

“El polo” is a bittersweet Andalusian song and dance that is similar to the “Rondeña” from Book Two of *Ibéria*. It reflects the street music that is heard at night in the southern part of Spain.

Mimicking the milieu of Lavapiés, one of the composer’s favorite quarters in the city of Madrid, the third piece in Book Three, “Lavapiés,” encapsulates the infectious festive nature inherent in the songs and dances of its inhabitants. To enhance its representation, Albéniz instructs the performer to play the piece with the utmost spirit and independence.

Book Three of *Ibéria*, with its highly polished musical epigrams, presents only one aspect of this significant Spanish showpiece. The whole suite, again quoting Townsend, “is the wonder of piano music..., the goal of the flamenco and summit of the gypsy style....Never has piano writing gone so far. *Ibéria* has, without a doubt, a place, perhaps the highest, among the most luminous stars of the king of instruments.”

Program notes by Elmer Booze

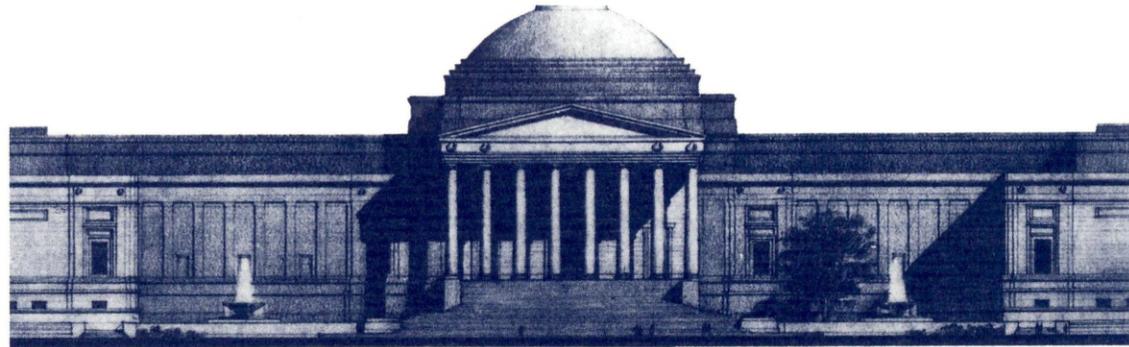
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

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

The Sixty-second Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2478th Concert

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN, *pianist*

Sunday Evening, 28 December 2003
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

Sonata in C Major, K. 330
(1781–1783)

Allegro moderato
Andante cantabile
Allegretto

Robert Schumann
(1810–1856)

Fantasiestücke, op. 12
(1837)

Des Abends (In the Evening)
Aufschwung (Soaring)
Warum? (Why?)
Grillen (Whims)
In der Nacht (In the Night)
Fabel (Fable)
Traumeswirren (Troubled Dreams)
Ende vom Lied (The End of the Song)

Intermission

Issac Albéniz
(1860–1909)

Ibéria, Book Three
(1907)

El Albaicín
El polo
Lavapiés

The Musician

Winner of the 1985 Carnegie Hall Competition, pianist **Marc-André Hamelin** is renowned for his superb musical virtuosity and refined pianism. He is equally renowned for his attention to lesser-known composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His interest in exploring both traditional and unfamiliar repertoire is reflected in the extensive discography he has produced under exclusive contract with the British record company Hyperion. His thirty-six recordings include concertos by Alkan, Berstein, Bolcom, Henselt, Korngold, and Joseph Marx, and solo discs of Alkan (the Canadian Juno Award, 1966), Catoire, Grainger (Soundscapes Award, 1977 [Australia]), and Schumann. Hamelin's compendium, "The Composer-Pianists: From Alkan to Hamelin," won the Deutsche Schallplattenkritik Prize for 1997–1998.

With his reputation well established worldwide, Marc-André Hamelin has given solo recitals in prestigious venues in such cities as Amsterdam, Berlin, Frankfurt, New York, Paris, Vienna, and Washington, D.C. His numerous festival appearances include the Ravinia Festival, the Ruhr Piano Festival, Mexico's Cervantino Festival, the Singapore International Piano Festival, the Snape Maltings, and the BBC Proms Festival in London. Hamelin has toured with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and has appeared with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the Chicago, Detroit, Helsinki, Montreal, Royal Concertgebouw, Toronto, Vancouver, and Philadelphia Orchestras as well as the BBC Philharmonic and the BBC Symphony.

