

AUDIO VIDEO CLUB OF ATLANTA

NOVEMBER 2014

Canciones españolas

Danielle Talamantes, soprano; Henry Dehlinger, piano
MS1476 (MSR Classics)

Canciones españolas (Spanish songs) marks the recording debut of rising soprano Danielle Talamantes. More than a little mystery surrounds this attractive new voice, as there is a lack of vital information on all the internet websites concerning her nationality or birthplace (you can forget about birth *date*: for singers, that is more jealously guarded than State Department secrets). We don't know who she studied under or where she completed her education. The earliest fact we are given about her is that she made her Carnegie Hall debut in 2007. Presumably, she appeared in this world, like Venus or Minerva, fully grown.

All kidding aside, Talamantes has the perfect voice for this recital – intelligent, well-modulated, and sensitive to all the emotions in a program of highly nuanced songs by three of Spain's greatest composers: Enrique Granados, Manuel de Falla, and Joaquin Turina. From the very beginning of the program, *La Maja y el Ruiseñor* (The Maiden and the Nightingale) from Granados' opera *Goyescas*, with the brief but eerily effective piano introduction by accompanist Henry Dehlinger setting the nocturnal scene, we know we are in for a rare experience in lyrics that speak eloquently, as only Spanish songs can, of the amorous longing, joy and despair of those who fall in love. "O, love is like a flower," Granados tells us in the aria at the head of the program, "A flower at the mercy of the sea," and we hear this message in various guises in his seven *Canciones amorosas* that follow it.

Falla comes next, with 7 Popular Spanish songs (*Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*) that are, typically, as much dances as they are songs, ranging in tone from the playfulness of a woman chiding her fickle lover in *Seguidilla murciana* ("I compare you to money / that passes / from hand to hand, / which in the end is wiped out, / and, believing it to be fake, / no one takes it!") to the anguished lover's complaint in *Polo*: "Love be damned, damned, / and damn him who made me understand it! / ¡Ay!"

Last, we have *Tres Arias* by Turina, three songs in which Talamantes' sensitivity to mood and nuance is put to maximum advantage. These songs, works of the same exalted high imagination as the composer's *Fantastic Dances*, also contain such moments of irresistible charm as the fisherman's song to his sweetheart (*El Pescador*): "Get into my little boat, / my sweet beloved beauty, / let the shadowy night / be brightened by your face."

PHIL MUSE