



**Fernando**  
**LOPES-GRAÇA**  
(1906–1994)

**Songs and Folk Songs • 2**

**Susana Gaspar, Soprano • Ricardo Panela, Baritone**  
**Nuno Vieira de Almeida, Piano**



**Songs and Folk Songs • 2**

<b>Sept Vieilles chansons grecques ('Seven Old Greek Songs'), Op. 58 (1950) *</b> (Text: Traditional)	<b>20:25</b>
<b>1</b> No. 1. L'Agnelet 'Chant du berger' ('The little lamb (Shepherd's song)')	4:05
<b>2</b> No. 2. Là-bas sur le gazon ('Down there, on the grass')	2:25
<b>3</b> No. 3. Pentozali	1:17
<b>4</b> No. 4. Ma compagne ('My companion')	2:55
<b>5</b> No. 5. Ma femme a l'air si gentillet ('My wife has such a pretty look')	2:27
<b>6</b> No. 6. Ô liane verte ('O green vine')	2:14
<b>7</b> No. 7. La Danse de Zalongo ('Dance of Zalongo')	5:00
<b>8</b> <b>Ícaro ('Icarus'), Op. 17 (1935) *</b> (Text: José Régio, 1901–1969)	<b>3:46</b>
<b>9</b> <b>Marcha quase fúnebre ('Quasi Funeral March'), Op. 18 (1935) *</b> (Text: Carlos Queirós, 1907–1949)	<b>2:54</b>
<b>10</b> <b>Pastoral, Op. 19 (1934–35)</b> (Text: Afonso Duarte, 1884–1958)	<b>3:20</b>
<b>Três canções do 25 de Abril ('Three Songs of 25 April') (1975) *</b> (Text: Arindo Rodrigues, 1904–1993 <sup>11</sup> , José Ferreira Monte, 1922–1985 <sup>12–13</sup> )	<b>6:12</b>
<b>11</b> No. 1. Portugal, cravo vermelho ('Portugal, red carnation')	2:15
<b>12</b> No. 2. Viva o amor ('Long live love')	2:17
<b>13</b> No. 3. A minha bandeira ('My banner')	1:40
<b>Três poemas em prosa ('Three prose poems'), Op. 7 (1928–29)</b> (Text: Rabindranath Tagore, 1861–1941, translated by A. Aguiar de Quadros)	<b>5:45</b>
<b>14</b> No. 1. Pronunciarei o teu nome ('I will utter your name')	2:14
<b>15</b> No. 2. Escura a noite e tu dormes ('The night is dark and your slumber is deep')	1:50
<b>16</b> No. 3. Quando levantas a tua lâmpada ('When you lift up your lamp')	1:39

**Dix Chansons populaires tchèques et slovaques  
(('Ten Czech and Slovak Folk Songs'), Op. 67 (1951, rev. 1978) \*** **22:35**

<b>17</b> No. 1. L'Adieu ('The farewell')	3:12
<b>18</b> No. 2. Cueillons la framboise ('Let's pick the raspberries')	1:03
<b>19</b> No. 3. Mère, êtes-vous là-bas? ('Mother, are you there?')	3:17
<b>20</b> No. 4. L'Oiseau planait ('The bird was hovering')	2:59
<b>21</b> No. 5. Chanson du rouet ('Spinning wheel song')	1:08
<b>22</b> No. 6. Toi, la plus belle ('You, the fairest of them all')	3:16
<b>23</b> No. 7. Un fusilier d'la garde ('A rifleman of the guard')	1:05
<b>24</b> No. 8. Je possède un doux ami ('I have a sweet friend')	2:26
<b>25</b> No. 9. Les Fillettes ('The girls')	2:50
<b>26</b> No. 10. Hop, hei! ('Hop, Hei!')	1:06

**\* WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING**

**Susana Gaspar, Soprano** **1 3 6 9–10 20–26**  
**Ricardoanela, Baritone** **2 4–5 7 8 11–13 17 19 22 25 26**  
**Nuno Vieira de Almeida, Piano**

Acknowledgements: Culturgest – Fundação Caixa Geral de Depósitos; Museu da Música Portuguesa

