



GINASTERA

ONE HUNDRED

GIL SHAHAM YOLANDA KONDONASSIS JASON VIEUX ORLI SHAHAM

OBERLIN ORCHESTRA | RAPHAEL JIMÉNEZ, CONDUCTOR

GINASTERA: ONE HUNDRED

A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF ALBERTO GINASTERA 1916–2016

HARP CONCERTO, OP. 25 (1956, revised in 1968)

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 1 | I. Allegro giusto..... | 9:25 |
| 2 | II. Molto moderato..... | 7:36 |
| 3 | III. Liberamente capriccioso - Vivace..... | 8:20 |

Yolanda Kondonassis, *harp*

Oberlin Orchestra | Raphael Jiménez, *conductor*

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|------|
| 4 | PAMPEANA NO. 1, OP. 16 (1947)..... | 9:04 |
|---|------------------------------------|------|

Gil Shaham, *violin*

Orli Shaham, *piano*

SONATA FOR GUITAR, OP. 47 (1976)

- | | | |
|---|------------------|------|
| 5 | I. Esordio..... | 3:44 |
| 6 | II. Scherzo..... | 3:04 |
| 7 | III. Canto..... | 3:34 |
| 8 | IV. Finale..... | 2:23 |

Jason Vieaux, *guitar*

DANZAS ARGENTINAS, OP. 2 (1937)

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|------|
| 9 | I. Danza del viejo boyero..... | 1:23 |
| 10 | II. Danza de la moza donosa..... | 3:24 |
| 11 | III. Danza del gaucho matrero..... | 3:11 |

Orli Shaham, *piano*

TOTAL: 55:10

This project celebrates the life and work of Alberto Ginastera. The Argentine composer's innovative style draws comparisons to Bartók and Stravinsky for the artful ways in which he integrated folk music and dance forms from his native country into a striking, modernist musical language. Throughout his compositional life, Ginastera took an architectural approach to his work that, while moving through different tonal and structural worlds, remained uniquely recognizable as his own distinctive, colorful voice.

To harpists, however, Alberto Ginastera was much more than a leading force in contemporary music. He wrote our piece. He created the work that pushed the harp out of its box and gave us the kind of indelible, substantive composition that makes or breaks a solo career like mine. By my best estimate, I have performed Ginastera's Harp Concerto close to 200 times, but in every performance, I discover something new—a hidden motivic layer, a subtle orchestral color I hadn't noticed before, or just another interpretive pathway to explore. His music speaks to performers and audiences alike, while pushing the ear beyond the expected. This kind of creation is a gift, and my gratitude to Ginastera for that gift was the inspiration for this project.

I recently had the honor of becoming acquainted with Ginastera's daughter, Georgina Ginastera. My evening with her was meaningful on a host of levels, but I find myself thinking about one thing in particular that she shared. She told me her father had once said that composing was a painstaking process for him. He did not scribble down dozens of notes quickly as they popped into his head. Instead, he found each note, one at a time, through a very reflective and meticulous progression. This style of creation is probably at least one reason his music has stood the test of time. So much of our culture today is made to be consumed and discarded—and it is often created as quickly as it is devoured. There is such beauty and substance in work that has been sculpted, revised, sculpted some more, and revised again. Georgina remembered her

father saying, "I do not search for things; I find them."

In many ways, the same could be said for my experience with this project, since the pieces of the journey have fallen into place almost as if they were meant to be. The artists, the timing, the resources—all have come together like treasures waiting to be found. I am enormously appreciative of the incredible musicians who gave their talents to this recording. Gil and Orli, your immense artistry is exceeded only by your warmth and humanity. Jason, your playing alone makes a piece of music great. To the Oberlin Orchestra: Your commitment and musical sincerity inspire me—the next generation of artistry is in your good hands. And Raphael, how wonderful it was to have in-depth conversations about tempo relationships and atmosphere, to debate the intricacies of note lengths and articulations, and to experiment with musical ideas in a full orchestral context. I cannot express enough gratitude for your energy and imagination, and for embarking on this incredibly rewarding endeavor with me.

Happy 100th birthday, Mr. Ginastera. Your life was well spent and your legacy continues to grow. We thank you.

