

ABOUT the Castro-Esquivel Duo

Dr. Castro's coaching/accompanist/conducting operatic experience includes the preparation of operas such as Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*; M. A. Charpentier's *Médée*; L'Éclaire's *Acis y Galatea*; Orlandini's *Il marito giocatore e la moglie bacchetona*; Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*; Glück/Berlioz's *Orphée et Eurydice*; Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*; Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*; Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*; Verdi's *Falstaff*; Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*; Britten's *Albert Herring*; C. Floyd's *Susannah*; Montsalvatge's *El gato con botas*; Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*; Bolcom's *A View from the Bridge*; and Catán's *La hija de Rappaccini*. He participated in the recordings of these last two operas with the Butler Opera Center.

Dr. Castro held faculty positions at the Universidad Nacional (Costa Rica), the Universidad de Costa Rica, and the University of Central Missouri. He currently works as freelance collaborative pianist and opera coach in the Eugene, OR area. Alongside with his wife, Dr. Castro co-directs the Opera Nova Costa Rica International Young Artist Program that takes place in Costa Rica over the summer. His research activity revolves around the history and development of the Spanish through-sung opera. He is the winner of the National Opera Association's Twenty-eighth Scholarly Papers Competition with his article "Spanish Operatic Identity vis-à-vis Bizet's *Carmen*." This article was published in *The Opera Journal* in June 2013.

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Season 114, Program 35



UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON

SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

HIDDEN JEWELS of the Spanish Repertoire

Dr. Karen Esquivel, Contralto
Dr. Gustavo Castro, Piano

Beall Concert Hall
Sunday, January 18, 2015 | 4 p.m.



La maja dolorosa

- . Oh muerte cruel
1867-1916
- . Ay majo de mi vida
Fernando Periquet
- . De aquel majo amante
1873-1940

Enrique Granados

Poema en forma de canciones

- . Dedicatoria
- . Nunca olvida
- . Cantares
- . Los dos miedos
- . Las locas por amor

Joaquín Turina
(1882-1949)Ramón de Campoamor
(1817-1901)**Siete canciones populares españolas**

- . El paño moruno
- . Seguidilla murciana

Manuel de Falla
(1876-1946)

She also, along with her husband, co-founded the project for the formation of young opera singers known as *Opera Nova Costa Rica*, providing lessons and performance opportunities through the presentation of recitals, scene programs and operas in Costa Rica, with the participation of young American and Costa Rican singers.

Dr. Esquivel has served as an adjudicator for NATS, NOA, Classical Singer, OMEA and on the faculty at the Universidad de Costa Rica, the Universidad Nacional (Costa Rica), Albany State University (GA), and Valdosta State University (GA). She is currently teaching Voice and Directing the Opera Ensemble at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon and is the current governor for the Oregon Chapter of the National Opera Association.

Gustavo Castro, pianist and opera coach, was born in San José, Costa Rica. Dr. Castro obtained undergraduate degrees in Piano Performance and Chamber Music from the National Conservatory of the Region of Strasbourg, France. He also obtained graduate degrees in Piano Performance, Piano Accompanying and Opera Coaching from the Universidad de Costa Rica, the Florida State University, and the University of Texas at Austin.

He has participated as a soloist with the Chamber Orchestra of the University of Costa Rica, and the Costa Rican National Symphony Orchestra. He also assisted in operatic productions of the Astoria Music Festival (OR), the Butler Opera Center (TX), the Costa Rican National Lyric Company (CR), the Eugene Opera (OR), the Florida State Opera (FL), the Florida State University Opera Workshop (FL), Opera Bend (OR), Opera Nova Costa Rica (CR), the University of Central Missouri Opera Workshop (MO), The University of Costa Rica Opera Workshop (CR), and the University of Oregon Opera Ensemble (OR).

