



## The Tachmindji Lecture

*How Much Time is there for Music in God's Order of Creation?*

A Lecture by Peter Casarella, PhD, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, The Catholic University of America

## Manuel de Falla and the Music of Faith

Post-Classical Ensemble

Angel Gil-Ordóñez, music director

Joseph Horowitz, artistic director

Sara Stern, flute; Mark Hill, oboe; David Jones, clarinet;

David Salness, violin; Evelyn Elsing, cello

Saint Paul's Boy and Girl Choristers and Men's Schola

Pedro Carboné, piano

Rosa Lamoreaux, soprano

Oscar Ceville, reader

### Program

Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1264)

*Pange lingua gloriosi*

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

*Caligaverunt oculi mei* (Mine eyes are dim with weeping)

Poetry by John of the Cross (1542-1591)

*La noche oscura* (The dark night)

Tomás Luis de Victoria

*Vere languores nostros* (Our failings he has truly taken upon himself)

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)

*Concerto* (1926)

Allegro

Lento: giubiloso ed energico

Vivace: flessibile, scherzando

*De los álamos vengo, madre* (harmonized for voice and piano by Joaquín Rodrigo)

Mateo Albéniz (1760-1831)

*Sonata in D*

Cantallós (1760-?)

*Sonata in C minor*

Padre Antonio Soler (1729-1783)

*Sonata in D*

Manuel de Falla

*Concerto* (1926)

Allegro

Lento: giubiloso ed energico

Vivace: flessibile, scherzando

**Post-concert discussion with the participation of Peter Casarella, Roger Ferlo, John Farina, Angel Gil-Ordóñez, and Pedro Carboné. Joseph Horowitz, host.**

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

By Joseph Horowitz

The Granada house of Manuel de Falla— to this day painstakingly preserved, inside and out — is exceptionally informative. Its white-washed rooms -- tiny, meticulous — were shared by Falla and his sister Maria del Carmen. Even the piano, an upright, is small. Falla's bedroom, with its crucifix, is a spare space more religious than secular. Maria's bedroom, with its crucifix and photographs, seems equally a shrine to Our Savior and to her famous brother. Of Falla in Paris, Stravinsky wrote: "His nature was the most unpytically religious I have ever known — and the least sensible to manifestations of humor. I have never seen anyone as shy." In Granada, the bachelor composer's personal eccentricities were even more pronounced. He maintained a strict daily regime, set by the clock. He worried incessantly about his faltering health. His gaunt physiognomy and short stature reinforced the austerity of his trappings and habits. By friends and acquaintances he was inevitably described as "saintly."

Tonight's 13-minute **Concerto** took all of three years to compose: 1923 to 1926. Though it scarcely resembles Albeniz's *Iberia*, Falla's own *El Amor Brujo*, or any previous musical evocation of the composer's homeland, homage to Spain inflects virtually every aspect of this compact and fastidious score. A prime motive was the desire to rescue for twentieth century music the instrument of Domenico Scarlatti and Antonio Soler. As Wanda Landowska had restored the harpsichord to contemporary prominence, it was to Landowska that Falla's Concerto is dedicated, and Landowska performed the premiere (conducted by Pablo Casals).

The complete title reads: "Concerto for harpsichord (or piano), flute, oboe, clarinet, violin, and cello." Falla also wrote: "In this work, the composer has not only endeavored to adjust it to the classical concerto form for solo instrument to be accompanied by orchestra, but also to surround the main instrument with a number of other ones, each being treated as a soloist. Owing to both its style and character, the music is derived from old Spanish religious, courtly, and folk melodies." That is: this is a harpsichord concerto for a total of five instruments, each treated soloistically. The harpsichord may alternatively be a piano. Of the three movements, the first and third cite or evoke courtly or folk music. The second pays tribute to religious Spain.

A comparison to Falla's earlier composition for piano and "orchestra" is instructive. *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* is twice as long. Its aura of gallantry and romance, its perfumed scent, its physical descriptions of the Alhambra, the final apotheosis of its romantic nocturnal ether — all of this connects with the "Spain" of Debussy and Ravel. The Concerto connects with a different influence, also encountered in Paris: Stravinsky. One could say, in fact, that *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* is Falla's *Firebird*. Certainly his subsequent move toward a modernism infused with religion and nationalism parallels Stravinsky's practice in *Les noces* (with its rustic ceremonial roots) or *Symphonies for Wind Instruments* (with its liturgical base) or *The Fairy's Kiss* (with its reconstituted Tchaikovsky excerpts). Falla's Concerto, similarly, reconstitutes elements of a national legacy. And, like Stravinsky, Falla here freshly explores timbre for its own sake.

