

VOICES OF ASCENSION

DENNIS KEENE
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

Thursday, February 9, 2017 at 8:00pm
The Church of the Ascension
Fifth Avenue and Tenth Street
New York City

Performance in honor of Roberta Huber

SPAIN: GRANADOS, FALLA & MODERNISME

VANESSA VASQUEZ, *soprano*
FRANCESCA DEPASQUALE, *violin*
VANESSA PEREZ, *piano*
DOUGLAS RIVA, *piano*
MICHELE SCANLON, *piano*
MARK KRUCZEK, *organ*

SILVER JUBILEE SOCIETY CONCERT SPONSOR
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The audience is urged at this time to make sure that all
cell phones and other electronic devices are turned off.
The use of cameras and recording devices is strictly prohibited.

Members of the audience are cordially invited to greet the artists at a reception
following the concert in the Parish Hall (enter through the right side doors).

PROGRAM

ROSARIUM BEATAE VIRGINIS MARIAE

PABLO CASALS
1876-1973

Voices of Ascension, Dennis Keene, Conductor,
Elena Williamson, *soprano*, and Mark Kruczek, *organ*

Pau (Pablo) Casals was born in El Vendrell (near Barcelona) in 1876 and died in San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1973. Casals was celebrated throughout the world as cellist, conductor and as a fighter for human rights. He was also a composer of a small body of very beautiful music.

These choral works were composed for the men and boy choir of the monastery in Montserrat, Spain. Each piece reveals his ability to express spiritual feelings in a simple, genuine and personal manner.

The *Rosaries* was intended to be sung in the services at Montserrat. The work is a series of very short movements, and is inspired by the tradition of congregational sections alternating with sections for chapel choir or soloists. Each movement has a different color and mood, some evoking Medieval or Renaissance styles.

PATER NOSTER

Pater noster, qui est in coeli; sanctificetur nomen tuum; adveniat regnum tuum; fiat voluntas tua, sicut in coelo et in terra.

AVE MARIA

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum; benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui Jesus.

GLORIA PATRI

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto

PANEM NOSTRUM

Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis, da nobis hodie, et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimitimus debitoribus nostris; et ne nos inducas in tentationem; sed libera nos a malo; Amen.

SANCTA MARIA

Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc, et in hora, mortis nostrae. Amen

SICUT ERAT

Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

OUR FATHER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done as it is in heaven.

HAIL, MARY

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

OUR DAILY BREAD

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen.

HOLY MARY

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and in the hour of our death. Amen.

AS IT WAS

As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

ROMANZA
ESCENA RELIGIOSA

ENRIC GRANADOS
1867-1916

Francesca dePasquale, *violin*, Douglas Riva, *piano &* Mark Kruczek, *organ*

Granados' *Romanza* for violin and piano is an overlooked gem of the repertoire. Dedicated to his friend Lázaro Clariana, *Romanza* is a work in the Romantic style, highly emotional and poetic.

Escena religiosa (Religious Scene) was dedicated "to the memory of beloved Doña Cecilia", wife of Granados' patron, Eduardo Conde. The work was probably composed for her funeral. Granados used a highly unusual instrumental combination in this composition, written for piano, organ and violin. The manuscript also called for a few notes to be played on the timpani, which have been transferred to the piano for tonight's performance. The manuscript contains a text placed above the score. It is not clear if Granados' intention was for the text to be read prior to the performance or if it was intended to reveal the inspiration of the composer:

Angel: *Come, my soul, God calls you to reward your martyrdom.*

Soul: *I will live with God and pray for my family.*

AVE MARIA
EL ROSSINYOL (THE NIGHTINGALE)

ENRIC MORERA
1865-1942

Voices of Ascension, Dennis Keene, Conductor,
Sarah Griffiths, *soprano*, and Mark Kruczek, *organ*

Enric Morera was born and died in Barcelona. He composed several operas and various instrumental works, but is best known today for his choral arrangements of Catalan folk songs, of which *El Rossinyol* may well be the most famous of all. In *Ave Maria*, he set the simple treble solo against a luminous background of women's voices. After a brief emotional outpouring, the calm melody returns in the men's voices.

AVE MARIA

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

EL ROSSINYOL

Rossinyol que vas a França rossinyol
encomana'm a la mare rossinyol
d'un bell bocatge rossinyol d'un vol.

Encomana'm a ma mare rossinyol
i a mon pare no pas gaire rossinyol
d'un bell boctge rossinyol d'un vol.

A mon pare no pas gaire rossinyol
perquè a un pastor me'n ha dada rossinyol
d'un bell bocatge rossinyol d'un vol.

HAIL, MARY

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and in the hour of our death.

THE NIGHTINGALE

Oh nightingale on your way to France, oh nightingale
Carry my prayers to my mother, oh nightingale,
As you fly overhead.

