

BRUSSELS PHILHARMONIC

EN

ESPAÑA

DEBUSSY - RAVEL - DE FALLA



Noches en los jardines de España

FRI
12.11

BRUSSELS PHILHARMONIC PRESENTS A BUCKET LIST CONCERT
CONDUCTOR **CARLOS MIGUEL PRIETO** PIANO **BORIS GILTBURG**
MEZZO-SOPRANO **JOLIEN DE GENDT** CONCERTMASTER **JANE PETERS**
CLAUDE DEBUSSY **IBÉRIA** MAURICE RAVEL PIANO CONCERTO IN G MAJOR
MANUEL DE FALLA **EL SOMBRERO DE TRES PICOS**

FLAGEY
BRUSSELS

“HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THIS FRENCHMAN [CLAUDE DEBUSSY], WHO HAD ONLY VISITED SPAIN ONCE, WAS ABLE TO SHOWCASE SPANISH FOLKLORE IN SUCH A MASTERFUL WAY? MANY SPANISH COMPOSERS ARE UNABLE TO SURPASS DEBUSSY. THEY WILL BE GREEN WITH ENVY!”

MANUEL DE FALLA

PROGRAMME

Brussels Philharmonic
Carlos Miguel Prieto, conductor
Boris Giltburg, piano
Jolien De Gendt, soprano

Claude Debussy

Images: 2. Ibéria (1905-1908)
Par les rues et par les chemins
Les parfums de la nuit
Le matin d'un jour de fête

Maurice Ravel

Pianoconcerto in G (1931)
I. Allegramente
II. Adagio Assai
III. Presto

intermission

Manuel de Falla

El sombrero de tres picos (1919)
Introducción
PARTE I
La tarde
Danza de la molinera (Fandango)
Las uvas
PARTE II
Danza de los vecinos (Seguidillas)
Danza del molinero (Farruca)
Danza del corregidor
Danza final (Jota)

MUSICIANS BRUSSELS PHILHARMONIC

Conductor
Carlos Miguel Prieto

Concertmaster
Jane Peters

Soloist
Boris Giltburg, piano
Jolien De Gendt, soprano

Violin 1
Nadja Nevolovitsch ⁽¹⁾
Bart Lemmens ⁽²⁾
Camille Aubrée, Olivia Bergeot,
Annelies Broeckhoven,
Cristina Constantinescu,
Veerle Houbraken, Justine Rigutto,
Kristina Rimkeviciute,
Elizaveta Rybentseva, Anton Skakun,
Alissa Vaitsner, Gillis Veldeman

Violin 2
Samuel Nemtanu ⁽¹⁾
Alexis Delporte,
Francisco Dourthé Orrego,
Aline Janeczek, Juliette Janssen,
Mireille Kovac, Eléonore Malaboef,
Sayoko Mundy, Naoko Ogura,
Eline Pauwels, Julien Poli,
Stefanie Van Backlé

Viola
Roman Spitzer ⁽¹⁾
Griet François ⁽²⁾
Philippe Allard, Eduard Ataev,
Phung Ha, Hélène Koerver,
Agnieszka Kosakowska,
Barbara Peynsaert,
Stephan Uelpenich, Patricia Van Reusel

Cello
Kristaps Bergs ⁽¹⁾
Kirsten Andersen, Diego Coutinho,
Barbara Gerarts, Julius Himmler,
Sophie Jomard, Emmanuel Tondus,
Elke Wynants

Double Bass
Jan Buyschaert ⁽¹⁾
Elias Bartholomeus, Thomas Fiorini,
Daniele Giampaolo, Simon Luce,
Luzia Vieira

Flute
Wouter Van den Eynde ⁽¹⁾
Sarah Miller, Elise Tossens
Jill Jeschek ⁽²⁾

Oboe
Arie van der Beek ⁽¹⁾
Maarten Wijnen
Lode Cartrysse ⁽²⁾

Clarinet
Anne Boeykens ⁽¹⁾
Severine Sierens
Midori Mori ⁽²⁾

Bassoon
Marceau Lefèvre ⁽¹⁾, Karsten Przybyl ⁽¹⁾
Alexander Kuksa
Jonas Coomans ⁽²⁾

