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## ***Enric Granados : Composer, Performer, and Teacher*** **Douglas Riva**

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ENRIC GRANADOS:  
COMPOSER, PERFORMER, AND TEACHER

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As musicians and listeners we tend to confine our interest in Granados to his compositions, overlooking the fact that initially he gained his reputation as a composer through his performances as a pianist. If we look beyond his music and want to know something of the man, we study the facts of his life or perhaps listen to the few recordings which he made. But, we might tend to discount the importance of the recordings due to their poor sound quality or what some might regard as Granados' overly romantic style, forgetting that broken chords and wide rubatos were typical of late nineteenth-century piano playing. And, after all, we may say, many great composers have also been noted performers. From Mozart to Prokofiev composers have performed their own compositions, drawing attention to their works through the brilliance of their playing. In the case of Granados, however, his playing and particularly his teaching hold the key to understanding his works — not only the techniques and style necessary to perform them but also the very notes the composer intended.

As a pianist Granados certainly achieved considerable success. The composer's daughter says the piano was "his instrument".<sup>1</sup> Granados' playing, as described by Joaquín Nin, "...united the most sensual morbidity and the most viril energy".<sup>2</sup> He was noted especially for his "beautiful and expressive tone" and the

<sup>1</sup> Personal interview with Natàlia Granados de Carreras, daughter of Enric Granados, at her home, Barcelona, May 21, 1981.

<sup>2</sup> Joaquín Nin in Jean Rogers Longland, "Granados and the Opera *Goyescas* [sic]", *Notes Hispanic*, V (1945), 95.

"dazzling effects"<sup>3</sup> he achieved with the pedal. Frederic Mompou, the Catalan composer, remembers Granados' playing as "sensitive and lyric" and says that he always produced a "great impression".<sup>4</sup> Granados' close friend Pau Casals, with whom he performed extensively, said that Granados was a "born pianist", a "natural".<sup>5</sup>

Another of Granados' remarkable gifts as a pianist was his amazing ability to improvise. Improvisation may have been one of Granados' most natural forms of expression. "Music simply poured out of him",<sup>6</sup> Casals said. The story is told that Granados said one day, "I saw a beautiful woman today". As he began to describe her, words failed him and he turned to the piano improvising a poetic description of the woman he had seen.<sup>7</sup>

Frank Marshall, Granados' devoted disciple, related that shortly after completing *El Pelele*, Granados included it in the program of one of his concerts. Deciding to use the score for the performance, he asked Marshall to turn the pages. During the concert Marshall noted that Granados did not follow the score but improvised a new *Pelele* with all the themes of the original, adding that although the music unfolded in a completely new form, it had the feeling of the original version.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Rogelio Villar, "Granados pianista", *Revista-Musical: Hispano-Americana*, Year VIII, Epoch III, No. IV, (April, 1916), 10.

<sup>4</sup> Personal interview with Frederic Mompou at his home, Barcelona, May 12, 1981.

<sup>5</sup> José María Corredor, *Conversations with Casals*, New York, E.P. Dutton, 1956, 164.

<sup>6</sup> Pablo Casals, *Joys and Sorrows: His Own Story as Told to Albert E. Kahn*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1974, 148.

<sup>7</sup> Personal interview with Antoni Carreras, son-in-law of Enric Granados, at his home, Barcelona, April 11, 1981.

<sup>8</sup> Frank Marshall in Alicia de Larrocha, "Granados, the Composer". translated by Joan Kerlow, *Clavier*, VI (October, 1967), 7, 23.

The composer's daughter, Natàlia Granados de Carreras, says that in the family home her father improvised constantly, especially in his own compositions, continually refining them.<sup>9</sup>

Alícia de Larrocha, the well-known performer of Granados' music, states that we must not forget Granados' "custom of polishing and substantially modifying passages of his compositions after they had been published". She continues:

It appears that forced by economic necessity, he brought his compositions to the editors with a certain hurry. Later, in periods of greater tranquility, he dedicated himself to retouching and correcting the published and accomplishing the authentic version.<sup>10</sup>

Herein lies the significance of Granados' habit of continually improvising in his own compositions at the piano. In this manner he took the original version, hastily published before he had resolved all the details to his satisfaction, and by improvising and performing his works he arrived at his definitive version. Thus the printed editions of Granados' piano works, notably the *Goyescas* and the *Danza Española, No. 7 (Valenciana)*, are not the "authentic" version since they lack the changes which Granados made in these weeks subsequent to their publication.