Carry my prayers to my mother, oh nightingale,
But there's no need to give them to my father
As you fly overhead.

No need to give them to my father, oh nightingale,
Because a shepherd has already brought them,
As you fly overhead.

Translation by Scott Jackson Wiley

EL AMOR BRUJO SUITE FOR PIANO

MANUEL DE FALLA

1876-1946

Pantomima (Pantomime)

Canción del fuego fatuo (Song of the Will o' the Wisp)

Danza del terror (Dance of Terror)

El Círculo mágico (The Magic Circle)

Minuit (Midnight)

Danza del ritual del fuego fatuo (Ritual Fire Dance)

Vanessa Perez, *piano*

El Amor Brujo (Love, the Magician) is a ballet composed in 1914-1915 by Manuel de Falla to a libretto by Gregorio Martínez Sierra. The ballet was later revised, and arranged for orchestra and as a piano suite.

The work is distinctively Andalusian in character with music of remarkable beauty and originality. The plot is disarmingly simple – a gypsy is possessed by the ghost of her faithless former lover until her new suitor enlists a beautiful friend to entice the ghost away. Finally the two lovers, at last freed from the stifling burdens of their past, emerge from a night of sorcery to face the wondrous splendor of a new dawn. While the piano suite has no explicit narrative, its movements hearken to the ballet and orchestral versions.

A “Pantomime” conjures a meltingly lovely reverie in 7/8 meter. The “Song of the Will o’ the Wisp” evokes elusive desire. The piquant “Dance of Terror” is relentless in its intensity. “The Magic Circle” summons timeless wonderment. In “Minuit” the clock strikes 12, leading to the final “Ritual Fire Dance”.

INTERMISSION

Voices of Ascension wishes to thank Dr. Jon Walton, the staff and members of The First Presbyterian Church for making their restrooms available to us. At the intermission, you may use the three Ascension restrooms, or follow the directions to the seven restrooms accessible throughout the 11th Street side entrance at First Presbyterian. For further assistance, please ask a Voices of Ascension volunteer, usher, or staff member for instructions.

Casals' exceptionally beautiful melody is given to all the women of the chorus - all sopranos and altos in unison - while the men provide the harmonic accompaniment. The work is brief, direct and deeply felt.

RECORDARE, VIRGO MATER

Recordare, Virgo Mater, in conspectu Dei. Recordare Virgo Mater, in conspectu Dei, ut loquaris pro nobis bona, ut loquaris pro nobis bona, et ut avertat indignationem suam a nobis. Alleluia.

OH REMEMBER, VIRGIN MOTHER

Oh, remember, Virgin Mother, when thou art in His sight, Oh, remember, Virgin Mother, when thou art in His sight, to recount what is good about us, and turn away turn away, His anger, His anger away from us. Alleluia.

Composed for the boys at Montserrat (without men's voices), this is one of Casals' most popular compositions. The floating treble vocal lines and touching melodies perfectly depict the tender, familiar biblical text.

NIGRA SUM

Nigra sum, sed formosa, filiae Jerusalem.
Ideo dilexit me rex et introduxit me in cubiculum suum et dixit mihi:
Surge, amica mea, et veni.
Jam hiems transiit, imber abiit, et recessit.
Flores apparuerunt in terra nostra,
Tempus putationis advenit
Alleluia.

I AM BLACK

I am black but beautiful, daughters of Jerusalem.
Therefore, the King delighted in me, and brought me into his chamber and said unto me: Arise my love and come, for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning is come. Alleluia!

CANT A LA VINYA

Que Déu te guard, oh vinya catalana!
Mar de verdor que serra amunt t'estens!
Mon pit s'eixampla al respirar ta ufana,
si enfonso els peus enmig de tos serments!

I et vull, i et tinc mateix que una altra esposa,
i els fills del cor els fem pujar tu i jo.
El meu amor te torna més hermosa,
i et dono fins la sang amb la suor!

Benhaja el sol que et besa cada dia,
i la pluja abundosa davallant
sobre tos pàmpols, llengües d'harmonia
que els aires mouen, mon delit cantant!

Com tos sarments s'abracen en la terra,
que s'abraci al damunt la nostra gent.
Oh vinya de la plana i de la serra,
dóna'ns força i noblesa eternament!

MORERA

May God keep you, oh Catalan vineyard!
Sea of green stretching mountain aloft!
My breast expands breathing in your abundance,
when I sink my feet in the shoots of your vines!

And I love you, and keep you like another spouse,
and the babes of my heart we raise them you and I.
My love makes you more beautiful,
and I give you even my blood with my sweat!

Blessed be the sun that kisses you each day,
and the abundant rain coming down
on your grape leaves, tongues of harmony
that the breezes move, singing my delight!

