

NAXOS

Alberto
GINASTERA

Glosses on Themes of Pablo Casals
Variaciones concertantes

London Symphony Orchestra
Israel Chamber Orchestra
Gisèle Ben-Dor



Alberto Ginastera (1916–1983)

Glosses on Themes of Pablo Casals, Opp. 46 and 48 • Variaciones concertantes, Op. 23

Glosses sobre temas de Pau Casals for Orchestra, Op. 48

1	I. Introducció	7:02
2	II. Romanç	3:09
3	III. Sardanes	2:42
4	IV. Cant	3:16
5	V. Conclusió delirant	1:36

Variaciones concertantes, Op. 23 24:23

6	Tema per Violoncello ed Arpa (Theme for Cello and Harp)	2:13
7	Interludio per Corde (Interlude for Strings)	1:48
8	Variación jocosa per Flauto (Cheerful Variation for Flute)	1:01
9	Variación en modo di Scherzo per Clarinetto (Variation in the manner of a Scherzo for Clarinet)	2:00
10	Variación dramática per Viola (Dramatic Variation for Viola)	3:44
11	Variación canónica per Oboe e Fagotto (Canonic Variation for Oboe and Bassoon)	2:46

Alberto Ginastera's music, with few exceptions, was clearly characterized by native *gauchesco* harmonies and rhythms with allusions to the *pampas*, the picturesque and pastoral ranch lands that identify vast portions of Argentina beyond Buenos Aires and its ring of suburbs. Ginastera was born in Buenos Aires on 11th April 1916 of parents who were second-generation Argentines of Catalonian (Spain) and Lombardian (Italy) ancestry without any known musical antecedents.

Ginastera entered the National Conservatory in Buenos Aires in 1936, studying composition with José André (1881–1944), a native Argentine who had studied from 1911 to 1914 at the Schola Cantorum in Paris with the French composers Vincent d'Indy and Albert Roussel. To André can be traced Ginastera's early French influences

12	Variatione ritmica per Tromba e Trombone (Rhythmic Variation for Trumpet and Trombone)	0:35
13	Variatione in modo di Moto perpetuo per Violino (Variation in the manner of a Moto Perpetuo for Violin)	1:07
14	Variatione pastorale per Corno (Pastoral Variation for Horn)	2:17
15	Interludio per Fiati (Interlude for Wind)	1:22
16	Ripresa dal Tema per Contrabasso (Repeat of the Theme for Double Bass)	2:01
17	Variatione finale in modo di Rondò per Orchestra (Final Variation in the manner of a Rondo for Orchestra)	3:30

Glosses sobre temas de Pau Casals for String Quintet and String Orchestra, Op. 46

18	I. Introducció	6:02
19	II. Romanç	3:12
20	III. Sardanes	2:27
21	IV. Cant	2:56
22	V. Conclusió delirant	1:38

and, according to Ginastera himself, the scores which made the most profound effects upon him at the time were Claude Debussy's *La mer* and Igor Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps*.

The national movement in Argentine music was initiated in the 1890s by Alberto Williams (1862–1952), with whom Ginastera studied for a time before entering the National Conservatory, and the movement had already matured as Ginastera blossomed musically in the 1930s. Some two years before graduating from the National Conservatory with highest honours in 1938, Ginastera composed his first acknowledged work, the ballet *Panambi*, "a choreographic legend in one act" based on Argentine *gauchesco* folklore. This was followed in 1940 by a second ballet score, *Estancia*, which led Aaron

Copland to declare in a 1942 article in *Modern Music* that no discussion of Argentine music could be complete without considering Ginastera's compelling, though at the time, few, contributions.

Ginastera achieved greater hemispheric recognition when he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1942 for studies in the United States from December 1945 to March 1947. From about the time of his *Variaciones concertantes* in 1953, the composer's international stature blossomed, resulting in the highly-prized commission from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., among many others, for the inaugural production in its opera house. *Beatriz Cenci*, the composer's final work of a trilogy based on historic figures, had its première there on 10th September 1971. In the same year he settled in Geneva with his second wife, Argentine cellist Aurora Nátola, living there until his death on 25th June 1983 – a dozen years punctuated still with compositions of profundity, one, or really two, of which were *Glosses on Themes of Pablo Casals*, *Opp. 46 and 48*.