Fortunately, Granados recorded a few of his works, thereby preserving his intentions. For the Welte-Mignon Reproducing Piano, Granados recorded *Coloquio en la reja*, *El fandango de candil*, and *Quejas o la maja y el ruiseñor*. It was during his visit to New York, in 1916, that he recorded two of his *Goyescas*. These were piano rolls which could be played on the Aeolian Company's Duo-Art Reproducing Piano. A few days before his departure

<sup>9</sup> Personal interview with Natàlia Granados de Carreras, at her home, Barcelona, April 24, 1981.

<sup>10</sup> Alícia de Larrocha, "Granados, the Composer", as in note 8, supra.



from New York, *The New York Times* published an interview with Granados in which he described his recordings for the Duo-Art. He noted, "It is all so truthful, so life-like, so exact a replica of my very touch that my pupils themselves in Madrid [*sic*] could detect no difference".<sup>11</sup> It is significant that Granados valued his students as listeners who would best be able to judge the distinction between the maestro's recording and his actual performance. Granados' pupils had special knowledge about their teacher's playing and particularly about his intentions in his works.

Although he did not notate his post-publication changes, Granados passed on his intentions in the *Goyescas* and other works through his students. He gave them a performance tradition for his works. By explaining and illustrating at the keyboard his intentions during the course of their lessons, Granados taught his pupils more "authentic" versions of his works than the printed scores.<sup>12</sup> For this reason we must examine Granados' work as a teacher, particularly as a teacher of his own compositions.

Certainly he devoted a considerable portion of his life to his students. In 1901 he established the Acadèmia Granados, which not only produced musicians of the highest caliber but also served as a center for concerts in Barcelona.

In the *Rules* of the Acadèmia, Granados stated that it was established to create an atmosphere of pure art. Students were trained as performers,<sup>13</sup> and also as listeners so as to form an audience for the future. In order to achieve this double ideal, Granados organized concerts in the auditorium of the Acadèmia. He performed frequently as a soloist and in ensembles with some of

<sup>11</sup> "An interview with Señor Granados on the Duo-Art Pianola", *The New York Times*, March 12, 1916, 15 (No author).

<sup>12</sup> Personal interview with Alicia de Larrocha, Director of the Acadèmia Marshall, Salisbury Hotel, New York, August 3, 1979.

the most respected artists of the day: pianist Joaquim Malats, and cellist Pau Casals, among them.

To insure the quality of education, courses were offered in solfege, harmony and theory, and in piano, violin and cello. Professors were encouraged to organize groups of students in whatever form they thought best for study. Lessons did not have a fixed duration. Detailed curricula were devised for the study of instruments, each divided into 8 years of study with an extra year of "perfection". The repertoire to be studied was carefully specified. Piano students learned selections from English virginal composers Byrd and Bull, pieces by Rameau and Couperin, many works by Bach, sonatas by Mozart and Beethoven and works by Chopin, Schumann and Liszt. Granados included much contemporary music in the curriculum, selecting compositions by Fauré, Albéniz and Debussy.

One of the most important aspects of Granados' playing and teaching involved the use of the pedal. Ernest Schelling, the noted American pianist who helped Granados achieve international recognition, wrote, after hearing Granados play, "I tried to produce the effects he achieved. After many failures, I discovered that his ravishing results at the keyboard were all a matter of the pedal".<sup>13</sup> Granados detailed his ideas for using the pedal in an important pedagogical work, the *Theoretical and Practical Method for the Use of the Pedal*.<sup>14</sup> Although it has largely been overlooked, it is perhaps the only method which analyzes the problems of applying the damper pedal and proposes definite solutions to these problems.

As a teacher Granados was highly successful. His method was

<sup>13</sup> Ernest Schelling, "The Human Element in Piano Playing", in James Francis Cooke, ed., *Great Men and Famous Musicians on the Art of Music*, Philadelphia, Theo. Presser, 1925, 332.

<sup>14</sup> Enrique Granados, *Método teórico práctico para el uso de los pedales del piano*, Madrid, Unión Musical Española, no. 18.916. 1954.

to take the results of his own experience to the lessons. Frederic Mompou, who knew Granados but did not study with him, said that Granados' students were "totally in love with him. He made disciples of them all".<sup>15</sup> Granados' most devoted disciples and the inheritors of his musical style were the singer Conchita Badia and the pianist Frank Marshall.

