

NAXOS

GINASTERA

**Complete Music
for Cello and Piano**

Cello Sonata

Puneña No. 2

Pampeana No. 2

**Cinco canciones
populares argentinas**

Mark Kosower, Cello

Jee-Won Oh, Piano



Alberto
GINASTERA
(1916-1983)

Complete Music for Cello and Piano

1	Pampeana No. 2 (Rhapsody for cello and piano), Op. 21	9:09
	Cinco canciones populares argentinas, Op. 10	
	(arr. for cello and piano by Mark Kosower)	10:53
2	No. 1. Chacarera	1:06
3	No. 2. Triste	4:28
4	No. 3. Zamba	1:09
5	No. 4. Arrorró	2:08
6	No. 5. Gato	2:02
	Puneña No. 2, Op. 45, 'Hommage à Paul Sacher'	9:49
7	I. Harawi	6:32
8	II. Wayno Karnavalito	3:16
	Cello Sonata, Op. 49	22:19
9	I. Allegro deciso	6:32
10	II. Adagio passionato	8:27
11	III. Presto mormoroso	3:16
12	IV. Allegro con fuoco	4:03

The transcription of the *Cinco canciones populares argentinas* are recorded here by kind permission of Ricordi Americana S.A.E.C. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The cello played on this recording was made by David Tecchler in 1701 and was generously loaned by Kenneth Warren and Son, Ltd.

Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)

Complete Music for Cello and Piano

Alberto Ginastera is one of the great musical voices of the twentieth century. He is a composer who equally embraced both old musical traditions and new innovations in the creation of an original music inspired by and deeply rooted in Argentine folk music. Ginastera's music is harmonically rich, melodically striking, and is often driven by a motoric propulsion of various dance-like rhythms. While often exuberant, bold, lively, and festive his music can also be introverted, reflective, mysterious, and magical. Ginastera is widely regarded as the greatest Argentine composer, one of the most important Latin American composers, and one of the leading composers of his time.

Born in 1916 in Buenos Aires, Ginastera began his musical studies at an early age. He was admitted to the Williams Conservatory when he was twelve years old and later attended the National Conservatory of Music in Buenos Aires where he graduated in 1938. Although he already received recognition during his student years for several early compositions it was his *Panambí*, a ballet based upon a supernatural legend of love and magic, which earned him a national reputation. Ginastera was invited to visit the United States for the first time in 1942 on a Guggenheim Foundation grant but he then decided to postpone the visit until 1945. While in the United States he studied with Aaron Copland at Tanglewood and upon returning to Buenos Aires in 1947 he co-founded the League of Composers and joined the faculty at the National Conservatory. He later served on the faculties of several other institutions including the Catholic University, where he was also Dean of the Faculty of Musical Arts and Sciences.

Ginastera first gained international recognition around 1953 when he was commissioned to compose his *Variaciones Concertantes* for chamber orchestra by a local association in Buenos Aires. The world première was conducted there by Igor Markevitch in June 1953 and the American première followed six months later

with Antal Dorati conducting the Minneapolis Symphony. Many other commissions followed, including the 1958 commission of his *String Quartet No. 2* by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation, the *Piano Concerto No. 1* commissioned by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation in 1961, and Ginastera's first opera *Don Rodrigo* by the Municipality of the City of Buenos Aires in 1964.

The late 1960s was a turbulent time in Ginastera's personal life. He decided to leave Argentina in 1969 after his second opera *Bomarzo* was banned and he was twice ejected from his teaching positions owing to his political protests against government oppression. On top of this he separated during this time from his first wife Mercedes, with whom he had two children. His compositional output began to wane and for a period of three months he could not compose. He then fell in love, however, with the Argentine cellist Aurora Nátola and they were married in 1971. During this time he was able to complete his third opera *Beatriz Cenci* in time for the première at the then brand-new Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C. Ginastera and Aurora settled in Geneva where they would be based until his death in 1983.

Ginastera viewed his own artistic output as a continuous, creative evolution. Always innovative and searching for new kinds of musical expression, Ginastera's music gradually transformed throughout his career from that of an Argentine nationalist composer to an international composer who drew on a wide range of musical influences. While he always preserved his Argentine roots through the use of obsessive rhythms and meditative Adagios, his music became increasingly complex and sophisticated structurally, harmonically, and procedurally as he began to experiment with the latest advances in compositional techniques, employing serial and aleatoric techniques as well as microtones in his work. By 1964 he had emerged as one of the leaders of the avant-garde. At the same time, however, his

music remained essentially classical as he regularly employed the traditional musical forms (sonata, variations, toccata) and mediums (string quartet, cantata, concerto, opera, ballet) of the past. Ginastera used modern compositional techniques organically in the spirit of Alban Berg in a way that maximised his music's fullest expressive potential. Howard Taubman, critic for *The New York Times*, wrote in 1958 that Ginastera's *String Quartet No. 2* created "an original and exciting synthesis of contemporary trends ... employing polytonality, serial technique, and a variety of novel timbres with compelling naturalness."