—YOLANDA KONDONASSIS

*"As played by Yolanda Kondonassis with The Cleveland Orchestra last night at Severance Hall, **Ginastera's Harp Concerto obliterated most notions of the harp as a demure pastoral figure happy to stand in the background.** Kondonassis brought remarkable sensitivity and strength to Ginastera's writing...It was a performance that confirmed the harpist's artistry and affirmed the instrument's soloistic personality."* —The Cleveland Plain Dealer

FROM GAUCHO TO GRUPO: GINASTERA'S ARGENTINE AVANT-GARDE

In concerts, recordings, and textbooks, Alberto Ginastera (1916-83) often stands in as a composer whose music represents the Latin American style. But what is this style? For some, his “Latin American” qualities can be heard in those aspects of his music that recall the folk culture of the Argentine plains. For others, “Latin American” suggests a broader kind of sensibility that Ginastera supposedly shared with many in the Western Hemisphere, including such composers as Carlos Chávez of Mexico and Heitor Villa-Lobos of Brazil. Yet what quality could possibly bind such a diverse, even incompatible group of artists and audiences?

The Gaucho Sound

Although Ginastera was born in a country called Argentina, there was not—nor has there ever been—any clear idea of what counted as authentically, uniquely “Argentine.” Nonetheless, as far back as the 18th century, settlers in the region began to assert that certain qualities distinguished them from their Spanish colonial rulers politically, geographically, and especially culturally. Writers tended to champion one figure in particular as emblematic of the local culture: the gaucho, a rough-and-tumble cattle driver of the Argentine lowlands, recognizable by his poncho and bolas, his slang and dazzling wordplay, and his fiery dances and virtuosic guitar music.

The gaucho was not only a cultural figure, but also a political symbol. In a region left factionalized by Spanish retreat, writer Domingo Sarmiento (1811-88) summoned another version of the gaucho in his book *Facundo: Civilización y Barbarie* (1845). As suggested by the title, he claimed two opposing forces divided the country. On the one hand was rural “barbarism,” represented by the real-life warlord Facundo Quiroga, who was consolidating power in the provinces by mobilizing gauchos. Sarmiento considered this group brutal, thuggish, and unsophisticated. On the other hand was urban “civilization,” centralized in Buenos Aires and enriched with European arts and

letters, which Sarmiento believed held the key to progress. The Teatro Colón (built 1857) became a beacon of such elite culture, establishing Buenos Aires as an international opera hub—a far cry from Quiroga’s gaucho culture. In this war of symbols, two competing versions of Argentine culture emerged: the proud pioneer of the plains and the backwards brute. Both were gauchos.

From these two versions emerged many. The gaucho continued (and continues today) to be marshaled in the service of Argentine politics. When Sarmiento later became president in 1868, for example, he continued to advocate for a greater European presence in Argentina. “*Gobernar es poblar*” was his slogan: “To govern is to populate.” Populate they did, and by the end of the century, 7 out of every 10 residents in Buenos Aires were foreign born. Many native Argentines began to eye certain immigrant groups with suspicion, and a generation of artists asserted their ethnic bona fides by once again turning to the gaucho. In literature, this was the age of José Hernández (1834-86), whose epic poem *Martín Fierro* (1872) followed a wily, native gaucho whose dazzling wordplay foiled dimwitted Italian settlers. In music, this was the era of Alberto Williams (1862-1952) and Julián Aguirre (1868-1924), whose short piano pieces featured Argentine folk melodies and carried evocative titles like *milongas* and *huellas* (traditional gaucho dances). This cultural movement, called *Argentinidad*, was in full swing when Ginastera began to compose his earliest pieces, such as *Concierto Argentino* and *Porteña* (“port city dweller,” or “woman from Buenos Aires”)—pieces he later abandoned as juvenilia.

Was this music Argentine? These composers believed emphatically, even aggressively, yes. But if by “Argentine” we refer to the music of natives, bound to the land by heritage and time, then this music is anything but. Williams and Aguirre trained in France and Spain, and their music drew largely upon the harmonies and habits of the late-19th-century European salon. The moments of supposedly “native” color that appear

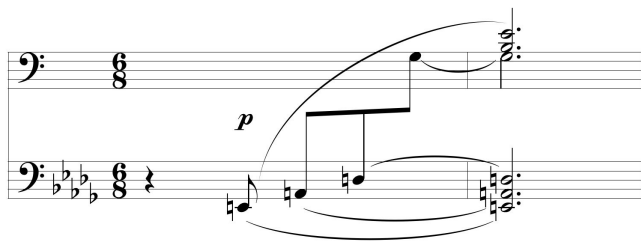
FROM GAUCHO TO GRUPO

in their works were less devoted to recovering an “authentically” Argentine sound of the past and more devoted to asserting what truly Argentine culture should be.

