

NAXOS

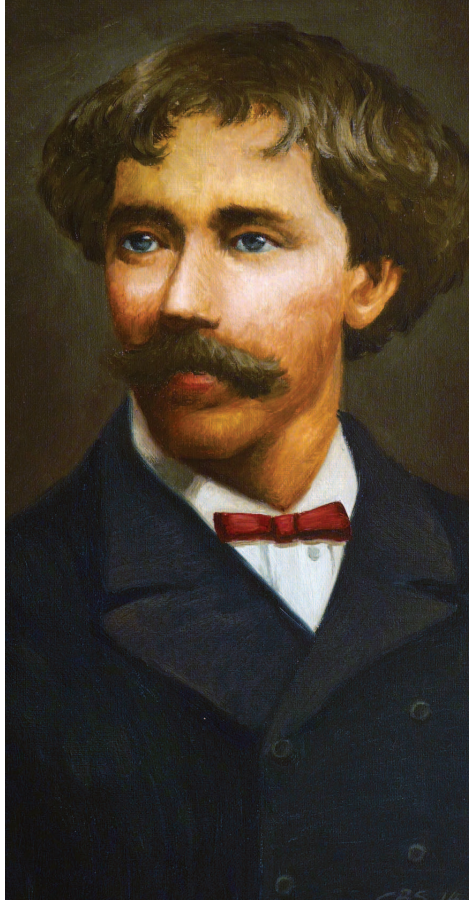
SARASATE

**Music for Violin
and Orchestra • 3**

**Fantasies on
The Magic Flute
and Faust**

**Tianwa Yang, Violin
Orquesta Sinfónica
de Navarra**

**Ernest Martínez
Izquierdo**



Pablo Sarasate (1844–1908)

Music for Violin and Orchestra • 3

The great Spanish violinist Pablo Sarasate was born in Pamplona in 1844, the son of a military bandmaster. After study in Madrid with Manuel Rodríguez Sáez, a pupil of Jules Armingaud, the leader of the quartet of which Edouard Lalo was a member, he entered the Paris Conservatoire at the age of twelve, with the aid of a scholarship from Queen Isabella and the Province of Navarre. Here he became a pupil of Jean-Delphin Alard and also embarked on the study of composition. He won first prize for violin in 1857 and the following year for *soffège*, and in 1859 for harmony as a pupil of Henri Reber. By the age of fifteen, however, Sarasate had launched himself on a concert career, at first winning a reputation in Spain and France, before more extended tours to North and South America and throughout the rest of Europe. Composers who wrote for him included Saint-Saëns, Bruch, Lalo, Wieniawski and Dvořák, and he

remained distinguished for the purity and beauty of his tone, perfection of technique and musical command. He refused, however, to play Brahms's *Violin Concerto*, claiming that the only proper melody in the work was given to the oboe. His playing was in contrast to that of his older contemporary Joseph Joachim, who represented a more characteristically German attitude to performance. For his own use Sarasate wrote a number of works for violin and piano or violin and orchestra, including, as might be expected, compositions based on Spanish themes and rhythms. Among these one of the best known is his *Zigeunerweisen* (Gypsy Airs), together with his *Spanish Dances*. Following the common practice of his time, he also wrote concert fantasies based on themes from popular operas of the day, of which the best known remains his *Carmen Fantasy*.

Keith Anderson

Fantasies on *Carmen* and *Roméo et Juliette*

As he grew to maturity, Sarasate played many works by Mozart. His final composition is the *Concert Fantasy on Mozart's Die Zauberflöte*, Op. 54, a masterpiece of the genre. While it is pure Sarasate in violinistic writing, the Spaniard took note of his predecessors Paganini and H.W. Ernst. Particularly remarkable are the passages in tenths; Sarasate's hand may not have been very big, but it certainly was flexible.

