

# FANFARE MAGAZINE

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**GRANADOS Goyescas: La Maja Y El Ruisenor. Canciones Amatorias. FALLA Siete Canciones Populares Españolas. TURINA 3 Arias, op. 26 • Danielle Talamantes (sop); Henry Dehlinger (pn) • MSR 1476 (51:18)**

Soprano Danielle Talamantes's debut album is a pleasing and stylish collection of songs by three Spanish composers whose careers and musical goals intertwined in the early years of the 20th century. Partnered by pianist Henry Dehlinger, Talamantes has programmed an interesting and subtly nuanced recital of the music of Enrique Granados, Manuel de Falla, and the less-frequently performed Joaquín Turina. Both Andalusians, Turina and de Falla became acquainted in Madrid and later belonged to the Parisian musical circle which included Debussy, Ravel, and Dukas in the years between 1905 and 1914. Granados, who had been a student in Paris from 1887 to 1889, presided over the Spanish music of his day as an elder statesman, and as such, both de Falla and Turina were inspired by his work. The bond all three shared was one not only of mutual admiration and friendship, but also of national pride, and the songs on this recording reflect the composers' attempts to express the soul of their people in aria and song.

Talamantes possesses a velvety, dark-hued soprano that has a limpid seductiveness appropriate to this music. Her instrument is well placed and even throughout the registers; she produces a firm, centered tone that is especially haunting in its upper reaches. Dehlinger provides sensitive if sometimes self-effacing accompaniment.

The recital opens with "La Maya y el Ruiseñor" from Granados's opera *Goyescas* (1915), in which Talamantes shapes the lush Romantic lines of the maiden with a sweeping abandon, partnered by Dehlinger's piano voicing the nightingale. There follows *Siete Canciones Amatorias*, Granados's 1913 series set to pre-1700 Castilian poems from Spain's Siglo d'oro. These are songs of chivalry and courtly love, ranging over a wide palette of emotional and musical color. Among these little gems are a tender lament of a young girl disappointed in love ("Mira que soy niña"), a luminous aubade ("Mañanica era"), an upbeat dance tune ("Serranas de Cuenca"), the dramatic, almost operatic "Gracia mia," and the plaintive lament of the lover from afar in "Desúbrase el pensamiento" with its exquisite vocalise and morendo finish.

While Granados mined aristocratic Spanish Medieval verse for inspiration, de Falla's 1914 *Siete canciones populares españolas* takes its inspiration from folk tunes and literature. Drawing from the cultures of many regions in Spain, he creates songs which use dance rhythms, asymmetrical phrases, modal harmonies, and evocations of classical guitar. This group calls for more vivid participation from the piano, which frequently imitates the rhythms and percussive string sound of the guitar, and Dehlinger rises to the challenge. He is especially effective in the driving harmony underscoring the voice in "Seguidilla murciana" and in the rumbling, crashing chords of the aria-like final song, "Polo." Talamantes runs the gamut from cheeky ("Jota") to tender lullaby ("Nana") to wrenching lament ("Polo").

Perhaps her strongest vocal interpretations, however, come in the final *Tres Arias*, op. 26 (1923) by Turina. These three settings of 19th-century poems, each in very different modes, have a mysterious delicacy that captures the lure of Spain. "Romance" is a frontier ballad about a victorious Moor who returns to Cordoba only to find his beloved is no longer true. Turina shapes the narrative with bold, dramatic strokes, coloring it with a patina of idealized Moorish "orientalia." Talamantes proves herself an effective narrator, sensitive to the tensions of the tale. "El Pescador" is a silvery siren song in which one feels the influence of the French Impressionist composers, and it allows the soprano to show off her florid singing and the magic of her delicate piano. The third aria returns to the Romantic ardor of the first, as it recounts the tale of a wanderer lured by his beloved's eyes which appear first like suns and then like will o'wisps. The references to Schubert/Müller's *Winterreise* imagery mark this richly textured romantic outpouring and allow Talamantes and Dehlinger to finish the recital with a big, dramatic flourish.

The recording is accompanied by an essay on the three composers and their works, as well as by the texts in Spanish and English (in Dehlinger's translations). MSR notes that the audio format on this high-resolution CD has not been compressed, and urges listeners to play it on a high-quality system and to "turn it up." The effect on mine was a warm, rounded naturalness that was most appealing.

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