

NWCR900

Orlando Jacinto García

Illuminated Shadows/Sombras Iluminadas



1. *Paisaje del Sonido II/Soundscapes II* (14:39)
Luis Gomez Imbert, solo contrabass; The Miami String Quartet: Ivan Chan, violin; Cathy Meng Robinson, violin; Chauncey Patterson, viola; Keith Robinson, cello; Keith Aleo, Jorge Grossmann, Li Ju Chen, wind chimes and glasses
2. *Entre El Anochecer y la Oscuridad/Between Nightfall and Darkness* (16:33)
Orquesta Sinfonica de Valencia; Ernest Martinez Izquierdo, conductor; Angel Lemus, viola
3. *Imágenes (Sonidos) Sonoros Congelados/Suspended Sonic Images* (14:58)
Robert Davidovici, violin
4. *Sombras Iluminadas/Illuminated Shadows* (19:21)
Orquesta Ciudad de Malaga; Odon Alonso, conductor

Total Playing Time: 65:31

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Notes

“A Soundworld Beyond Borders – The Music of Orlando Jacinto García”

Over the past decade, much has been written about the second wave of American émigré composers, who unlike the first wave of Europeans, have arrived in the United States from Asian and Latin American countries. In such writings, there is an inevitable tendency to generalize about these composers and to describe, for example, how the Asian composers have introduced a more contemplative approach to timbre to our music or how the Latin American composers have incorporated rhythmic elements from their homelands.

Such generalizations are no help at all when approaching the music of Cuban émigré composer Orlando Jacinto García (*b* 1954) whose subtle, painterly, almost rhythm-less music has less in common with son or clavé than with the music of composers like George Crumb, John Luther Adams, and Morton Feldman, with whom García studied or to whom many of his works are dedicated. In fact, García’s music is a direct refutation to the notion of music emanating from national identity. For that reason, and for its sheer sonic expanse, his music lives in a soundworld beyond borders.

That is not to say that Orlando Jacinto García completely eschews allusions to Latin American sonorities. How could a composer so sensitive to sonority eschew any sound? “I’m a product of what I am,” he explains. “When I was a kid, my grandmother lived with us and she played Cuban piano music all the time and she had recordings and I listened to that music. When I got older and came down to Miami, I even played in a salsa band. Some of these players went on to play with Gloria Estefan! And now I teach a history of Latin American music class... So, it’s in my background.” But García also likes to tell a story about a performance of his

Threnody for the Americas by Joan La Barbara and the Buffalo Philharmonic some twelve years ago. “A couple of British composers and performers involved in the festival were with me after the concert. They commented on how interesting the Latin American aspect of the piece was. I asked them if they would still have found this aspect if my name was Robert Smith. They stopped somewhat stunned for a moment and said probably not.” Keep this in mind while listening to this third CD devoted exclusively to the music of Orlando Jacinto García which showcases four different types of compositions composed over the past decade: chamber, concerto, solo, and orchestral.

Paisaje del sonido II (Soundscapes II), composed in 2000 and scored for double bass and string quartet with obbligato wind chimes and glasses, is loosely based on an earlier work, *Paisaje del sonido (Soundscapes)* for contrabass and tape from 1992. While every moment *Paisaje del sonido II* is created acoustically and in real time, it’s “soundscape” of harmonics, chordal glissandos and silences comes across as an evocation of electronic sound somewhat reminiscent of the string music Krzysztof Penderecki, György Ligeti, and others were writing in the early 1960s. But unlike those scores, which made frequent use of non-pitched scrapings and tapings and incorporated elements of indeterminacy, every thing in García’s music is pitch-centric and nothing is left to chance.

García acknowledges that *Paisaje del sonidos II* is “one of the first pieces where the use of small percussion instruments are employed as timbral extensions of an ensemble that does not include an extensive percussion part.” After this, García “started writing some solo pieces where the instrumentalists have to use similar percussion instruments to increase the

timbral palette available in these works.” Though ostensibly a work for soloist and ensemble, the writing for the double bass is decidedly not virtuosic in any traditional sense, there are no staggering soloistic pyrotechnics or any kind of flashy extroversion. Rather, the soloist is presented against a backdrop of textures that come and go which offer varying degrees of aural exposure. But that is not to say that this music is easy to play. On the contrary, describing the performance, García remarks: “Luis Gomez Imbert is a tremendous player who has tremendous control of his instrument. He can play everything from *Theraps* by Xenakis to Druckman’s *Valentine*. He can play a million notes a second! Yet for him this is one of the most difficult pieces to play in his own estimation because of the control that’s required over minute details. And for me, that is really the focus of the piece.”

