

SALIDA ASPEN CONCERTS 2005

SATURDAY, July 30, 2005

JOHN HELD AUDITORIUM, SALIDA

ASPEN MUSIC FESTIVAL

David Zinman, Music Director

Deborah Barnekow, Salida Program Director

**Eunae Grace Cho, piano
&
Alejandro Hernandez-Valdez, piano**

PROGRAM

Hungarian Dances for piano four hands, WOO1 (1868) Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
 No. 1
 No. 5
 Eunae Grace Cho
 Alejandro Hernandez-Valdez

Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Op. 58 (1844) Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)
 I. Allegro Maestoso
 II. Scherzo: Molto vivace
 III. Largo
 IV. Finale: Presto, non tanto
 Eunae Grace Cho

INTERMISSION

Four pieces for solo piano Manuel M. Ponce (1882-1948)
 1) Romanza de Amor (1917)
 2) Balada Mexicana (1915)
 3) Intermezzo
 4) Concert Etude No. 3 "Hacia la Cima" (1921)
 Alejandro Hernandez-Valdez

Slavac Dances Op. 46 for piano four hands (1878) Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904)
 Eunae Grace Cho
 Alejandro Hernandez-Valdez

The audience is requested not to applaud between movements. Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management. Those with electronic devices of any kind are asked to silence them before the concert. Cameras, recording equipment, food, and beverages are not permitted. In consideration of the performing artists and members of the audience, anyone who wishes to leave before the end of the performance is asked to do so between numbers. Adults are responsible for the conduct of their children.

Eunai Cho, piano, was born in Seoul, Korea, from a religious and musical family. She was introduced to music at the age of five, and very soon she showed great musical abilities. At the early age of eleven Ms. Cho was appointed pianist for Bangbae Elementary School choir. With the Bangbae choir, she appeared on a major TV show for KBS (Korean Broadcast System), which introduced songs for the musical education of Korean public schools.

In 1993, she entered the Seoul Arts High School where she obtained a complete musical education receiving piano instruction from professor Bon-hee Ju. In 1996 she was admitted as a piano performance student at Seoul National University.

In 1997, Ms. Cho was named principal pianist for the respected Korean male choir Ictus. Her work with the choir took her through several tours that included Australia and New Zealand.

After receiving her undergraduate degree in the spring of 2000 from Seoul National University, Ms. Cho worked as artistic manager for the New International Music Festival in Seoul. In addition to her activities in the summer festival, she participated as an opera accompanist for the opera company *Life and Dream*.

In 2001, she was admitted as a master's student at the University of Texas at Austin in the studio of Gregory Allen. In addition to her solo work at UT Austin, she actively participated in collaborations with several instrumentalists.

In her first year of study at UT Austin, Ms. Cho entered the Sidney M. Write Collaborative Artist Competition at UT Austin where she received an Honorable Mention.

In the summer of 2002 she was accepted as a scholarship student to the prestigious Aspen Music Festival where she received valuable instruction from prestigious artists. Performances in Aspen included several master classes and presentations in distinguished venues such as the Harris Concert Hall and the Wheeler Opera House.

In 2003 she was chosen by the piano faculty at UT Austin to perform at a master class for the distinguished pianist and pedagogue Nelita True. For the fall semester 2003, she was the only student in the master's program at UT Austin to be admitted into the doctoral program.

In the summer of 2004, Ms. Cho attended the Aspen Music Festival once more; this time under a full scholarship.

Looking for performance opportunities, in the fall of 2004, Ms. Cho transferred to the University of Maryland at College Park as a doctoral student in collaborative piano under Professor Rita Sloan. After her arrival at the University of Maryland she was given a second place in the Chopin International Piano Competition in Corpus Christi, Texas. In addition, she was the runner up at the University of Maryland's concerto competition held in the spring of 2004. Next fall, she will be performing Rachmaninoff's Variations on a Theme of Paganini with the University Repertoire Orchestra.

Alejandro Hernandez, a doctoral candidate in piano performance at the University of Texas at Austin and four-year fellowship student at the Aspen Music Festival and School, performs in the U.S. and Mexico. Born in Guadalajara into a gifted musical family, he began music studies with his father and older brother. At school in Guadalajara he studied piano, composition, Gregorian chant, and organ, performing as soloist and collaborative artist throughout Mexico. He majored in piano performance as a full-scholarship student at Shenandoah Conservatory, Virginia.