Just as your shoots embrace upon the earth
may our people embrace above.
Oh vineyard of the plain and the mountain range,
give us strength and make us noble eternally!

ECO
PRELUDIO

MANUEL OLTRA
1922-2015

Manuel Oltra was one of Catalonia's most distinguished composers and teachers. His *Eco* and *Preludio* come from a set of *Three Songs of Love* on texts by Garcia Lorca. Composed in 1965 and 1964, they display a brilliant ability to compose for the choral instrument, and they each create the wonderfully vivid atmospheres of the unique Lorca poems.

ECO

Ya se ha abierto la flor de la aurora
(¿Recuerdas el fondo de la tarde?)
El nardo de la luna derrama su olor frío.
(¿Recuerdas la mirada de agosto?)

PRELUDIO

Las alamedas se van,
pero dejan so reflejo.
Las alamedas se van,
pero nos dejan el viento.
El viento está amortajado
a lo largo bajo el cielo.
Pero ha dejado flotando
sobre los ríos, sus ecos.
El mundo de las luciérnagas
ha invadido mis recuerdos.
Y un corazón diminuto
me va brotando en los dedos.

ECHO

The flower of dawn has now opened.
(Do you recall the late afternoon?)
The spikenard plant radiates its cool scent under the
moon.
(Do you recall how August seemed?)

PRELUDE

The poplar avenues move on
but leave their reflection.
The poplar lanes move on
but leave us the wind.
The wind lies shrouded
full length beneath the sky.
But floating on the rivers
it has left its echoes.
The world of fireflies
has invaded my memories.
And a tiny little heart
is sprouting at my fingertips.

LA MAJA Y EL RUISEÑOR FROM GOYESCAS
GRACIA MIA

GRANADOS

Vanessa Vasquez, *soprano* & Michelle Scanlon, *piano*

In spite of a fear of travel by sea, Granados agreed to come to New York for the premiere of his opera *Goyescas*. On January 28, 1916, *Goyescas* was premiered at the Metropolitan Opera to positive reviews by the American audience and critics. Granados' opera, based on early paintings by Francisco Goya, was the first to be performed in Spanish and featured the talents of Giovanni Martinelli and Giuseppe De Luca. Though it was well-received, the work was never performed again at The Met.

While in New York for the premiere, Granados received an honorary membership in the Hispanic Society of America and was presented by founder and president, Archer Huntington, with the Silver Medal of Arts and Letters. Granados in turn inscribed a musical phrase on one of the columns in the central hall of the Society's building and he also gave the Hispanic Society the original manuscript of the vocal score of *Goyescas* which has been shared with Voices of Ascension for this performance.

Originally appearing as the fourth piece of Granados' piano suite *Goyescas*, the aria "La Maja y el Ruisenor" is based on a folk song which Granados heard a young woman sing in the countryside surrounding Valencia. He transforms the melody through a series of variations culminating in a cadenza imitating the song of the Nightingale.

LA MAJA Y EL RUISEÑOR

¿Por qué entre sombras el ruiseñor
entona su armonioso cantar?
¿ Acaso al rey del día guarda rencor ?
¿ Y de él quiere algún agravio vengar?
Guarda quizás su pecho oculto tal dolor,
que en la sombra espera alivio hallar,
triste entonando cantos de amor. ¡Ay!
¡Y tal vez alguna flor temblorosa del pudor de amor,
es la esclava enamorada de su cantor!...

¡Misterio es el cantar
que entona envuelto en sombra el ruiseñor!
¡Ah! Son los amores como flor
a merced de la mar.
¡Amor! ¡Amor!
¡Ah, no hay cantar sin amor!
¡Ah! ruiseñor: es tu cantar
himno de amor.

THE SONG OF THE NIGHTINGALE

Why in the shadows does the nightingale
Sing its harmonious song?
Does it bear a grudge against the Sun, King of the Day?
Or want to avenge some grievance?
Perhaps she keeps hidden in her breast such grief
That she hopes to find relief in the shadows,
Sadly singing her songs of love. Or,
Maybe some flower, trembling with the blushes of love,
Is the love-lorn slave of her song.

Mysterious is the song
Which the nightingale chants, wrapped in shadows!
Ah! Love is like a flower
At the mercy of the sea.
Love! Love!
Ah, there is no singing without love!
Ah! Nightingale: your singing is
A hymn of love.

Translation by David Wyatt

“Gracia Mia”, from *Canciones amatorias*, is an exuberant love song. In contrast to the sorrow of Rosario and her nightingale, this is a reminder that love can be a joyous and extravagant.

GRACIA MIA

Gracia mía, juro a Dios
que sois tan bella criatura
que a perderse la hermosura
se tiene de hallar su voz.

