

Albéniz was not a romantic in the same sense as Chopin or Schumann. Objectivity and realism are consistent characteristics of his style, and this emotional detachment set him apart from other Spanish composers of the late nineteenth century. A trait he had in common with them was the tendency to look to the Spanish countryside for native sources of inspiration.

Manuel de Falla embodies the spirit of contemporary Spanish music. He was a master craftsman who evidently did not allow everything he composed to be published. Although he wrote little for the piano, his music for that instrument reverberates with local color and sheer sonic splendor. Included among his piano works are *Pièces espagnoles* (*Spanish Pieces*), *Fantasia bética* (*Baetican Fantasy*), and *Danza ritual del fuego* (*Ritual Fire Dance*), an orchestral piece from of the ballet *El amor brujo*, from which Falla made a solo piano arrangement.

Program notes by José Melitón and Elena Martín
Adapted and edited by Elmer Booze

*For the convenience of concertgoers,
the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 p.m.*

*The use of cameras or recording equipment during
the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell
phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.*

The Sixtieth Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2416th Concert

ELENA MARTÍN and JOSÉ MELITÓN, *duo-pianists*

Presented in honor of the exhibition *Goya: Images of Women*

Sunday Evening, 7 April 2002
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

PROGRAM

Enrique Granados
(1867–1916)

Complaints, or The Maja and the Nightingale
from *Goyescas* (1911–1912)
(Arranged for two pianos by Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson)

Antonio Soler
(1729–1783)

Concerto No. 6 for Two Keyboards

Allegro; andante
Minué

Isaac Albéniz
(1860–1909)

Cadiz (Cancion) from *Suite española* (1866)
(Transcribed for two pianos by Elena Martín)

Manuel de Falla
(1876–1946)

Spanish Dance No. 1 from *La vida breve*
(Transcribed for two pianos by Elena Martín)

Albéniz

Sevilla (Sevillanas) from *Suite española*
(Transcribed for two pianos by Elena Martín)

INTERMISSION

Albéniz

Pavana capricho
Op. 12 (1883)
(Transcribed for two pianos by Elena Martín)

Soler

Concerto No. 1 for Two Keyboards
Andante
Minué

Soler

Concerto No. 3 for Two Keyboards

Andantino
Minué

Granados

Allegro de concierto
(Transcribed for two pianos by Elena Martín)

Falla

Spanish Dance No. 2 from *La vida breve*
(Transcribed for two pianos by Elena Martín)

Albéniz

Aragon (Fantasia) from *Suite española*
(Transcribed for two pianos by Elena Martín)

Elena Martín and **José Melitón** have wide experience as both solo and ensemble performers and have won numerous competitions in the United States, Asia, and Europe. Currently dividing their time between Spain and the United States, they have received warm response to their performances of Spanish music for two pianos four hands, much of which has been transcribed for this medium by Elena Martín. They have appeared on Radio Nacional de España, National Public Radio, Radio and Television of Hong Kong, Radio Rijnmond Rotterdam, and the Spanish-language cable network Galavisión. Martín and Melitón both hold the *título superior de piano* from the Real Conservatorio Superior de Música de Madrid as well as master of music degrees from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Their musical endeavors receive regular support from the Spanish Ministry of External Affairs, which assisted with the recording and release of their most recent CD (*Duende*) on the Centaur label. Reviews of the recording have appeared in such prestigious music magazines as *American Music Teacher*, *American Record Guide*, and *Música y Educación* (Madrid).

For political and economic reasons, a lack of national identity plagued Spanish composers during the nineteenth century. Italian music dominated the Iberian Peninsula, preventing the Spanish musical heritage

from growing and barring German and Russian musical influences from the region completely. Only in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century was there a renaissance of the indigenous arts in Spain. In piano music, this rebirth resulted in a magnificent repertoire created by four distinguished composers: Isaac Albéniz, Enrique Granados, Manuel de Falla, and Joaquín Turina. Their works constitute what has been called the golden age of piano music in Spain. They created a truly Spanish nationalist school and freed Spain from the influence of Italian music. Another composer, Felipe Pedrell, who was also a musicologist and critic, promoted this development, encouraging his students (among them Albéniz and Granados) to change the course of Spanish music history by exploiting the distinctive characteristics of the emerging Spanish idiom.

Many of these idiomatic gestures were drawn from a rich and diverse tradition of folk music and dance. Instruments such as the castanets and the guitar contributed special rhythmic and melodic patterns. In addition, Arab influences manifested themselves in melismatic passages and unusual scale patterns. All Spanish and some non-Spanish composers of keyboard music from Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1787) onward have introduced these patterns as well as guitar effects into their works. The slow, expressive *cante jondo* (*Gypsy deep song*), an integral part of Spanish folklore, was the source of inspiration for the more melancholy melodies. On the other hand, the lively Spanish dance tunes, rich in color, life, and emotion, continue to be a passionate force that directly affects the listener.

Enrique Granados identified strongly with Francisco de Goya and dedicated much of his work to reproducing in music the romantic ambiance of the Madrid that Goya passionately portrayed in his paintings and tapestries. He wrote: “I fell in love with the psychology of Goya, with his palette. With him, and with the Duchess of Alba, with his *Maja Señora*, with his models, with his disputes, loves, and flirtations....” The piano suite *Goyescas* is Granados’ masterpiece and holds an important place in the repertoire. *Quejas o La maja y el ruiseñor* (*Complaints, or The Maja and the Nightingale*) is a lovely character piece from this collection. The emphasis on melody, lush harmonies, sensitive

exploitation of the instrument’s sonorities, and poetic atmosphere (all reminiscent of Chopin’s artistic sensibilities) have made the work an extremely popular item in the romantic piano literature. In 1914 Granados expanded *Goyescas* into an opera bearing the same name.

The preeminent composer of Spanish music from the eighteenth century, Padre Antonio Soler (1729–1783) studied at the choir school of the Montserrat Monastery before becoming an apprentice under the famous organist and composer José Elias (fl. 1715–1751). Elias had been a pupil of Juan Bautista José Cabanilles (1644–1712), chief organist of the Cathedral of Valencia. While still a youth, Soler was appointed music master of Lérida Cathedral. Shortly after entering the Hieronymite order in 1752, Soler was named organist and choirmaster of El Escorial Monastery outside Madrid, a position he held until his death.

Between 1752 and 1757 Soler studied under Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757), who also resided in Madrid. Although Scarlatti left a noticeable influence on Soler’s keyboard compositions, these pieces should by no means be thought of as Scarlatti imitations, as Soler’s music is deeply Iberian in nature and sentiment. In addition, the Italian province of Naples, Scarlatti’s homeland, had been a Spanish possession for only a short time, and the Italian hegemony in the Spanish musical world that prevailed in the nineteenth century had not yet begun.

During the months when the Spanish royal family was in attendance at El Escorial, Soler gave harpsichord instruction to the Infante Gabriel of Bourbon, son of King Charles III. In order to challenge and entertain his royal pupil, Soler composed six concertos for two keyboard players, each consisting of two movements. The only extant source of these concertos, a hand-written copy, is contained in the music archive of El Escorial Monastery.

Although Isaac Albéniz associated with some of the best-known and most influential French composers of his day (Gabriel Fauré, Vincent d’Indy, and Paul Dukas), he maintained a distinct Spanish flavor in his music and became one of the musical heroes of his native land. Some of his most important works for piano include *La vega*, *Azulejos*, *Suite española*, *Iberia*, and *Navarra*.