

A35 2001 4-8

Susan E. Adkins
PROGRAM NOTES

April 8, 2001 Brecheam Auditorium

Cuatro Madrigales Amatorios

Joaquin Rodrigo is a well loved composer in Spain, counted by many as the greatest composer next to Manuel de Falla., who was in fact a close friend of his. Rodrigo was blinded at age 5, due to a case of diphtheria. He said his blindness brought him to music, and so in that way was a blessing. Rodrigo also maintained that songs were the most important part of his musical output aside from concertos. He composed these four love songs in 1947, choosing poems by anonymous poets of the 15th century. *¿Con qué la lavaré?* is a poem in the Andalusian /Moorish tradition of the 15th century. *De los álamos, venga* was set by Miguel de Fuenllana in his *Orphenica Lyra* (Seville 1554), songs with vihuela accompaniment. Enriquez de Valderrábano set *¿De donde venís, amore?* in his seven volume collection of vihuela music. Each of Rodrigo's four songs is dedicated to a different woman.

Translations:

¿Con qué la lavaré? A Blanca María Martínez Seoane.

With what shall I wash my face? I who live so badly afflicted. They wash themselves, the wives, with lemon water. I wash myself, I the unfortunate one, with grief and pain.

Vos me matásteis. A Celia Langa.

You have killed me, girl with (beautiful) hair. On the banks of a river I saw a virgin maid. You have killed me, girl with (beautiful) hair.

¿De donde venís, amore? A María Angeles Morales

From where have you come, love? Well I know from where. From where did you come, friend? I was a witness. From where have you come, love? Well I know from where.

De los álamos, vengo, Madre. A Carmen Pérez Durias

From the poplars I come, mother. From seeing how the wind sways them. From the poplars of Seville. From seeing my beautiful friend.

La Maja Dolorosa

Enrique Granados and Fernando Periquet y Zuaznábar (1873-1940) were both fascinated by the Madrid, Majo/Maja (a "street wise" man or woman of Madrid) pictures of Goya. In fact Granados had already written the piano pieces entitled *Goyescas* by 1900. So it is no surprise that when Periquet approached him about the possibility of putting to music poems in a tradition of the 18th century *tonadilla*, (originally a musical skit, performed by a solo singer, telling a story, and lasting about 10 minutes) Granados was very willing to be a partner in this collaboration. How they went about this is a little unusual. Instead of composing songs to poems already written by Periquet, Granados would create a scenario, such as this set in which a woman laments her dead lover, and then compose melodies. Then Periquet would write lyrics to match the music. The works were performed in 1912 and some critics in Spain believe this to be Granados' best work. The two collaborators also created a lyric drama together entitled, like the piano pieces, *Goyescas*. It premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1916. To the misfortune of the music world, Granados and his wife were killed on their way home to Spain, when the Sussex was torpedoed by the Germans on March 24th.

Translations:

No. 1

Oh cruel death! Why did you by treachery take my majo, my passion? I don't want to live without him, for it is death to live so. It is impossible now to feel more pain: My soul is dissolved in tears. Oh God! Return my love, for it is death to live so.

No. 2

Oh, majo of my life, no, no, you have not died! Would I still be alive if that were true? Wildly I desire to kiss your lips! I want in faithfulness to share your destiny. Alas, your destiny! But oh, I am raving, I dream. My majo no longer exists. The world about me is weeping and sad. I find no consolation in my sorrow. But even dead and cold, my majo will always be mine. Oh! Always mine!

No. 3

Of that beloved majo who was my glory I cherish a happy memory. He loved me ardently and truly and I gave my whole life to him, and I would give it again a thousand times, if he desired it. For when feelings are profound, torments are sweet. And as I think of my beloved majo, dreams come back of a time gone by.

Neither in Mentidero nor in Florida was a majo more handsome ever seen to stroll. Beneath the broad-brimmed hat I saw his eyes fixed upon me passionately, for they caressed the one on whom they rested. In the entire world I have never seen a more piercing look. And as I think of my beloved majo, dreams come back of a time gone by.

Three songs of Obradors

The music of Fernando J. Obradors is beloved by singers around the world. In fact the only music of his in print today is his vocal music. He spent twenty years collecting and arranging Spanish folk songs and melodies from antique sources. *La mi sola Laureola*, is a "solmization villancico", a type of old Spanish song in which the words correspond to the solfege syllables of the musical scale. The melody is from the 16th century Spanish composer Juan Ponce. *Al Amor* is originally a work of Cristóbal de Castillejo, a 17th century composer and poet who strongly defended the Spanish style of verse against the Italian style. He wrote three volumes of poetry, one entirely devoted to love. Some of his poetry was banned by the Inquisition due to its free and bold use of satire and its strong nature. *Del cabello más sutil* is a setting of an authentic folk song.