Despite his continuous evolution Ginastera himself classified his creative output as belonging to three distinct stylistic periods - Objective Nationalism, Subjective Nationalism, and Neo-Expressionism, all of which are represented here. A representative of his Objective Nationalism (1937-1948), the *Cinco Canciones Populares Argentinas* is a collection of five songs and dances originally for voice and piano derived from folk-music and set to folk poetry. The *Cinco canciones* presents the various folk elements in a direct and uninhibited manner which is typical of the period. The first movement entitled *Chacarera* is a fast dance in triple metre which originates from the central pampas. Although short in length it boils with excitement with its motoric propulsion augmented by hemiolas that imply both triple and compound metre. *Triste* is a song of unrequited love originating from the Kechua Indians. Sparsely scored in song-recitative, Ginastera uses the entire spectrum of register to portray open spaces and feelings of hopelessness. The *Zamba* (not to be confused with the Brazilian Samba) is a Peruvian scarf-dance with romantic, sometimes melancholic lyrics, sung in a 6/8 rhythm. *Arrorró* is a lullaby of unknown origins, this song being a direct translation from folklore. *Gato* is a six-part choreographed dance that originated in Spain. A cat dance, it is wild and a little rambunctious being motorically driven from beginning to end with flavourful dissonances and melodic fervour.

The inspiration for this transcription of the *Cinco canciones populares argentinas* came from Pierre

Fournier's transcription of *Triste*. I was taken by this song and soon began to imagine what the other songs would sound like for cello and piano. The cello being so near in quality and register to that of the human voice, the new instrumentation seemed able to transmit the meaning of the text purely in sound and spirit.

The *Pampeana No. 2: Rhapsody for Cello and Piano* was completed in 1950 and belongs to Ginastera's Subjective Nationalism period (1948-58). Here the influence of folk-music becomes more symbolic. Ginastera said of the three works he wrote entitled *Pampeana No. 1* (for violin and piano), *Pampeana No. 2*, and *Pampeana No. 3* (for orchestra) that "without using any folkloric material, it (the music) recalls the rhythms and melodic trends of the Argentine pampas." He went on to say that:

"Whenever I have crossed the pampas, my spirit felt itself inundated by changing impressions, now joyful, now melancholy, produced by its limitless immensity and by the transformation that the countryside undergoes in the course of the day . . . from my first contact, I desired to write a work reflecting these states of my spirit."

Composed in four sections the *Pampeana No. 2* captures the full scope of these moods and feelings through rhapsodic fantasy. The first section *Lento e rubato* is a series of declamatory statements in the form of a cello cadenza (with the exception of the piano's opening chords). Bold and majestic, the cello climbs to great heights in a series of sweeping flourishes based upon open fourths and fifths. The piano then abruptly begins the *Allegro* with the rhythms of the *malambo*, a foot-stomping dance of the gauchos. Characterized by syncopated rhythms and hemiolas, the cello soon enters with a heroic theme. The idea of cadenza is not forgotten as cello cadenzas continue to appear throughout the work interrupting the music periodically. The slow dance rhythm of the *estilo* permeates the middle section marked *Poco più lento* and is a central

feature in this mysterious, seductive, and captivating atmosphere. The final *Allegro vivace* breaks the mood with a startling entrance which again evokes images of gauchos galloping across the pampas on horseback. The momentum builds to the end pausing only momentarily for one last cello cadenza before accelerating to a sizzling conclusion.

The *Puneña No. 2* was written in honour of the seventieth anniversary of the Swiss patron Paul Sacher. Written in 1976 this unaccompanied work for cello belongs to Ginastera's Neo-Expressionism period (1958-1983). Ginastera writes:

"Puneña No. 2, Hommage à Paul Sacher, is a re-creation of the sonorous world of this mysterious heart of South America that was the Inca empire, the influence of which one can still feel in the north of my country, as well as in Bolivia and Peru.

The work consists of two closely related movements. The first one, Harawi, means melancholy love song. It is based on two themes, the first one being eSACHERe and the second one (the other six notes) the metamorphosis of a pre-Columbian melody of Cuzco. Lyric and ardent but at the same time deep and magical, it evokes a haunting solitude, sounds of kenas, murmurs of the distant forest with imaginary birds singing "Sacher!... Sacher!...", and the glittering of moon and stars.

The second movement, Wayno Karnavalito, is a wild and tumultuous Carnival dance on the principal theme "eSACHERe", full of rhythms of charangos and Indian drums, colored costumes, ponchos and masks, as well as of Indian corn alcohol."

