



ABC
Classics
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Song in the Night

Concert Fantasies,
arrangements and
original works by
CARLOS SALZEDO

Alice Giles HARP

ABC
Classics

Carlos Salzedo 1885-1961

1	JOHN STEVENSON 1761-1833 arr. Salzedo Believe Me, if All Those Endearing Young Charms	2'13	12	CARLOS SALZEDO Turkey Strut – Concert Fantasy on the theme of “Turkey in the Straw”	3'32
2	CARLOS SALZEDO Jolly Piper – Concert Fantasy on the theme of “The Sailor’s Hornpipe”	2'47	13	TRAD. IRISH arr. Salzedo The Last Rose of Summer	3'04
3	TRAD. IRISH arr. Frederick E. Weatherly 1848-1928 and Salzedo Londonderry Air	3'35	14	CARLOS SALZEDO Chanson dans la nuit (Song in the Night)	3'27
4	JULES MASSENET 1842-1912 arr. Salzedo Menuet d’amour from <i>Thérèse</i>	2'30	15	La Désirade	1'58
5	GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL 1685-1759 arr. Salzedo The Harmonious Blacksmith – Air and Variations	5'16	16	AGUSTÍN LARA 1897-1970 arr. Salzedo Concert Fantasy on “Granada”	4'11
6	FELIX MENDELSSOHN 1809-1847 arr. Salzedo Spring Song from <i>Songs without Words, Book 5</i>	2'47	17	GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL arr. Salzedo Largo from <i>Xerxes</i>	5'51
7	CARLOS SALZEDO Traipsin’ thru Arkansaw – Concert Fantasy on the theme of “The Arkansas Traveller”	4'07	18	ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK 1841-1904 arr. Salzedo Humoreske, Op. 101 No. 7	2'54
8	TRAD. SCOTTISH arr. Salzedo Annie Laurie	2'03	19	FRANZ LISZT 1811-1886 arr. Salzedo Paraphrase on Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2	3'35
9	NEGRO SPIRITUAL arr. Salzedo Deep River	2'10	20	ANTON RUBINSTEIN 1829-1894 arr. Salzedo Melody in F, Op. 3	3'58
10	CARLOS SALZEDO Dixie Parade – Concert Fantasy on the theme of “Dixie”	2'42	21	JOHANNES BRAHMS 1833-1897 arr. Salzedo Waltz, Op. 39 No. 15	1'49
11	STEPHEN C. FOSTER 1826-1864 arr. Salzedo My Old Kentucky Home	2'13	22	Lullaby, Op. 49 No. 4	2'05
				Total Playing Time	68'48

Alice Giles *harp*

Carlos Salzedo was a true musical renaissance man. As well as being a virtuoso harpist of the highest order, he was a fine pianist, a teacher of great renown, a composer, conductor and an important advocate in the dissemination of the contemporary music of his time.

Born, like his friend Maurice Ravel, in the Basque region of southern France, Salzedo demonstrated his considerable musical gifts and ability at a very early age. In fact his earliest published composition was written at the age of five. Later, in his teens, whilst studying at the prestigious Paris Conservatoire, he received several prizes, not only in harp, which he had recently taken up, but also solfège and piano.

By the age of 24, Salzedo's renown as a harpist had attracted the attention of the great Toscanini, who invited the young Frenchman to join his orchestra at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Salzedo also experienced great success as harpist in the Trio de Lutèce with the noted flautist Georges Barrère and cellist Paul Kéfer. The trio ingeniously took its name from the old Latin name for Paris and focussed, aptly, on French repertoire ranging from Rameau to Debussy and Ravel. American audiences and Salzedo were mutually impressed with each other and this led the harpist to adopt the United States as his permanent home. Salzedo continued to maintain close contact with Europe, though, and visited often.

Because of his strong interest in and association with modern music and its best composers and practitioners, Salzedo, with fellow composer and close friend Edgar Varèse, founded the International Composers Guild in 1921. Devoted to contemporary composition, the Guild organised many concerts in New York that often included premiere performances by the finest of the time – Stravinsky, Bartók, Hindemith and Ives amongst others. Salzedo often displayed a humble and philanthropic side to his nature – helping fellow artists during times of need by initiating grants and collections. Two dancers who were to personally benefit from his benevolence were the great Vaslav Nijinsky and America's greatest choreographer, Martha Graham. However, with his appointment as inaugural teacher of harp at Philadelphia's now famous Curtis Institute, Salzedo set about doing more than any other to bring the harp into the 20th century – composing and teaching as well as fine-tuning, adapting and expanding the instrument and its technique. In 1931, Salzedo bought a house in Maine where he created the Summer Harp Colony of America, an ingenious approach to harp tuition which operated until only a few years ago.

Salzedo's influence was felt far and wide and he impressed the greatest musical minds and exponents of his time. Stokowski, Toscanini and Casals admired and celebrated his wide-ranging abilities as a complete musician. Both Otto

Klemperer and Salzedo's colleague from Curtis, Fritz Reiner, praised his ability as a conductor, whilst Igor Stravinsky professed amazement at his sight-reading ability and the uncanny precision of his ear.

By the time he was 25, Salzedo was composing mature and individual works for solo harp, compositions which were as expressive as the *Préludes* of Debussy. Here was an original, innovative and ground-breaking musical language: an exploration of colour and effects that in many ways bypass the possibilities suggested by Debussy and Ravel in their writing for the harp. Salzedo created a bridge between traditional usage and 20th-century composition and styles, and always wrote specifically with the harp in mind. Accordingly, his compositions always sound perfectly conceived for the instrument.

