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KALEIDOSCOPE

CONTEMPORARY PIANO MUSIC BY FEMALE
COMPOSERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

ISABEL DOBARRO

KALEIDOSCOPE

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ISABEL DOBARRO, *piano*

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WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING

TOTAL TIME: 55:49

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Foreword

The engagement of new audiences, encompassing a spectrum of generations and social backgrounds, remains an ongoing endeavour for classical music in general and contemporary music in particular. *Kaleidoscope* rises to the challenge by extending an invitation to prospective audiences who may feel excluded by a musical programme that too narrowly represents gender, geography, culture and history. This inclusivity not only diversifies the musical landscape, but also contributes to the cultivation and dissemination of professional role models and icons for new generations of women composers, especially (although not only) from countries that have traditionally been left out of the classical Western canon.

The musical work of female composers must be spread through recordings, concerts and the publication of scores to guarantee their social accessibility and an awareness of this wealth of inspiration for the future. Filling this gap is a fundamental task today. May the emerging generations of women composers be able to identify with the protagonists of this album and their creative achievements. Let them see how very possible it is to be a woman, a composer, and to have your work recorded on a leading record label as played by such an outstanding pianist with a confirmed international career as Isabel Dobarro. Let these achievements inspire them to dare to pursue their musical career.

Kaleidoscope is a significant stride toward the normalisation of the programming of music composed by women and the integration of contemporary non-European music into the 21st-century musical lexicon. Such initiatives will invigorate the musical composition profession for new generations of women composers from regions too often marginalised from the classical Western canon. Broadening our horizons is a fundamental step toward both gender equity and the enrichment of contemporary music. Let us celebrate this step forward while reaffirming our commitment to the work that still lies ahead.

Patricia Kleinman

Patricia Kleinman is the founder and director of the initiative *Proyecto CompositorAs*, an organisation dedicated to the recuperation of unpublished works by women composer

THE MUSIC

Classical music is undergoing seismic shifts and embracing diversity in all its forms by expanding its repertoires, approaches and canonic constructions. As a classical piano album, Isabel Dobarro's transportative *Kaleidoscope* proposes a multicultural music interchange among women composers from distant continents, cultures and traditions. As performed by Dobarro, each artist's repertoire reflects a wealth of piano works that should inspire pianists and audiences alike while challenging and reverting the historical neglect of women in the classical genre.

From the Greek *kalos* (beautiful), *eidos* (form), and *scopio* (to observe), a *Kaleidoscope* refracts light to create colourful, spectacular shapes of inspiring symmetry. Similarly, this piano album expressively refracts musical soundscapes via wide-ranging cultural influences. Each kaleidoscopic gesture of Dobarro's virtuosic touch reveals new hues and patterns in each of the contributing composers' works.

Fed by Dobarro's advocacy for gender equity and sustainability, her oxygenating musical approach to each piece unveils a unique synthesis connected to the profound and sensitive ontological views, emotions and compositional styles of global women. The repertoire compels as a testament to the composers' brilliance in expanding the piano's musical boundaries, leaving a distinctive, lasting imprint on the classical genre.

GRAMMY-nominee Dobrinka Tabakova (Bulgaria) contributes *Nocturne* in her characteristic evocative compositional style once lauded as 'exciting and deeply moving by the *Washington Times*.¹ Composed in 2008, Tabakova's contemplative piece explores textural colours through a repetitive motif, with the left hand introducing a poignant melody during the middle section that intensely contrasts with the action of the right hand. Programmed at major venues across Europe and the United States, the Bulgarian's oeuvre has delighted audiences at the San Francisco Ballet, BBC Proms, Davos Summer Festival, the MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra, and more.

¹ <https://www.dobrinka.com/about/index.htm>

Estudio 3 by virtuoso composer Gabriela Ortiz (Mexico) strikes a bold contrast to Tabakova's left-right delicacy. Drawing on Ligeti, Ortiz presents an impassioned continuum demanding of a tour-de-force performance from pianist Dobarro. The score calls for a 'Latin feel' within very technically challenging textures, which Dobarro masterfully reaches, marking her virtuosic apogee. Ortiz is recognised as one of today's most notable composers, having been recently appointed Carnegie Hall Debs Composer's Chair for 2024–25. Her reputable works, performed by major orchestras like the Berlin Philharmonic and Los Angeles Philharmonic, affirm Ortiz's prominence in the contemporary music scene.