Glosses on Themes of Pablo Casals for String Orchestra and String Quintet, *Op. 46*, was composed in Geneva in response to a joint commission the composer received from the Festival Casals of Puerto Rico in celebration of the centenary of Pablo Casals's birth and from the Puerto Rico Committee for the 1976 American Bicentennial in celebration of America's independence from Great Britain.

Pablo Casals, who died in 1973, was a Catalan cellist without peer in his prime. His performance skills were legendary. The *Glosses* commission and the music it drew from the composer became something quite dear to its creator, who, for publication of the work by Boosey & Hawkes, wrote "Composer's Notes" that read in part:

It was with great emotion that I composed the *Glosses* to the memory of Pablo Casals. Many things drew me to Casals: his personality; his great qualities as an artist and as a man for whom freedom is the essential element in all of life; the long friendship that existed between him and my wife, Aurora, one of his devoted disciples; the enthusiasm which he showed for my works; his interest in being aware of

all events of the musical world; and, finally, my Catalan origin, the *ginastera*, or broom flower, being one of the symbols of Catalonia. I still have in my mind a very clear, almost photographic, recollection of him sitting on the beach of San Juan with his inseparable umbrella, looking at the sea beyond the horizon as though he were trying to reach with his eyes the opposite shore. A distant smile, enigmatic, mischievous, somewhat poetic, somewhat bitter, lighted his face at times and one knew that his thoughts were over there in his native Catalonia. And I have kept from that time certain of Casals's imaginary memories which I have tried to bring back to life with love and friendship through his own musical themes.

Glosses is in five movements. The *Introducció* makes allusion to a Caribbean legend: the watchman's song, fireworks and chorus of praise to the Virgin of Montserrat. The thematic reference here is to Casals's sacred choral work, *Oració a la verge de Montserrat* (Prayer to the Virgin of Montserrat), composed in 1959. The second movement *Romanç* is an idyllic, serene landscape recalling *Tres Estrofas de amor* (Three verses of love), a setting of verses by the Spanish poet Tomás Blanco, composed by Casals in 1958 and dedicated to his wife, Puerto Rican cellist Marta Montanez. *Sardanes* brings forth wisps of the far-off sounds of an infinite number of sardanes, the national dance of Catalonia that is elegantly and solemnly executed in a circle. In the nocturnal and magical atmosphere of the fourth-movement *Cant*, amid the bird-song one can hear the theme of the Catalanian folk-tune, *Cant dell Ocells* (Song of the Birds), that Casals immortalized as a performance encore on the cello. In the *Conclusió delirant*, following allusions to blood and gold, the colours of the Catalan flag, an atypically wild and fantastic *sardana* breaks out and rushes to a frenzied finale.

As originally composed for string orchestra, with string quintet in *lontano* (placed in the hall, but apart from the orchestra), *Glosses* had its première on 14th June 1976 in San Juan by the Interamerican Youth Orchestra of the Centennial Festival Casals, Alexander Schneider conduct-

ing. The music, however, soon occupied the composer again. As before, the impetus would come from a virtuoso cellist. Reference again is made to “Composer’s Notes” accompanying the published score:

While composing this work for string orchestra, I could not avoid hearing the resonances of the symphony orchestra and when Mstislav Rostropovich requested a world première [he was then Music Director of the National Symphony Orchestra], I proposed the reworking of a version for full orchestra of the *Glosses* where one can listen to the themes of his illustrious colleague. He welcomed my suggestion and I thus developed the structure of the string version by amplifying its form and adapting it to the new symphonic conception. This venture, which was carried out during the year 1977, was considerable, and took the same proportion of time as composing a new work.

This new *Glosses on Themes by Pablo Casals for Full Orchestra* had its première on 24th January 1978 in Washington, D.C., with the National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mstislav Rostropovich, and it was later published as the composer’s *Opus 48*. In this version, the original instrumentation is expanded significantly to include two flutes, piccolo, three oboes (one doubling English horn), three clarinets (one doubling E flat clarinet and bass clarinet), three bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets (one doubling piccolo trumpet), three trombones, tuba, harp, piano, celesta, harmonium and a battery of some 39 percussion instruments sounded by no fewer than four players.

