

**JOAQUÍN RODRIGO: AN ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
THE GUITAR AND BEYOND**

HISPANIC SOCIETY MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

April 4, 2019

Lecture: 6:30 PM

Concert: 7 PM

Solo Piano and Piano Duet Music by Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-1999)

Isabel Pérez Dobarro, piano

Douglas Riva, piano

Program

Sonatina para dos muñecas (Sonatina for Two Dolls)

Empieza el día, (The Day Begins)

Alegres peripecias (Happy Adventures)

Recogimiento (Quiet Time)

Vuelta del Cole (Back from School)

Douglas Riva

Isabel Pérez Dobarro

A l'ombre de Torre Bermeja (In the Shadow of Torre Bermeja)

Danza de la amapola (Dance of the Poppy)

Douglas Riva

Serenata Española (Spanish Serenade)

Isabel Pérez Dobarro

Cuatro estampas andaluzas (Four Andalusian Scenes)

El vendedor de chanquetes (The Chanquetes Seller)

Crepúsculo sobre el Guadalquivir (Twilight over the Guadalquivir)

Seguidillas del diablo (The Devil's Seguidillas)

Barquitos de Cádiz (Little Boats in Cádiz)

Douglas Riva

Juglares (Minstrels)

Isabel Pérez Dobarro

Douglas Riva

Cuatro piezas para piano (Four Pieces for Piano)

Caleseras, Homenaje a Chueca (Homage to Chueca)

Fandango del ventorrillo (Fandango in the Tavern)

Plegarias de la Infanta de Castilla (Prayer of the Princess of Castile)

Danza valenciana (Valencian Dance)

Isabel Pérez Dobarro, piano

Gran Marcha de los Subsecretarios

A buen andar pero sin prisa (At a good tempo but without any hurry)

Trio—Tempo ministerial (At a governmental tempo)

Isabel Pérez Dobarro
Douglas Riva

Piano: Steinway and Sons

Approximate Duration: 60 minutes

Artist Biographies:

ISABEL PÉREZ DOBARRO, Piano

Isabel Pérez Dobarro has appeared in solo recitals and chamber music concerts at the Stern Auditorium, Zankel Hall, and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Steinway Hall, Japan Society, Academy of Arts and Letters, Tenri Cultural Institute, Yamaha Center, DiMenna Center, Liederkrantz Foundation, Rachmaninoff Hall at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow, Sala Manuel de Falla, Ateneo de Madrid, and Sala Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli in Bolzano, Italy. She was a prizewinner at the American Protégé International Piano and Strings Competition (2nd Prize), Grand Prize Virtuoso International Competition (3rd Prize), Ciutat de Berga International Competition (1st Prize) and the Cidade do Fundao Piano International Competition (1st Prize), as well as the recipient of the Jorge Bolet Distinguished Performer Award at the Stony Brook International Piano Festival. She has performed at the Mannes Contemporary Music Institute and the New England Conservatory Summer Institute for Contemporary Performance and Practice, the Festival Internacional de Segovia, Música en Compostela, and Gijón Piano Festival, among others.

She recently performed at the Concert for a Sustainable Planet at Carnegie Hall along with cellist Yo-Yo Ma and members of the New York Philharmonic. In January 2018, she was a soloist with the Real Filharmonia de Galicia Orchestra under the baton of maestro Diego Masson. Her interest for contemporary music has led her to premiere works by Eduardo Soutullo, Octavio Vázquez, Pamela Sklar, Sonia Megías, Michael Boyman, Julia Dopico, Lars Graugard, among others. She is a frequent performer of works both for solo and ensemble of George Crumb, Juan Antonio Simarro, Consuelo Díez, Mercedes Zavala, Alexa Babakhanian, Miguel Bustamante, Benet Casablanca, Cristóbal Halffter, Luis de Pablo, Antón García Abril, Carmelo Bernaola, Debra Kaye, Marga Richter, Mary-Ann Joyce, among others. With composer Noelia Lobato and conductor Irene Gómez-Calado she is working on a project entitled Spanish Women in Music.

