Joaquin Rodrigo: Concierto Aranjuez - Fantasia Para Un Gentilhombre (Yepes) [1985]

Concierto De Aranjuez For Guitar And Orchestra *1. 1. Allegro Con Spirito 6:09 2. 2. Adagio 11:16 3. 3. Allegro Gentile 5:15* Fantasía Para Un Gentilhombre For Guitar And Small Orchestra
4. 1. Villano y Ricercare (Adagietto - Andante Moderato) 4:56 5. 2. Españoleta Y Fanfare De La Caballería De Nápoles (Adagio - Allegretto Molto Ritmico) 9:40 6. 3. Danza De Las Hachas (Allegro Con Brio) 2:07 7. 4. Canario (Allegro Ma Non Troppo) 4:58
Narciso Yepes – guitar English Chamber Orchestra Philharmonia Orchestra Luis A. Garcia Navarro – conductor

Joaquin Rodrigo's Concierto de Aranjuez and Fantasia Para Un Gentilhombre are my two favorite guitar-and-orchestra compositions, and this 1990 Deutsche Gramophon recording presents them in all their lush musical glory. Performed by guitarist Narciso Yerpes, the London Philharmonia Orchestra and the English Chamber Orchestra (both under the baton of conductor Garcia Navarro), these two works are among the best known classical pieces to come from Spain.

The concierto's first movement, Allegro Con Spirito, lives up to its description with its spirited beginning, which is unusual as it begins with the solo instrument instead of the orchestra. The movement's performance is handled in almost equal parts by Yerpes on guitar and the London Philharmonia, musically evoking zest and vigor.

The second movement, the well-known Adagio, also starts out with Yerpes on the guitar. The soloist mimics a harp accompaniment that underscores the introduction of the famous melody by the English horns. The movement is reflective and features a musical exchange between Yerpes and the Philharmonia, and comes to a beautiful and passionate conclusion.

The third movement, the nearly five-minute long Allegro gentile, is based on an old Spanish song ("De los alamos vengo"), which Rodrigo turns into a theme-and-variations piece, played with a joyful grace that lives up fully to its descriptive title. Listening to this movement brings back memories of strolling along the banks of the Guadalquivir River or through Seville's Plaza de Espana on a warm late-summer afternoon. The second work, Fantasia Para Un Gentilhombre, consists of five movements (Villany y Ricercar, Espanoleta, Fanfare De La Caballeria De Apoles, Danza De Las Hachas, and Canario), and was composed 15 years after the Concierto de Aranjuez for the master of classical guitar, Andres Segovia. Once again, Rodrigo dipped into Spain's musical heritage and based his themes on songs from the late 17th Century by Gaspar Sanz. Performed here by the wonderful English Chamber Orchestra (which also was teamed with guitarist John Williams and conductor Charles Grove in another recording), the Fantasia is a beautiful collage of musical styles that are firmly Iberian in tone and origin.

The Deutsche Gramophon recording is crystal clear, and both orchestras under Navarro's baton perform the music with the mixture of exuberance and reflection most listeners will associate with these two great works. --- Alex Diaz-Granados, amazon.com

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