

SARASATE

**Music for Violin
and Orchestra • 4**

**Fantasies on
Don Giovanni and
Der Freischütz**

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

**Ernest Martínez
Izquierdo**



Pablo Sarasate (1844–1908) Music for Violin and Orchestra • 4

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 *solfège*, 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 through-

Introduction et Tarantelle • Fantasies on *Don Giovanni* and *Der Freischütz* Jota de San Fermín • Jota de Pamplona • Airs écossais • Le Rêve • L'Esprit follet

Pablo de Sarasate was the most successful violinist in history. On his death, the *New York Herald* estimated his bank account at two million francs. It was Wieniawski, no less, who phrased the obvious so perfectly. He declared: "Sarasate is the violinist to the whole world. He plays everywhere, his tone is both beautiful and memorable, his programmes are always fresh and popular, and audiences love his music." In concert with what Wieniawski said, the great violinist, Ruggiero Ricci, told me that the most distinguishing characteristic of a violinist is his tone. Sarasate's tone was pure magic. It was, along with Jascha Heifetz, the most readily identifiable tone of any violinist. In addition, Sarasate was the master of a perfect technique of both hands, which was used at the service of the music.

This final instalment of the complete works for violin and orchestra of Sarasate, begins with *Introduction et Tarantelle, Op. 43*. Except for *Zigeunerweisen*, this piece is surely the most popular of his non-Spanish works. As always, it is a melding of singing melody, miraculous bowing, scintillating left-hand technique, with all this

out 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.

Keith Anderson

added to the Paganini-like salvos on the G string.

Jota de San Fermín, Op. 36, is one of Sarasate's weaker efforts. While it contains some felicitous melodies and the usual virtuoso violinistic bravura, it bears out a brilliant observation by the great violinist Nathan Milstein comparing the two Prokofiev violin concertos: "He wrote the *First Violin Concerto* because he wanted to write a violin concerto. He wrote the *Second* because he was a great composer."

In his maturity, Sarasate turned increasingly to the classics. The music of Bach and Mozart was almost always performed at the beginning of his recitals. Two Mozart opera fantasies, on *Don Giovanni* and on *The Magic Flute*, illustrate the significant change of these final years. Today's staid and overly sophisticated audiences will certainly look down on these pieces. This is unfortunate, because both fantasies are delightful, and helped educate the audiences of their day to this great music. For this reason, alone, opera fantasies were valuable.

The *Fantaisie on Weber's 'Der Freischütz'* is an early,

if mature work, based on the overture to Weber's opera. The feature that is most notable is that the memorable horn melody of the original is realised in double stops by Sarasate. All is conceived with attention to singing in the grand manner. Sarasate had a justifiably famous, scintillating flying staccato which is heard to great effect in this work.

If *Jota de San Fermín* is found lacking, *Jota de Pamplona, Op. 50*, is one of the best. The listener is amazed and delighted at every turn. Never let it be said that Sarasate lacked imagination or a gift for melody. It is curious to note that the name of the dedicatee, the famous Professor Edouard Nadaud, is misspelled on the title page.

Airs écossais, Op. 34, is dedicated to Sarasate's younger colleague Eugène Ysaÿe. It has, as one would expect, bagpipe imitations and uses of the Scottish snap. Perhaps Sarasate wanted to demonstrate to Bruch, with

his *Scottish Fantasy* and Sir Alexander Mackenzie with his *Pibroch Suite*, that he could not be outdone.

Le Rêve, Op. 53, is a remarkable piece in every way, of a calibre sufficient to assure Sarasate a place in the pantheon of the greatest composers.

L'Esprit follet, Op. 48, is to violin music what Houdini was to magic. Sarasate demonstrates will-of-the-wisp fingering befitting the title and inimitable feats of bowing.

Sarasate's compositions for violin and orchestra, recorded in the present series, must help to recall earlier days when violinist-composers were a feature of concert life. Among these Sarasate reigned supreme, a great violinist and a composer of uncommon quality, an incandescent musical personality, and a genius for the ages.