The core of the concerto is its middle slow movement, marked *Lento* and "giubiloso ed energico." The apparent slightness of this music — it lasts less than six minutes — is wholly misleading. It is a religious ecstasy, an experience of high piety at once spartan and loving. Its hymnic strains inhabit a stark physical or metaphysical space. Its steady, tidal trajectory culminates in streaming scales: refulgence, illumination, a halo of light in the darkness. As in the poetry of Spain's sixteenth century mystics, the soul attains loving union with God. In solitude and concealment, writes St. John of the Cross, "I abandoned and forgot myself, laying my face on my Beloved; all things ceased. . . ."

Of the Concerto's flanking movements, both briskly secular, the first cites the Renaissance madrigal "**De los álamos vengo, madre,**" and the third connects with the eighteenth century harpsichord sonatas of Scarlatti and Soler.

PEDRO CARBONE ON THE FALLA CONCERTO

*In Granada, Falla lived like a monk. You can sense that in the music — its sobriety, its austerity. This begins with the instrumentation — he absolutely forbids that the instruments be doubled.*

*The concerto as a whole is a kind of condensation of the history of Spanish music. The first movement quotes Spanish Renaissance songs, as collected by Pedrell. The second certainly evokes the sixteenth century church music of Tomas Luis de Victoria — from the time of Don Quixote — but with a simplicity that rigorously negates any sense of grandeur. The last movement is all about the Spanish keyboard school of Scarlatti and Soler, which was the final manifestation of Spanish greatness in music before the twentieth century. So Falla shows, in summary, what Spanish music has been about — the popular music, the religious music, the keyboard school.*

*The concerto is of course conceived for harpsichord, but Falla sanctioned the substitution of a grand piano. Falla himself once performed the Concerto twice in succession, first on the harpsichord, then on the piano. I think that tells you a lot. Because there are things — the poly-rhythms of the finale, for instance — that can only be clarified with a piano. You simply cannot bear everything when a harpsichord is used. Clearly, Falla intended the timbre of the harpsichord. But there is a musical gain when the piece becomes a Piano Concerto.*

**Peter Casarella** received his Ph.D. in 1992 from the department of Religious Studies at Yale University after completing a dissertation on the theology of the word of the fifteenth century Catholic thinker Nicholas of Cusa. He spent two years as an assistant professor of theology at the University of Dallas before assuming a similar position at The Catholic University of America. Since 1997 he has been an associate professor of systematic theology there and also served a term as director of the university's Center for Medieval and Byzantine Studies.

He has written numerous essays in scholarly journals on a variety of topics, e.g., medieval Christian Neoplatonism, contemporary theological aesthetics, and the Hispanic/Latino presence in the U.S. Catholic Church. He has co-edited two volumes of essays: with Raúl Gómez, S.D.S., *Cuerpo de Cristo: The Hispanic Presence in the U.S. Catholic Church*. (Academic Renewal, 2003) and with George Schner, S.J., *Christian Spirituality and the Culture of Modernity: The Thought of Louis Dupré* (Eerdmans, 1998). He recently published "Carmen Dei: Music and Creation in Three Theologians," in: *Theology Today* 62:4 (Jan 2006). In March 2006 The Catholic University of America Press will publish another of his edited volumes, *Cusanus: The Legacy of Learned Ignorance*.

In 2003-2004, he held the J. Houston Witherspoon Research Fellowship in Theology and Natural Science at the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, N.J. He is currently (2005-2006) serving a one-year term as president of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians in the U.S. (ACHTUS) and continues his on-going duties as vice president of the American Cusanus Society. He is also a member of the editorial board of *Communio* and a co-organizer of the annual session of the Hans Urs von Balthasar Society at the Catholic Theological Society of America. His current research project focuses on St. Bonaventure's trinitarian theology of creation and the idea of emergence in contemporary physics.

