



**Fernando
LOPES-GRAÇA**
(1906–1994)

Songs and Folk Songs

Susana Gaspar, Soprano • Cátia Moreso, Mezzo-Soprano
Fernando Guimarães, Tenor

Nuno Vieira de Almeida, Piano



Fernando Lopes-Graça
(1906–1994)

SONGS AND FOLK SONGS

Quatro cantos do Natal ('Four Christmas Songs'), Op. 97 (1955) 9:12

- | | | |
|----------|---|------|
| 1 | I. Ó meu menino Jesus ('Oh my baby Jesus') | 1:48 |
| 2 | II. Vinde Pastores ('Come, you shepherds') | 2:00 |
| 3 | III. Estando a Virgem ('The Virgin was') | 2:41 |
| 4 | IV. Ó meu menino tão lindo ('Oh my beautiful baby') | 2:38 |

Três poemas de Adolfo Casais Monteiro
('Three Poems by Adolfo Casais Monteiro'), Op. 12 (1934) 5:08

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| 5 | I. Música ('Music') | 2:34 |
| 6 | II. Poemas das mãos tombadas ('Hands Fallen Down') | 1:20 |
| 7 | III. Marcha triunfal ('Triumphal March') | 1:10 |

Tíz Magyar Népdal ('Ten Hungarian Songs'), Op. 87 (1954) 16:14

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| 8 | I. Kertünk alatt ('Under our garden they dig a hole') | 2:20 |
| 9 | II. Jeruzsálem Kapujában ('At Jerusalem's gates') | 1:31 |
| 10 | III. Tegnap jártam zaboratni ('Yesterday I reaped the oats') | 0:54 |
| 11 | IV. A gyirmóti magas torony ('The tall tower of Gyirmót') | 1:54 |
| 12 | V. Ideki a Csengébe ('Out here in Csenge') | 0:49 |
| 13 | VI. Estefelé ('In the evening') | 2:31 |
| 14 | VII. Látodé te azt a hegyet ('Do you see upon that hill') | 1:05 |
| 15 | VIII. Jaj de porzik a zilahi ('Alas, dust in the street') | 2:09 |
| 16 | IX. Tedd be, vedd fö ('Turn on, take the main') | 0:43 |
| 17 | X. Őszi szél ('Autumn wind') | 2:12 |

Dois romances de Armindo Rodrigues
('Two Romances by Armindo Rodrigues'), Op. 47 (1946) 5:40

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| 18 | I. Romance das três meninas no laranjal
(('Romance of Three Girls in an Orange Grove')) | 3:05 |
| 19 | II. Romance dos sete cavaleiros ('Romance of the Seven Horsemen') | 2:33 |

Neuf Chansons populaires russes

(‘Nine Russian Folk Songs’), Op. 66 (1950–51)

24:40

20	I.	Moissonneur! (‘Reapers!’)	2:15
21	II.	La mal-mariée (‘The Ill-married’)	2:29
22	III.	Je m’en irai (‘I am leaving’)	2:17
23	IV.	Sur la rivière (‘On the river of Kozanka’)	1:56
24	V.	Poussière de neige (‘Snowflake’)	1:52
25	VI.	Pétrouchka	1:49
26	VII.	Souliko	3:51
27	VIII.	Ma petite maisonnette (‘My little cottage’)	1:53
28	IX.	Sur les flots puissants du Volga (‘On the strong waves of the Volga’)	6:14

As três canções de Olívia (‘The Three Olivia Songs’), Op. 20 (1935)

4:19

29	I.	Desalento (‘Dismay’)	1:41
30	II.	O bordado (‘The Embroidery’)	1:12
31	III.	Distância (‘Distance’)	1:22

Quatro novos cantos do Natal (‘Four New Christmas Songs’) (c. 1958)

10:10

32	I.	Em Belém (‘In Bethlehem’)	1:51
33	II.	Dia de festa (‘Holiday’)	2:39
34	III.	Cântiga à Virgem (‘Song to the Virgin’)	1:20
35	IV.	Vós sois Cristo (‘You are Christ’)	4:17

Susana Gaspar, Soprano **1–5, 21–22, 25, 27–28, 32–34**

Cátia Moreso, Mezzo-Soprano **2, 4, 8–17, 29–34**

Fernando Guimarães, Tenor **3–4, 6–7, 18–20, 23–24, 26, 28, 32, 35**

Nuno Vieira de Almeida, Piano

Fernando LOPES-GRAÇA (1906–1994)

Songs and Folk Songs

The missing link

‘Music, all true and great music, is an ineffable movement of the soul, a free play of the spirit, a subtle whim of the intelligence, pure and disinterested activity of the mind, a winged exercise of reason, its triumph and its desperation.’

