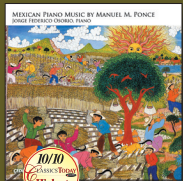


Also with Jorge Federico Osorio on Cedille



MEXICAN PIANO MUSIC BY MANUEL M. PONCE

"Osorio plays all of these pieces masterfully, with virtuosity to spare and a natural expressiveness that never compromises the music's freshness and spontaneity. If I had to choose one highlight, it would probably be the *Suite cubana*, a marvelous exploration of Latino musical folklore cast as a triptych in the manner of Debussy's *Images*. But then, there are no dead spots, musically or interpretively, and the engineering offers the last word in sonic realism. In short, this is an absolutely wonderful disc by any measure."

— CLASSICSTODAY.COM



PIANO ESPAÑOL

Albéniz, Falla, Granados, and Soler

"Jorge Federico Osorio knows this music as well as any pianist alive, and his performances bespeak the wisdom of maturity with no loss of freshness or spontaneity. . . . There's poetry aplenty, but also bravura. Sonically this recording strikes me as ideal. In short, what you hear is what Osorio does, and what he does is pretty terrific."

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DEBUSSY & LISZT

"Osorio's performances combine . . . clarity of texture with an articulate rhythmic sense that illuminate such pieces as 'La cathédrale engloutie' (one of the highlights of the set) from within. His robust readings of the Liszt pieces benefit from the pianist's finely-chiseled detail and generous color palette."

— CHICAGO TRIBUNE



CEVILLE

SALÓN MEXICANO

CASTRO
VILLANUEVA
PONCE
ROLÓN

JORGE FEDERICO OSORIO, PIANO

Producer James Ginsburg

Engineer Bill Maylone

Recorded February 8–9 and April 15, 2012

In the Fay and Daniel Levin Performance Studio at 98.7 WFMT

Steinway Piano **Technicians** Charles Terr and Ken Orgel

Cover *Portrait of Angelina Beloff*, 1918 (oil on canvas), Diego Rivera (1886–1957)
Museo Dolores Olmedo Patiño, Mexico City, Mexico / The Bridgeman Art Library

Cover Design Sue Cottrill

Inside Booklet and Inlay Card Nancy Bieschke

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SALÓN MEXICANO

JORGE FEDERICO OSORIO
piano

- 1 RICARDO CASTRO (1864–1907) *Caprice Vals*, Op. 1 (7:03)
- 2 FELIPE VILLANUEVA (1862–1893) *Sueño Dorado: Mazurka* (4:33)
- 3 CASTRO *Vals caressante* (1:56)
- 4 MANUEL M. PONCE (1882–1948) *8ª Mazurca de Salón* (2:32)
- 5 VILLANUEVA *Causerie: Vals lento* (3:47)
- 6 VILLANUEVA *Tercera Mazurka*, Op. 27 (4:14)
- 7 PONCE *"Marchita el Alma..."* (3:03)
- 8 VILLANUEVA *Ebelia: Mazurka de Salón* (5:38)
- 9 CASTRO *Vals amoroso*, Op. 31, No. 11 (1:58)
- 10 CASTRO *Mazurca melancólica* (3:30)
- 11 CASTRO *Barcarola*, Op. 30, No. 2 (2:46)
- 12 VILLANUEVA *Amor: Vals de Salón* (3:12)
- 13 PONCE *"Todo pasó..."* (2:07)
- 14 CASTRO *Vals sentimental*, Op. 30, No. 1 (2:35)
- 15 CASTRO *Vals blquette* (1:58)
- 16 PONCE *Mazurca de Salón* (2:55)
- 17 CASTRO *Vals melancólico*, Op. 36, No. 2 (4:29)
- 18 VILLANUEVA *Vals Poético: Vals de Salón para piano* (3:40)
- 19 PONCE *Canciones Mexicanas: "Por ti mi Corazón..."* (2:38)
- 20 JOSÉ ROLÓN (1876–1945) *Vals Capricho*, Op. 14 (8:32)

TT: (74:10)

SALÓN MEXICANO

Notes by Andrea Lamoreaux

Some musical purists use “salon music” as a term of contempt. They claim it lacks artistic value; that it is just an early type of Muzak, or meaningless background sound. In the 19th century, however, piano music as a form of pure entertainment had both an artistic and a social function. In those days, before the invention of recording, the advent of radio, and the arrival of MP3 downloads, party music could only be provided by actual performers. Often these were pianist-composers who could create melodies that were singable and danceable, and elaborate them in clever ways that made them highly interesting and entertaining to hear.

