

firm manner . . . high intelligence, cool efficiency, and warm humanity." In an earlier article Dale had called Hannan an eloquent speaker with a "rich, earnest voice." Hannan is a member of the committee for the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, of the board of trustees of the Catholic University of America, and of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. Among the honors he has received is the George Washington medal of the Freedom Foundation, awarded him in 1963.

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LARROCHA, ALICIA DE

May 23, 1923- Spanish pianist
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Alicia de Larrocha is generally recognized as the finest of contemporary Spanish pianists and perhaps the best woman pianist before the public today. She projects with unmistakable authority the color and charm of her country's music, especially the compositions of Enrique Granados and Isaac Albéniz. A child prodigy, she began playing at two, but her teacher, the late Frank Marshall, himself a pupil of Granados and a friend of Albéniz, would not allow her to play Spanish music until she was fifteen. "It was Bach and Mozart that I played," she has recalled of her early years. "This is a necessary base for a pianist. You cannot play Spanish music without it. Spanish music is *very, very, very* hard. Young people come to me and think they can play it right away. But Spanish music must have the right rhythm, just as Bach and Mozart must have the right rhythm. If you cannot play Bach and Mozart well, you cannot play Spanish music well." When she is not giving concerts, Miss de Larrocha directs the Academia Marshall, a conservatory in Barcelona.

Alicia de Larrocha y de la Calle was born on May 23, 1923 to Eduardo de Larrocha and Maria Teresa de la Calle in Barcelona, Spain. She has two older sisters, Maria Teresa and Berta, and a younger brother, Ramon. Her mother and her mother's sister both studied piano with Granados and while marriage ended her mother's career her aunt went on to become a teacher at the Academia Marshall, the school founded by Frank Marshall as a successor to one begun by Granados. Before she was four, Miss de Larrocha's talent came to the attention of Marshall and he took charge of her studies. Her first public performance took place when she was five. After a number of successful concerts in her home city she was invited to play with the Madrid Symphony Orchestra under Fernandez Arbos. Between the years 1940 and 1947 she gave concerts throughout Spain, Spanish Morocco, and the Canary Islands, appearing with the leading Spanish orchestras and

conductors. In 1947 she ventured for the first time beyond Spanish territory, performing in Paris, London, Edinburgh, Geneva, Lausanne, Brussels, and elsewhere in Europe.

In 1954 Miss de Larrocha traveled to the United States and played with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra under Alfred Wallenstein and the San Francisco Symphony under the direction of Enrique Jordá. A year later she made her New York debut with a recital at Town Hall. On that occasion the critic for the *Saturday Review* (April 30, 1955) found that "as might have been anticipated from a recording or two associated with her name, Miss de Larrocha played the music of such composers of her native Spain as Granados, Albéniz, and Surinach with crisp rhythm, stylistic assurance, and the kind of flexibility in melodic statement that is hard for an outsider to simulate." The same reviewer found her interpretation of Schumann's *Carnaval* unconventional but noted that its "deviations were always related to a firm musical esthetic, its points of stress and climax determined by an artistic awareness of a very conscious sort." He found her phrasing "beautiful" in *Papillons* and *Reconnaissance* and "effectively molded" in *Valse Allemande*, but he noted that there were "blurred details in passage work, a false note in a chordal cluster" and he concluded that she "does not have the kind of technical equipment in which the management of difficulties can be taken for granted."

Between 1955 and 1965 Miss de Larrocha toured Europe annually, but in the United States she was heard only in recordings. In 1960 she received the Grand Prix du Disque for her Columbia recording of *Iberia* by Albéniz. In 1964 Columbia Records issued her recording of three works of Isaac Albéniz: his *Suite Espanola*, *Pavana-Capricho*, and *Cantos de Espana*. Herbert Kupferberg of the *New York Herald Tribune* (October 25, 1964) found the music "rather minor in its weight" but the playing "nothing short of magnificent." Howard Klein in the *New York Times* (October 4, 1964) thought that the pieces "must be part of herself, for they sound improvised, not studied." At the end of 1965 she returned to New York to play with the New York Philharmonic at Lincoln Center under the direction of William Steinberg. On that occasion she played the Mozart concerto in A Major, K.488. Though she played expertly, with style and nuance, the performance was marred by a dull sounding piano and an overpowering orchestra. Two weeks later such renowned pianists as Artur Schnabel, Claudio Arrau, and Ania Dorfmann turned up at Hunter College to hear Miss de Larrocha play a program consisting of Bach's *English Suite No. 2*, sonatas by Soler and Schubert, and excerpts from the *Iberia* of Albéniz and the *Goyescas* of Granados. Harold C. Schonberg, writing in the *New York Times* (January 17, 1966) declared that Miss de Larrocha was "pianistically flawless, with infallible fingers, brilliant sonorities, steady rhythm, everything." In spite of the difficult passages in the last two items on the program, some of them so complex that they have to be written on three staves, she never relied on pedal effects. Some critics pointed out that this purity of approach had one drawback: it detracted from the sensuous quality of the music. In 1966 Epic Records

released Miss de Larrocha's album *Piano Music of Granados*, which includes the *Allegro de Concerto*, the *Valses Poeticos*, and *Six Pieces on Spanish Popular Songs*.