Salzedo was also a master of the transcription, and the arrangements that make up the majority of this recital feature a mixture of popular tunes and pieces that would have been well known to contemporary audiences. Like Copland, Salzedo effortlessly adapts folk melodies and gospel: **Traipsin' thru Arkinsaw, Deep River** and Foster's **My Old Kentucky Home**. And his more virtuosic treatments (the Concert Fantasies on "The Sailor's Hornpipe", "Dixie" and "Turkey in the Straw") show just how seriously Salzedo attempted to weld American forthrightness to the limited confines expressed within European

musical culture at that time. Salzedo's brilliant Concert Fantasies are collected here – complete – for the first time on compact disc.

Whilst many of his compositions started life as pedagogical exercises designed to harness and conquer particularly trying issues of technique, they often introduced new and appropriately concentrated means of notation and expression as well as a whole new palette of tonal effects for the instrument. All of this was achieved with great economy, precision and with an impressive sense of musical architecture which would single-handedly redefine the possibilities of the instrument. Salzedo's harp pieces demonstrate great individuality, virtuosity and invention and have taken their rightful place on the concert platform worldwide.

Salzedo's *Method*, published in 1927, remains a standard teaching resource for the harp. Detailed descriptions of hand positions, methods of tuning and of repairing broken strings are included in English and French as well as sections on more directly musical matters such as the production of harmonics and the execution of various musical effects. Also included by way of practical example are fifteen preludes, three of which have come out of the classroom and into the concert hall to be met with great acclaim. Two of these, **La Désirade** with its marvellous pedal slides and the very popular **Song in the Night** are included on this compact disc.

According to Dewey Owens, in his 1992 biography *Carlos Salzedo: From Aeolian to Thunder*, the composer's original title for *La Désirade* was "Prélude lascif," but when a pupil, who also happened to be a nun, asked for an explanation, he became rather unsettled as the word has more lewd connotations than "lascivious" has in English. So he renamed it after *Désirade*, an island near Guadaloupe in the West Indian Antilles, which evoked a languid atmosphere, sensuous rather than sensual, and thus closer in meaning to his initial intention.

Salzedo tirelessly explored the placement and spelling-out of chords and note patterns as a means to best express and support his original compositions and transcriptions. As Owens has suggested, a large amount of his success in this direction is due more to intuition and innate musicality than to technique. For example, in his transcription of the popular **Largo** from Handel's *Xerxes*, the spelling of the chords as Salzedo writes gives the piece a peculiar sonority which is not achievable on any other instrument. He was just as meticulous in matters of tonality; for when transcribing the same composer's harpsichord variations **The Harmonious Blacksmith**, Salzedo moves the key up from the original E major to G-flat major, rather than F-sharp major, giving the piece a more appropriate sonority and at the same time clarifying the bass lines. He would do this also in his transcriptions of Mendelssohn, Debussy and Bach, where in

his transcription of the sixth French Suite he is more than content to exclude the work's *Gigue* as it simply does not work on the harp.

Just as we acknowledge Casals, Segovia, Liszt and Paganini as instrumental innovators of great genius, Salzedo, though less well known to a wide musical public, holds a similar position as an exponent of the harp. He is rightfully regarded as one of the great musical innovators – a musician to be ranked with the greatest of any period.

Brett Allen-Bayes

Alice Giles

Alice Giles has been acclaimed as one of the world's leading harp soloists. The Australian-born musician first attracted international notice in 1982 when she won the First Prize in Israel's International Harp Contest. A student of June Loney, Alice Chalifoux and Judith Liber, she made her New York debut at Merkin Hall in 1983, and was invited by Rudolf Serkin to participate for three summers in the Marlboro Music Festival in



Vermont, USA. She has given many premiere performances and has recently commissioned a complete program of new works for the electro-acoustic harp.

She has participated in numerous festivals, including the Salzedo Centennial in Austin, Texas, World Harp Congress in Copenhagen, World Harp Festival in Cardiff, Edinburgh Harp Festival, Bath Mozartfest, Scotia Festival, Adelaide and Sydney Festivals, Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Barossa and Huntington Festivals, and the Schleswig-Holstein and Insel Hombroich Festivals in Germany. Concert highlights include solo recitals in London's Wigmore Hall, New York's 92nd Street Y, Frankfurt Alte Oper, Gulbenkian Foundation Lisbon, Berlin Philharmonie and in San Francisco, Philadelphia, Washington D.C. and Toronto, and concertos with the Collegium Musicum Zurich, Badische Staatskapelle Karlsruhe, English Symphony Orchestra, Danish Radio Concert Orchestra, and Hamburg Mozart Orchestra. Alice Giles also performs regularly with all the major Australian symphony and chamber orchestras.

Alice Giles was regarded by Luciano Berio as the foremost interpreter of his *Sequenza II* and has taken part in tributes to Berio at the Queen Elizabeth Hall London, Salzburg Mozarteum and at the 92nd Street Y. She has an international reputation as a teacher, having given masterclasses in the Salzburg Mozarteum, Den

Haag Conservatorium, Royal Academy London, Cleveland Institute, Juilliard School and the Curtis Institute. From 1990 to 1998 she taught at the Hochschule für Musik in Frankfurt; she has recently been appointed to the School of Music of the Australian National University.

Her discography includes three solo harp discs, numerous chamber music discs – as Duo Corda, and with the Budapest Brass Quintet, flautist Geoffrey Collins and Kunstpfeifer Martin Werner, among others – and, for ABC Classics, a concerto disc with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, conducted by David Porcellijn.

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