

CLÉLIA IRUZUN

Possessing her unique combination of a colourful Brazilian spirit and profound musicianship, London-based pianist Clélia Iruzun has become one of the most exciting musicians to emerge on the international concert scene in recent years.

Clélia's childhood was spent in the rich cultural atmosphere of Rio de Janeiro, where she began to play the piano at the age of four. She won her first competition when she was seven and made her orchestral debut playing Grieg's Concerto at 15. At 17, Clélia won a scholarship to continue her studies with the highly regarded Maria Curcio in London, followed by further advanced studies with Christopher Elton, who took her under his wing at the Royal Academy of Music from which she graduated with the Recital Diploma. Clélia continued post-graduate studies with Noretta Conci in London and with the highly distinguished Brazilian pianist and pedagogue Mercês de Silva Telles in Paris, who encouraged Clélia to develop her own definitive style. Her later mentors have included Nelson Friere, Jacques Klein, Stephen Kovacevich and Fou Ts'ong. Clélia also holds a Master's degree in Philosophy from Birkbeck College, University of London.

From the earliest years of her career, Clélia's piano artistry caught the attention of prominent Brazilian musical figures including Francisco Mignone, who wrote a Suite especially for her, and more recently Marlos Nobre, who also dedicated a work to her. Clélia has won many awards in Brazil and also in Europe, including the Paloma O'Shea in Santander and Pilar Bayona in Zaragoza, Spain, and the Tunbridge Wells Piano Competition in the UK.

Clélia Iruzun has given recitals and concerto performance all over Europe, the Americas and Asia. Her tours in China have included playing before huge audiences, including recitals at the Grand Theatre in Shanghai, Hangzhou, Ningbo and the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing. Her recital in Shanghai was voted one of the ten best concerts of the year. She has also toured China and Brazil with the Coull Quartet, with whom she has formed a close association, performing with them again in the UK on the South Bank as well as within the quartet's concert series in Warwick University. Clélia also founded the festival "Brazil Three Centuries of Music" with the Coull Quartet and they have already enjoyed several successful seasons in London.

In the UK, Clélia has performed at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room and at St John's, Smith Square, as well being a regular guest at music societies and festivals across the country. She has also appeared on radio and television, giving frequent broadcasts for BBC Radio 3. Her international concert tours have taken her across Canada and the USA, and in Europe to Yugoslavia, Poland and the Czech Republic, Portugal, France and Spain. She has also performed extensively in Scandinavia.

Clélia has given several first performances of works by Brazilian composers, including the Piano Quintet by Henrique Oswald, *Iara* by Francisco Mignone for piano and string quartet and the Villa-Lobos Octet. In addition, she premiered the Piano Sonata by João

Guilherme Ripper, *Desafio* for Piano and Guitar and Sonata Breve by Marlos Nobre, as well as the Sonatina for Piano and Guitar by Radames Gnattali, both at the South Bank Centre and at Wigmore Hall. Other significant premieres have been of Concertos with orchestra, including Mignone's Fantasia No.3 in Norway with the Kristiansand Orchestra, in London with the Lontano Ensemble and in Poland with the Poznan Philharmonic, where she also premiered the *Concertante do Imaginario* by Marlos Nobre.

In her native Brazil, Clélia is a regular performer on TV and radio and at the country's major concert halls, where she has also given the South American premieres of works by British composers including York Bowen and Arnold Bax. Recent performances in Brazil include the prestigious Campos do Jordão Festival and concertos with the country's leading orchestras including the Albéniz Concerto with the Filarmonica de Minas Gerais.

Clélia is also a much admired interpreter of the established classical masterpieces, which form a large part of her concert and recital programmes. In particular, she has been widely praised for her compelling performances of music from the Classical and Romantic repertoire, most notably for her interpretations of Mozart, Chopin and Schumann.

On disc, Clélia's extensive discography has championed the music of South American composers, with such albums as *Villa-Lobos Piano Music* (Meridian Records, re-issued 2005), *Latin American Dances* (1998, Intim Musik), *The Waltz Album* (2002, Intim Musik), and *Brazilian Mosaic* – including the world premiere recording of Marlos Noble's *Concertante do Imaginario* (2003, Lorelt), the music of *Lecuona* (2005, Lorelt) and *Francisco Mignone-Piano Music* (2007, Lorelt). A disc of Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No 1 and Concerto for Violin and Piano with the Vasteras Sinfonietta and Joachim Gustafsson (1999, Intim Musik) was selected by Swedish Radio as the best recording of the double concerto available.

Her further CDs include a recording with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra conducted by Odaline de la Martinez of the Concertino by Elizabeth Maconchy, as well as solo discs of Piano Music by Marlos Nobre, and - on the international SOMM label - two volumes of music by Federico Mompou, the second volume of which was selected as one of the 'Best Recordings of the Month' by *The Sunday Times*. Clélia's discs have invariably received enthusiastic critical reviews, notably a recent CD of music by the Brazilian composer Ernesto Nazareth, "Portrait of Rio", on the Lorelt label, issued in 2015.

Clélia's most recent CD for SOMM is of the Piano Concertos by Francisco Mignone and Isaac Albéniz with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Jac van Steen – a disc hailed by *International Piano*: 'Clélia comes into her vivid own, playing with a superb mastery and empathy; it is difficult to imagine [the music] played with greater skill and affection.'

Clélia is married to Renato and has two children, Raphael and Maria Clara. Making her home in London, Clélia returns to Brazil several times each year. When not performing, Clélia enjoys Philosophy, following films, is an avid art lover and enjoys cooking.

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