ELISENDA FÁBREGAS

Biography (Long)

> *"Fábregas is one gifted with a blue guitar. Her tunes are beyond us, yet ourselves. Indeed they are tunes of things exactly as they are."*
> *—American Music Teacher Magazine*

Spanish/American composer **Elisenda Fábregas** (b. 1955 in Terrassa, Catalonia, as Elisenda Fábregas Torras) has been praised for writing with an "imaginatively colored… idiom" (*The New York Times*) and for an "individuality [that] shows through in yearning dissonances, quirky juxtapositions of thematic material and a pervasive sensuality" (San Antonio Express-News). Her music has been described as "complex and haunting" (Washington Post), with "expressive long lines and gorgeous lyricism" (NATS Journal), an "emotionally compelling aura" (New Mexican News), and a "marvelous sense of progression and development" (American Music Teacher Magazine). Her catalog ranges from the "dreamlike images… and illusive rhythms and harmonies" of the piano solo *Hommage à Mozart* to music "notable in its sturdy and arresting generative themes" with "motoric, muscular, exciting fast movements" (San Antonio Express-News). In 2000, Fábregas received the Shepherd Distinguished Composer Award from the Music Teachers National Association.

During the 2023–24 season, Fábregas was resident composer at the Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona, where four commissions received their premieres over multiple concerts. Her collaboration with Cuarteto Casals produced the string quartet *Fiery Earth* (also performed under the Catalan title *Terra encesa*), premiered at the Palau on March 19, 2025. Cuarteto Casals has since carried the work through the 2025–26 season to major halls across Europe and North America — including the Royal Concertgebouw, the Musikverein, the Pierre Boulez Saal, the Phillips Collection, and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation — with Asian premieres in Hong Kong and Seoul in October 2026. Fábregas's newest commissions include *Càntic d'exaltació*, an overture written for the 140th-anniversary season of Barcelona's Banda Municipal (premiered October 2025), and a song cycle on poems by Rainer Maria Rilke, commissioned by the International Hugo Wolf Academy Stuttgart for its 2026 Vocal Competition.

Fábregas's collaboration with pianist Jaeden Izik-Dzurko, winner of the 2024 Leeds International Piano Competition and First Prize winner at several others, began with *Somnis radiants* (2022), which he premiered at the Ruhr Piano Festival in Essen and performed widely across Spain and Germany, including at the Palau de la Música Catalana and, in its Spanish premiere, at the Auditorio Nacional de Madrid, where critic Arturo Reverter praised the work's "colorful, skillful palette." In 2024, he gave the world premiere of Fábregas's *Quintet for Piano and String Quartet* with the Atenea Quartet at the Palau. The two continue to collaborate on a substantial new piano suite (30–35 minutes) for Izik-Dzurko.

Fábregas's orchestral work has had a particularly strong life in South Korea and beyond. *Accents Catalans* for orchestra was commissioned and premiered by the Bucheon Philharmonic under Maestro Youngmin Park at the Seoul Arts Center as part of the 2016 Spring Orchestra Festival, with a further performance at Bucheon Citizens' Hall; it was later taken up by the West Coast Philharmonic Orchestra in Australia and by The Florida Orchestra in Clearwater and St. Petersburg. Her *Symphony No. 1* for symphonic band premiered in February 2014 at L'Auditori's Sala Pau Casals in Barcelona under Maestro Youngmin Park, and was later recorded by the Barcelona Symphonic Band under Maestro Salvador Brotons for the album *Catalan Wind Music, Vol. 2* (Naxos). Her collaboration with Youngmin Park began in 2011 with *Terra Mater* for symphony orchestra, commissioned and premiered by the Wonju Philharmonic in South Korea.

In the vocal and chamber repertoire, *Imitació del foc* (Imitation of Fire) for tenor and piano was released on the Bridge Records album *Visca L'Amor: Catalan Art Songs of the XX and XXI Centuries*, recorded by tenor Isaí Jess Muñoz and pianist Oksana Glouchko alongside works by leading Catalan composers including Frederic Mompou. Her early song cycle *Five Songs for Soprano and Piano* (1986) found new life in 2025 on soprano Naroa Intxausti's

album *Lorca de amor y muerte*, nearly four decades after its premiere. *Masks* for clarinet, cello, and piano, commissioned in 2019 by the IonSound Project Ensemble and premiered in New York by the Random Access Music (RAM) Concert Series with clarinetist Tom Piercy, has since been performed in several American cities and, in Catalonia, as part of the Primavera Musical a Vistabella series.

Fábregas has written for chamber ensemble, voice, choir, piano, orchestral instruments, symphony orchestra, and wind symphonic ensemble. Recordings of her music appear on Naxos, Bridge Records, Hänssler (Profil Edition) — whose recording of *Voices of the Rainforest* was named a "Recording of the Month" by MusicWeb International — Albany Records, Centaur Records, Mundo Arts, and NCA New Classical Adventure; her scores are published by Hofmeister Musikverlag (Leipzig), Alphonse Leduc & Cie. (Paris), and her own imprint, Hidden Oaks Music Co. Her music has been performed at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.; Merkin Concert Hall in New York; La Salle Cortot in Paris; the Sala Pau Casals at L'Auditori de Barcelona; the Ibero-American Institute of Berlin; the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society; the Seoul Arts Center; the Seoul International Percussion Festival; Esplanade Concerts in Singapore; and the Musikfest Stuttgart.

Catalan cellist Roger Morelló Ros has long championed Fábregas's cello chamber repertoire. He performed *Danses de la terra* (2020), a work written for him, throughout Europe during the 2023–24 season in his solo cello recital *La veu de Casals* (The Voice of Casals), and recorded it for his 2023 album of the same name, alongside works connected to cellist Pau Casals and Catalunya, released in April 2023 on IBS Classical. *Danses de la terra* also appears on cellist Sophie-Justine Herr's album *:innen* (PASCHENrecords), which was named to the Longlist of the Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik (German Record Critics' Award) in 2024. *Danses de la terra* was originally premiered at the Palau Güell in Barcelona on October 28, 2021. Though not based on literal quotation, the four-movement work — *Ball d'entrada* (Opening dance), *Ball ceremonial de purificació* (Ceremonial dance of purification), *Dansa de rondalla amorosa* (Dance of amorous tale), and *Records de sardana* (Memories of sardana) — draws on Fábregas's childhood memories of Catalan dance and folk music, recreated from the perspective of a Catalan who has lived abroad since 1977. Fábregas and Morelló Ros have also collaborated on *Uphill: From Clara to Robert* for cello and piano (2021) and *Duende* (2019), an arrangement for solo cello of a movement from *Colores Andaluces*. Her *Sonata for Flute and Piano* has been performed by Roberto Alvarez at the Esplanade Concerts in Singapore and the Australian Flute Festival, and was premiered worldwide by flutist Barbara Siesel in Beijing during the 1995 United Nations Conference on Women's Rights. Alvarez later gave the work its world premiere recording, with pianist Kseniia Vokhmianina, on the 2022 Odradek Records album *The Whirlwind Within* — reviewing the launch recital, critic Chang Tou Liang called the Sonata the recital's most substantial work and "a work that is accurately summed up by the album's title."

Fábregas holds doctorates from Columbia University Teachers College (Education) and the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University (Composition), and received a master's and bachelor's degree in piano performance from The Juilliard School. After eleven years as Visiting Professor of Western Classical Music and Asian Cultural Studies at Kyung Hee University's Humanitas College in Seoul, she now lives and composes full-time in Catalonia, Spain.