

## PROGRAM NOTES FOR ROMANTIC MUSIC OF SPAIN

Known as the Spanish Poet of the piano, the romantic spirit of the music of Enrique Granados evoked nostalgia and things of the past and had a powerful effect on all those who heard the composer play his own works. His music was full of inflexions, nuances and accents. These were to have a profound impact on the great Andalucian composer, Manuel de Falla.

In 1903, an important competition was held at the Madrid Royal Conservatory of Music in which both Falla and Granados competed. Both composers submitted an *Allegro de concierto* and although the decision was difficult for the jury to make, Granados won the competition. Despite the outcome of the competition, the two men remained lifelong friends.

Falla had the highest regard for Granados and was among the many who demanded justice from those that had snatched away Spain's beloved and brilliant musician in the prime of his life. After the tragic death of Granados and his wife whose ship had been torpedoed by a German submarine on their way home from the States, in spite of secret sanctions to let the vessel proceed unharmed, Falla sought to preserve the precious treasure Granados had left behind. In Falla's opinion, the musical heritage that Granados had left to Spain was a vastly, rich legacy because it had been created out of the strength of the composer's own intelligence and will.

One of the last things Falla did before leaving Spain himself, was to return to the Port of Barcelona and pay homage to his dear friend from the place where Granados had set sail on his fateful voyage.

### *MOLTO APPASSIONATA*

One of the outstanding characteristics of Spanish romanticism was its archaic graciousness. In our opening selection, the *Molto appassionata* from the *Escenas Romanticas* Granados evokes the spirit of archaic graciousness in several ways.

At the outset we hear the rising interval of the fourth that constitutes the melodic theme throughout the work. The interval of the fourth was thought to have originated with the ancient oriental influence that was brought to Spain many centuries ago. Its quality brings a deep sadness to the sound and evokes memories of the far distant past.

To further enhance the spirit of archaic graciousness, Granados returns to the use of an old medieval device called dialogue whereby the theme appears to be engaged in a conversation with two or more other musical voices. He also uses another old device called colour whereby the theme is transferred from range to range as opposed to moving it through different keys by modulation.

At the close of the work, we are given one more opportunity to reflect upon its spirit of archaic graciousness as the composer quietly and delicately extinguishes the theme.

### *VALSES POETICOS*

The *Valses poeticos* belong to Granados early period of salon pieces. Unlike much of the romantic music of the nineteenth century, they were never intended to be pictorial or dramatic. Their elements were drawn from aristocratic life at the courts of England, France and Spain.

Elegant and shamelessly romantic, the *Valses poeticos* reflect the lifestyle of their composer and an old Madrid he deeply adored.

### *EL PELELE*

Nothing could be <sup>more</sup> romantic than ~~this~~ <sup>own next</sup> charming piece of music that comes from Granados opera, *Goyescas*.

In Spain, <sup>not so many</sup> ~~some~~ centuries ago, when love had flown or an arranged marriage contract could offer nothing more than a tiresome old husband, no matter how rich he might be, it was the custom of the young woman of the household, in question and her friends to make a scarecrow. The effigy was stuffed with straw and dressed in clothing that suspiciously resembled the gentleman, also in question.

The strawman was then tossed vigorously up into the air over and over until there was nothing left of it but a few bits of straw. It was the

belief that once the strawman had been destroyed so then would also the love that the young woman had had for her beloved.

As for the arranged marriage contract, it was the fervent prayer of that young woman that the destruction of the strawman would make the contract null and void and she could then ride off into the sunset with the beloved of her choice.

### CANCION ARABE

One of the outstanding individuals in Granados life was the great Spanish musicologist, Felipe Pedrell. During his years of research Pedrell became very aware of the many cultural influences that had passed through Spain and he encouraged composers such as Granados to think ~~about incorporating~~ <sup>reflect</sup> these influences in their own writing. Granados took Pedrell's advice seriously and his contribution became part of the rich legacy he left to Spain.

The *Cancion arabe* reflects the enormous impact of the ~~Arabs in~~ <sup>Arabian</sup> Spain. Granados captures the ~~exoticism and mystery~~ <sup>exoticism</sup> of that historical time in the past through such elements as long pauses, changing time signatures and the prominent use of the interval of the fifth.

### DOCE DANZAS ESPANOLAS

The twelve Spanish dances constituted a point of departure for Granados in his writing. Each dance exuded beauty in both its melody and harmony. Characteristics of Spanish romanticism continued to be reflected through his use of old modes and unique tonality while his new direction, nationalism, ~~was reflected through~~ <sup>was</sup> the aristocratic spontaneity of his original forms.

### PLAYERA

Our first dance is based on an ancient lament. Sketched on the modality of E it features ~~elements of ancient Andalusian music~~ <sup>some of the distinctive elements of Andalusian music</sup> with its falling cadence, ~~narrow melodic range~~ <sup>melody that can be easily be</sup> and guitar-like accompaniment.

## MELANCOLICO

This dance <sup>was given its name</sup> takes its name from the downward <sup>the downward</sup> turn of the melodic <sup>melody</sup> figure and its constant return to the original key after each modulation. <sup>the central</sup>

Although it has a certain rusticity to its sound, Granados <sup>also</sup> manages to express <sup>some of</sup> the quintessential qualities of Spanish romanticism – elegance, and refinement. <sup>nostalgia & melancholy</sup>

## LA ROMANTICA

In this dance the composer combines elements of Spanish romanticism through his use of an old mode that alternates with the aristocratic spontaneity of the more nationalistic sections of the overall form. <sup>Granados' reference to the past & the influence of the historical</sup>

<sup>On</sup> last piece La Romantica embodies elements of both Spanish Romanticism & nationalism thru composer's use of an old mode that ~~he alternates with an~~ and ~~an~~ original form