

DANZAS CARIBEÑAS

CLASSICAL
SALON MUSIC
FROM CURAÇAO,
CUBA AND
VENEZUELA

MARCEL WORMS - PIANO



ABOUT THIS MUSIC COLLECTION

This CD contains a selection of the numerous elegant *danzas*, waltzes, *pasillos*, *danzóns*, *mazurkas* and *polkas* from the Caribbean.

The *danza* is generally considered the most exquisite and poetic form of 19th century Caribbean art, with the first *danza* being published in Havana in 1803. Traditionally, a *danza* consists of two or three sections. The first section can be traced back furthest in history, with its origins in the English country-dance of the 16th century. In 18th century France, country-dance became *contredanse*, from which the *cotillon* and the *quadrille* developed. The *contredanse* was very much *en vogue* in the French colony of Saint Domingue, as Haiti was then called. After a slave rebellion in 1791, numerous French colonists fled to the Cuban province of Oriente, taking with them their *contredanse* and sowing its seeds in the fertile Cuban soil. The enrichment of Hispano-Cuban culture with French colonial music at the end of the 18th century was a critical factor and sparked the birth of the Caribbean *danza*. Henceforth, the French *contredanse* with its more northern and restrained character became the introduction part of the *danza*, while the following parts evocating the emotional exuberance of passionate Latin-Iberian chants and of African rhythms.

The *Curaçao waltz* can be characterised by its rich use of syncopations in the melody as well as the rhythmical accompaniment. The basic rhythm is determined by the *hemiola*, a metrical pattern in which two bars in simple triple time (3/4) are articulated as if they were three bars in simple duple time (2/2 or 2/4). A typical Curaçao waltz has two or three parts, each of 16 bars. For a composer, the challenge is to create, within this tight miniature regime of a limited prescribed number of bars, a passionate and imaginative

succession of chords that are not only a pleasure to the ear but also provide wings to the feet of dancing couples. The waltzes on this music album were written to sublimate a moment of sorrow, to honour loved ones or to express elation.

The *pasillo* is a typical Latin American adaptation of the European waltz. It originated in the first half of the 19th century in Colombia where it received the name *pasillo de paso*: a dance of small steps. Beyond Colombia, the *pasillo* became popular in Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Central America, and also in Curaçao. The style, tone and tempo of the *pasillos* differ from country to country. In the Curaçaoan *pasillo*, the right hand plays a tuneful melody in a lyrical flowing style while the left hand can be characterized more as a whirlwind: strict rhythms such as the dactylus pattern consisting of one long beat and two short beats, combine with freely moving passages functioning as counter melodies while being at the same time highlighting pianistic virtuosity.

The *danzón* originates from Cuba. It developed in the second half of the 19th century as a successor to the *contradanza* and the *habanera*. The *danzón* reached its heights of popularity in Central America and the Caribbean during the first two decades of the 20th century. The rhythm of the *danzón* has a stronger African character than the *contradanza* and the *habanera*. This is created by the repetitive use of the Cuban *cinquillo*, a 5 part rhythm in one measure and four hits on the beat in a second measure. As with several other dances emanating from the Caribbean and Latin America, the *danzón* was initially regarded as scandalous. The rhythm of the *danzón* led to couples sinuously moving their hips. *Winy*, composed by Rudolf Palm, is the best-known *danzón* from Curaçao.

The *polka* originated in the first half of the 19th century in Bohemia but soon became very popular all over the world. The polka also became a popular dance in 19th century Curaçao. *El Neverí* composed by Joseph Sickman Corsen is a nice example of the many polkas that were composed in the Caribbean.

The *mazurka* originated in Poland. It is a stylised dance, in triple meter with a lively tempo and a heavy accent on the second or third beat. The mazurka which is still danced in Curaçao, albeit only by very skilled dancers, was considered to be the highlight of parties in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This CD includes a Mazurka de Salon (Op. 30) composed by Teresa Carreño from Venezuela. One may notice the influence of the Polish-French composer Frédéric Chopin.

