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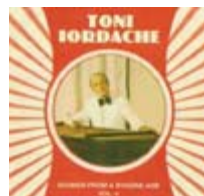
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## World Music CD Reviews Europe



### Toni Iordache

*Sounds from a Bygone Age, Vol. 4*

Asphalt Tango

By [Jeff Tamarkin](#)

Published February 19, 2008

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If someone could be dubbed the Jimi Hendrix or John Coltrane of the tambal, then Toni Iordache was surely that person. The centuries old stringed tambal, also known as the cimbalom, is a variation on the hammered dulcimer with origins in Asia. Its popularity is now centered primarily among the Roma people in Eastern Europe, and it was in Romania where Iordache learned his craft as a child in the 1940s. His virtuosity became legendary wherever Romanians had taken up roots, and he eventually toured Europe, Asia and the U.S. This compilation of recordings he made during the 1960s and '70s is all the testament anyone needs to understand Iordache's remarkable gift. The tambal possesses a naturally rich and sonorous quality, but Iordache brought a jazzman's improvisational intuitiveness to the instrument (like, say, Lionel Hampton did to the vibraphone), and imbued his music with a strong melodicism and taut sense of drama. The guy was also wickedly fast while the ballads are all heart-achingly sweet, the more uptempo tracks give Iordache a platform to take off.



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