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GOYESCAS

ENRIQUE GRANADOS

1. Los Requebros	[9.23]
2. Coloquio en La Reja	[10.53]
3. El Fandango de Candil	[6.41]
4. Quejas, ó la Maja y el Ruiseñor	[6.22]
5. El Amor y la Muerte: Balada	[12.43]
6. Epilogo: Serenata del Espectro	[7.39]
 Total Timings	 [54.00]

ANA-MARIA VERA PIANO

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The Goyescas suite has accompanied me throughout my life, and I always knew that one day I would attempt to master it. The rich textures and aspiring harmonies, the unfurling passion tempered by restraint and unforgiving rhythmic precision, the melancholy offset by ominous, dark humour, the elegance and high drama, the resignation and the hopefulness all speak to my sense of being a vehicle, of feeling the temperature changes, the ambiguity, and the emotion the way an actor might live the role of a lifetime.

And so this particular project has meant more to me than almost any in my career. Catapulted into the limelight as a small child, I performed around the globe for years before realising I had never had a chance to choose a profession for myself. Early success, rather than going to my head, affected my self-confidence as a young adult and I began shying away from interested parties, feeling the attention wasn't deserved and therefore that it must be of the wrong kind. This attitude, though not conducive to self-promotion, led to living a more dimensional existence and a gradual, difficult, exhilarating discovery of self. If I took my eye off the career, I never took it off the music and have continued to perform and expand my repertoire. Much of my time at the moment is spent with my daughter Naira Mar. I was pregnant

with her during the recording sessions and felt generous and grounded like never before. The music came more easily as my perspectives broadened and I cared less about perfection. Ironically this is when you stand the best chance of approaching your ideals and embracing your audience.

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GOYESCAS: LOS MAJOS ENAMORADOS, Op 11 / H 64

Enrique Granados (1867 - 1916)

'Like Goya, Granados was an idealist; like Goya he knew how to reproduce the essence of what he saw; like him also he could find behind the grandeur, and show, the caricature, the great hidden in the trivial' (Guillermo de Boladeres Ibern, *Enrique Granados: recuerdos de su vida y estudio crítico de su obra por su antiguo discípulo*, Barcelona 1921). Cherishing the Latin/Moorish arabesque of Scarlatti, the fantasy-imagery of Schumann, the Nordic silvering of Grieg, Granados epitomised Iberian elegance and refinement, the bouquet of subtle perfumes and smokes, the harmonics of imagination and improvisation. Aside from private contact and lessons with the foremost nationalist of the day, Felipe Pedrell, he was formally trained as a pianist, studying with the Paris-schooled Joan Baptista Pujol, teacher of Albéniz, Malats and Ricardo Viñes. And, returning to Barcelona from a stint at the Paris Conservatoire sitting-in on classes by Charles Wilfrid de Bériot (one of Ravel's teachers), it was as a pianist that he made his first mark, with a recital at the Teatre Lírico, 20 April 1890.

Catalan by birth (though not blood-line), Granados was a cosmopolitan. 'I consider myself as much a Catalan as anyone, but in my music I want to express what I feel ... be it Andalusian or Chinese'. Notwithstanding Albéniz's childhood adventures in the Americas post Civil War, he was the first major composer from Spain to visit the USA - for the premiere of his final opera, *Goyescas*, at the New York Metropolitan, 26 January 1916, a White House recital and an audience with Woodrow Wilson. Sailing back to Europe, trying to save his wife Amparo, Granados perished with her in the English Channel when the ship he was on, the Sussex bound for Dieppe out of Liverpool, was torpedoed (though not sunk despite losing her bow) by a German U-boat, 24 March 1916. In the following days Falla memorialised him as an artist who 'brilliantly represented Spain abroad'; as a friend who on his death left 'the loftiest heritage a man can leave his country: the product of his intelligence and his will'. 'The death of Granados,' believed Ernest Newman, 'was the greatest loss the artistic world of Europe has sustained by reason of the War'.

Together with Albéniz's *Iberia*, *Goyescas*: Los Majos Enamorados (Goya-esques: the Majos in Love) - brocaded testimony to the majismo revival of the 1900s - crowned the Spanish high-Romantic /

Impressionist movement, much as Debussy's *Préludes* and Ravel's *Miroirs* and *Gaspard de la nuit* did the French. 'Great flights of imagination and difficulty' (letter, 31 August 1910) - complex in voicing, guitar shadows strummed (*rasgueo*) and plucked (*punteo*), 'orchestration', *evocación*, languor, temporal interplay and verbal overlay, a tale of love and death - the music (1909-11, from earlier sketches) was written or honed in the village of Tiana at the home of Clotilde Godó Pelegrí, the composer's student, intellectual peer, muse, and 'romantic partner'/collaborator (John W Milton), then in her mid-twenties and divorced. When Book I (1-4) appeared in a limited edition in 1911, she was the second recipient, following only the king, Alfonso XIII. Granados premiered the first book in the Palau de la Música Catalana, Barcelona, 11 March 1911, and the second (5-6) in the Salle Pleyel, Paris, 2 April 1914. Previewing the sextology, Gabriel Alomar enthused: 'No one has made me feel the musical soul of Spain like Granados. [*Goyescas* is] like a mixture of the three arts of painting, music, and poetry, confronting the same model: Spain, the eternal "maja"' (*El poble català*, 25 September 1910).