Isabel has taught masterclasses at the Manuel Peleteiro Conservatory and the New York University's Undergraduate Collegium. She has also given lectures and speeches at the Nobel Peace Prize Forum, United Nations General Assembly, ECOSOC Youth Forum, European Parliament within the European Arts Forum, I Jornadas Sostenibilidad e Instituciones Culturales, University of Michigan, IE University in Madrid, University of Vechta, Columbia University, Carnegie Hall, and

Casina Pio IV at the Vatican. She has participated in Música en Compostela, Gijón International Piano Festival, and the Summer Institute for Contemporary Performance and Practice at the New England Conservatory, among other festivals. In 2016, she organized the Festival Granados: Composer, Pedagogue, and Virtuoso at New York University, a series of lectures and concerts about Enrique Granados in which she premiered a newly reconstructed version for piano quintet of Granados' *Concierto Patético* by composer Sergi Casanelles.

With mezzo-soprano Anna Tonna, Isabel was awarded the 2016 New York Women Composers Seed Grant for their project *Mujeres en Música*, an initiative that promotes music composed by women in the United States and Spain. The project consists of two concerts per year (one at the Lincoln Center in New York and one at the International Institute in Madrid) in which they present music composed and performed by women. In addition to her concertizing career, Isabel leads the project UNSDSN-Youth Arts Twenty Thirty which combines arts with sustainability in the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Isabel Pérez Dobarro is a Ph.D. candidate at NYU Steinhardt, where she started teaching as an Adjunct Instructor at age 19. She holds a Professional Studies degree from the Manhattan School of Music, a master's degree from NYU Steinhardt and a bachelor's degree from the Real Conservatorio Superior de Música de Madrid. Isabel is a member of the Executive Board of the Piano Teachers Congress of New York and co-chair of its Honors Program. She is the UN Focal point at the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth, President of the Beta Pi Chapter at the International Honors Society in Education Kappa Delta Pi, and the Western European Representative of the Fair Air Coalition. She is also part of the UNWTO Honorary Committee for the Conference "The Way of Saint James and the SDGs," along with their Majesties the King and Queen of Spain, the Prince of Liechtenstein, among others. She obtained a J.D. in law from UNED and has completed courses in U.S Law and Methodologies courses at NYU SPS and the SDG Academy. She is currently studying International Relations at Harvard University, where she previously completed the Harvard Business CoreX program.

She has been selected as one of the most influential Galicians by the newspaper "El Correo Gallego."

DOUGLAS RIVA, Piano

American pianist Douglas Riva has gained international recognition for his profound knowledge of Spanish music, and no less an authority than the distinguished Spanish composer Xavier Montsalvatge has described him as "an exceptional pianist." Douglas Riva's interpretations of the works of Enrique Granados have earned him his reputation as today's leading exponent of Granados' piano music. His recordings for Naxos of the complete piano works of Granados, comprising 231 works including 102 World Premiere recordings have won worldwide critical acclaim. Spanish critics writing in *Scherzo* praised Mr. Riva's interpretation of Granados' masterpiece as "belonging to the privileged class of the very

best versions of *Goyescas*.” Referring to Vol. 7 of the series *Scherzo* also described Mr. Riva as “an absolute authority, an excellent pianist who is as poetic as Granados’ music.” London’s *The Guardian* described Vol. 3 of the series as “a totally compelling performance [that] demands to be heard”.

Douglas Riva is the Assistant Director of the eighteen-volume critical edition of the Complete Works for Piano of Enrique Granados, directed by Alicia de Larrocha and published by Editorial Boileau, Barcelona. In 2016 the Complutense University, Madrid, published his critical edition of the complete orchestral works by Granados, including the first publication of 8 works. Mr. Riva recorded one of these works, *Elisenda*, with the City of Granada orchestra, directed by Cristóbal Soler, for Deutsche Grammophon.

Mr. Riva has performed at the White House, Carnegie Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and numerous festivals in Brazil, Spain, Portugal, Holland, United Kingdom and the United States. He gave the first United States performance of a newly discovered Scarlatti sonata at the National Gallery of Art and the world première of *Gazebo Dances* by John Corigliano. Granados’s long-lost masterpiece *Cant de les estrelles* for piano solo, organ and choruses was performed for only the second time in history by Douglas Riva and the Voices of Ascension, directed by Dennis Keene in 2007. The Naxos recording of the première performance, *Song of the Stars*, was nominated for a GRAMMY award. The *Wall Street Journal* described *Cant de les estrelles* as a “masterpiece” and praised the Naxos CD as “real cause for celebration. . .gorgeous in every way—from the engineering quality to the impeccable performances.” The *American Record Guide* commented: “Its expressive effect was breathtaking. . . full of grace, subtlety, nuance, poetry and assurance.”