## Fernando LOPES-GRAÇA (1906–1994) Songs and Folk Songs · 2

Fernando Lopes-Graça\* was one of the most prominent Portuguese composers of his generation. After finishing his composition and piano studies with Tomás Borba, Luís de Freitas Branco and Viana da Mota at the National Conservatoire in Lisbon, he settled in the university city of Coimbra in central Portugal, where he came in contact with a group of writers and intellectuals active around the journal *Presença*, an important modernist publication that exerted a major influence on the young composer's aesthetic outlook. The *Presença* circle also revealed to him the poetry of José Régio, Adolfo Casais Monteiro, Carlos Queirós and Fernando Pessoa, among others, whose poems Lopes-Graça began setting to music in the early 1930s, thus virtually inaugurating the use of contemporary Portuguese poetry in the composition of art songs. An articulate writer himself, he contributed a number of essays to the journal, including a study of contemporary French song (focusing on Fauré, Ravel and Milhaud) and the first in-depth discussion of Schoenberg's music to appear in Portugal, which together reveal an inquisitive mind attuned to the most recent developments in European music as well as an enduring affinity for the dialogue of poetry and music. His own works as a composer from this early period are marked by a highly distinctive musical style, in which a meticulous treatment of prosody and vocal inflection, much influenced by French models, is combined with an idiosyncratic exploration of the expressive power of dissonance and a taste for unstable rhythms and harmonies that often bring his music to the verge of atonality.

The pull of French, cosmopolitan culture led to his move to Paris in 1937, at the time of the *Front populaire*, an experience that could only have strengthened his ties with the political left, already in evidence during his student years. Having been

arrested on charges of political subversion, and barred from taking up a teaching position at the Lisbon Conservatoire, the composer was to become a member of the Portuguese Communist Party, which made him persona non grata with the authoritarian regime of António de Oliveira Salazar and, to a large extent, prevented the dissemination of his music through state institutions for many decades. In Paris, he attended musicology lectures at the Sorbonne and took lessons in composition and orchestration with Charles Koechlin. Even though his first mature work (1927) was a set of piano variations on a Portuguese folk motif, Lopes-Graça's sustained interest in folk music seems to have been triggered by the encounter in Paris with the singer Lucie Dewinsky, who approached him with a request for versions of Portuguese folk songs suitable for concert performance. According to the composer, this was the motivation behind his first reworkings of Portuguese folk songs around 1939, the first of a vast number of pieces both for solo voice and choral ensemble, to which the composer would devote himself throughout his prolific career.

After his return to Portugal at the outset of the Second World War, Lopes-Graça settled in Lisbon, where he created an amateur ensemble specialising in the performance of his own folk arrangements, together with a more overtly political song repertoire, while at the same time establishing a concert society ('Sonata') for the promotion of contemporary music. An overview of Portuguese folk song in book form appeared in 1953, a prelude to a more systematic involvement in the collection and study of traditional music, conducted together with the Corsican ethnologist Michel Giacometti after 1959. The example of Béla Bartók, both as a composer and an ethnomusicologist, was to be of paramount importance for the Portuguese

composer throughout his process of rediscovery and recreation of the country's folk tradition.

The works included in this recording illustrate the three essential genres of solo vocal music with piano accompaniment cultivated by Lopes-Graça: folk-song arrangements (in this case, of non-Portuguese music), 'modernist' settings of Portuguese poetry, and political songs in a deliberately simplified style, meant for amateur performance in the spirit of *Gebrauchsmusik*.

The three *Poemas em prosa* ('Prose poems', 1928–29), on texts by Rabindranath Tagore (in a Portuguese translation by Aguiar de Quadros), are representative of Lopes-Graça's early musical style, as his second art song collection (and the first to be preserved in its entirety). Already in its tripartite structure, the set is reminiscent of Debussy's vocal triptychs, and the influence of the French composer's melodic and harmonic style is very apparent in Lopes-Graça's setting of Tagore's nocturnal and ecstatic lyricism, with the opening descending arabesque, persistent pedal points and the 'oriental' augmented seconds of the first song, the hypnotic effect of the whole-tone scale in the second, and the voluptuous harmonic sequences and open-ended melodic tritones of the closing piece.

The three songs of 1934–35 are separate works, albeit closely interrelated through their choice of texts from the *Presença* poets, and they show the composer at his most austere and uncompromising, a reflection perhaps of the sombre atmosphere of 1930s Portugal. *Ícaro* ('Icarus'), on a poem by José Régio, employs a highly rhetorical declamation style against the background of stagnant, quartal harmonies, as an illustration of Régio's evocation of disenchantment: the poem depicts the loss of the transcendent aura of pain and its fall down to earth, in a self-deprecating spirit. *Marcha quase fúnebre* ('Quasi funeral march'), on a poem by Carlos Queirós, presents the picture of a sad, almost sinister procession of orphanage girls deprived of all beauty and joy, leading to an angry, expressionistic cry of revolt against such emotional and

existential poverty ('When will they finally give them / a lesson in joyfulness?'). The tormented and oppressive mood of the previous pieces is somewhat tempered by the bucolic mood of the third song, *Pastoral* (poem by Afonso Duarte), with its diatonic vocal line over rustic drones and folk-derived turns in the accompaniment – even though even this Arcadian vision is not entirely devoid of chromatic tension in the concluding bars, as if to suggest the illusory character of the pastorale's redemptive promise.