Nkeiru Okoye's (USA) *African Sketches* weaves the composer's Nigerian roots into each element of the suite. The work's second movement, *Dusk* honours Okoye's first musical mentor through a meditative sonority of exceptional ambiance that explodes the piano's resonance throughout its registers. Dobarro's delicate performance here affirms the movement independently of the suite while extending the tradition of African piano music thriving most prominently in Nigeria and Ghana. As a preeminent artist of African descent, Okoye is the first recipient of the International Florence Price Society Award for Composition and a distinguished Guggenheim Fellow.

Improvisation by Suad Bushnaq (Jordan) has roots in the Arabic system of melodic modes known as 'maqam'. Arpeggios ebb and flow between both hands, contrasting colours and exploring registers amid a nuanced Middle Eastern atmosphere. To Bushnaq's score offering a performer interpretive freedom in dynamics and tempo, Dobarro coaxes delicate well-articulated fingerings to underscore the piece's improvisational essence. Bushnaq stands as a seminal composer of classical and film music, with the BBC praising her compositions as 'reflective and touching'² – a testament to her ability to evoke deep emotions through nuanced musical narratives.

Yoko Kanno (Japan) composed *Hana Wa Saku* ('Flowers Will Bloom') after the horrifying tsunami and earthquake that struck Japan in 2011. Since its creation, this work has symbolised resilience and hope amidst catastrophe. The composer, widely regarded for her masterful versatility and contributions to film and videogame music, creates a sectional work where two contrasting themes, one lyrical and one hymnal, coexist to foster hope, and Dobarro's treatment does just that.

² <https://www.suadbushnaq.com/bio>

Pulitzer winner and Kennedy Honors recipient Tania León (Cuba) exhibits a masterful blend of her Latin heritage and contemporary language with *Tumbao*, a composition title also representing the basic rhythmic motif in Afro-Cuban popular music, as harnessed by Dobarro prominently on the left hand with lively bursts in contrast, sharpness and brilliance. León's composition, activism and pedagogy have established her as another leading figure in the contemporary musical landscape as well as a composer-in-residence for prestigious orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic and London Philharmonic. León was appointed Carnegie Hall Debs Composer's Chair for the 2023–24 season.

Blue Ocean by prominent pedagogue and composer Carolyn Morris (Australia) pertains to the educational volume *Australian Women Composers' Piano Anthology. Vol. III* published by Wirripang and conjures Morris's childhood along her home country's Great Ocean Road. Morris crafts a long-sustained melody over a constant flow of arpeggios that in Dobarro's hands presents a perpetual process of transformation, perhaps epitomising the highs and lows of the composer growing up beside the rhythmic dance of ocean waves.

Karen Tanaka (Japan) and her *Water Dance III* gracefully evokes water amid her compositional creativity, which unfolds in classic ABA structure. Its first and third sections are characterised by rapid arpeggios imbuing the piece with an ethereal lightness that mirrors the multifaceted hues and fluidity of water, while its middle section contrasts that lightness with the piano's lower register, casting a darker, more dramatic tone reminiscent of the ocean's hidden depths, which Dobarro tastefully articulates. Tanaka's extensive musical versatility has been performed by venerable orchestras such as the BBC Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony, and the NHK Symphony, among others.

Buenos Aires, Despierta y Sueña resonates as a heartfelt tribute to the Argentinian city by the prominent late composer Claudia Montero (Argentina), the winner of four Latin GRAMMY Awards who positioned herself as a seminal figure in Latin America. The piece conjures a nostalgic melody that elegantly hovers above an arpeggiated accompaniment. This minimalistic yet emotive structure allows Dobarro a vast breadth of romantic freedom to reinterpret its evocative musical cosmos, keeping the piece poignant and potent while honouring Montero's enduring legacy.

Renowned for her Pulitzer Prize and MacArthur Genius Grant, Julia Wolfe (USA) presents a fascinating compositional perspective with *Earring*. As Wolfe reflects, 'Earring, like much of my music, appears deceptively simple at first glance. However, once the fingers engage, the complexities unfold.' The primary challenge here for a pianist, which Dobarro brilliantly meets then transcends, lies in the hands' distinct independence: the right hand must persistently articulate a samba-like rhythm at the piano's zenith while the left drifts in a dream-like state. Wolfe is esteemed as one of the most influential composers of our era, and her imprint has been felt in music scenes across continents.

