

Clara Rodriguez

VENEZUELA

Nimbus Alliance NI6122 (DDD) 74.24

LUISA ELENA PAESANO (B 1946)	Pajarillo
EVENCIO CASTELLANOS (1915-1984)	Mananita caraquena
FEDERICO VOLLMER (1834-1901)	Jarro mocho
RAMON DELGADO PALACIOUS (1863-1902)	La Dulzura de tu rostro
LUISA ELENA PAESANO	El porfiao
FEDERICO VOLLMER	El atravesado
FEDERICO RUIZ (b 1948)	Aliseo
MARIA LUISA ESCOBAR (1903-1985)	Nocho de luna en Altamira
FEDERICO RUIZ	Zumba que zumba
MIGUEL ASTOR (b 1958)	Adriana
PABLO CAMACARO (b1947)	Diversión
ANTONIO LAURO (1917-1986)	Cancion Vals criollo
JUAN CARLOS NUNEZ (b 1947)	Retrato de Ramon Delgado Palacios
MODESTA BOR (1926-1998)	Fuga Juangriego
ANTONIO LAURO	Seis por derecho
RICARDO TEREUL (b 1956)	Destilado de vals
FRANCISCO DELFIN PACHECO (??)	El cumaco de San Juan
LUIS LAGUNA (1926-1984)	Creo que te quiero
PEDRO ELIAS GUTIERREZ (1870- 1954)	Alma Ilanera
PABLO CAMACARO (b 1947)	Don Luis
SIMON DIAZ (b 1928)	Caballo viejo
MANUEL YANEZ (1941-2000)	Viajero del rio
HERACLIO FERNANDEZ (1851-1886)	El Diablo suelto



This CD is of 25 short pieces from Venezuelan composers. Much of it is slight being waltzes, nocturnes and dance music of that South American country and it will not be to everyone's taste. Slight music has to contain something arresting and memorable to make it worthwhile. We are always looking for precious

gems. 75 minutes of miniatures of the same flavour is very hard to take and this sort of music is occasional music.

There is no doubt that Rodriguez plays this music as if were her very own and her upbringing in Carcas with parents who were interested in the arts clearly influenced her. Her playing is unquestionably skilful and the enjoyment she has in playing these pieces is infectious. One would have wished for a few works of a more substantial nature. Snacks are OK but not a satisfying meal.

She came to London when she was 17 and studied at RCM. Among her teachers were Phyllis Sellick and Paul Badura-Skoda.

It is both a pity and an injustice if she is only known for these small pieces. She plays Bach, Beethoven, Prokofiev, Mompou, Prokofiev, Dutilleux, Webern and Berg. Her concerto repertoire consists of the five concertos of Villa Lobos, both concertos by Ruiz, Falla's Nights in the Gardens of Spain, a very strange piece, Castellanon's Concerto, the Hahn concerto and one by Ginestera arguably the very best composer from South America.

Of the composers on this CD, Antonio Lauro is probably the best known. He is famous for his guitar music and popular music such as his many Venezuelan waltzes but his music tends to be superficial and have no depth.

Ruiz is another composer of mainly short pieces. On Rodriguez's CD of his piano music on ASV there are 21 items lasting 64 minutes. He has written two piano concertos and the 1957 score for the film *The Bodysnatchers* set in Mexico.

Modesta Bor was an important composer, an educator, a musicologist who studied in Russia for a time. She was a staunch advocate for women in the music world and her own music was not confined to the traditions of Venezuela. She wrote orchestral and chamber works and almost 100 choral which deserve to be heard. Her fuga on this disc is probably the best piece.

As to the music on this CD, I cannot deal with each item. The opening track is pleasant, rhythmic and repetitive. The Castellanos sounds like a gentle chiming of Big Ben and is also repetitive but pretty. The Vollmer is a joropo, a waltz like dance in which traditional clothes are worn and the dance has fast leg movements and is completely different. The joropo is usually accompanied by guitars, mandolins, harps and, of course, the maracas. It is really folk music and a dance associated with that tradition and a dance enjoyable to watch. There are international joropo festivals in Venezuela and in other South American countries like Colombia, for instance. Vollmer's music is somewhat banal. The Ruiz waltz *El atravesado* does nothing and has some unfortunate hints of Chopin.

Camacaro's *Adriana* may suggest jazz.

A lot of this music is bland but pleasant. But there is no denying the superior piano playing. If you can listen to all the Chopin waltzes in one go then you will enjoy this disc even more. It will certainly introduce people to new music, new names and trying to understand Spanish.

But let's have Miss Rodriguez playing some meaty music.

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