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Édouard  
LALO

Symphonie espagnole

Joan  
MANÉN

Concierto español

Tianwa Yang, Violin

Barcelona Symphony Orchestra

Darrell Ang



## Édouard Lalo (1823-1892): *Symphonie espagnole*

### Joan Manén (1883-1971): Violin Concerto No. 1 'Concierto español', Op. A-7

Here are two brilliant, melodious violin concertos with Spanish connections; yet whereas Édouard Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole* has always been among the most popular pieces in the repertoire, Joan Manén's *Concierto español* is virtually unknown. Even Lalo is not a household name: although he was quite prolific and famous in his own time, his reputation now rests on his works for stringed instruments and orchestra: the tenor aria from his opera *Le roi d'Ys* is about the only other piece heard regularly today.

Édouard-Victoire-Antoine Lalo was born in Lille on 27th January 1823 and as a boy learnt violin with Müller and cello with Peter Baumann at his local conservatoire, but his father would not support further musical studies. From 1839, at his own expense, he had lessons in violin with François Antoine Habeneck at the Paris Conservatoire and composition with Julius Schulhoff and Jean-Émile de Crèvecoeur, supporting himself by playing the violin and teaching. He began composing seriously in 1845 and succeeded with songs, violin pieces and piano trios. In 1855 he co-founded the Quatuor Armingaud-Jacquard, usually playing viola: he wrote his own *String Quartet* in 1859. In 1865 he married the contralto Julie Bernier de Maligny. Although his 1866 opera *Fiesque* was not performed, its ballet music had a success in 1872. Suddenly his fortunes picked up: the great Spanish violinist Pablo de Sarasate played his *F minor Concerto* at the Concert National in 1874 and commissioned the *Symphonie espagnole*, giving its première at the Concert Populaire on 7th February 1875. The *Cello Concerto* was played by dedicatee Adolphe Fischer in 1877 and the *Fantaisie norvégienne* in 1878. The *Concerto russe* for violin was introduced by its dedicatee Martin Marsick in 1879. The 1882 ballet *Namouna* was not liked, although it survived as concert suites, but *Le roi d'Ys* triumphed at the Opéra-Comique in 1888. Already a member of the Legion d'Honneur, Lalo was made an officier in 1890. He died in Paris on 22nd April 1892.

Like most of Lalo's works for violin and orchestra, the



Joan Manén (1883-1971)  
Photo: The Tully Potter Collection

*Symphonie espagnole* is dedicated to Sarasate and reflects his light, quicksilver technique in its frequent virtuosic passagework. Scored for piccolo and double woodwind, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani and strings, the work is in five movements, although it was once customary to omit the *Intermezzo*. Sarasate may have suggested melodic material to Lalo; but the 'Spanish' colour of the work is derived as much from its moods and rhythms – especially the *habanera* – as from any obvious Iberian tunes. The *Allegro non troppo* is bold and assertive, like much of Lalo's orchestral music, and the soloist duels with the orchestra from the start: although the violin has a *Dolce espressivo* second theme, tension is kept up until the brilliant coda. The *Scherzando*, launched by orchestral *pizzicati*, finds the soloist's lyrical musings forming a counterpoise to the rhythmical orchestra, and something similar happens in the *Intermezzo*, such a strong movement that no one today would wish to jettison it. In the *Andante*, against a solemn, dark orchestra the violin unfurls a poignant theme, interrupted by restless passagework until a quiet coda and a final loud chord. The *Rondo* is scintillating, with one particularly Spanish-sounding episode. The harmony in the *Symphonie espagnole* is always interesting and the composer's mastery of string writing is demonstrated at every turn. Lalo deploys his quite large orchestral forces with discretion, so that the solo violin is never obscured.