Gustave Le Gray, composed by GRAMMY and Pulitzer Prize recipient Caroline Shaw (USA), captivates as a deep dive into intriguing sonic techniques. Deploying fragmentation and repetition, the piece pays homage to photographer Gustave Le Gray and his contemporary, the composer Fryderyk Chopin. Shaw meticulously assembles each component of a musical puzzle to form Chopin's *Mazurka, Op. 17, No. 4*, expressed at the composition's centre. Hereafter, the work undergoes a deconstruction into contrasting tonal landscapes that traverse the spectrum of human sentiment. Considered one of the most influential composers of her era, Shaw shines in both the classical domain and as a rap and pop-music producer.

Kaleidoscope concludes with *Alalá das Paisaxes Verticais* ('Alalá of Vertical Landscapes') by composer Carme Rodríguez (Spain). Dedicated to Isabel Dobarro herself, this programmatic piece epitomises the coast of Galicia, birthplace of both the composer and first performer. Rooted in the traditional Alalá, a Galician melismatic solo chant, the piece weaves a rich tapestry of dynamic, formal, and textural contrasts derived from Galician traditional music. The piece's dedicatee brings this evocative musical homage to life as only she could.

Manuel Garcia-Orozco
PhD in Music
Columbia University

THE COMPOSERS

The prize-winning composer, **DOBRINKA TABAKOVA** (b. 1980, Plovdiv, Bulgaria), has lived in London since 1991, graduating from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, and obtaining a PhD from King's College London. Her music has been featured in films, dance and been programmed at festivals across Europe and the US. Tabakova has been resident composer at the Davos Summer Festival in Switzerland and Truro Cathedral, Cornwall (UK), as well as with the MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Swan (Stratford, UK). Tabakova has been commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Society, BBC Radio 3 and the European Broadcasting Union. Her debut profile album *String Paths* was nominated for a GRAMMY in 2014. In 2017 she was appointed composer-in-residence with the BBC Concert Orchestra. Tabakova's second album, devoted to her choral music and performed by the Truro Cathedral Choir with the BBC Concert Orchestra, received a *Gramophone Critics' Choice* (2019). In 2021, Dobrinka Tabakova completed her orchestral *Earth Suite* for the BBC Concert Orchestra and the violin concerto *The Patience of Trees* for the Manchester International Festival. In 2022, she was named the Hallé Orchestra's artist-in-association. An album of her orchestral works, recorded by the Hallé Orchestra was released in October 2023.

www.dobrinka.com

Latin GRAMMY-nominated **GABRIELA ORTIZ** is one of the foremost composers in Mexico today. A recipient of several honours and awards, her musical language achieves an extraordinary and expressive synthesis of tradition and the avant-garde; combining high art, folk and popular music in novel, frequently refined and always personal ways, achieving a balance between highly organised structure and improvisatory spontaneity. Ortiz has written music for dance, theatre and cinema, and has actively collaborated with poets, playwrights and historians. Her creative process focuses on the connections between gender issues, social justice, environmental concerns and the burden of racism, as well as the phenomenon of multiculturalism caused by globalisation, technological development, and mass migration. She has composed three operas, in all of which interdisciplinary collaboration has been a vital experience. Since 2016 Ortiz has been inducted to the Mexican Academy of Arts. In 2022 she

became a member of the prestigious Colegio Nacional, an honorary society created in order to assemble Mexico's foremost distinguished artists, writers, scientist and philosophers. In 2022 she was appointed curator of the Pan-American Music Initiative along with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel. She also has been appointed Debs Composer's Chair at Carnegie Hall for the 2024–25 season.

www.gabrielaortiz.com

NKEIRU OKOYE is an American-born composer of African American and Nigerian ancestry. She was born in New York, NY, and raised on Long Island. After studying composition, music theory, piano, conducting and Africana Studies at Oberlin Conservatory, she pursued graduate studies at Rutgers University and became one of the leading African American women composers. An activist through the arts, Okoye creates a body of work that welcomes and affirms both traditional and new audiences. Her works have been commissioned, performed and presented by the Detroit Symphony, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony, Opera North (UK), Mt. Holyoke College, The Juilliard School, Houston Grand Opera, the American Opera Project, Boston Landmarks Orchestra, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the University of Michigan Orchestras, Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Sinfonietta, Cleveland Opera Theater, Moscow Symphony, Tanglewood Music Festival, Virginia Symphony, Tulsa Opera, Royal Opera House, Da Capo Chamber Players, Cellist Matt Haimovitz, Pianist Lara Downes, and many others.

www.nkeiruokoye.com

SUAD BUSHNAQ, a dual Canadian-Jordanian citizen of Bosnian, Palestinian and Syrian heritage, is a four-time Canadian Screen Awards nominated, and Hollywood Music in Media Award-winning composer whose versatile style spans a number of genres. With more than 40 film credits to date, she has scored award-winning features and shorts that have screened at festivals including La Biennale di Venezia, Locarno, Hot Docs and Edinburgh.