Navarra, Op. 33, for two violins, was one of Sarasate's most frequently played pieces. He played it on many occasions with Enrique Fernandez-Arbo, a performer who wrote some pieces especially for his fellow-countryman. *Navarra* is a *jota*. Notable is the imitation of the flute-like harmonics and the regional drumming. The change in tempo in the middle section would have been sung by a male singer, and perhaps Sarasate had Julian Gayarre, his Navarese compatriot, in mind.

Muñeiras, Op. 33, has a naive charm. Its most notable features are the bagpipe-like effects so characteristic of Northwest Spain, the plaintive middle section, and a finale which brings to mind *Caprice basque*, Op. 24. This unique

piece was published in 1883. Quite coincidentally, a manuscript came to my attention recently. It dates from Sarasate's first concert tour of the Americas, and is autographed "New York 26-2-1872". With very few differences it is the identical piece.

Gounod's great tragic opera *Faust* seemed to interest Sarasate. It is the only opera which inspired him to write not one but two fantasies. This version is Op. 13, and is completely different from the earlier one, dated 1863. The listener will recognize *Le Veau d'or*, the *Garden Scene*, and the *Valse finale*, which is a miracle of lightness and brilliance. *Le Veau d'or* is another thing. Here, Mephistopheles is a lightweight character. This brings to mind what George Bernard Shaw said of Edouard de Reszke's characterization of Mephistopheles: "The most timid child would climb up on his knee and demand to be shown how a watch opens when blown on!"

The *Barcarolle vénitienne*, (*Gondoliéra vénéziana*), Op. 46, is dedicated to Sarasate's important German colleague and frequent piano accompanist, Otto Neitzel. This piece is simply bewitching. It conjures up a nocturnal

drypoint etching by another of Sarasate's friends, James McNeill Whistler. Imagine, if you will, the Venice canals enshrouded in fog. All is mysterious twilight. A gondolier's voice is heard in the distance, but you do not know from where it comes. Close your eyes; envision a musical Whistler nocturnal scene. Tears will come to your eyes.

In 1904 Sarasate recorded some nine discs for the G&T Company. *Caprice Jota*, from the *Introduction and Caprice-Jota, Op. 41*, was among them. His fleet fingers

and enchanting tone are readily apparent. A barcarol-like first section, delightful in its melodiousness, sets the stage with great anticipation for the *Jota*, and what a *Jota* this one is! All the array of Sarasate's arsenal is brought to the utmost of effect. Here is proof positive why Sarasate was one of the greatest of all violinists, and a composer for the ages.

Joseph Gold



Tianwa Yang

In concert and recital Tianwa Yang, born in Beijing in 1987, is winning unprecedented international reviews as she takes the stage as one of the most impressive young violinists of today. She studied the violin from the age of four and at ten was accepted by Lin Yaoji at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Hong Kong media subsequently described her as "A Pride Of China". She was awarded the Volkswagen Foundation prize *Star of Tomorrow* by Seiji Ozawa and the *Prix Montblanc 2006*. Her mentors are Jörg-Wolfgang Jahn and Anner Bylsma. International symphonic débuts have taken her to the United States, Europe, Singapore, Taiwan and China. In recital she has performed at the Berlin Philharmonic Hall, and the Wigmore Hall, London. At the age of thirteen she recorded the *24 Caprices* of Paganini, making her the youngest interpreter of this demanding work and in 2004 she began her collaboration with Naxos, recording the first two volumes of eight of the complete works of Sarasate.

Tianwa Yang offers her thanks to the Sarasate Museum and Pamplona Town Council for permitting her to play on Pablo de Sarasate's violin, the Jean Baptiste Vuillaume of 1842. The *Magic Flute Fantasy* and the 1st violin part of *Navarra for two Violins* is recorded on Sarasate's Vuillaume; the 2nd violin part of *Navarra* is recorded on the Vuillaume she usually plays. It is a tremendous honour to combine performances on both instruments for this recording.