‘The musical work (just like the work of a painter or a poet) is the product of an equation between the artist and their environment. It has to correspond to their needs and solicitations (...) and it is “meaningful” insofar as it embodies or satisfies the “state of mind” of a historic moment, a people or a class.’

These two apparently contradictory descriptions of musical creation were written by the same man, Fernando Lopes-Graça, arguably the most important Portuguese composer of the second half of the 20th century. Although there is a time gap of about 12 years (1932–1945), the tension between both statements could easily be taken as the most significant motif in Lopes-Graça’s work.

Throughout his impressive musical output – with the clear predominance of the works for piano and voice – it is possible to find clear examples of this tension as the composer veers between an almost formalist musical conception and music firmly rooted in the popular folk music of his native Portugal. One may even

find examples of this dialectic in the author’s own biography.

It was during his three-year sojourn in Paris, from 1937 to 1939, to undertake studies in composition and orchestration, that Lopes-Graça was convinced by singer Lucie Dewinsky to start a systematic work of harmonising Portuguese folk songs. At the time, Lopes-Graça was free to delve into the intricacies of contemporary musical language – he attended the classes of Charles Koechlin – and after having introduced the work of Schoenberg or Hindemith to Portuguese audiences, he was also ready to engage in the lifelong project of harmonising a rich repository of Portuguese popular songs. A repository that was made even richer through the research in which he himself would engage, after 1960 and together with ethnomusicologist Michel Giacometti, of methodically compiling and analysing Portuguese musical traditions.

This creative tension between complex musical erudition together with an efficient mastering of the avant-garde idioms of the time, and a deep taste for authentic popular music, matched that of Béla Bartók, who, together with Beethoven and, perhaps on a lesser note, Stravinsky and Debussy, was one of the guiding influences on Lopes-Graça’s musical persona. However, Lopes-Graça’s carefully studied regard for the formalist dimension of musical creation, and the ancient cultural idiosyncrasies of Portuguese musical traditions, distinguish

his production from Bartók's, in almost every aspect. This dialectic tension was also, to a great extent, Lopes-Graça's solution to a problem that, according to him, affected Portuguese musical creation for quite some time. Eager to accompany musical fashion, Portuguese composers, eager to follow musical trends, were rather willing to adopt the compositional methods of the day without fully developing the creative potential of existing methods. Lopes-Graça railed against this obsession for novelty, noticing how Portuguese musical Classicism and Romanticism stopped short of its full development. The same thing was happening when he was starting his career with a sudden and ill-prepared shift from nationalism to the twelve-tone technique and, despite his admiration for Schoenberg's revolution, Lopes-Graça was not so eager to follow that path, unlike most of his fellow colleagues at that time.

In a way, there was a missing link between the folklorism or nationalism of the late 19th century, and the experiences of atonality of the early 1900s, and Lopes-Graça was poised to fill that gap. This is clearly perceived in the originality and complexity of his compositions for piano and voice, and particularly in the intensity of his work on traditional songs. Among them, there is a striking emphasis on Christmas songs, most of which have also been adapted to choral versions. This album includes *Four Christmas Songs* (1955) and *Four New Christmas Songs* (1958), recently discovered by Conceição Correia at the Museum of Portuguese Music – Casa Verdades de Faria. The fact that this work emerged not only from Portuguese folk music but also from other national musical heritages is a

clear reminder that the notions of folklorism or nationalism should be taken on a wider scale.

In fact, some of the most interesting examples of Lopes-Graça's ability to think through musical tradition are to be found in his versions of foreign folk songs, such as the *Ten Hungarian Songs* (1954) and the *Nine Russian Folk Songs* (1950–51), recorded here. Lopes-Graça's talent lies in bringing out the musical atmosphere intrinsic to each of these songs – simply by making the atmosphere denser through the harmonic support of the piano.

