

DELICATE GRACE

Saturday | January 21, 2012 | 8 pm | Symphony Hall at the DECC
Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra | David Danzmayr, conductor
Sharon Isbin, guitar

JAN
21
2012

DeFalla

Three-Cornered Hat Suite No. 2 ca. 12'
The Neighbors' Dance (Seguidillas)
The Miller's Dance (Farruca)
Final Dance (Jota Final)

Rodrigo

Concierto de Aranjuez ca. 21'
Allegro con spirit
Adagio
Allegro Gentile

Sharon Isbin, guitar

I N T E R M I S S I O N ca. 20'

Shore

The Lord of the Rings ca. 10'
Duluth Superior Youth Symphony

Dvořák

Symphony No. 8 Op. 88 in G major ca. 34'
Allegro con brio
Adagio
Allegretto grazioso-Molto vivace
Allegro ma non troppo

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7pm Behind the Music is hosted by William Bastian.
His profile appears on page 66.

David Danzmayr's profile appears on page 24.
Sharon Isbin's profile appears on page 24.

Program subject to change



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DELICATE GRACE

Scenes from a Spanish village featuring dancing rhythms and intricate melodies...a lyrical concerto for the guitar that draws from Spain's native folk and classical traditions...and a symphony filled with the fresh air of the Czech countryside.

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946) was the pre-eminent Spanish composer of the first half of the twentieth century. Although he had lived in Paris for seven years and absorbed French musical styles into his own (for which he was often criticized), his second suite from "Three-Cornered Hat" epitomizes Spain. It shows Falla drawing on the classical and traditional music of his native country to create a lively, engaging style that was quite different from music of mainstream Europe.

Falla based his ballet on a popular racy novel by Pedro de Alarcón...a popular Spanish folk tale about the antics of a miller, his wife, and their neighbors deceiving and having the last laugh on the pompous local magistrate.

Suite 2 contains three dances from the second act of Falla's ballet *El sombrero de tres picos* (The Three-Cornered Hat), which premiered in London in 1919. (A fellow Spaniard, Pablo Picasso, designed the sets.) Falla based his ballet on a popular racy novel by Pedro de Alarcón. The story is a popular Spanish folk tale about the antics of a miller, his wife, and their neighbors deceiving and having the last laugh on the pompous local magistrate. (The three-cornered hat was the symbol of authority worn by magistrates.) Falla's music depicts scenes from Spanish village life using the sharply-defined rhythms and intricate melodies of authentic Spanish music. Several sections have Spanish dance titles. Falla's vivid tone colors bring the extrovert character of his country's music into sharp relief. "The Three-Cornered Hat" created a sensation and established Falla as a composer of international importance.

The music in Suite 2 derives from traditional Spanish dances. "The Neighbor's Dance" contains *seguidillas*, quick triple-meter dances. Falla uses two folk-songs in this movement, one introduced by the violins, the other by the cellos and basses. Sweeping rhythmic energy and rich orchestration provided a vivid accompaniment to the ballet's depiction of a high-spirited celebration of the feast of St. John's Night.

"The Miller's Dance" is a *farruca*, an Andalusian dance of Gypsy origin. A horn fanfare and rhapsodic English horn

cadenza set the scene for a show of male bravado. The miller exhibits his prowess and virility in a dance that starts with little motions, moving only his heels at first to the sharply defined rhythms. Momentum builds to a frenzy of driving pulses.

The "Final Dance" uses the lively triple-meter *jota* from northern Spain. Exciting rhythms and imaginative tone colors depict the final confusion and uproar of the ballet as the police pursue the miller, whose wife tries to protect him, and the neighbors continue their celebration. At the end, all are reconciled and the crowd subjects the magistrate to a blanket toss.

INSTRUMENTATION: Two flutes (second doubling on piccolo), piccolo, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, suspended cymbals, snare drum, triangle,

tam tam, xylophone, castanets) harp, piano, celesta and strings.

HISTORY: The DSSO has performed all or part of this ballet music in seven previous concerts. In 1938, 1953, 1961, 1968, and 1974, three dances were presented. The entire work was performed in 1981 (with Claudia Lund, mezzo-soprano) and on March 11, 2006 (KrisAnne Weiss, mezzo-soprano).

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Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-1999) followed in Falla's footsteps as a Spanish composer who invigorated his style by drawing on elements from native folk and classical traditions. As Falla had been earlier in the century, Rodrigo, too, would become one of Spain's leading composers (a remarkable achievement for someone who had been blind since age three). His *Concierto de Aranjuez* was a key work in that process. It is perhaps the most frequently performed guitar concerto of the twentieth century.

