Montserrat Caballé sings Songs of Enrique Granados with symphony orchestra Rafael Ferrer, Conductor
Having established herself—meteorically but indisputably—as a mistress of the flamboyant, romantic Italian operatic repertory, Montserrat Caballé in this recital turns to material of a far more inward and subtle nature, the songs of her great countryman Enrique Granados. Simple and modest of outline as these songs may be, they make demands on a singer's artistry fully as taxing as the most complex Donizetti arias. It has often been said that only the greatest musician can make simple music come to life. This recording stands as proof.

Granados' career was cut tragically short by a German torpedo in March 1916. He was at that time at the height of his power and glory. His Goyescas had been triumphantly mounted by the Metropolitan Opera two months before, and he was on route home after giving an invitational concert before President Wilson at the White House when the "Sussex" was sunk in the English Channel. He was 49 at the time, renowned as a pianist and as the creator of a modern Spanish compositional style in a country which had produced no other major composer in over three centuries.

The opera, his songs and most of his large output of piano music were strongly influenced by the paintings and etchings of Francisco Goya. Like the painter, Granados sought to distill in his works the particular spirit of Madrid, that capital of both cosmopolitan and provincial where elegance, passion and dire poverty are united in a fantastic, colorful swirl. In the works of Goya there is tremendous power in a single line; they appear simple to the casual observer, but in that very simplicity is a depth of passion that reveals itself slowly but unmistakably.

And so it is with the seventeen songs of Granados, so indelibly touched with the art of Montserrat Caballé on this record. They represent the composer's entire output in the field, aside from a few slight, unimportant early pieces.

The Canciones Amatorias are somewhat more sophisticated, on the whole, than the Tonadillas, subtler and possibly more inward. Only in one of them, No Llores, Ojuelos, do we encounter any notable amount of folk flavor. They point even more clearly, therefore, to the growing status as an "international" composer that Granados was beginning to enjoy at the time of his tragic death.

They are songs about love, seen for the most part through the eyes of the woman. In some we meet her as an innocent flirt, fending off her lovers with protestations about being too young for such things. In others we meet a far more mature woman, despairing at love's hopelessness, lamenting a betrayal, seeking solace in the company of flowers. Ending the cycle are two songs full of cheer, warmth and the love of pure beauty: a delightful country scene in which the maidens visit the woods, "some to dance and some to gather nuts," and an ardent, joyous paean to the loveliness of all things.

The second set of songs suggests Goya's time in the overall title; the tonadilla was a kind of theatrical entertainment popular in Madrid in the early 19th century in which folk and sophisticated elements were interwoven against a simple scenic backdrop. Granados' purpose in the Tonadillas was to evoke Goya's time by using harmonies that were slightly archaic and accompaniments that suggested folk instruments.

The first three form a haunting triptych of lamentation; a maja (woman of Madrid) mourns her dead lover, first in desperation and wildness, finally in calm resignation. No more than the first few notes of the first song, a deep, throaty outcry, are needed to delineate the singer's passionate sorrow. The next four songs, all lighter in mood, take us through a cross section of Spanish temperament: soulful, fluttering, flirtatious and melancholy. The last three are the most notably Goyesque, and in the last of them we hear a brief reminiscence of the first song.

Simple or subtle, all these songs stand as high artistic creations. Granados, like the painter he revered, was the kind of transcendent artist who could deal with the simplest of objects, the most direct of sentiments, and transfigure his material through the outlay of a supreme imagination. He was, first and foremost, a Spanish composer. But, in so being, he transformed those things which were indigenous to his native land into the kind of art which knows no boundaries.

—ALAN RICH

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS ENCLOSED
Montserrat Caballé
sings
SONGS OF
ENRIQUE GRANADOS
Descúbrese el pensamiento de mi secret Cuidado
(Poetry by Fernando Periquet)

La Cara de Cuenca (2)
(Maids of Cuenca No. 2)

Highland girls from Cuenca went singing to the pine grove, some for nutpines, others to dance; la la la la lalalaa.