As a collaborative pianist, he has performed in Costa Rica, El Salvador, France, Nicaragua, and the United States, in numerous of these occasions with his wife, contralto Karen Esquivel. He has accompanied singers in Master Classes with Frederica von Stade, Mignon Dunn, Samuel Ramey, Stephanie Blythe, and Warren Jones. He was recently invited to serve as one of the collaborative pianists for the Carolyn Bailey & Dominick Argento Vocal Competition organized by the National Opera Association.

Contralto **Karen Esquivel** was born in the U.S.A., of a Costa Rican mother and father of Mexican descent. She obtained her BME and Master's degree in Voice / Opera Theater at the University of Nebraska, a MM in Opera Production from Florida State University and her Doctorate in Voice Performance from the same institution. Dr. Esquivel has participated in the Apprenticeship Programs of the Des Moines Metro Opera and the Santa Fe Opera.

Her experience covers performances in Music Theater to Opera to Oratorio. Dr. Esquivel served as Director of the *Compañía Lírica Nacional de Costa Rica* and performed as a soloist with the *Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Costa Rica*, the *Orquesta Sinfónica de Colombia*, *Oregon Mozart Players*, *Eugene Concert Choir and Chorus Austin*. Since 1997 she has formed a duo with her husband, Costa Rican pianist/coach Gustavo Castro, with whom she has performed numerous recitals in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and the United States.

Dr. Esquivel has performed the roles of Baba in *The Medium*, the Black Madonna in *The Canticle of the Black Madonna*, Dame Quickly in *Falstaff*, Giulio Cesare in *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, Katisha in *The Mikado*, Orphée in *Orphée et Euridice*, as well as Servilla in the baroque intermezzo *Il marito giocatore e la moglie bacchettona*. She has performed as a soloist in numerous oratorio presentations including *Alexander Nevsky* (Prokofiev), *El Amor Brujo* (Fallá), *Gloria* (Vivaldi), *Magnificat* (Bach & Pergolesi), *Messiah* (Handel), *Ninth Symphony* (Beethoven), *Les Noces* (Stravinsky), *Stabat Mater* (Rossini), *Ständchen* (Schubert), and *Requiem* (Durufié).

As a Stage Director and Costume Designer, Dr. Esquivel has presented *Acis y Galatea* (Líteres), *Così fan tutte* (Mozart), *Dido and Aeneas* (Purcell), *El Gato con Botas* (Montsalvatge), *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (Handel), *Hänsel und Gretel* (Humperdinck), *Médée* (Charpentier), *The Old and the Thief* (Menotti), *La Tragédie de Carmen* (Bizet/Brooks), *Trouble in Tahiti* (Bernstein), *Riders to the Sea* (Vaughan Williams), and *Savitri* (Holst), and *Die Zauberflöte* (Mozart) for the *Compañía Lírica Nacional de Costa Rica*, *Universidad de Costa Rica*, *Opera Nova Costa Rica*, *Florida State University*, *Albany State University*, *University of Oregon*, *Astoria Music Festival*, and the *Artist Mentor Program of Eugene Opera*.

Dr. Esquivel's research is on through-sung Spanish Opera and her Doctoral treatise, *El Gato Montés: A Victim in Spain's Struggle to Establish a National Operatic Identity* was published through Florida State University.

Spanish Folk Poetry

- . Asturiana
- . Jota
- . Nana
- . Canción
- . Polo

INTERMISSION

Estich enamorada from <i>Els Pirineus</i>	Felip Pedrell (1841-1922)
Who Preaches Love from <i>Pepita Jiménez</i>	Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909)
Juntô dende chavaliyô from <i>El Gato Montés</i>	Manuel Penella

Hidden Jewels of the Spanish Lyric Repertoire

Contralto Karen Esquivel and her husband, pianist Gustavo Castro-Ramirez, have dedicated part of their lives to research, discover, and promote Spanish through-sung opera. The present recital encompasses a selection of lyric works by the most influential Spanish composers of the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, a period in which many of them were searching for a nationalistic Spanish musical style.

These composers were among the most important figures of the operatic nationalist movement in Spain. They are Felip Pedrell (1841–1922), Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909), Enrique Granados (1867–1916), Manuel de Falla (1876–1946), Manuel Penella (1880–1939), and Joaquín Turina (1882–1949).