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Puneña No. 2 is a tour de force for solo cello that explores all registers of the instrument as well as a wide repertoire of extended techniques. Left-hand, right-

hand, and arpeggiated guitar-strummed pizzicati, normal and false harmonics, *ponticello* and *sul tasto* textures, indeterminate notes and glissandi, ricochets, and block shifting combine to enhance the expressive possibilities and help demonstrate the incredible capabilities of the cello. *Puneña No. 2* was given its première by Mstislav Rostropovich in Zurich.

The *Sonata, Op. 49*, is one of Ginastera's last works from his Neo-Expressionism period that was commissioned by the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (Inter-American Music Council). Completed in 1979 the sonata was a personal gift to Aurora Nátola as the music bears the heading "*A mi querida Aurora*". The significance of Aurora Nátola should not be overlooked when it comes to Ginastera's cello works. In addition to the *Sonata* she was the inspiration for the *Cello Concerto No. 2* as well as a revision of the *Cello Concerto No. 1* of which she gave the première in 1978. *Pampeana No. 2* was dedicated to Aurora and was first performed by her as well in 1950. Although Aurora is not documented as having played a rôle in the creation of *Puneña No. 2* she undoubtedly was an invaluable resource.

Ginastera writes of the *Sonata*:

"Strong rhythms, lyrical singing, and a mysterious atmosphere are, I think, the characteristics of this work consisting of four movements."

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The first movement is compact in form and consists of four clearly marked sections entitled *Prima Parte*, *Collegamento*, *Seconda Parte*, and *Coda*. The *Prima Parte* and *Seconda Parte* sections are each repeated once, the *Collegamento* serves as a bridge between the two, and the *Coda* brings the movement to a rapid and furious conclusion. While there is imitative dialogue to be found throughout the movement both the cello and piano have their own distinctive motivic and harmonic materials.

The first movement *Allegro deciso* begins with the

flare of Argentine rhythms in motoric propulsion. This main theme explores a series of complex sonorities based upon the ideas of bitonality and tone clusters. In the piano the major second, minor ninth, and various tone clusters are important in concept while perfect fourths, fifths, major sevenths, and the tritone dominate in the cello part. *Prima Parte* evolves quickly climbing to the upper registers of both instruments before precipitating into the *Collegamento*. *Collegamento* begins with a syncopated theme in the cello derived from previous material. While the piano similarly has a slightly varied material the obsessiveness of the rhythms begins to wane. As *Collegamento* progresses the music dissipates mysteriously until only a tone cluster remains in the lowest register of the piano.

Seconda Parte alternates and contrasts two main ideas, one consisting of four sonorities in whole notes descending by step, and the other of fantastic flourishes based upon motifs and fragments from the previous two sections. The suspenseful quietness and magical atmosphere of this section is finally broken when the cello and piano begin climbing and rumbling out of their lowest registers in chromatic unison marking the beginning of the *Coda*. A fanfare of sonorities follows in the piano with rapidly arpeggiated open intervals in the cello. This fanfare quickly thrusts the music into a late recapitulation which then erupts into a fury before ending decisively.

Adagio passionato is an improvisatory movement that is the most decidedly different of the four movements owing to its lack of motoric propulsion. Like *Allegro deciso* this movement has four sections that are specifically described by the composer. Ginastera labels these sections as *Esposizione del cello*, *Esposizione del piano*, *Sviluppo*, and *Epilogo*. The *Esposizione del cello* is a dramatic cello cadenza in recitative. The cello begins with a three-note figure in its lowest register which it then repeats inversely beginning a half step lower. This figure becomes a main building block for the entire movement. Dramatic singing, evocative flourishes, and suspenseful silences characterize the cadenza. The *Esposizione del piano*

then follows in the same style and is also in the form of a cadenza. It emerges from a sustained note B in the cello. More fanciful and elaborate, the piano cadenza is also more complex in regards to intervals and harmony as it employs the use of tone clusters. The section begins with a series of inquisitive fragmented gestures and gradually builds to a theme marked *tutta forza! esaltato* which marks the climax of the cadenza. After dying down the cello reappears with two alluring gestures labelled *amor*, a quote from Ginastera's *String Quartet No. 3*.

The two instruments then begin an intimate dialogue in the *Sviluppo* with the piano's sweeping intervals of harp-like timbres and cantabile singing in the cello. Based upon material from the two cadenzas, the intensity builds quickly and suddenly the climactic theme from the piano cadenza reappears as the climax for the entire movement. Virtuoso bio-tonal chromatic runs in the piano accompany a soaring theme in the cello. The *Epilogo* brings the movement to a haunting conclusion with the piano veiling a seductive slow dance rhythm in tone clusters under a mysterious melody high above in the stratospheres of the cello.

