

## **Nights in the Gardens of Spain**

**Thursday, October 10 – 8 pm**

**William Eddins**, conductor

**Angela Cheng**, piano

**Eric Buchmann**, violin

**Jacob Kryger**, marimba

### **FAURÉ**

***Dolly Suite, Op.56: Le pas Espagnol***

(3')\*

### **CORELLI - JENKINS**

***La folia***

(11')\*

### **MASSENET**

***Le Cid: Ballet Suite*** – excerpts

(6')\*

Aragonaise

Aubade

Navarraise

### **TCHAIKOVSKY**

***Swan Lake Suite, Op.20a: Danse espagnole***

(3')\*

### **CHABRIER**

***España***

(7')\*

**INTERMISSION** (20 minutes)

### **FALLA**

***Noches en los Jardines de España*** (“Nights in the Gardens of Spain”)

(24')\*

En el Generalife

Danza lejana

En los jardines de la Sierra do Cordoba

### **RIMSKY-KORSAKOV**

***Capriccio espagnole, Op.34***

(15')\*

Alborada

Variazioni

Alborada

Scena e canto gitano  
Fandango asturiano

program subject to change

\*indicates approximate performance duration

### **Nights in the Gardens of Spain – Program notes**

“Ah, Spain,” wrote poet and playwright Federico García Lorca (1898-1936), “where the dead are more alive than the dead of any other country.” While it took a while for actual Spanish composers to take their rightful place in western art music, Spain itself has long held a hypnotic sway over artists from many other places. In fact, there was a standing joke for many years that everyone was writing Spanish music – except the Spanish. Tonight’s concert reflects some of that influence.

As if to demonstrate, we begin in Paris. It was unusual for **Gabriel Fauré** (1845-1924) to assign descriptive titles to his pieces, but he made quite the exception for his suite for piano duet, **Dolly**. The six brief movements to the set were composed between 1893 and 1896. “Dolly” was the nickname of the young daughter of Fauré’s mistress, the singer Emma Bardac, and each movement is a reference to some aspect of the Bardac’s family life.

In 1906, Fauré’s friend Henri Rabaud orchestrated the suite, and this version has become quite popular, particularly the Berceuse opening movement. Tonight, we begin our Spanish-themed concert with the suite’s final movement. **Le pas Espagnol** seems to have been influenced by *España*, by another of Fauré’s musical friends, the composer Emmanuel Chabrier (see below), although its place in the suite refers to an equestrian statue by that name which was prominently displayed in the parlour of the Bardac home.

**Arcangelo Corelli** (1653-1713) set the compositional template in the Baroque era. If you wanted to “do it right,” you modeled your works on the forms which he established. Many composers’ first published works were sets of trio sonatas which adhered to the standard set by Corelli. **La Folia** is popularly known from Corelli’s Opus 5 collection of trio sonatas. However, it’s worth noting that even Corelli’s *La Folia* (the title translates as “The Folly”) is Corelli’s version of a much older piece. It is thought that *La Folia* was originally a 16-measure melody with ground bass accompaniment, dating from Portugal in the 16th century. With that in mind, tonight’s performance is much more contemporary – a 2004 version for marimba and strings arranged originally for legendary percussionist Evelyn Glennie by composer **Karl Jenkins** (b. 1944).

If you’re more familiar with Hollywood epics than operas, the title **Le Cid** might seem like a typo. *El Cid* was a famous Charlton Heston-Sophia Loren movie released in 1961, and based on the same Pierre Corneille play as that told in **Jules Massenet’s** (1842-1912) French opera (hence the French definite

article in the title, rather than the Spanish). The opera's title refers to the honoured name given the hero, Rodrigue, following his defeat of the Moors in the story's climactic battle.

As with many spectacle operas that were the rage in Paris at the time, Massenet's 1885 opera comes complete with an elaborate ballet – in fact, Massenet wrote the scene specifically for the talents of prima ballerina Rosita Mauri. While the opera itself has faded from the standard repertoire since the early 20th century, the ballet suite excerpted from it has remained a popular concert favourite, principally for its vivacious and lavishly scored Spanish dances. Tonight, we will hear three of the dances from the ballet: the Aragonaise, the tender Aubade, and the Navarraise.

