



reviews, news & interviews

Classical CDs Weekly: Sean Shibe, Morten Gunnar Larsen and Leonard Elschenbroich

English guitar repertoire, piano works from the Americas, plus 20th century French cello music

by [Graham Rickson](#) Saturday, 12 August 2017

Creole Connections: Piano music by Nazareth, Gottschalk and Piazzolla Morten Gunnar Larsen (piano) (Lawo Classics)

Creole? It's because the pieces on this disc are by composers from North and South America with Mediterranean roots: the subsequent mingling of classical European styles with indigenous music leading to new musical forms. Pianist Mort Gunnar Larsen sees the Brazilian composer Ernesto Nazareth as the pivotal figure, a colourful musician described by Villa-Lobos as "the true incarnation of the Brazilian soul". Poor Nazareth met a sticky end in 1934, and on the evidence of the eight pieces collected here, he's a composer you'd like to hear more of. His tangos are breezier affairs than the two by Astor Piazzolla included here, though they share Piazzolla's quirky originality. The tiny *Labirinto* has an infectious left hand part and some unexpected key changes. Best is the sublime, extended slow waltz *Turbilhão de beijos*. It could sound like a piece of naïve hack work in unsympathetic hands, but Larsen treats it with disarming respect.

Four short pieces by Gottschalk aren't quite in the same league, though an irresistible *Mazurk* comes close. David T Roberts' *Maria Antonieta Pons* is a delicious rumba, and I was floored by a pair of tiny dances by the Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona. An enchanting collection, played with lashings of rhythmic zip. Lawo's sound is predictably good. Only the minimal documentation disappoints, though information about the various composers can readily be found online.

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