

Manuel de FALLA

Siete canciones populares españolas

III. Asturiana

arr. Piano solo

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Foreword

Manuel de Falla is one of the most important musical figures of the European 20th century, both for the relevance of his works and for the influence that his work has had on later generations.

One of the composer's first great successes was the opera *La vida breve*. This work was composed for the 1905 competition of the *Real Academia de Bellas Artes* in Madrid, where it won the first prize. However, it did not find a theatre to premiere it. The first time it was performed public was in Nice in April 1913 with considerable success, being translated into French by Paul Milliet. Performances in Spain began in 1914. These improved the composer's finances and gave him time to devise his next projects.

With the outbreak of WWI, the composer returned to Madrid where he composed *Siete canciones populares españolas*. This original piece for piano and voice was premiered in January 1915 at the *Ateneo* in Madrid on the occasion of a tribute to Turina and Falla. This piece was performed by the great zarzuela soprano Luisa Vela with Falla playing the piano.

Siete canciones were dedicated to Ida Godebska, hostess of one of the most famous Parisian gatherings at the beginning of the century. Musicians such as Debussy, Satie, Stravinsky, Granados... could regularly be found at these gatherings.

Siete canciones is one of many examples of the use of the popular *acquis* in the space of academic music standards. Spanish folklore is used by Falla as a return to his roots. The material used comes from different corners of the Spanish geography,

and both its spirit and its text belong to the Hispanic folklore. However, Falla makes an authentic act of musical recreation, bringing together the essence of the source material with the impressionist aesthetics so trendy in Paris.

The third movement belongs to the region of Asturias in the north of Spain. The formal and melodic structure presents a particular simplicity, but not its harmony. The harmonic accompaniment shows a simple configuration but a great ambiguity from the tonal point of view. The occurrence of a leading tone-tonic turn does not appear until the final postlude. The text tries to capture the melancholy of a young woman who weeps disconsolately:

Por ver si me consolaba,
arriméme a un pino verde
por ver si me consolaba.
Por verme llorar, lloraba.
Y el pino, como era verde,
por verme llorar, ¡lloraba!

To see if it would console me,
I approached a green pine tree
to see if it would console me.
To see me cry, I cried.
And the pine tree, because it was green
to see me cry, I cried!

The arrangement for solo piano has been carried out trying to preserve the material and the original Falla's purpose. It has been modified only in those measures necessary to adapt it to a more appropriate writing for the instrument and its technical capabilities.

Jesús ARNAU
Salamanca, May 2021

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M. de Falla

Andante tranquilo (♩=66)

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(appena rit.) a Tempo

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perdendosi poco rit. a Tempo

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32

dolcissimo

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35

a Tempo (appena rit.) morendo (poco rit.)

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