

## *Chanticleer Festival 2000*

*Ana Cervantes*

### 5. RECORDING

Thursday of the second week, after having played a number of concerts, we go to Earlham College's Goddard Chapel to record. Engineer David Ripp has just finished the Chanticleer Quartet's first CD, an anthology album of recordings from the past few festivals, and it is beautiful, featuring a cover by Nick Green, the youngest of the Klemperer-Green brood and a talented young artist; photography by Rubén Mendoza, (a gorgeous sunset photo of night falling over a barn on the farm); and music that ranges from Piazzolla to gospel (Rosemarie Gore, guest artist soprano of a few years ago, singing "Sweet Little Jesus Boy" with the quartet) to Beethoven and Brahms, finishing with klezmer from Harold Seletsky that will get the feet of dead people to dancing. If they come out well some of today's recordings will make it onto the next album.

It's a calm and professional and highly concentrated effort. We start with *Oaxaca* to warm up and then go straight into Brahms, so we'll hit it while we're fresh. Galindo next, and we all have the feeling that the second take is a keeper. The Quartet records the Bartók and Shostakovich while I take a break. On the floor in the back of the hall, I stretch out, silently, silently, while they record the Shostakovich, listening to the long, heartrending line of Salvo's first violin in the *Adagio* section, delicately out in front of the woven texture which is the rest of the quartet. All the instruments are *con sordino* (played with mutes), giving the sound a curious distance and a sense of being contained and intensely concentrated. It breaks my heart every time I hear it, especially the last grave comment which Caroline's second violin makes right before the cadence. It is accepting, sad, completely final, with nevertheless a kind of motherly gentleness about it which for me is the most heartbreaking touch of all.

Then it is time for Salvo and me to record Ravel's *Tzigane*, if we want. We want. Over the last two weeks we've developed a fine ensemble rapport; Salvo knows this piece like the back of his bow hand, and between our ensemble and his confidence the piece has a fire that is undeniable and contagious.

Nevertheless, Salvo and I are both tired by now, and sweating from the bright lights on the stage. Caroline says, "Let's turn out all the lights except what Ana needs to read the music. Can we do that?" David Ripp agrees, and gratefully we nod *Yes* as well. "OK," says Caroline, "now no stage, no lights, no theater, you're in some gypsy café in the backwoods of Spain or Rumania or whatever. Let 'er rip!"

So the lights go out and the transformation is magical. Salvo stands at his mike, stage front, a shadow to me, his sound more real than his image. No eye contact, we don't need it now, it's all ears, ears, ears wide open, the fabulously intricate musculature of hands connecting with the equally intricate synapses which connect us to each other, to our brains, to our ears, to the music. We do two takes only, and know we've got it.

Everyone else leaves and I stay to record the CPE Bach. I do the Márquez as well, knowing it's not ready to record yet by a long shot, just as an exercise. Suddenly I realize that I'm tired and starving; I ask David the time and it's almost 11PM. We started at 4:30. Time to go home and

have a sandwich and an Oreo, or three or four, and rest for the next day's performance. Later, much later, after playing Márquez in México a few times, after working with the composer again, after playing it in Cuba, and in the US again in November at the Smithsonian, I'll be ready to record it. I leave content.

NEXT... Part 6: [TRAIN TIME](#)