Variaciones concertantes for Chamber Orchestra, Op. 23, is scored for two flutes (one doubling on piccolo), oboe, two clarinets, bassoon, two horns, trumpet, trombone, timpani, harp and strings. The work is in twelve sections.

The theme is first stated in the upper registers of a single cello over a recurring figure in the harp that is at first the notes of the natural, open strings of the *gauchesco* guitar (E-A-D-G-B-E’) and later a chromatically altered form of the same chord. An interlude for strings alone serves as a

bridge to the seven orchestral variations that follow, each variation highlighting in turn as solo instruments: (1) flute, (2) clarinet, (3) viola, (4) oboe and bassoon, (5) trumpet and trombone in a brief variation that serves as little more than a fanfare for the *Moto perpetuo* that follows featuring (6) violin and (7) horn. Then, a second interlude, this time for wind choir, leads to a reprise of the theme by a solo string bass (rather than by a solo cello as before) over the same *gauchesco* figure in the harp. The entire orchestra brings the work to a frenetic conclusion with a virtuosic musical *malambo*, the archetypical “jousting” dance of the gaucho once described as follows in an 1883 monograph, *The Province of Buenos Aires*:

In the manner of dances, none is comparable to the *malambo*. It is the gaucho’s “tournament” when he feels the urge to display his skill as a dancer. Two men place themselves opposite each other. The guitars flood the *rancho* with their chords, one of the gauchos begins to dance; then he stops and his opponent continues; and so on it goes. Many times [and may consist] of seventy-six figures by each of the dancers. The spectators are fascinated by the dancer’s feet, which go through complicated tapping, shuffling, stamping, doubling, and criss-crossing, at times barely seeming to touch the ground with the soles of their boots. The onlookers applaud, shout, and make bets on one dancer or the other, while even the women and children are swept along by the frenetic enthusiasm engendered by the vertiginous motion.

The first performance of *Variaciones concertantes* was given on 2nd June 1953 in Buenos Aires by the Orchestra of the Association of the Friends of Music, Igor Markevitch conducting. The work has also gained some circulation on ballet stages around the world, first unveiled in that form on 25th May 1960 at the Teatro Colón under the direction of Horatio Butler.

Rudy Ennis

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Gisèle Ben-Dor

Gisèle Ben-Dor has won worldwide acclaim as guest conductor with major orchestras and as Music Director of the Santa Barbara Symphony, becoming Conductor Laureate in 2006. Uruguayan by birth and upbringing, she is a particularly persuasive champion of Latin American composers (Ginastera, Revueltas, Villa-Lobos, Piazzolla, Bacalov). Internationally, she has most recently led the Rotterdam Philharmonic, Bern Symphony, Jerusalem Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic, Boston Pro-Arte Chamber Orchestra, and the national orchestras of Brazil, Chile and Costa Rica. She has led the New York Philharmonic, London Symphony, BBC/Wales, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Pops, New World Symphony, Israel Philharmonic, Israel Chamber Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic, Houston Symphony and Orchestre de la Suisse Romande among many others. As assistant to Kurt Masur at the New York Philharmonic, she led the orchestra on two last minute calls, including a highly acclaimed program of Mahler and Beethoven, without the benefit of rehearsals. She also led the orchestra in New York's Central Park before an estimated audience of 100,000 and at the British Festival. Her major performances of Ginastera's music have included a unanimously acclaimed new

production and European première of his last opera, *Beatrix Cenci* (Grand Théâtre de Genève) and *Turbæ ad Passionem Gregorianam* in Madrid. Upcoming new recordings of Ginastera's music feature Plácido Domingo (excerpts from his first opera *Don Rodrigo*); earlier recordings include Ginastera's complete ballets *Estancia* and *Panambi* (Naxos), and *The Soul of Tango* (world premières by Piazzolla and Bacalov). Elected by the musicians, she is also Conductor Emerita of Boston's Pro-Arte Chamber Orchestra. Recognized by Leonard Bernstein, they shared the stage at Tanglewood and at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival. Winner of the Bartók Prize of Hungarian Television, she made her conducting début with the Israel Philharmonic in Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, televised by the BBC/London throughout Europe. She studied at the Rubín Academy of Music in Tel-Aviv and at the Yale School of Music. www.giseleben-dor.com

