

Johannes Möller
plays Spanish music



The Guitar and its repertoire

In the 17th century the guitar was the favourite instrument of Louis XIV, but in most people's minds it is associated with Spain; and though this association gives too narrow a picture of the guitar's history, there are some good reasons for this popular perspective. Spain has more often than not been the centre of the most important developments in guitar repertoire. In the late 19th century and early 20th centuries both Spain's and the guitar's prestige grew immensely through the pioneering compositions of **Francisco Tárrega y Eixea** (1852-1909) and the performances and commission of the great virtuoso Andrés Segovia (1893-1987). Spain also became an obsession with French composers such as Debussy and Ravel.

Tárrega studied in Madrid and had a successful career as a virtuoso throughout Europe. For guitarists he is as famous for his transcriptions as his original compositions, many of which are either studies, dances or preludes. However, he also composed a number of pieces that evoke his native Spain, the most famous of which is the gorgeously trembling recollection of Granada's Alhambra, *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*. Its beautifully evocative melody floats on a bed of tremolandi.

Sumptuous as Tárrega's evocation of Southern Spain is, its musical vocabulary is rooted in an era well before its date of composition. Musical conservatism dominated Spanish repertoire even in the 20th century though a few composers branched out to be more experimental. Pre-eminent amongst these was **Manuel de Falla** (1876-1946), who composed a single work for guitar, a tribute to Debussy (died 1918).

The Homenaje (1920) is conceived as a 'tombeau', a 17th century memorial lament.

However, it has little to do with the 17th century. Instead, de Falla made his own personal exploration and version of Debussy's style. The result is a magical piece of reflection and experiment, which has become a cornerstone of modern guitar repertoire and a herald of things that followed.

Different aspects of 20th century styles can be heard in the works by other Spanish composers on this CD. **Joaquín Rodrigo** (1901-1999) carved out a unique position amongst Spanish 20th century composers, most famously in his *Concierto de Aranjuez*, an evocation in war-time of the elegance of 18th century Spain.



En los Trigales (1938) conjures up the spirit of Spanish dancing, even more particularly Flamenco scales and styles. Much more reflective is the gorgeously languid *Junto al Generalife* (1959), whose initial dreamy mood is never really disturbed by its more energetic middle section.

The Burgos composer **Antonio José** (1902-1936) was executed by Falangists in the Spanish Civil War, but had already made his mark on Spanish music with his individual use of the folk music from his native Burgos. His magnificent 1933 sonata is as evocative of native region as it is suggestive of Spain in general. It is also indicative of the range of different styles Spanish composers used in the 20th century to give an impression of their country and make its music stretch beyond the boundaries of its native peninsula.

Tremolandi permeate the sonority of **Eduardo Sainz de la Maza's** (1903-1982) *Campanas del Alba* and near-jazzy syncopations intersperse the sultry tribute to the French artist Toulouse-Lautrec. Though gestures recall Tárrega the effect is quite different. As a composer Sainz de la Maza confined himself to the guitar and to using the folk styles of Andalusia and Castile.

RODERICK SWANSTON ©2005

*This recording is dedicated to Alex van der Horst ("Alejandro"), who is a true friend,
builds amazing guitars and is a welcome source of artistic inspiration.*

Produced by Mats Möller. **Recorded** by Sforzando Productions in studio 3, Radio House, Stockholm, April 2-3 and July 2-3, 2005 – using 88.2 kHz/24-bit technology. **Edited and mastered** by Sforzando Productions. **Booklet design** by Sforzando Productions. **Photos** by Per-Erik Adamsson. **Texts** by Roderick Swanston, Carlos Bonell and Anders Bråntén (translation by Transförlag). **Puppy trainer** Molly Möller. **Johannes Möller plays** an Alejandro ceder guitar 1996.

CD SFZ 6014 [p]&[c] SFZ records/Sforzando Productions 2005. DDD. Total time 54'44.

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Johannes Möller (born 1981) played his first public concert when he was 13 years old. Since then he has found time for more than 250 appearances in Canada, England, Finland, Germany, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the USA.

His Swedish teachers were Roland Fridh and Bo Hansson. Abroad he has earned a Bachelor of Music with Honours from the renowned Royal College of Music in London where he studied with Gary Ryan and Carlos Bonell.

He has been awarded prizes in international guitar competitions in England, Germany (3), Portugal and Romania and has been granted several scholarships from the Royal Swedish Academy of Music. With his distinct musical language, Johannes Möller's artistry has reached well beyond the usual guitar circles; a fact confirmed when he became the first guitarist to win The Bromsgrove Festival International Young Musicians Platform (England) in May 2005.

Critics have also noted this, writing of his playing that "He gets the shape of the music right, never failing to deliver its message" (Colin Cooper, Classical Guitar) and "Guitarist Johannes Moller achieved miracles with his lucid, spacious playing" (Stephen Pettitt, London Evening Standard).

This is his first solo CD. Previously he has made several recordings with his father, flutist Mats Möller, including DUO 2XM (SFZ 1007) and SCHUBERT & GIULIANI (SFZ 1009).

Homepage: www.johannesmoller.com

"Johannes is one of the finest guitarists of the younger generation. He plays with excellent tone, and his playing ranges from the lyrical to the dramatic. His wide repertoire reveals a lively and enquiring musical personality."

CARLOS BONELL





Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

- [1] **HOMENAJE pour le tombeau de Claude Debussy** (1920) 3'20

Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-99)

- [2] **JUNTO AL GENERALIFE** (1959) 4'56
[3] **EN LOS TRIGALES** (1938) 4'51

Antonio José (1902-36)

SONATA (1933) 21'24

- [4] -Allegro moderato 7'24
[5] -Minueto 2'55
[6] -Pavana triste 6'20
[7] -Final 4'46

Eduardo Sainz de la Maza (1903-82)

- [8] **CAMPANAS DEL ALBA** (1962) 3'52
[9] **HOMENAJE A TOULOUSE-LAUTREC** (1967) 5'18

Francisco Tárrega (1852-1909)

- [10] **PRELUDIO NÚMERO 1** (1899) 1'32
[11] **LA ALBORADA** (1891) 1'46
[12] **PRELUDIO NÚMERO 2** (1899) 2'18
[13] **RECUERDOS DE LA ALHAMBRA** (1897) 5'22



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