Given that the three ballets composed by **Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840-1893) are among the most loved and most performed, it's a little surprising that he was not an enthusiastic composer for the art form. ***Swan Lake*** was his first, and he took the 1877 commission only reluctantly, and was not thrilled with the results. The ballet, in fact, took a while and numerous revisions by many hands (including Tchaikovsky's) before establishing itself as one of the greats.

Like many ballets of the time, *Swan Lake* has an extended "pageant" segment. In Act III of the four-act ballet, a ball is presented, giving ample showcase opportunities for extravagant and colourful ensemble numbers. The "**Spanish Dance**" is one of several brief dances with a national character to them. Set to humming strings which pulse like guitars, whatever it may lack in authentic Spanish-ness is compensated for by its rousing and vibrant orchestration.

French composer **Emmanuel Chabrier** (1841-1894) and his wife visited Spain in 1882, and he was soon under its spell. Notebook in hand, Chabrier noted the music wherever he and his wife stopped: Seville, Málaga, Cádiz, Granada, Valencia and more. Upon returning to Paris, Chabrier set to work to capture his own feelings in the musical idioms he heard on his trip.

***España*** premiered at a Lamoureux Concert on November 6, 1883, and it made Chabrier famous. "It may be said...that it was the most thoroughly Spanish orchestral work written up to that time," says Gilbert Chase in his book *The Music of Spain*, and no less than Manuel de Falla (see below) would agree with him. "I venture to say that no Spaniard has succeeded better than Chabrier in giving us, with such authenticity and genius, the version of a *jota* as it is 'shouted' by the peasants of Aragón in their nocturnal rounds," Falla wrote. Basing his work on two dance forms – the *malagueña* and the *jota aragonesa* – Chabrier crafted a flowing, bracing and captivating orchestral gem.

Highly influenced by the Andalusian melodies and flamenco rhythms of his homeland, **Manuel de Falla** (1876-1946) also benefited from seven years of musical study in Paris, which gave his music a unique craftsmanship. Composed in 1916, ***Noches en los Jardines de España***, for all that it has a descriptive title (as do each of its three movements – see page \_), contains no detailed program, according to Falla. "The mere enumeration of their titles should be a sufficient guide to the hearer," he wrote. "The composer has followed a definite format, regarding tonal, rhythmic, and thematic material...It was written to evoke places, sensations, and feeling. The themes employed are based on the rhythms, modes,

cadences, and ornamental figures distinctive of the popular music of Andalusia, though they are rarely heard in their original guise.”

The piano’s role in the work is not that of a virtuoso piano concerto. Though demanding, complex, and exceedingly detailed, the piano’s part is evocative and even sensual, an integral part of the changing, delicate colours of this “painting in sound.” It was originally sketched out as a four movement work; one movement was eventually removed, and its music would become part of Falla’s ballet *El amor brujo* (“Love, the Magician”). The work’s opening movement evokes the gardens of the Generalife, the 14th century palace above the Alhambra, in Granada. The second movement, *Danza lejana* (“Dance heard in the distance”) begins in an air of mystery, over which a dance begins. The piano bridges to the finale, in which the soloist takes the role of a *canto jondo* (“deep song”) singer – a Flamenco style in which a lavish melody is set to a pulsing accompaniment. This rhythmic third movement, *En los jardinos de la Sierra de Cordoba* (“In the gardens of the Sierra de Cordoba”) builds to a highly-charged climax, but the work concludes in an atmosphere of wistfulness.

“The opinion formed by both critics and the public that the *Capriccio espagnole* is a brilliant ‘magnificently orchestrated piece’ is wrong. The Capriccio is a brilliant ‘composition for orchestra’.” So said **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov** (1844-1908), who penned the work in 1887, and he further explained what he meant by his statement. “The change of timbres, the felicitous choice of melodic designs and figuration patterns, exactly suiting each kind of instrument, brief virtuoso cadenzas for instruments solo, the rhythm of the percussion instruments, constitute here the very essence of the composition, and not its garb. The Spanish themes, of dance character, furnished me with rich material for putting orchestral effects in use.”

The justly famous and exciting orchestral showcase is in five uninterrupted sections, beginning with an Alborada (“Morning Song”) in a lively manner. Next is a set of variations, in which a horn fanfare theme is given various treatments. Next, the Alborada returns in different orchestral clothes, followed by a Gypsy song featuring a series of cadenzas for the violins. The final section is a Fandango, introduced by the trombones. The Alborada returns in the spectacular climax.

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