

## ABOUT THE SPANISH MASTERS

While most composers endeavor to leave behind a legacy that will endure the test of time, the vast majority fade into obscurity. Their works, once celebrated, die away and fall out of style, becoming like sepia images reflecting an earlier time.

Spain at the end of the nineteenth century was a waning empire. Surrendered in the 1898 Treaty of Paris were the last vestiges of her colonial reach: the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Culturally, the Spanish remained isolated, while France, England, Italy, and Germany had surpassed them economically and militarily.

**Felipe Pedrell** (1841-1922) was a Spanish composer destined for obscurity but whose philosophy and timing would make him one of the most significant influences to shape modern Spanish musical culture. He wrote a short manifesto in 1891 called *Por Nuestra Música* (For Our Music) in which he implored Spain's composers to develop a distinct national style. He advocated the use of material from the "golden age" of Spain (the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries), the use of folkloric idioms from the various regions, and the use of modern compositional techniques and instrumentation.

**Isaac Albéniz** (1860-1909), **Manuel de Falla** (1876-1946), and **Enrique Granados** (1867-1916) are as linked to Spain's musical tradition as Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms are with Germany's. Although the three men approached music and life differently and were vastly unlike in terms of personality, Albéniz, Granados, and Falla were friendly contemporaries, colleagues, and supporters of one another. Their mutual admiration was strengthened greatly by their shared belief in the tenets of Spanish Nationalism set forth and championed by their common teacher, Felipe Pedrell.

Of the three composers, it is widely accepted that **Isaac Albéniz** was the best technical pianist. Already a touring virtuoso by age 15, Albéniz's personality was gregarious and outgoing, and he was well liked for his good sense of humor. Accompanying a caricature of him in *La Ilustración* musical from 1883, is the following: "Como hombre, un niño. Como pianista, un gigante," which translates into, "As a man, a child. As a pianist, a giant." He was also quite a story teller. It wasn't until fairly recently that scholars unraveled the tangle of conflicting accounts which he invented about himself for his many biographers.

*La Vega* refers to the fertile plain at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains that sustained the inhabitants of Granada for thousands of years. The composition was supposed to be part of a larger collection of movements called The Alhambra, in reference to the palace built by the Nasrid sultans which overlooks La Vega. The piece underwent several revisions including an orchestral rendition and a song cycle which never materialized. This original version was recovered from the manuscript in 2007 and represents the composition as Albéniz had conceived it. Because *La Vega* was supposed to be part of a larger suite, this version is significantly shorter than the one we are familiar with today. It might be because of Albéniz's desire to get on with his opera trilogy that he lengthened the piece and left it as a stand-alone work. *La Vega* remained unpublished until 1908, the year before his death.

Albéniz lost some of his sociable nature later in life due to his nearly-constant discomfort caused by Bright's disease, a painful kidney ailment. While visiting the Mediterranean seaside village of Tiana for a recuperative stay, he met with Dr. Ruperto Regordosa Planas, owner of an Edison phonograph, who convinced the pianist to play and be recorded. The three improvisations, performed during that convalescent visit in 1903, are the only extant examples of Albéniz's playing. Their source material might have been sketches for the remaining two operas in his Arthurian trilogy,

unpublished works for piano, or simply invented on the spot. Adding to their allure, the improvisations were performed during the decade-long period in his life when Albéniz abandoned writing for the piano so that he could focus full-time on composing opera.

**Enrique Granados** was unquestionably the best improviser and only true pedagogue among the three. In addition to composing and performing, he founded the Granados Academy and became an influential teacher and caretaker of the Spanish school of piano playing. Despite not having a formal education in anything but the piano, Granados became fluent in three languages and recognized as a gifted orator.

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) spent the last twenty-eight years of his life in Spain, and his compositions had an important influence on Granados. Granados transcribed for piano twenty-six of Scarlatti's keyboard sonatas from a manuscript he had found in Barcelona. He regularly performed these sonatas in his concerts and audiences received the rarely-heard works very enthusiastically. The Sonata Number 9 in B-flat Major, from the 1912 Odeon Studios recording, is among the ones which Granados transcribed himself.