The other major characteristic of Lopes-Graça's works for piano and voice consists of music for poems by Portuguese writers. This could be the opportunity for Lopes-Graça to indulge in a more 'subtle whim of intelligence' but, interestingly enough, we find in many of his songs a kind of musical reminiscence and a new way to integrate and develop a legacy from the past. A significant trait of this 'working with the past' is apparent in the way Lopes-Graça resorts to tradition for his quite unique treatment of the Portuguese prosody, as if centuries of dealing with a language in music provided a technical and poetic lesson on how to put words into song. This seems particularly evident if one compares the relatively mature *Two Romances by Armindo Rodrigues* (1946) to the earlier cycles, *Three Poems by Adolfo Casais Monteiro* (1934) and *The Three Olivia Songs* (1935), based on poems by Adriano Vera Jardim, when the appeal to move with the times seemed more imposing.

Vitor Moura

Susana Gaspar



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The Portuguese soprano, Susana Gaspar, was a member of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme in 2011–13 at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. She studied at the Lisbon Conservatoire, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the National Opera Studio, and represented Portugal in the 2013 Cardiff Singer of the World competition. Her operatic roles include: Mimì (*La Bohème*), Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Azema (*Semiramide*) Violetta (*La traviata*), First Nymph/Foreign Princess (*Rusalka*), Paride (*Paride ed Elena*), and Contessa Ceprano/Paggio (*Rigoletto*). She has performed with the London Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Simón Bolívar Orchestra of Venezuela, and at the Teatro Nacional de São Carlos and the Setúbal Music Festival and with Orquestra XXI.

Gaspar's future and current engagements include Mimì for Diva Opera, Manon for Valladolid Opera Project, Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*) for Dias da Música in Lisbon and Verdi's *Requiem* with the Hastings Philharmonic.

Cátia Moreso



The Portuguese mezzo-soprano, Cátia Moreso, first studied interior design at IADE in Lisbon before undertaking vocal studies at the Lisbon Conservatoire. She then trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (where she obtained a BM and a master's degree), and at the National Opera Studio. A student of Susan Waters, she won First Prize at the second Fundação Rotária Portuguesa Singing Competition, the Newcomer Prize at the Luísa Todi Singing Competition, and First Prize at the Prémio José Augusto Alegria in Portugal. She has appeared at Wexford, Grange Park and Tanglewood, and for Naxos she sings Dianora in De Almeida's *La Spinalba* (8.660319-21), and Giano in De Almeida's *Trionfo d'Amore* (8.573380-81).

