

Spanish conductor **Juanjo Mena** marks Alberto Ginastera's Centenary with new CD by the BBC Philharmonic ahead of his much-anticipated debut with the **Berlin Philharmonic in May**



26, 27 & 28 May

Philharmonie, Berlin

Berlin Philharmonic

Juanjo Mena *conductor*

Marie-Pierre Langlamet *harp*

Raquel Lojendio *soprano*

Debussy *Iberia*

Ginastera *Harp Concerto*

De Falla *El Sombrero de Tres Picos (The Three-Cornered Hat)*

GINASTERA – orchestral works 1

BBC Philharmonic

Lucas Somoza Osterc *baritone*

Juanjo Mena *conductor*

Audio CD (31 Dec. 2015), Label Chandos

ASIN: B017C1C8UY

"The sheer energy generated by this exciting conductor [...] was one of the most exhilarating orchestral experiences in my recall."

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Juanjo Mena, the Spanish conductor in demand across the globe and as Chief Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic, makes his debut with the **Berlin Philharmonic** in May with a Latin inspired programme. Sir Simon Rattle asked Mena to conduct Falla's *El Sombrero de Tres Picos (The Three-Cornered Hat)*, following his seminal performance of the work with the BBC Philharmonic at the BBC Proms in 2013. To these works, Mena suggested adding Ginastera's Harp Concerto with the Philharmonic's principal harpist **Marie-Pierre Langlamet** to mark the centenary of Argentine composer **Alberto Ginastera's** birth, and Debussy's *Iberia*, celebrating the French theme that runs throughout the Berlin Philharmonic's season.

Recording the works of lesser-known Spanish composers has been a regular motivation for Juanjo Mena. His extensive Spanish discography initially started with Naxos, recording music by Basque composers. In 2012, he continued the Latin theme with the BBC Philharmonic for Chandos Records. Their first disc together was of Falla's *The Three-Cornered Hat* with **Raquel Lojendio**, who will take to the stage with him in Berlin. Further discs of music by composers Xavier Montsalvatge and Joaquín Turina followed, which gained excellent reviews from the specialist classical music press.

This year Mena has been championing the works of Ginastera in his centenary year, with performances across the globe, and a commitment to record his music for Chandos Records. Mena and the BBC Philharmonic are joined by Marie-Pierre Langlamet in Manchester on 16 March for Ginastera's *Harp Concerto*. Their first disc of music by Ginastera was released in January (*Estancia* - the ballet about gaucho life on the pampas of Argentina, *Ollantay* and *Pampeana No3*), and further performances featuring his works follow in the UK, Spain and America. The new release has had favourable reviews:

"It is greatly to the credit of Juanjo Mena and his forces [...] that such a potent atmosphere is achieved"

Gramophone Magazine

"The BBC Philharmonic is in cracking form at the moment... and in Juanjo Mena it has a chief conductor capable of leading it through dance rhythms and moods of the Spanish speaking world with gusto and understanding."

BBC Music Magazine

"this is a real winner for Ginastera's centenary this year"

Andrew McGregor, BBC Radio 3's Record Review



As Mena explains,

"Ginastera is the Argentine equivalent of Copland, himself a supporter of Ginastera's music while he was in exile from Argentina. While Copland painted the open prairies, Ginastera focused on the pampas."

Prior to Berlin Mena will be in Germany, returning with the **Dresden Philharmonic** on 28 and 29 April with Prokofiev's 'Classical' Symphony No.1 and Bruckner's 6th Symphony, which he recently performed with the New York Philharmonic to critical acclaim. Mena's interpretations of German Romantic repertoire, in particular Beethoven and Bruckner, have drawn widespread praise. **The Telegraph** said of a 2011 performance, ***"Rarely have I heard a Bruckner Sixth that displayed such masterful long-term vision, and never, I think, one that made the work seem so important."***

The New York Classical Review said of Mena's performance of the same symphony with the New York Philharmonic: ***"He treated much of the symphony, notably its opening Majestoso, like a force of nature to be unleashed. There was a thrilling tidal quality to the music's progression... He demonstrated a superb sense for the structure of the piece, but what was most striking was the astonishingly precise control he showed over the orchestra's levels and textures. An aggressive, martial passage would give way to pastoral reflection at the turn of a hair."***

Juanjo Mena has been Chief Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic since September 2011, and has undertaken international tours with the orchestra and numerous recordings, which have received nominations from BBC Music Magazine and Gramophone Magazine awards. Their seminal concert at the BBC Proms of Falla's *Three Cornered Hat* was the opportunity for the BBC Philharmonic to become completely absorbed in the Spanish idiom when Mena brought in the Antonio Márquez Dance Company, described as ***"utterly sensational"***. With them, he worked on the concept of ***Cante Jondo***, the flamenco term for singing from the soul with a sound that comes from the centre of the body.

Juanjo Mena elaborates,

"More often than not, audiences know Latin music through non-Hispanic composers such as Ravel and Debussy, because of their wonderful orchestrations of the Spanish musical language and hypnotic rhythm. Meanwhile, our own home-grown composers - mostly post-Romantic - remain overlooked, with the exception perhaps of the great Manuel de Falla. For me, our CD series on Chandos has been a really exhilarating

experience because it has been an opportunity to record Latin repertoire in the best possible conditions - something not necessarily afforded to these composers in their lifetimes."

