



SAN FRANCISCO
PERFORMANCES

presents...

Edward Simon | Piano

Recorded Thursday, July 9, 2020

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Belvedere, CA

**FEDERICO
MOMPOU**

Song and Dance No. 1
Song and Dance No. 2
Song and Dance No. 3
Song and Dance No. 6
Song and Dance No. 8
Song and Dance No. 12

Música Callada, Book 1

I. Angelico
II. Lent
III. Placide
IV. Afflitto e penoso
V.
VI. Lento molto cantabile
VII. Lento profond
VIII. Semplice
IX. Lento

Prelude No. 8
Prelude No. 9
Prelude No. 10

Produced, engineered and mastered by **Matt Carr**

ARTIST PROFILE

Edward Simon, a native of Venezuela, has made a name for himself over decades in America as a jazz improviser, composer-arranger, band leader and educator. *DownBeat* has called him “one of the strongest pianists of his generation, with intuitive empathy and drum-like ingenuity,” while *Jazz Journal International* has singled out “his deep emotional statements” as a composer and improviser. Based in the San Francisco Bay Area as a member of the all-star SF-JAZZ Collective, he has been a Guggenheim Fellow along with being awarded multiple composition grants as part of the Chamber Music America’s New Jazz Works initiative. Simon, a Yamaha artist, has recorded 15 albums as a leader or co-leader. His latest is *Sorrows and Triumphs*, released via Sunnyside Records in April 2018; the album was declared “unmissable” in Nate Chinen’s *Take Five* column on WBGO.org, and the pianist was featured in an extensive *DownBeat* interview upon the disc’s release. This follows Simon’s 2016 album *Latin American Songbook*, which won him an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Jazz Album; a four-and-a-half-star *DownBeat* review also praised his fresh vision of classic Latin American songs as “grand and sophisticated.”

Another key release for Simon was his 2014 Sunnyside

album *Venezuelan Suite*, which saw the pianist blend the tuneful, buoyant sounds of his native country with the harmonically sophisticated, forward-looking manner of jazz. *All About Jazz* marveled: “*Venezuelan Suite*... is the perfect confluence of Venezuelan ideals, jazz language and chamber-esque sophistication. In short, it’s a masterpiece.” One of Simon’s most recent collaborative projects is the trio Steel House, with the pianist joined by bassist Scott Colley and drummer Brian Blade for a group that blends acoustic jazz improvisation with electronic-tinged atmospherics for an inviting, song-oriented sound. This virtuoso trio has performed at top venues across the country, with *L.A. Weekly* saying: “All-star bands can be a hit-and-miss prospect, but Steel House exceeds expectations...These extraordinary instrumentalists convert their shared histories into poetic, genre-leaping music.” The group presented its debut album, *Steel House*, via ArtistShare in 2017. Simon is on the faculty of the Roots, Jazz & American Music program at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and he has also served on the faculties of the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, City College of New York and University of the Arts.

PROGRAM NOTES

“This music has no air or light. It is a weak heartbeat.
One cannot ask of it to reach beyond a few millimeters in space,
but instead to penetrate the depths of our soul,
and the most secret regions of our spirit.
This music is quiet because its hearing is internal.”

“Primitive instinct...to search for the most expressive music with the
least amount of resources, to avoid any kind of development,
in which the subject appears stripped of all artifice,
always in search of a pure music.”

“I feel music as simple as the mountain’s path...Simplicity of strong emotion...
Our modern art is a return to the primitive...No, it is not going back, it is to “restart.”
In art, simplicity and complexity have currently inspired a restart.”

—*Federico Mompou*

Born in Barcelona in 1893, **Federico Mompou** studied piano with Pedro Serra at the Barcelona Conservatory until 1911. A recital by Gabriel Fauré and Maguéríte Long during the 1909–10 season influenced him deeply and he decided then and there to become a composer, to go to Paris to study.

Mompou left for Paris in November 1911 with a letter of recommendation from Enrique Granados for Fauré, the director of the Conservatoire. But in the waiting room the shy, young pianist became so frightened, he left without even talking to Fauré. In composing, he followed his own

instincts, reacting violently against the strict rules of musical theory. He spent from 1914 to 1920 in Barcelona in the Spanish military service, composing in secret. During these years he developed his artistic tenets and style.

In 1920 he returned to Paris, became acquainted with the works of Satie and Ravel, and continued his friendship with his teacher Ferdinand Motte-Lacroix who first performed his works and had some published. Mompou began to be known by Paris high society and his works began to be performed.

From 1931 to 1937 Mompou was active in the high society social life of Paris and published nothing. He began to long for solitude, and during the Second World War he returned to Barcelona in 1941. He remained there leading a solitary life dedicated to composing. He apparently need the isolation of Barcelona, rather than the high society of Paris, to dream and experience his musical sensations.

Mompou's music is introspective, personal, sometimes song-like, sometime dance-like with a popular folk quality. Often tinged with sadness, the music is dreamy and impressionistic, but always melodic and colorful—exquisite miniatures.

—*Program Notes by Dean Elder*