

Concert Program for December 3 and 4, 2010

Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, conductor

ALBÉNIZ (1860-1909)/ **Suite española, op. 47** (1886-98)/(1960s)
orch. Frühbeck Castilla
(b. 1933) Granada
Sevilla
Asturias
Aragón

FALLA **Three Dances (Suite No. 2) from *El sombrero de tres picos***
(1876-1946) **(*The Three-Cornered Hat*)** (1916-18)
The Neighbors' Dance (*Seguidillas*)
The Miller's Dance (*Farruca*)
Final Dance (*Jota*)

Intermission

BRAHMS **Symphony No. 1 in C minor, op. 68** (1862-76)
(1833-1897) Un poco sostenuto; Allegro
Andante sostenuto
Un poco allegretto e grazioso
Adagio; Più andante; Allegro non troppo, ma con brio

Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos is brought to you through the generosity of the Whitaker Foundation as part of the Whitaker Guest Artist Series.

The concert of Friday, December 3, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Joel S. Iskiwitch.

The concert of Saturday, December 3, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Mark B. Andrews.

These concerts are part of the Wells Fargo Advisors Series.



Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos **Whitaker Guest Artist**

Born in Burgos, Spain, in 1933, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos studied violin, piano, music theory and composition at the conservatories in Bilbao and Madrid, and conducting at Munich's Hochschule für Musik, where he graduated summa cum laude and was awarded the Richard Strauss Prize. He currently is Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Dresden Philharmonic.

He has served as General Music Director of the Rundfunkorchester (Radio Orchestra) Berlin, Principal Guest Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C., and Music Director of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Vienna Symphony, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI Turin, Bilbao Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Spain, the Düsseldorfer Symphoniker, and the Montreal Symphony. For many seasons, he was also Principal Guest Conductor of the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo.

Each season Frühbeck returns to North America as guest conductor for the Philadelphia Orchestra, Boston Symphony, and Tanglewood Music Festival. In 2009-10 he also conducts the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra in Washington D.C., Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Toronto Symphony.

North American engagements in the 2008-09 season included the New York Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra. In the spring of 2008, Frühbeck led the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra on a six-city tour across Spain and toured the United States with the Dresden Philharmonic.

Frühbeck has made extensive tours with such ensembles as the Philharmonia of London, the London Symphony Orchestra, the National Orchestra of Madrid, and the Swedish Radio Orchestra. He toured North America with the Vienna Symphony in three different seasons and he has led the Spanish National Orchestra on two tours of the United States.

Since 1975 he has been a member of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando. The numerous honors and distinctions he has been awarded include the Gold Medal of the City of Vienna, the Bundesverdienstkreuz of the Republic of Austria and Germany, the Gold Medal from the Gustav Mahler International Society, and the Jacinto Guerrero Prize, Spain's most important musical award, conferred in 1997 by the Queen of Spain. In 1998 Frühbeck received the appointment of Emeritus Conductor by the Spanish National Orchestra. He has received an honorary doctorate from the University of Navarra in Spain.

Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos most recently conducted the St. Louis Symphony in November 1985.

Iberiana

BY PAUL SCHIAVO

Ideas at Play

Few countries claim a tradition of folk music as distinctive as that of Spain. Semi-isolated from the rest of Europe by its position on the Iberian peninsula and by the natural barrier of the Pyrenees, home to a large gypsy population, and strongly influenced by Arabic culture as a result of the Moorish occupation during the Middle Ages, Spain developed a unique and especially lively musical idiom. The sound of guitars and castanets; the soulful rhapsodies of *cante jondo*, the smoldering, melancholy style of gypsy singing; the vibrant rhythms of flamenco and other types of folk dances—these are but a few of the characteristics that make Spanish folk music immediately identifiable.

For generations, Spanish composers ignored the folk tradition of their homeland, striving instead for a cosmopolitan style based on French or Italian or Austrian models. But toward the end of the 19th century, Spanish composers began to embrace the sound of their country's indigenous music. This development led rather quickly to a fully formed Spanish compositional style, one whose leading practitioners include Isaac Albéniz, Enrique Granados, Manuel de Falla, and Joaquín Rodrigo.

The first half of our program presents music by two of these Spanish masters. Following intermission, we shift our focus from the Iberian peninsula to central Europe and one of the essential composers of the 19th century.

