

CLASSICAL PIANO MUSIC FROM ARGENTINA

MIRIAN CONTI, piano

LOOKING SOUTH

Albany
CLASSICAL

In the early 1900's, Nationalism in Argentina, which coincided with the various strong artistic national currents throughout Europe and the United States, was competing with other "isms": post-romanticism, neoclassicism, expressionism, futurism, atonalism, serialism, microtonalism, traditionalism, nativism, indigenism, and in the visual currents: dadaism, cubism etc, etc. It was an era of constant search for an individual voice, original style, and the desperate need to "belong" to an "ism." Nationalism in Argentina was at its peak in the late 1800's through the early decades of 1900's. By the 1920's, new tendencies were starting to develop, and consequently composers were beginning to explore, experiment and elaborate on old and new elements. However, many composers felt no pressing need to completely break away from tradition, and they were able to adapt and incorporate these changes while remaining true to their beliefs, sensitivities and their way of expressing themselves.

This recording encompasses works written in different styles and idioms, each with a unique compositional personality, but at the same time having one distinctive quality in common: expressing the Argentine soul in sounds. Each composer arrives at his unmistakable "argentinism" in various ways while expressing the same profound emotions and sentiments. Whether it is using traditional, folkloric or popular motives within the frame of Romanticism, Neo-classicism or Modernism all these composers have a common thread uniting them: it is the respect and understanding of piano writing, the skilful and resourceful way of bringing out the best of the instrument's colors.

One would hope that someday every serious classical pianist can begin to explore in depth the vast repertoire of Argentina and earnestly incorporate it into the standard concert program. It is my wish that this recording will begin to introduce music lovers to some of the finest works of the Argentine piano repertoire.

due to its seriousness and more modern approach than the popular tangos everybody is so familiar with. However these "Tangos" bring out an interesting amalgamation of different elements: rich rhythms, intricate contrapuntal lines and sharp contrast of mood in harmonically daring changes. They were written as an homage to the city of Buenos Aires with its everyday characters and their quirky personalities such as the *Compadron* (bully), *Lloron* (whiner), *Nostalgico* (the sad one), or *Milonguero* (the one dancing his milongas) or simply evoking old tangos tunes in *Evocacion*.

CONSTANTINO GAITO, a much revered composer and teacher born in Buenos Aires in 1878 and died in 1945, contributed to the development of the Argentine folkloric school in music. After studies in Naples, he returned with his famous father, the violinist Cayetano Gaito, in 1900 and created with him their own Conservatory in Buenos Aires. He taught many distinguished composers such as Luis Gianneo, Juan Jose Castro, and Roberto Garcia Morillo. Gaito's youthful experiences as a pianist in the world of the Opera Theater sealed his life as a musician and composer of many operas. His *Gato Correntino* belongs to the Opera *La Sangre de las Guitarras* composed in 1932.

"Gato Correntino" refers to the Province of Corrientes, located in the Northeast of Argentina. I felt the need to include this warm and extroverted rich Gato to honor the province where I was born.

LUIS GIANNEO (1897-1968) was born in Buenos Aires where his teachers included Constantino Gaito and Eduardo Fomarinini in composition, and Ernesto Drangosch and Luis Romaniello in piano. *Sonatina* was written in 1938 under the strong influence of a composer who he thought was the best representative of the Contemporary new aesthetic: Igor Stravinsky. Gianneo's musical aesthetics reflect his preoccupation with the "new musical advances" of the times without breaking his ties with tradition. This *Sonatina* is dedicated to the great Chilean pianist Claudio Arrau, who unfortunately never performed it. The work is written in a balanced neo-classical language in three movements filled with thematic material derived from the rhythms and melodies of Argentine folk music.

Numerous are Gianneo's piano works which include short pieces as well as three Sonatas, a suite, cycles of children's music, preludes, and bagatelles, dances and studies, and an extensive output of chamber and orchestral works that spanned 40 years of his life (1923-1963).

ALBERTO GINASTERA was born in Buenos Aires in 1916 and died in Switzerland in 1983. A disciple of Athos Palma, Jose Gil and Jose Andre, Ginastera is perhaps the most known Argentine composer

de Musica Argentina de Juan Dios de Filiberto" for many years. His *Milonga Sireña* is a sentimental, almost painful lament and his *Gato* is composed in a more popular style in contrast to the other *Gatos* in this recording.

It is interesting to note the various ways this popular dance is handled by all these great composers, showing once again that despite their contrasting personalities, their love for their native music is profound and long lasting.



MIRIAN CONTI

The Argentine pianist Mirian Conti enjoys a growing reputation as a musician whose performances combine technical brilliance with striking originality and artistic insight. Stylistically assured in a wide range of repertoire, Ms. Conti is considered a leading exponent of Spanish music; and her rare ability to communicate passion and excitement when playing contemporary scores has won the admiration of leading American and Argentine composers such as Bowles, Broeders, Cohn, Diamond, Gould, Lees, Persichetti, Ramey, White, Zyman, etc. She premiered Lalo Schifrin's *Piano Concerto No. 2* at the Dorothy Chandler Pavillion in Los Angeles. She was invited by the French Cultural Center in Tangier, Morocco to

perform a concert in homage to Paul Bowles. The pianist has made solo, orchestral and chamber appearances at Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Concert Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall (debut in 1987 as a winner of Artists International Auditions) in New York, and has performed at numerous concert halls throughout the world, including the Teatro Colón in her native Argentina. In 1989, she was awarded a special prize as the best performer of Spanish music in the International Pilar Bayona Piano Competition in Zaragoza, Spain. In 1995, she was awarded

FABIOLA RUSSO, recording and producing engineer.
Ing. JAVIER COSENTINO, mastering.
Notes written by Mirian Conte.

Recorded at Estudios Cosentino,
Buenos Aires, Argentina in September 2005.
Hamburg Steinway "D".

LOOKING SOUTH

TROY837



ALBANY RECORDS U.S.
915 BROADWAY, ALBANY, NY 12207
TEL: 518 436-8814 FAX: 518 436-0643

ALBANY RECORDS U.K.
BOX 137, KENDAL, CUMBRIA, LA8 0XD
TEL: 01539 824008

© 2006 UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON MADE IN THE USA

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
DIGITAL AUDIO

DDD

WARNING: COPYRIGHT SUBSISTS IN ALL RECORDINGS ISSUED UNDER THIS LABEL.