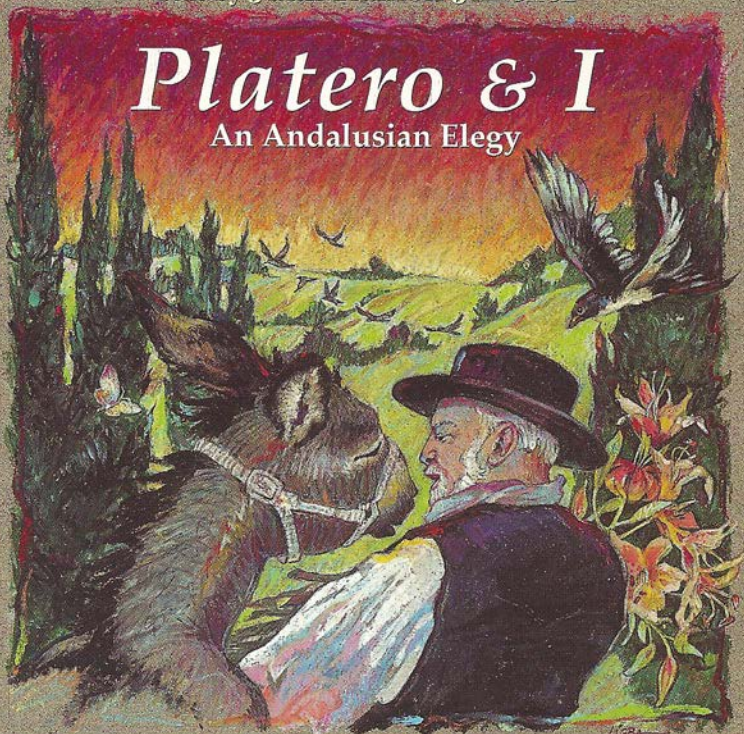


Music by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco
Text by Juan Ramón Jiménez

Platero & I

An Andalusian Elegy



Don Doyle, Narrator
Frank Koonce, Guitarist





**Mario
Castelnuovo-Tedesco**

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968) spent his youth in Florence, Italy, where he attended the Cherubini Royal Conservatory of Music and earned degrees in piano and in composition. He became widely known in Europe during the 1920s as a concert pianist and composer. In 1939, because of the emergence of Fascism in Italy and Mussolini's anti-Semitic policies, he immigrated to the United States, settling in California after a two-year stay in New York.

A highly skilled and prolific composer, Castelnuovo-Tedesco wrote in almost every musical form. His most celebrated works include the opera *La Mandragola*, overtures to twelve plays by Shakespeare (many of whose sonnets and poems he set to music), and two Shakespearean operas, *The Merchant of Venice* and *All's Well That Ends Well*.

He also wrote solos, concertos, and chamber music for a variety of instruments, over 200 songs, and over 300 scores for the motion picture industry, among them *Gaslight*, *And Then There Were None*, *The Loves of Carmen*, *The Yearling*, and *The Mask of the Avenger*.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco's students include noted composers Andre Previn, Henry Mancini, and Jerry Goldsmith, and guitarist Ronald Purcell who provides us with this personal testimonial:

With an uncanny sense of history, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco aligned himself with oral traditions, famous painters, and literary masterpieces, and he created musical moods evoking the emotional content of any text or graphic artwork. His compositional style is so heterogeneous that one hears in his works all musical styles that have come down through the ages. *Platero and I* is an excellent example of this symbiotic relationship between the composer and the story woven by Juan Ramón Jiménez. Castelnuovo-Tedesco's works are refreshing, eloquent, and sing the 'Song of Songs', and will continue to please audiences for generations to come.

Platero & I

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Platero & I, originally in Spanish (*Platero y yo*), is a book of prose by Juan Ramón Jiménez, dedicated to a little donkey named Platero (from *plata y oro* meaning 'silver and gold'). Subtitled 'An Andalusian Elegy', it shares the experiences of Jiménez and Platero, to whom the poet confides his deepest thoughts, feelings, and observations about daily life in his native village of Moguer in southern Spain. A shortened version of *Platero & I* appeared in 1914, and the first complete edition in 1917, both published in Madrid.

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco set 28 of the verses to music for narrator and guitar in 1960. Soon afterwards, Andrés Segovia recorded ten of them without narration since much of the musical score sounds complete by itself. Both the music and text independent of one another are highly expressive and moving; but together, they become a little-known masterpiece. This world premiere recording in English features 17 selections from *Platero & I* performed by guitarist Frank Koonce and narrator Don Doyle. Soprano Sherrie Grieve sings in three of the movements.



Juan Ramón Jiménez

Juan Ramón Jiménez (1881-1958) was born in the Andalusian village of Moguer. A leading poet of Spanish-speaking countries, he wrote over twenty-five volumes of poetry, including *Platero & I* (1907-1916)—the best known of his prose works. The Spanish Civil War forced Jiménez and his wife, Zenobia, to flee their homeland in 1936. After spending time in the United States and Cuba, the couple made their final home in Puerto Rico. Jiménez received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1956, three days before his wife's death. Heartbroken by her passing and being in poor health, he died two years later.

With regard to the present work, Jiménez noted:

Some people believe that I wrote *Platero & I* for children, that this is a book for children. No. In 1913, the editor of *La Lectura*, who knew that I was writing this book, asked me to advance a few of its most idyllic pages for its 'youth series'. Then, changing my idea momentarily, I wrote this prologue:

A NOTE TO THOSE GROWNUPS WHO MIGHT READ
THIS BOOK TO CHILDREN:

This short book, where joy and sadness are twins, like the ears of *Platero*, was written for . . . I have no idea for whom! . . . For whomever lyric poets write. . . . Now that it goes to the children, I do not add nor remove a single comma. That's it! 'Wherever there are children'—Novalis used to say—'there is a Golden Age'. Well, it is along this Golden Age, which is like a spiritual island fallen from the skies, that the heart of the poet walks, and it finds itself there so at home that its most cherished wish would be not to have to ever abandon it. . . .¹

¹*Platero and I, an Andalusian Elegy 1907-1916*, Juan Ramón Jiménez, trans. Antonio T. de Nicolás, (Boulder, CO & London: Shambhala Publications, 1978), p. ix.



Don Doyle

Photography by Tom Eldridge

Don Doyle is a nationally recognized storyteller, a professional actor, a director of theatre and opera, and a Professor Emeritus of Theatre at Arizona State University. He is a recipient of The Campton Bell Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Alliance for Theatre and Education (Artists and Educators Serving Young People), and has been presented with the Medallion of Merit Award from the National Society of Arts and Letters. Dr. Doyle currently serves on the Board of Directors of the National Storytelling Association.



Frank Koonce

Photography by Alfred Jacobs

Frank Koonce, director of the guitar program at Arizona State University since 1978, has achieved an international reputation as a performer and teacher. A Fulbright scholar to Italy, he is the author of a highly acclaimed guitar edition of Johann Sebastian Bach's complete solo lute works and of numerous articles in professional journals. Mr. Koonce currently serves as Chairman of the Guitar Foundation of America Advisory Board and is the 'Pedagogy Forum' editor for the GFA publication, *Soundboard*.

Platero & I

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Text by Juan Ramón Jiménez

**Don Doyle, Narrator, and Frank Koonce, Guitarist
with Sherrie Grieve, Soprano**

Producer: Todd Hallawell

Production assistance: Kay Hallawell

Digital recording and editing: Todd Hallawell

Technical consultants: Lee Furr & John Wroble

Digital mastering: Roger Seibel

Cover artist: Libba Tracy

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