Translations:

La mi sola, Laureola

My only Laureola, my only, only, only. I the captive Leriano, am most proud to be wounded by that hand which, in the whole world, is unique. My only Laureola, my only, only, only.

Al Amor

Give me, love, kisses without number, grasping my hair, and a thousand and a hundred after them, and after them a thousand and a hundred, and after... thousands more, three! And because no one knows, let's interrupt the count, and let's count in reverse.

Del cabello más sutil

Of the softest hair, which you have braided, I will make a chain to bring you to my side. A pitcher in your house, child, I would like to be, to kiss your mouth when you take a drink.

La vida Breve

When Manuel de Falla wished to compose an opera to enter into the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts competition, he approached Carlos Fernández-Shaw and asked him to develop a poem of his, *El Chavalillo*, (which de Falla had read in a magazine) into a libretto. Fernández-Shaw was an experienced Zarzuela librettist of the time. Together they produced one of the first true Spanish operas, *La Vida Breve*. Manuel de Falla said "I had four aims in mind while making *La Vida Breve*. 1. To make a Spanish opera in dramatic form, something which I could find no example of in the entire history of Spanish lyrical theatre. 2. To compose the music from a series of popular songs and dances. 3. To try, above and beyond all else, to evoke the feelings of fear and joy, of hope and torment, of life and death, of exultation and depression, all linked to certain personal images of places, moments, landscapes, etc. 4. To notch up some money in order to carry on working." The opera won the competition but it was not produced by the Teatro Real de Madrid as promised. It was expanded by de Falla into two acts and produced, in French, in Nice in 1912. It was finally produced in Madrid, in Spanish, in 1914. Carlos Fernández-Shaw was never able to see the opera performed as he died in 1911.

Plot: Salud loves Paco who makes her false promises of undying love, but decides to marry the wealthy Carmela instead. In the first aria Salud tells of the brevity of life and how it is better to die than to be abandoned. In the second aria she has discovered Paco's betrayal and is devastated. At the end she is determined to confront him at his own wedding. At the end of the opera she does go to the wedding where she falls dead at his feet.

Translations:

¡Vivan los que ríen!

Long live those who laugh! Perish those who weep! The life of the poor, who live in suffering, is bound to be short. Even my songs turn out sad today! That seguidilla, which was my mother's, knew what it said! The flower that is born at daybreak dies when the day is over. How happy are the flowers that hardly have time to learn the misery of life! A bird, sad and all alone, flew into my garden to die; it fell and died at once. With a sad and lonely life like that it is better off dead! He left her for another girl and she died of sorrow! For those disillusioned by love there is nothing like death, which is a great consolation. Long live those who laugh! Perish those who weep! The life of the poor, who live in suffering, is bound to be short.

¡Allí está! ¡Riyendo!

There he is laughing with that woman! He has left me for good! She is his now! He is her own! Ah, God! Ah, Blessed Virgin! I feel I am dying. Paco! Paco! No! No! No. How weary I am. How unhappy! Sometimes my heart stops beating, and other times it pounds like a mad thing. How ungrateful he is! What could I have done to deserve a fate like this for no reason at all, without just cause or motive? Everyone kept it from me. He, because he's despicable, my friends out of pity for me. They think they're deceiving me, that I don't know what's going on! Ah, God! I feel I am dying! Why was I ever born to die like this? Like the little lonely bird, like the withered flower, when I was just beginning to live. But it's better! Than to live on with this fearful pain and grief, it's better far to die! No!! Why should I see him? He's betrayed me enough already! Let him die or let me kill myself! Let us both die! What disgrace!

Cinco Canciones Negras

In 1946, Xavier Montsalvatge was interested in creating a style of music that allowed him to use a combination of Catalan, Spanish and indigenous elements found in Cuba and Antilles to create his brand of "Antilleanism." These exotic elements helped make a great success of these five songs. Montsalvatge chose poets who were current and writing just the poetry he needed for his venture. Rafael Alberti (1902-1999) was a Spanish poet who won Spain's national literature prize in 1925. He lived in Argentina after the Spanish Civil War and expressed his political opinions in his work after 1930. His poem *Cuba dentro de un piano* talks about Cuba's changing society. Néstor Luján is a journalist born in 1922 in Madrid. He won the Quart Prize for Humour and Satire in Spain in 1992. This sense of humor and his journalistic specialty covering gastronomy are both evident in *Punto de Habanera*. Nicolás Guillén (1902-1989) wrote both *Chévere* and *Canto Negro*. Guillén was an African-Cuban and so had special insight into the complex relationships between men and women of that culture, which is so evident in the first of the two poems. In *Canto Negro*, he wanted to employ an authentic "black Spanish" unfortunately Afro-Cuban critics took offense at the nonsense syllables and one of the few intelligible lines which says, "the black man sings and gets drunk." However, given Guillén's sense of humor, it is more likely a universal look at human nature. It is certainly a universally enjoyable song for audiences to listen to. Ildefonso Paredes-Valdes of Uruguay is a poet and a literary critic. He explores the themes and characters of black poetry in *Lo negro y Lo mulato en la Poesía Cubana* (1969). He says about his *Canción para dormir a un negrito*, that it was probably the first black lullaby written in Cuba, but was followed by many excellent examples. For him the cuna theme penetrates profoundly into the Afro-Cuban emotion.