Ernest Martínez Izquierdo

Born in Barcelona in 1962, Ernesto Martínez Izquierdo has held the position of Music Director of the Navarre Symphony Orchestra of Pamplona since 1997 and was Music Director of the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra from 2002 to 2006. He has also conducted the principal Spanish orchestras. Internationally he has worked with orchestras including the Kyoto Symphony Orchestra, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, Philharmonique de Radio France, Helsinki Philharmonic, Orchestra Comunale di Bologna, Beethoven Academie of Antwerp, Tonkünstler-Orchester Niederösterreich and ensembles such as the Ensemble Contemporain of Montreal, the Ensemble Modern in Frankfurt, the Austrian group Klangforum Wien and the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra in Helsinki. In opera outstanding productions include Kaija Saariaho's opera *Adriana Mater*, staged by Peter Sellars, Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, staged by Emilio Sagi

and Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, staged by La Fura dels Baus. He has recorded for Telarc, Harmonia Mundi, Col Legno, Ircam, Stradivarius and Naxos. He has been awarded the Spanish National Radio Critical Eye prize, (1995), the Catalan Roland Journalism Prize for Classical Music (2000), and the Latin Grammy (2006). Since 2006, he has been a member of the Catalan Saint George Royal Academy of Fine Arts.

Navarra Symphony Orchestra

The Navarra Symphony Orchestra was founded by Pablo Sarasate in 1879, making it the oldest orchestral ensemble still active in Spain. Since 1997 the Principal Conductor has been Ernesto Martínez Izquierdo. The orchestra boasts a wide repertoire, collaborates regularly with internationally known soloists and conductors, and is frequently invited to perform in venues and festivals of the highest national and international significance. Concert tours abroad have taken the orchestra to Warsaw, to Dortmund and to Paris, where it is invited every year to both the prestigious Théâtre des



Champs-Élysées and to the Théâtre du Châtelet. The orchestra has also toured China with Tianwa Yang, giving seven concerts in five different cities with music by Pablo Sarasate. The Navarra Symphony Orchestra receives financial support from the Government of Navarra and the City of Pamplona, and is sponsored by private companies including NH Hoteles, Diario de Navarra, Caja Navarra and Gas Natural Navarra.

Acclaimed as 'an uncommonly brilliant young violinist' Tianwa Yang continues her highly praised survey of Pablo de Sarasate's music for violin and orchestra. His *Magic Flute Fantasy* is a masterpiece of the genre à la Paganini, while the Gounod *Fantasy* (his second) is a miracle of lightness. The highly popular *Navarra*, the charming *Muiñeira* with its bagpipe effects, the bewitching *Venetian Barcarolle* and the *Introduction et Caprice-Jota* with its barcarolle-like beginning and dancing finale coming thrillingly to life on this album. "Tianwa Yang is a sensationally talented young violinist. She has technique to burn... Best of all, she has a beautiful tone in cantabile phrases and a really seductive way with rubato that conveys emotion without distorting the rhythm" (David Hurwitz/ClassicsToday.com on Volume 2, 8.572216).

Pablo
SARASATE
(1844–1908)

Music for Violin and Orchestra • 3

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|---|--|--------------|
| 1 | Concert Fantasy on Mozart's <i>Die Zauberflöte</i>, Op. 54 | 13:02 |
| 2 | Navarra, Op. 33 (for two violins and orchestra*) | 6:26 |
| 3 | Muiñeiras, Op. 32 | 9:54 |
| 4 | Nouvelle fantaisie sur <i>Faust</i> de Gounod, Op. 13 | 12:00 |
| 5 | Barcarolle vénitienne (Gondoliéra veneziana), Op. 46
(version for violin and orchestra) | 9:51 |
| 6 | Introduction et Caprice-Jota, Op. 41 | 7:15 |



Tianwa Yang, Violin
Orquesta Sinfónica de Navarra
Ernest Martínez Izquierdo



*** Both violin parts played by Tianwa Yang**

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Playing Time
58:50



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