Two giants of keyboard composition in the 19th century were Frédéric Chopin and Franz Liszt, virtuoso performers who could invent melodies and exploit every possibility

of those themes in a pyrotechnical fashion. Many of Chopin’s and Liszt’s compositions are complex, soulful works of deep expressiveness and meaning. Others serve a different purpose: to show off pianistic ability, explore every nuance of a tune, and bring a smile to listeners’ faces (and probably their own faces as well). Composers and pianists of all levels of inspiration and talent seized upon these elements and created large quantities of such entertainment pieces, or salon music.

The salon style fell out of favor during the 20th century. Now that we’re well into the 21st, we hardly ever hear it. Jorge Federico Osorio’s current recording brings many of these delightful pieces back to life. It has the further interest of presenting works by composers not generally well known to us: those who revitalized and developed the performance and appreciation of the musical arts in Mexico. Of the four composers represented, only Manuel Ponce

has a significant international profile today. Along with Ponce, you will hear pieces by two of his predecessors and one contemporary on this program of musical rediscovery.

Ricardo Castro (1864–1907) came from the generation that preceded Ponce. Ponce’s major interest was in traditional Mexican music and its integration into the world of art music. Castro was more inspired by the European styles of his time, and especially by Chopin. Castro performed from an early age in Mexico, Venezuela, the United States, and Paris, while also composing symphonies, concertos, two operas, and a great deal of piano music. Having studied at the conservatory in Mexico City, he became its director shortly before his death.

Opening the disc, Castro’s *Caprice-Vals*, Op. 1, exists also as a piece for piano and orchestra. As a calling-card work, it appears intended entirely as a display piece, an exhibition of

startling virtuosity. Through numerous key changes and shifts between major and minor modes, it explores the whole range of the piano’s sound and the pianist’s art. Structured as a free rondo, it builds to a powerful triple-forte climax in octaves.

Castro’s serene, melodious *Vals caressante* (Caressing Waltz) evokes a vision of ballroom dancers. Also included on the program are Castro’s rhapsodic *Vals amoroso* and lilting *Barcarola*, reminiscent in mood and rhythm of the famous *Barcarolle* from Offenbach’s *Tales of Hoffmann*. In between those pieces on the disc, Castro’s *Mazurca melancólica* recalls Chopin. Chopin wrote some 50 mazurkas based on traditional Polish dances; the time signature is 3/4, like a waltz, but the accents are usually placed on the second or third beat, rather than the first. Castro’s mazurka is full of challenging octave passages. It’s followed later by two more evocations of Chopin’s style, the mellow *Vals sentimental* that

makes us again picture ballroom dancers and *Vals melancólico*, which fluctuates constantly between major and minor. In between, the rippling runs and ornaments Castro loved to write are particularly apparent in *Vals bluette* (Little Blue Waltz), a waltz more suited for listening than dancing.

Felipe Villanueva (1862–1893) was playing violin in a theater orchestra at the age of 14. He went on to be a composer, pianist, piano teacher, and founder, with Ricardo Castro, of a new Music Institute to enhance the teaching of all things musical to young Mexicans. The six Villanueva pieces on this CD are mostly dedicated to individual students. *Sueño Dorado* (Golden Dream) is a mazurka, with an introduction set entirely in the piano's treble range; bass notes come in only as the mazurka proper begins. *Causerie* (Chatter), subtitled "slow waltz," has a hesitation-waltz feeling at the beginning through the left-hand

accompaniments to its right-hand melody: a single note, a broken chord, and a rest. In *Tercera Mazurka* (Third Mazurka), the introductory flourish is followed by a mazurka theme that starts on the second beat, emphasizing the dance's distinctive rhythm. The tunefulness of the opening leads into a virtuosic romp, combining the singing quality that's so much a part of salon music with its equally characteristic brilliance and high spirits. *Ebelia*, subtitled "Salon Mazurka," starts out with a sequence of rhetorical gestures in changing tempi; having gained our attention, Villanueva begins the mazurka with triplet figures and shifting accents. This highly virtuosic piece ends in an "agitato" flourish. *Amor*, subtitled "Salon Waltz," opens, like *Causerie*, with a hesitation-waltz feel, with chords and octaves held over into the next measure. The score of this intense piece features indications such as "with passion" and "with fury." By contrast, *Vals Poético* ends

very quietly with an octave in the piano's high register. It's moderately paced and very lyrical.

One of the most important figures in Latin-American music, Manuel M. Ponce (1882–1948) was a child-prodigy pianist who became a renowned composer, teacher, and musicologist. Ponce researched Mexican music, incorporated it into his concert works, and brought it to the attention of the world. He studied in Mexico City, Italy, and Germany; visited Cuba; met Brazil's Heitor Villa-Lobos in the musical ferment of 1920s Paris; and wrote songs, piano music, guitar works, and symphonic scores. One of his best-known works is the *Concierto del Sur* for guitar and orchestra, premiered by Spain's guitar icon, Andrés Segovia. Even better known is his song *Estrellita*, which has been arranged in countless instrumentations and heard worldwide.

