

2017-2018 Season
November 18 and 19, 2017
Program Notes

By Dr. Richard E. Rodda



***El Amor Brujo* (“Love, the Magician”) (1913-1914)**
Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

After his years in Paris absorbing the riches of what was then the world’s most vibrant musical city (and simultaneously befriending Debussy, Ravel and Dukas), Falla retreated to Spain in 1914 in the face of the German invasion of France. Soon after his arrival, Pastora Imperio, the reigning *donna* of Gypsy music, asked him to provide the accompaniment for a “song and dance” for her act. So fervent was Rosario’s singing of the traditional songs and recounting of the Gypsy legends that Falla decided to create not just a “song and dance” but a full ballet. Despite Imperio’s popularity, however, the premiere of *El Amor Brujo* gained little success, and Falla revised the score, cutting some numbers and expanding the original chamber scoring to full orchestra.

Falla’s ballet *El Amor Brujo* is set in Andalusia. To the accompaniment of singing, the heroine of the ballet, Candelas, appears. She has been in love with a dashing Gypsy, recently dead, who keeps returning to haunt her. A live and handsome villager, Carmelo, loves Candelas and wants to marry her but the ghost intervenes, and his sorcery prevents her from granting Carmelo the kiss of perfect love. Desperate, Candelas tries to drive off the specter through a ritual fire dance. She fails, so Carmelo tries to trick the ghost. Since the deceased always had a strong taste for attractive women, Carmelo decides to use Lucia, a companion of Candelas, as a decoy. Carmelo comes to woo Candelas. Jealous, the specter appears, but when his eye is caught by the pretty Lucia he ignores Candelas and follows her friend. Carmelo convinces Candelas that his own devotion to her is greater than that of the ghost. As morning dawns and the bells of the village sound, the pair at last exchange the perfect kiss and exorcise the ghost forever.

***Concierto de Aranjuez* for Guitar and Orchestra (1939)**
Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-1999)

The small town of Aranjuez, thirty miles south of Madrid on the River Tagus, is a green oasis in the barren plateau of central Spain. In the mid-18th century, a palace, set amid verdant forests and parks, was built at Aranjuez as a summer retreat for the Spanish court. Generations of Spanish kings

thereafter settled into Aranjuez every spring, when the countless nightingales would serenade them from the cedars and laurels, the court ladies would promenade in the cooling shade, and the men would hone their equestrian skills with the famous cream-colored Andalusian horses bred nearby. When Rodrigo sought inspiration for a new concerto in the difficult, war-torn year of 1939, it was to the elegant symbol of by-gone Spain represented by Aranjuez that he turned. “Having conceived the idea of a guitar concerto,” he recalled, “it was necessary for me to place it in a certain epoch and, still more, in a definite location — an epoch at the end of which *fandangos* transform themselves into *fandanguillos*, and when the *cante* and the *bulerias* vibrate in the Spanish air.” He further stated that he had in mind the early decades of the 19th century when composing this *Concierto de Aranjuez*. Of the work’s mood and the character of its solo instrument, the composer wrote, “Throughout the veins of Spanish music, a profound rhythmic beat seems to be diffused by a strange phantasmagoric, colossal and multiform instrument — an instrument idealized in the fiery imagination of Albéniz, Granados, Falla and Turina. It is an imaginary instrument that might be said to possess the wings of the harp, the heart of the grand piano and the soul of the guitar.... The *Aranjuez Concierto* is meant to sound like the hidden breeze that stirs the tree tops in the parks, as dainty as a veronica.”

In his *Concierto de Aranjuez*, Rodrigo adapted the three traditional movements of the concerto form to reflect different aspects of the soul of Spanish music — the outer movements are fast in tempo and dance-like, while the middle one is imbued with the bittersweet intensity of classic flamenco *cante hondo* (“deep song”).

