



Gustav Meier  
Music Director

61st Season

4th Subscription Concert  
Klein Memorial Auditorium

Saturday, March 3, 2007

8:00 p.m.

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Gustav Meier, Conductor  
Allen Vizzutti, Trumpet

STRAUSS R.

Don Juan

VIZZUTTI

Concierto Mexicano (World Premiere)

*Zapateado (de Sarasate)*

*Malagueña Salerosa (Ramirez)*

*Luciernaga (Vizzutti)*

*Trumpetista Celestial (Vizzutti)*

*Fandango (Mendez)*

Allen Vizzutti, Trumpet

### INTERMISSION

BIZET

Four Pieces from Carmen Suites 1 and 2

*Prelude (1)*

*Habanera (2)*

*Chanson du Toreador (2)*

*Danse Boheme {Gypsy Song} -(2)*

KOFF/MENDEZ

La Virgen de la Macarena

Allen Vizzutti, Trumpet

RAVEL

Alborada del Grazioso

RODRIGO/arr.  
Vizzutti

Theme from Concierto de Aranjuez

Allen Vizzutti, Trumpet

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## PROGRAM NOTES

In North American minds, 'Latin Passion', theme of tonight's program, may conjure up thoughts of suave tangos or scenes like Hernando's Hideaway in the musical Pajama Game, but the term latin, properly speaking, refers to anything derived from ancient Rome including countries of the Mediterranean basin like Spain and Portugal, their languages, and by extension their influence in Central and South America from the Age of Exploration in the 1600's on. Even the French language belongs in this category, although the country itself is more of a Gallic/Celtic/Norman mixture.

All of this evening's offerings fit this theme, but it is the German, Richard Strauss, who wrote the swashbuckling tone poem, *Don Juan*, about the 14th-century Spanish libertine who preyed on the women of Seville and became the symbol in plays, epic verse, opera and other musical forms of machismo gone wrong. The Frenchman, Bizet, wrote the opera, *Carmen*, also set in Seville, about a sultry gypsy cigarette girl - a work universally recognized as one of the 5 or 6 greatest operas ever written. Another Frenchman, Ravel, composed the *Alborada*, a North Spanish type of serenade to the Dawn, this one belonging to a *Grazioso* - or fool in the household of a Spanish nobleman. Such works have given rise to the idea that the greatest Spanish music has been written by Frenchmen. Considering de Falla, Albeniz, Granados, Turina and Rodrigo among others, this is not true, but all the composers on this list did go to Paris to study. Rodrigo, who wrote the *Concierto de Aranjuez*, was a student of Paul Dukas at the Schola Cantorum. The Montanan, Vizzutti, whose *Concierto Mexicano* is premiered tonight has worked extensively in Hollywood as did the Mexican trumpeter, Mendez, who arranged *La Virgen de la Macarena* - all of which seems to mean that, while Latin is certainly a matter of temperament, it is also more that of a style as well and only partly a place of origin.

### DON JUAN

**Richard Strauss (1864 -1949)**

Of this work Strauss wrote, "My *Don Juan* is no hot-blooded man eternally pursuing women. It is the longing in him to find a woman who is to him incarnate womanhood, and to enjoy in the one, all the women on earth, whom he cannot possess as individuals. Because he does not find her, at last disgust seizes hold of him and this disgust is the devil that fetches him." At 24, Strauss succeeded in writing "a controlled masterpiece into which the fiery ardor of youth

was injected with a passion that has never faded" (Grove's Dictionary). Based on episodes from Lenau's poem about Don Juan and his own love for Pauline de Ahna, his future wife, the music has continuity, "unprecedented pyrotechnics" and definition. Several affairs of the Don are poetically described, the most arresting being that involving the four horns in a high tessitura that exhausted the players at the first performance. In the end, in a gesture of futility, the Don drops his sword and the brother of one of his conquests kills him.

### CONCIERTO Mexicano

**arr. by Allen Vizzutti**

"I desired in *Concierto Mexicano*," Vizzutti has written, "to capture elements of Mexican folk melody and harmony, as well as present a piece with some exciting 'Vizzutti' flair. Mexican culture is as steeped in tradition and richness as any culture on earth. I found, altered and orchestrated three existing pieces and wrote two original ones to complete a set of five."

(1). Zapateado is an adaptation of a piece by 19th century violin virtuoso, Pablo de Sarasate. A zapateado is "a flamenco dance in which the performer stamps and taps rhythmically with the heels." He continues, "I added some technical fun in the solo part in lieu of attempting to click my heels!"

(2). Malaguena Salerosa opens with "a rich orchestral setting of a theme by Mexican composer Elpidio Ramirez. Malaguena is a core branch of the songs from the southeast of Spain (Malaga) originating in the mines and expressing deep suffering. Urban variants tend to refer to love and life. Salerosa is translated as lively and graceful. The first half of the piece is performed on flugel horn for its warm and mellow sound."

(3). "Luciernaga is Spanish for firefly. Flashy and light, the blazing solo trumpet part should leave you glowing. It is difficult, so wish me luck."

