

BUILDING A LIBRARY

FALLA
EL AMOR BRUJO (1915)
MOZART
SERENADE IN B FLAT,
'GRAN PARTITA' (1784)

This month, we move from the heat and passion of Falla's flamenco to a moment of Mozart at his most sublime, as our Radio 3 experts search out the best recordings

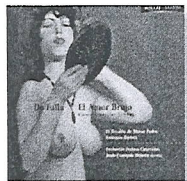


COMPOSER
Manuel de Falla
(1876-1946)

FALLA EL AMOR BRUJO *Chris de Souza*

There are two versions of *El amor brujo* (Love, The Magician): the original 1915 *gitaneria* using a small ensemble and the better-known ballet version constructed in 1925, with a standard orchestra. The first version is in two acts with an interlude, the ballet a single span. Two of the movements, the 'Ritual Fire Dance' and the 'Dance of Terror', have become extremely popular.

JEAN-FRANÇOIS HEISSER
Antonia Contreras; Poitou-Charentes
Orchestra *Mirare* **MIR034 £13.70**



When Falla wrote *El amor brujo*, he was on a mission to bring the vigorous tradition of

Spanish folk music into the concert hall. There is a problem balancing the gypsy element with other more classical elements. Should the principal singer be a flamenco artist, adept in *cante jondo* (flamenco vocal style), or in a more traditional European style? The choice is yours: recordings in both styles abound.

The fullest recording of the *gitaneria*, the Poitou-Charentes Orchestra's of 2005, directed from the piano by Jean-François Heisser, includes all the dialogue (though it ducks the vocal ejaculations in the 'Ritual Fire Dance') in a slightly bathroom-like acoustic. It has a real

sense of theatre, the instruments sounding just like a theatrical band, and the flamenco singer, Antonia Contreras is wonderfully convincing. She applies some of the subtleties of concert singing to the vigorous style of *cante jondo* to great effect, delivering the untempered intervals of the flamenco scale. Contreras is subtly accompanied, with beautiful solo contributions particularly from the oboist. Her Andalusian accent is to the manner born. You could argue that *cante jondo* and classical orchestral technique don't match: that Falla's refined style, and essentially neo-classical leanings, is itself a sublimation of Spanish folk music, but Heisser shows that they can be successfully brought together.

Listening to this, it is difficult to understand why anyone would prefer the more popular ballet version to the original *gitaneria*.



THE BEST OF THE REST

VÉRONIQUE LACROIX
Odette Beaupré; Ensemble
Contemporain de Montreal
ATMA ACD 22146 £13.70



Finely played, with great attention to detail, there is a sense of forward movement here. Mezzo Odette Beaupré takes on the accent of *cante jondo* more than most.

CARLO MARIA GIULINI
Victoria de los Angeles; Philharmonia
EMI 567 5872 £17.60



For the better-known ballet version, it is perhaps less important to have a flamenco singer. Victoria de los Angeles could not sound further removed from the *cante jondo*, but she is perfectly Spanish without any caricature: highly musical and aristocratically accompanied.

RAFAEL FRÜHBECK DE BURGOS
Esperanza Fernández; Spanish NO
Classic FM 75605 570352 £8.80



In this flamenco version with Esperanza Fernández, the Spanish National Orchestra's magnificent playing shows that sticking to Falla's original intentions, for all their restraint, works.

GETTY, LEBRECHT