Winner of several competitions, he received the three most distinguished awards of Shenandoah University, graduating magna cum laude. At UT Austin, he began as a teaching assistant, won the collaborative artist competition, and was subsequently appointed coordinator for the piano project and the school's assistant instructor in piano. Recipient for four years of an international fellowship from the Institute of Latin American Studies, he has also studied conducting. He recorded and supervised (as pianist, organist, harpsichordist, and conductor) musical examples for the fifth edition of *Tonal Harmony* by Kostka and Payne. He also recorded selected examples for the new *Anthology of Music Analysis* by Kostka and Greybill.

Composer Notes

Piano Pieces (Part of the mini-festival in Aspen called “Postcards from Latin America).

Born in Zacatecas, Mexico, but raised in Aguascalientes, **Manuel Ponce** showed prodigious musical talent, composing his first piece at age five. In his late teens and early twenties, he worked as an organist, piano teacher, and music critic, and in 1900-01 studied piano and harmony in Mexico City. Encouraged to further his education in Europe, Ponce sold his piano in order to make the trip and stayed first in Bologna, where he studied with Ceare Dall’Olio, Puccini’s teacher. When Dall’Olio died several months later, Ponce moved to Berlin to study piano with Martin Krause, but he soon had to return to Mexico in financial hardship. He taught piano privately, then at the Conservatorio Nacional in Mexico City, where in 1910 he met Faure and Saint-Saens while serving on a competition jury. Signal events in 1912 included the recital of his students who introduced Debussy’s music to Mexico; the eleven year old Carlos Chavez opened the recital and a concert of his own works. He had now gained status as Mexico’s premier composer, solidified by a 1913 lecture, soon published, on Mexico’s national musical heritage.

For a time during the Mexican Revolution he was forced to flee to Cuba, where he continued performing, teaching, and writing music criticism. Most fortuitous after his return to his homeland was making the acquaintance in 1923 of celebrated guitarist Andres Segovia, for whom he wrote numerous pieces and with whom he formed a lasting friendship. In 1925, feeling a need to update his musical knowledge, he settled in Paris where he studied with Paul Dukas and hobnobbed with classmate Joaquin Rodrigo and with Hector Villa-Lobos. Dukas was so impressed with Ponce that he graded him a “30” out of 10 possible in the course.

In 1933 Ponce returning to teaching, composing, and writing articles in Mexico, and witnessed some of the most important premieres of his works. Among numerous distinctions and honors, he was appointed director of the National Conservatory in 1945 and in 1947, one year before his death, he received the Premio Nacional de Arts. Though most know him as the composer of the song “Estrellita,” he also composed orchestral, chamber, piano, and guitar music, drawing on Romanticism, Neoclassicism, Impressionism, and above all, nationalist characteristics. The first of this program’s selections, Romanza de amor (Romance of love), was written in 1915 and dedicated to his wife Clema, a singer of French heritage whom he met in 1913 and married in 1917. “Not too slow,” and “with passion,” the piece generally proceeds in a four-voice texture that includes some nice melodic interest in the interior voices. After a slightly faster middle section, Ponce returns to the opening music, but with a passionate extension and slow, expressive coda.

Balada Mexicana, also composed in 1915, is a more extensive piece, based on a singing melody that emerges out of an oscillating texture, again in four-voice-writing. When the texture changes, Ponce’s “big tune” is supported by ranging left-hand arpeggios. A new section features a theme in dotted rhythms, which the composer subjects to variations before offering an entirely new texture of rising right hand arpeggios and left hand chords. He then returns to the opening music, which he extends with a bravura coda. Ponce’s melancholy Intermezzo is based on a pattern of parallel thirds, whose configuration also produces a melody. This relatively brief piece embarks on a bit of harmonic excursion before returning to the opening. The composer dedicated the Intermezzo to Adolfo de la Pena Gil, a leader in the Mexican Theosophist Society, and incidentally someone who believed that fellow theosophist Thomas Alva Edison was actually born in Mexico (!).

Hacia la cima (Toward the top) was composed in 1921 as the third of Ponce’s “concert etudes.” Dedicated to “Senorita Sara Munguia”—possibly a piano student?—the piece cascades into a texture of repeated notes combined with melody notes that sound reminiscent of guitar technique. A doloroso melody atop alternating hands leads to harmonic excursions, flashy chromatic descents, and more alternating hands before the sad melody returns in ternary fashion. Ponce now whips this up into a brilliant conclusion that brings back the opening cascades. (*Jane Vial Jaffe, Osvald Laccerra*)