Fuera bien aventurada
en perderse en vos mi vida
porque viniera perdida
para salir más ganada.

¡Ah! Seréis hermosuras dos
en una sola figura,
que a perderse la hermosura
se tiene de hallar en vos.

En vuestros verdes ojuelos
nos mostráis vuestro valor
que son causa del amor
y las pestañas son cielos;
nacieron por bien de nos.

Gracia mía ...

MY DEAREST (SONGS OF LOVE)

My dearest, I swear to God
that you are the most beautiful creature
that if Beauty were lost
one would find it in you.

If only my life could be so fortunate
to lose myself in you.
I being lost
would come out winning.

You then would be twice beautiful
in one figure,
that if Beauty were lost
one would find it in you.

In your beautiful green eyes,
you show us your great strength
the reason for all love
And your eyelashes are skies;
They were born for our happiness.

My dearest...

Douglas Riva, *piano* and Mark Kruczek, *organ*

CANT DE LES ESTRELLES

Oh!, Immensitat eternal dels espais!
 Follia i febre d'amor, deliri no hem conegut mai!

Mai!
 Per això (per'xò) és nostra vida eterna serena
 i pura nostra llum.
 Quan en la nit calmada, guaitant del fons de la blavor
 llunyana,
 veiern com cerqueu repòs debades pels vostres cors
 assedegats per la febre inestroncable del desig.
 Per això (per'xò) és nostra vida eterna i pura nostra
 llum.
 quan, en la calma nit, de vosaltres ens compadim!
 Som filles de la nit, ulls d'esguard brillant,
 que a través dels espais vers vosaltres compassives
 girem!
 Som víctimes de l'amor! No havern conhort!
 L'eterna serenitat, que augusta plana en el cel,
 enfondeix nostra pietat vers vostra estèril anhel.
 Ah!, eterna serenitat del cel.
 Lliures voldriem volar! Ah!
 Som presoners de l'amor!
 Com ens podrem desilliurar?
 Feblesa porteu al cor!
 Debades repòs cerqueu!
 Volem conèixer nous mons!
 Encisos d'amor trenqueu!
 No podem rompre els grillons!
 Immensitat!
 Eternitat!
 Eternitat! Ah!

SONG OF THE STARS

Oh, infinite vastness and stillness of space!
 Oh, wild delirium of love, whose fever we never can
 know!
 No!
 And so we live for ever
 Shining down with pure serene starlight
 When in the still of the night, we wait and watch
 from out of the deep blue distance,
 Overwhelmed by the insatiable fever of desire.
 And so we live on forever, shining with pure light
 When in the still of the night, with compassion to
 you we turn!
 We daughters of the night, shining brightly down,
 Across the vastness of space we turn with compassion
 to you!
 We victims of love's cruel spell! Never find repose!
 Infinite stillness of space, bearing relentlessly down,
 Deepens our pity for you. Longing in vain to find
 peace.
 Infinite stillness of space.
 Oh for the freedom to fly! Ah!
 No more the prisoners of love!
 How can we break off the bonds?
 Love in man's heart makes him weak!
 Vainly he hopes for release!
 We want to visit new worlds!
 Break the enchantment of love!
 There's no escape from its bonds!
 Infinite space!
 Endlessly still!
 Endlessly still! Ah!

Notes by Douglas Riva

On the night of March 11, 1911 one of the most significant concerts in the history of Spanish music took place at Barcelona's Palau de la Música Catalana. The program was devoted entirely to the music of Granados, all performed by the composer himself. That night, only four months shy of his 44th birthday, Granados was aware that he was presenting himself to the world as a mature composer and pianist. The program included the World Premieres of his piano suite *Goyescas* and of *Azulejos* [Mosaic Tiles], a work by Albéniz which Granados completed after Albéniz's death at the request of his widow. Other works performed included Granados' *Valses poéticos* and *Allegro de concierto*.

Critics were unanimous in their praise. However, one work in particular was singled out: *Cant de les estrelles* [Song of the Stars], which was performed with the chorus Orfeó Català. Scored for piano solo, organ and choruses, it was the only ensemble work on the program. Granados had conceived *Cant de les estrelles* specifically for performance by the Orfeó Català in the Palau de la Música Catalana. The chorus was divided into three groups, two on the on the stage and the third, a women's chorus, placed above the auditorium near the cupola, which provided a polychoral antiphonal effect.

Cant de les estrelles is a masterpiece, one of Granados' finest compositions. It was composed in the Romantic-

modernista style, with post-Wagnerian harmonies and no traces of Spanish nationalism. Comparable to a piano concerto with chorus and organ rather than an orchestra, Granados wrote *Cant de les estrelles* as a vehicle for himself although he dedicated it to the pianist Mieczyslaw Horszowski (1892-1993). The work opens with an extended piano solo of considerable virtuosity, followed by a duet for organ and piano and only then does the chorus enter.