ABOUT THE COMPOSERS

Jan Gerard Palm (Curaçao, 1831 - 1906) is often referred to as the patriarch of Curaçao's salon music and of the musical Palm dynasty. By a relatively young age, he had already directed several music ensembles. In 1859, he was appointed music director of the citizen's guard orchestra on Curaçao. Jan Gerard Palm played several instruments including piano, organ, clarinet, flute, lute and mandolin. His waltzes and mazurkas show a rich use of harmonic variations. His polkas, marches and galop reveal his buoyant lifestyle. In the predominantly prudish 19th century, he was the only composer who dared to write rousing tumbas. Palm was often progressive in the sense of not being afraid of using chords that were (and still are) relatively unusual. The rhythms of each of his danzas are typically complex, very Creole and sensual.

Ignacio Cervantes (Cuba, 1847 - 1905) is a key figure in the panorama of Caribbean salon music. Cervantes received his first piano lessons from Juan Miguel Jova and later from composers Nicolás Ruiz Espadero and Louis Moreau Gottschalk. Gottschalk encouraged him to study at the *Conservatoire de Paris* (1866-1870) under Antoine François Marmontel and Charles-Valentin Alkan, where he was awarded first prizes in composition and harmony with jury members including Auber and Gounod. After graduation, he returned to Cuba. Cervantes wrote one opera (*Maledetto*), various chamber pieces, zarzuelas and his world famous forty-one *Danzas Cubanas*. Four of these danzas, including the legendary *Adiós a Cuba*, are played by Marcel Worms on this CD recording.

Jules François Blasini (Curaçao, 1847 - 1887) certainly belongs on the short list of Jan Gerard Palm's most talented students. On the recommendation of Count Felix Baciocchi, the director of the Theatre at the French Court, Blasini was admitted at the *Conservatoire*

de Paris in 1865. Blasini became a student of Georges Mathias, who was himself taught by Frédéric Chopin. Blasini left the *Conservatoire de Paris* in 1866 and returned to Curaçao where he not only became a celebrated pianist, well known for his excellent piano technique, but also proved to be a talented composer. His compositions reveal a particular refined elegance expressed with a subtle use of rhythm.

Joseph Sickman Corsen (Curaçao, 1853 - 1911), both poet and musician, grew up in a family where music and literature were part of daily life. 'Shon Jo', as his friends called him, gave his first piano-recital when he was just thirteen years old. He also filled roles as a conductor, bandmaster and organ player, and he was one of the founders and editor of the influential periodical *Notas y Letras* (Notes and Letters). This periodical was published on Curaçao between 1886-1888, with numerous subscribers throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Corsen was the first to write a poem, *Atardi* in the Papiamentu language that is spoken in Curaçao, Aruba and Bonaire. Jacobo Palm later set this poem to music.

Maria Teresa Carreño (Venezuela, 1853 - New York, 1917) received her first piano lessons from her father. Exiled because of a revolution, the family settled in New York in 1862. At the age of 10 she performed at the White House for the president, Abraham Lincoln. In New York, Maria Teresa Carreño studied with Louis Moreau Gottschalk. She also spent four years in Paris as a student of Georges Mathias and Anton Rubinstein, after which she embarked upon a long and highly successful concert career. Teresa Carreño was one of the most accomplished pianists of her day, and the pianola recordings that she left give eloquent testimony to the elegance and refinement of her playing. She also composed works for the piano as well as a string quartet and the *Petite danse tsigane* for orchestra.

Rudolf Theodorus Palm (Curaçao, 1880 - 1950) received lessons in music and composition from his grandfather Jan Gerard Palm. Rudolf Palm played several instruments including piano, organ, saxophone, clarinet and flute. At the age of 19 he was appointed music director of the citizen's guard orchestra in Curaçao. Palm played flute in the Curaçao Philharmonic Orchestra and founded his own music ensemble *Los Dispuestos*, an orchestra consisting of 20 musicians, and a sextet, *Los seis*. His most talented students were his own sons the composers Albert Palm and Edgar Palm and his daughter Maria Henskes-Palm. As a composer Rudolf Palm wrote about 90 pieces for piano and orchestra and also some songs.