At Carnegie Hall with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jean Martinon in November 1966 Miss de Larrocha played Manuel de Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*. She received a prolonged ovation for a rendition of that difficult work that was notable for its minimum use of the pedal and the absence of romanticism and eccentricity. Percussive attacks were used to achieve guitar-like effects while the purest legato was heard in the lyric sections. "She knew just when to introduce a touch of rhythmic variety, just when to color an otherwise bleak phrase, just when to adjust to a solo passage in the orchestra," wrote Harold C. Schonberg in the *New York Times* (November 9, 1966). "She is a wonderful pianist, and more: she is an artist."

Appearing a month later in the "Great Performers" series at Philharmonic Hall, Miss de Larrocha played the four books of Albéniz' *Iberia* suite. The composer, who worked on this composition up until his death in 1909, wanted to put into it everything he knew about the piano. Because of its great difficulty, many years passed before pianists began to include it in their repertoires. Critics were amazed at the way this tiny woman with chubby hands managed the work's big sonorities and wide stretches and the interweaving of fingers required. In even the thickest parts of the suite, such as "Jerez" and "Malaga," her Toscanini-like playing made all the notes, melody, inner voices, and bass audible. Throughout, the Spain that Albéniz loved was uniquely projected, with the click of castanets, the whirl of guitar strings, and the subtle changes in rhythm and dynamics that characterize flamenco. "For me," Miles Kastendieck wrote in the *New York World Journal Tribune* (December 15, 1966), "she imparted the essence of Spanish rhythms better than any other pianist." Just before beginning Book IV Miss de Larrocha stood up to inform the distinguished audience in broken English and with animated gestures that one of the piano keys had become stuck—a fact that no one in the audience could have deduced from her playing. The applause for her performance was deafening.

About the time of the Philharmonic Hall recital Epic Records released a recording of Miss de Larrocha playing the complete *Iberia* and *Navarra* of Albéniz, and the following summer the company issued her recording of the *Goyescas* and *Escenas Romanticas* of Granados. "The numbers and weights of accents she applies to a phrase are breathtaking," Theodore Strongin commented in the *New York Times* (August 13, 1967). "In music as complex as Granados' it seems incredible that she can encompass so many gradations." Miss de Larrocha commemorated the one hundredth anniversary of Granados' birth, on December 7, 1967, with a Carnegie Hall recital devoted entirely to his works. Besides the fifty minute *Goyescas* and the *Escenas Romanticas* she played three pieces based on popular songs: *Ecós de la Paranda*, *Anoranza*, and *Zapateado*.

Miss de Larrocha is not entirely satisfied with her identification in the public mind with Granados and Spanish music and would like to return occasionally to the Bach and Mozart of her youth. Winthrop



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Sargeant writing in the *New Yorker* (December 25, 1967) had no such misgivings: "She is one of the supreme artists of the keyboard now appearing before the public. So far we have heard her mainly in the music of her native Spain. That music—especially for the piano—deserves a higher place, or a more central place, in our musical thinking than it has been accorded, and Miss de Larrocha is just the person to bring it to greater popularity." In an interview in *Time* (December 15, 1967) she recalled a spring day in Barcelona when, at the age of four, she first heard the music of Granados played by Frank Marshall: "There opened before me a new world of poetry and dreams. I had the sensation that this music formed part of myself, and now I would never be able to free myself from its influence." She considers Granados, Albéniz, and de Falla the ultimate in Spanish music. Among her contemporaries she plays the music of Oscar Espla, Joaquín Rodrigo, and Xavier Montsalvatge. Their works are recognizably Spanish but she considers them rather provincial. Some day she hopes to edit a definitive edition of Granados' works, including those as yet unpublished. "This is not easy," she wrote in an article on Granados in *Opera News* (December 9, 1967), "for Granados was always changing his mind, making corrections and alternates. I haven't found much time for it so far, but eventually we'll get it done. We owe it to him: like Goya, he belongs especially to us, just as in a less personal way he belongs also to the whole world."

Alicia de Larrocha y de la Calle is four feet nine inches tall and has brown eyes and black hair. She is a Roman Catholic. On June 21, 1950 she was married to Juan Torra, a piano teacher, with whom she directs the Academia Marshall in Barcelona. They have two children: Juan Francisco and Alicia. "Thanks to him," Miss de Larrocha has said of her husband, "I can make my tours. He stays home and looks after the conservatory and the children."

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