Cant de les estrelles is a highly unusual work but it is not unique in the genre. Other works have also been composed for piano, organ and chorus, such as *Ave María* by Rossini and *Dextera Domini* by César Franck. However, the scope and inspiration of *Cant de les estrelles* places it at the forefront of Granados' works.

Cant de les estrelles is subtitled "Poem for piano, organ and voices inspired by a poem by Heine", referring to the German poet Heinrich Heine. According to Heine expert Peter A. Shea, the non-attributed Catalan text set by Granados is not a translation of any specific poem by Heine nor is it a free translation. Rather, Mr. Shea believes that the text is a kind of response to one or more Heine poems which deal with love and the stars, but in this case written from the point of view of the stars themselves. He suggests that a possible source of Granados' inspiration could be Heine's *Lyric Intermezzo*, No. 8. Granados did not read or speak German and thus must have read Heine's poetry in translation or with the assistance of a German-speaking colleague such as the Catalan poet and dramatist Apel.les Mestres, who had translated the *Lyric Intermezzos* into Catalan in 1895.

Theoretically at least, Apel.les Mestres would seem the most likely author of the text. However, Granados always attributed to their authors the texts he used in his compositions, and certainly would have done so in the case of a poet of the stature of Apel.les Mestres. In addition, the text does not resonate with the style of other works by Apel.les Mestres. Walter A. Clark, author of *Enrique Granados: Poet of the Piano* (Oxford University Press, 2006) observed that "the preoccupation with death expressed in the final strophe is eerily portentous of the fate soon to visit the other possible author of these lines: Granados himself."

In spite of its success Granados did not publish the score of *Cant de les estrelles*. Unfortunately neither he nor any other pianist had occasion to perform it again. Following Granados' death the various manuscripts of *Cant de les estrelles* remained in the family archive until 1938 when his son Víctor, with or without the knowledge of other family members, brought the manuscripts of that piece as well as those of orchestral works *Romeo y Julieta*

and *Torrijos* along with that of the opera *María del Carmen* to New York. Once in New York Víctor signed a contract with Nathaniel Shilkret for their publication. Shilkret was a well-known as a conductor, composer and recording producer. He immediately realized the importance of the Granados manuscripts.

However, Víctor was not the sole heir to his father's music and consequently was not authorized to enter into any contractual agreements without the consent of other members of the Granados family. Communication between New York and Barcelona was difficult at best due to World War II and the matter could not be resolved, in spite of repeated attempts on the part of Mr. Shilkret and others.

From this point the story becomes increasingly complicated. Those interested might want to consult Walter A. Clark's *Lost and Found: Granados' Cant de les estrelles for Piano, Organ and Chorus* or Margaret M Barela's "Out of Obscurity, Into the Light" in the January, 2007 issue of *International Piano*. For a historical fiction novel based on the life of Granados see *The Fallen Nightingale* by John W. Milton, Swan Books, 2005.

The various Granados manuscripts remained in the Shilkret archive for decades. In 1964 the Shilkret archive suffered a fire and all the manuscripts were feared lost. Through the years the Granados family, with the assistance of José Iturbi and Alicia de Larrocha, made numerous attempts to recover the manuscripts without result. In 1982 Granados' daughter, Natalia and her husband Dr. Antoni Carreras i Verdaguer appointed Douglas Riva as the family representative in this matter. Years of contacts between the parties failed to yield any result. However, the story has a happy ending thanks to the efforts of Shilkret's grandson Niel Shell. In 2004 an agreement was reached and the manuscripts were finally brought to light. Although the manuscripts of *Cant de les estrelles* had suffered water damage and mold as a result of the fire, fortunately, they were restored by Susan B. Martin. Editorial Boileau, Barcelona, published a critical edition of the score prepared by Douglas Riva. The second performance ever of the work took place in New York in March, 2007 with Voices of Ascension directed by Dennis Keene and Douglas Riva, piano. The concert was recorded for a Naxos CD which was nominated for a Grammy award. Ninety-six years after its first and only performance Granados' glorious music finally reached the public. Subsequent performances have been given in many cities, London, Barcelona, Sydney, Madrid, Toronto, Washington, D. C., Padova (Italy), Minneapolis and El Paso, Texas among them.

Notes on Granados by Douglas Riva

Enrique Granados Campiña: Lleida (Lérida, Catalunya, Spain), July 27, 1867; at sea (English Channel), March 24, 1916. Composer, pianist, conductor, teacher. Enrique Granados, along with Isaac Albéniz and Manuel de Falla, was one of the most important composers in Spanish history. He is frequently, and incorrectly, described as a Nationalist composer. In fact Granados introduced late Romanticism into Spain for the first time, while retaining his Spanish roots. He created a highly expressive and personal Neo-Romantic style influenced by Schumann, Chopin, Schubert, and Wagner.