The first half of the program will include three well-known song cycles, *La maja dolorosa* (The Pained Young Woman) by Granados, *Poema en forma de canciones* (Poem in the form of songs) by Turina, and *Siete canciones populares españolas* (Seven Spanish Popular Songs) by Falla. In the first cycle, Granados sets in music three poems by Fernando Periquet (1873–1940) representing three different stages in the expressing of the loss of the beloved one. The term *maja* refers to a woman from the lower class of society, particularly in the geographic area of Madrid, who at the time sported a flamboyant form of dress and manners. In the second cycle, Turina sets four poems by Ramón de Campoamor (1817–1901) about passionate love “a la española”. This cycle is introduced by a solo piano “song” called Dedication. In the third cycle Falla sets seven traditional texts from different regions of Spain creating a sort of musical tour through his home country.

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It is unfortunate that the low female voice did not receive much attention from Spanish composers. With the intention of sharing beautiful examples of the Spanish operatic output, the five following arias in the second half of the program are borrowed from the repertoire written for soprano or baritone.

Pedrell, considered as the father of the 19th century Spanish musicology, created an operatic trilogy written in the Catalan language, one of the five official languages of Spain. This opera is called *Els Pirineus* (The Pyrenees) and is set in medieval northern Spain in the times of the Catholic reconquest against the Moors. Lisa, disguised as the soldier Lisardo, is asked to sing *Estich enamorada* (I am in love) as a way to calm the platoon the night before the battle.

The chaotic political atmosphere during the 19th and 20th century Spain, forced Isaac Albéniz to live out of his country. He composed three operas based on librettos written by the English writer and banker Francis Money-Coutts (1852–1923). One of them is *Pepita Jiménez*, based on a novel written by the Spanish writer and diplomat Juan Varela (1824–1905). In *Who Preaches Love*, Albéniz offers an interesting product by setting the English-language libretto on music that recreates the atmosphere of southern 19th century Spain, where the plot takes place.

El Gato Montés by Penella is one of the more obscure Spanish operas. In spite of this fact, it contains some of the most beautiful Andalusia-inspired music and dramatic singing. Strongly influenced by the Italian *verismo*, and especially Puccini, Penella specifies in his libretto the use of the Spanish form of pronunciation of Andalusia. In *Juntô dende chavaliyô* (Together Since We Were Kids) Soleá, a young gypsy girl, recalls her relationship with Juanillo, a gypsy bandit known as *El Gato Montés* or The Wild Cat. She tells the story of how, by defending her, he came to be a wanted man. This aria will be followed by *¡Soleá! ¡Ná!* (Soleá! Nothing!), Juanillo’s aria lamenting the death of Soleá.

The program will close with the aria *¡Vivan los que rien!* from Falla’s opera *La vida breve*. In this aria Salud sings about the fate of those who laugh and those who cry. For centuries the Spanish audience was divided between lovers of *zarzuela* (popular local operetta/musical theater) and lovers of Italian opera (the art form favored by the Spanish court, often of foreign origin), with the through-sung Spanish opera falling through the cracks. *La vida breve* is perhaps the most well known Spanish opera; nevertheless, it was premiered in France because of the lack of support for local opera in Spain.

Falla and Penella redeemed the way Gypsy characters were portrayed by the French orientalist movement that influenced the creation of Bizet’s *Carmen*. In these two last operas, the gypsies Salud, Soleá, and Juanillo are sensitively portrayed accordingly to their real cultural traditions, moral values, and a sense of their victimization by the society of the time.

We have decided to finish our recital with two examples of the Latin American lyric output, in this case by the Cuban composer Lecuona. *María la O* is an aria from the popular zarzuela (Spanish operetta) with the same name, and *Siboney* is a popular song. In Spain and Latin America, popular songs of the 19th and 20th centuries were composed with the intention of showing off well-trained singers, paralleling the way Italians love to hear singers performing their famous Neapolitan songs.