Robert
Gerhard

—

Eduard
Toldrà

—

Joan Lamote
de Grignon

—

Joan
Comellas

—

Ernest
Borràs

SONGS *From* CATALUNYA

Marisa Martins
mezzosoprano

—

Mac McClure
piano

SONGS

Robert Gerhard (1896-1970)

1. Bosque frondoso
2. Los serranos inocente)
3. Un oficial de guerra
4. ¿De dónde venís, amore?
5. Canción muy popularizada
6. Yo te quiero, Gileta
7. Tirana del Zarandillo

Eduard Toldrà (1895-1962)

8. Cançó de grumete
9. Cançó de l'amor que passa)
10. Después que te conocí
11. Madre, unos ojuelos vi
12. Menta i farigola
13. Romanç de Santa Llúcia
14. La mar estava alegra

J. Lamote de Grignon (1872-1949)

15. L'àngel de la son)

Joan Comellas (1913-2000)

16. Soy la dulce frutera
17. El que gusta el sabor de mi fruta
18. "Sones" para cantados y bailados...
19. Nana (príncipe mío duerme)
20. Hay una blanca señora en tu país

Anell Sagrat Ernest Borràs (1928-2021)

2.1 Mattina
22. Stasera
23. Chiaroscuro
24. Rose in fiamme
25. Noia
26. Sogno
27. Lontano

SONGS FROM CATALUNYA

Songs From Catalunya brings together a collection of songs by composers closely associated with the Catalan musical tradition, performed by mezzo-soprano Marisa Martins, accompanied by pianist Mac McClure. The album offers a journey through a variety of musical worlds, exploring the distinctive artistic languages of Robert Gerhard, Eduard Toldrà, Joan Lamote de Grignon, Joan Comellas and Ernest Borràs. Each composer contributes a personal perspective on the relationship between poetry and music, revealing the richness of a vocal tradition shaped by different historical, cultural and aesthetic influences. Through their individual approaches to melody, harmony and textual expression, these works illuminate the diversity of Catalan musical heritage. The interpretations bring together historical awareness and artistic sensitivity, allowing each composition to retain its own character while forming part of a coherent musical narrative. At the heart of the recording lies a celebration of the intimate dialogue between voice, piano and poetry.

The programme combines songs in Catalan and Spanish with Ernest Borràs's Anell Sagrat, a song cycle comprising seven pieces. This carefully conceived selection highlights the richness, diversity and expressive possibilities of the vocal repertoire associated with Catalonia. Moving between different languages, poetic sensibilities and musical approaches, the album reveals the many ways in which composers have transformed literary texts into intimate musical experiences. Some works draw upon the immediacy and evocative qualities of popular song, while others explore more refined forms of lyrical expression and sophisticated musical construction. The contrast between these different worlds creates an engaging artistic dialogue, in which tradition and individual creativity continually enrich one another. Together, the pieces offer listeners an opportunity to discover a repertoire whose artistic value extends well beyond its geographical and linguistic origins.

THE COMPOSERS



THE COMPOSERS AND THEIR MUSICAL WORLDS

Songs From Catalunya brings into dialogue five distinctive voices within the vocal repertoire connected to the Catalan musical tradition. Through songs in Catalan and Spanish, alongside the Italian-language cycle Anell Sagrat, the programme presents a multifaceted panorama of musical expression, encompassing the intimacy of the art song, the sensitivity of poetic interpretation and the transformation of popular musical materials. Each composer approaches the relationship between words and music from a different aesthetic perspective, revealing the diversity of influences that have shaped this repertoire. The result is a musical journey that moves between tradition and modernity, refinement and spontaneity, personal reflection and theatrical expression. Beyond their individual characteristics, these works share a profound attention to the expressive potential of the human voice. They also reveal how the Catalan musical identity has developed through an ongoing dialogue with broader European cultural movements.