Photo: Boris Ravich





London Symphony Orchestra

The London Symphony Orchestra is widely considered to be one of the world's leading orchestras, on the strength of its performances alone, but there is much more to its work than concerts in concert-halls. Its many activities include an energetic and ground-breaking education and community programme, a record company, a music education centre and exciting work in the field of information technology, and much more. A hundred years after it was formed the orchestra still attracts excellent players, many of whom have flourishing solo, chamber music or teaching careers alongside their orchestral work. The roster of soloists and conductors is second to none,

starting with Principal conductor Valery Gergiev, LSO President Sir Colin Davis, and Daniel Harding and Michael Tilson Thomas as Principal Guest Conductors. At its Barbican home in the City of London, the orchestra promotes more concerts than any other classical music organization in London, and its LSO Live recordings made there take the orchestra to a global audience of million. With music for films, including all six *Star Wars*, on radio, television, on computer games, on planes and online, the orchestra can be heard everywhere. Five minutes from the Barbican, at LSO St Luke's, the UBS and LSO music education centre, the orchestra is expanding its artistic programme to include BBC Radio 3 lunchtime chamber concerts and UBS Soundscapes: Eclectica concerts with world-class artists from diverse musical backgrounds. LSO Discovery is facilitating music education and community music-making, using LSO musicians and amateurs, and new technology to build ever-stronger links with local people and in East London schools.

Israel Chamber Orchestra

The Israel Chamber Orchestra was founded in 1965 by Gary Bertini, its Artistic Director and conductor for ten years. Subsequent Artistic Directors have included Luciano Berio, Rudolf Barshai, Uri Segal, Yoav Talmi, Shlomo Mintz, Philippe Entremont, later Laureate Conductor, Salvador Mas Conde, Noam Sheriff, and Gil Shohat. Since January 2009 Roberto Paternostro has served as Music Director. Numerous well-known artists have performed with the orchestra and there have been collaborations with several internationally acclaimed choirs. The orchestra's repertoire ranges from early baroque to contemporary music and great importance is attached to fostering music among the young, with its series *For the Entire Family* enthusiastically acclaimed by both youth audiences and professional music critics alike. The orchestra tours extensively in Europe, the United States, Canada, South America and the Far East and has participated in prestigious festivals, including Salzburg, Istanbul, Helsinki, Athens, Pompeii, Sofia and Mitte Europa, and Hong Kong. There have been recordings for Chandos, Musicmasters, Koch and Teldec. The Israel Chamber Orchestra is sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports and the Tel Aviv Jaffa Municipality.

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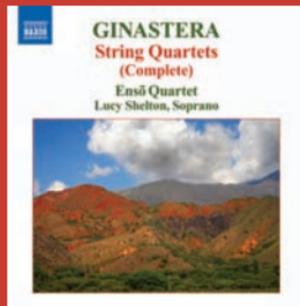
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Alberto Ginastera's dazzling *Glosses on Themes of Pablo Casals*, heard here in both its original version for string quintet and string orchestra and its later fully-orchestrated version, pays tribute to his close friend, the legendary cellist (and composer) on the occasion of the centenary of Casals's birth. The *Variaciones concertantes* places a variety of instruments in the limelight with featured solos, culminating in a virtuosic *malambo*, the archetypical *gaucho* 'jousting' dance whose vertiginous motion engenders frenetic enthusiasm among both participants and onlookers.

Alberto
GINASTERA
(1916–1983)

Glosses sobre temas de Pau Casals for Orchestra, Op. 48* 17:45

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| 6-17 | Variaciones concertantes, Op. 23** | 24:23 |

**Glosses sobre temas de Pau Casals for String Quintet
and String Orchestra, Op. 46* 16:15**

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Full track details will be found on page 2 of the booklet



London Symphony Orchestra*
Israel Chamber Orchestra**
Gisèle Ben-Dor

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