The *Danzas Españolas* (Spanish Dances) are the first of his important compositions, and while it's unclear when they were begun (Granados did not usually date his manuscripts), he started performing the twelve Danzas publicly in 1890. Granados was often under financial strain, and this caused him to rush compositions to his publisher before he had given them time to mature. The editions were printed, but in many cases, quite different than how he eventually performed and taught the pieces. His renditions of the seventh and tenth Spanish Dances were also recorded in Barcelona's Odeon Studios in 1912, and they illustrate very clearly the discrepancies between the published score and Granados's eventual vision. Fortunately he taught his students to play those works using his revisions, and they've been recently published.

Although *El Pelele* (the Puppet) was named for Goya's famous painting, it is not part of the *Goyescas* suite. All of the works by Granados that were inspired by Goya are labeled as *Goyescas*. There is a famous story involving *El Pelele* which Granados's student, Frank Marshall, passed on to his student, Alicia de Larrocha. Marshall was turning pages for Granados at a public performance of *El Pelele* and soon the pianist diverged from the manuscript, not playing much of what he'd written and improvising such an outstanding rendition, that the enthusiastic audience demanded that he play it again. When he obliged the audience, he played note-for-note from the score. Such was the fleeting nature of Granados's talent—much of what he imagined he could only create once.

Compared to Albéniz and Granados, **Manuel de Falla** was by far the most-sophisticated and best-trained composer. Slightly built and very shy, Falla was an extremely devout Catholic and a hypochondriac. His varied oeuvre included stage works, operas, zarzuelas (Spanish operettas), even a harpsichord concerto.

The *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* (Seven Popular Spanish Songs) were completed in Madrid during the middle of 1914. Falla had lived in Paris for the previous seven years during which he was mentored by Debussy, but he returned to neutral Spain at the onset of World War I. The songs draw their texts from the folklore of various provinces in Spain and make discreet moral references to premarital sex, chastity, and infidelity—all of which suited the prudish moral compass of Falla. Regional rhythms and melodies accompany the text, and while the songs were not necessarily conceived of as a cycle, they are usually performed together. So well-written and adored by audiences, this set has endured to become among the most popular Spanish songs ever written. This has led to various transcriptions of them, including a version for cello and piano under the title, *Suite Populaire Espagnole* transcribed by Maurice Maréchal. Excluded from the suite is the song, *Seguidilla Murciana*

because it did not work well for cello. Falla recorded them in 1928 with soprano Maria Barrientos at the Studio Albert in Paris.

Two years later, Falla reunited with Barrientos at the same Parisian studio to record the *Soneto a Córdoba* (Sonnet to Córdoba), and the *Canción del Fuego Fatuo* (Song of the Will-o'-the-Wisp) from his Flamenco opera, *El Amor Brujo* (Love of the Warlock). *Soneto a Córdoba* was presented to Falla by his friend, Federico García Lorca. The sonnet was written by Luis de Góngora, a 16<sup>th</sup> century poet who had come to be much admired by Lorca's literary contemporaries in Spain known as the generation of '27. It was scored for voice with harp-lute accompaniment, probably in reference to the period of the text, but was also written for voice and piano. In *Fuego Fatuo*, the Gypsy heroine of *El Amor Brujo*, Candela, is being tormented in a dark cave by the will-o'-the-wisp. She compares the elusive nature of love to the taunting she is receiving from the spirit in the cave. When the will-o'-the-wisp suddenly disappears she sings, "The cave is mine... By Satan! By Barrabas! I want the man who forgot to come for me!"



LAUFER

Isaac Albéniz, Manuel de Falla, and Enrique Granados each realized their mentor's idea of a Spanish nationalist style of music differently. It is precisely because of their brilliant and varied approaches to define Spain musically that their work continues to endure.

**Dr. Milton Rubén Laufer,**  
Raleigh, NC, Summer 2011

## ABOUT THE SOLOISTS

### MILTON LAUFER, Curator and Pianist

Since making his debut at the age of twelve in Chicago's Petty Auditorium, pianist Milton Rubén Laufer has enjoyed performing throughout the world to the delight of audiences and critics alike. Dr. Laufer began playing the piano at three, and his training includes studies at the Music Institute of Chicago, the Moscow Conservatory, the Gnessin Institute, the Eastman School of Music, the University of Michigan, and Rice University where he earned his DMA.

