



Rosa Maria Kucharski (1929 – 2006) was born in Barcelona and began her piano studies at the tender age of six, giving her first public performance when she was only Seven. During these formative years, she studied at the Marshall Academy in Barcelona and later, in Madrid, with Tomás Andrade de Silva.

From her base in Spain, she travelled the world as a pianist and featured as a soloist with many important orchestras. She furthered her studies, working with Laraze Levy in Paris as well as with Pablo Casals, George Enesco, Walter Giesecking and Wilhelm Kempff.

She was the first woman pianist to be invited to participate in the prestigious Chopin Festival of Mallorca and was professor of piano at both the Conservatory in Córdoba and at the Escuela Superior de Canto de Madrid. She founded the International Society for Music Education in 1977 and, in 1986, the International Musical Exchange (Intercambio Musical Internacional).

Rosa Maria Kucharski was well acquainted with many of the finest Spanish composers of her time, most especially with Federico Mompou, and her performances show this passionate attachment to this music and to her homeland, Catalonia.

We would like to pay tribute to this wonderful artist who evokes the spirit of Spain.

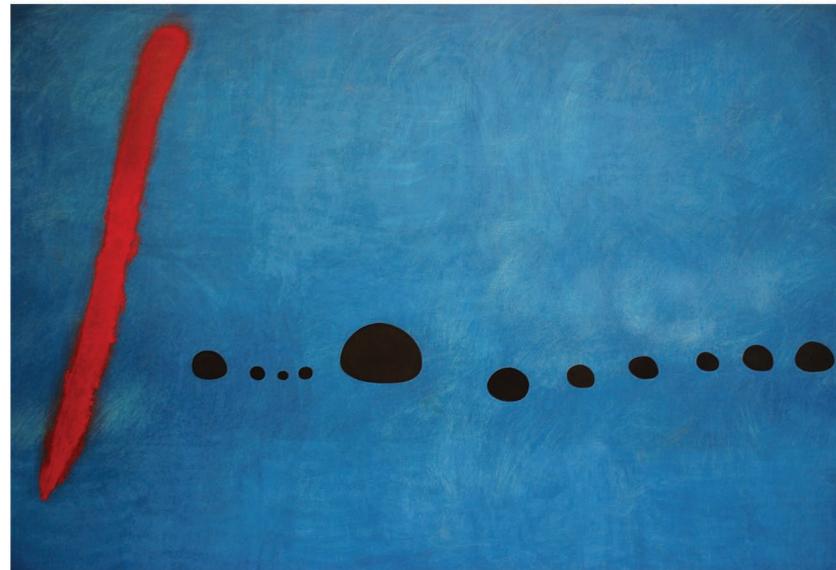
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Piano Musique Espagnole



Rosa Maria Kucharski



Volume 2



A Unity of Cultures

In particular, it is the music and culture of Spain that has played such an important role in the general development of western music. Aside from the Latin American influences coming as a result of the colonizing of the Americas after 1492, streams of migrating populations entered the peninsula from across Europe, from Africa and, indeed as many believe, also from the Celtic culture. This is easily heard in the language and in the parallels to be seen between the timbre of the Spanish tongue with its unique vocalizations and the permutations of that timbre to be found in its music.

In the early centuries of the Christian era, the influences of ancient Greece mingled with those of the Christian church. After the fall of Rome, this mixture also took on an oriental flavour with the arrival of the Jews, the Moors (until 1492) and, somewhat earlier, also the Germanic Visigoths who had taken control of the Iberian Peninsula immediately after the collapse of Rome. Each of these groups brought the sounds of its own language and these mingled in a two thousand year history that has produced a sound unique to Spanish music, individual and unified despite the differences in region or dialect.

In this recording, the overriding influence in this music, also interpretively, is that of Catalonia, of the province bordering on France. The music of Antonio Soler carries with it this international sheen but also the influences of his teacher, the Italian Domenico Scarlatti. As a monk in Lleida, “el padre Soler” was exposed to these Moorish influences coming from the Mozarabic Chant which had dominated this church music for centuries, as well as to his own Catalan tongue and to Italian and French. In this regard, it is to be remembered that the early Christian church in Spain existed isolated from the influence of Rome. This was a result of the Islamic invasion which held the country remote from Roman-Latin culture until the end of the 15th century. The Moors of Al-Andalus were a tolerant people allowing Christian and Jewish congregations to co-exist. It was not until the 8th or 9th century that musical notation became possible with the introduction of the Visigoth neumes for the codification of chant melodies and it may be of interest to realize that, in the rest of Europe, it wasn't until Guido of Arezzo in the 10th century that the idea of musical notation was thought to be possible. In Spain, as early as the 6th century, Isidore of Seville had maintained that it would be humanly impossible to notate sounds.

Soler, however, went much further than simply allowing the church music influences in his environment to colour his works. In his music we find folkloric elements, mixed with his love of the Alberti Bass and his evolution as a master of counterpoint. In short, it was Padre Soler who introduced the first modern strains of progressive western musical thought, all of it underscored by the Roman/Italian influences coming from Italy via his teacher, Scarlatti.

Similarly, José de Larrañaga, another Spanish monk but, this time, from the Basque country, combined the spices of his own dialect with the baroque refinements of Handel and, once again, of Scarlatti. Larrañaga was also politically active and linked to the early Royal Basque Society of Friends of the Country, a movement which introduced ideas of the Age of Enlightenment into the Basque region and, for which, he was investigated as being a dangerous and subversive influence.

Also composers such as Isaac Albéniz, himself from Catalonia, brought the dances and sounds of his homeland and of the Catalan language into the Spanish mainstream as did Enrique Granados and, indeed Federico Mompou.

It is this unique relationship to Catalonia that makes these interpretations, also by a pianist of Catalan origin, such a special tribute to the variety of Spanish culture but also the influences of Joaquín Turina from Sevilla and of the Basque, José de Larrañaga, that show this variety in its full splendor. It is this richness of influences from Africa, from Islam, from Christianity and from the Germanic Visigoths that have given this music its special “ring”. The title of the work by Larrañaga, “Tañido de órgano”, emphasizes this phase of “discovery” and shows that, as early as the 18th century, Spanish composers were referring to the “twang” of this music. Hence the title of this work which means “Twang the Organ”.

We hear the stylized dance music of the Basque country on this recording and its counterpart in the Catalanian “Sardana”. We sample the richness of this cultural interchange and hear a musical tongue unique to this part of the globe, full of the joy of a people rejoicing in the richness of its history and proud of its cultural diversity.