Isaac Albéniz Suite española, op. 47

Born: Camprodón, Spain, May 29, 1860 **Died:** Cambo-les-Bains, France, May 18, 1909 **First performance:** Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos's orchestration of Suite española evolved over a number of years, and different versions of the suite were first performed at different times, mainly in the 1960s **STL Symphony premiere:** February 15, 1974, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos conducting the only previous performance **Scoring:** Two flutes, two piccolos and alto flute; three oboes and English horn, two clarinets and bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, celesta, and strings **Performance time:** Approximately 24 minutes



Albéniz

In Context 1886 Rodin sculpts “The Kiss”; Saint-Saëns’s *Symphony No. 3*, “Organ,” premieres; Franz Liszt dies in Bayreuth

The first important member of the nationalist school of Spanish composers, Isaac Albéniz led an exciting and somewhat chaotic life during his early years. A child-prodigy pianist, he gave his first recital at age four. At 12 he ran away from home and traveled by himself throughout North and South America, giving concerts. Returning to Europe two years later, Albéniz entered

the Leipzig Conservatory and later studied with Franz Liszt. His early compositions, most of them for the piano, adopted Liszt’s transcendent keyboard technique and ardent Romanticism. But in 1883, Albéniz met Felipe Pedrell, a Spanish musicologist and composer. Pedrell convinced his younger colleague of the merit of Spanish folk music and the need for a national style of composition.

Albéniz’s conversion to the cause of a distinctly Spanish compositional idiom changed the course of his creative work, and he henceforth blended sophisticated Romantic textures with rhythms, dance forms, and inflections of melody and harmony derived from Spanish folk music. Albéniz first used these Spanish elements in a series of piano pieces written in 1886, which over the years continued to evolve into the work known as *Suite española*.

The Music: The movements of *Suite española* are linked, both nominally and musically, to specific locales. “Sevilla,” for example, imagines that Andalusian city in music redolent of its flamenco guitar tradition. Elsewhere Albéniz makes the connection by using dance rhythms typical of certain regions. “Aragón” references the *seguidilla*, and “Castilla” the *jota*. We need not know these dances, of course, to appreciate their Spanish flavor. That flavor is spiced by Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos’s brightly colored orchestration of these pieces.

Manuel de Falla Three Dances (Suite No. 2) from *El sombrero de tres picos* (*The Three-Cornered Hat*)

Born: Cádiz, Spain, November 23, 1876 **Died:** Alta Gracia de Córdoba, Argentina, November 14, 1946 **First Performance:** July 22, 1919, in London; Ernest Ansermet conducted the orchestra of the Ballets Russes **STL Symphony premiere:** February 15, 1929, Enrique Fernández Arbós conducting **Most recent STL Symphony performance:** March 2, 2008, Miguel Harth-Bedoya conducting **Scoring:** Two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani and percussion, harp, piano, celesta, and strings **Performance time:** Approximately 12 minutes



Falla

In Context 1916-18 World War I Battle of Verdun ends after 10 months of fighting with 330,000 German and French soldiers killed and wounded; International Red Cross receives Nobel Peace Prize; three peasant children near Fatima, Portugal, claim to receive prophecies from the Virgin Mary

Although he produced a relatively small number of works, Manuel de Falla stands as the most important Spanish composer of the 20th century. Like Albéniz before him, Falla created music of a strongly Spanish character. Although he rarely resorted to literal quotations of indigenous songs and dances, the composer thoroughly absorbed the melodic and rhythmic inflections of Spanish folk music and used these as elements of his own style. Moreover, his important theatrical works are drawn from Spanish subjects and deliberately evoke a Spanish atmosphere.

One of those works is the ballet *The Three-Cornered Hat*, which Falla composed in 1916-17 and revised a year later. The ballet's plot is based on a traditional Spanish story, *El corregidor y la molinera* (*The Governor and the Miller's Wife*). It tells how a lecherous and despotic governor, whose emblem of authority is a three-cornered hat, conceives a fancy for the pretty spouse of a poor miller. When she spurns his advances, he has her husband arrested in order to clear the way for his conquest. Still he is unable to win her, and in the end the governor is exposed, ridiculed, and utterly defeated by the miller and his clever wife.

The Music: Falla extracted two concert suites from his full ballet score. The second, which we hear now, is composed of three dances from the latter half of the ballet. As Act II opens, neighbors of the miller and his wife have come to the mill to celebrate the Feast of St. John. In the warm Andalusian night there is drinking and, of course, dancing—a *seguidilla*, which all join in. Falla's music captures the fluid rhythms of this dance and provides a wonderful mosaic of changing instrumental colors.

The miller then responds with a dance of his own, a somewhat more vigorous *farruca*. Falla prefaces it with rhapsodic solos for French horn and

Brahms

English horn, and the music's gradual acceleration creates an impression of accumulating energy. Falla's scoring imitates the strumming of guitars that traditionally accompanies this dance.

At the close of the ballet, the governor's lechery has been exposed to the entire town. The populace concludes its St. John's Night celebrations by dancing around him, mocking him, and finally tossing him up and down upon a blanket. Falla's closing dance, a *jota*, presents a kaleidoscope of shifting melodic figures, with different motifs following each other in quick succession. The orchestration is exceptionally colorful, its extensive and very knowing use of percussion contributing much to the music's festive and Spanish character.