She was competitively selected for the Festival de Cannes 'Spot the Composer' programme, and the SESAC film scoring residency in Los Angeles where she was mentored by composer Christophe Beck. Other awards Bushnaq has received include a Best Original Score at the Fine Arts Film Festival in Los Angeles. She holds a Bachelor in Music Composition from Canada's top music school, McGill University, and is an alumna of the Canadian Film Centre Slight Music Residency. Bushnaq was recently nominated for a Canadian Screen Award (Canada's equivalent to a BAFTA) for her score for the feature film *Jasmine Road* directed by Warren Sulatycky, and recently scored *Hanging Gardens*, a feature film by Ahmed Yassin Al-Daradji, which had its world premiere at the 79th edition of La Biennale di Venezia 2022.

www.suadbushnaq.com

YOKO KANNO is a lyric and song writer, arranger and music producer. Kanno has created music for movies, TV dramas, TV commercials, animation and video games. She has also produced and written music for many artists. Her pieces include *Cowboy Bebop*, *Genesis of Aquarion*, *Macross Frontier*, *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex*, music for the movie *Our Little Sister*, and the NHK historical TV drama *Naotora: The Lady Warlord*, among others. She also composed the eastern Japan earthquake (Fukushima) recovery support song, *Flowers Will Bloom – Hana wa saku*, for which she has made several arrangements. In the first year of the new Reiwa era (2019), she composed the Japanese emperor's enthronement celebration song, *Ray of Water*, and dedicated the performance to the emperor and the empress in front of the imperial palace. Most recently she composed the music for the Netflix version of *Cowboy Bebop* and *The Makanai: Cooking for the Maiko House*.

TANIA LEÓN (b. Havana, Cuba) is highly regarded as a composer, conductor, educator and advisor to arts organisations. Her orchestral work *Stride*, commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, was awarded the 2021 Pulitzer Prize in Music. In 2022, she was named a recipient of the 45th Annual Kennedy Center Honors for lifetime artistic achievement. In 2023, she was awarded the Michael Ludwig Nemmers Prize in Music Composition

from Northwestern University. León became the London Philharmonic Orchestra's composer-in-residence in 2023 and held Carnegie Hall's Debs Composer's Chair for its 2023–24 season. Honours include the New York Governor's Lifetime Achievement, inductions into the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and fellowship awards from ASCAP Victor Herbert Award and The Koussevitzky Music and Guggenheim Foundations, among others. León has received honorary doctorate degrees from Colgate University, Oberlin, SUNY Purchase College, and The Curtis Institute of Music, and served as US Artistic Ambassador of American Culture in Madrid, Spain. A CUNY Professor Emerita, she was awarded a 2018 United States Artists Fellowship, Chamber Music America's 2022 National Service Award, and Harvard University's 2022 Luise Vosgerchian Teaching Award. In 2023, Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library acquired Tania's León's archive.

www.tanialeon.com

CAROLYN MORRIS is an Australian composer based in Melbourne, Australia. With her music, she aims to spark the imagination of both the performer and listener. Many of her compositions are inspired by nature, and seek to communicate the essence of the human spirit and uplift the audience. Morris has composed music for chamber orchestra, choir, solo instruments, voice and chamber groups. She studied oboe and piano at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) Secondary School and subsequently graduated from the VCA with oboe as her principal study. Since graduating she has added to her performance, teaching and composing skills by using Kenja Communication Training, a uniquely Australian training method, co-founded by Ken Dyers and Jan Dyers. Carolyn Morris has performed as an oboist with the Australian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra at St Paul's and Alpha Sinfonia. As an accompanist she has played for the Melbourne Theatre Company and the Australian National Academy of Music, as well as oboists such as Diana Doherty, Anne Gilby, Gordon Hunt and Maurice Bourgue. Morris is a pedagogical artist with the Australian Music Centre, and her music is published by Wirripang. She was commissioned to compose the oboe sight reading book by the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB).