Granados studied piano with Joan Baptista Pujol (1835-1898) and composition with Felip Pedrell (1841-1922) in Barcelona and continued his piano studies with Charles de Bériot (1833-1914) in Paris in 1887. While in Paris he came into contact with the international musical world of the era. He returned to Barcelona in 1889 and began his artistic career as a pianist, composer and conductor. Granados was recognized as a virtuoso pianist and his first masterpiece, *Danzas españolas* [*Spanish Dances*], brought him international recognition as a composer as well. Massenet, Cui, Saint-Saëns, and Grieg all praised the *Danzas españolas* highly. In the following years Granados composed numerous piano works, operas, orchestral works, vocal works and chamber music. In 1901 he founded the Academia Granados, one of the most advanced music schools in Spain where he introduced new techniques from other European countries.

Granados spent the final months of his life in New York. He came to New York for the premiere of his opera *Goyescas* at the Metropolitan Opera. While in New York he performed concerts as soloist and with cellist Pau Casals, made piano roll recordings for the Duo-Art Reproducing Piano and composed his two final works: the Intermezzo from the opera *Goyescas* and *Danza de los ojos verdes* [*Dance for Green Eyes*] for the New York debut of the brilliant Spanish dancer, Antonia Mercé, known as La Argentina.

2016 marked the centenary of Granados' death and 2017, the 150th anniversary of his birth. The coincidence of these anniversaries provides an unparalleled occasion to re-evaluate his contributions to music, hear lesser known compositions and discover works which are just now being published for the first time.

Notes on Granados, Falla & Modernisme by Dennis Keene

Voices of Ascension celebrates the centenary of Enric Granados in collaboration with the CUNY Foundation for Iberian Music, The Hispanic Society, the Government of Catalonia, and the Sorel Organization, with this performance for chorus, soprano, violin, piano, and organ.

Granados long-lost choral fantasy for three choruses, piano, and organ, *Song of the Stars*, is the focal point of this concert, balanced by the piano version of de Falla's *El Amor Brujo* – both epic tales of love and death, yearning and freedom.

The musical style of Granados is further revealed in a “Romanza” for violin and piano and “Escena religiosa” for violin, piano, and organ. His great opera *Goyescas*, premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in 1916, and the manuscript of which he gave to The Hispanic Society, is represented by a performance of the aria for soprano, “La maja y el ruiseñor,” coupled with the delightful “Gracia mía.”

Choral settings of sacred and folk texts as well as poetry of García Lorca by Casals, Morera, and Oltra represent the Catalan choral tradition, which is subtly nuanced and expresses vast emotional range.

VoA presented the North American premiere of *Song of the Stars* in 2007 and recorded a GRAMMY nominated CD for Naxos. Pianist Douglas Riva, whose efforts led to the recovery of the long-lost score, worked with VoA Artistic Director and Conductor Dennis Keene to research the musically and culturally significant body of Catalan choral music which had been previously unknown to us.

DENNIS KEENE is Artistic Director and conductor of the Voices of Ascension Chorus & Orchestra. Known internationally through his many concerts and recordings with Voices of Ascension, his regular guest appearances as conductor and clinician, and his work as Artistic Director of The Dennis Keene Choral Festival, he has emerged as one of leading choral conductors in the world today.

Recognized early as an exceptional organist, Dennis Keene began musical studies and performing in his native Los Angeles. He moved to New York City to study at The Juilliard School, where he earned the BM, MM, and DMA degrees and the coveted Gaston Dethier Organ Prize as a student of Vernon de Tar. Dr. Keene also studied privately in Paris with Marie-Madeleine Duruflé, André Marchal, and André Isoir.

Dennis Keene was active as a recitalist until his interest in conducting prompted him to study conducting at the Pierre Monteux School for Orchestral Conductors, with Charles Bruck in Paris, and with John Nelson at The Juilliard School. His passion for the finest in professional choral music can be traced to his early work as organist with Gregg Smith, Roger Wagner, and Margaret Hillis.

In addition to his work with Voices of Ascension, Dr. Keene continues as Organist and Choirmaster of Church of the Ascension in New York City. He served for many years on the Board of Directors of Chorus America, which honored him with the first Louis Botto Award for “innovative action and entrepreneurial zeal in developing a professional ensemble of exceptional artistic quality.” He has also served on the Choral Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts and on the Music Panel of the New York State Council on the Arts.

