

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

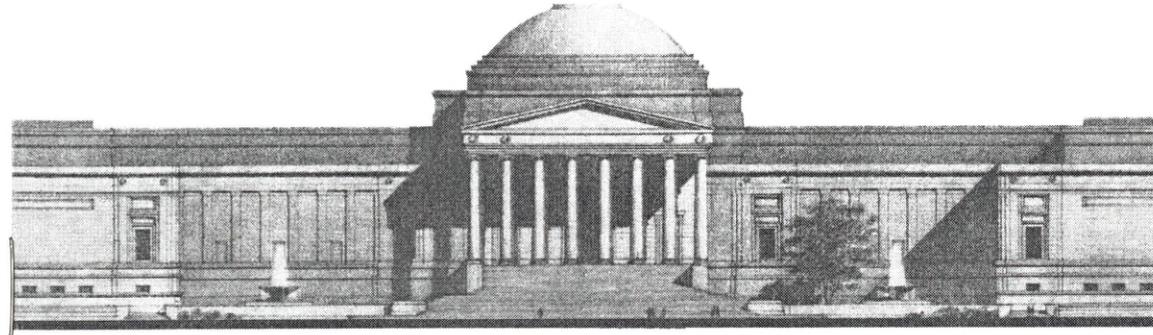
The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry after 6:30 pm
is not permitted.

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The Sixty-third Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lamot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,539th Concert

Carlos César Rodríguez, *pianist*

June 12, 2005
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Carlos Guastavino (1912–2000)

Sonatina no. 3 (1949)

Allegretto

Adagio amoroso

Presto

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

Sonata (1926)

Allegro moderato

Sostenuto e pesante

Allegro molto

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Valses nobles et sentimentales (1911)

Modéré

Assez lent

Modéré

Assez animé

Presque lent

Vif

Moins vif

Epilogue: Lent

INTERMISSION

Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909)

El Albaicín

From *Iberia* Book III (1907)

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Valse: La plus que lente (1910)

Ondine from *Préludes* Book II (1913)

Manuel de Falla (1876–1946)

Suite from *El amor brujo* (1915)

Pantomima

Danza del terror

Círculo mágico

Danza ritual del fuego

Featured Musician

Carlos César Rodríguez has gained recognition as a virtuoso pianist who not only generates unusual excitement in the Hispanic and Spanish repertoire but also displays an extraordinary flair for Mozart and for the romantic and avant-garde composers. An expert on early instruments, he enjoys entrée to the Smithsonian Institution's collection of rare keyboard instruments and was chosen to perform in its *Piano 300* exhibition. His varied career has included musical directorship of Mozart operas, Spanish zarzuelas, ballets, and Latin jazz/pop presentations.

Rodríguez made his recital debut in his native Venezuela at age five and played his first concerto with an orchestra at age eleven. He was a finalist in the New York Philharmonic Young People's Competition and played his Weill Recital Hall debut at age twenty-one. He has also performed at Merkin Hall and the Americas Center in New York City and at the Kennedy Center, the White House, and the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington. As a collaborative pianist and chamber musician, he has worked with Jessye Norman, Denyce Graves, and Plácido Domingo as well as with various artists at the Garth Newel Chamber Music Festival in Warm Springs, Virginia.

Among Rodríguez's recordings to date, his CD on the Briosio label, *España en el corazón*, has won high critical acclaim. He has also recorded for the Omicron label. A graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts and the Juilliard School of Music, Rodríguez earned the doctor of musical arts degree from the University of Maryland, where his teacher was Thomas Schumacher. Outstanding European pianists with whom he has worked include Alfons Kontarsky, Peter Feuchtwanger, and Hartmut Holl. Rodríguez is a member of the piano faculty at the Levine School of Music and guest artist and coach for the Domingo/Cafritz Young Artist Program of the Washington National Opera.

Program Notes

Carlos Guastavino, born in Santa Fe, Argentina, was a leading South American composer of the twentieth century. He wrote more than two hundred works, most of them for the piano or for piano and voice. An accomplished pianist with an immense gift for melody, Guastavino wrote effectively for his instrument, mastering not only its brilliant virtuoso aspect but also its intimate and poetic side. His style, always tonal and lusciously romantic, takes its intensity from Argentine folk music. Firmly rooted in the late nineteenth-century romantic tradition, he remained completely removed from the modern musical milieu of Argentina. His stylistic isolation is evident when his works are compared with those of his contemporary, Alberto Ginastera (1916–1983).