www.carolynmorris.com.au

KAREN TANAKA (b. Tokyo, Japan) is a versatile composer and pianist. She studied composition with Akira Miyoshi at Toho Gakuen School of Music in Tokyo, Tristan Murail in Paris, and Luciano Berio in Florence. In 1987, she was awarded the Gaudeamus Prize in the Netherlands for her piano concerto *Anamorphose*. In 1996 received the Margaret Lee Crofts Fellowship at the Tanglewood Music Center, and in 1998 was appointed as co-artistic director of the Yatsugatake Kogen Music Festival in Japan. Tanaka's works have been performed by distinguished orchestras and ensembles worldwide, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Netherlands Radio Symphony Orchestra, Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the Brodsky Quartet, Gothic Voices and Anúna, among many others. She has scored numerous short films, animations and documentaries. In 2012, she was selected as a fellow of the Sundance Institute's Composers Lab for feature film and was mentored by Hollywood's leading composers. In 2016, Tanaka served as an orchestrator for the BBC TV series *Planet Earth II*. She scored the animated film *Sister*, which was selected for prestigious film festivals including Sundance, Annecy, Ottawa, and nominated for the 92nd Academy Awards for Best Animated Short Film.

The Argentinian composer **CLAUDIA MONTERO** emerged as one of the most outstanding and acclaimed composers in Latin America. She was born in Buenos Aires in 1962 and later settled in Valencia, Spain until her passing in January 2021. Montero was frequently invited as a composer and lecturer to festivals such as the Cagliari International Music Festival in Italy, the Festival A Orillas del Guadalquivir and the Ayamonte Music Festival in Spain, the Gitarreland Festival in Germany and France, the Encuentro Latinoamericano en las Artes in Alcalá and the Festival Internacional de la Habana in Cuba. She has participated as a composer in conferences at the Universities of Valencia, Niš in Serbia, Jaum I, Giovanni Battista Martini in Bologna, Cagliari and Udine in Italy. Montero won four Latin GRAMMY Awards in the category of Best Contemporary Classical Composition, in 2014 for her *Concerto for Violin and String Orchestra* and in 2016 for her string quartet *Cuarteto para Buenos Aires*. In 2023, her work *Suite de los Buenos Aires* for piano and flute was nominated for the Latin GRAMMY Awards in the category Best Contemporary Classical Music Composition. Her works have been performed and recorded by many soloists and orchestras worldwide.

JULIA WOLFE's music is distinguished by an intense physicality and a relentless power that pushes performers to extremes and demands attention from the audience. She draws inspiration from folk, classical and rock genres, bringing a modern sensibility to each while simultaneously tearing down the walls between them. In addition to receiving the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in Music, Wolfe was a 2016 MacArthur Fellow. She received the 2015 Herb Alpert Award in Music, and was named *Musical America's* 2019 Composer of the Year. Julia Wolfe is co-founder/co-artistic director of New York's legendary music collective Bang on a Can, and is artistic director of NYU Steinhardt Music Composition. Wolfe's recent premieres include *Pretty* – premiered in June 2023 by conductor Kirill Petrenko and the Berlin Philharmonic, it was co-commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, The Philadelphia Orchestra and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. *UnEarth*, was commissioned and premiered in June 2023 by the New York Philharmonic. *Her Story*, a 45-minute semi-staged work for orchestra and women's chamber choir, received its world premiere in September 2022 with the Nashville Symphony, conductor Giancarlo Guerrero, the vocal ensemble Lorelei, and stage direction by Anne Kauffman.

www.juliawolfemusic.com

CAROLINE SHAW is a musician who moves among roles, genres, and mediums, trying to imagine a world of sound that has never been heard before but has always existed. She works often in collaboration with others, as producer, composer, violinist and vocalist. She is the recipient of the 2013 Pulitzer Prize in Music, several GRAMMY Awards, an honorary doctorate from Yale, and a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. Recent projects include the score to *Fleishman is in Trouble*, the score to Josephine Decker's *The Sky Is Everywhere*, and music for the National Theatre's production of *The Crucible*. Shaw has written over 100 works in the last decade, for Anne Sofie von Otter, Davóne Tines, Yo-Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, Dawn Upshaw, LA Phil, Philharmonia Baroque, Seattle Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Aizuri Quartet, The Crossing, Dover Quartet, Calidore Quartet, Brooklyn Rider, Miro Quartet, I Giardini, Ars Nova Copenhagen, Ariadne Greif, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Britt Festival, and the Vail Dance Festival. She has contributed production to albums by Rosalía, Woodkid, and Nas. Her work as vocalist or composer has appeared in several films, TV series, and podcasts, including *The Humans*, *Bombshell*, *Yellowjackets*, *Maid*, *Dark*, Beyoncé's *Homecoming*, *Tár*, Dolly Parton's *America*, and *More Perfect*.