Translations:

Cuba dentro de un piano

When mother wore a strawberry ice for a hat and the smoke from the boats was still made in Havana, dark as a girl from Vuelta Abajo. That was when Cadiz fell asleep to the sound of fandangos and habaneras, and a little parrot at the piano wanted to be a tenor. Tell me where is the flower that a man can really respect. My uncle Antonio returned with his insurrectionist air. The Cabaña y el Principe (colonial fortresses) resounded through the patios near the harbor. No more, shines the blue pearl of the Antillean Sea. Already

it's gone out, it's died. I found myself in beautiful Trinidad. Cuba had been lost and now it was true, it was true, it wasn't a lie. A fleeing gunboat arrived singing it in guajiras (narrative Cuban folk song). Havana was already lost. It fell. The gunboat fell silent. But later, but ah, later was when sí became yes!

Punto de Habanera

The Creole girl goes by with her white crinoline. How white! Hello crepe of your foam. Sailors, get a look at her! She walks, moist, of moon that makes her skin golden. Don't complain little girl. It's only for this one evening. I would like to order the water not to escape too soon from the prison of your skirt. Your body encloses, this evening, the murmur of a dahlia opening. Little girl don't complain. Your body is fruit asleep in the embroidered breeze. Your waist quivers finely with the nobility of a whip. All your skin smells joyfully of lemon and orange trees. The sailors watch you and they keep on watching. The Creole girl goes by with her white crinoline. How white! Mmmm!

Chévere

Chévere of the knife slash, turns himself into the knife. He slices up into pieces the moon, but the moon runs out. He slices up into pieces the shadow, but the shadow runs out. He slices up into pieces the song, but the song runs out. And then he slices, how he slices flesh of his bad black woman!

Canción de cuna para dormir a un negrito.

Ninghe, ninghe, ninghe, little tiny one, little black child who doesn't want to sleep. Coconut head, coffee bean, with beautiful freckles, with big eyes, like two windows that watch the sea. Close your little eyes frightened little black boy, the white boogey-man can eat you. You're not a slave anymore and if you sleep a lot, the mister of the house promises to buy you a suit with buttons so you can be a groom. Ninghe, ninghe, ninghe, sleep little black one, mmmm. Coconut head, coffee bean.

Canto Negro

Yambambó! Yambambé! Celebrates the congo solongo, Celebrates the black man, well black. Aoé! Congo solongo from songo. Dances the yambó on one foot. Yambambó! Yambambé! Mamatomba serembé cuserembá, the black man sings and gets drunk. Mamatomba serembé cuserembá, the black man gets drunk and sings. Mamatomba serembé cuserembá, the black man sings and goes walking. Acuememe serembó aé, Yambambó! aé, Yambambé! Aó. Swaying, swaying, swaying, swaying, the black man that falls. Falls the black man, damn! Damn! Damn it that the black man falls. Yambá! Yambó! Yambambé! Yambambó! Yambambé! He dances the yambo on one foot!!

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Cuatro Madrigales Amatorias

Con que la lavare?
Vos me matasteis.
De donde venis, amore?
De los alamos, vengo, Madre

Joaquin Rodrigo
(1901-1999)

La Maja Dolorosa

Oh muerte cruel
Ay, majo de mi vida
De aquel majo amante

Enrique Granados
(1867-1916)

La mi sola, Laureola

Al Amor
Del cabello mas sutil

Fernando Obradors
(1897-1945)

La Vida Breve

Vivan los que rien
Alli esta, riyendo!

Manuel de Falla
(1876-1946)

Cinco Canciones Negras

Cuba dentro de un piano
Punto de habanera
Chevere
Cancion de cuna para dormir a un nino
Canto negro

Xavier Montsalvatge
(1912-)

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206.417.5000

Susan E. Adkins
Mezzo-Soprano

Jeremy Samolesky
Piano

Doctoral Recital

April 8, 2001

DIALEKT RECORDINGS