Jacobo José Maria Palm (Curaçao, 1887 - 1982) was similarly taught music and composition by his grandfather Jan Gerard Palm. He played several instruments including piano, organ, violin, clarinet and flute. For more than 50 years, he was an organist in the pro-cathedral Santa Ana in Curaçao. His improvisations on the organ were considered unequalled. For many years, Jacobo Palm was the concertmaster in the Curaçao Philharmonic Orchestra. He was also a member of the Curaçao string quartet where he played viola. As a concert pianist, Jacobo Palm accompanied world famous musicians such as the violist Andres Dalmau from Argentina and the Russian cellist Bogumil Sykora. His compositions not only reveal his admiration for the Polish composer Chopin, but also a delicate sensitivity for the polyrhythmic character of Caribbean and Latin American music. His most talented students included his daughters Elsa Maria and Irma Cecilia, his grandson Robert Rojer, Nelly Herschoe-Jongepier and Wim Statius Muller.

Albert Telésforo Palm (Curaçao, 1903 - 1958) was taught to play the piano by his father, the composer Rudolf Palm. Albert took lessons in cello playing from Paul Quirino de

Lima. At the early age of 13 he started to replace his father as an organist and he played piano in his father's orchestra. Albert Palm also played bass in the Curaçao Philharmonic Orchestra and in several other ensembles. When the silent film arrived on Curaçao, Albert Palm provided the musical accompaniment in *Salon Habana* (later named *Cinelandia*). Albert Palm composed various beautiful piano pieces including his well-known waltzes *¿Para que Amar?*, *Anna* and *Otrobanda*.

Edgar Rudolf Roemer Palm (Curaçao, 1905 – Curaçao, 1998), is another talented son of composer Rudolf Palm. Like his brother Albert, Edgar also learnt piano playing from his father. In his eleventh year, he was already regularly replacing his father as an organist. In 1924 Edgar moved to The Netherlands to study mechanical engineering. He combined his study with piano performances such as his first piano recital in the city theatre of 's Hertogenbosch. On graduating, he returned to Curaçao where he combined working for Shell with many musical performances. Edgar recorded 37 singles, 8 LP's and one CD with Curaçao music. He wrote more than seventy compositions including two ballets. To honour Edgar Palm, the Music Academy on Curaçao changed its name into the Edgar Palm Music Academy.

Wim Stadius Muller (Curaçao, 1930) studied piano with Jacobo Palm. In 1949 he continued his music studies in New York at the Juilliard School of Music. Having acquired his Master's degree and having followed postgraduate courses in composition, orchestral conducting, and orchestration he was appointed to the music faculty of the Ohio State University. In 1960 Stadius Muller returned to Curaçao to start a career in government, which was to take him to The Netherlands and eventually until his retirement, to Brussels on the General Secretariat of NATO. Stadius Muller, has performed several times in the USA,

Latin America, The Caribbean and in Europe. His compositions reflect the traditions of 19th and early 20th century Curaçao salon music but also the influence of Frédéric Chopin. The waltz *Shon Coco* he composed to honour his piano teacher Jacobo (shon Coco) Palm. During a visit of Stadius Muller to the Netherlands in 2014, Marcel Worms had the opportunity of playing the Stadius Muller's dances which he was about to record, for the composer himself.

Robert Anthony Rojer (Curaçao, 1939) started his musical training under the guidance of his maternal grandfather, Jacobo Palm. Robert Rojer was brought up in the ambience and traditions of 19th and early 20th century of Curaçao salon music. Rojer left Curaçao to study medicine in The Netherlands, and continued his musical training there. He specialised in Internal Medicine and was appointed a professor at the University of Groningen in 1999. Robert Rojer continued to find time to be an active pianist and composer. In 1988, twelve of his own compositions for two pianos were released on CD. In the French periodical *Répertoire*, Annette Lauth characterised his compositions as being 'absolutely original'. She also mentioned his polyrhythmic and chromatic style and typified Rojer's harmonies as 'chatoyant' (colourful and sparkling). On this CD one may enjoy two undeniable original and elegant danzas composed by Robert Rojer: *Something Else* and *Kaleidoscoop*.

Frédéric François Chopin (Poland, 1810 – France, 1849) has been a source of inspiration for many of the composers of classical salon music from the Caribbean. In Chopin's posthumous Waltz in A minor which Marcel Worms included as a bonus track on this CD, only the rhythm would need to be changed to make it sound as a real Caribbean waltz...

