

Orlando Jacinto GARCÍA

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME TWO

FROM DARKNESS TO LUMINOSITY
OF WIND, SEA AND LIGHT
THE DISTANT WIND II
A RISING TIDE

Jennifer Choi, violin
Cristina Valdés, piano
Fernando Domínguez, clarinet
Málaga Philharmonic Orchestra
Orlando Jacinto García, conductor

ORLANDO GARCÍA'S GENTLE FORCES OF NATURE

by Sarah Cahill

The four compositions by Orlando García on this album, although markedly distinct from one another, are bound together by common themes. Natural elements permeate each of them, as their titles make clear: *una marea creciente*, *from darkness to luminosity*, *the distant wind II* and *of wind, sea and light*. The forces of nature have, of course, been a favourite topic for composers for centuries – Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* and Debussy's *La mer* are obvious examples – but García takes things further, directly and more literally expressing the elements with wind chimes, the sounds of breath and humming, and extended techniques meant to conjure the natural world. One structural strategy García uses to this end is that both silence and sound evolve organically through constantly shifting metres – for example, $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{2}{4}$ to $\frac{5}{8}$ to $\frac{7}{8}$ and so on, changing with every bar – because, after all, there are no metronomes in nature. Paradoxically, these metres are rigorously notated, even if the ultimate effect is to suggest timelessness and freedom.

una marea creciente [1] was composed in late 2014 for first performance at the 2015 New Music Miami Festival by the violinist Jennifer Choi and a string orchestra with wind chimes and tuned wine glasses rubbed by the fingertips. The title, translated as *a rising tide*,¹ might be presumed to refer to the effects of climate change in García's home town of Miami, which is threatened by inundation if sea levels rise; instead, the composer explains, it was 'suggested by the sonorities that are heard ascending in register at different moments throughout the work'.² In a restless opening, the violin soloist begins with a rising motif which lengthens at each iteration, adding pitches until it culminates in a sinuous nine-note melody. The strings support the

¹ The Spanish and English titles are equally valid: both are on the score.

² All of Orlando García's comments quoted in this essay are taken from the prefaces to his scores.

soloist with turbulent repetitions of rising half- and whole tones, occasionally echoing the plaintive melody of the solo violin. Changing metres create the free, cadenza-like feel of the piece. There are moments that recall the swagger of the archetypical Romantic violin concerto, but *una marea creciente* is far more intimate and meditative than any such predecessor. Indeed, for the last third of the piece, the violin is alone in a kind of wilderness of unpitched sonorities of wind chimes and wine glasses played by the orchestra. Although García uses these effects to expand the timbral palette, they also create a sense of loneliness and poignancy, and set the lyrical solo in relief.

García explains that the title *from darkness to luminosity* [2] ‘refers to the contrasting musical materials found in the piece, including consonant and dissonant sections as well as less rhythmic sections and sections with driving ostinatos. Ultimately what sections constitute darkness and luminosity is for the listener to decide’. Written for the pianist Cristina Valdés, the Seattle Modern Orchestra and its co-artistic directors Julia Tai and Jeremy Jolley in summer 2015, and premiered during the SMO 2015–16 concert season, *from darkness to luminosity* is a *concertante* piece rather than a traditional piano concerto, since the piano is integrated into the ensemble. Once again, García expands the timbral possibilities with extended techniques for the pianist: ‘finger-muting’ of the strings, plucking the strings with the flesh of the finger or with fingernail (the resulting sonorities are surprisingly distinct), and sweeping the strings in *glissandi* with a guitar plectrum; it’s almost a surprise when the piano is played conventionally, using the keys. When the piece opens, with three low pitches on the piano, muted at the pegs by the pianist, the listener is immediately plunged into an unconventional soundworld, its contrasts pointing to a full spectrum of light and shadow. With the extended techniques applied to the piano, as with the unusual techniques deployed in the other works on this album, García brings a degree of physicality into his music – one can almost feel fingertip on string. The orchestral strings provide a gentle backdrop of suspended chords while the pianist offers occasional flashes of brilliance, gradually gathering momentum before reaching a central section of virtuosic minimalist passages, where the piano is joined by the full ensemble. As in the other works recorded here, *from darkness to luminosity* presents a kind of subversion of the role of the soloist: throughout, the pianist alternates