In his day, Joan Manén was almost as famous as his fellow Catalan Pablo Casals. He made the first recording of the Beethoven *Concerto*, gave more than 4,000 concerts or recitals and travelled around the world five times. He continued the tradition of the virtuosic violinist-composer well into the 20th century and won respect for his operas, ballets and symphonies. Born in Barcelona on 14th March 1883, he started learning theory, *solfège* and piano at three with his father, a keen amateur musician, after Manén senior discovered he had perfect pitch. Local fiddlers of varying competence began giving him violin lessons when he was five, but failed to instil in him any love for the instrument. He turned to the piano as an escape, playing through operatic scores and Bach preludes and fugues. 'The piano was one daily hour of

diversion and the violin was one unbearable hour a day,' he later wrote. For his own amusement he learnt Chopin's *E minor Concerto* but kept up the violin well enough to be able to play both instruments at his début in Castellón, when he was seven. Around this time he began lessons with Clemente Iburguren, a Barcelona violinist who had studied in Paris with Delphin Alard, Sarasate's teacher. Soon he was touring Spain as a pianistic prodigy but when he appeared at the Palace in Madrid before Queen María Cristina and the Infanta Doña Isabel de Borbón, he played violin pieces as well as Mendelssohn's *Variations sérieuses* for piano. He toured Argentina as a piano and violin soloist and conducted his first symphonic concert in Buenos Aires aged ten. Back in Barcelona, he began to study the Beethoven and Mendelssohn *Concertos* in earnest. He then toured Cuba and Mexico.

Manén's American début, at the Mendelssohn Glee Club in New York on 15th November 1896 with his father at the piano, featured Wieniawski's *Faust Fantasy*, the first movement of the Mendelssohn *Concerto*, the *Andante* from the *Symphonie espagnole* and his own *Jota* (adapted from Caballero's *Duo de la Africana*). On 15th January 1897 he played the complete Lalo (minus *Intermezzo*) in Carnegie Hall with Walter Damrosch conducting; Eugène Ysaÿe and César Thomson took part in the same concert. This period saw Manén's first compositions – able to compose without using a piano, he could write music while on tour. So 1897 also saw him give the première of his *Concierto español* (dedicated 'A mon ami Mons. Fritz Kreisler') at the Teatro Lírico, Barcelona. In 1898 he began to tour Europe and that December made his Paris orchestral début, playing the Beethoven *Concerto* with his own cadenzas at the Concerts Colonne. In Warsaw he played his own *Concierto español* and *Caprices Nos. 1 and 2* as well as his orchestral version of Paganini's *24th Caprice*, with the Philharmonic under Emil Mlynarski: after he slipped in Wieniawski's *Souvenir de Moscou*, despite an interdict on Polish works by the ruling Russians, some of the audience carried him shoulder-high to his hotel. In March 1899 he played Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy* at the composer's house in Friedenau, with Bruch at the piano;

and the following year he had Richard Strauss as accompanist for a recital in Cologne. At Fritz Simrock's house Manén played Dvorák's *Sonata* with the composer at the piano. He was beginning to be recognised as a composer apart from the violin, with premières of a *zarzuela*, *El Suplici de Tántalo*; his symphony *Nova Catalonia*; his first opera *Juana de Nápoles*; his piano quartet *Mobilis in Mobile*; and within a year his second opera *Acté*. In Madrid he played his new edition of Paganini's *B minor Concerto*, with its celebrated *finale La campanella*. Sometimes he conducted, as in a performance of Grieg's *Piano Concerto* with Teresa Carreño.

Manén considered that his career really took off with the recital he gave at the Berlin Hochschule in November 1904, when critic after critic hailed him as the best violinist of his time. Especially after his tyrannical father's death from typhus in 1908, his life opened up. In the turbulent years before World War I he was one of the best-known fiddlers, acclaimed throughout Europe and playing for all the crowned heads. Manén made his London début in 1910 at the Bechstein (now Wigmore) Hall, with Mozart's *D major Concerto*. Two years later he took Queen's Hall by storm with the same Mozart, Saint-Saëns's *B minor*, both Beethoven *Romances* and his own *Introduction, Andante and Variations on a Theme of Tartini*. He had an impressive platform manner – Sir Henry Wood, the conductor on that occasion, described him as 'a deeply attractive personality ... a Spanish violinist who, in those days, rivalled even the great Sarasate. Manén was certainly one of the most wonderful-looking men I ever set eyes on. He was dark and bearded, with an aesthetic expression that made me think he would have been an ideal sitter for the 16th-century painter Velázquez. He had a marvellous technique and was a composer of considerable distinction.'