Grupo Renovación and the Copland Connection

While Ginastera was a conservatory student during the 1930s, Sarmiento’s divided culture became even starker as the disparity grew between wealthy European immigrants and poor Argentine laborers. Juan Perón rode a wave of anger to power under the slogan “*Alpargatas, yes; books, no,*” pitting blue-collar Argentines (symbolized by their cheap shoes) against intellectuals.

As a student, Ginastera fell under the influence of the Grupo Renovación, a coterie of composers who imbued their music with the esoteric musical techniques of contemporary avant-garde European composers such as Arnold Schoenberg and Igor Stravinsky. The first movement of Ginastera’s *Danzas Argentinas* (1937), for example, is in two keys at once. To achieve this effect, the pianist plays with one hand entirely on the black keys and the other entirely on the white keys. At last, after being torn between these two sounds for the entire song, the piece comes to rest on a chord that appears out of the blue.



Unlike traditional harmonies, which are built on major and minor thirds, this chord is built entirely on fourths. The effect is an unusual, modernistic sonority—a sound Ginastera would return to throughout his life (and which appears in every piece on this recording).

Yet there is more to this chord. Paradoxically, it harkens back to the past. As historians Gilbert Chase and Deborah Schwartz-Kates have noted, the chord also reproduces the pitches of an open, strummed gaucho guitar, an association further suggested by the movement’s title, “*Danza del viejo boyero*” (“Dance of the old herdsman”).

The second and third movements are similarly Janus-faced. The “*Danza de la moza donosa*” (“Dance of the beautiful young woman”) recalls the music of Alberto Williams with a wending, haunting, almost Spanish melody. Yet it also accumulates a kind of intense dissonance that has no precedent in any previous Argentine classical or folk music. The final movement, “*Danza del gaucho matrero*” (“Dance of the cunning gaucho”), celebrates the garrulous wit of the familiar folk figure. However, while much of this movement’s drama relies on moments of tension and arrival that would have been familiar in the 19th century, it also takes modern sounds from the first movement—untraditional chords, bitonal writing—and subjects them to virtuosic treatment.

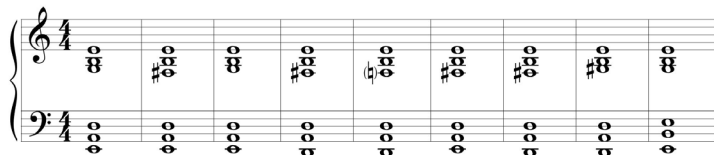
The overall effect was a potent mixture of past and present that would propel Ginastera to prominence in Argentina. In 1941 he was appointed to the faculty at the national conservatory and the Liceo Militar, where he continued to experiment with combining an avant-garde musical language and a folksy gaucho style. Such gestures became increasingly dangerous as Perón rose to power on a pro-proletariat platform. In 1945, he dismissed Ginastera from the Liceo Militar and forced other members of the Grupo Renovación into exile. From 1945 to 1947, Ginastera traveled to the United States on a Guggenheim Fellowship and studied composition with Aaron Copland. At the time, Copland hoped to forge a modern, avant-garde sound that would still appeal to working-class Americans—what historians today tend to call his “common man” style,

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which included not only his famous fanfare (1942), but also *El Salón México* (1936) and *Lincoln Portrait* (1942).

From him Ginastera developed a technique of writing unmistakably modern music that did not sound avant-garde. On first hearing, for example, the *Pampeana No. 1* (1947) may even seem regressive, abandoning the techniques of the Grupo Renovación for tried-and-true 19th-century virtuoso violin music. Yet there are details that cast a modern hue upon this piece. The opening piano chord is, once again, the gaucho chord, but the technique he uses hardly seems avant-garde: One hand moves, the other stays put; the other hand moves, the first one stays put; and so on. The resulting sonorities, however, have an unusual, crystalline quality that set them apart from most 19th-century writing and closer to Copland's harmonies from the early 1940s.