MARCEL WORMS

Marcel Worms (1951) studied at the Sweelinck Conservatorium in Amsterdam under Hans Dercksen. He also had lessons with the Russian pianist Yuri Egorov and with Alicia de Larrocha. After graduating in 1987, he continued his studies in chamber music with Alexandre Hrisanide and 20th century piano music with Hans Broekman. Marcel Worms is active both as a solo piano performer and as a member of several music ensembles. In 1990 he premiered early works of Schoenberg in Amsterdam and in 1991 he performed the complete piano works of Janáček. Since 1992 he has often performed the program *Jazz Influences in 20th Century Piano Music on Dutch stages*. In 1994, this program was recorded and released on the BVHAAST label. In 1996, Marcel Worms initiated a unique Blues project: to date, more than 200 Dutch and foreign composers, from over 50 countries on all continents, have contributed a work for solo piano. This ongoing project accounts for seven CD's already, with no end in sight. Since 1998, Marcel Worms has performed countless concerts comprising selections from his library of works dedicated to him and his project. His Blues project was heard in most European countries, the USA, Russia, South-America including Cuba, Africa, the Middle- and the Far East. Since 2002, Worms has been active with the piano works of Federico Mompou. In 2007 he released three CD's with this composer's music and organized a three-day Mompou Festival in Amsterdam. In 2009 he debuted on CD some 40 unpublished works of Mompou that had been rediscovered the year before in Barcelona. In 2012 Marcel Worms recorded on one CD both Bach's *Goldberg Variations* and *Metamorphosis* by Philip Glass. Worms is also well-known for his Latin American and Caribbean repertoire. A tango programme, which was performed in China, Argentina and elsewhere, resulted in the release of his CD *Tangos for Piano* in 2002. In 2013, he released a CD *Brazilian Dances for Piano* featuring music by the Brazilian composer Francisco Mignone.



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COLOPHON

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Websites:

www.marcelworms.com

www.zefrecords.nl

www.palmmusicfoundation.com

Jan Gerard Palm (1831-1906)	1	Valse	El 18 de febrero	1:12	
	2	Valse	¿Porqué Sufres?	1:31	
	3	Danza	La Trigueña	1:59	
Jules Blasini (1847-1887)	4	Danza	¿Para Cuál de las Tres?	3:12	
	5	Danza	¿Porqué no?	2:17	
	6	Valse	El Ramo de Milflores	1:54	
Rudolf Palm (1880-1950)	7	Valse	Anne Marie	2:20	
	8	Pasillo	Como tú lo quieres	3:27	
	9	Valse	Los Hermanos Hellburg	2:27	
	10	Danzón	Winy	2:28	
	Jacobo Palm (1887-1982)	11	Valse	Primero de Octubre	1:54
		12	Valse	Tierna Sonrisa	1:36
13		Danza	Rufo	1:46	
14		Pasillo	Ecos del Alma	1:36	
15		Pasillo	La Inocencia	2:35	
16		Tango	El Regreso de Jolley	1:12	
Maria Teresa Carreño (1853-1917)	17	Andante	Atardi	1:49	
	18	Mazurka	Mazurka de Salon Op. 30	2:45	
Ignacio Cervantes (1847-1905)	19	Danza	Almendares	1:21	
	20	Danza	Ilusiones Perdidas	1:13	
	21	Danza	La Encantadora	1:16	
	22	Danza	Adiós a Cuba	1:41	
Joseph Sickman Corsen (1853-1911)	23	Valse	¡Deja!	3:05	
	24	Polka	El Neverí	1:24	
	25	Danza	Amorosa	1:10	
	26	Valse	Simpatía	1:27	
Albert Palm (1903-1958)	27	Valse	Para Que Amar	1:06	
	28	Valse	Anna	1:56	
	29	Valse	Otrobanda	1:48	
Edgar Palm (1905-1998)	30	Valse	Padú	1:41	
	31	Valse	Cas Coral	2:28	
Robert Rojer (1939)	32	Danza	Something Else	2:50	
	33	Danza	Kaleidoskoop	2:23	
Wim Stadius Muller (1930)	34	Valse	Shon Coco	1:52	
	35	Valse	Nostalgiá	1:43	
	36	Calypso	El Curaçao	1:18	
Bonus track: Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)	37	Valse	Despedida	2:43	
	38	Valse	Valse en la mineur	2:20	