solos with the ensemble in a kind of dialogue, or leads the group into shared passages, but even so, the piece could not be described as a conventional concerto. García writes: 'As with most of my music, the counterpoint between register, density, timbre, and pacing and the relatively slow evolution of musical materials are important aesthetic concerns.'

From the start, the ethereal, unfamiliar soundworld of *the distant wind II* (*el viento distante II*³) [3], scored for clarinet and strings, makes its title clear: the clarinet soloist breathes air through his instrument while four string-players gently shake wind chimes, and then engage in bowing techniques given thus in the score: 'circular bowing in the string parts indicates to bow in a circular fashion across all 4 strings producing a white noise sound, occasional harmonics, and other pitched sounds'. García wrote this piece in spring 2013 for the clarinetist Wojciech Mrozek and the strings of the Lviv Philharmonic, based on *el viento distante* for clarinet and orchestra, composed for Mrozek nine months earlier. Once again, constantly shifting metres disengage the music from metronomic time, and the texture constantly evolves, with unusual combinations – as when the singing line of the clarinet mixes with violin *pizzicati* and rubbing of wine-glass rims. Two minutes in, the clarinet, gently echoed by the strings, sounds the three-note motif that will carry the piece to its end. As the motif lingers, a kind of tension arises between powerful melodic lines, conventionally played on clarinet and strings, which hint at the weight of the classical tradition, and the many extended techniques, multiphonics and use of wind chimes and tuned wine glasses, which add such an unconventional range of colours. A degree of ritualism is added to the mix when the clarinetist is asked to hum through his instrument, and the string-players to hum on pitch as well. In the last few minutes of the piece, a six-note rising figure propels the motion forward with a burst of activity. The three-note motif then returns in the clarinet solo, and the piece concludes with all the string-players humming quietly on pitch while the clarinet suspends one final note.

³ Again, the English and Spanish titles are equally valid, both being given on the score.

As its title suggests, the orchestral work *of wind, sea and light* [4], composed especially for this recording project, subsumes the other three pieces, presenting thematic material from each of its companion works at various intervals. The wind-players blow air through their instruments, varying the sound by adjusting their embouchures, recalling *the distant wind II*. One of the orchestral violinists provides an echo of *una marea creciente* with a shapely rising melody. A repeated pattern in rapid sextuplets recalls *from darkness to luminosity*. This pattern develops into a polyrhythmic, full-orchestral climax; but aside from this dramatic moment, the texture is sparse enough for the individual elements of García's luminous timbres to shine through.

These four works are deliberately intended to reflect the natural world, with its contrasts of stillness and motion, of growth and decay, of pitched and non-pitched sounds, of stasis and action, of a regular beat and organic free metre. García's music embraces it all, underlining the fact that these contradictions in nature are the very forces that create harmony and balance – as William Blake put it in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (c. 1790), 'Without Contraries is no progression'.

Sarah Cahill is a pianist devoted to new music. Over forty composers have dedicated works to her, including John Adams, Orlando Jacinto García, Pauline Oliveros, Terry Riley and Frederic Rzewski. Her writing has appeared in The John Adams Reader (Amadeus Press, Pompton Plains, New Jersey, 2006), Contemporary Music Review, Keyboard Magazine and The Ashgate Research Companion to Minimalist and Postminimalist Music (Ashgate, Farnham, 2013). She is on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and hosts a weekly radio show on KALW in San Francisco.

