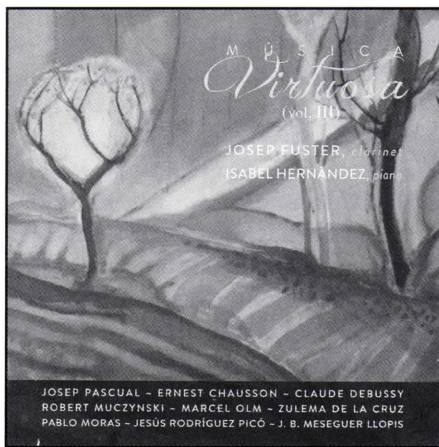


Añoranza; Claude Debussy: *Première Rhapsodie*; Pablo Moras: *Rapsodia*; Jesús Rodríguez Picó: *C'était magnifique*; Robert Muczynski: *Time Pieces*. COLUMNA MÚSICA 1CM0312. Total time 78:23. www.columnamusica.com



Música Virtuosa (Vol. III) is the fifth CD to come from the duo of Josep Fuster and Isabel Fernández. The album contains a terrific variety of repertoire, blending standards from the repertory with some lovely new gems from Spain that will hopefully become more familiar to clarinetists worldwide. It is of note that all of the works from Spain were written within the last four years and span a wide variety of styles and colors.

Clarinetist Josep Fuster teaches at the *Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya* and performs in the *Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona I Nacional de Catalunya*. Pianist Isabel Hernández currently teaches at the Royal Academy of Music in Madrid.

The first and most recently composed piece, *Díptic Venecià*, embodies an Italian spirit from the downbeat. Fuster's lyrical playing floats over arpeggiated figures in the piano. In the second movement, an homage to Burano, the composer uses themes by Baldassare Galuppi. *Kaleidoskop* by Catalan composer Marcel Olm has a twinkling sense to it, juxtaposed with moments of introspection. The dialogue between the clarinet and piano at the end really gives the impression of spinning images.

Balada del amanecer or "Ballad of Dawn" by female composer Zulema de la Cruz starts enigmatically in the low register of the clarinet with tremolo in the piano. The work transitions to a bolder section with rhythmic interplay between clarinet and piano, accelerating to a dramatic mo-

ment with flutter tongue on a high note, only for the piano to recede back to the calm broader statements. Timbral trills maintain a mysterious atmosphere at the end of the work.

Añoranza, or "nostalgia" in Catalan, could not have a better title. The piece, though only four minutes long, conveys a warm yearning with rolling undulations in the piano under a melody that sounds as though it is being sung, reminiscent of a *chanson* or *Lied*. Through numerous hearings, this writer never tired of this work.

After Debussy's *Rhapsodie* comes *Rapsodia* by Pablo Moras, which thoroughly explores the range of the clarinet, and begins with a beautifully rich statement in the chalumeau register. It is enjoyable having this piece follow Debussy. Though it is certainly bolder than the Debussy, I recommend hearing it afterward, as the characters may be more similar than they initially seem. If you doubt this, wait until the end.

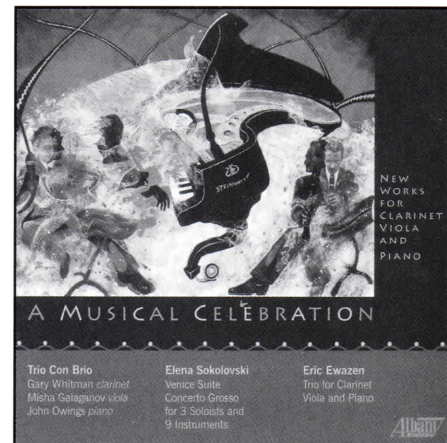
C'était magnifique by Jesús Rodríguez Picó begins with a bold entrance and, along with Muczynski's *Time Pieces*, provides some healthy contrast to the many lyrical works on the album. Throughout the album Fuster and Hernández convey an almost delicate finesse in technique while still maintaining an engaging dialogue with the listener in more aggressive moments. The lyricism throughout the album is delightful, and I enjoyed the interplay between clarinet and piano.

All three current volumes of **Música Virtuosa** by the Fuster-Hernández Duo can be found on iTunes. This album features exciting new music that would surely be a welcome and original addition to programs outside of Spain. I look forward to hearing Volume IV and hope it also includes other works as rewarding as these.

by Dileep Gangolli

A Musical Celebration. Trio Con Brio: Gary Whitman, clarinet/bass clarinet; Misha Galaganov, viola; John Owings, piano. Elena Sokolovski: *Venice Suite, Concerto Grosso for 3 Soloists and 9 Instruments*; Eric Ewazen: *Trio*. ALBANY RECORDS TROY1384. Total time 56:00. www.albanyrecords.com

In choosing their musical voice, composers have to decide on how to incorporate influences from the past while looking to the future. On the recording **A Musi-**



cal Celebration featuring Trio Con Brio, a faculty ensemble from Texas Christian University, two contemporary composers approach their craft in unique ways that bear the influence of two very different past eras.

Trio Con Brio includes clarinetist Gary Whitman, past president of the I.C.A. and a professor of clarinet at TCU. In addition to his teaching duties, he performs as bass clarinetist with the Fort Worth Symphony. In this ensemble, he collaborates with his academic colleagues Misha Galaganov, viola, and John Owings, piano. The CD contains two works, each about a half-hour in length, providing an interesting musical contrast since they are different in character.

The first composition, titled *Venice Suite, Concerto Grosso for 3 Soloists and 9 Instruments*, was written in 2006 by Russian-born composer Elena Sokolovski. As the title suggests, this work uses Baroque dance forms in several of its movements and draws inspiration from the city of Venice. The work requires the musicians to perform on multiple instruments, including glasses filled with wine. The clarinetist must play E-flat clarinet, clarinet in A and bass clarinet. The writing for all three clarinets is challenging and requires both technical and musical facility. The diverse coupling of instruments (harpichord, bowed vibraphone, celesta) recall some of Vivaldi's more daring experiments in orchestration but in a more modern format. The work is in 11 movements and several of the movements have programmatic titles with themes (canals, glass and carnival) that evoke the unique and special aspects of Venice.

The second work here is by American composer Eric Ewazen who has writ-