García’s concept of a soloist is also a guiding principle for *Entre el anochecer y la oscuridad* (*Between Nightfall and Darkness*), for viola and orchestra completed in 1992. It should be pointed out that this approach to contrasting a soloist with an ensemble has precedence in the concerto-type pieces of Morton Feldman, García’s teacher who had an extremely profound influence on his work. García comments: “Although at some level the piece may be understood as an homage to my mentor, Morton Feldman, and his work *The Viola in My Life*, my main concern at the time that I wrote the piece was the subtle exploration of the viola’s timbral possibilities in counterpoint with those of the orchestra’s.”

The work begins with a quiet but dense sustained chord played by the full orchestra accompanying a sliding series of harmonics at the top of the solo viola’s range. (These viola harmonics return periodically throughout the score serving almost as a theme.) Then a series of almost dodecaphonic-sounding unaccompanied ascending solo viola lines emerge from this backdrop, sounding almost naked when contrasted against the dense sustained chord of the orchestra. The soloist re-emerges in a mind-bending metrical display. Sixteen-note groupings of eighth and dotted-eighth notes wrap around measures of nineteen eighth notes to the bar. But before any rhythmic stability is established the timeless sustained chords of the orchestra return. Later, García employs a similar rhythmic gambit with the full orchestra pulsating an eight-note grouping of eighths and dotted-eighths in measures of eleven eighth notes alternating with measures of three quarter time. In the end, however, silence ultimately wins out as barren unaccompanied viola gestures are surrounded by nothingness ending with a barely audible tremolo on temple blocks punctuated by a tap on a triangle growing quieter and more distant.

While *Imagenes (sonidos) sonoros congelados* (*Suspended Sonic Images*) is described as a work for violin solo and tape, once again the lines drawn between the soloist and the pre-recorded ensemble material are almost indistinguishable in a recording. The score states that the “tape and violin should be relatively soft throughout” and that “the violin should blend with the tape part at times seeming to come out of the texture of the tape.” The tape part consists of samples of musical phrases written for the soloist that were recorded and then processed utilizing a variety of software (Sound Hack, Super Collider, ProTools) and assembled in the computer. *Imagenes (sonidos) sonoros congelados* opens with some of the busiest music García has ever composed, cascades of ascending and descending diatonic scales which gradually dissolve into a sea of isolated pitches and silences. García writes: “The title of the work refers to the gestures (sonic images) that are captured (suspended in time) on the tape. In addition, many of

the same ‘suspended’ gestures are heard in the violin part throughout the piece. The limited number of gestures, coupled with the slow evolution of the materials is an attempt at creating the sense of a ‘freezing’ or stillness of time in the listener. *Imagenes (sonidos) sonoros congelados*, also features the spatial movement of the sounds coming from the live violin part, as the player is required to gradually move to music stands placed increasingly further back on the stage.”

Sombras Iluminadas (*Illuminated Shadows*) for large orchestra (1997) is the grandest of García’s canvasses. Majestic harmonies shift slowly and quietly throughout the orchestra like hues in an abstract color field painting. García comments: “This slow movement of color suggests the changing visual field one perceives when sunlight slowly shifts and illuminates what once was in shade.” Like much of his recent music, the harmonies are more constant, yet since each sonority is presented in isolation, almost like the pointillism of Milton Babbitt but slowed down and repeated to the point that it becomes minimalistic, it is no more tonally stable than any of his earlier music and yet staggeringly beautiful. And, as if to defy what seems to be García’s stark contrast from other American composers originally from Latin America, the percussion section includes rather prominent claves!

—Frank J. Oteri

Frank J. Oteri is a New York-based composer and the editor of *NewMusicBox*, the ASCAP Deems Taylor Award-winning web magazine from the American Music Center (www.newmusicbox.org).

With a catalog of over 100 works for a wide range of performance genres, **Orlando Jacinto García** has established himself as a major figure in the new music world. Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1954, García emigrated to the United States in 1961. In demand as a guest composer and lecturer at national and international festivals, he is the recipient of numerous honors and awards from a variety of organizations and cultural institutions, including the Rockefeller, Fulbright, Dutka, and Cintas Foundations. Performances of García’s works have been given in the major capitols of the world by numerous distinguished soloists, ensembles, and orchestras. He is founder and director of several international festivals including the New Music Miami Festival and the Music of the Americas Festival. García’s works are recorded on O.O. Discs, CRI, Albany, North/South, CRS, Rugginenti, Capstone, and Opus One Records and are available from Kallisti Music Press, BHE, and North/South Editions. He is professor of music and director of the composition program and graduate studies for the School of Music at Florida International University.