During the Great War, in which he lost all his savings, and throughout the 1920s, Manén pursued a fulfilling career. But he was essentially a 19th-century violinist and by then Jascha Heifetz had set new standards. Manén's American tour in 1920 was a disappointment and by 1938 Sir Henry Wood was writing of him: 'He played again only a year or two ago, but I think he has lost some of his

fascination, or perhaps it is that so many violinists of distinction have appeared in the meantime.' One sign of the decline in his pulling power was that he made no 'official' electric recordings. During the 1930s he spent more time conducting and composing; and when the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936 he went into internal exile. In 1948 Manén resumed his international career and when he returned to the United States in 1950, he was still playing magnificently, as live recordings attest. He went on performing until 1959, when he was 76. Although now clean shaven, he remained a dignified figure and sporadic successes still came his way. Yet when he died in Barcelona on 26th June 1971, hardly anyone attended the funeral. He is commemorated by a square in Ciudadela on Menorca and a small but beautiful square in Barcelona.

Joan Manén is the only Spanish composer to have written in all the accepted forms: his compositions (issued by at least ten publishers) include six operas (one of them, *Don Juan*, a trilogy); two ballets; nine orchestral works, two of them symphonies; numerous works for soloist and orchestra, including three concertos, a *Concertino* and five other pieces for violin; as well as chamber, instrumental, vocal and choral works. He made many arrangements and transcriptions. He wrote all his opera librettos except the first one, produced a number of books, contributed to many journals and founded the review *Música*.

As we have seen, the *Concierto español* was among his earliest works; but later he revised many pieces, giving them new opus numbers beginning with A. Thus in 1935 the *Concierto*, originally Op. 18, became Op. A-7. After a brief atmospheric introduction, the orchestra boldly introduces the first theme and a dancing second theme. It is clear that we are in for a pleasingly melodic work, yet there is something of the 20th century in this late 19th-century composition, a touch of chromaticism that keeps it from being merely anodine. The soloist enters with yet another, more lyrical theme, before going into the dancing theme, and all three themes are used in the working-out. Manén seems concerned to keep the music moving – a note in French indicates that performers should aim at the

tempo of a Viennese waltz – but there is a brief cadenza, also a hint of a Spanish theme that will flower in the slow movement and reappear in the *finale*. The violin writing is virtuosic, with passages in double-stops and other technical devices. A solo clarinet introduces the *Lamento*, which has nostalgic writing for the orchestral strings. The soloist enters with a very Spanish-flavoured version of the 'cyclical' theme heard in the opening movement – it has

now taken on a yearning quality – and a second more lilting theme lends variety to this rhapsodic movement. The finale is basically a *tarantella* but there is an episode with the 'cyclical' theme, as well as an accompanied cadenza. Just before the end, Manén seems to be paying tribute to Lalo, so our programme comes full circle.

Tully Potter

## Tianwa Yang



Photo: Friedrun Reinhold

Recipient of the ECHO Klassik 2015 Best Instrumentalist (violin) and Best Up-and-Coming Artist 2014 Awards for her Ysaÿe *Sonatas for Solo Violin* (8.572995) and Mendelssohn's two *Violin Concertos* (8.572662), Tianwa Yang has recorded Sarasate's complete music for violin and orchestra (8.572191, 8.572216, 8.572275, 8.572276), and for violin and piano (8.557767, 8.570192, 8.570893, 8.572709), Piazzolla's *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* with the Nashville Symphony and Giancarlo Guerrero (8.572271), and a coupling of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and *Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas* arranged for violin and strings (8.551228 / Naxos Germany only), followed by Rihm's *Complete works for Violin and Piano* (8.572730), Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *Violin Concertos Nos. 1 and 2* (8.573135), *Live in Concert in St Petersburg* on DVD (2.110283) and Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole* with Juan Manén's *Concierto español*. On this recording Tianwa Yang plays a violin by Petrus Guarnieri (Venice) 1729, on kind loan from Mr Rin Kei Mei in Singapore.