Like Falla, Rodrigo spent considerable time abroad, including several years in Paris. (In fact, it was in Paris that he met Falla, who became a mentor to him.) Rodrigo remained abroad during the Spanish Civil War, returning home to Spain only when it ended, in 1939. Soon after his return to Madrid, he composed *Concierto de Aranjuez*.

A pianist himself, this was the first of several concertos he would write for guitar, an instrument long associated with Spain. In program notes for this concerto, Rodrigo wrote that the guitar "has its strings saturated in the roots of the spirit of Spanish music." If one were to imagine an instrument that conveys the essence of Spanish music, he wrote, it would "possess the wings of the harp, the heart of the grand piano and the soul of the guitar." Rodrigo wrote his *Aranjuez* Concerto as a tribute to Spanish guitarist Regino Sainz de la Maza y Ruiz, who gave the premiere in Barcelona in 1940.

Aranjuez was a villa outside of Madrid that had once been a summer residence of the Spanish royal family. Rodrigo and his wife enjoyed walking in

Rodrigo wrote that the guitar “has its strings saturated in the roots of the spirit of Spanish music.”

the woods and gardens that surrounded the villa. The concerto, according to Rodrigo, “is meant to sound like the hidden breeze that stirs the tree tops in the parks, and it should be only as strong as a butterfly and as dainty as a veronica.”

This is indeed a delicate and graceful concerto, lyrical and decorative rather than brilliant and dazzling. Yet it is a challenging work requiring virtuoso skills of the guitarist. From the opening rhythmic strumming to the ornamented scale that spirals downward to end the concerto, the guitar is the center of focus.

The best-known movement, the emotional heart of the concerto, is the Adagio. Some hear its melancholy beauty as Rodrigo’s lament for the suffering during the Spanish Civil War, which ended the same year he was composing the concerto. But it may express his grief at the recent loss of his stillborn child as well as his hope for his wife’s recovery. (She suffered a miscarriage in 1939.) While this movement may mourn for what might have been, what lay ahead for Rodrigo and his concerto was a bright future.

INSTRUMENTATION: Two flutes (second doubling on piccolo), two oboes (second doubling on English horn) two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets and strings.

HISTORY: Tonight’s performance of this concerto will be only the third by the Orchestra. One of the two prior performances featured tonight’s guest artist, Sharon Isbin, on January 26, 2002—her only previous appearance with the DSSO. The other, on January 19, 1973, featured Javier Calderon.

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904), one of the great nationalist Czech composers, preceded Falla and Rodrigo in the use of native folk elements in classical genres. His Symphony No. 8 in G major, Op. 88, is one of his most nationalistic symphonies, full of the air of the Czech countryside.

A listener may hear birdcalls, hunting signals, the rustling of leaves, a funeral march (echoing Beethoven’s “Eroica”), hymns, and a tune from one of Dvořák’s own comic operas (at the end of the third movement).

Dvořák had built his reputation with works such as the “Slavonic Dances” and by the early 1880s was well-known abroad. England, for example, played a big role in his success—Dvořák was invited regularly to London to present his symphonies and other works. Thanks to such successes, the late 1880s were happy years for Dvořák. After years of eking out a living, he now enjoyed financial comfort. He was finally able to fulfill a longtime dream—he bought a country retreat where he could relax with his family in the summer and “enjoy the beauties of God’s nature.”

There, in 1889, he worked on his Eighth Symphony. Work on it came easily. “Melodies simply pour out of me,” he marveled. He finished the first movement in only twelve days, the other movements in even less time. The Eighth Symphony, along with other works from this time, showed a new depth of expression that Dvořák recognized as a real breakthrough in his development. “Here,” he confided to a friend, “I am a poet as well as a musician.”

The symphony premiered in Prague in February 1890, with Dvořák conducting. Two months later he gave a performance of it in London. (The symphony was also first published in London, in 1892.) More honors from England came in July 1891, when he was awarded an honorary

doctorate from Cambridge University. The Eighth Symphony was performed at the ceremonies.

