

GARRETA Violin Concerto TOLDRA Suite

Catalan composers explored by London conductor Martín

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The Catalan composer Juli Garreta (1875–1925) had already made a name for himself as a master of the sardana (a circle dance strongly associated with the autonomous region) before turning to symphonic music in the first half of the 1920s. Pau Casals and his eponymous orchestra were his foremost champions and it was they who gave the Barcelona world premiere, on October 23, 1925, of his large-scale Violin Concerto. Sadly Garreta died just a few weeks later, and, apart from a lone performance the following year at a tribute concert, his magnum opus wasn't heard again until 1971.

Clocking in at nearly 43 minutes, it's an endearingly garrulous, strongly lyrical outpouring (the slow movement basks in a romantic glow reminiscent of Bruch and Saint-Saëns), and by no means lacking in fresh-faced charm and formal intrigue (Garreta unexpectedly places the cadenza at the start of the third-movement finale). Not a forgotten masterpiece, perhaps, but a lovable find none the less, as is the Suite in E from 1919 by another Catalan figure, Eduardo Toldrà (1895–1962). Surprising to read in the booklet that Toldrà withdrew the work after a mere two performances, for it proves something of a gem, displaying a melodic fecundity, captivating lightness of touch and playful whimsy that can hardly fail to lift the spirits.



Garreta_Violin Concerto; Toldra_Suite

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra
Suite

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