www.carolineshaw.com

CARME RODRÍGUEZ grew up in a musical environment and studied piano, singing, guitar and percussion. She is a versatile composer, orchestrator, arranger and multi-instrumentalist. Rodríguez graduated in 2018 with honours in Contemporary Music Composition at the Transforming Arts Institute (TAI University) in Madrid. Living in Galicia and Madrid, she currently combines her work as a composer and as an arranger and orchestrator in concert, film, theatrical and TV projects. In 2022, she received a commission from the Galician Culture Council for the Letras Galegas Concert, performed by Zoar Ensemble, and an orchestration project for the Real Filharmonía de Galicia. In 2021, she composed a new piece for the Galician Symphony Orchestra's Project 2020(21), which premiered at the Resis Festival in A Coruña, conducted by Nacho de Paz. Her music has been performed by the Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León, ensembles such as neSg, Mbira-Duo, Grupo Instrumental Siglo XX, and solo performers including Isabel Dobarro, Steve Harriswangler and Noè Rodrigo. Awards she has received include X Galician Composition Contest for Concert Band (2017), 'Construíndo Sons' Award (2018), II International Composition Contest 'María de Pablos' (2019), CreaClásica Contest (2019) and III International Contest of Composition 'María de Pablos' (2020), among others.

www.carmerodriguez.com

ISABEL DOBARRO ON KALEIDOSCOPE

Kaleidoscope explores the spectrum of my musical journey, a journey whose paths have been deeply influenced by my discovery of works by women composers. For eight years my piano performance career has sought to gain attention for these marvellous women's relevant contributions. I want to promote their diverse musical output worldwide, and the present recording serves as a genesis for that. For different reasons, I deeply admire each of the composers selected for this album, and it was both a thrill and a delight to perform their works. Each composition has affected me profoundly, as a player, a person, and as a woman.

Dobrinka Tabakova's *Nocturne* explores an intimist atmosphere whose subtle colours and feelings never fail to touch one's soul, while Tania León's explosive *Tumbao* intersperses passionate Latin rhythms amid contemporary musical language, creating a piece full of life, hope and light. These two pieces perfectly set the tone for Gabriela Ortiz's fiery tour de force, *Estudio No. 3*, a virtuosic and imaginative treat for both pianist and listener.

Besides being an exploration, *Kaleidoscope* is also a dialogue, one where diverse musical languages merge, synthesize and flourish together. For example, throughout Julia Wolfe's *Earring*, two rhythms and two worlds, one rhythmic and one melodious, first move in different directions before gracefully fusing at the end. Yoko Kanno's work, *Hana wa saku*, dedicated to the victims of Japan's March 2011 earthquake, one of the country's deadliest, counterpoints sorrow with hope, sadness with light, ultimately becoming a wonderful anthem for resilience.

Water Dance by Karan Tanaka explores reflections of water and its variations as an eternal fount of inspiration. Similarly inspired by water, Carolyn Morris's soulful *Blue Ocean* transports the listener to the composer's earliest memories growing up by the sea along Australia's Great Ocean Road. Nkeiru Okoye's *Dusk*, from her *African Sketches*, takes us on another journey not only into the fascinating colours of African music but also into oneself. Melancholic and intimate, Okoye's piece closely connects to my inner emotions.

With its sense of nostalgia, *Buenos Aires, Despierta y Sueña* by Claudia Montero evocatively transports the listener into the very streets of that South American city, while Caroline Shaw's *Gustave Le Gray* offers not only a

centrepiece of the contemporary classical repertoire but a fascination that explores sound, form, transformation and colour. Global musical reach is also within the grasp of Suad Bushnaq's *Improvisation*, which invites the composer's Arabic musical roots into the Romantic piano language, creating a rich musical tapestry.

Kaleidoscope concludes very close to my heart, for I was honoured to be the dedicatee of Carme Rodríguez's *Alalá das Paisaxes Verticais*, a thrillingly evocative musical portrait of my home region of Galicia in northwestern Spain, where tradition and contemporaneity meet as compellingly as they do amid the tracks of this album.