The cycle draws loosely on designs from the mid-1770s onwards by the court painter, chronicler, 'man of our day', observer of the

human condition, and 'friend to too many free thinkers', Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828). 'Beethoven with Medusa's hair', Goya was 'the great, unflinching satirist of everything irrational and violent and absurd in life and politics' (Michael Kimmelman), whose 'soul saw pass in procession all the events of his time, which [he] portrayed ... with their images and passions as in a mirror' (Rafael Domenech). 'Picador, matador, banderillero by turns in the bull ring ... reckless to insanity, [fearless of] king or devil, man or Inquisition' (James Huneker). Focussing on the often low status men (*majos*) and women (*majas* - queens of the mantilla and fan) who frequented Madrid and its bohemian quarter in the late 18th century, many of his cartoons, for the Royal Tapestry Factory of Santa Barbara in Madrid, cameoed, idealised or commented on everyday scenes.

'The real-life *majo* cut a dashing figure, with his large wig, lace-trimmed cape, velvet vest, silk stockings, hat, and sash in which he carried a knife. The *maja*, his female counterpoint, was brazen and streetwise. She worked at lower-class jobs, as a servant, perhaps, or a vendor. She also carried a knife, hidden under her skirt. Although in Goya's day the *ilustrados* (upper-class adherents of the Enlightenment) looked down their noses at

majismo, lower-class taste in fashion and pastimes became all the rage in the circles of the nobility, who were otherwise bored with the formalities and routine of court life. Many members of the upper-class sought to emulate the dress and mannerisms of the free-spirited majos and majas' (Walter Aaron Clark, *Diagonal: Journal of the Center for Iberian and Latin American Music*, 2005). To the composer, himself a poet of the brush, the genius who committed these nameless people to a visual eternity caught the Iberian spirit. 'I fell in love with the psychology of Goya and his palette,' he wrote in 1910. 'That rosy-whiteness of the cheeks contrasted with lace and jet-black velvet, those jasmine-white hands, the colour of mother-of-pearl have dazzled me'. 'Goya's greatest works,' he told the Société Internationale de Musique in 1914, 'immortalise and exalt our national life. I subordinate my inspiration to that of the man who has so perfectly conveyed the characteristic actions and history of the Spanish people'.

More melodist than structuralist, in love with the detail of sound and the alchemy of the pedal, Granados was happiest in spontaneous, atmospheric mode, recognised by Newman when he likened *Goyescas* to 'the finest written-out improvisation'. 'The music, for all the fervour of its passion, is of classical beauty and composure. The harmony is rich but never experimental. The melodies have

new curves, the rhythms new articulations. Informing it all is a new grace, a new pathos, a new melancholy. Not only the separate pieces themselves but the themes of them have a curious poetic individuality, so that to meet in a later piece with a theme from an earlier one is like seeing a definite personality step across the scene; but, above all, the music is a gorgeous treat for the fingers, as all music is that is the perfection of writing for its particular instrument. It is difficult, but is so beautifully laid out that it is always playable: one has the voluptuous sense of passing the fingers through masses of richly coloured jewels ... it is pianoforte music of the purest kind' (*Musical Times*, August 1917). In Madrid, around the same time, Luis Villalba celebrated the opus as a national and spiritual credo ('the image of the maja [having] taken the place of the Virgin Mary as the appropriate icon for modern Spain' [Clark]), relishing how 'above the fabric of melodies and harmonies floats a supplication, like a very pure song, in which the sexuality of the fiesta and the love of colour with music unite with the black eyes of the Maja-Nation, of the priests in black in darkened side streets, and of secret tribunals and autos de fé (penance of heretics and apostates) in plazas shaded by convents, and of Holy Week processions and convulsive insane asylums and nocturnal witches' (Enrique Granados: 'Semblanza y biografía').

1. Los Requeibros ('Flattery', 'Compliments', 'Loving Words', 'Flirtation'), E flat major. After *Tal para cual* ('Birds of a Feather', 'Two of a Kind', 'Made for Each Other'), the fifth of Goya's 'Andalusian Caprichos', eighty aquatints depicting 'the innumerable foibles and follies to be found in any civilised society ... the common prejudices and deceitful practices which custom, ignorance, or self-interest have made usual' (Diario de Madrid, 6 February 1799). To the artist's contemporaries *Tal para cual* satirised the Court wheeler-dealer Manuel de Godoy, Knight of the Golden Fleece, powdered and wigged, and his amor, the Queen Consort María Luisa of Parma, buxom and coarse (her behaviour mocked by two washerwomen in the background). A variation-set on a pair of phrases from *Tirana del Tripili*, a tonadilla by Blas de Laserna (1751-1816), the music is in the form of a jota, an 18th century Aragonese dance.