Oh, cruel death! Why by treachery did you take me, my passion? I don't want to live without her; for it is death to live thus.

It is impossible now to feel more pain: My heart would burst with the horror of it. O Cruel! Return my love, for it is death to live thus.

Oh, majo of my life, no, no you have not died! Would you unmask yourself like this, my poor soul? Wildly I wish to kiss your lips; I want to faithfully share your identity.

O cruel death! Why by treachery did you take me, my passion? I don't want to live without her; for it is death to live thus.

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La Maja Dolorosa No. 3  
(The Sorrowful Maja No. 3)

De aquel majo amante que fué mi gloria
guardo anhelante dichosa memoria.
Él me adoraba vehemente y fiel,
yo mi vida entera di a él,
y otras mil diera, si él quisiera,
que en hondos amores, martirios son flores.
Y al recordar mi majo amado,
van resurgiendo ensueños de un tiempo pasado.

Ni en el Mentidero ni en la Florida
majo más majo paseo en la vida.
Bajo el chambergo sus ojos vi
con toda el alma puestos en mí,
que a quien miraban enamoraban.
Pues no hallé en el mundo mirar más profundo.
Y al recordar mi majo amado,
van resurgiendo ensueños de un tiempo pasado.

Of that beloved majo who was my glory
I cherish a happy memory.
He loved me ardently and faithfully,
and I gave my whole life to him,
and I would give it again a thousand times, if he wanted it,
for when feelings are deep, torments are sweet.
And as I think of my beloved majo,
dreams come back of a time gone by.

Neither in the Mentidero nor the Florida
was a more handsome majo ever seen to walk.
Beneath the broad-brimmed hat I saw his eyes
fixed upon me passionately,
for they caressed the one on whom they rested.
In all the world I have never seen a more piercing look.
And as I think of my beloved majo,
dreams come back of a time gone by.

El Tra la la y el Punteado  
(The Tra la la and Guitar Strum)

Es en balde, majo mío,
que sigas hablando,
porque hay cosas que contesto
yo siempre cantando.

Por más que preguntes tanto,
en mi no causas quebranto,
ni yo he de salir de mi canto.

It is useless, my majo,
for you to persist,
because there are things which I always
answer with a song.

No matter how much you question,
you will not distress me,
nor will I cease my song.

El Mirar de la Maja  
(The Gaze of the Maja)

¿Por qué es en mis ojos
tan hondo el mirar?
Que a fin de cortar desdénos y enojos
los suelo entornar.
Que fuego dentro llevarán
que si acaso con calor
los clavo en mi amor,
sonrojo me dan.

Por eso el chispero
a quien mi alma di,
al verse ante mí me tira el sombrero
y diceme así:
¡Mi maja! No me mires más,
tus ojos rayos son,
y ardiendo en pasión,
la muerte me dan.

Why do my eyes
have this deep look?
I must lower my lids
to hide scorn and hatred.
Such fire they give forth
that if by chance with passion
I fix them on my love,
they make me blush.

Therefore the chispero
to whom I have given my soul,
pulls down his hat
when meeting me and says:
My maja! Do not look at me,
for your eyes are like lightning,
and burning with passion,
they destroy me.

Callejeo  
(I Have Walked the Streets)

Dos horas ha que callejeo,
pero no veo nerviosa ya sin calma
al que le di confiada el alma.
No vi hombre jamás
que mintiera más
que el majo que hoy me engaña.
Mas no le ha de valer,
pues siempre fuí mujer de majo.
Y si es menester,
correré sin parar tras él entera España.