Johannes Brahms Symphony No. 1 in C minor, op. 68

Born: Hamburg, May 7, 1833 **Died:** Vienna, April 3, 1897 **First performance:** November 4, 1876, in the German city of Karlsruhe, with Otto Dessoff conducting
STL Symphony premiere: February 18, 1910, Max Zach conducting **Most recent STL Symphony performance:** December 2, 2006, Jerzy Semkow conducting
Scoring: Two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings **Performance time:** Approximately 45 minutes



Brahms

In Context 1862-76 *Period of Civil War and Reconstruction in the United States; Paris Commune founded; Alexander Graham Bell makes the first telephone call*

At the opposite pole of musical perspective and character from the Spanish nationalism of Albéniz and Falla stands the work of Johannes Brahms. More than any composer active during the second half of the 19th century, Brahms represents what has sometimes been referred to as the “central tradition” of Austro-German composition. That tradition runs from Bach, through Mozart and Haydn, directly on—by way of Beethoven and Schubert—to Brahms. Its deepest value is musical architecture based on coherent melodic development and harmonic movement, with vibrant colors and textures having little place within the tradition. Its ethos is generally cosmopolitan rather than nationalistic, for which reason its music avoids exoticism and folkloric references in favor of abstract and personal creation. And it finds its ideal representation in the symphony.

Brahms was deeply aware of this tradition and his place in it. In particular, he aspired to emulate Beethoven's achievement in expanding the form and scope of symphonic music to give expression to the spirit of the 19th century. In this, Beethoven's work served as a model but also as a daunting example, and Brahms's youthful ambition to compose a symphony was opposed by his own sense of the gravity of the undertaking.

“You have no idea,” he reportedly told the conductor Hermann Levi, “what it is like to try to write a symphony while hearing the footsteps of a giant like [Beethoven] behind you.”

Brahms’s first symphonic essay was, in fact, begun very much in the shadow of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9, which the composer first heard in 1854. Soon afterwards he was sketching a symphony in the same key of D minor and somewhat the same spirit as Beethoven’s magnum opus. Brahms’s command of orchestral writing was then tenuous, however, and he abandoned his symphony, recasting the music first as a sonata for two pianos and finally in the form we know it today, his Piano Concerto No. 1, op. 15.

During the next two decades, Brahms brought forth no new orchestral work except two lightly scored serenades. Nevertheless, the ambition that had sparked his earlier effort never left him. By 1862 he had substantially completed the opening movement of a new symphony that he showed to Clara Schumann, widow of composer Robert Schumann and one of Brahms’s most intimate acquaintances. Completion of this work, a towering composition in C minor, proved arduous. Brahms continued to revise the score, submitting it to trusted friends for criticism and ignoring their pleas that he bring it before the public. Not until 1876 was he sufficiently satisfied with the work that he released it for performance.

It is hardly surprising that, as the symphony became known, many musicians noted similarities to Beethoven’s Ninth. The stormy opening movement, the broad anthem-like theme of the finale, and the dramatic progression over the course of the work from struggle to exultation all have obvious precedents in Beethoven’s last symphony. But such comparisons failed to recognize the uniquely Brahmsian qualities of this work. Theodore Billroth, a thoughtful physician and pianist whose friendship and musical judgment Brahms valued highly, perceived both the inspiration and the originality of the work. After examining the score, he wrote to the composer: “That the whole symphony has a somewhat similar emotional groundwork as the Ninth of Beethoven occurred to me in my study of it. And yet... your own artistic individuality stands out clearly.” His observation remains accurate and useful more than a century later.

The Music: The first movement opens with a dramatic introduction in slow tempo. In its opening measures two melodic lines—one rising, the other descending—pull roughly at each other while timpani and bass instruments toll ominously below. A plaintive melody introduced by the oboe then leads to the main Allegro portion of the movement. “This is rather strong,” wrote Clara Schumann in 1862, after reading through the score, “but I’ve grown used to it. The movement is full of beauties, the themes are treated masterfully.” They are indeed. And had she seen the complete symphony at the time, Frau Schumann might have added that the sense of turmoil and conflict that fills this movement serves to prepare the composition’s exultant finale.

Brahms

The inner movements are less turbulent but no less moving. A feeling of almost religious serenity pervades the second, while the third is breezy and melodious. Its initial measures provide an example of Brahms's fondness for thematic relationships and symmetries: the second phrase of the clarinet melody is precisely the mirror image of the first, its melodic contour rising where its predecessor fell, and vice versa.

With the onset of the finale, Brahms returns to the drama established in the opening movement. Its initial section is shrouded in dark C-minor harmonies. Suddenly, however, a clarion horn call dispels the shadows and leads to the movement's broad principal theme. The triumphal character and anthem-like simplicity of this subject inevitably brought comparisons with the "Ode to Joy" melody in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. Brahms dismissed these as incidental and obvious. "Any ass can see that," he reportedly exclaimed when the similarity was pointed out. His impatience is understandable. Clearly of greater consequence than any superficial resemblance to Beethoven's melody is the progression of this theme to quite jubilant heights and the symphony's conclusion with a stirring coda passage. And these Brahms accomplishes in his own very convincing fashion.