

The Scotsman

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Toni Jordache: Sounds from a bygone age Volume 4

CD-ATR 1307

The tambal is Romania's name for the zither played with two sticks with their heads wrapped in cotton: Toni Jordache (1942-88) was its undisputed master in Ceausescu's Communist heyday. Indeed, when he was imprisoned for possessing a few dollars, one of his supporters angrily asked why one of their country's three celebrities (the others being Ceausescu and tennis ace Ilie Nastase) deserved such vengeful treatment; his fellow-convicts ensured that his fragile health was not further damaged, by doing his hard labour for him. The sound here is sweet old-fashioned analogue do we now prize that so much because it denotes genuineness? But do those hammers fly! His top frequency was timed at an amazing 25 beats per second, and the faster he goes, the closer we pay attention. But there are other pleasures to savour here, notably violin, trumpet, and clarinet riffs, and solos by Gypsy singers backed by the band in that wonderfully insinuating aksak rhythm which characterises their slow dances. Recorded in the Sixties, this cd takes us back to the world of those Gypsy magicians Taraf de Haidouks before fame took away their edge, but it also has some deliciously jazzy moments.

Michael Church