Through more than 150 works for a wide range of performance genres, **Orlando Jacinto García**, Professor and Composer in Residence for the Florida International University (FIU) School of Music, has established a distinctive music described as 'time suspended – haunting sonic explorations', an aesthetic he developed from his work with Morton Feldman, among others. After moving from Havana in 1961, at the age of seven, he was educated in the United States and has taught at FIU for over two decades. He is the recipient of numerous honours and awards, including those from the Rockefeller, Fulbright, Dutka, Civitella Ranieri, Knight and Cintas Foundations, among others. Most recently he has been the recipient of four Latin

Grammy nominations in the best Contemporary Classical Composition Category (2009–11, 15). With performances in most of the major capitols of the world, his works have been recorded on a number of labels, among them Albany, Capstone, CNMAS, CRI/New World, CRS, Innova, New Albion, O.O. Discs, Opus One, North/South, Rugginenti, Telos, Toccata Classics and VDM. He is a resident composer for the Miami Symphony Orchestra and the founder and director of the Miami Chapter of the International Society for Contemporary Music, the New Music Miami ISCM Festival, and the Nodus Ensemble.



The award-winning violinist **Jennifer Choi** has charted a career that breaks through the conventional boundaries of solo violin, chamber music and the art of improvisation. Hailed by *The New York Times* as an ‘excellent violinist [...] soulful, compelling,’ she has performed around the world, in such venues as Carnegie Hall, the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., WQXR in New York, the RAI National Radio in Rome and Hong Kong National Radio, having gained a significant reputation as ‘a leading New York new music violinist,’ as *The Boston Globe* put it. A frequent collaborator with living composers, she has premiered solo and chamber-music works written for her by Susie Ibarra, Wadada Leo Smith, John Zorn and others. She can be heard on over a dozen albums on the Tzadik, New Focus, New World and Starkland labels.



Considered one of today's foremost interpreters of contemporary music, the pianist **Cristina Valdés** is known for presenting innovative concerts, with repertoire ranging from Bach to Xenakis. She has performed across four continents and in such venues as Lincoln Center, Le Poisson Rouge, Miller Theatre, Jordan Hall and the Kennedy Center. An avid chamber musician and collaborator, Cristina has toured extensively with the Bang on a Can All Stars, and has performed with the Seattle Chamber Players, the Mabou Mines Theater Company, the Parsons Dance Company and Antares. She has also been a featured performer on both the Chamber Series and 'untitled' concerts of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra.



Her passionate interest in new music has led to a variety of collaborations with many celebrated composers, including performing side by side with Terry Riley, Morton Subotnick and Joan Tower, recording the works of Ezra Laderman, Ned Rorem and Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, and premiering works by Wayne Horvitz, Richard Karpen, Oliver Schneller and Christian Wolff, among others.

Among the orchestras with which she has appeared as concerto soloist are the Johns Hopkins Symphony, Binghamton Philharmonic, Seattle Philharmonic, Eastman BroadBand, North Corner Chamber Orchestra (known as 'NOCCO') and the Stony Brook Symphony. In 2015 she performed the piano-solo part of the Ives Fourth Symphony with the Seattle Symphony under the direction of Ludovic Morlot, which was later released by the orchestra on its own label. She can also be heard on the Albany, Newport Classics and Urtext labels.

Cristina Valdés is currently an Artist-in-Residence at the University of Washington, where she teaches piano and is the Director of the UW Modern Music Ensemble.

Fernando Domínguez, clarinet and bass clarinet, is currently the leading exponent of the contemporary repertoire for clarinet in Mexico. His interest in this genre has led him to work closely with a large number of Mexican composers, ranging from established figures to the younger generation. Many of these composers have dedicated their works to him, among them Ignacio Baca Lobera, Juan Trigos and Carlos Sánchez-Gutiérrez. Fernando Domínguez is also a member of the Onix Ensemble, Mexico City Woodwind Quintet, Trio Neos and Duplum Duo. With these groups, he has given numerous performances in Mexico and abroad.