As he had done in his earlier music, Dvořák draws on features of traditional folk music to shape his melodies and rhythms. The flute solo near the opening of the first movement, for example, has a folk-like character in its simple structure

and rhythmic patterns, as do the dances of the third movement. But Dvořák’s new “poetic” style creates a more picturesque and evocative setting that includes references to elements from everyday life. In addition to hints of Czech folksongs and dances, a listener may hear birdcalls, hunting signals, the rustling of leaves, a funeral march (echoing Beethoven’s “Eroica”), hymns, a tune from one of Dvořák’s own comic operas (at the end of the third movement), and more. Dvořák offers a musical vision of “the beauties of God’s nature” in his homeland and, with the ecstatic trilling of the horns in the final movement, his joy in beholding them.

INSTRUMENTATION: Two flutes (second doubling on piccolo), two oboes (second doubling on English horn) two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani and strings.

HISTORY: This symphony has previously been heard only three times on this stage. A guest conductor has led the Orchestra in each of its performances. On March 20, 1976, guest Dr. Richard Cormier conducted. The Minnesota Orchestra performed this work here on November 2, 1979, with Neville Marriner as conductor. The most recent concert with this Orchestra featuring this piece was on March 23, 1996, with former Music Director Taavo Virkhaus conducting.

Tonight's guest artist: **Sharon Isbin, guitar**



Hailed as “the pre-eminent guitarist of our time,” Sharon Isbin has been acclaimed for her extraordinary lyricism, technique and versatility. She has given sold-out performances throughout the

world, including New York’s Carnegie and Avery Fisher Halls, Boston’s Symphony Hall, Washington D.C.’s Kennedy Center, London’s Barbican and Wigmore Halls, Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, Paris’ Châtelet, Vienna’s Musikverein, Munich’s Herkulesaal, Madrid’s Teatro Real, and many others. In November 2009, Ms. Isbin she was invited by the President and First Lady to perform a concert at the White House.

Ms. Isbin’s catalogue of over 25 recordings displays her amazing versatility, which includes baroque, Spanish/Latin, cross-over and jazz-fusion. In 2010, Ms. Isbin received her second GRAMMY® Award for “Best Instrumental Soloist Performance” for her CD *Journey to the New World* (Sony) which remained on the Billboard charts for 63 consecutive weeks. Her recording of concerti written for her by Tan Dun and Christopher Rouse has also won a GRAMMY®. Ms. Isbin is the only guitarist to have ever recorded with the New York Philharmonic (concerti by Rodrigo, Villa-Lobos, Ponce) and she is featured artist on the soundtrack of Martin Scorsese’s Academy Award-winning *The Departed*. In 2011, she released her CD *Guitar Passions: Sharon Isbin & Friends* (Sony), which features rock guitarists Steve Vai, Steve

Morse (Dixie Dregs founder), Nancy Wilson from Heart, jazz guitarists Stanley Jordan and Romero Lubambo, Brazilian singer Rosa Passos, Paul Winter, and Brazilian percussionist Thiago de Mello.

Born in Minneapolis, Ms. Isbin began her guitar studies in Italy at age nine, and she later studied with Andrés Segovia and Oscar Ghiglia. She received a B.A. cum laude from Yale University and a Master of Music from the Yale School of Music. She is currently the director of guitar departments at the Aspen Music Festival and The Juilliard School (which she created in 1989 becoming the first and only guitar instructor in the institution’s 100-year history).

DAVID DANZMAYER, CONDUCTOR



DAVID DANZMAYR completed his tenure as Assistant Conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in August 2010 after three very successful and exciting years in the post. During this time, he conducted the

orchestra in over 70 concerts, performing a wide and eclectic range of repertoire in all the major Scottish concert halls and in the prestigious, Orkney-based St. Magnus Festival.

Mr. Danzmayr graduated from the Salzburg Mozarteum with the highest honours and held the Conducting Stipendiate of the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra in 2003 with Pierre Boulez and 2004 with Claudio Abbado. In 2004/05 he went on to

study conducting with Leif Segerstam at the Sibelius Academy Helsinki. Mr. Danzmayr was a prize winner in the International Malko Conducting Competition and was awarded the Bernhard Paumgartner Medal by the Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum. In February 2011, he was the only European conductor to reach the final of the prestigious Chicago Symphony Orchestra Sir Georg Solti competition.

Since 2006, Mr. Danzmayr has held the post of Music Director of Ensemble Acrobat. He is also a tutor and conductor at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and served as Music Director of the Australian International Symphony Orchestra Institute in 2009 and will be undertaking that role again in 2011. Mr. Danzmayr has assisted many world class conductors in Europe and USA—Stéphane Denève, Dennis Russell Davies (American Composers Orchestra New York), Pierre Boulez, Sir Andrew Davis, Walter Weller, and Neeme Järvi, to name a few.