From 1998 to 2003 Maestro Keene presented a major summer institute for the training of conductors and singers: The Dennis Keene Choral Festival, in Kent, Connecticut. In 1993 he began his recording association with Delos International, with which he has recorded such best-selling CDs as *Beyond Chant*, the *Duruflé Album*, and the *Berlioz Te Deum*. This series of highly acclaimed recordings with Voices of Ascension has secured international recognition for both conductor and chorus and become the standard for first-ranked ensembles worldwide.

VOICES OF ASCENSION

GRAMMY-nominated Voices of Ascension, founded in 1990 and directed by conductor Dennis Keene, presents exceptional performances of great works of music for chorus and orchestra. Over the course of its 27 year history, Voices of Ascension has produced an annual concert series, released GRAMMY-nominated recordings, and engaged in artistic collaborations with the San Francisco Symphony, Mostly Mozart Festival, José Limón Dance, the Mark Morris Dance Group, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

and others. These performances have won acclaim for their “sheer musical excellence” (NYTimes), the chorus for being the “finest in American choral music” (Stereophile), and Dr. Keene as the “leader most widely touted to pick up the mantle of Robert Shaw” (NY Times).

VoA’s professional ensemble musicians collectively share the finest credentials in classical music, boasting degrees from and teaching appointments at major conservatories and universities including Juilliard, Manhattan School of Music, Mannes/New School, New England Conservatory, Eastman, Oberlin, Indiana University – Harvard, Yale, Columbia, NYU, CUNY, SUNY and Rutgers among others. They regularly perform with orchestras including the NY Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, Orpheus, The Knights, Philip Glass Ensemble, and Boston Baroque; the Metropolitan, Chicago Lyric, Houston Grand and New York City Operas, with vocal ensembles *Conspirare*, *Lionheart*, *Seraphic Fire*, *Waverly Consort*; and comprise the core ensemble for many NY professional choruses including *Musica Sacra*, *St. Ignatius Loyola*, *St. John the Divine*, and *Trinity Wall Street*.

The ensemble shares a commitment to artistic excellence and helps to sustain the choral tradition by supporting emerging soloists in VoA’s Young Artist Program and serving as the chamber ensemble for the VoA Conductor Academy. Recent performances have been described as “inspired” (The New York Times 4/4/15) and “richly colored, impressive, and beautifully balanced” (Wall Street Journal 2/11/15). Voices of Ascension is proud to present the musical integrity and sensitivity of these extraordinary musicians.

The Voices of Ascension mission is to produce exceptional performances of great music for chorus. VoA also seeks to sustain the legacy of the choral art through the following programs:

Young Artists Program: identifies exceptionally gifted emerging solo artists and gives them the opportunity to perform in a world-class choral setting, under the direction of Dennis Keene.

VoA Conductor Academy: An intensive conducting workshop with Dennis Keene, featuring talks, master classes, and private lessons, for serious students as well as veteran professionals. Participants conduct the Voices of Ascension chorus and chamber orchestra. The 2017 program will be June 5-9.

Voices Online: records VoA performances of choral masterworks live, in concert, for free online distribution to a new and larger audience.



Vanessa Vasquez, originally from Scottsdale, Arizona is a second-year Resident Artist of The Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. She earned a B.A. in Vocal Performance from The Catholic University of America and M.M. in Opera Performance from the University of Los Angeles, California (UCLA). Last season,

she made her AVA debut as Mimi in *La Boheme*. This past November she sang the role of Donna Anna in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at AVA. Earlier this year, Vanessa won the James Parkinson Opera Foundation First Prize and the Walter and Alice Strine, Esqs. Audience Prize in the Giargiari Bel Canto Competition. In addition, she won First Prize in the Vocal Arts DC art song competition and was a Grant Award recipient in both The Giulio Gari Foundation and Puccini Albanese Vocal competitions.



Described by critics as “scintillating” and celebrated for her “rich, expressive playing” (MusicalAmerica), violinist

Francesca dePasquale leads a dynamic career of performance, pedagogy, and community engagement. Francesca is the First Prize winner of the 2010 Irving M. Klein

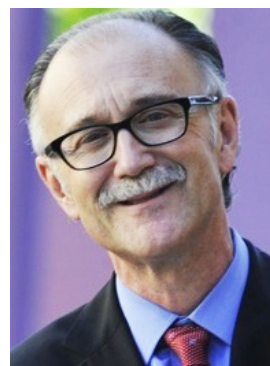
International String Competition and recipient of the prestigious 2014-2016 career grant from the Leonore Annenberg Fellowship Fund for the Performing and Visual Arts. Earning her the 2015 Classical Recording Foundation Young Artist Award, her self-titled debut album released in March of 2016 encompasses works that scope from Bach to a new commission from composer Paola Prestini for violin and electronics. For the album and accompanying recital tour, Francesca was praised for “sincerity, intensity” and “individual voice” (Philadelphia Inquirer) and received acclaim from Strings magazine, Strad magazine, and on SiriusXM, WNYC, WRTI (Philadelphia), and WFMT (Chicago).



