

BRIEF NOTES

Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909) Catalanian pianist and composer, a child prodigy who gave concerts at the age of four when his father took him and his sister Clementina on tour throughout Spain. He was a tireless traveller, therefore was inspired by several traditions. In his youth he wrote pieces dedicated to cities, popular dances or situations which he then played himself on 24th January 1886 for the first time. He was a leading figure of the Spanish national school and composed a number of small and beautiful pieces of his native Spain; some of the piano works have been orchestrated. He was greatly influenced by his teacher and composer Felipe Pedrell who encouraged him to write the *Suite Española Op 47* (1886) with reference to cities and with eight pieces: *Aragón* (Fantasia) *Granada*, (Serenata), *Cataluña* (Corranda), *Sevilla* (Sevillanas), *Cádiz* (Canción) *Asturias* (Leyenda), *Castilla* (Seguidillas) and *Cuba* (Capricho). From *Suite Española* Boris Cepeda is playing *Granada*, *Asturias* and *Sevilla*. It is possible that *Granada* was the starting point of the Suite in the style of the popular *Grenadina* folk song. *Asturias* was incorporated to the *Suite Española* much later and is one of the most popular works originally written for piano, while *Sevilla* is a brightly coloured piano piece.

Gerardo Guevara (b. 1930) composer, pianist, conductor and choir director. He was educated at the Quito National Conservatoire of Music and on the celebration of the 50th anniversary of their Composition competitions he won the top Prize. Since then he has become a notable composer. In 1958 he premiered his ballet *Yaguar Shungo* for symphonic orchestra and choir. He was the recipient of a grant from UNESCO and went to study with Nadia Boulanger at the Paris School of Music. In 1980 he became Rector of the Quito National Conservatoire of Music and is the founder of the Quito Central University Choir. He has written works which have surpassed the pentatonic system such as, *Espantapájaros* (scarecrow), Ecuadorian *pasillo*, rhythm, the favourite one, viewed as popular music. It is like a waltz in A-B-A form which begins and ends with an elegiac mood; the middle part is faster and is played in a major key. In *Danzante del Destino* (a fated dancer) and *Apamuy Shungo*, the composer used the rhythms of his ancestors by transposing traditional sounds into symbolic meanings. The three pieces were written with a vernacular musical language in mind.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was born in Raiding, Hungary and moved to Vienna where he studied piano with Czerny and composition with Salieri. His family went to Paris in 1823 and from there he toured the country giving piano concerts. He was influenced by Paganini and wanted to apply a similar technique as a pianist. He settled in Switzerland with Comtesse d'Agoult, with whom he had three children, but they separated in 1844 when he had already gained a good reputation as a pianist. He later went to Weimar where he had many pupils and as a composer he worked on the creation of a new form, the *symphonic* poem. We will hear tonight the *Rhapsodie Espagnole* which makes use of the Folies d'Espagne tune with variations by Rachmaninov, Corelli, Vivaldi and other Baroque composers and the *Jota Aragonesa*.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) French composer who was very much influenced by his Basque mother; Spain became an inspiration for Ravel's music for most of his life. He fell in love with the country even before he visited but instinctively captured the essence of Spanish music. He entered the Paris Conservatoire at 14 and stayed until 1905. He wrote a number of works considered too modern but with perfect form and style a characteristic of Ravel's works. Gabriel Fauré taught him composition and he imprinted his music-writing with a very personal and individual style always within the boundaries of harmonic conventions rooted in tonality. It was September 1911 when Ravel visited the Basque country by car and continued travelling throughout Spain in a series of trips where he composed his most famous pieces: *Rapsodie Espagnole*, *Pavane for a dead Princess*, *Sonatine* for piano, *String Quartet*, *Gaspard de la nuit*, the ballet *Daphnis et Chloé*, *Boléro* and many more. From the *Miroirs* (1905), considered one of his master works, we will hear *Alborada del Gracioso*, an early piece which was the basis for a ballet. We should note that Ravel was inspired by the Spain of his mother who recalled her years spent in Madrid when she was very young.

José Ignacio Canelos (1898-1957) composer and pianist who has distinguished himself in the field of Ecuadorian music which has a deep feeling of melancholy, a characteristic of the music of Ecuador. He is the author of around six hundred works, among them, religious pieces. traditional works for voice and instrumental pieces for orchestra like *Indigenous poem*, chamber music and several piano works. He very much wanted to incorporate a mixture of traditional Ecuadorian music with European forms. There are native forms such as, the *Sanjuanito*, *Yaravi*, *Danzante* and *Yumbo* with a marked Andean native accent. Professor Segundo Luis Moreno made a list of notable composers and performers and has included Ignacio Canelos amongst others. He followed his roots when he wrote the beautiful piece *Intermezzo Inca*, and for this reason, he is regarded as the founder of Ecuadorian national music, always fascinated with the music of indigenous background as early as 1920.

Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937) Polish composer born in Tymoszwówka, now the Ukraine, into a family with considerable interest in the arts and as a result his brother and sisters pursued their careers in the field and became painters, musicians and poets. His father gave him piano lessons from an early age and later went to the Elizavetgrad School of Music and was taught by Gustav Neuhaus. Afterwards, he enrolled at the Warsaw State Conservatoire to have a systematic musical education and received lessons from Zawirski in harmony and with Zygmunt Noskowski in counterpoint and composition. He extensively travel to Europe, Middle East, North Africa and the USA and as a result he wrote his novel *Efebos*, which unfortunately was lost in a fire in 1939. His music was influenced by Richard Wagner, Richard Strauss, Frédéric Chopin, Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel among others and he developed a very personal rhapsodic style. Szymanowski wrote four symphonic works, two ballets, two operas, and his famous Etudes Opus 4 for piano, two masterful string quartets, one sonata for violin and piano and many more works. Cepeda is playing one piece from a set of three from the *Masques Opus 34*, (1915-16) *Don Juan's Serenade* - *vivace quasi imprvivisando*. The other two pieces are *Scheherazade* and *Tantris the Clown*. The *Masques* are harmonically varied, colourful and vibrant in tonality.

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) Brazilian composer who lived during the social reforms and modernisation of Brazil. Young Villa-Lobos learned to play the guitar, cello and the clarinet and when his father Raúl died he worked by playing piano in cinema and theatre orchestras in Rio. He taught himself music inspired on Brazil's indigenous cultural diversity. By 1916 he wrote the symphonic poems *Amazonas* and *Uirapurú* drew from primitive folk material. In 1923 he went to Paris and in the '20s he composed his *Etudes* and *Choros*. By 1932 he became Director of the Superintendencia de Educação Musical e Artística (SEMA). He returned to Paris and visited USA and Great Britain in 1945 and received a number of commissions culminating with *Forest of the Amazons* which was recorded for United Artists. *Rudepoema*, is one of the most important pieces of his piano production and is a portrait of Villa-Lobos' friend Artur Rubinstein, a pianist with greater talent, enormously successful and beloved Polish-born American pianist. It was dedicated to him in retribution of his entertaining book *My Many Years*, where he remembered his early days in Rio de Janeiro. Villa-Lobos orchestrated the piano work in 1932 and is an amazing orchestral piece, but tonight Boris Cepeda skillfully plays this piano piece to end his concert!

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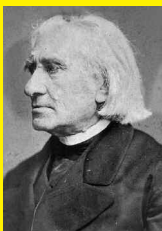
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