Fernando Guimarães

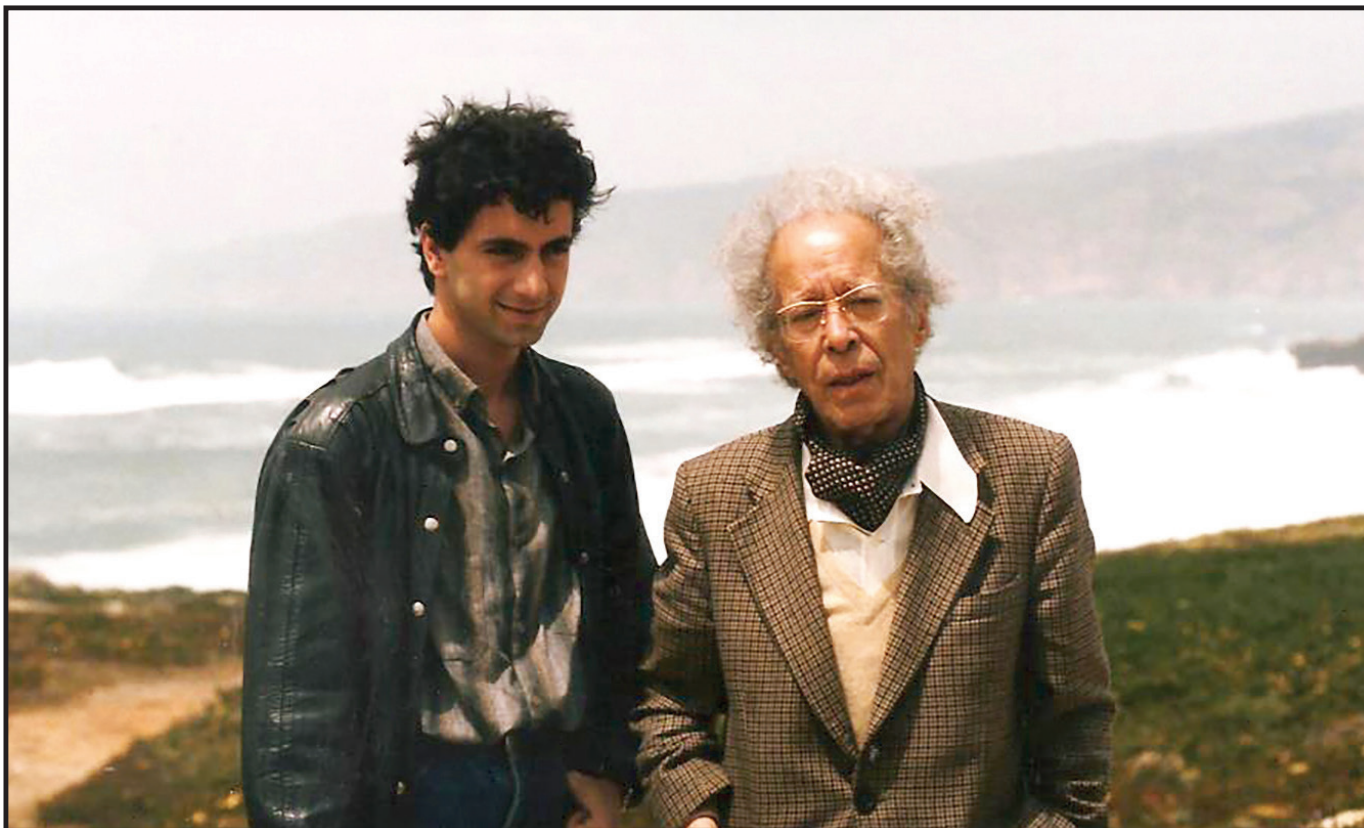


The Portuguese tenor, Fernando Guimarães, was born in Oporto. He has won prizes at the Orfeo and Innsbruck singing competitions and has worked with leading conductors. His festival appearances include Aix-en-Provence, Innsbruck, Potsdam, Ambronay, Saintes and Beaune. In concert, Guimarães has appeared with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Les Arts Florissants, Les Talens Lyriques, the Freiburger BarockConsort, Capriccio Stravagante, Collegium Vocale Gent, Al Ayre Español, L'Arpeggiata, B'Rock and the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra. In 2014 he made his US debut in the title role of Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, for which he obtained a GRAMMY® nomination for Best Opera Recording. For Naxos, Fernando Guimarães sings Ippolito in De Almeida's *La Spinalba*, Adraste in De Almeida's *Il Trionfo d'Amore*, and Orlando in Sousa Carvalho's *L'Angelica* (8.573554-55).

Nuno Vieira de Almeida



Upon graduating from the Lisbon Conservatoire, Nuno Vieira de Almeida went to Vienna on a scholarship from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation to study with Leonid Brumberg and later with Geoffrey Parsons in London. He has worked as a Lieder pianist with renowned singers including Gundula Janowitz, Peter Weber and Gabriele Fontana, and in Lisbon, he has worked with all the major Portuguese singers such as Elsa Saque and Elisabete Matos. Vieira de Almeida has recorded several albums of Portuguese music for voice and piano and has also worked with the Portuguese film-maker Manoel de Oliveira, recording all the music for the film *Vale Abraão*. Vieira de Almeida has a PhD in historical musicology from the Universidade Nova in Lisbon and teaches at the Escola Superior de Música in Lisbon.



Nuno Vieira de Almeida and Fernando Lopes-Graça
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Fernando Lopes-Graça was arguably the greatest Portuguese composer of the second half of the 20th century. He absorbed successive stylistic influences, but the core of his musical impulses lay in the folk music of his native country, a feature especially evident in his songs. The originality and complexity of his harmonisations, the vivid and communicative beauty of his sets of Christmas Songs and the subtlety of his settings of Russian and Hungarian songs illustrate a complete mastery of this aspect of his multifaceted art.

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FUNDAÇÃO
D. LUIS

A detailed track list can be found on page 2 of the booklet

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Playing Time
1:15:45



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