions, my music is

completely original.

I don't like musicology very much. Musicologists want authenticity; but if you do what they tell you the music can become extremely boring, so I write what I have in mind and try to make a piece entertaining. There may be an illusion of authenticity, but that's all I'm concerned about. "Ritmo Jondo," for instance, is obviously inspired by flamenco dances, and it sounds very Spanish, but it has not a trace of actual Gypsy music. I don't like that; it's not supposed to be the real thing, it's more like 'thinking' about Gypsy music. It's interesting--Doris Humphrey, Martha Graham and José Limón all used my music for dance pieces, not because it sounds Spanish, but because it has a certain theatrical drama. Of course, in ballet, the composer is usually ignored by the choreographer, but even so, many of my dance scores have gone around the world. I like to be a little modest if I can, so I would say let the miracle be done, even if it's done by the devil.

Why did I go to Germany? As I said, I wanted to make popular Spanish forms suitable for the concert hall, and for that, Germany was very useful: They write music very seriously. You must remember that the Germans helped Franco during the Spanish Civil War, and by 1939 they had occupied France, so it was impossible to study there. But with a recommendation from my teacher in Barcelona to Richard Strauss, I was given a fellowship, so I went to Germany in 1940, studying first in Düsseldorf, then for three years at the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin.

At the beginning, life in Berlin was very good. The musical life was very rich: Wilhelm Furtwängler was there, and the pianist Wilhelm Kempff, and many foreign musicians were active there as well. I even shook hands with Richard Strauss.

It's hard to explain, but as a Spaniard I did not feel any connection to the Nazis. Remember, Franco was not all that different. I had been a soldier with the Liberals against Franco, but he occupied Barcelona and that was the end of the civil war. The feeling was that the Falangists and the Nazis were trying to do the same thing, the main difference being that Spain was not at war while Germany was devouring Europe. We were very upset about all that was going on, and when America got into the war and started bombing Berlin, I decided to go back to Spain.

I did a lot of conducting then and later on in Paris as well, but no longer. You cannot have two professions; conducting takes a great deal of time, and I much prefer to compose. I find it intriguing to hear other artists perform my music--it's like seeing yourself through different glasses. Our work, after all, ends with ink on paper. From then on, it's up to the interpreter, since each one has another physical way of expressing what's on the page. I try to control only what is written, but within what is written, the interpreter can do whatever he or she wants. If the results are good, you don't have to say anything to the performer. If they're bad, there's nothing to be said. . . .

TRES CANTARES

Texts by Lope de Vega

El Cordobés Valeroso

Este es Pedro Carbonero

Pedro, platero famoso

Pedro, perlero precioso

coralero y diamantero.

*Y de cuanto cubre el mapa
tales Carboneros son,
son dignos de llevar carbón
a la cocina del Papa.*

Pedro the coal man is famous,
Pedro the coal man is handsome
Pedro attracts all the women with
his bold and reckless manner.
Men as attractive as Pedro,
no matter where they may be,
are worthy of selling their coal
to the cook of the Pope.

El Marqués de las Navas

*A Madrid voy que no voy,
a Manila o a la China,
en cuya mar filipina,
nueva navegante soy.
Presto sabrás que allí estoy
si otra jornada recelas,
pleitos dices que vas:
bien dices, quiero ayudarte,
pues vas Leonardo a casarte,
o por ventura lo estás.*

Maybe I'll go to Madrid,
maybe I'll go to Manila,
sailing across every ocean,
maybe I'll just stay at home.
Maybe you'll know where I am,
surely, if you really want me,
tell me, are you unhappy?
How I would like to help you!
Maybe you'd like to get married
or can it be that you are?

Danzas y Bailes

*Las mañanicas de abril
dulces eran de dormir,
y las de mayo mejor
si no despertara amor.*

Belardo y Lucinda

¿casaranse? Sí.

