Enrique Granados (arr. Cassadó)
Intermezzo from ‘Goyescas’ 4:55

Manuel de Falla (*arr. Gendron / Cheng)
Primera Danza Española from ‘La vida breve’* 3:55

Siete canciones populares españolas
I. El paño moruno 2:03
II. Seguidilla murciana 1:18
III. Asturiana 2:42
IV. Jota 2:50
V. Nana 2:26
VI. Canción 1:24
VII. Polo 1:26

Isaac Albéniz (arr. Stutschewsky / Thaler)
España, Op. 165 No. 3 ‘Malagueña’ 3:57

Enrique Granados (arr. Calvo / Cheng)
Danzas Españolas, Op. 37 No. 5 ‘Andaluza’ 4:24

Manuel de Falla (arr. Piatigorsky)
Danza ritual del fuego from ‘El amor brujo’ 3:46

Joaquín Turina
Danzas fantásticas, Op. 22 No. 1 ‘Exaltación’ 5:14

Gaspar Cassadó
Suite per Violoncello
I. Preludio – Fantasia 6:01
II. Sardana (Danza) 4:41
III. Intermezzo e Danza Finale 5:52

Requiebros for Violoncello and Piano 4:52

Pablo de Sarasate
Zigeunerweisen, Op. 20 9:30
Mining a multifaceted, centuries-old musical heritage cultivated in relative isolation from the rest of Western Europe, the composers of Spain around the turn of the twentieth century wove a rich tapestry from the diverse strands of their country's musical traditions: its ecstatic sacred music, the dramatic fervor of Spanish opera and zarzuela, and the hot-blooded intensity of flamenco. The country's foremost composers of that era – Isaac Albéniz, Enrique Granados, Manuel de Falla, and Joaquín Turina – developed an unmistakably Spanish flavor in their music by drawing from the folk styles of their cultural heritage (specifically, as the present album attests, making frequent use of traditional dance forms from various regions of Spain) and integrating them within a Western classical framework.

Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909) may fairly lay claim to being the progenitor of twentieth-century Spanish concert music. Equally renowned during his lifetime as a composer and virtuoso pianist, he remains primarily known today for his large catalogue of piano music. Albéniz's approach to the piano self-assuredly combined Spanish folk elements with the Romantic élan of Liszt and Chopin, as encountered in the four-volume piano suite Iberia, a paean to Spanish culture and unquestionably Albéniz's magnum opus.

While decidedly more modest than Iberia in both its proportions and expressive aspirations, España: 6 hojas de album (6 album leaves) for solo piano, op. 165, composed in 1890, is no less representative of the Spanish character at the heart of Albéniz's artistic identity. Its fetching third movement (heard here in an arrangement for cello and piano by Joachim Stutschewsky and Isco Thaler) is a malagueña, a style of flamenco dance.

Alongside Albéniz, Enrique Granados (1867-1916) ranks among Spain's most significant musical voices of the post-Romantic era. Granados's piano suite Goyescas, like Iberia, distinctly evokes Spanish culture; its six movements are inspired by the Spanish painter Francisco Goya's portrayal of eighteenth-century Madrid. Composed between 1909 and 1911, the suite became the basis, in 1916, for a one-act opera of the same name, from whence comes the famous Intermezzo. Granados composed the Intermezzo overnight during the rehearsal period for the opera's premiere, in order to accommodate the set change between Scenes I and II. It is a thing of cinematic sweep, buoyed by long-breathed melody, elegantly translated to the cello in the arrangement by the Spanish cellist and composer Gaspar Cassadó, made in 1923.

After Goyescas, Granados's Danzas españolas, a set of twelve Spanish dances for solo piano, are his most widely known work. Each danza in its own right perennially delights audiences. The fifth, “Andaluza”, endures as the most popular of the set, appearing in numerous arrangements and orchestrations. An ardent melody soars atop a pulsating accompaniment, slows to a tender lullaby in the Andante middle section, then returns with a vengeance before the turbulence abates for the dance's conclusion.
Sixteen years Albéniz’s junior, **Manuel de Falla** (1876-1946) emerged in the early twentieth century as Spain’s most important composer. Like Albéniz and Granados, he integrated Spanish folk elements with broader developments that he absorbed from the music of other leading composers of the day.

In his opera *La vida breve* (The Short Life), composed between 1904 and 1913, Falla sought to create high art music based on gypsy sources without compromising their essential character. The opera brought together gypsy cante jondo (deep song) with elements of Italian verismo opera. A colorful eclecticism results, encapsulated by a pair of dances. The first of these has achieved widespread popularity through various arrangements, appearing as the *Primera Danza Española* (Spanish Dance No. 1).

