



Goyescas
Charlotte Hu



GOYESCAS

Enrique Granados (1867-1916)

Goyescas - Suite

1	I. Los Requeiebros	8. 44
2	II. Coloquio en la Reja	11. 56
3	III. El Fandango del Candil	5. 57
4	IV. Quejas o la Maja y el Ruiseñor	6. 56
5	V. El Amor y la Muerte: Balada	12. 35
6	VI. Epílogo (Serenata del Espectro)	8. 15

12 Danzas españolas

7	No. 2, Oriental	5. 28
8	No. 5, Andaluza	3. 45

Total playing time: 63. 41

Charlotte Hu, piano





ENRIQUE GRANADOS:
Goyescas and Spanish Dances

A Personal Journey with a Spanish Masterwork

My first encounter with Granados' *Goyescas* came during my years as a student at Juilliard. Like many artists discovering this cornerstone of Spanish piano literature, I was immediately captivated by the vivid world Granados had created on the keyboard. What struck me most was not simply the technical brilliance of the writing, but rather the poetry embedded within—the nuanced characters, the narrative arc that unfolds across the entire suite, the distinctly Spanish flavors interwoven with profound emotional depth, and the virtuosity that never overshadows the music's intimate storytelling. Here was a masterwork that seemed to contain entire worlds: passion, tenderness, humor, shadow,

and light all coexisting within its six movements.

That fascination never left me. Years later, I decided that I wanted to explore this work in its complete form, to understand every layer of Granados' genius. Working with Everett Porter and the Polyhymnia team at MCO 1 in Hilversum, we embarked on recording the entire suite, along with two selections from his *Spanish Dances*. The result captures what I believe is the true essence of these works—their color, their drama, their intimacy—in a way that feels both fresh and deeply respectful of Granados' vision. It is my hope that this recording will help bring *Goyescas* back into concert halls, where this beautiful masterwork deserves to be heard far more often than it currently is.

The World of Goyescas

Goyescas stands as one of the most ambitious and poetic creations in Spanish piano literature. Granados drew his inspiration from the paintings of Francisco Goya, the 18th-century Spanish master whose dark, sensual works explore themes of love, desire, flirtation, and the human condition. Each movement of *Goyescas* corresponds to a painting or draws from Goya's visual universe, allowing Granados to translate visual art into musical narrative.

The opening movement, "Los requiebros" (The Flirtations), sets the stage with music of flirtation and charm. It is graceful and playful, yet carries an underlying intensity—a musical representation of the delicate dance of attraction. Granados establishes the passionate, Spanish character of the suite immediately, introducing themes

that will echo throughout the work. The virtuosity here is not for display but for expression; every ornamental passage, every technically demanding moment serves the emotional narrative.

As we move deeper into the suite, the emotional landscape becomes more complex. The fourth movement, "La maja y el ruiseñor" (The Maiden and the Nightingale), offers a shift in tone—more introspective and romantic. Here, Granados employs the image of a nightingale, its song representing idealized beauty and yearning. The movement is characterized by lyrical melodic lines and a dreamlike quality, though beneath the surface runs an undercurrent of melancholy. The virtuosity here is more delicate; Granados uses rapid passagework to evoke the bird's song, creating a shimmering texture that is

simultaneously fragile and hypnotic. This movement showcases the composer's gift for combining technical brilliance with profound emotional expression.

The fifth movement, "El amor y la muerte" (Love and Death), represents perhaps the most profound emotional and dramatic summit of the entire work. Here, Granados confronts the deepest human themes—the inexorable connection between desire and mortality, love and loss. The movement opens with an almost mournful intensity, exploring the tension between passion and inevitability. There is a profound darkness here, yet it is not without beauty; rather, it is a beauty born of acceptance and profound understanding. The musical language becomes increasingly chromatic and harmonically complex, reflecting the emotional turbulence of the

moment. Yet within the darkness, there are moments of transcendent beauty—passages where love shines through as something eternal and transformative.

Throughout *Goyescas*, Granados' harmonic language is remarkably modern for its time. Published in 1911, the work employs chromatic writing and innovative tonal shifts that were quite advanced, yet these technical innovations never overwhelm the work's essential lyricism. Instead, they deepen it, adding layers of complexity to what might otherwise be straightforward romantic expression. This is music that appeals simultaneously to the virtuoso and the dreamer.

Spanish Dances:

Miniatures with Profound Depth

The two *Spanish Dances* included on this recording are like musical tapas—concentrated moments of flavor and character that offer brief but intensely satisfying glimpses into Granados' world.

Spanish Dance No. 2, "Oriental," is hauntingly beautiful and surprisingly introspective. When I play this dance, I am drawn into a vast, snowy landscape—a frozen world where a lone traveler walks in silence, reflecting on the past. There is longing in this music, and a kind of solemn dignity. Despite its modest length, "Oriental" contains entire narratives. The slow, measured pace and the minor key create an atmosphere of quiet contemplation. It is easy to overlook this dance in favor of more dramatic works, yet it contains some of Granados' most touching writing.

Spanish Dance No. 5, "Andaluza," is perhaps the most frequently performed of Granados' dance pieces, and for good reason. It captures the spirit of Andalusia—passionate, energetic, and joyful. The piece is so perfectly crafted for the guitar that it has become a staple of the classical guitar repertoire, yet its origins are on the piano, and the work retains much of its original brilliance when returned to Granados' original instrument. The "Andaluza" allows the performer and listener alike to experience the uninhibited joy and vitality that characterizes Spanish folk tradition at its best.

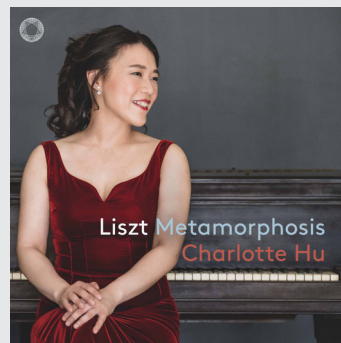
Introspection

Recording this album has been a journey of deep engagement with a composer whose music continues to reveal new dimensions with each encounter. I hope that through these recordings, listeners will discover or

rediscover the profound beauty and artistry within Granados' *Goyescas* and *Spanish Dances*—works that remain essential to the piano repertoire and to the broader story of Spanish cultural expression. Whether experiencing the dramatic intensity of *Goyescas* or the intimate character of the *Spanish Dances*, I hope you're taken on a personal and unique journey to the world of Granados.

Charlotte Hu

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