Béla Bartók often played the first few public performances of his piano works himself, as his contemporaries were slow to develop enthusiasm for his music. In spite of the fact that he was often in ill health and wrote works that require extreme power and endurance from the performer, he measured up to their demands when he presented them in concert. The first movement of his *Sonata* (1926) features accented dissonant chords that function as musical slaps. Pistonlike rhythms and frequent alternations between violent outbursts and playful dance interludes give the movement unrelenting energy. The second movement explores the expressive potential of steely dissonances and stark repetitions, neither of which seem at first to have any such potential. Bartók nevertheless develops surprising eloquence in this movement, heightened by the long, slow crescendo in the middle register. The movement ends abruptly with an accented E-flat. The final movement corresponds loosely to the rondo form, but the standard single recurring theme is replaced by three. The first may remind the listener of the medieval carol *Good King Wenceslas*. It is typical of the motifs Bartók derived from the folk music he collected throughout his life. The

second theme begins in a similar vein and leads through a rapid acceleration to the third, which consists of violent outward leaps in both hands. Each of the themes returns several times, appearing upside-down, in a different register, or accompanied by birdlike twitters. The athletic leaping chords of the third theme, which call to mind a frenzied peasant dance, bring the sonata to a brilliant close.

Ravel's *Valses nobles et sentimentales* received its premiere performance under unusual circumstances. The identity of the composers of the works on the program was kept secret from the audience. At the end of the concert, the listeners were invited to guess who had written each work. For the *Valses nobles*, the registered guesses were evenly divided among Ravel, Erik Satie, and Zoltán Kodály. Ravel placed a prefix in the original score that reveals the extent to which he was influenced by the symbolist poets and the bohemian eccentricity of his hero, Satie: "Le plaisir délicieux et toujours nouveau d'une occupation inutile" (the delightful and always novel pleasure of a useless occupation). Satie, always ready to enter into witty repartee, soon published a work of his own entitled *Trois valses distinguées du précieux dégouté* (Three Distinguished Waltzes of a Jaded Dandy), a gentle poke at Ravel's reputation for fussiness in dress and grooming and at Satie's own habit of wearing fine clothes in a disheveled condition.

The suite of twelve characteristic pieces entitled *Iberia* is the magnum opus of the Spanish composer Isaac Albéniz. Each movement is inspired by a place in Spain or by a traditional Spanish dance. El Albaicín is the gypsy quarter of Granada, where mournful guitar and violin music is heard wafting out of many doorways. The pianist Albéniz, though raised in a different part of Spain (Catalonia), was in a unique position to capture in piano music the spirit of this exotic neighborhood.

Valse: La plus que lente and *Ondine*, even though both are late works, bear the hallmarks of Claude Debussy's early style. The waltz rounds out the composer's forays into old dance forms (already in 1890 he had completed a minuet, a saraband, and a passepied). It is unique among his

works in that it has a tempo marking as its title ("as slow as possible"). By the time he compiled his second book of preludes in 1913, Debussy was ready to summarize his output as a composer by means of a collection of representative pieces. *Ondine* is drawn from the world of legends and fairy tales, one of his favorite sources of inspiration. The capricious rhythm evokes the underwater antics of the famed sea sprite of the same name.

Manuel de Falla's *El amor brujo* was originally conceived as a ballet in pantomime, with a libretto based on an Andalusian folk tale. A young girl, Candelas, is tormented by the memory of a fascinating Gypsy, now dead, who had been her lover (*el amor brujo*, the sorcerer lover of the title). Believing that the Gypsy has cast a spell on her, she is unable to respond to the advances of a new suitor, Carmelo. He comes up with a solution that involves persuading a Gypsy girl of irresistible charms, Lucia, to flirt with the ghost of the sorcerer. She does this with complete success, driving the ghost to madness and eventually flight. Freed from her curse, Candelas is finally able to fall in love with Carmelo. The suite that closes this program contains four movements from the ballet, which explore the confusion, terror, awe, and ecstasy that are experienced by the characters in the story.

Concerts at the National Gallery of Art

There will be no Sunday concerts in July, August, and September. On Friday evenings from Memorial Day through Labor Day, visitors to the Sculpture Garden can enjoy live jazz performed by an eclectic mix of top Washington-area artists. Please check the Gallery's bimonthly Calendar of Events for details.

Sunday concerts will resume on October 2, 2005, at 6:30 pm, with a concert by the National Gallery Orchestra, Christopher Kendall, guest conductor. The program will feature music by Elgar, Wagner, Stravinsky, and Schoenfield, with solo violinist Nicolas Kendall.