He is a graduate of the Vienna State Conservatoire, where he studied with Roger Salander. Thereafter he completed a specialisation in bass clarinet and contemporary music with Harry Sparnaay at the Sweelinck Conservatoire in Amsterdam. In 2011, he obtained a Bachelor's degree from the National Music School of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, where he is currently a faculty member.

In 2016 his album *Negro fuego cruzado* ('Black Crossfire') was released by Urtext; it features works for bass clarinet that are dedicated to him. He is currently a Vandoren artist.



The Orquesta Filarmónica de Málaga – Principal Conductor and Artistic Director Manuel Hernández Silva – gave its inaugural concert on 14 February 1991. It was born under the name of the City Orchestra of Málaga, an association between Málaga Town Council and the Regional Government of Andalusia, as a response to the conviction that a city such as Málaga ought to have a major symphony orchestra of its own. Throughout the years it has maintained the commitment to offer the city high-quality music along with the best conductors and soloists on the national and international scene. In charge of the Orchestra, and of the project encompassing it, the five Principal Conductors – Octav Calleya, Odón Alonso, Alexander Rahbari, Aldo Ceccato and Edmon Colomer – have left their personal mark, and the list of guest conductors likewise contains some outstanding names, among them Sergiu Comissiona, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Jesús López-Cobos and Krzysztof Penderecki, to name only four. Equally, the Orchestra has been privileged to welcome soloists of considerable prestige, the roll-



call including Joaquín Achúcarro, Boris Belkin, Dimitri Bashkirov, Montserrat Caballé, Renaud Capuçon, Plácido Domingo, Lluís Claret, Alfredo Kraus, Alicia de Larrocha, Pepe Romero and Renata Scottó. However, the Orchestra – renamed the Málaga Philharmonic Orchestra after celebrating its tenth anniversary – believes it is essential not to restrict its musical activity to the seasonal programmes and has put forward some exciting parallel proposals dedicated to the task of forming the audiences of the future. With this aim in mind it has set up a programme of didactic activities, in collaboration with the Education Area of the Málaga Town Council. The Málaga Philharmonic Orchestra has also achieved much success in the major Spanish concert venues, theatres and festivals, as well as on a number of tours around Europe, which have taken it to the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Slovakia and Sweden.

This is the third recording of the Málaga Philharmonic Orchestra for Toccata Classics. The first featured José Serebrier conducting three works of Orlando Jacinto García: *Auschwitz (they shall never be forgotten)*, *Varadero Memories* and *In Memoriam Earle Brown* (TOCC 0239). The second, conducted by Paul Mann, featured the Symphonies Nos. 1 and 4 and the tone-poem *Distant Nebulae* by Rodney Newton (TOCC 0459).



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‘Cuban composer Orlando Jacinto García’s orchestral music is replete with shifting masses of sound, often layered, just as often presented serially, and even more often repeated. They are also lexicons of timbral and harmonic diversity. There is often a propensity for space and pause, each sonic block or gesture existing in an amniotic fluid of silence from which it emerges and then returns.’

—Marc Medwin, *Fanfare*

TOCC 0239



‘The performances under José Serebrier’s lead have both enviable concentration and commitment in their favour. Decent sound and excellent presentation, too.’

—Andrew Achenbach, *Gramophone*

ORLANDO JACINTO GARCÍA Orchestral Music, Volume Two

1	<i>a rising tide</i> (2014)	14:14
2	<i>from darkness to luminosity</i> (2015)	17:17
3	<i>the distant wind II</i> (2013)	14:13
4	<i>of wind, sea and light</i> (2016)	14:46

TT 60:30

FIRST RECORDINGS

Jennifer Choi, violin 1

Cristina Valdés, piano 2

Fernando Domínguez, clarinet 3

Málaga Philharmonic Orchestra

Orlando Jacinto García, conductor