

Pristine
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ATAÚLFO ARGENTA *conducts* ESPAÑA



Ataúlfo Argenta's career was one of the most brilliant and cruelly abbreviated in twentieth-century conducting. Born in Castro Urdiales in 1913, he first made his name as a pianist, studying in Madrid and Liège before further work in Germany brought him under the influence of Carl Schuricht, who encouraged him towards conducting. Argenta's rise was swift: by 1947 he was sharing the direction of the Orquesta Nacional de España, and from 1950 he appeared regularly in Paris with the Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire. He also recorded zarzuela extensively. His sudden death in January 1958, aged only forty-four, cut short a career clearly destined for the widest international stage.

This collection unites two complementary portraits of Argenta in Spanish and Spanish-inspired repertoire. The Paris recordings, made in mono in 1953, place him before a French orchestra in music by Albéniz and Turina. The later London sessions, recorded in stereo at Kingsway Hall on 31 December 1956 and 1 January 1957, show him leading the London Symphony Orchestra in works by Rimsky-Korsakov, Granados and Moszkowski. Together they move from Spain seen from within to Spain reflected through the colourful imagination of outsiders.

Albéniz composed *Iberia* between 1905 and 1909 as a cycle of twelve piano pieces of extraordinary rhythmic subtlety and colour. The five excerpts here, orchestrated by Enrique Fernández Arbós, transform the piano palette into a rich orchestral tapestry while preserving the music's intricate rhythms and distinctive character.

Turina's *Danzas fantásticas*, inspired by José Más's novel *La orgía*, offers three sharply contrasted panels: *Exaltación*, *Ensueño* and *Orgía*. Argenta shapes the suite with a natural dramatic curve, bringing the final dance to a blazing conclusion.

Rimsky-Korsakov's *Capriccio espagnol* is Spain through the eyes of a Russian master orchestrator. Asturian melodies, instrumental solos, brilliant percussion and dazzling colour combine in a work of orchestral showmanship and finesse. Argenta's performance became one of the celebrated early stereo showpieces. Reviewing the original Decca programme, Paul Serotsky called it "a joy from start to finish" and praised its "peerless evocation" of Spanish character.

Granados's *Andaluza* provides an intimate interlude, while Moszkowski's *Spanish Dances* – originally for piano duet and later orchestrated by Philipp Scharwenka and Valentin Frank – bring the programme to a buoyant close.

Across two orchestras and two very different recording environments, Argenta's signature remains unmistakable: rhythmic lift, vivid colour, elegance without fuss, and excitement that never turns crude. In this new XR remastering, these performances once again glow with warmth, brilliance and irresistible vitality.

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ARGENTA *conducts* ESPAÑA

Albéniz • Turina • Rimsky-Korsakov • Granados • Moszkowski

Ataúlfo Argenta

Paris & London recordings

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ESPAÑA



PARIS RECORDINGS

*Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire
Ataúlfo Argenta, conductor*

ISAAC ALBÉNIZ (1860–1909)	30:18
Iberia – orchestral excerpts	
01 Book 1 No. 1 – Evocación	5:28
02 Book 1 No. 3 – El Corpus en Sevilla	8:14
03 Book 2 No. 3 – Triana	4:41
04 Book 1 No. 2 – El Puerto	4:36
05 Book 3 No. 1 – El Albaicín	7:18

Orchestrated by Enrique Fernández Arbós

JOAQUÍN TURINA (1882–1949)	15:56
Danzas fantásticas, Op. 22	
06 I. Exaltación	5:20
07 II. Ensueño	6:07
08 III. Orgía	4:29

*Recorded at Maison de la Mutualité, Paris
12, 14–17 & 19 October 1953 (mono)*

LONDON RECORDINGS

*London Symphony Orchestra
Ataúlfo Argenta, conductor*

NIKOLAI RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (1844–1908)	14:44
Capriccio espagnol, Op. 34	
09 I. Alborada	1:11
10 II. Variazioni	4:17
11 III. Alborada	1:13
12 IV. Scena e canto gitano	4:44
13 V. Fandango asturiano	3:18

ENRIQUE GRANADOS (1867–1916)	4:08
Andaluza – Danza española No. 5 in E minor, Op. 37	
14 Andaluza	4:08

MORITZ MOSZKOWSKI (1854–1925)	14:06
Spanish Dances, Book 1, Op. 12	
15 No. 1 in C major	1:42
16 No. 2 in G minor	4:05
17 No. 3 in A major	2:45
18 No. 4 in B flat major	2:31
19 No. 5 in D major	3:03

*Orchestrated by Valentin Frank (Nos. 1, 3 & 4)
and Philipp Scharwenka (Nos. 2 & 5)*

*Recorded at Kingsway Hall, London
31 December 1956 & 1 January 1957 (stereo)*

XR Remastered by Andrew Rose

Cover image based on a photograph of Ataúlfo Argenta

TOTAL DURATION 79:11

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