

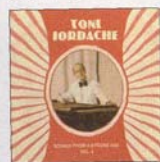
Toni Iordache
Sounds from a Bygone
Age Vol 4

Asphalt Tango CDATRI307

Full Price (51 mins)



Fastest cimbalom slinger in the East



In the West, the cimbalom or dulcimer is considered a rather quirky, laughable instrument. But seeing it in action in Eastern Europe is a different story. Romanian maestro Toni Iordache (1942-1988) was one of the celebrated musicians of his day, working with the best Bucharest *lautari* singers and travelling the world on tour. His

instrument was not the small portable cimbalom (or *țambal* as it's known in Romanian) still seen in many Romanian Gypsy bands, but the concert instrument developed by J.V. Schunda in Hungary at the end of the 19th century. Iordache was so successful that he was arrested in the 70s for illegal possession of foreign currency (thanks to his international tours). At his trial, one of the most prestigious Bucharest orchestra leaders said: "We have three giants in Romania – Nicolae Ceaușescu [the head of state], Ilie Nastase [the tennis champion] and *tambal* player Toni Iordache. Do you really want to convict him for a few dollars?"

The virtuoso speed of Iordache's web of sound was legendary and it's »

audible on tracks such as 'Ca La Breaza'. In France they once measured it at 25 hits per second in a scientific test, but what makes his music so good is not the speed, but the subtle syncopations and textures with which he colours it. His 'Balada Haiduceasca' is a veritable *étude* for cimbalom, full of poetic playing. The other real delight of this disc is the presence of the great Gypsy vocalists Gabi Lunca and Romica Puceanu. The way Puceanu slides from note to note on 'Tinerete, Tinerete', with Iordache punctuating the vocals alongside his wild solos, is one of the highpoints of Romanian music.

Simon Broughton