Mr. Riva began his musical education at the age of nine, studying both the piano and the flute. His professional career began at the age of sixteen as the Principal Flutist of the El Paso (Texas) Symphony Orchestra. Later, devoting himself exclusively to the piano, he continued his studies at the Juilliard School, New York University, and in Barcelona at the Academia Granados-Marshall, founded by Granados.

A frequent lecturer, in Spain and the United States, Mr. Riva has lectured at Harvard University, New York University, University of California (Riverside), University of New Mexico, University of Richmond, Graduate Center of the City University of New York and in Spain for the Sociedad Española de Musicología (Madrid) and the Real Academia de Bellas Artes (Canary Islands).

Program notes

Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-1999), one of the major figures in Spanish music, is revered throughout the world for his hauntingly beautiful guitar concerto, *Concierto de Aranjuez*, one of the most popular concertos of all time. In addition, Rodrigo is renowned for his solo guitar music, an innovation when the works

were composed, which helped bring the instrument to major concert halls throughout the world. Less known is his enormous catalogue of brilliant and original works for piano, chamber music and voice.

Joaquín Rodrigo was born in Sagunto, Valencia, Spain on November 22, 1901. Rodrigo triumphed against remarkable odds. At the age of 3 diphtheria severely impaired his eyesight and he later went completely blind. Nevertheless, his music led him to be awarded more prizes and honors than any other Spanish composer in history. In addition, Rodrigo was a noted music critic and for 30 years held the Manuel de Falla Professorship at the Complutense University, Madrid.

He began music study at age 8 at the Valencia Conservatory with Francisco Antich, Enrique Gomá and Eduardo López Chavarri, studying solfège, piano and violin, and later added harmony and composition. By the 1920s he was an excellent pianist and began composing his first works. Rodrigo wrote his compositions in Braille and later dictated the score to a copyist for notation in a manuscript. In 1927 Rodrigo decided to continue his studies in Paris with the famed composer Paul Dukas (1865-1935) at the École Normale de Musique. Once in Paris Rodrigo met numerous musicians including Manuel de Falla, Mexican composer Manuel Ponce and other Spaniards such as Joaquín Turina.

At the same time Rodrigo met the Turkish pianist Victoria Kamhi and they were married in 1933. Victoria Kamhi was a fine pianist and decided to give up her professional career in order to dedicate herself to her husband. The couple first lived in Paris while Rodrigo was studying at the Paris Conservatoire and at the Sorbonne. Subsequently they lived in Germany, Austria and Switzerland before returning to Madrid in 1939. In 1940 Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* for guitar and orchestra was premiered in Barcelona. This work brought him world-wide fame. From that point Rodrigo was immersed in composing and also was engaged in numerous artistic activities including the previously mentioned position of Professor of Music History at the Complutense University in Madrid, Head of Music Broadcasts for Spanish Radio, music critic for several newspapers, and Head of the Artistic Section of the Spanish National Organization for the Blind (ONCE).

Joaquín Rodrigo's numerous and varied compositions include eleven concertos for various instruments, more than sixty songs, choral and instrumental works, and music for the theatre, dance and cinema. Numerous distinguished soloists commissioned works from him, among them cellist Gaspar Cassadó, guitarist Andrés Segovia, harpist Nicanor Zabaleta, flutist James Galway, cellist Julian Lloyd Webber and the Romero guitar quartet. His music has a distinctive voice which is refined, luminous and fundamentally optimistic with a distinctive use of melody and original harmonies.