Marshall, who was born in Catalonia to English parents, served as assistant director of the Acadèmia Granados during the composer's lifetime, and later became its Director after Granados' death. Although a brilliant pianist, he rarely performed in public.

His studies with Granados began after hearing Granados perform, which made an overwhelming impression on him. In spite of the fact that Marshall was already an accomplished pianist when he began studying with Granados, the "maestro" told him that in order to play his music Marshall would have to begin with the basics so as to learn the proper method. Marshall readily agreed and they began a close association.<sup>16</sup>

Granados did not teach all of his students to play his own compositions but reserved them for the select few, such as Marshall, who committed themselves to mastering his music. When asked why he assigned much Bach, Mozart and Chopin, but not Granados, he responded, "that way I don't hurt myself".<sup>17</sup>

As indicated earlier, Granados did not notate the refined versions of his works which he arrived at through his performances and improvisations, but passed these versions on to his disciples as a performance tradition, illustrating his intentions at the key-

<sup>15</sup> Personal interview with Frederic Mompou at his home, Barcelona, May 12, 1981.

<sup>16</sup> Personal interview with Mercè Roldós, Assistant Director of the Acadèmia Marshall, Barcelona, March 11, 1981.

<sup>17</sup> Personal interview with Antoni Carreras at his home, Barcelona, April 11, 1981.



board. He taught his works to those students who were able to completely fulfill his high standards of musical expression, such as Frank Marshall, the "inheritor" of Granados' pianistic style and musical ideas.<sup>18</sup> Both Natàlia Granados and Frederic Mompou assert that Marshall's playing and teaching conserved the composer's ideas and methods. As the heir of Granados' pianistic style and the performance tradition which Granados taught him for playing his own works, Marshall passed this tradition on to his students Alicia de Larrocha, Mercè Roldós and Rosa Sabater — all of whom have carried forward the Granados heritage.

Wanting to preserve the "authentic" version of Granados' music which he left in his recordings and passed down to Marshall as a performance tradition, the author recently completed a study of Granados documenting the changes which he made in the piano suite *Goyescas* subsequent to its publication.<sup>19</sup>

These involve questions of detail, although in certain cases the changes are substantial. These details invariably make the music clearer and more accessible to the listener and, without reducing their difficulty, more playable for the performer.

Perhaps the most dramatic changes Granados made in any of his piano works is to be found in the *Danza Española, No. 7 (Valenciana)*. In this short piece the composer altered the notes and phrasing in a way which makes a critical difference in the effect the piece produces.

Mercè Roldós relates that she and Marshall's other students were taught to play this dance with the changes Marshall preserved in his score, telling them that this was the way Granados wanted it to be played. She received proof of Marshall's assertion

<sup>18</sup> Personal interview with Natàlia Granados de Carreras at her home, Barcelona, May 21, 1981.

<sup>19</sup> Douglas Riva, *The "Goyescas" for Piano by Enrique Granados: A Critical Edition*, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1982.



some years later when a wax cylinder was found which proved to be Granados' own recording of the *Danza*.<sup>20</sup> This recording contained all the changes which Marshall taught to his students.

Considering first the printed version of the *Danza Española, No. 7 (Valenciana)*, we see the composer's published ideas of measures 1 through 11.



Ex. 1. Granados, excerpt from *Danza Española, No. 7 (Valenciana)*.

Examples 2 and 3 show the final version recorded by the composer, passed on by him to Marshall as a performance tradition, and preserved in Marshall's personal copy of the score.

Measures 4 through 7 are to be played as follows:

<sup>20</sup> Personal interview with Mercè Roldós, Acadèmia Marshall, Barcelona, January 15, 1981.



Ex. 2. Granados, excerpt from *Danza Española, No. 7 (Valenciana)*, as recorded by the composer and as notated in Frank Marshall's personal copy of the score.

Measures 8 through 11 are to be played as follows:



Ex. 3. Granados, excerpt from *Danza Española, No. 7 (Valenciana)*, as recorded by the composer and as notated in Frank Marshall's personal copy of the score.

The final eleven measures of the piece were published as follows:



Ex. 4. Granados, excerpt from *Danza Española*, No. 7 (*Valenciana*).