Horn
Hans van der Zanden ⁽¹⁾
Claudia Rigoni, Luc van den Hove
Mieke Ailliet ⁽²⁾

Trumpet
Ward Hoornaert ⁽¹⁾
Rik Ghesquière, Luc Sirjacques

Trombone
Soteris Chrysostomou ⁽¹⁾
Sander Vets
Tim Van Medegael ⁽²⁾

Tuba
Jean Xhonneux ⁽²⁾

Timpani
Gert François ⁽¹⁾

Percussion
Gert D'haese ⁽²⁾, Titus Franken ⁽²⁾
Bjorn Denys, Ruben Martinez Orio,
Stijn Schoofs

Harp
Eline Groslot ⁽²⁾

Piano & Celesta
Anastasia Goldberg ⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ principal

⁽²⁾ soloist

WELCOME

A programme full of southern temperament, with music that celebrates the proud Spanish culture, under the baton of a Mexican conductor. Vámonos!

Debussy needed just a few trips to grasp and express the essence of Spain in Ibéria, a vibrant musical tableau with sultry Andalusian nights. Even though Ravel had Mozart in mind when writing his Piano Concerto in G major, yet he could not resist the lure of jazz or the influences of Basque and Spanish folk music bred in his bones. The tempo is further enhanced with glowing colours and passion: de Falla wrote his masterpiece *El sombrero de tres picos* for 'Les Ballets Russes', but it is his pure love for Spain that pulses through the veins of the music.

PROGRAMME NOTES

Not long after the death of Claude Debussy (1862-1918), the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla (1876-1946) wrote the following: "How is it possible that this Frenchman, who had only visited Spain once, was able to showcase Spanish folklore in such a masterful way? Many Spanish composers are unable to surpass Debussy. They will be green with envy!"

De Falla became friends with Debussy and Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) when, in 1907, on the advice of his mentor Felipe Pedrell, he moved to Paris. He was enthralled by their aesthetic, while Debussy and Ravel in turn borrowed elements from his music. The French capital was fascinated by exotic cultures at the time, partly under the influence of the world exhibitions at the end of the 19th century, which produced cross-fertilization between French impressionism and the lively and colourful music of Spain.

Debussy wrote his first composition with a Spanish tint in 1903 with *La soirée dans Grenade* ('Evening in Grenada') for piano. But it was principally his work *Ibéria* that impressed de Falla so greatly. In the case of Ravel, the appeal of Spanish culture was in his genes; his mother came from Ciboure, a Basque French village on the Atlantic coast. Ravel also had many Spanish friends, and he regularly visited the land of flamenco and toreadors. It was during

one of his visits there that he made the first sketches for his Piano Concerto in G major.

PORTRAIT OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

Images pour Orchestre, a musical portrait of three European countries, is one of Debussy's best-known and largest scale orchestral works. Debussy worked on it at various points during the period between 1905 and 1912, and the three sections were performed at separate premieres. The first one of the series to be completed was *Ibéria*, an ode to Spanish culture. He had spent no more than a few hours in Spain, and yet was able to evoke the atmosphere perfectly, and based entirely on what he had read, seen or heard about Spain.

Ibéria itself is made up of three movements. Of the first movement, *Par les rues et par les chemins* (In the Streets and Byways), Debussy wrote: "At the moment, I hear the sounds of streets in Catalonia at the same time as the music of the streets in Granada." He translated those sounds into lively music, with castanets and the tambourine in the orchestra. The second movement, *Les parfums de la nuit* (Perfumes of the Night), evoked for de Falla the "intoxicating magic of Andalusian nights". Here, the castanets give way to an intimate setting and sensual sound combinations. At the end, bells peal to announce daybreak and the beginning of the lively *Le matin d'un jour de fête* (A Feastday Morning). After awakening, the noisy

festival begins: a joyful crowd dances to the tuneful chords of a *banda de guitarras y bandurrias* (band of guitars and bandurrias), the winds whisper cheerful melodies and in the distance, we can hear a tune played on the violin.

A CONCERTO RICH IN CONTRASTS

Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major is a blueprint for the composer's aesthetic. With Mozart and Saint-Saëns as his models, it is far from the often bombastic piano concertos of the twentieth century. "The music of a concerto should, in my opinion, be light-hearted and brilliant, and not aim at profundity or at dramatic effects. It has to be said of certain great classics [specifically Brahms] that their concertos were written not 'for' but 'against' the piano. I heartily agree. I had intended to entitle this concerto 'Divertissement'. Then it occurred to me that there was no need to do so, because the very title 'Concerto' should be sufficiently clear," as Ravel set out his vision.