Suite No. 2 from the Incidental Music to Alphonse Daudet’s Play *L’Arlésienne* (1872) Georges Bizet (1838-1875)

Alphonse Daudet based his drama *L’Arlésienne* on a true incident of the frustrated love and suicide of a young relative of the Provençal poet Frédéric Mistral. In the play, the chief protagonist, the mysterious and seductive Woman of Arles (“L’Arlésienne”), never appears on stage. A young farmer, Frédéric, is madly in love with this alluring woman of the town, and he wishes to marry her. His family tries to dissuade Frédéric by proving to him the unfaithfulness of L’Arlésienne, and arranges a marriage for him with Vivette, his childhood sweetheart. (The parallels with the story of the opera *Carmen*, which followed two years later, are worth noting.) Frédéric agrees, but he becomes so distraught with hopeless passion for L’Arlésienne on the eve of the wedding that he hurls himself from the loft of the farmhouse to his death on the pavement below.

Bizet extracted a suite of four numbers from his incidental music for *L’Arlésienne* soon after the original production closed. Four years after Bizet’s death, the composer’s friend Ernest Guiraud returned to the original *L’Arlésienne* score and found enough material for a second suite of orchestral

pieces. The opening section of the *Pastorale* that begins the Suite No. 2 is from the sweeping prelude to Act II, while the movement's enchanting and subtly dance-like middle portion is Guiraud's considerable reworking of one of *L'Arlésienne's* off-stage choral numbers. The *Intermezzo* occurred as an orchestral interlude during the second act. For the *Menuet*, Guiraud borrowed an instrumental number from Bizet's opera of 1867, *The Fair Maid of Perth*. The main theme of the concluding *Farandole* is a Provençal dance (*Danse dei Chivaux-Frus*) for pipe and tabor that is combined with the *March of the Three Kings*.

Selections from *Souvenirs of Spain from Themes of Isaac Albéniz* for Guitar and Orchestra (composed 1886-1896; arranged 2016)
Original Compositions by Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909)
Arranged by Patrick Russ (born in 1954)

The compositions of Isaac Albéniz, a seminal figure in the musical life of his native Spain, are imbued with the idioms and ethos of his homeland. He seldom quoted existing melodies, but rather integrated their essential characteristics into his works to create idealized versions of Spanish songs and dances that not only came to represent and popularize the music of his country among listeners throughout the world, but also served as the model and inspiration for his colleague Granados and for the succeeding generation of Falla and Turina.

California-born Patrick Russ is a symphonic orchestrator and music arranger, with over 170 film score orchestration credits collaborating with some of Hollywood's finest film composers. Russ has also created arrangements for over sixty concert premieres around the world, and arranged the *Olympic Hymn* and other works for the Olympic Opening Ceremonies in Atlanta, Salt Lake City and London. His arrangements are featured on over thirty CDs for such artists as Christopher Parkening, Kathleen Battle, Jessye Norman, Jubilant Sykes, Korn and Vanessa Williams, as well as 2012's GRAMMY finalist *The Film Music of Dimitri Tiomkin*. Patrick Russ holds degrees in composition from U.C. Santa Barbara and in theology from Regent College in British Columbia, and is Visiting Professor of Music at England's University of Liverpool and President of The Film Music Foundation, which awards grants for film music research and education, and assists film composers in placing their music with educational institutions.

Patrick Russ wrote of his *Souvenirs of Spain from Themes of Isaac Albéniz*, "While a student at U.C. Santa Barbara during the 1970s, I traveled to northern Spain to attend a guitar master class. On the flight, I recognized several UCSB exchange students who invited me to stay with them at the University of Madrid. My first morning in Spain set a wonderful precedent. I walked into their concert

hall which, quite by chance, reverberated with Isaac Albéniz' piano solo *Sevilla*. As the melody filled the hall, I felt that I had come to a magical place.

“That evening, deserted streets led us to a hidden door that opened onto a large noisy gathering of flamenco and beer. Once again, an old upright piano banged out Albéniz. Days later, in the cathedral cloisters of Santiago de Compostela, an unseen guitarist's performance of *Córdoba* echoed through ancient corridors. In each city, it was as though Albéniz was accompanying my travels. These musical postcards were my souvenirs of Spain.

“The combination of melody with rhythmic accompaniment make Albeniz's piano works a natural vehicle for guitar, and yet also work well when arranged for orchestra. In fact, Maurice Ravel wanted to orchestrate several Albéniz piano solos but was prevented by copyright restrictions. Instead, he wrote *Bolero*. For this guitar and orchestra adaptation I chose Albéniz' own impressions of cities I visited, as well as his famous *Tango*.”