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"More than an orchestra," **Post-Classical Ensemble** breaks out of classical music, with its implied notion of a high-culture remote from popular art. Its concerts regularly incorporate folk song, dance, film, poetry, and commentary in order to cultivate adventurous new listeners. Of the orchestra's past programs, "Csárdás!" — with the participation of the Gázsa Folk Band of Budapest— was recorded for national broadcast via Chicago's WEMT, and has also been heard over National Public Radio. In June 2005, in association with the American Film Institute, Post-Classical Ensemble presented two classic American documentaries—*The River* and *The Plow that Broke the Plains*—whose scores, by Virgil Thomson, were performed live. These presentations will generate a state-of-the-art DVD produced by Naxos and currently in production. The Ensemble made its sold-out Kennedy Center debut in Fall 2005 in "Celebrating Don Quixote," featuring a commissioned production of Manuel de Falla's sublime puppet opera *Master Peter's Puppet Show*. The Ensemble's 2006-2007 season includes two programs at the Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts in College Park, Maryland: "Beyond Flamenco: Finding Spain in Music," an all-day immersion experience with Pedro Carboné on Sunday, November 19, and "Song of the Earth," featuring the premiere of a commissioned work by Zhou Long alongside the "Farewell" from Mahler's *Song of the Earth* on Friday, March 16.

**Pedro Carboné** has been hailed as "one of the best Spanish pianists of our time" (*Ritmo*, Madrid), His interpretation of Albéniz's *Iberia*, to be heard next season at Post-Classical Ensemble's "Beyond Flamenco" program, as been praised as "magnificent" (*ABC*, Madrid). He recorded Oscar Esplá's piano works for Marco Polo to great acclaim in *Fanfare* and the *American Record Guide* and performed Esplá's concerto *Sonata del Sur* with the Brandenburgisches Staatsorchester Frankfurt and the "George Enescu" Philharmonic of Bucharest, marking the first time this music was heard outside of Spain in fifty years. Mr. Carboné recorded the complete Chopin Etudes at the age of 19 for RCA — "among the best versions ever made" (*Harmonie-Opéra*, Paris). *The Washington Post* called him "a major artist" after his Kennedy Center debut. He has since performed widely in the United States and has frequently been featured in live performance on National Public Radio. In New York City he has performed as soloist with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the American Composers Orchestra, and the Perspectives Ensemble.

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**Saint Paul's Boy and Girl Choristers and Men's Schola.** Since 1866 professional choral music has been an integral part of St. Paul's Parish, K Street, Washington. Few choirs of boys and girls aim to master a large body of complex music and perform weekly at a high standard. St. Paul's Boy and Girl Choristers are introduced to classic hymns to Renaissance motets, Bach in German, English anthems and Gregorian Chant. Great emphasis is given to music reading skills, with each child receiving significant individual attention and vocal training. The boys and girls are joined by professional adult altos, tenors and basses. Presently, Mark Dwyer holds the position of Music Director. The choir has performed with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center under Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Leonard Slatkin, and Christopher Hogwood.

**Rosa Lamoreaux** was recently named Artistic Director of the National Gallery of Art Vocal Ensemble. She has been soloist with the Atlanta Symphony and the Cincinnati Symphony with Robert Shaw in performances of Bach's B minor Mass and Mozart's Mass in C minor.

Formerly Associate Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Spain, **Angel Gil-Ordóñez** has led the American Composers Orchestra, Opera Colorado, the Pacific Symphony, the Hartford Symphony, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic. Abroad, he has been heard with the Munich Philharmonic, the Solistes de Berne, at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, and at the Bellas Artes National Theatre in Mexico City. In summer 2000 he toured the major music festivals of Spain with the Valencia Symphony Orchestra in the Spanish premiere of Leonard Bernstein's *Mass*. Born in Madrid, he worked closely with Sergiu Celibidache for more than six years in Germany. In addition being the founding Music Director of Post-Classical Ensemble, he is Director of Orchestral Studies at Wesleyan University and Music Director of the Wesleyan Ensemble of the Americas. A specialist in the Spanish repertoire, Mr. Gil-Ordóñez has recorded four CDs devoted to Spanish composers.

**Joseph Horowitz** has long been a pioneer in classical music programming, beginning with his tenure as Artistic Advisor for the annual Schubertiade at the 92nd Street Y. As Executive Director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, he received national attention for "The Russian Stravinsky," "American Transcendentalists," "Flamenco," and other festivals exploring the folk roots of concert works. Now an artistic advisor to half a dozen American orchestras, he has created more than two dozen interdisciplinary music festivals since 1985. Called "our nation's leading scholar of the symphony orchestra" by Charles Olton, former President of the American Symphony Orchestra League, Mr. Horowitz is also the award-winning author of seven books mainly dealing with the institutional history of classical music in the United States. His *Classical Music in America: A History of Its Rise and Fall*, was named one of the best books of 2005 by *The Economist*.

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