In 1905, *La vida breve* won a competition sponsored by the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, but no theaters authorized the promised performance of the opera. Frustrated by Spain’s bureaucratic obstacles to pursuing a musical career, Falla accepted an invitation in 1907 to tour to France as a piano accompanist. He became utterly enchanted by Paris and remained there for the next seven years, meeting the likes of Debussy, Ravel, and Stravinsky, among other luminaries. During this time, Falla developed a penchant for modern French music, falling particularly under the spell of Debussy, whose influence can be heard throughout his œuvre.

Falla composed *Siete canciones populares españolas* (Seven Spanish Folk Songs) in 1914, shortly before returning from Paris to Spain. The songs are settings of popular Spanish texts, originally scored for voice and piano; they have lent themselves over the years to numerous transcriptions for various instruments. (The songs have also been orchestrated by various composers, including Luciano Berio.) Even divorced from the texts, Falla’s melodic language conveys an irresistible dramatic urgency. The piano accompaniments are equally remarkable: witness the inexorable thrust of repeated notes in the cycle’s final song, “Polo.” Their adaptability to transcriptions and arrangements, combined with the immediate appeal of their melodic, harmonic, and textual content, have made *Siete canciones* the most frequently performed songs in the Spanish repertoire.

In 1915 came Falla’s next major stage work after *La vida breve*: the ballet *El amor brujo* (Love, the Magician). Here, as in *La vida breve*, Falla drew on traditional gypsy music. The heady “Danza ritual del fuego” (Ritual Fire Dance) has become the ballet’s most famous movement, thanks in part to numerous arrangements, including Falla’s own for solo piano and Gregor Piatigorsky’s for cello and piano.

Of the generation immediately following Albéniz, **Joaquin Turina** (1882-1949) vied with Falla for the distinction of being Spain’s most prominent musical voice. Like Falla, Turina followed his early successes in his homeland with a stint in Paris, where both composers were members of the Société musicale indépendante. Originally drawn to the standard classical forms (his Opus 1 was a Piano Quintet, and he was the only one among Spain’s significant composers to complete a symphony), Turina turned to Spanish popular music on the advice of Albéniz and Falla while still living in France. He returned to Spain in 1914, at the same time as Falla.
Turina composed his *Danzas fantásticas* for orchestra, op. 22, in 1920. The work also exists in the composer’s own arrangement for solo piano. The three *danzas* — “Exaltación,” “Ensueño” (Dream), and “Orgía” (Orgy) — were inspired by the novel *La orgía* by the Spanish writer José Más. The score to Turina’s *Danzas fantásticas* quotes sentences from the novel above each dance. Inscribed above the first movement: “Parecía como si las figuras de aquel cuadre incomparable, se movieran dentro del cáliz de una flor” (It seemed as though the figures in that incomparable picture moved within the chalice of a flower). Turina draws on three traditional dance forms, from different regions of Spain, for the *Danzas fantásticas*. “Exaltación” is a *jota*, a Spanish dance rooted in Aragon (which appears also in Falla’s *Siete canciones*).

The present album complements these four principal figures of twentieth-century Spanish composition with music by two of Spain’s preeminent composer-performers of the same time period: the cellist Gaspar Cassadó (1897-1966) and the violinist Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908). Both are primarily known for their contributions to the legacies of their respective instruments, but produced respectable corpuses of original music in their own right.

Cassadó’s music betrays the influence of Falla and Ravel. His Suite for Cello, composed in 1926, represents a significant, if under-recognized, essay in the solo cello literature. The Suite triply pays homage to the essential elements of Cassadó’s artistic profile. It comprises three dance movements, each of Spanish extraction: the impassioned *Preludio-Fantasia* is a *zarabanda* – the triple-meter sarabande of Baroque dance suites; the blithe second movement is the Catalan sardana; and the Suite concludes with a *jota*. In the *Preludio-Fantasia*, Cassadó honors the instrument’s tradition with a quotation of Kodály’s Sonata for Solo Cello, and nods to a personal idol by quoting the famous flute solo from Ravel’s *Daphnis et Chloé*. Cassadó composed his *Requiebros* for cello and piano in 1934. If lighter in character than the Suite (“Requiebros” loosely translates as “flirtations”), in the composer-virtuoso’s expert hands, the work nevertheless glorifies the cello to equal effect.