Mena's original three-year contract with the BBC Philharmonic was extended in 2014. Last season, he conducted his first opera with them, Beethoven's *Fidelio*, with **"power and subtlety"** (Tim Ashley, *The Guardian*). With a love of large scale choral works with which he commenced his career as a conductor, Mena will be joined by his brother countertenor Carlos Mena, in Manchester for Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* on 16 April. With the BBC Philharmonic partnership, Mena has become a regular annual fixture at the **BBC Proms**, with their most recent performance of Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphony* drawing praise from the **Financial Times**: **"Mena palpably relished every moment of the Turangalila's surging, life-affirming hymn to humanity."**

Speaking about Juanjo Mena's debut with the Berlin Philharmonic, Marie-Pierre Langlamet says: ***There is something so evident about Juanjo Mena's musicianship: his pulse, his breathing, his instinct, his feel for colors.... I feel incredibly privileged to introduce him to my orchestra, and to be at his side in the Ginastera Concerto! I would not want to miss a single minute of his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic.***

Forthcoming Highlights

16 April 2016

Bridgewater Hall, Manchester

BBC Philharmonic

Bernstein *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*

Ginastera *Harp Concerto* (soloist Marie-Pierre Langlamet)

Stravinsky *Symphony of Psalms*

Bernstein *Chichester Psalms* (soloist Carlos Mena)

28 & 29 April 2016

Schauspielhaus, Dresden

Dresden Philharmonic

Prokofiev *Symphony No. 1*

Kabalevsky *Cello Concerto No. 1*

(soloist Jan Vogler)

Bruckner *Symphony No. 6*

12 May 2016

Oslo Concert Hall, Oslo

Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra

Mozart Arias (soloist Mari Eriksmoen)

Brahms *Symphony No. 3*

26 & 27 May 2016

Philharmonie, Berlin

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra

Debussy *Iberia*

Ginastera *Harp Concerto* (soloist Marie-Pierre Langlamet)

Falla *The Three-Cornered Hat* (soloist Raquel Lojendio)

1 & 2 June

Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Granada *Intermezzo* from *Goyescas*

Nielsen *Violin Concerto* (soloist Pekka Kuusisto)

Ravel *Daphnis et Chloe*

24 June

Granada Festival – Alhambra Palace

BBC Philharmonic

Glinka *Ruslan and Lyudmila* Overture

Dvorák Cello Concerto (soloist Pablo Ferrández)

Tchaikovsky Symphony Nº 6

23 and 24 July

Tanglewood

Boston Symphony Orchestra

23rd:

Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1

Garrick Ohlsson, piano

Falla *The Three-Cornered Hat* (complete)

Raquel Lojendio, soprano

24th:

Ginastera *Variaciones concertantes*

Mozart Violin Concerto Nº4

Veronika Eberle, violin

Beethoven Symphony No. 6, Pastoral

TRACK LISTING



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1. I. Adagio Contemplativo - Poco Più Mosso - Tempo I - A Tempo Ma Pochissimo Più Lento - BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
2. II. Impetuosamente - Intermezzo Quasi Trio. Un Poco Meno Mosso [tempo II] -Più Mosso - Tempo II - Più Mosso - Tempo II - Tempo I -... - BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
3. III. Largo Con Poetica Esaltazione - Pochissimo Più Lento - BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
4. Paisaje De Ollantaytambo. Lento - BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
5. Los Guerreros. Allegro - Poco Più Mosso -Tempo I - Presto E Agitato - BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
6. La Muerte De Ollantay. Andante - Adagio - Largo E Desolato - BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
7. Cuadro I. El Amanecer: I. Introducción Y Escena. Allegro - Andante - Lucas Somoza Osterc/BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
8. Cuadro I. El Amanecer: II. Pequeña Danza. Allegro - Meno Mosso - Lucas Somoza Osterc/BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
9. Cuadro II. La Manana: III. Danza Del Trigo. Tranquillo - [] -Tempo I Ma Un Poco Rubato - Lucas Somoza Osterc/BBC Philharmonic Orchestra

10. Cuadro II. La Manana: IV. Los Trabajadores Agrícolas. Tempo Giusto - Lucas Somoza Osterc/BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
11. Cuadro II. La Manana: V. Los Peones De Hacienda. [] - Mosso E Ruvido - Lucas Somoza Osterc/BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
12. Cuadro II. La Manana: VI. Los Puebleros. [] - Lucas Somoza Osterc/BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
13. Cuadro III. La Tarde: VII. Triste Pampeano. Lento - Lucas Somoza Osterc/BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
14. Cuadro III. La Tarde: VIII. La Doma. Allegro Molto - Lucas Somoza Osterc/BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
15. Cuadro III. La Tarde: IX. Idilio Crepuscular. Adagio - Lucas Somoza Osterc/BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
16. Cuadro IV. La Noche: X. Nocturno. Lento - Più Lento - Tempo I - Più Lento, Quasi Larghetto - Lucas Somoza Osterc/BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
17. Cuadro V. El Amanecer: XI. Escena. Andantino - Lento - Lucas Somoza Osterc/BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
18. Cuadro V. El Amanecer: XII. Danza Final. Malambo. Allegro - Tempo Di Malambo - Lucas Somoza Osterc/BBC Philharmonic Orchestra

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