Isabel Dobarro





Isabel Dobarro and producer Javier Monteverde
© Rubén Torres Melero

ISABEL DOBARRO

Dr Isabel Dobarro is one of the most internationally renowned Spanish pianists of her generation. She is a Professor at the Centro Superior Katarina Gurska, President of the European Music Centre Spain and invited as Visiting Professor at the London Performing Academy of Music in the UK. She has developed her career in the United States, Spain, Germany, Russia, Belgium, France, Argentina, Italy and Portugal.

As a soloist Dobarro has performed and lectured at some of the most renowned venues in the world, including Carnegie Hall, the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow, the European Parliament, the National Auditorium in Madrid and the Palau de la Música Catalana, among many others.

Her work as an advocate for female composers has been recognised with a Women to Follow Award, the Alfiler de Oro Prize, a New York Women Composers' Seed Money Grant and as a finalist in the Future Women of Classical Music Award in London. For her work in the recovery of music by women composers she has been invited to speak at the Women Now Conference together with Her Majesty Queen Letizia of Spain and film producer Kathleen Kennedy. In 2016 together with mezzo-soprano Anna Tonna, Isabel Dobarro created the Women in Music Project, an initiative that promotes music composed by women from around the world.

Committed to the performance of new music Dobarro has given national and world premieres of works by Eduardo Soutullo, Miguel Bustamante, Consuelo Díez, Juan Durán, Julia Dopico, Mercedes Zavala, Marga Richter and José Buenagú, among others. Her album *The Unknown Pauline Viardot* released in 2021 received critical acclaim.

Isabel Dobarro has formed duos with the concertmaster of the RTVE Symphony Orchestra Miguel Borrego, the guitar master José María Gallardo del Rey and the outstanding flautist Rubén Torres Melero. She has collaborated with the New York Philharmonic and also played with the Orquestra Simfònica Solidària de Barcelona, the Real Filharmonía de Galicia and the Orquestra Filarmónica de Braga, among others.



ISABEL DOBARRO
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KALEIDOSCOPE

CONTEMPORARY PIANO MUSIC BY FEMALE COMPOSERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

This recording is a testament to Isabel Dobarro's passionate commitment to the music of contemporary women composers and also to her promotion of their highly individual and richly varied perspectives. The composers heard on this album are ones she admires and they have all made outstanding contributions to the music world. Whether GRAMMY Award and Pulitzer Prize recipients, Guggenheim Award or Latin GRAMMY Award winners, the music here ranges across continents, cultures and traditions to inspire pianists and audiences alike, creating a new 21st-century lexicon.



ISABEL DOBARRO

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|----------|---|-----------|---|
| 1 | DOBRINKA TABAKOVA (b. 1980)
NOCTURNE (2008) 02:35 | 7 | CAROLYN MORRIS (b. 1970)
BLUE OCEAN (2020) 05:00 |
| 2 | GABRIELA ORTIZ (b. 1964)
ESTUDIOS ENTRE PRELUDIOS:
ESTUDIO 3, HOMENAJE A
JESUSA PALANCARES (2007) 05:54 | 8 | KAREN TANAKA (b. 1961)
WATER DANCE: III. VERY
LIGHTLY, LIKE A HARP (2008) 03:56 |
| 3 | NKEIRU OKOYE (b. 1972)
AFRICAN SKETCHES:
II. DUSK (2003–04) 02:52 | 9 | CLAUDIA MONTERO (1962–2021)
BUENOS AIRES, DESPIERTA Y
SUEÑA (2008) 02:36 |
| 4 | SUAD BUSHNAQ (b. 1982)
IMPROVISATION (2001–02) 02:14 | 10 | JULIA WOLFE (b. 1958)
EARRING (2000) 01:46 |
| 5 | YOKO KANNO (b. 1964)
HANA WA SAKU (2012)
(version for piano, 2015) 05:12 | 11 | CAROLINE SHAW (b. 1982)
GUSTAVE LE GRAY (2012) 13:43 |
| 6 | TANIA LEÓN (b. 1943)
TUMBAO (2005) 02:23 | 12 | CARME RODRÍGUEZ (b. 1996)
ALALÁ DAS PAISAXES
VERTICAIS (2021) * 06:51 |

* WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING

TOTAL TIME: 55:49



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