Presto mormoroso is a wonderful example of one of Ginastera's magic movements from his Neo-Expressionism period. This murmuring movement is in every way like the work of a magician from its musical content to its compositional wizardry as a palindrome. The movement begins sparsely with a note here and there alternating in dialogue between the two instruments. The single notes in pizzicati and staccati grow to be three note figures before the shadowy currents begin to flow in triplets, sixteenths, and quintuplets. The material which follows is striking with an array of magical harmonics, glissandi, trills, and ponticello fast notes in the cello. These techniques are also creatively combined to create a wealth of timbres and sound effects. The piano maintains a bitonal language throughout alternating lyrical lines with rhythmic clusters.

The two instruments climb to their upper registers when suddenly rhapsodic piano flourishes suspend time

at the movement's midpoint. The change in pitches then marks the beginning of the musical inversion. When the cello enters again the two instruments play in retrograde back to the beginning disintegrating back to nothing.

The final movement marked *Allegro con fuoco* enters *attacca* from the third movement when the piano executes a sizzling head motto in clusters marked *fortissimo* and *marcato*. The movement then truly begins in bar six with the cello's statement of the theme. This wild and festive movement combines sonata form with the toccata and is characterized by a very intricate and intense dialogue between the two instruments. The explosive nature of the music is fueled by syncopated dance rhythms including the *Karnavalito*, obsessive

running sixteenth notes, sudden shifts in material, and a boldness of character. It has an intoxicating effect as the movement builds excitement from beginning to end.

Near the end a brief cello cadenza in arpeggiated and double-stop fifths suspend time momentarily before the music comes to an outrageous foot stomping conclusion. Triple stops, huge leaps, and double-stop glissandi in the cello ignite fireworks with rampaging tone clusters in the piano's lowest register. *Allegro con fuoco* seems to unveil the mysteries from the previous movements while still leaving a lingering and mysterious aura.

Mark Kosower

Mark Kosower



Photo: Hyun Kang

One of the outstanding cellists of his generation, Mark Kosower has appeared as guest soloist with orchestras worldwide including the Orchestre de Paris, the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the China National Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan, the Kansai Philharmonic, and the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra. An Avery Fisher Career Grant winner, he has been guest soloist in the United States with the St Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Ravinia Festival Orchestra, the Buffalo Philharmonic, and the symphony orchestras of Detroit, Florida, Houston, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Minnesota, Oregon, North Carolina, Phoenix, and Seattle, among many others. He has appeared in recital on the Great Performers Series at Lincoln Center as well as at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Aspen Music Festival, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and in major cities throughout the United States and the world. A former Chamber Music Two member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, he has recorded for Naxos, Delos, Ambitus, and VAI.

Jee-Won Oh



Photo: Hyun Kang

Born in Seoul, the Korean pianist Jee-Won Oh has performed internationally as soloist and chamber musician in the Americas, Asia, and Europe. She has made appearances in some of the world's great musical centres, including the cities of Belgrade, Paris, Salzburg, Rio de Janeiro, Seoul, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington DC. She has performed on the Great Performers Series at Lincoln Center in New York as well as at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington DC, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the Salle Gaveau in Paris, Kumho Art Hall in Seoul, and at the Sala Cecilia Meireles in Rio de Janeiro. She has also participated in such prestigious music festivals as the Schleswig-Holstein Festival and the Ernen Musikdorf, and she appears regularly at the Mammoth Lakes Music Festival and the Sitka Music Festival. She was the studio pianist and assistant to the distinguished cellist Janos Starker for five years and was also Associate Instructor of Piano at Indiana University from 1994 to 1998. She studied with György Sebök and Shigeo Neriki.



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One of the most important South American composers of the 20th century, Alberto Ginastera embraced both old and new in the creation of an original style rooted in Argentine folk and popular music while incorporating increasingly modernist techniques. The works on this recording span Ginastera's entire compositional output. The *Cinco canciones populares argentinas* are derived directly from folk-music but in *Pampeana No. 2* the use of folk-music is more symbolic. *Puneña No. 2* is a tour de force for solo cello that explores all registers of the instrument as well as a wide range of extended techniques. Ginastera himself wrote of the *Sonata, Op. 49*, one of his last works from his Neo-Expressionist period: "Strong rhythms, lyrical singing, and a mysterious atmosphere are, I think, the characteristics of this work consisting of four movements".

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Complete Music for Cello and Piano

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|------|---|-------|
| 1 | Pampeana No. 2 (Rhapsody for cello and piano), Op. 21* | 9:09 |
| 2-6 | Cinco canciones populares argentinas, Op. 10
(arr. for cello and piano by Mark Kosower)* | 10:53 |
| 7-8 | Puneña No. 2, Op. 45, 'Hommage à Paul Sacher' | 9:49 |
| 9-12 | Cello Sonata, Op. 49* | 22:19 |



Mark Kosower, Cello
Jee-Won Oh, Piano*



A detailed track list can be found on page 2 of the booklet

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