ROBERT GERHARD

Educated within the musical environment of Catalonia and subsequently a pupil of Arnold Schönberg, Robert Gerhard developed a highly individual musical language that brought together a profound interest in tradition and an open-minded engagement with European modernity. His artistic trajectory represents an important connection between Catalan musical culture and the avant-garde movements of the twentieth century. Through his encounter with the Second Viennese School, Gerhard absorbed new compositional techniques while maintaining a distinctive awareness of his cultural origins. His music reflects a continuous search for artistic independence, balancing intellectual rigour with a strong sense of expressive identity. In this programme, his songs reveal a more intimate and lyrical dimension of a composer frequently associated with the renewal of contemporary musical language. They offer an opportunity to appreciate his sensitivity to poetry and the subtle relationship between vocal expression and instrumental writing. This vocal repertoire thus provides a valuable insight into another facet of Gerhard's artistic personality.

EDUARD TOLDRÀ

Eduard Toldrà occupies a central position in the history of twentieth-century Catalan song and is widely regarded as one of its most distinguished representatives. His remarkable sensitivity to prosody, musical colour and expressive detail gives the relationship between voice and text a particularly essential role in his compositions. His songs reveal an intimate understanding of poetry, in which the natural rhythm and emotional nuances of the written word become the foundations of musical expression. Although his work developed alongside the musical innovations of his time, Toldrà retained a direct, refined and deeply communicative relationship with the poetic text. His melodic language combines elegance, warmth and structural clarity, creating an atmosphere in which simplicity never excludes sophistication. The piano accompaniment is far more than a supporting element: it contributes actively to the emotional landscape of each composition. Through his songs, Toldrà established a distinctive artistic language that remains one of the most enduring achievements of the Catalan vocal tradition.

JOAN LAMOTE DE GRIGNON

Composer, pedagogue and orchestral conductor, Joan Lamote de Grignon played a significant role in the development of Barcelona's musical life during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His activities as a conductor and as a promoter of musical institutions formed part of a broader cultural environment that encouraged the development of several generations of Catalan composers and performers. His contribution extended beyond composition, encompassing musical education, institutional leadership and the dissemination of symphonic and vocal repertoire. As a central figure in the musical life of his time, he helped strengthen the artistic infrastructure that allowed Catalan musical culture to flourish. The vocal works included in this programme reveal a more intimate and personal aspect of his creative identity, offering a perspective that complements his better-known activities as a conductor and musical organiser. In these songs, the expressive possibilities of the human voice become the focus of his musical imagination. Their inclusion enriches the album's historical perspective and broadens our understanding of the different artistic personalities that shaped Catalan music.

JOAN COMELLAS

The presence of Joan Comellas broadens the artistic scope of the album, introducing another perspective on the possibilities of the song repertoire. His contribution adds further variety to a programme that moves between different expressive atmospheres and compositional approaches. The selection alternates pieces with popular and theatrical characteristics with more lyrical and introspective moments, creating opportunities for a particularly nuanced interpretation. This diversity allows the performers to explore the rhythmic vitality of the text, the expressive significance of individual words and the interplay of characters and images suggested by the songs. The relationship between music and language becomes especially important, as the melodic line responds to the natural inflections and dramatic implications of the poetry. At times, the music invites a more spontaneous and theatrical approach; at others, it encourages a delicate and contemplative form of expression. Comellas's presence therefore contributes to the album's broader exploration of the many dimensions of Catalan vocal music, highlighting its capacity to embrace both intimate lyricism and dramatic vitality.