Recognized internationally as a leading performer and scholar of Spanish piano music, Dr. Laufer's recent editions of Isaac Albéniz's 3 Improvisations for Piano and La Vega are published by G. Henle Verlag of Munich and available worldwide. He is currently working on the book, *The Pianist's Guide to the Repertoire of Spain*. • [www.miltonlaufer.com](http://www.miltonlaufer.com)



BAILEY

### ZUILL BAILEY, Cellist

A consummate concerto soloist, recitalist, chamber musician, and teacher, cellist Zuill Bailey has established himself as one of the most sought after musicians performing today. His recordings of the complete works of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms on Telarc International have received both critical and popular acclaim. In celebration of his recordings and appearances, Kalmus Music Masters will release "Zuill Bailey Performance Editions" which will encompass the core repertoire of cello literature.

In addition to his extensive touring engagements, Mr. Bailey is the Artistic Director of the Sitka Summer Music Festival (Alaska) and El Paso Pro Musica (Texas), and is professor of cello at the University of Texas, El Paso. • [www.zuillbailey.com](http://www.zuillbailey.com)



### ISABEL BAYRAKDARIAN, Soprano

Canadian soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian is known as much for her artistry and stage presence as her musicality. Since winning first prize at the 2000 Operalia International Opera Competition founded by Plácido Domingo, she burst onto the international opera scene, appearing at major opera houses around the world including the Metropolitan Opera, Royal Opera House, Canadian Opera Company, La Scala, Opéra National de Paris, and the Salzburg Festival.

Ms. Bayrakdarian's recordings have garnered her four consecutive Canadian Juno Awards for "Classical Album of the Year," and a 2009 GRAMMY® nomination for "Best Vocal Performance." She is heard on the soundtracks of *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, and on Atom Egoyan's *Ararat*.

Ms. Bayrakdarian said of the Falla compositions, "singing these songs with the composer himself playing the piano accompaniment was truly an incredible experience." • [www.bayrakdarian.com](http://www.bayrakdarian.com)

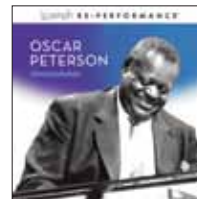
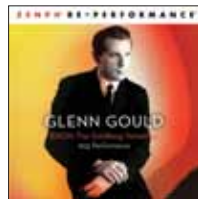


## ABOUT ZENPH

The team at Zenph is passionate about music. Since 2003, we've been developing audio applications designed to transform music production and consumption. Our focus is analyzing—and precisely replicating—how musicians perform, and translating that analysis into data that can be rendered with superb realism on instruments. We began by recreating works by famous pianists. Now our work has expanded to other instruments, including the bass, saxophone, and drums. Our vision has also grown to include live theatrical experiences, as well as cutting-edge software for teaching and creating music.

Zenph's work was named one of the "Best Ideas of the Year" by *The New York Times Magazine* and has received multiple GRAMMY® nominations. The astonishing fidelity and nuance of recordings produced by Zenph software has earned the company accolades from music lovers and critics the world over, including back-to-back, perfect-10 reviews from *The Absolute Sound* and a "Record To Die For" distinction from *Stereophile*.

We chose to record this album in a chamber environment, much like the spaces in which the original performances were recorded. You'll hear a wide dynamic range across the pieces, from Zuill's lovely cello playing in the lullaby to Isabel's full-voiced singing in the closing Soneto. We used no compression, striving to give you the compelling experience of being seated in an intimate room with the performers.



**PRODUCED** by Philip Amalong and John Q. Walker

**ENGINEERED** and **MIXED** by Ian Schreier

**MASTERING** and **ADDITIONAL MIXING** by Brent Lambert at The Kitchen

**RECORDED** June 26-27 and July 12, 2011 at Manifold Studios,  
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implemented by Richard Shepherd of Live Performance, Inc.

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**Digital Editing** by Brady Barnett

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Zuill Bailey appears courtesy of Telarc Records. Mr. Bailey wishes to thank his private patron for the generous loan of the 1693 Ex "Mischa Schneider" Matteo Gofriller cello (Venice, Italy) which he uses for his performances and on this recording. Mr. Bailey uses a Victor Fétique cello bow (Paris, France) and endorses Thomastik Infeld Strings with Connolly and Company Music (Larsen A and D, Soloist-medium / Spirocore Tungsten G, Medium / Spirocore Tungsten C, Medium).

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