*Belisa y Castilio.
¡Oh, que par gentil!
Tirreno y Diana.
Sol y Serafín.
Clarinda y Riselo.
Ébano y Marfil.
Silvano y Belisa.
Clavel y Jazmín.
Toribio y Antonia.
Apio y perejil.
Riselo y Pascuala.
Toronja y cetí.
Rebollo y Andrea.
Guindas y pernil.*

*Las mañanicas de abril
dulces eran de dormir,
y las de mayo mejor
si no despertara amor.*

*Todo os lo perdono
si sucede así.
Lisarda y Arnaldo.
Rosa y albelí.
Augusta y Leonicio.
Xymena del Cid.
Laura y Feliciano.
Rosa y toronjil.
El rey y la reina.
San Juan y San Gil.
Tantos años vivan
como el Rey David.
Si ella se empeñare
para un paladín;
tan valiente sea
como un puervo espín.
Santantón la alumbre
con el su candil.*

*Las mañanicas de abril
dulces eran de dormir,
y las de mayo mejor
si no despertara amor.*

April mornings in the sun,
lazy hours full of sleep,

when the days become too warm,
they awaken us to love.

Belardo and Lucinda,
Will they marry? Yes!

Cora and Castilio,
What a lovely pair!
Carlos and Diana,
endless sky and sun.
Clara and Riselo,
golden moon and stars.
Mario and Belinda,
butterflies and bees.
Pablo and Antonia,
laurel leaves and thyme.
Paco and Pascuala,
oranges and spice.
Chocolates and cookies,
pineapple and ham.

April mornings in the sun,
lazy hours full of sleep,
when the days become too warm,
they awaken us to love.

When they come together,
I am full of joy.
Lisa and Arnaldo,
roses in a vase.
Beautiful Xymena,
mistress of El Cid!
Laura, Feliciano,
poetry and wine.
King and Queen of Naples,
saints and angels, too!
May they all live long
and never know despair!
Let each girl who's lonely
find a merry lad,
handsome and courageous
like a knight of old.
May the saints of Heaven
grant her heart's desire!

April mornings in the sun,
lazy hours full of sleep,
when the days become too warm,

they awaken us to love.

The **Bronx Arts Ensemble** presents concerts throughout the Bronx and the New York City area that reflect the diversity of its audience. The BAE maintains a residency at Fordham University, Bronx Rose Hill Campus. The Ensemble performs regularly at Van Cortlandt House Museum, Riverdale YM-YWHA, Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, Russian Mission to the U.N. Residency, The Woodlawn Cemetery, and Hostos Community College, as well as a "Chamber Music in Great Homes" series in landmark private residences. Winner of the New York City Arts and Business Council Encore Award for its imaginative programming and service to the people of the city, the Ensemble has presented premieres of works by Roberto Sierra, Morton Gould, Max Lifchitz, Robert Baksa, and Meyer Kupferman, among others. The BAE has recorded for New World Records, Musical Heritage Society, Soundspells, CRI, Leonarda, Premier Records, and Newport Classic. The BAE was recently awarded a grant from the Booth Ferris Foundation to present a new series, *MusicAmericas*, at the Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture, offering music, both new and familiar, of Latino and African-American composers.

