

Born: May 23, 1923 - Barcelona, Spain

Died: September 25, 2009 -- Barcelona, Spain

The brilliant Spanish pianist, Alicia de Larrocha (y de la Calle), studied piano with Frank Marshall at his Academia Marshall and music theory with Riccardo Lamote de Grignon. She made her first public appearance with a solo recital at the age of five, and was soloist with Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid at the age of 11, performing Mozart's "Coronation" Concerto (K. 537).

Alicia de Larrocha's adult career began in 1940, but she did not make any international tours until 1947, when she first toured Europe. In 1953, she premiered Montsalvatge's Concierto breve, which is dedicated to her, and also made her first visit to England. Her first appearance in the USA was in 1955 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. Since then she has developed an intensive international career, and is now recognised as an artist of outstanding interpretative insight. She is a regular visitor to all the important musical centres of the USA and Canada, and performs regularly throughout Europe, Latin America, Japan and Australia.

Alicia de Larrocha has enjoyed collaborations with a number of eminent musicians, among them Victoria de Los Angeles, Montserrat Caballé, and the Guarneri and Tokyo Quartets, and the conductors Sir Colin Davis, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Kent Nagano, and Gerard Schwarz. She also gave a performance of the Concerto for two pianos by Francis Poulenc with the composer playing the second piano part. Her lifelong friendship with Federico Mompou led to the composition of a number of works dedicated to her. In addition to her performing, she took on the directorship of the Academia Marshall in Barcelona in 1959.

Her recent appearances in the UK have included concerts with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Sir Simon Rattle, the London Symphony Orchestra and Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, the Philharmonia Orchestra and Giuseppe Sinopoli, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Daniele Gatti, the Hallé Orchestra and Kent Nagano, and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra under Gerard Schwarz. She has also given recitals for the Edinburgh and Aldeburgh festivals, and at Symphony Hall Birmingham, and the Wigmore Hall and South Bank in London.

Alicia de Larrocha's greatest contribution as a musician has been her unrivalled advocacy of Spanish and Catalonian piano music. Her interpretations of the music of Albéniz, Enrique Granados, Falla, Mompou, and Montsalvatge are universally described as brilliant, authentic, and masterful in tonal colour, texture, and rhythm. She is also exuberantly praised by critics for her impeccable taste and exquisitely polished technique in classical works.

Her recordings, particularly of Albéniz and E. Granados, have received numerous prizes, including three Grammy awards, the Edison Prize, two Grand Prix du Disque, and the Deutsche Schallplatten Prize. She is also highly regarded for her recordings of Mozart and French Impressionist music. An exclusive artist with BMG/RCA Classics, current releases include a series of Mozart piano concerto recordings with the English Chamber Orchestra under Sir Colin Davis. Already available are recordings of Mozart piano sonatas, works by Robert Schumann, a Spanish recital disc featuring works by Falla and Montsalvatge, and discs featuring songs and dances by Mompou and works by E. Granados.



MANUEL DE FALLA NIGHTS IN THE GARDENS OF SPAIN

FREDERIC CHOPIN PIANO CONCERTO No. 2

ALICIA DE LARROCHA L'ORCHESTRE DE LA SUISSE ROMANDE SERGIU COMISSIONA



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS

DXD

Digital eXtreme Definition

Mastered using 24bit/352.8 kHz resolution

Nights in the Gardens of Spain (Spanish: *Noches en los jardines de España*), G. 49, is a piece of music by the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla. Falla was Andalusian and the work refers to the Hispano-Arabic past of this region (Al-Andalus).

Falla began this work as a set of nocturnes for solo piano in 1909, but on the suggestion of the pianist Ricardo Viñes he turned the nocturnes into a piece for piano and orchestra. Falla completed it in 1915 and dedicated it to Viñes. However the pianist at the first performance was neither Viñes nor Falla (who was a skilled pianist), but José Cubiles. The first performance was given on April 9, 1916, at Madrid's Teatro Real, with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Madrid conducted by Enrique Fernández Arbós.

Viñes first played the work in its San Sebastián premiere, shortly after the world premiere, with the same orchestra. Arthur Rubinstein was in the audience that night, and he introduced the work to Buenos Aires. The Paris premiere took place in January 1920, with the pianist Joaquín Nin playing under Fernández Arbós. The composer himself was the soloist at the London premiere in 1921, at a Queen's Hall concert under the baton of Edward Clark.

