

Nights in the Gardens of Spain

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (3rd doubles piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, celesta, strings.

Duration: 23 minutes in three movements.

THE COMPOSER – MANUEL DE FALLA (1876-1946) – When Falla fled Paris in 1914, he brought much of his French life back to Spain with him. In his artistic luggage was certainly a general affinity for impressionistic tone painting, but also an incomplete piano work his Parisian colleagues had been talking about for years. That piece would eventually, and appropriately, belong to his homeland. The same could not be said for the toupee he dropped in haste on the train platform.

THE HISTORY – Falla had begun sketching out *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* as a collection of solo piano nocturnes back in 1909 but, on the advice of pianist Ricardo Viñes, he shifted his focus to a set of orchestral impressions with the piano serving as guide. By the time he finished the project in late 2015, Falla had become Spain’s unofficial king of art music. Perhaps this ascension occurred somewhat by default, what with the death Granados that very year, but Falla’s creative output would quickly prove the status apt. Falla had enjoyed success with his opera *La vida breve* before leaving France and it was that very positive reception that made his Parisian cohort so eager to hear the piano and orchestra piece he had been teasing so for so long. Falla looked for an opportunity to mount a production of the opera in Madrid when he got there, delaying *Nights* even further, but he eventually completed the transformation of his simple nocturnes in time for a 1916 premiere. The composer’s own words on the music stated that “The themes employed are based on the rhythms, modes and ornamental figures which distinguish the popular music of Andalusia” and he also offered that “The music has no pretensions to being descriptive; it is merely expressive. But something more than the sounds of festivals and dances has inspired these ‘evocations in sound,’ for melancholy and mystery have their place also.”

THE WORLD – 1916 was the year of the Easter Rebellion in Ireland, the Battle of the Somme in France, the killing of Rasputin in Russia and the publication of James Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

THE CONNECTION – CCSO last performed *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* during the _____ season. _____ was on the podium and _____ appeared as soloist.