The **Miami String Quartet** is one of the most respected young quartets in the music world today. The recipient of numerous prestigious awards, including the Evian, London, Fischhoff, and Concert Artist Guild competitions, the Quartet have performed at most of the major concert halls in the world. Their critically acclaimed recordings can be heard on Pyramid, Klavier, and BMG. The MSQ are artists-in-residence at Florida International University in Miami.

The **Orquesta Ciudad de Malaga** is one of Spain’s most prestigious young orchestras. Founded in 1991, the Orquesta has already collaborated with numerous first rate soloists, conductors, and choirs and has been featured at festivals throughout Spain. Odon Alonso, one of the orchestra’s principal conductors, has had a long and distinguished career conducting some of the most respected orchestras throughout the world. His highly acclaimed recordings of works from

celebrated Spanish composers as well as standard repertoire can be found on numerous labels here and abroad.

Founded in 1943, the **Orquesta Sinfonica de Valencia** has a long tradition for the presentation of standard repertoire as well as contemporary works. Featured at festivals throughout Spain and other parts of Europe, the orchestra has received critical acclaim for their performances and adventuresome repertoire. A sizable discography that includes collaborations with some of the most noted soloists of recent times is part of the orchestra's legacy.

Violinist **Robert Davidovici** has achieved an international reputation for his excellent work as a soloist, concertmaster and chamber virtuoso. Currently the concertmaster with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Davidovici has performed extensively as a soloist with major orchestras and in critically acclaimed solo and chamber recitals. With several highly noted recordings to his credit including a duo CD with cellist Yo Yo Ma, Davidovici is an artist-in-residence at Florida International University in Miami.

Contrabassist **Luis Gomez Imbert** is well known for his virtuosity, musicality, and championing of new works for the

contrabass, having commissioned well over fifty compositions in the last fifteen years. A former student of Bertram Turetzky and Gary Karr, he has been featured in solo recitals and with many orchestras throughout North and South America. Imbert is on the faculty at Florida International University in Miami where he teaches applied bass and directs the FIU New Music Ensemble.

Ernest Martinez Izquierdo is one of Spain's most acclaimed young conductors and composers. His credits include working with Pierre Boulez and the Ensemble Intercontemporain as well as conducting many major orchestras throughout Europe. Izquierdo is currently the conductor and artistic director of the principal orchestra in Barcelona.

Cuban violist **Angel Lemus** began his training at a young age in Cuba and later in Los Angeles, where he studied with Donald McInnes. His musicality and beautiful tone brought him critical acclaim during his tours in the U.S. and Europe. Lemus recently died in a tragic automobile accident near his home in Los Angeles. It is hoped that this recording will help keep his exceptional artistry alive.

Production Notes

Paisaje del sonido II (Soundscapes II) recorded by Lee Liu at Mahler Sound (mahlersound@mailcity.com) during the 2000 New Music Miami Festival held at the Wertheim Performing Arts Center, Miami, Florida.

Entre el anochecer y la oscuridad (Between Nightfall and Darkness) recorded by Radio Nacional de España during the 1992 Alicante Music Festival in Spain.

Imágenes (sonidos) sonoros congelados (Suspended Sonic Images) recorded by Orlando Jacinto García at the Wertheim Performing Arts Center, Miami, Florida. Tape created at the FIU Music Technology Center.

Sombras iluminadas (Illuminated Shadows) recorded by Radio Nacional de España during the 1997 Alicante Music Festival in Spain.

Additional mixing done by Francesco Sardella at Pinkhouse Studios in Monsano, Italy.

Publishing: *Paisaje del sonido (Soundscapes II)*-published by Kallisti Music Press, Philadelphia, PA. *Entre el anochecer y la oscuridad (Between Nightfall and Darkness)*-score and parts available from the composer. *Imágenes (sonidos) sonoros congelados (Suspended Sonic Images)*-published by Kallisti Music Press, Philadelphia, PA. *Sombras iluminadas (Illuminated Shadows)*-score and parts available from the composer.

Orlando Jacinto García is represented by BMI in the U.S. and Canada and the Sociedad General de Autores y Escritores (SGAE) in the rest of the world.

Executive Director for CRI: John G. Schultz.

This CD is made possible in part by grants and support from the State of Florida, Florida International University (FIU), the Cuban Research Institute at FIU, the Latin American Caribbean Center at FIU, the Fulbright Foundation, the Cintas Foundation, the SGAE, Radio Nacional de España, and all of the excellent musicians on the recordings.