

museum it may be, but at its 125th birthday, the Philharmonic is a far healthier celebrator, with a longer life expectancy, than it has ever been in the past.

PIANISTS

In the Blood

In Barcelona one spring morning in 1928, Alicia de Larrocha's piano teacher played her a little piece by the Spanish pianist-composer Enrique Granados (1867-1916). As she remembers the occasion now, "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

she took command of the keyboard like a man, shuttling her tiny hands furiously over the keys to weave notes into a glowing fabric of colors and sonorities. The climax of her recital was the 50-minute *Goyescas*, a work she seemed to have in her blood as well as her fingers. Formidably complex (some passages are scored on three staves instead of two), it unfolds in broad, rolling phrases that are punctuated by guitar rhythms and embroidered with intricate arabesques. De Larrocha not only mastered its difficulties, but through artful shadings of rhythm and dynamics she brought it to pulsing life.

Quality of Seduction. For her, she says, the Spanish musical idiom has

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ALICIA DE LARROCHA AT CARNEGIE HALL
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be able to free myself from its influence."

Alicia was only four at the time, but her reaction was as perspicacious as it was prophetic. Granados, who turned out a substantial body of operas, songs and other kinds of music, was above all a composer for the piano. He blended an instinctive Spanish flavor with French impressionism and the Chopin-Liszt tradition to produce a heady and original style, flowing with romantic feeling yet tempered and refined by elegant workmanship. His six-part suite, *Goyescas*, which powerfully evokes the gaudy, sensual world of Goya's paintings and tapestries, stands with Albéniz' *Iberia* at the pinnacle of the Spanish piano repertory.

Glowing Fabric. Alicia de Larrocha, now 44 and a superb concert pianist, never has freed herself from Granados' music. Instead, she has become its foremost interpreter, and last week, at Manhattan's Carnegie Hall, she saluted the 100th anniversary of his birth with an all-Granados program.

Although she is so short (4 ft. 9 in.) that her feet barely reach the pedals,

"the same quality that our great flamenco dancers have—the sense of excitement held tightly under control. With this comes the quality of seduction, a certain haughtiness, or pride." She has absorbed that idiom thoroughly. Both her mother and aunt studied piano with Granados, and her own teacher, the late Frank Marshall, was a notable Granados disciple. Today, when she is not hopping continents to keep up with her steadily expanding concert schedule, she directs the piano academy that Granados founded in Barcelona. Among the faculty: her aunt and her husband, Juan Torra.

Since type-casting can be as stultifying for musicians as for actors, De Larrocha is beginning to grow uneasy about her near-total identification with Granados and Spanish musical nationalism. When she started playing at the age of two, "first it was Bach and Mozart and the wide range of the European repertory—the necessary base." Now she would like to touch that base more often in her performances, thereby securing her already considerable claim to international stature.