ERNEST BORRÀS · ANELL SAGRAT

Ernest Borràs's Anell Sagrat, a cycle comprising seven songs, brings the musical journey to a close with a distinctive artistic identity and a clearly defined expressive unity. Based on Italian-language texts by the poet Joan Vinyoli, the cycle evokes a succession of luminous images, emotional states and contemplative distances. The poetic universe unfolds through subtle shifts in atmosphere, inviting the listener into a world of introspection, symbolism and delicate emotional contrasts. The choice of Italian introduces a further linguistic and musical dimension, expanding the expressive horizons of the programme while establishing a dialogue with the broader European tradition of art song. Set alongside the Catalan and Spanish songs, Anell Sagrat reinforces the album's remarkable linguistic and stylistic diversity. Its seven pieces form an independent yet complementary musical statement, allowing the recording to conclude on a note of particular intimacy and reflection. Through this cycle, Borràs demonstrates the enduring possibilities of the voice as an instrument of poetic interpretation and emotional communication.

THE PERFORMERS

MARISA MARTINS · MEZZOSOPRANO

Argentine–Spanish mezzo-soprano Marisa Martins has developed an international career in opera and concert performance, with a repertoire encompassing Monteverdi, Mozart and Rossini, as well as French and Spanish music. Her artistic versatility is reflected in her ability to move naturally between different historical periods, vocal traditions and stylistic languages. In 2004, she received a Grammy nomination for her recording of Xavier Montsalvatge's opera El gato con botas, and in 2008 she was awarded the Orphée d'Or, further recognising her contribution to the recording and performance of classical music. A specialist in Lied and art song, she has been particularly committed to the discovery, performance and dissemination of works by contemporary Catalan composers. Her artistic interests extend beyond the traditional concert platform, encompassing collaborations with musical ensembles, composers and artists working in the fields of music and dance. Throughout her career, she has combined an international perspective with a deep commitment to the vocal repertoire of her cultural environment. Her interpretations are distinguished by their attention to textual detail, stylistic authenticity and expressive sensitivity, qualities that make her particularly well suited to the intimate and varied repertoire presented in this recording.

THE PERFORMERS

MAC McCLURE · PIANO

American pianist Mac McClure, who spent many years living and working in Catalonia, is widely recognised for his interpretations of Spanish and Latin American piano repertoire. His artistic development has been closely connected to the musical traditions of the Iberian Peninsula, while his international career has allowed him to establish a broad perspective on the European and Latin American concert repertoire. He studied in Barcelona with Carlota Garriga at the prestigious Acadèmia Marshall, subsequently deepening his understanding of Spanish music through his work with Alicia de Larrocha, one of the most influential pianists of the twentieth century. These formative experiences contributed significantly to his interpretative approach and his particular sensitivity to the stylistic and expressive characteristics of Spanish music. His extensive discography comprises more than forty recordings, reflecting a sustained commitment to the documentation and dissemination of repertoire that is not always represented on the international concert stage. Since 2010, he has served as an associate professor at the National University of Colombia, combining his performing career with academic and pedagogical activities. His work as a pianist is distinguished by stylistic refinement, intellectual curiosity and an enduring dedication to chamber music and the art of accompaniment.

THE MARTINS–McCLURE DUO

Marisa Martins and Mac McClure share a long-standing artistic partnership developed through many years of musical activity in Catalonia, together with a particular commitment to the vocal repertoire of Catalan, Spanish and French composers. Their collaboration is founded on a shared interest in the art song tradition and on a deep understanding of the expressive relationship between voice and piano. Throughout their careers, they have worked directly with composers such as Xavier Montsalvatge, Xavier Turull and Ernest Borràs, gaining valuable insight into the intentions, stylistic characteristics and interpretative possibilities of their music. They have also explored the vocal works of Frederic Mompou in close collaboration with pianist Carmen Bravo, an experience that further enriched their understanding of the poetic and musical world of this remarkable composer. Their approach combines historical and stylistic research with practical performance experience and an openness to different musical traditions. The result is an artistic partnership in which technical precision, expressive sensitivity and interpretative freedom coexist naturally. Their international outlook, together with their profound knowledge of the repertoire, allows them to approach each work with both authenticity and individuality. In Songs From Catalunya, their collaboration offers a particularly meaningful interpretation of a musical heritage that deserves continued recognition and wider international dissemination.



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