

American Record Guide

Vol 73, No 4 July/August 2010

Spanish Romance

Manjon, Parga, Cano, Oudrid

Agustin Maruri, g

EMEC 49—55 minutes

In the last issue I reviewed three other releases in this series, sponsored by the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection of Musical instruments. Again, Maruri plays period instruments—one by Pedro Fuentes, made before 1858, and a Rene Lacote from 1825—and uses modern strings.

That set produced three different recommendations, based on the quality of the material, and this falls somewhere between those.

Maruri is a skilled and expressive player. He's not particularly showy, and neither is this music, but he has a lovely range of sounds and is an expert on these minor figures of the Spanish romantic era. This is similar to the program that offered composers like Arcas and Vinas.

There are seven pieces by Antonio Gimenez Manjon, each more predictable than the other. He can write a mildly effective theme, but seems to have no idea how to develop it, and the music is terribly repetitive. There are also single works by Juan Parga and Antonio Cano (who was on the other recital). The Parga is rather more interesting—the best of the recital, though the standard isn't very high. The Cano is forgettable.

The program closes with two anonymous pieces and one by Cristobal Oudrid, each a flamenco dance, none with any real fire. For some reason, there is no mention of these in the notes.

I don't think the problem here is any lack of conviction or skill on the part of Maruri, who is as good an advocate as I can imagine. If you're looking for some out-of-the-way repertory that's not terribly difficult, you may wish to explore some of these; but an entire recital of it is tiresome. Sometimes exploring unknown music reveals unexpected treasure. But sometimes it is unknown for a reason.

KEATON