Opening to *Pampeana No. 1* (Reduced)

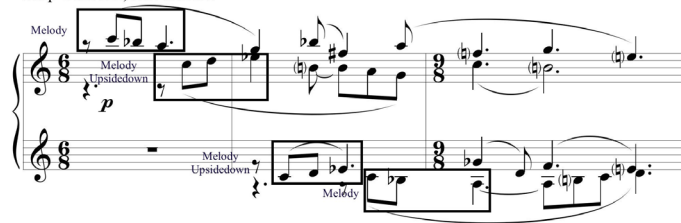


So is this Argentine folk music? Or is it modern? It is both at once. With its rolled guitar chords, its strummed violin, its driving dance-like rhythms, and its title (which refers to the country's vast, rolling plains), this piece seems to evoke folkloric Argentina in an accessible way. For those in the know, however, the subtle modernisms distanced this music—and Ginastera—from Perónist propaganda.

The International Style

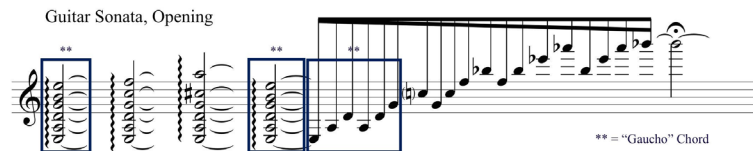
As Ginastera gained a wider reputation, and as Argentina fell further under Perón's control, the composer began to turn away from the Argentine concert scene. During the 1950s, he established a musical infrastructure within Argentina to support experimentalists from abroad. In 1958 he became dean of the Facultad de Artes y Ciencias Musicales and founded the Estudio de Fonología, and in 1962 he took over the Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales. In this phase of his career, rather than try to express his own emotions through familiar, communicative composition, he emphasized the "study" or the "science" of music, experimenting with its basic elements: form, harmony, and melody. In the second movement of his Harp Concerto (1965), for example, Ginastera wrote a melody in the woodwinds that reappears upside down on top of itself when the lower instruments enter.

Harp Concerto, movement 2



Yet even amid such esoteric techniques, the familiar gaucho chord appears. In the Harp Concerto, it appears as the long, contemplative cadenza that opens the third movement. In the avant-garde Guitar Sonata (1976), the gaucho chord appears on almost every

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page, strummed, plucked, slid, and tapped. For example, the opening notes of the piece spring from this chord, but then extend throughout the entire range of the guitar.

What is it doing in these ultramodern, international compositions? Although very few would argue that this sounds like folk music, was it meant as an emblem of Argentine culture?

By the late 1960s, Ginastera had changed his views on composition. In 1967 he said to his biographer, Pola Suárez Urtubey, "I believe that the creative act is, in principle, an act of faith, an act of affirmation, and therefore for the artist it has the vital, unquestionable importance of a metaphysical truth. It is 'his' truth that the artist must express, not this or that truth." At first this quotation seems contradictory: The "truth," whatever it may be, is supposedly both "personal" and "metaphysical." Yet Ginastera believed that while his individual approach to harmony and melody may be rooted in something personal or Argentine, working through these initial ideas in the process of composition would produce something universal. In the Harp Concerto and Guitar Sonata, Ginastera tried to tease out the implications of the guitar chord in a way that shed its ethnic associations, producing something revelatory. (What exactly it revealed would be impossible to say because, being metaphysical, it lay beyond the ken of language.) With an increasingly "universal" compositional style, Ginastera left Argentina in 1971 and settled until the end of his life in Switzerland (where, incidentally,

he changed the Argentine "H" pronunciation of his name to "J"—"Hee-nuh-stare-uh" became "Jee-nuh-stare-uh").

To return to our opening problem, if Ginastera had previously considered "Argentine" or "Latin American" to be some essential value that bound a group of people together, he now abandoned it as a shallow trait, a rest stop on the way to universal truth. To some, this seemed an unfortunate loss, as if he were abandoning those aspects of his identity that linked him to his geographic roots. But can one blame him? After all, assertions of "Latin" and "Argentine" authenticity never really illuminated an essential identity that bound people together. Instead, they had proven divisive and exclusionary, a charged claim to Argentine purity invoked in moments of political upheaval.

In 1964, before he left Argentina, Ginastera asked music historian Gilbert Chase to travel to Argentina and give a lecture about "American" music. By "American" Ginastera meant some quality that binds "the whole continent from Alaska to the Tierra del Fuego." Chase misunderstood the word "American," however, and wrote back saying that he planned to speak about music of the United States—about some quality that somehow would bind the music of the rural South, the urban North, the mountains of the West, and the port towns of New England. Ginastera corrected him: In Spanish, he said, such music is called *estadounidense*. Strangely, in English we have no word for it. But perhaps it is just as well.