The work depicts three gardens:

En el Generalife (In the Generalife): The first gardens are in the Generalife, the jasmine-scented gardens surrounding the Alhambra.

Danza lejana (A Distant Dance): The second garden is an unidentified distant one in which there is an exotic dance.

En los jardines de la Sierra de Córdoba (In the Gardens of the Sierra de Córdoba): The third set of gardens are in the Sierra de Córdoba. The best-known inhabitant of the gardens of the Sierra de Córdoba was the Sufi philosopher Ibn Masarra, and the dances depicted here are presumably Sufi dances.

Falla referred to Nights in the Gardens of Spain as "symphonic impressions." The piano part is elaborate, brilliant, and eloquent but rarely dominant. The orchestral writing is lush. It is Falla's most "impressionistic" score. The Spanish composer Joaquín Turina called it "the most tragic and sorrowful of his works," in which is expressed "an intimate and passionate drama."

The score calls for piano, three flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, cymbals, triangle, celesta, harp, and strings. Performance time usually runs in the range of 22 to 26 minutes.

Chopin didn't set out to make something new of standard concerto form; both inexperience and a lifelong disinterest in symphonic thought stood in his way. His models were the recent concertos by Johann Nepomuk Hummel—popular, effective, utterly workmanlike scores that were, themselves, updated knockoffs of Mozart's concertos. For a great innovator, Chopin was a man of surprisingly conservative tastes. The only composers he admired without reservation were Mozart and Bach (before a concert he often would play through *The Well-Tempered Clavier*). He disliked most contemporary music: he had no use for Berlioz or Liszt, and he once told Stephen Heller that Schumann's *Carnaval*, which includes an affectionate parody of Chopin's style, was not music at all. Although the great painter Delacroix was arguably his best friend, Chopin nonetheless preferred the more traditional work of David and Ingres.

Chopin's own boldness and daring were apparent only when he turned to the keyboard. In the first movement of the F minor concerto, the music comes to life with the entrance of the piano. Suddenly, the same material that sounded unexceptional and a tad dutiful when played by the orchestra seems distinctive, poetic, and endlessly inventive. In Chopin's exquisite hands, the concerto is a monologue; there is little of the chamber-music intimacy between solo and ensemble that characterizes Mozart's works or the heroic dialogue between forces in Beethoven's. The orchestra is master of ceremonies, accompanist, and indispensable partner—introducing material, lending color and support—but the piano commands center stage. In passage after passage, Chopin writes music for it that is brilliant, virtuosic, and richly ornamented, yet never trivial. There is no need for a cadenza in the first movement; from its first notes, the piano has already irrevocably drawn the spotlight.

Liszt and Schumann both admired Chopin's slow movement, a quietly stunning nocturne with a rhapsodic, embellished piano melody that sounds almost improvised. Midway through, the piano and orchestra carry the music to a wrenching climax. The return of the main material has an unexpected bassoon solo, imitating the piano melody. (When the orchestra does come to the fore, it always has something smart and effective to say.) "The whole of the piece is of a perfection almost ideal," Liszt wrote, "its expression, now radiant with light, now full of tender pathos." While he was at work on this movement, Chopin confessed that it was inspired by Konstancia Gladkowska, his first love, whom he "served faithfully, though without saying a word to her, for six months" before he left Poland. (Chopin quickly recovered from unrequited love: the concerto was dedicated to the Countess Delfina Potocka, a new love, when it was published in 1836. It was she, "one of the most admired types of society queens," in Liszt's opinion, who was with Chopin when he died.)

The dazzling finale is a mazurka, too quirky, complex, and unpredictable to be danced. Its rhythms are plainly indebted to Polish folk music, but its spirit is pure international showmanship.

Falla Nights In The Gardens Of Spain Chopin Piano Concerto No.2

Alicia de Larrocha and L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and Sergiu Comissiona

Nights In The Gardens Of Spain

1. En El Generalife
2. Danza Lejana
3. En Los Jardines De La Sierra De Cordoba

Chopin: Piano Concerto No.2 in F minor, Op.21

1. Maestoso
 2. Larghetto
 3. Allegro vivace
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