Born in Uruguay and a New Yorker since 1976, **Pablo Zinger** has been a frequent pianist and conductor with the Bronx Arts Ensemble. His knowledge of Spanish and Latin American music has led to guest conducting engagements in Costa Rica and Montevideo, Uruguay. He was Music Director of the Spanish Repertory Theatre of New York from 1980 to 1995, and was recently appointed Resident Artist at the University of Texas in El Paso.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- Concertino for Piano, Strings, and Cymbals. S. Rodriguez, piano; Richmond Sinfonia; G. Manahan, conductor. Elan CD 2222.
- Concerto for Piano and Orchestra. Alicia De Larrocha, piano; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; Fruehbeck De Burgos, conductor. London CS-6990. (lp)
- Concerto for String Orchestra. Bronx Arts Ensemble; Pablo Zinger, conductor. New World 80428-2.
- Doppio Concertino*. Bronx Arts Ensemble; Pablo Zinger, conductor. New World 80428-2.
- Flamenco Cyclothymia*. Bronx Arts Ensemble; Pablo Zinger, conductor. New World 80428-2.
- Melorhythmic Dramas*. Louisville Orchestra; Jorge Mester, conductor. Louisville Orchestra First Edition Records. LOU-68-1/LS-68-1. (lp)
- Piano Quartet. Pablo Zinger, piano; Bronx Arts Ensemble. New World 80428-2.
- Quartet for Strings. New World Quartet. Vox Box 2 CDX 5071.
- Sinfonica Chica*. The University of Miami Symphony Orchestra; Thomas M. Sleeper, conductor. Centaur CRC 2256.
- Symphonic Melismas*. The University of Miami Symphony Orchestra; Thomas M. Sleeper, conductor. Centaur CRC 2256.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Chase, Gilbert. *Music of Spain*. 2nd Edition. (Illus.) New York: Dover, 1960.
- del Hoyo, A., ed. *Federico García Lorca: Obras Completas*. Madrid, 1957, rev. 1963, with music.

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Editor: Steven Epstein

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RITMO JONDO

CARLOS SURINACH (b. 1915) 80505-2

BRONX ARTS ENSEMBLE

Ritmo Jondo (Flamenco) (1952)

(publ. Associated Music Publ.)

1 Bulerias 1:29

2 Saeta 2:59

3 Garrotín 1:35

Mitchell Kriegler, clarinet; Lorraine Cohen-Moses, trumpet; Mark Sherman, timpani; Glenn Paulson, xylophone and percussion; Dean Crandall, hand-clapper; Theresa Norris, hand-clapper; Howard Van Hyning, hand-clapper; Pablo Zinger, conductor

Trois Chansons et Danses Espagnoles (Three Spanish Songs and Dances) (1950)

(publ. Peer-Southern Music)

4 Larghetto; allegro 3:00

5 Andantino; moderato 2:45

6 Adagio; allegro tranquillo 3:49

Pablo Zinger, piano

Three Songs of Spain (1952)

(publ. Peer-Southern Music)

7 Allegro (Federico García Lorca) 0:56

8 Andante (Antonio Machado) 2:13

9 Allegro (Antonio Machado) 0:48

Rachel Rosales, soprano; Pablo Zinger, piano

Tres Cantos Berberes (Three Berber Songs) (1952)

(publ. Peer-Southern Music)

- 10 Allegro 2:33
- 11 Andante 4:11
- 12 Presto 3:06

John Wion, flute; Marsha Heller, oboe; Paul Gallo, clarinet; Susan Follari, viola; Lutz Rath, cello;
Pablo Zinger, piano

Tientos (1953)

(publ. Associated Music Publ.)

- 13 Tiento de Queja - Plaintive 2:03
- 14 Tiento de Pena - Sorrowful 2:50
- 15 Tiento de Alegria - Joyful 1:36

Marsha Heller, English horn; Mark Sherman, timpani; Pablo Zinger, piano

Tres Cantares (Texts by Lope de Vega) (1971)

(publ. Associated Music Publ.)

- 16 Allegro (El Cordobés Valeroso) 2:02
- 17 Larghetto (El Marqués de las Navas) 2:47
- 18 Allegro grazioso (Concionero Teatral "Danzas y Bailes") 2:25

Rachel Rosales, soprano; Pablo Zinger, piano
English translation by Joseph Machlis

Hollywood Carnival (1956)

(publ. Broude Brothers)

- 19 Opening 1:22
- 20 Charlie Chaplin 0:45
- 21 Parade of Beauties 1:24
- 22 Epitaph to the Silent Movies 1:31
- 23 Stereophonism 0:57
- 24 Pasodoble in Technicolor 1:26

Theresa Norris, piccolo/flute; Mitchell Kriegler, clarinet; Lorraine Cohen-Moses, trumpet; Dean
Crandall, bass; Mark Sherman, timpani; Glenn Paulson, percussion; Howard Van Hyning,
percussion; Pablo Zinger, conductor

All compositions BMI.

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