Although Rodrigo was a fine pianist he did not pursue a career as a soloist. However, his thorough knowledge of Spanish piano music gave him a

unique perspective which led him to create his own highly personal music for the piano. He commented that “in the 19th Century the piano was very important in expressing the emotional needs of musicians. However, for various reasons, Spain did not have the same connection to the piano until later.” In the final decade of the century Enrique Granados (1867-1916) was the composer who gave Spain a glorious period of late-Romantic piano masterpieces. In the first decade of the 20th Century Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909) composed the suite *Iberia* which created an entirely new and modern concept of piano music with dense and highly complex pianistic textures. Rodrigo wanted to avoid what he called the “magnificent Albéniz piano” which in turn inspired him to create a distinct 20th Century piano style made from “elimination” leading to “much smaller and clearer” textures. For this he looked to the harpsichord music which Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) composed during the many years he lived in Spain, commenting: “Inspired to some extent by this style of keyboard music and by the characteristics of the 20th Century piano, I have tried to write my own pieces for the piano.”

Throughout his life Maestro Rodrigo was honored by governments, universities, academies and other organizations in many different countries. In 1985 he was inducted as a member of the Hispanic Society in New York. In 1991, to celebrate his 90th birthday, Joaquín Rodrigo was raised to the nobility by H. M. Juan Carlos I, King of Spain, with the title *Marqués de los jardines de Aranjuez*. Five years later, in 1996 he was awarded Spain’s greatest cultural distinction, the Prince of Asturias Prize, awarded to a composer for the first time. Rodrigo commented: “I like to be an ambassador for Spain.” Certainly Maestro Rodrigo brilliantly fulfilled his goal by bringing his unique vision of Spanish music to the entire world.

2019 marks the 20th anniversary of Maestro Rodrigo’s death and provides a unique opportunity to re-discover and re-evaluate his contributions to the musical world and explore his lesser known masterpieces. The Hispanic Society Museum and Library along with the Foundation for Iberian Music of the Graduate Center at the City University of New York (CUNY) and the King Juan Carlos Center at New York University (NYU) have joined together to organize a city-wide Rodrigo Festival which began with the Hispanic Society concert of chamber music on December, 6, 2018 and continues throughout 2019. Events include the three concert series organized by the Hispanic Society Museum and Library, an international round table at NYU and future events.

Sonatina para dos muñecas (Sonatina for two Dolls)

Quite a number of great composers have written music recalling their childhood. However Rodrigo also composed works specifically conceived for children to perform and express childhood emotions. The *Sonatina para dos muñecas* was written in 1977 for his two granddaughters, Cecilia and Patty. The four movements are a delightful recreation of a child’s day: The Day Begins, Happy Adventures, Quiet Time and Returning from School. Rodrigo said for him

that the voices of his granddaughters was “the finest music.” In this delightful work we can clearly hear their voices.

A l’ombre de Torre Bermeja (In the Shadow of Torre Bermeja)

This is an emblematic work by Rodrigo for several highly interesting and unusual reasons. It was composed as an homage to the great Spanish pianist Ricardo Viñes (1875-1943), who premiered many works by Maurice Ravel, Claude Debussy, Manuel de Falla, Enrique Granados and Isaac Albéniz. Viñes was known for his interpretation of a particular work by Isaac Albéniz titled *Torre Bermeja*, inspired by a fortress near the Alhambra in Granada. For Rodrigo this work was something of an intellectual exercise, leading him to comment: “I wrote a kind of commentary, a paraphrase of [Albéniz’s] *Torre Bermeja*. I did not use any themes from it, but I was inspired to some extent by its atmosphere. The title, partly in French, partly in Spanish, recalls that Albéniz did the same in his early years. . . . At the end of the piece you will hear bells tolling in memory of Ricardo Viñes, and the themes of my work, without having a note of Albéniz in them, do bring to mind his early works.”

Danza de la amapola (Dance of the Poppy)

Danza de la amapola was composed in 1972 after 20 years during which Rodrigo did not compose any piano works. This brief and brilliant piece with a spare two-voice texture and a vibrant conclusion is dedicated to Rodrigo’s oldest granddaughter, Cecilia. He did not intend for her to play this difficult piece but rather for her to dance to the music in her tiny heeled dancing shoes.

Serenata española (Spanish Serenade)

The passionate, turbulent and mysterious *Serenata española*, composed in 1931, was the earliest masterpiece for piano in the composer’s mature style. In *Serenata española* Rodrigo used many of the recognizable elements of Andalusian music, modal harmonies, imitations of guitar techniques and a lyrical *copla*, all in his own highly personal manner. This brilliant work was dedicated to the great Spanish pianist José Iturbi (1895-1980).