—JAMES O'LEARY, FREDERICK R. SELCH ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF MUSICOLOGY, OBERLIN CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC



Gil Shaham recording
Ginastera's Pampeana No. 1
at the Academy of Arts
and Letters in New York City
(February 2016).

ERICA BRENNER, LUKE RATRAY

THE ARTISTS



GIL SHAHAM is one of the foremost violinists of our time; his flawless technique combined with his inimitable warmth and generosity of spirit has solidified his renown as an American master. Recent highlights include performances with the Berlin Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, and the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the release of *1930s Violin Concertos, Volume 2*. He also performs Bach's complete unaccompanied sonatas and partitas throughout the world.

Shaham has more than two dozen albums to his name and has earned multiple Grammy Awards, a Grand Prix du Disque, Diapason d'Or, and *Gramophone* Editor's Choice. His recent recordings are issued on his own Canary Classics label, which he founded in 2004, and include *1930s Violin Concertos Volumes 1 and 2*; *J.S. Bach: Sonatas & Partitas for Violin*; *Nigunim: Hebrew Melodies*; *Sarasate: Virtuoso Violin Works*; and Elgar's Violin Concerto with the Chicago Symphony. A passionate advocate for new music, Shaham has also premiered works by composers including William Bolcom, David Bruce, Avner Dorman, Julian Milone, and Bright Sheng.

Shaham was awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 1990, and in 2008 he received the coveted Avery Fisher Prize. He plays the 1699 "Countess Polignac" Stradivarius.

Visit gilshaham.com.

THE ARTISTS



Celebrated as one of the world's premier solo harpists, **YOLANDA KONDONASSIS** has been hailed as "a brilliant and expressive player" (*Dallas Morning News*) and an artist with "a dazzling technique unfailingly governed by impeccable musical judgment" (*Detroit News*). She has performed around the globe as a soloist, appearing with numerous major orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, and Hong Kong Philharmonic.

Widely regarded as today's most recorded classical harpist, with hundreds of thousands of albums sold worldwide, Kondonassis has released 20 titles, including the Grammy-nominated disc *Air* (Telarc). As her recordings earn universal critical praise, she continues to be a pioneering force in the harp world, striving to push the boundaries of what listeners expect of her instrument. A champion of new music, she recently premiered Bright Sheng's Concerto for Harp and Orchestra and will premiere Jennifer Higdon's Harp Concerto in 2018.

The recipient of two Solo Recitalist Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Kondonassis has been featured on CNN and PBS, as well as Sirius/XM Radio's *Symphony Hall*, NPR's *All Things Considered*, *Tiny Desk Concerts*, *St. Paul Sunday Morning*, and *Performance Today*. In addition to her touring schedule, Kondonassis heads the harp departments at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and the Cleveland Institute of Music and presents master classes around the world.

Visit yolandaharp.com.



National Public Radio describes Grammy-winning guitarist **JASON VIEAUX** as "perhaps the most precise and soulful classical guitarist of his generation." His latest solo album, *Play*, won the 2015 Grammy for Best Classical Instrumental Solo. Vieaux has earned a reputation for putting his expressiveness and virtuosity at the service of a remarkably wide range of music, and his schedule of performing, teaching, and recording commitments is distinguished throughout the U.S. and abroad. He has performed as soloist with nearly 100

orchestras, and his passion for new music has fostered premieres by Dan Visconti, Vivian Fung, José Luis Merlin, and others. Vieaux continues to bring important repertoire alive in the recording studio as well. He has released 13 albums, most recently *Together* with harpist Yolanda Kondonassis. In 2011, Vieaux co-founded the guitar department at the Curtis Institute of Music, and he has taught at the Cleveland Institute of Music since 1997, heading the guitar department since 2001. In 1992, he was the youngest winner ever of the Guitar Foundation of America International Guitar Competition. He has also been honored with a Naumburg Foundation top prize and a Salon di Virtuosi Career Grant, and was the first classical musician to be featured on NPR's *Tiny Desk Concerts*.

Visit jasonvieaux.com.

THE ARTISTS



A consummate musician recognized for her grace, subtlety, and vitality, **ORLI SHAHAM** has established an impressive international reputation as one of today's most gifted pianists. Hailed by critics on four continents, Shaham is in demand for her prodigious skills and admired for her interpretations of both standard and modern repertoire.