I have walked the streets for two hours,
nervous and restless, but I do not see
him to whom I trustingly gave my soul.
I have never met a man
who lied more
than the majo who betrays me now.
But he will find it of no avail,
for I was always a clever woman,
and if necessary,
I will follow him ceaselessly all over Spain.
Amor y Odio
(Love and Hate)

Pensé que yo sabría ocultar la pena mia,
que por estar en lo profundo
no alcanzará a ver el mundo
este amor callado que un majo malvado
en mi alma encendió.
Y no fué así, porque él vislumbró
el pesar oculto en mí.

Pero fué en vano que vislumbrara,
pues el villano mostróse ajeno de que le amara,
y esta es la pena que sufro ahora:
Sentir mi alma llena
de amor por quien me olvida,
sin que una luz alentadora
surja en las sombras de mi vida.

El Majo Discreto
(The Discreet Majo)

Dicen que mi majo es feo;
es posible que sí que lo sea,
que amor es deseo que ciega y marea.
Ha tiempo que sé que quien ama no vé.

Mas si no es mi majo un hombre
que por lindo descuelle y asombre,
en cambio es discreto y guarda un secreto
que yo posé en él sabiendo que es fiel.

¿Cuál es el secreto que el majo guardó?
Sería indiscreto contararlo yo.
No poco trabajo costará saber
secretos de un majo con una mujer.
Nació en Lavapies.
¡Eh! ¡Eh! Es un majo, un majo es.

El Majo Timido
(The Timid Majo)

Llega a mi reja y me mira
por la noche un majo.
Que en cuanto me ve y suspira
se va calle abajo—
¡Ay! Que tío más tardío.
Sí así se pasa la vida,
estoy divertida.

Si hoy también pasa y me mira
y no se entusiasma
pues después de ese saludo
adiós al fantasma—
¡Ay! Que tío más tardío.
Por estar enamorado
las rejas calladas.

La Maja de Goya
(The Maja of Goya)

Yo no olvidaré en mi vida
de Goya la imagen gallarda y querida.
No hay hembra ni maja o señora
que a Goya no ecuche de menos ahora.
Si yo hallara quien me amara
como él me amó,
nor envidiara, no, ni anhelara
más venturas ni dichas yo.

I thought I would know how to hide my sorrow,
to hide it so well
that the world would not be able to see
this silent love that a wicked majo
fired in my soul.
But it was not so, because he perceived
my hidden suffering.

But it was in vain that he noticed it,
for the villain proved indifferent to my love,
and this is the pain which I suffer now:
To feel my soul full of love
for one who forgets me,
without one hopeful ray of light
to brighten the shadows of my life.

They say that my majo is homely;
maybe it is so,
for love is but a desire that blinds and dazzles.
I have long known that he who loves is blind.

But if my majo is not a man
noted for being handsome,
he is discreet and keeps a secret which I,
knowing he is trustworthy, confided to him.

What is the secret that the majo kept?
It would be indiscreet for me to tell.
No little effort is required to discover
the secrets a majo has with a woman.
He was born in Lavapies.
Oh! Oh! He's a majo, a majo he is.

There is a majo who comes to my window
in the evening and looks at me.
As soon as he sees me and sighs,
he goes off down the street—
Oh! What a dullard of a man.
If this is the way it will be,
a fine time I shall have.

If today he goes by and looks at me
but does not get his courage up,
and after that greeting
he disappears like a ghost—
Oh! What a dullard of a man.
He is so in love,
but my gates remain silent.

As long as I live I will never forget
the gallant and beloved image of Goya.
There is not a woman, or maja, or lady
who does not miss Goya.
If I found one who would love me
as he loved me,
I would not desire, no, nor crave
greater fortune or happiness.
Montserrat Caballé Sings
Songs of Enrique Granados
Montserrat Caballé, Soprano
Canciones Amatorias
Descubre el Pensamiento de Mi
Secreta Cuidado

RCA

Red Seal

Mañanica Era  Llorad, Corazón, Que
Tantea Razón
Mira Que Soy Niña, iAmor, Déjame!
No Llores, Ojuelos
Iban al Pinar  Gracile Mia

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(In Spanish—Recorded in Spain)
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