

Chamber Music Societies Join To Celebrate Music from Spain

By Mike Telin



Unlike other groups that the Cleveland Chamber Music Society presents, The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center is not a single standing ensemble but rather a collection of talented musicians who come together around a specific project or program.

On Tuesday, February 11 at 7:30 pm at The Cultural Arts Center at Disciples Church, CCMS continues their 75th Anniversary season with the Lincoln Center ensemble's "Spanish Journey." The program features works by Fernando Obradors, Isaac Albéniz, Enrique Fernández Arbós, Manuel de Falla, Pablo de Sarasate, Joaquín Rodrigo, and Joaquín Turina performed by guitarist Jason Vieaux, pianist Soyeon Kate Lee, violinist Kristin Lee, soprano Vanessa Becerra, and cellist Clive Greensmith. Tickets are available [online](#).

We caught up with violinist Kristin Lee by phone in the lobby of Alice Tully Hall after the group had just completed their dress rehearsal for the premiere performance of the program before taking it on tour.

Lee, who curated the concert, said that her own Spanish Journey began when she was tasked with creating a program for California's Music@Menlo's Focus series. When thinking about a topic, she realized that she didn't know a lot about composers from the Iberian peninsula.

"I knew that a lot of composers in other cultures were influenced by Spanish music, but when it came to Spanish composers themselves, my knowledge was limited."

Lee said that as soon as she began her research she was hooked. “It’s been such an incredible journey to learn more about Spanish composers and to bring these beautiful pieces to light.”



The wonderfully crafted playlist juxtaposes works for soprano and guitar — Fernando Obradors’ *Canciones Clásicas Españolas*, Manuel de Falla *Siete canciones populares españolas*, and Joaquín Rodrigo *Tres canciones españolas* — with two piano trios — Enrique Fernández Arbós’ *Three Original Pieces in Spanish Style* and Joaquín Turina’s *Trio No. 2*. Lee said that the singer and the guitar are essential to the Spanish sound. The program is rounded out with Isaac Albéniz’s *Mallorca* for Guitar, and Pablo de Sarasate’s *Romanza Andaluza* from *Spanish Dances* for Violin and Piano.

Lee said it was interesting to learn how important it was for the composers to celebrate their own regional folk music in their compositions. One example is Lee’s surprise discovery of Arbós’s trio. “He was completely new to me and his piano trio celebrates three different Spanish dance styles — a *bolero*, a *habanera*, and a *seguidilla*.”

Lee noted that the *bolero* is based on a march-like figure, and the *habanera* is a dance that could go in many directions from energetic to sad. “Then in the last movement, the *seguidilla*, it’s as if Arbós is saying ‘show off all you can.’ Ultimately these are all dance tunes that would be heard in the streets, and he did a wonderful job of incorporating them into his music.”

Of all the pieces on the program, does Lee have a personal favorite? “Without a doubt it’s Turina’s Trio #2,” she said. “Many people know his First Trio but the Second is

mystical sounding with the modal harmonies of Spanish music mixed with some French impressionism — the second movement does sound like Ravel.”



Lee said that being on tour with her CMS colleagues is a total hoot. “A lot of us have been working together for a very long time so we know each other pretty well. We tend to look for similar things, like good restaurants, a place for a run. We’re always looking to have a really good time, and Jason and I are definitely going to find a place to catch the Superbowl.”

Photos by Frank Impelluso

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