Beyond his lifelong concern with the traditional music of his native land, Lopes-Graça came to develop something of a utopian vision of universal peace and internationalist fraternity through the practice of folk song, and a fervent belief in the composer's mission as a mediator between cultures, eventually broadening his interest in popular traditions to encompass the music of various nations. The harmonisations of Greek, Czech and Slovak songs included in this recording are testimony to his eclectic approach to the world's folk heritage, exemplified in a number of similar adaptations of French, English, Russian, Hungarian, Brazilian, Black American and Sephardic folk songs (the Hungarian and Russian songs are available on Naxos 8.579039). In an article published in the journal *Seara Nova* ('On the Portuguese folk song and its artistic treatment', 1942), Lopes-Graça gave a detailed account of his aesthetic stance regarding this type of composition, advocating the free use of modern harmonic resources as a means to enhance the artistic value of the traditional melodies. Among these resources, he specifically mentioned quartal and quintal harmonies, imitations in distant keys, inner pedal notes, the liberal use of appoggiaturas and the enhancement of modal colouring (to which one might add dissonant counterpoint and polychords), thus spelling out some of the typical compositional techniques found in his 'concert versions' of folk songs, Portuguese or otherwise. His piano writing is usually rich in figurative invention, often providing musical illustrations of some aspect of the poetic text in the Lied tradition.

The *Sept Vieilles chansons grecques* ('Seven Old Greek Songs') and the *Dix Chansons populaires tchèques et slovaques* ('Ten Czech and Slovak Folk Songs') date from 1950 and 1951, respectively. In both cases, the original melodies were selected from the collection *Chantons les vieilles chansons d'Europe*, compiled by the Hungarian-French pianist, composer, and ethnomusicologist Paul Arma (real name Imre Weissshaus, a former disciple of Béla Bartók), and published in Paris by Les Éditions ouvrières, c. 1943. From Arma's correspondence with Lopes-Graça (today in the Museum of Portuguese Music in Monte Estoril) one may surmise that the Portuguese composer maintained the hope of seeing his own harmonisations published in the same series, thus ensuring their wider dissemination. This, and the fact that in Arma's compilation all the songs appear in French translations, explains why Lopes-Graça's versions also use French rather than the original languages. Unfortunately, the publication project came to nothing, and ever since the first performances of the songs in Lisbon in 1951 to 1952, by Maria Alice Vieira de Almeida with the composer at the piano, these works have remained unperformed.

The Greek songs, in particular, are characterised by their predominantly modal colouring and, in some cases, a typical metric asymmetry, especially foregrounded in the first, fifth, sixth and seventh songs. From the perspective of emotional expression, they run the gamut from lament to defiance, from melancholy to mischievousness, as in the patently misogynous *Ma femme a l'air si gentillet*, with its rather distasteful

advice against garrulous wives. There are also echoes of the Greek people's struggle for freedom against the Ottoman-Albanian rulers, in particular the tragic Zalongo incident in 1803, when a number of Souliote women decided to jump off a cliff with their children rather than surrender to the approaching enemy troops. According to tradition, they did this while singing and dancing, an event commemorated in *La Danse de Zalongo*, the last song of the collection. By contrast, the Bohemian/Moravian (*Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7 and 10* of the later collection) and Slovak songs (*Nos. 3, 4, 8 and 9*) belong to a gentler world of pastoral sentiment and rural naivety, in their strophic simplicity and tonal clarity, only occasionally enlivened by subtle modal touches.

A similar simplicity of tone marks the *Canções do 25 de Abril* ('Songs of 25 April'), composed in 1975 in the wake of the Carnation Revolution of the previous year, the event that finally brought to an end the authoritarian regime in Portugal and which restored democracy to the country. These songs, incorporated into the series named *Canções heróicas, dramáticas, bucólicas e outras* ('Heroic, Dramatic, Bucolic and Other Songs') initiated in 1946, had no other aim than to give voice to revolutionary energy and the celebration of freedom regained.

**Paulo Ferreira de Castro**

\* Also spelt *Lopes Graça*. In his later years, the composer decided to revert to the version of his name without a hyphen.