He wrote his Piano Concerto in G major between 1929 and 1931, after a concert tour through the United States. There, he discovered jazz, which was also to be heard in Paris: "The most exciting element of jazz is the rich and varied rhythm. It is a very rich and unmistakable source of inspiration for modern composers, and I am amazed that so few Americans have been influenced by it." So it is no surprise that Ravel incorporated syncopated rhythms,

blues figures and jazz harmonies into his piano concerto. Spanish influences can also be detected. In terms of form, the concerto follows the traditional division into three movements which are very different from each other. For the orchestra, Ravel opted for a small-scale instrumentation, giving pride of place to the lower voices such as the English horn, bass clarinet, double bassoon and the lower strings – by way of contrast with the pianist, who plays chiefly in the upper register.

Ravel would have liked to perform the premiere himself, but because of health problems he was obliged to give up that plan. The pianist Marguerite Long took his place at the successful premiere in Paris in 1932, with Ravel as conductor. It was the beginning of a tour of the major European cities. After that, Ravel's health declined rapidly: a degenerative muscle condition meant that by the following year he found it very difficult to write, speak or even move. He died in 1937 after having undergone brain surgery, but this work became one of the most popular piano concertos of the twentieth century.

SPANISH FROM TIP TO TOE

During his stay in Paris, de Falla developed a personal style which he described as “the creation of a new Spanish art”, making use of “the natural, living sources of Spanish folk music, namely, the substance of sound and rhythm rather than their

external phenomena”. He returned to Spain in 1917 with a bundle of new inspiration and experience. In the same year, the Russian impresario Sergei Diaghilev left war-torn Paris for the neutral city of Madrid. There, he became enchanted by a performance of de Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, which he asked the composer to arrange for his *Ballets Russes*. But de Falla had a different idea; he proposed to Diaghilev instead to expand his pantomime *El corregidor y la molinera* (The Magistrate and the Miller's Wife) into a full-scale ballet.

And so it was. De Falla translated the story of the self-satisfied *corregidor* who tries to lure the miller's wife away from her husband into a ballet score chock full of energetic dances, Spanish folk tunes and scintillating humour. It was none other than Léonide Massine who provided the choreography, while the sets and costumes were designed by Pablo Picasso. At the very first performance, in the London Alhambra theatre on 22 July 1919, *El sombrero de tres picos* (translated into English as *The Three-Cornered Hat*) was an overwhelming success. The performance received such high praise that de Falla soon put together two orchestral suites, one based on each act. The second suite, in which one traditional dance succeeds the other at a rapid tempo, has become a veritable hit.

Commentary by Aurélie Walschaert

CARLOS MIGUEL PRIETO, CONDUCTOR

www.carlosmiguelprieto.com

Carlos Miguel Prieto was born into a musical family of Spanish and French descent in Mexico City. He is renowned for championing Latin American music. He has conducted numerous world premieres of works by Mexican and American composers. His charismatic conducting is characterised by its dynamism and the expressivity of his interpretations.

He is a graduate of Princeton and Harvard University. Since 2006, he has been the music director of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra. A year after, in 2007, he was appointed the same position for the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México, and starting from 2008 he can also be counted as music director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería. Recent highlights include engagements with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra and North Carolina Symphony Orchestra. A staunch proponent of music education, Prieto served as Principal Conductor of the Youth Orchestra of the Americas from its inception until 2011 when he was appointed Music Director. He has also worked regularly with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and the NYO2 in New York.

BORIS GILTBURG, PIANO

www.borisgiltburg.com

The Moscow-born, Israeli pianist is lauded across the globe as a deeply sensitive, insightful and compelling interpreter: “singing line, variety of touch and broad dynamic palette capable of great surges of energy” (Washington Post). In 2013, he received the First Prize at the Queen Elisabeth Competition.

He regularly plays recitals in worldwide renowned halls, notably the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Carnegie Hall, Hamburg Elbphilharmonie and Wiener Konzerthaus. Recent collaborations include the London Philharmonic, Czech Philharmonic, WDR Sinfonieorchester, Rotterdam Philharmonic and Israel Philharmonic.