(4). "Trumpetista Celestial (Heavenly Trumpeter) is dedicated to the late legendary Mexican trumpet artist, Rafael Mendez. He was responsible for introducing the charm and beauty of Mexican music in a classical setting to much of the world and shattered the accepted limits of trumpet technique by performing as if playing on a violin or singing an opera. This movement is based on melodies from my heart."

(5). "Fandango is an animated Spanish dance in triple time. Based on charming and decidedly Mexican melodies composed by trumpeter Mendez to whom the preceding movement was dedicated, and whose harmony in them reflects

his life in Hollywood, I reworked the form, some of the harmony and added several difficult trumpet passages, while maintaining the delightful Mexican character of the original."

## FOUR PIECES FROM CARMEN SUITES 1 AND 2

**Georges Bizet (1838 -1875)**

In Bizet's Opera, the gypsy, *Carmen*, is a force of nature, "uninhibited, uncompromising - love under any laws except her own will is inconceivable to her" (Curtiss). To have put such a character on the stage, along with Don José and Escamillo, willingly bending to her sway, was unheard of in 1875. Furthermore, the realism of the first Carmen's (Galli-Marié) acting and singing, - because she believed in the score - were intolerable as well. The only favorable review read, "Bizet has tried to show real men and real women, dazzled,... tortured by passion..." The composer was dead at 36 within three months of this failure from throat abscesses that led to heart attacks (today antibiotics would have gotten rid of the abscesses). In 1883 with Galli-Marié again in the title role, the earlier nay sayers understood, "Carmen, the most hair-raising strumpet of Moorish blood... but also the most live and thrilling of creatures has finally gained her naturalization papers..." Bizet's work has liberated it from all obstacles..." one of them wrote.

Four excerpts are played this evening arranged for orchestra alone:

- (1). Prelude: introduces the up-beat music that will accompany the gathering crowd at the Bullring in the last Act, the chorus of the Toreador Song and the theme of Fate associated with Carmen.
- (2). Habanera: is Carmen's paean to love, "Love is free as a wayward breeze... If I love you, watch out, you play with fire!" A Habanera is a relatively slow, voluptuous dance from Cuba.
- (3). Chanson du Toreador: is Escamillo's bold description to the crowd of the excitement of a bullfight. "Day of fame for men of courage."
- (4). Danse Bohème (Gypsy Song); is Carmen's song while she and other gypsy girls dance at Lillas Pastia's tavern. "The tambourines of Spain and strumming guitars... drive them on... like a whirlwind no force can stay."

## LA VIRGEN DE LA MACARENA

**Rafael Mendez  
arr. Charles Koff**

Macarena is a quarter of Seville known for its revered statue of the Blessed Mother. *La Virgen de la Macarena* is a traditional hymn-like tune, now generally set for the trumpet. This haunting melody is often played before bullfights

when the matadors enter the chapel; hence its second title 'The Bullfighters Song'. "The whole tapestry of Spanish culture seems to unfold in this trumpet solo," is the remark of one listener on an internet blog.

## ALBORADA DEL GRAZIOSO

**Maurice Ravel (1875 - 1937)**

The unreal and the real mingle in Alborada del Grazioso, fourth of the five piano pieces Ravel wrote in 1905 called Miroirs. In this Dawn Serenade of a nobleman's jester, disparate ideas follow one another in close succession, perhaps mirroring a night of revelry with both remorse and delight. The flashing guitar sounds and sensual colors of the piano original are brilliantly transferred to the orchestral version made a few months later, adding to Ravel's lustre as a great orchestrator. This is not a prelude to the fresh start of a new day, but what biographer Stuckenschmidt called "a psychopathological state of fluctuation between normal awareness and illusion."

## THEME FROM CONCIERTO DE ARANJUEZ

**Joaquín Rodrigo (1901 -1999)  
arr. Vizzutti**

Aranjuez was a favorite watering place of the Bourbon Kings of Spain at the end of the 18th and early 19th centuries. A sophisticated provincial retreat 30 miles from Madrid, life there was characterized at this time by "majas, bullfights and Spanish American tunes." Rodrigo said of his *Concierto*, "in its notes one may fancy seeing the ghost of Goya, held in thrall by melancholy - in its themes there lingers the fragrance of magnolias, the singing of birds and the gushing of fountains."

In this arrangement of the second movement melody, a melancholy dialogue between the guitar soloist and orchestral instruments in the original, Vizzutti has written "I employ extensive use of the harp, rich string textures and a bit of tango. The solo is performed on the flugel horn," - the valved brass instrument used earlier in the 2nd movement of the *Concierto Mexicano*.

Blind since the age of three from an attack of diphtheria, Rodrigo had an influential career as composer, critic and Professor of Music History at the University of Madrid where a special chair was created for him in memory of Manuel de Falla. The *Concierto de Aranjuez* was a runaway hit from its 1940 first performance. "It is impossible to find another Spanish work with such exciting picturesque qualities and formal perfection," is a typical critical observation.

-Burton Hatheway