Cuatro estampas andaluzas (Four Andalusian Scenes)

Cuatro estampas andaluzas, composed 1946-1952, were inspired by Andalucía. However, the four pieces do not use any popular Andalusian themes. Instead, Rodrigo wrote his own melodies to evoke the south of Spain. *El vendedor de chanquetes* is a lively portrait of a street vendor selling *chanquetes*, fried immature fish. Rodrigo uses mild dissonance to enhance the mood. *Crepúsculo sobre el Guadalquivir* (Twilight over the Guadalquivir River) evokes an evening in Seville, beginning calmly and continuing with late night revelries. *Seguidillas del diablo* (The Devil’s Seguidillas), written at the request of the Spanish dancer José de Udaeta, perfectly represents a wild satanic dance. The very beautiful *Barquitos de Cádiz* (Little Boats in Cádiz), dedicated to the British pianist Harriet Cohen (1895-1967), begins with a calm and somewhat mournful *Adagio*, evoking a calm sea. The second section is in complete contrast. It

opens with gentle rolling arpeggios that increase in intensity and tempo leading to a brilliant coda.

Juglares (Minstrels)

Rodrigo's first orchestral work *Juglares*, was composed in 1923 and was premiered with great success the following year by the Valencia Symphonic Orchestra. At the same time Rodrigo wrote this arrangement for piano, 4 hands, which was forgotten for many years. Rodrigo dedicated this version to the piano duo of Miguel Zanetti and Fernando Turina, who re-discovered, premiered and recorded the work. *Juglares*, less than 5 minutes long, is in three part form, opening with a vibrant Allegro followed by a melancholy Largo and then a return of the Allegro and concluding with a highly personal and brief Coda at a slow tempo--a daring and highly unusual gesture for a young composer.

Cuatro piezas para piano (Four Piano Pieces)

Rodrigo commented that all four pieces are in reality dances. Although they were published together as a group each piece might be played as an independent work. *Caleseras* is an homage to Federico Chueca (1846-1908), one of the most prominent composers of *zarzuelas*, described by Rodrigo as "the musical form closest to the people of Spain. . .[and] certainly the most authentic". Specifically in *Caleseras* Rodrigo was inspired by a brief melodic phrase from Chueca's *zarzuela, Agua, azucarillos y aguardiente*. There is an argument between two water-sellers with the chorus acting as judges singing "She's in the right" using only four notes. *Caleseras* was inspired by those four notes—F, E, D and C. *Fandango del ventorrillo* is very different and extremely short. Rodrigo said that "it has a plain and unadorned texture, just a two-voice sketch, very brief, very pared-down and very difficult." *Plegaria de la Infanta de Castilla* (Prayer of the Princess of Castile) is an evocation of an imaginary medieval religious dance. In this piece everything is related to the initial theme which is developed throughout the dance with a medieval character using sensual harmonies, dramatic coloring and an obvious sense of anxiety. Rodrigo described *Plegaria de la Infanta de Castilla* as music of the past but with "the expressive and harmonic recourse of our own time." *Danza valenciana* (Valencian Dance) was inspired by Valencian folklore tradition, specifically the Valencian *fandango*, a dance in three-four time, both colorful and picturesque.

Gran Marcha de los Subsecretarios (Grand March of the Under-Secretaries)

There are many works by Rodrigo where humor and irony are given free reign. However, there is probably none more notable as a musical joke than the *Gran Marcha de los Subsecretarios* [Grand March of the Under-Secretaries]. The work, an ironic parody of governmental bureaucrats, is dedicated to two close friends of the composer who were also career bureaucrats--the respected linguist Antonio Tovar (who later became Dean of the University of Salamanca) and Jesús Rubio, later the national Secretary of Education. Both were quite accomplished amateur pianists. The composer and Luis Galve premiered the

work in Madrid *circa* 1942. Rodrigo commented: "I gave the opening tempo indication as "*A buen andar, pero sin prisa*" [At a good tempo, but without any hurry] and later on in the Trio section as "*Tempo ministerial*" [At a governmental tempo]. The piece is written in the key of b minor because it is dedicated to Under-Secretaries. If they had been real Secretaries it would have been written in B Major."

--Douglas Riva