## Susana Gaspar

Portuguese soprano Susana Gaspar was a member of the 2011–13 Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. She studied at the Escola Artística de Música do Conservatório Nacional in Lisbon, Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the National Opera Studio. Gaspar represented Portugal in the 2013 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition. Operatic roles include *Clarice (Il mondo della luna)* with Os Músicos do Tejo and *Azema (Semiramide)* at the BBC Proms under the baton of Sir Mark Elder, and she has appeared with numerous companies including Grange Park Opera, Diva Opera (with whom she toured the UK and France) and Nevill Holt Opera. She has also performed with the London Symphony Orchestra, Orquestra de Câmara Portuguesa and the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela led by Gustavo Dudamel. Her discography includes *Portugal: Matinas do Natal* (Paraty), the songs of Fanny Mendelssohn (Champs Hill Records), *Opera Classics* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and numerous releases for Opera Rara.



## Ricardo Panela

Born in Ílhavo, Portuguese baritone Ricardo Panela has established himself as a versatile performer, with his repertoire spanning opera, oratorio and art song. In 2019, he won the Best Performer award at the Arnel Opera Festival, following a series of performances as Leporello in *Don Giovanni* in Ecuador and in Budapest. Previous roles have included Malatesta (*Don Pasquale*), Lescaut (*Manon*), Figaro (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Harlekin (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) and Marcello (*La bohème*) among others. He has performed in prestigious venues such as the Queen Elizabeth Hall at the Southbank Centre and Cadogan Hall in London. Panela made his debut at the Teatro Nacional de São Carlos in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, staged by Luís Miguel Cintra and directed by conductor João Paulo Santos. This release is his second collaboration with Nuno Vieira de Almeida, the duo having previously recorded an album featuring the songs of Kurt Weill. Panela studied with Juracyara Baptista, António Salgado, Laura Sarti and Sherman Lowe.

[www.ricardopanela.com](http://www.ricardopanela.com)



### **Nuno Vieira de Almeida**

Since studying with Geoffrey Parsons in London from 1985 to 1986, pianist Nuno Vieira de Almeida has resurrected many forgotten works for voice and piano by important Portuguese composers. He has premiered numerous pieces by Fernando Lopes-Graça, Joly Braga Santos and Luís de Freitas Branco, and made many recordings. He has also given first performances in Portugal of works by Benjamin Britten, Hugo Wolf, Arnold Schoenberg and Anton Webern, to name a few, and performed with distinguished singers such as Gundula Janowitz, Peter Weber, Gabriele Fontana and many distinguished Portuguese singers. Nuno Vieira de Almeida also recorded the music for Manoel de Oliveira's film *Vale Abraão*. He is a teacher of repertoire and coordinator of the voice department at the Escola Superior de Música in Lisbon, and also holds a PhD in historical musicology from the Universidade NOVA de Lisboa.



Photo:  
Wanderson Alves

Fernando Lopes-Graça was one of the greatest Portuguese composers of the 20th century. He composed songs in many genres, including folk-song arrangements, modernist settings of Portuguese poetry, and songs connected to political and historical events, all of which are represented here in this second volume (*Volume 1* is on 8.579039). Early songs reveal the harmonic influence of Debussy, while Lopes-Graça's utopian vision of international fraternity can be heard in his harmonisations of Greek, Czech and Slovak songs, which range from lament and defiance to pastoral sentiment.



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# Fernando LOPES-GRAÇA

(1906–1994)

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## Songs and Folk Songs • 2

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|--------------|--|--------------|
| <b>1–7</b>   | <b>Sept Vieilles chansons grecques</b> ('Seven Old Greek Songs'), Op. 58 (1950) *  | <b>20:25</b> |
| <b>8</b>     | <b>Ícaro</b> ('Icarus'), Op. 17 (1935) *   | <b>3:46</b>  |
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| <b>17–26</b> | <b>Dix Chansons populaires tchèques et slovaques</b><br>( <b>'Ten Czech and Slovak Folk Songs'</b> ), Op. 67 (1951, rev. 1978) * | <b>22:35</b> |

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A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

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The available sung texts can be accessed online at [www.naxos.com/libretti/579082.htm](http://www.naxos.com/libretti/579082.htm).

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Booklet notes: Paulo Ferreira de Castro • Editions: All works performed from the composer's manuscripts

Sponsors: Fundação D. Luís I, SHARE Foundation, Fundação Millennium BCP

Cover image: *Twilight with boat and Lisbon bridge* by Wanderson Alves

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