Vanessa Perez — an intense yet sensitive Venezuelan-American pianist — recently released a new album, “Spain”, on the Steinway & Sons label. “Like many South Americans, my family has roots in Spain, but Spanish music was only a small part of what I would play. Three experiences drew me into it: Traveling throughout Spain for

several years, collaborating with the renowned soprano Isabel Rey, and having lessons with Falla’s friend, pianist Luis Galvé. ... I was bewitched by the true daily atmosphere of Spain, its rhythms, its dance, and its music.”

A frequent performer throughout the Americas, Perez has performed in the cultural capitals of Mexico, Brazil, Uruguay, Peru, and in Argentina’s famed Teatro Colon. In Europe, venues such as the Palau de la Música in Barcelona, the Montpellier Festival in France, Beethoven-Haus in Germany, Wigmore Hall in England and the Gothic Hall in Belgium. Actively involved in contemporary music, Perez has collaborated with and performed works by such composers as Paul Moravec, Lowell Liebermann, Suzanne Farrin and Paul Desenne. Perez has been featured playing on such radio stations as WQXR New York, WFMT Chicago, WGBG Boston among others, and most recently on Minnesota Public Radio, Texas Public radio, NPR’s “All things Considered”, and American Public Media “Performance Today”. She is a Steinway Artist.



Douglas Riva has gained international recognition for his profound knowledge of Spanish music. 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. 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 November, 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. He has performed at the White House, Carnegie Hall and numerous festivals Brazil, Spain, United Kingdom, Portugal, Holland, and the United States. He gave the first American 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.



Mark Kruczek, organist, conductor, and vocal coach, began his musical training at DePaul University in Chicago with Arthur Becker, the founder of the School of Music. He also did undergraduate and graduate work at the Catholic University of America in Washington DC., where he studied under the

organists Conrad Bernier, Robert Twynham and George Baker. A graduate of Julliard School with undergraduate and Master's degrees, he studied under Vernon de Tar and was awarded the Gaston Dethier Organ Prize. Mr. Kruczek has done extensive piano study with Helen Engler at the Chicago Conservatory, and Amos Allen of the Peabody Conservatory. Mr. Kruczek has served on the faculty of the Catholic University of America. Since 1979 he has held the post of Director of St. Joan of Arc Roman Catholic Church in Jackson Heights, New York. In 1985, Mr. Kruczek founded Chorus Angelorum of Northwest Indiana, a professional chorus that performs great sacred choral repertoire. He has played master classes for Birgit Nilson, Renata Scotto, Peter Pears, Martin Isepp, and Janet Bookspan. He has been a coach and accompanist for the Denes Striny Voices Studio in New York City. As an accompanist, he has performed with Lauren Flanigan and Myra Merritt of the Metropolitan Opera, as well as international tenor John Aler. He is also a member of the Roman Catholic Diocesan Music Commission for the Diocese of Brooklyn.



Michele Scanlon has been a member of the piano staff at the prestigious Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia for 30 years. She has worked as musical director or assistant musical director for Opera New Jersey, ConcertOPERA Philadelphia, Concert Operetta Theatre, International Opera Theatre and has served as pianist

for many diverse groups ranging from The Philadelphia Singers to The Savoy Company. She also is an active producer and has produced and music directed over 150 opera galas at the Tomasello Winery in Hammonton, NJ.



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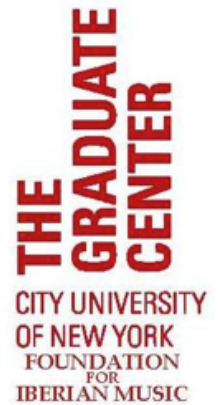
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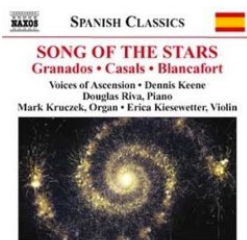
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The choral artists in this concert are represented by AGMA, the American Guild of Musical Artists, AFL-CIO, the union that represents artists performing in opera, modern dance and choral presentations, as well as choreographers, stage directors, and stage managers.

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Voices of Ascension thanks The Hispanic Society for sharing with us the *Goyescas* score. The complete score, along with other historical and archival materials is available on our website at www.voicesofascension.com/interactiveprogram.



This concert would not be possible without the research and efforts of Doug Riva and publisher Editorial Boileau. *Song of the Stars*, along with other Voices of Ascension recordings, is available for sale during Intermission.

Voices of Ascension wishes to thank the following people for their contributions to this project:

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