

ROMERO GUITAR QUARTET



RUPERTO CHAPI Y LORENTE (1851-1909)

Preludio from *La Revoltosa*

Ruperto Chapí, born in North Alicante, Spain, received his education at the Conservatory of Music in Madrid. During the late nineteenth century, composers such as Chapí and Tomás Bretón revolutionized the form of the zarzuela. Chapí's zarzuelas continue to be popular throughout Spain and have brought the composer recognition for the elegance, grace and exquisite orchestrations that are embodied in them. Of the 155 zarzuelas that Chapí composed, *La revoltosa* ("The Rebellious Lass") is the most famous. It was praised by many of the composers of the time, including Saint-Saëns for its musicality and style.

ISAAC ALBENIZ (1860-1909)

Granada

Isaac Albéniz began the important modern movement in Spanish music and is largely responsible for its extraordinary popularity. His music usually portrays, colorfully, the spirit of his native Spain. After an adventurous youth in which he ran away from home and toured as a pianist almost everywhere in the Americas, Albéniz settled down to serious study and became one of

the great artists of his time.

Granada, the first movement of *Suite española* No.1, is in the form of a serenade and was written during his stay in Granada in 1886. Its lazy melody, in the lower register, recalls the sound of the guzla, a small lute-like instrument, and carries with it the perfumes of the city of Granada. Albéniz writes, "...romantic to the point of paroxysm and sad to the point of despair...I seek now the tradition.. I want the Arabic Granada, which is all art, which is all that seems to me beauty and emotion."

ÁNGEL BARRIOS (1882-1964)

Arroyos de la Alhambra

Not to be confused with his contemporary and fellow guitarist/composer, Agustín Barrios Mangoré, Ángel Barrios Fernández was a native of Granada, Spain and was the son of flamenco guitarist Antonio 'El Polinario' Barrios, who was the manager of a tavern next to the Alhambra at the beginning of the 20th century. The place was thought to have one of the best flamenco atmospheres in the city and was frequented by great musicians and painters including John Singer Sargent, Santiago Rusiñol and Joaquín Sorolla.

When he was only 18 years old, Angel Barrios founded the "Trio Iberia" with the popular Spanish instruments of guitar, laúd and bandurria and gave concerts throughout Europe, notably in London and Paris. Barrios was a great promoter of his native city of Granada and the Alhambra as a meeting place for composers and artists to come from all over the world. Together with Manuel de Falla and Federico Garcia Lorca, he invited Ravel, Glinka, Albeniz, Falla, Turina, Granados who came to know this place of inspiration. His compositions were greatly influenced by his native Andalusian folklore and flamenco and he created along with Manuel de Falla and Federico Garcia Lorca the artistic form known as Alhambrismo, which translates "to be caught by the under the spell of the Alhambra."

One of the last pieces Barrios wrote after he became blind, Arroyos de la Alhambra captures the sound and feeling of the many "water paths" of the palace and gardens of the Alhambra.

JOAQUIN TURINA (1882-1949)

Fantasía Sevillana

Next to Falla, Turina plays the most significant role in Spanish impressionistic music. Educated in Spain, Turina left his native country to spend a decade in Paris where he became close friends and collaborator with Manuel de Falla and Isaac Albéniz, who provided the stimulus for directing Turina's efforts toward the writing of Spanish nationalistic music.

Perhaps in his own words Turina describes this work for solo guitar best:

"My music is the expression of the feeling of a true Sevillian who did not know Seville until he left it, and this is mathematics, yet it is necessary for the artist to move away to get to know his country, as for the painter who makes some steps backwards to be able to take in the complete picture."

LUIGI BOCCHERINI (1743-1805)

Guitar Quintet No. 4

Of the Italian composers who devoted themselves to instrumental music, Boccherini was one of the greatest. His father was either a cellist or bass player, and as a child he studied the cello and composition. From an early age, the boy's prodigious talents were obvious; he made his

public debut as a cellist at age thirteen. Boccherini's reputation grew with his progress as a performer as well as a composer, and he gained appointments at Vienna in 1757, and at Lucca in 1763. In 1766, he undertook an extensive concert tour that lasted for several years. In 1770 the composer was appointed to the service of the Infante Don Luis as exclusive composer and as performer. He subsequently served appointments to the King of Prussia and at Potsdam before returning to Madrid, where he remained for the rest of his life.

MANUEL DE FALLA (1876-1946)

Miller's Dance from *El sombrero de tres picos*
Falla's music is extremely nationalistic and always suggests the rhythms and movements of classic and flamenco Spanish dance. Manuel de Falla once heard a flamenco guitarist playing a *farruca* and the experience stayed in his mind and later became the "Miller's Dance". His most famous ballet, known in English as *The Three-Cornered Hat*, is based on the story of the pursuit of a pretty miller's wife by an amorous old gentleman, and of the manner in which the miller makes him appear a fool. This *farruca*, danced by the Miller, shows his great passion and jealousy for his wife.