A winner of several Grammy nominations, instrumental awards, and unanimous critical praise for his unique musical accomplishments, Hamelin was born in Montreal, Canada. He began to play the piano at age five and by age nine had already won the top prize in the Canadian Music Competition. Hamelin's father, a pharmacist who was also a keen pianist, introduced him to the works of Alkan, Medtner, and Sorabji at a very young age. His principal teachers were Yvonne Hubert, Harvey Wedeen, and Russell Sherman. Hamelin studied at the École Vincent d'Indy in Montreal and later at Temple University in Philadelphia,

where he now makes his home. Marc-André Hamelin appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Colbert Artists Management, Inc., of New York City.

Program Notes

Mozart's *Sonata in C Major, K. 330*, has 1778 as its date of composition in some editions, but it was actually composed between 1781 and 1783, as cited in *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, Eighth Edition. The death of Mozart's mother in 1778 introduced a cloud of darkness that understandably affected his life, and many of the sonatas he wrote between 1778 and 1781 reveal a lugubrious ambiance, reflecting sentiments reverberating from this and other personal tragedies. However, Mozart's attempt at gaining new emotional ground seems to have taken place in this sonata. The outer movements (Allegro moderato and Allegretto) are brimming with effulgence and animation, while the inner movement (Andante) provides an elegant slow theme that is mellifluous and seductive in its contrasting role.

Schumann's *Fantasiestücke (Fantasy Pieces)*, op. 12, are an expressively conceived but loosely knit collection of eight contrasting sketches, dedicated to a Miss Robena Laidlav. Fantasy, taken to mean bizarre or incredible imaginings, is not apropos to Schumann's collection. Writer Klaus George Roy offers another definition: "Fantasy, for Schumann, was his other world; not an escape-paradise of idle day-dreaming without tangible results, but the artistic reality behind the material façade of daily life."

The moody, introverted, and mentally disturbed Schumann often took flight into a fantasy world to re-enact or play out his life through his alter egos, Florestan and Eusebius—the former loquacious, lithesome, and impetuous, and the latter quixotic, reflective, and otherworldly. The fluctuations between Florestan and Eusebius in the *Fantasy Pieces* are easily discernible. For example, the extroverted Florestan makes his appearance in the vociferous "Aufschwung" (Soaring) and the rhythmically oriented "Grillen" (Whims), while the introverted Eusebius surfaces in the more serene, passionate, and self-possessed "Des Abends" (In the Evening), "Traumeswirren" (Troubled Dreams), and "Ende vom Lied" (The End of the Song).

Schumann's fantasy excursion was also motivated by an outward driving force, his love for the youthful Clara Wieck. The entire collection of pieces is about love and despair, and, as the pianist and musicologist Louis Biancoli states, the "*Fantasiestücke*, like so much else of Schumann's piano music of this period, is the poetic and passionate record of a young man in love."

Isaac Albéniz conceived his magnum opus, *Ibéria*, as a suite of twelve Spanish pieces for solo piano in four books. A child prodigy, Albéniz was taken to Paris at the age of seven, where he was accepted as a private pupil of the distinguished French pianist and pedagogue Antoine-François Marmontel (1816–1898), the teacher of Bizet and Debussy. As a pianist, Albéniz was judged an incomparable virtuoso. *Ibéria* serves to validate his pianistic prowess, as it is one of the most dazzling works in the genre. *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* describes the work as "a brilliant display of piano virtuosity."

The first of the three pieces from *Ibéria* selected for performance by Marc-André Hamelin, "El Albaicín" evokes the music of gypsies living in the eponymous Moorish section of Granada. In composer and writer Douglas Townsend's account of the piece, the music resonates with their "sounds and colors [such as the strumming of guitars]...using melodic fragments characteristic of their songs and dances....In the middle section Albéniz exploits the utmost resources of the piano, so that at times it seems as though it will explode into countless drops of brilliant colors like an impressionist painting."