

Recuerdos de Tárrega



Anders Clemens Øien



"RECUERDOS DE TÁRREGA"

Francisco Tárrega (1852-1909)

This recording is a tribute to a guitarist and composer who played a major role in promoting the popularity of and love for the guitar and its music. His own music gave the instrument a rich and intimate world of sounds and expressions. Ranging from salon music to the beloved classics, such as "Recuerdos de la Alhambra" and "Capricio Arabe", his music impresses the listener with its authenticity, and it is clear that he devoted his life to the world of the guitar. Tárrega also expanded the guitar's repertoire with his many transcriptions of the most important music of his time (Grieg, Wagner, Malats, Albeniz), as well as music by Bach, Mendelssohn, Beethoven and Schubert. One of these transcriptions ("Barcarola", by Mendelssohn) is included on this recording.

Tárrega's own music reflects his life from his beginnings as a cafe musician to his career as a concert artist in the major venues of Europe. But Tárrega's career was not the main focus of his attention. He preferred intimate settings, both personally and musically. His home in Barcelona became a meeting place where his friends could hear the maestro play his new transcriptions and his own compositions.

His attachment to his native country made the idea of extensive travelling unappealing to him, and many of his pieces were written while he was homesick during tours throughout Europe. Travelling also inspired Tárrega to compose musical "impressions" from various places. "Recuerdos de la Alhambra" was obviously inspired by his visit to the famous Moorish castle in Granada. His music also expresses his love for his family and friends.

Many of his pieces were dedicated to them, including “Paquito” (to his son), “Capricio Arabe” (to the composer Thomas Breton), “Alborada” (a musical amusement for his son, Paquito), “Recuerdos de la Alhambra” (to Dr. Leckie) and “Prelude no.2” (to Miguel Llobet).

Tárrega’s music was also influenced by his encounter with the guitar maker Antonio Torres (1817-1892). Torres made considerable changes to the design of the instrument. The internal fan strutting of the guitar that Torres invented is still being used as a model for guitar craftsmen. The sound of this new style of guitar was noticeably different from the guitars that had been built previously. More sustain and a larger sound provided Tárrega with new colours and harmonic possibilities.

Tárrega never wrote larger works, nor did he compose much chamber music. Instead, his music reflects the intimate world of the guitar, featuring little gems like “Adelita” and “Lagrima”. These small-scale pieces suit the poetic and private world of the guitar, and most likely reflect the temperament of the composer, as do the waltzes, polkas, mazurkas and other dances that Tárrega wrote for the instrument. Within these pieces Tárrega is also capable of exploiting all the expressive technical possibilities of the instrument. Portamenti, glissandi, pizzicati and vibrato all serve to enhance the beauty of his music and form an essential part of its interpretation.

Tárrega was also a dedicated teacher throughout his life. He wrote many studies and exercises that he probably intended to collect in book form, but he never managed to do so before his death in 1909. Emilio Pujol and Miguel Llobet were among his students, and Tárrega’s home became a popular meeting place for guitar enthusiasts in Barcelona.

His students helped spread the Tárrega “method”, giving the guitar a new lease of life and laying the foundation for the enormous popularity the instrument enjoyed in the twentieth century.

When Manuel de Falla was asked his opinion of the guitar as a concert instrument, he responded that it was sufficient to hear “Recuerdos de la Alhambra” to become fully aware of the beauty and emotional scope of the guitar.

Felipe Pedrell commemorating Tárrega, 1915:

“...Those half-dozen simple strings that sounded like an ideal orchestra, much more ideal than those we are accustomed to nowadays, an orchestra which suggested the one which is formed by all the instruments brought together, sounds, timbres and sound combinations that will never be able to surpass or improve on the mysterious, unique ambience of this humble instrument, even vulgar when placed in the hands of the populace and poor players. Because this instrument, to produce sound, must be in contact with the soul that is producing it, creating it and giving it a subjective expression generated by the feeling that dictates it. This is why the expressiveness of the guitar, like that of the violin and almost all the bowed or stringed instruments, is superior, more ideal and human, than that of other instruments, which are deprived of forming sounds through contact with the soul of the player.....”

My goal in making this recording is to pay a tribute to an important figure in the history of my instrument and to share this beautiful music with new listeners.

Barcelona, October 2008, Anders Clemens Øien



Anders Clemens Øien

Anders Clemens Øien was born in Oslo in 1976, and began studying music while at St. Hallvard Upper Secondary School. He later studied under Jan Danielsen at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo and under Zoran Dukic at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, Holland. He pursued postgraduate studies in Barcelona, Spain, studying with Alex Garrobe and Sadahiro Otani. He has received grants from the Norwegian Government and the Spanish Foreign Ministry.

Anders has won a number of awards in prestigious international guitar competitions. In 2003 he became the first Scandinavian to win first prize in the Andres Segovia Competition in La Herradura, Spain. In 2002 the Norwegian Concert Institute selected him as an “INTRO” musician, resulting in a number of concert tours and other promotional activities. He is currently receiving an artist’s grant from the Norwegian Government.

He has been invited to appear at the major festivals in Norway and abroad. Anders has performed with many prominent international musicians, including Isa Katarina Gericke, Jean Ferrandis, Henning Kraggerud, Stig Nilsson, Sølve Sigerland, the Borromeo Quartet, the Vertavo Quartet, the Skampa Quartet and Mark Kaplan. He has also given courses and master classes at important festivals and conservatories. He has toured in Europe, America and Asia, performing at major venues like Seoul Arts Center (Korea), Troidhaugen (Norway), and Bolivar Hall (London). He has performed “Concierto Aranjuez” and “Fantasia de un gentilhombre” with the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra, the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, the Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra and the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra (Norway), Orquesta Sinfónica de Albacete (Spain) and the Eurasian Philharmonic (Korea). He has recorded three CDs for the NORDIC SOUND record label.



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Guitar: Alejandro, 1996

CDs: "Romanza" (2003), "Sonatas" (2005)

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