Sarasate “represented a completely new type of violinist,” wrote his contemporary Carl Flesch. He stood among his generation’s most gifted violin virtuosi. His sound lacked muscularity, but was remarkable for its sweet, effortless clarity, placing Sarasate in his element in salon repertoire rather than concerti designed for large concert halls. His own compositions affirm the character of his playing – indeed, Sarasate shone most brightly in his own music – and his much-beloved *Zigeunerweisen*, op. 20, based on gypsy themes, has remained a staple of the virtuoso repertoire since its composition in 1878.

Patrick Castillo
CHENG² DUO

Since debuting at Carnegie Hall in 2011, the Cheng² Duo (pronounced Cheng Squared Duo) continues to be celebrated by audiences and critics alike for its artistic excellence, generous spirit, and compelling vibrancy. Named one of CBC Music’s “30 hot Canadian classical musicians under 30”, the brother-and-sister duo is formed by 20-year-old cellist Bryan Cheng, recipient of the 2017 Canada Council for the Arts Michael Measures Prize, and pianist Silvie Cheng, recipient of the Roy M. Rubinstein Award for exceptional promise in piano performance.

Quickly becoming an audience favourite wherever they perform, the dynamic Cheng² Duo has been making music together for the past 15 years. The duo’s refreshing approach to classical music is steeped in a rare balance of infectious joy and enthusiasm in their playing on one hand, and mature, historically informed, and profound interpretations on the other. The duo has presented recitals in notable venues throughout North America (Canada and USA), Europe (Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Netherlands, Italy), and Asia (China and South Korea). Cheng² Duo has been featured at numerous international festivals, including Aspen (USA), Trasimeno (Italy), Ottawa Chamberfest and Festival of the Sound (Canada).

In 2016, Cheng² Duo released its debut album, Violoncelle français, which was selected as one of WCRB’s top CDs of 2017. The album has been lauded by international press and publications in France, Luxembourg, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada, and USA for its “musical sensitivity”, “maturity and perfection”, “taste, sure flair for phrasing, and beauty of sound”. Violonchelo del fuego is the second in a set to be recorded with audite, with each album focusing on the music of a particular country.
Bryan Cheng has attracted widespread attention for his natural, virtuosic command of the cello and his mature, impassioned musicianship. He made his orchestral debut at age 10 with the I Musici de Montreal Chamber Orchestra; since then, he has been soloist with Canada’s National Arts Centre Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra, Niagara Symphony Orchestra, Esprit Orchestra, Nouvelle Génération Chamber Orchestra, and Germany’s Südwestdeutsches Kammerorchester Pforzheim, among others.

Since his New York debut recital at Carnegie Hall at age 14, Bryan Cheng has performed in world-class concert halls including Montréal’s Maison Symphonique, Toronto’s Koerner Hall, Edmonton’s Winspear Centre, Aspen’s Harris Hall, and Shanghai’s Poly Grand Theatre. He is 1st-prize winner of the National Arts Centre Bursary Competition, 2nd-prize winner of the OSM Manulife Competition, and a CBC Young Artist of the Year.

Over the years, Bryan Cheng has accumulated a concert repertoire spanning five centuries. He is equally committed to both traditional masterworks and the music of his time, having commissioned and given over half a dozen world premieres in North America. Formerly studying with cellist and conductor Yuli Turovsky and Hans Jørgen Jensen of Northwestern University, he is currently enrolled at the Universität der Künste (University of the Arts) in Berlin in the class of Jens Peter Maintz. Bryan Cheng plays a rare 1754 Venetian cello by Bartolomeo Tassini.
Lauded for her exquisite touch at the keyboard, pianist **Silvie Cheng** has an extraordinary ability to connect with audiences both on and off the stage. She made her orchestral debut in 2008, followed by her Carnegie Hall solo debut three years later, and has performed solo recitals in venues ranging from New York City’s Steinway Hall to Ottawa’s National Arts Centre to the Remonstrantse kerk in Alkmaar, Netherlands. She has won top prizes at the Thousand Islands International Piano Competition, Heida Hermanns International Piano Competition, Lillian Fuchs Chamber Music Competition, and numerous national competitions in Canada.

Silvie Cheng received diplomas from the Royal Conservatory of Toronto and both her Bachelor’s and Master’s performance degrees from the Manhattan School of Music in New York, where her main teacher was Jeffrey Cohen. She has performed in master classes with Menahem Pressler, Angela Hewitt, Christoph Eschenbach, and Robert McDonald, among other distinguished musicians.

Passionate about connecting the next generation with classical and contemporary music, Silvie Cheng is a teaching-artist of both the Manhattan School of Music’s Distance Learning program and of the Bridge Arts Ensemble. She is also the pianist of sTem Trio in New York City, where she is currently based.
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