Ponce was not ashamed to use the term "salon" in some of his titles, like

the passionate *8th Mazurca de Salón* that opens his group. Later come instrumental versions of three of his songs: the plaintive *Marchita el Alma* (My Soul Languishes), which calls for the pianist's best singing tone to express lost love; *Todo pasó* (All Passes), a very simple tune that also reflects sadness and loss; and, from Ponce's *Tres Canciones Populares Mexicanas*, *Por ti mi Corazón* (For You, My Beloved), again a lament of love gone wrong. Rounding out the Ponce selections, another *Mazurca de Salón* features a scale-based main theme and a more elaborate midsection before the varied return of the opening.

José Rolón (1876–1945), a slightly older contemporary of Ponce and a fellow professor at Mexico's National Conservatory, studied composition in Paris with Nadia Boulanger and was also a conductor. Rolón's *Vals Capricho* emphasizes the virtuoso element of salon music. Dedicated to Artur Rubinstein, the piece comprises

a thrillingly brilliant set of variations on the famous circus and merry-go-round tune “Sobre las Olas” (Over the Waves) by Mexican composer Juventino Rosas (1868–1894). Rolón transforms the famous melody with rich chromatic harmonies, changes the key signatures back and forth, calms it down only to intensify it again with pounding octaves, and builds it all up to a ringing fortissimo coda that resounds from the piano’s bass to its top.

Andrea Lamoreaux is Music Director of 98.7 WFMT, Chicago’s Classical Experience.



JORGE FEDERICO OSORIO

Jorge Federico Osorio has been internationally acclaimed for his superb musicianship, powerful technique, vibrant imagination, and deep passion, and hailed as “one of the more elegant and accomplished pianists on the planet” (*Los Angeles Times*). He has performed with many of the world’s leading orchestras, including the Symphony Orchestras of Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Seattle, and the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico; the Israel, Warsaw, and Royal Philharmonics; the Moscow State Orchestra, Orchestre Nationale de France, Philharmonia Orchestra, and Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw Orchestra. Osorio’s concert tours have taken him to Europe; Asia; and North, Central, and South America. He has collaborated with such distinguished conductors as Bernard Haitink, Mariss Jansons, Lorin Maazel, Klaus Tennstedt, Rafael Frühbeck de

Burgos, James Conlon, Luis Herrera, Manfred Honeck, Eduardo Mata, Juanjo Mena, Michel Plasson, Carlos Miguel Prieto, Maximiano Valdés, and Jaap van Zweden, among many others. American festival appearances have included the Hollywood Bowl, Ravinia, Newport, and Grant Park Festivals.

One of the highlights of Osorio's long and distinguished career was the performance of all five Beethoven Concertos over two consecutive nights with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at the 2010 Ravinia Festival. During the past several years, Osorio has performed in Berlin, Brussels, Düsseldorf and Stuttgart; at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam; and at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig. Recent American recitals have taken him to Boston, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Chicago, where he performed on the prestigious Bank of America Great Performers Series at Symphony Center. Osorio has also given two

highly acclaimed New York City recitals at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall.

A prolific recording artist, Osorio has documented a wide variety of repertoire, including a solo Brahms CD that *Gramophone* proclaimed "one of the most distinguished discs of Brahms' piano music in recent years." Recordings with orchestra include Beethoven's five Piano Concertos and Choral Fantasy, both Brahms concertos, and concertos by Chávez, Mozart, Ponce, Rachmaninov, Rodrigo, Schumann, and Tchaikovsky. Osorio's previous solo recordings on Cedille include music of Ponce, Liszt, and Debussy, and *Piano Español*, a collection of works by Albéniz, Falla, Granados, and Soler that received glowing reviews internationally and marked Osorio as one of the world's great interpreters of Spanish piano music. Osorio's recorded work may be found on the Artek, ASV, CBS, Cedille, EMI, IMP, and Naxos labels.

Osorio has won several international prizes and awards, including the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's Gina Bachauer Award and the Rhode Island International Master Piano Competition. An avid chamber music performer, he has served as artistic director of the Brahms Chamber Music Festival in Mexico; performed in a piano trio with violinist Mayumi Fujikawa and cellist Richard Markson; and collaborated with Yo-Yo Ma, Ani Kavafian, Elmar Oliveira, and Henryk Szeryng. A dedicated teacher, Osorio serves on the faculty at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts. For his own musical education, Osorio began his studies at the age of five with his mother, Luz María Puente, and later attended the conservatories of Mexico, Paris, and Moscow, where he worked with Bernard Flavigny, Monique Haas, and Jacob Milstein. Osorio's other mentors include Nadia Reisenberg and Wilhelm Kempff. Highly revered in his native Mexico, where he

performs often, Osorio resides in Highland Park, Illinois, and is a Steinway Artist.

For more information, please visit
jorgefedericoosorio.com