2. Coloquio en la Reja ('Dialogue at the Window'), B flat major. A lady within, her lover beyond, exchanging words through an iron grill, dusky and Phrygian-toned. 'I heard [Enrique] play it many times and tried to reproduce the effects he achieved,' recalled the American Ernest Schelling (whose idea it was to transform *Goyescas* into an opera). 'After many failures, I discovered that his

ravishing results at the keyboard were all a matter of the pedal. The melody itself, which was in the middle part, was enhanced by the exquisite harmonics and overtones of the other parts. These additional parts had no musical significance, other than affecting certain strings which in turn liberated the tonal colours the composer demanded'.

3. El Fandango de Candil ('Candlelit Fandango'), A minor. 'To be sung and danced slowly with plenty of rhythm' (prefatory note), the mood and exotism of the scène often a matter of opposites: secco unpedalled staccato/fluid pedalled legato ... ongoing motion/held-back rubato ... firm pulse/flexible caesuras. The fandango was an early 18th century courtship ritual from Andalusia and Castile, associated with flamenco in its slower, more plaintive form. Dancing it by candlelight was popular in Goya's time.

4. Quejas, ó la Maja y el Ruiseñor ('Laments, or the Maiden and the Nightingale'), F sharp minor. Another aromatic variation sequence, this time on a dolorous folk-song from Valencia. Poetry, image and emotion crystallised in sound, it cadences in a 'nightingale' cadenza of trills, arpeggios and graces, voicing, according to Granados, 'the jealousy of a wife, not the sadness of a widow'. Schumann-like, the song fades away not in the

home key but in an afterglow of C sharp major:
The most famous bird-music between Liszt
and Messiaen.

5. El Amor y la Muerte: Balada ('Love and Death: Ballade'). Inspired by the tenth of Goya's Caprichos (1799) and its caption: 'See here a Calderonian lover who, unable to laugh at his rival, dies in the arms of his beloved and loses her by his daring. It is inadvisable to draw the sword too often'. 'Intense pain, nostalgic love, the final tragedy - death: all the themes of *Goyescas*,' confirmed Granados, 'are united in El Amor y la Muerte ... The middle section is based on the themes of *Quejas, ó la Maja y el Ruiseñor* and *Los Requeiebros*, converting the drama into sweet gentle sorrow ... the final chords [death of the majo, G minor lento] represent the renunciation of happiness'.

6. Epílogo: Serenata del Espectro ('Epilogue: The Ghost's Serenade'), E modal. A tableau wandering the landscape from Dies irae plainchant to snatches of fandango and malagueña. Above the closing three bars the score notes how the 'ghost disappears plucking the [six open] strings of his guitar'.

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BIOGRAPHY

ANA-MARIA VERA

Ana-Maria Vera was born in Washington, D.C. to Dutch and Bolivian parents. She began her musical studies with her mother at the age of three, made her professional debut when she was eight and has been performing around the world ever since. Acknowledged early on, her gifts were developed with the help of two superb teachers, Ylva Novik and Leon Fleisher. At the age of nine she made her nationally televised debut with the Boston Pops and the legendary Arthur Fielder, with whom she embarked on several American tours. At the age of eleven she recorded Mozart and Haydn piano concertos with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra under Edo de Waart, for which Philips awarded her a Gold Record. Later that year she was also invited to perform a recital at the White House for President and Mrs. Carter.

Vera has appeared as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony, Netherlands Philharmonic, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra and Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, and with conductors Riccardo Muti,

Yoel Levi, Edo de Waart, David Zinman, Eliahu Inbal, David Stern, Sergiu Commissiona, Maximiano Valdes, Michael Schönwandt, Ken-Ichiro Kobayashi and James Conlon. She is equally at home on both sides of the Atlantic, appearing in solo recitals at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Herkulesaal in Munich, Tivoli Theatre in Copenhagen, Salle Gaveau in Paris and at London's Wigmore Hall. Over the past decade she has devoted much of her artistry to chamber music, developing close duo partnerships with major artists such as Ivry Gitlis, Steven Isserlis and Joshua Bell.

In February 2005, her debut in London's Royal Festival Hall with the London Philharmonic Orchestra led to an immediate re-invitation to play with the orchestra in their next season. Reviewers have called her sound 'luminous' likening it to 'pure aural silk', remarking on her 'dazzling pianistic virtuosity' and 'penetrating sensitivity', with one review for her LPO performance of Ravel's G major concerto stating that 'The two outer movements glittered with fun, humour and superb pianism ... the long opening passage [of the 2nd



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movement], where the piano is unaccompanied, spoke of serenity, distance, of eternity even'.

Ana-Maria Vera is descended paternally from the Andean Aymara civilization and has in recent years organised a series of concerts in Bolivia, taking a select group of world-class colleagues to join local musicians and students to play a full range of chamber and orchestral concerts throughout the country. Memorable occasions have included outdoor concerts at Kalorko, a recently discovered site of dinosaur footprints, the Salar de Uyuni, the largest salt desert in the world,

and amongst the pre-Incan ruins of Tihuanaku as well as in the theatres of La Paz, Sucre, Potosi and Cochabamba.

Ana-Maria now lives in London with her husband and daughter.

www.ana-mariavera.com

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Mastered - Jochem Geene

www.studiovanschuppen.nl

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