Giltburg performs repeatedly with the Brussels Philharmonic. An exceptional example amongst the many performances they have already given together, is the marathon of the Beethoven piano concertos in 2020, where Beethoven's five piano concertos were performed on three consecutive evenings.

JOLIEN DE GENDT, SOPRANO

www.joliendegendt.com

Coloratura soprano Jolien De Gendt studied at the Royal Conservatory of Ghent with Gidon Saks, Marcos Pujol and Mireille Cappelle. She completed her studies at Operastudio Vlaanderen (now known as International Opera Academy).

Since 2006, De Gendt has been a choir member of the Vlaams Radiokoor, where she also regularly performs solo parts (led by Eric Whitacre, Hervé Niquet, Stéphane Denève and Dirk Brossé, among others). She has also participated in a number of theatre productions, including collaborations with KOPERGIETERY and NTGent. You can also find her in other genres such as opera (where she has formerly appeared in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* as Queen of the Night, and as Belinda in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*), and oratorios such as Bach's passions or Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*.

BRUSSELS PHILHARMONIC

www.brusselsphilharmonic.be

"The world needs symphonic music. And symphonic music needs the world."

That is the firm belief of the Brussels Philharmonic. As a symphony orchestra founded in 1935 under the auspices of the Belgian public broadcaster, unveiling the symphonic world as best we can is deep in our DNA. By innovating while maintaining full respect for the value of the past, we keep the symphonic music of the past, present and future relevant and inspiring - for ourselves and all of society. We do this from the historic Studio 4 at Flagey in Brussels, together with our music director Kazushi Ono: he shares our open and adventurous spirit and our rock-solid belief in the need for cross-fertilization between art, life and society.

With our activities firmly based in our home city of Brussels, the Brussels Philharmonic focuses resolutely on 4 areas, each of which is intended to bring people together around symphonic music:

> Brussels Philharmonic Bucket List: our own distinctive selection of the great symphonic repertoire, with works that we think you must hear live in a concert hall at least once in your life.

> Brussels Philharmonic Atelier: back to the source of symphonic music, the art of playing music in a smaller formation.

We work carefully and in depth, with extra attention to delicate details.

> Brussels Philharmonic Lab: a place where contemporary music is given the leading role, researched and tested, and exposed to other arts or forms of performance. A radical decision to experiment and focus on the future, with guest conductor Ilan Volkov.

> film & festival: as a former broadcast orchestra, the Brussels Philharmonic has a deeply rooted love of film music. And we love to share our enthusiasm, knowledge and expertise with partners and festivals.

In, around and throughout the many concerts we offer, the golden thread is the theme of EXPLORE: a wide range of diverse, joined-up initiatives that invite audiences to discover, explore in greater depth, admire, share, and connect. By means of meetings, podcasts, chamber music, guided walks, educational materials and workshops, discussions after concerts, customized introductions, digital initiatives and much more, the Brussels Philharmonic comes to you. Thanks to the youth orchestra programme, young musicians also receive the opportunity to get down to work themselves: from an amateur level at BOENK! Brussels Young Philharmonic (BOENKI!) to the pre-professional at the Youth Orchestra Flanders.

The vision of our music director, Kazushi Ono, an experienced conductor whose reputation crosses continents, cultures and genres, overlaps in so many ways with that of the orchestra: the authenticity with which the great repertoire is kept alive, the permanent quest for innovation and evolution, the commitment to giving the music of today and tomorrow a central role, and the passion for sharing the love of symphonic music widely and generously.

That sharing takes place first and foremost in our home port at Flagey, where the orchestra rehearses, performs and throws open the doors to its activities, as well as on the major stages and at festivals in Flanders. The orchestra's international reputation comes to the fore in its specialisation in recording soundtracks (including the Oscar-winning music for 'The Artist'), the many successful recordings for labels such as Deutsche Grammophon, and the ambitious projects on prestigious stages around the world (Carnegie Hall, New York, Philharmonie de Paris, Musikverein Wien, Grosses Festspielhaus Salzburg, Cadogan Hall, London).

Brussels Philharmonic is an institution of the Flemish Community.

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