In 2015, Shaham released a solo CD, *Brahms Inspired*, which includes music by Brahms and his compositional forefathers along with new works by Brett Dean, Avner Dorman, and Bruce

Adolphe. Also released in 2015 is Shaham's recording of John Adams' *Grand Pianola Music* with pianist Marc-André Hamelin and the San Francisco Symphony. In 2014, Shaham released *American Grace*, featuring the world-premiere recording of Steven Mackey's *Stumble to Grace* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Shaham has performed with many major orchestras in the United States and Europe, as well as in significant recital halls around the world. Since 2007, Shaham has served as artistic director for Pacific Symphony's chamber music series in Costa Mesa, California. She is also artistic director for the interactive children's concert series held at New York's 92nd Street Y, Baby Got Bach, which she founded in 2010.

Visit orlishaham.com.



Praised by *The New York Times* for his "tightly wrought" and "stirring, vividly shaped" renditions and by *The Washington Times* for his "delicious buoyancy and impeccable taste," **RAPHAEL JIMÉNEZ** is celebrated for his work with orchestras around the world.

Equally comfortable on the podiums of professional and pre-professional ensembles, Jiménez divides his career between an intense schedule of concerts, operas, and ballet performances and educating the next generation of professional musicians. From his

first conducting position at the National System of Youth and Children's Orchestras in Venezuela to his current position as director of orchestras at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, he has demonstrated a deep commitment and passion for music education.

Jiménez is frequently acknowledged for his remarkable ability to lead, masterfully train, and inspire young players to perform at the highest level. The South Florida *Sun-Sentinel* writes, "The [orchestra], conducted by Raphael Jiménez, played [with] a professional sheen rarely heard from student ensembles." His performances with the Oberlin Orchestra at New York's Carnegie Hall and at Symphony Center in Chicago have also been well received, with ClevelandClassical writing, "To say that this concert was impressive for an ensemble of young players would be an understatement: This is an orchestra that any city would be happy to have as its resident professional ensemble."

THE ARTISTS

Hailed as a “national treasure” by *The Washington Post*, the Oberlin Conservatory of Music is known the world over as an institution of incomparable excellence. The first **OBERLIN ORCHESTRA** was established in 1896. It evolved into a model training program that propels graduates into key roles in professional orchestras around the globe.

The Oberlin Orchestra has enjoyed a rich history of leadership in the hands of superlative faculty conductors including Robert Baustian, Louis Lane, Robert Spano '83, and Larry Rachleff. The orchestra has also performed under such notable guests as Igor Stravinsky, Pierre Boulez, Sir Simon Rattle, David Zinman, and John Williams.

In just the past decade, the Oberlin Orchestra has performed on tour in important cultural centers including Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, Benaroya Hall in Seattle, Cleveland's Severance Hall, two extended tours in Asia, and engagements at New York's Carnegie Hall in 2007 and 2013—performances described by *The New York Times* as “stellar.” In January 2016, the orchestra performed at Chicago's Symphony Center under the direction of Associate Professor of Conducting Raphael Jiménez in honor of the conservatory's 150th anniversary.

Ginastera: One Hundred is the sixth Oberlin Music title to feature the Oberlin Orchestra.

SCOTT SHAW



Yolanda Kondonassis
performing Ginastera's Harp
Concerto with the Oberlin
Orchestra (November 2015).

OBERLIN MUSIC is the official record label of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. It celebrates the artistic vision and superlative talent of Oberlin's faculty, students, and alumni—on campus and on tour. Essential to this mission is Clonick Hall, a superior recording facility dedicated to capturing studio sessions in the heart of the conservatory. Oberlin Music titles are available on CD and digital music channels worldwide. For more information, visit oberlin.edu/oberlinmusic.

OBERLIN CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC, founded in 1865 and situated amid the intellectual vitality of Oberlin College, is the oldest continuously operating conservatory in the United States. Recognized as a professional music school of the highest caliber, it was awarded the National Medal of Arts, the country's highest honor given to artists and arts patrons.

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James O'Leary thanks Andrea Katz, Steven Volk, Ana Cara, Claire Solomon, and Julius Reder-Carlson for all their help with accessing materials and translations.

Recorded November 13-15, 2015, and February 4, 2016, at Warner Concert Hall, Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Oberlin, Ohio; and February 10, 2016, at the Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, New York.

Jason Vieaux and Yolanda Kondonassis appear courtesy of Azica Records.

Ginastera photo at piano by Bruno Guth/Fotesa; others courtesy of Boosey & Hawkes.





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