Joseph Gold

Tianwa Yang

Tianwa Yang has quickly established herself as a leading international performer and recording artist. She has recorded critically acclaimed interpretations of the complete music for violin and orchestra (8.572191, 8.572216, 8.572275, 8.572276), and for violin and piano (8.577767, 8.570192, 8.570893) by Sarasate, with the latter cycle due for completion in 2014 (8.572709). These Naxos début albums were followed by Piazzolla's *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* (8.572271), with the Nashville Symphony and Giancarlo Guerrero, and a coupling of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and Piazzolla's *Las 4 Estaciones Portenas* arranged for violin and strings (8.551228 / Naxos Germany only), followed by Rihm's *Complete works for Violin and Piano* (8.572730). Her recording of Mendelssohn's two *Violin Concertos* (8.572662) has won the highest praise. Her recording of Paganini's *24 Caprices*, made at the age of thirteen, make her the youngest artist to have recorded these works. She also appears on the Naxos 20th Anniversary Gala concert DVD (2.110277) live from the Wigmore Hall, London. Her most memorable concert performances with some of the most prestigious international orchestras include those given in the Gewandhaus, Leipzig, the Salle Pleyel, Paris, the Philharmonic Hall, Berlin, the Rose Theater, New York and the Gasteig, Munich, as well as appearances at the Ravinia Festival, USA, the Schwetzingen Festival, Germany, and on tour throughout the major cities of Canada. In May 2012 she was selected to perform for Naxos' 25th Anniversary Gala celebrations and for the inaugural event of *Classical Next* in Munich. Born in Beijing, Tianwa Yang began studying the violin at the age of four, winning six national competitions even in childhood. At the age of ten she entered the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, and in 2003 she was awarded a scholarship by the German Academic Exchange Service to study chamber music in Germany, where she remains a resident. While admiring the music of Brahms, Mozart, Schubert and Ravel, Yang feels a strong affinity with the work of Wolfgang Rihm, which she finds emotionally compelling, diverse and unique. She is a multi-faceted artist with wide-ranging artistic interests. She extends her gratitude to Lin Yaoji, Jörg-Wolfgang Jahn and Anner Bylisma for their musical insight and support throughout her career.

Ernest Martínez Izquierdo

Born in Barcelona in 1962, Ernest Martínez Izquierdo has been artistic and music director of the Navarre Symphony Orchestra since 1997. After his musical training in Barcelona and Paris, he began his career as a conductor with the establishment of Barcelona 216, specialising in contemporary chamber music. From 2002 until 2006 he was conductor and artistic director of the Barcelona Symphony and Catalonia National Orchestra (OBC), continuing as principal conductor until 2009. At the same time he conducted other leading Spanish and international orchestras, including the Kyoto Symphony Orchestra, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic, Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre National de Lyon, Warsaw Philharmonic, Zagreb Philharmonic, Orchestra del Teatro Comunale di Bologna, the Beethoven Academie, Antwerp, and the Tonkünstler Orchestra of lower Austria, Vienna, and ensembles such as the Ensemble Contemporain de Montréal, Ensemble Modern, Frankfurt, Wien Klangforum, and the Avanti Chamber Orchestra (Helsinki). He has conducted operas, including Saariaho's *Adriana Mater* in Finland and the United States. He has recorded for Telarc, Harmonia Mundi, Col legno, Ircam, Stradivarius and Naxos. Awards have included the Ojo Crítico of Spanish National Radio, the Catalan Roland Journalism Prize for Classical Music, the Ciutat de Barcelona Prize and the Latin GRAMMY®. 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 orchestra now active in Spain. The orchestra boasts a wide repertoire, collaborates regularly with internationally renowned 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, Dortmund and both the prestigious Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris as well as to Munich, Prague, Vienna, Amsterdam and Baden-Baden. The orchestra has also toured China with Tianwa Yang. The Navarra Symphony Orchestra receives financial support from the Government of Navarra and the City of Pamplona, and is sponsored by private companies including Diario de Navarra, "laCaixa", and Gas Natural Navarra.

Photo: Javier Sesma



Photo: Javier Sesma

Photo: Friedrun Reinhold



This volume concludes Tianwa Yang's internationally acclaimed series of recordings of Pablo de Sarasate's works for violin and orchestra. This stunning programme includes the popular *Introduction et Tarantelle* and two delightful jotas. Sarasate's scintillating flying staccato technique is heard in the *Fantaisie on Weber's 'Der Freischütz'*, while *Le Rêve* is a remarkable work in every way. "Yang is splendidly equipped as a Sarasate violinist, with her clear tone, pure intonation, impressive dexterity and light touch ... startlingly beautiful." (*Gramophone* on Volume 3, 8.572275)

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(1844–1908)

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| 1 | Introduction et Tarantelle, Op. 43 | 5:02 |
| 2 | Jota de San Fermín, Op. 36 | 5:56 |
| 3 | Fantaisie sur le <i>Don Juan</i> de Mozart, Op. 51 | 10:31 |
| 4 | Fantaisie sur <i>Der Freischütz</i> de Weber, Op. 14 | 12:34 |
| 5 | Jota de Pamplona, Op. 50 | 6:46 |
| 6 | Airs écossais, Op. 34 | 9:34 |
| 7 | Le Rêve, Op. 53 | 11:18 |
| 8 | L'Esprit follet, Op. 48 | 5:01 |



Tianwa Yang, Violin
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Cover painting: Portrait of the composer by Chai Ben-Shan