MANUEL DE FALLA (1876-1946)

Danza Española No. 1 from *La vida breve*

Falla was born in Cadiz, and had his first musical training with his mother, who was a talented pianist. He himself won honors as a pianist and composer with the well-known *La Vida breve* while still a young man. He lived in Paris until the outbreak of World War I, where he befriended Ravel and Debussy.

After Falla's sixth attempt at a hit zarzuela went nowhere, he pushed the genre boundaries a bit with the lyric drama *La vida breve* (composed in 1904–1905; revised in 1913), a loving depiction of Granada in a brutal tale of betrayed gypsy love—and saw it languish for almost a decade before finally being produced... in Nice, in a French translation. The restless *Danza Española No. 1* comes from the beginning of the second act, where a wedding party is in progress.

HEITOR VILLA LOBOS (1887-1959)

Preludios No. 1 and *No. 3*

Heitor Villa-Lobos, the leading composer of South America, is credited with having composed

over 1400 works including symphonies, operas, symphonic poems, chros, and smaller works. The list is astonishing in its profusion. Some composers have used actual folk themes in their music, some have used popular tunes and some have used their own themes in the character of folk themes. All three methods of composition are to be found in the music of Villa-Lobos. These preludes come from a set of five; depicting the nostalgic folk feeling which Brazilians call "saudosismo."

ENRIQUE GRANADOS (1867-1916)

Danza No. 2 "Oriental"

Enrique Granados y Campina was born in Catalonia and died at sea (victim of the Sussex disaster in the English Channel) as he was returning from the United States where the premiere of his opera, *Goyescas*, had been given at the Metropolitan Opera House. Oriental flavor is pervasive in Spanish music due to the long occupation of the country by the Moors, especially in Andaluca. Like his dear friend and colleague Albeniz, Granados was enamored with the city of Granada and the mysterious and beguiling palace and gardens of the Alhambra.

SEBASTIAN IRADIER (1809-1865)

La Paloma

"La Paloma" (the dove) was written by Spanish composer Sebastin Iradier (later Yradier) after he visited Cuba in 1861. The influence of the Cuban habanera gives the song its characteristic and distinctive rhythm. "La Paloma" became especially popular in Mexico, and soon spread around the world. In many places, including Afghanistan, Mexico, Spain, Hawaii, the Philippines, Germany, Romania, Zanzibar, and Goa it gained the status of a quasi-folk song. Over the years the popularity of "La Paloma" has surged and receded periodically, but never subsided. It may be considered one of the first universal popular hits and has appealed to artists of diverse musical backgrounds. Iradier may have composed "La Paloma" around 1863, just two years before he died in Spain in obscurity, never to learn how popular his song would become. It became quickly a popular song, having been produced and reinterpreted in diverse cultures, settings, arrangements, and recordings over the last 140 years.

CELEDONIO ROMERO (1913-1999)

Fantasa cubana from Suite Andaluza

Its movements are each inspired by Flamenco dances. The different dances indicate the type of meter and mode according to the name. Alegras is marked Allegro and is a rendition of this lively flamenco dance from Cadiz. It contains a central slow movement, silencio in which the dancer demonstrates graceful upper body, arm and hand movements. Zapateado is named for the Spanish dance that is characterized by keeping time by stamping one's feet on the floor. The final movement, Fantasia, is a technical showpiece. It is reminiscent of the very first efforts of Celedonio improvising on the guitar when he was a small child. His father would come home from work and ask him to play "los compuestos", which to them meant "improvisations. Fantasa received its basic form is from the Cuban rhythm of guajiras.

PEPE ROMERO (B. 1944)

Suite flamenca

En el Sacromonte, Colombianas

Moved by his love for the mystery and magic of Granada, one evening while sitting in the Sacromonte and viewing the Alhambra he felt the mysterious blend of the various cultures – Moor, Andaluz, Jewish, gypsy that have lived in this special place. As the Sacromonte is the birthplace of the samba granadina (a dance of gypsy and Arabic forms) he was moved to compose this piece in which each of the four guitars represents the musical traditions of the four great cultures that survived in the caves of the Sacromonte.

In the late 1950's Pepe Romero became a close friend of both Carmen Amaya and Sabicas who greatly popularized the flamenco rhythm of "colombianas". Continuing his homage to these artists, this piece is written in the flavor of the "cantes de ida y vuelta" which were flamenco rhythms resulting from the cultural interchange between Spain and the new world, specifically between Cadiz and la Habana. The basic rhythms used in this work are "colombianas"– a mixture of Colombian folk melody with the rhythmic structure of the Cuban "guajiras" and the "rumba gitana".