Marshall's score changes the entire *Andante* to the following:



Ex. 5. Granados, excerpt from *Danza Española*, No. 7 (*Valenciana*), as notated in Frank Marshall's personal copy of the score.

In his recording Granados plays the music presented in the preceding example with the exception of the final three measures. For these three measures he plays the following:





Ex. 6. Granados, excerpt from *Danza Española, No. 7 (Valenciana)*, as recorded by the composer.

In the *Goyescas* the changes are perhaps less striking, but nevertheless significant. As an example the author has selected *El Pelele: Escena Goyesca*, which was the object of many changes in Granados' continual development of his compositions. The manuscript of this piece does not contain an introduction, but begins with the main body of the work. However, in the published version an introduction was added and is printed as follows:



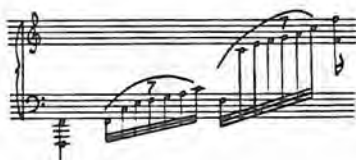
Ex. 7. Granados, excerpt from *El Pelele: Escena Goyesca*.

Granados passed on another version of this introduction to his students as a performance tradition. This version, which represents yet a further refinement of *El Pelele*, is as follows:



Ex. 8. Granados, excerpt from *El Pelele: Escena Goyesca*, as notated in Frank Marshall's personal copy of the score.

Granados' refinements in this introduction, which is but an example of his continuing process of seeking a more self-pleasing version of this and other works, did not stop with the version he passed on to his students. During the final months of his life, Granados recorded a version of *El Pelele* for the Aeolian Company in New York. He plays yet a different version of the introduction to *El Pelele* in this recording. It is notated as follows:



Ex. 9. Granados, excerpt from *El Pelele: Escena Goyesca*, as notated by the author from Granados' recording of *El Pelele* made for the Aeolian Company.

Due to the fact that he was not teaching during that period of his life, he did not convey this new version to his students. This recording may be regarded as representing Granados' final intentions, since he died shortly after making the recording.

Upon Granados' death, Marshall became the director of the Acadèmia Granados, changing its name to Acadèmia Marshall. Granados' curriculum is still in use today at the Acadèmia Marshall which continues to be an important center for musical study. All students from the elementary level to the professional are taught using methods initiated by Granados. Piano students are taught the same precise keyboard technique, attention to musical expression, and the Granados tradition that the Acadèmia's present directors, Alícia de Larrocha and Mercè Roldós, learned from Marshall.

The Acadèmia embodies an important part of the musical heritage of Catalonia. Granados' students have extended his musical ideals up to the present day. Robert Gerhard, who studied with Granados in the year before the maestro's death, has left us a large number of significant compositions. Conchita Badia recorded many Spanish songs instilled in her students the highest vocal and musical standards. Marshall's two best-known students, Alícia de Larrocha and the late Rosa Sabater, have spread the music of their native land throughout the world.

Granados died only 70 years ago. The intervening years have given us the perspective to appreciate the beauty and significance of his works. Let us keep alive his musical heritage by performing and listening to his music and by encouraging young musicians to study at his Acadèmia. In this way we can maintain one of the greatest treasures of Catalan music.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Recordings:

*The Catalan Piano Tradition*, which contains works by various composers, performed by pianists Isaac Albéniz, Joaquim Malats, Enric Granados, Frank



Marshall, and Alicia de Larrocha, 33-1/3 rpm, International Piano Archives, IPA-109, n.d.

Granados, Enric, *El Pelele: Escena Goyesca*, Enric Granados, pianist, Duo-Art piano roll, copy of the original piano roll, n.d., in the collection of Robert Taylor, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

—, *Enrique Granados Plays Granados*, Enric Granados, pianist, 33-1/3 rpm, Everest Records, X-909, n.d.,

—, *Goyescas*, Alicia de Larrocha, pianist, 33-1/3 rpm, London, CS-7009, 1977.

—, *Goyescas* (excerpts), Enrique Granados, pianist, *The Welte Legacy of Recorded Treasures: Granados and de Falla*, 33-1/3 rpm, Recorder Treasures, Inc., B 1121 S, 669, n.d.,

—, *Quejas o la maja y el ruiseñor*, Enrique Granados, pianist, Duo-Art piano roll, copy of the original piano roll, n.d., in the collection of Robert Taylor, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.