## **Barcelona Symphony Orchestra – the National Orchestra of Catalonia**

**Music director: Kazushi Ono • Principal guest conductor: Jan Willem de Vriend**



The OBC (Barcelona Symphony Orchestra – the National Orchestra of Catalonia) was founded in 1944 by Eduard Toldrà. Its commitment is to promote classical and contemporary music of all cultures, giving special attention to Catalan composers. Since its foundation more than 70 years ago, the orchestra's Music Directors have been Eduard Toldrà, Rafael Ferrer, Antoni Ros Marbà, Salvador Mas, Franz-Paul Decker, García Navarro, Lawrence Foster, Ernest Martínez Izquierdo, Eiji Oue and Pablo González. Kazushi Ono took over as Music Director in September 2015. The OBC has enjoyed collaboration with renowned conductors and soloists as well as major Spanish institutions and festivals, with regular performances at the Gran Teatre del Liceu, Palau de la Música, Festival Grec, Festes de la Mercè, Sonar, Mercat de les Flors and Festival Castell de Peralada. It has made more than 100 recordings for Decca, EMI, Auvidis, Koch, Claves, Naxos, Telarc, Tritó, Columna Música and BIS, combining Catalan with wider repertoire. The OBC has visited some of the world's major concert halls, including New York's Carnegie Hall and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, and has taken part in international festivals including the Proms in London at the Royal Albert Hall and the Schleswig-Holstein Festival. The OBC belongs to the Consorci de l'Auditori i l'Orquestra, formed by the Catalan Government and the City of Barcelona. Since April 1999, the OBC has performed in its own venue, L'Auditori of Barcelona, designed by Spanish architect Rafael Moneo.

## **Darrell Ang**



Darrell Ang's triumph at the 50th Besançon International Young Conductor's Competition, where he took all three top awards – Grand Prix, Audience Prize and Orchestra Prize – launched his international career, leading to the music directorship of the Orchestre Symphonique de Bretagne and numerous guest conducting engagements with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre National de Lyon, Orchestre Philharmonique du Strasbourg, Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano 'Giuseppe Verdi', St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Konzerthaus Orchestra Berlin, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, Copenhagen Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Hong Kong Philharmonic, among others. Three years later Ang was selected to join the prestigious International Conductors' Academy of the Allianz Cultural Foundation and invited to take on residencies with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Philharmonia Orchestra. In his native Singapore he became the youngest Associate Conductor of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and served as the Music Director of the Singapore National Youth Orchestra. Darrell Ang's uncommon gift was discovered at the age of four when he began to play violin and piano. His training as a conductor was in St Petersburg, followed by study at Yale. Highlights from the current season include performances with the Singapore Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Bordeaux Opera.

These two concertos – one a staple of the repertoire, the other almost unknown – share melodic richness and a Spanish influence. Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole* reflects the quicksilver technique of its dedicatee, Pablo de Sarasate, in its ingenious and virtuosic passagework, with its moods and rhythms indelibly Iberian in feel. Joan Manén, in his day almost as famous as his fellow Catalan Pau Casals, was an admired virtuoso violinist and a prominent composer. His *Concierto español*, the first of three violin concertos, is suffused with technical demands, lyric warmth, and rhapsodic nostalgia. Soloist Tianwa Yang's Sarasate recordings have received international acclaim.



Édouard  
**LALO**  
(1823-1892)

**Symphonie espagnole, Op. 21 (1875) 32:44**

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| <b>1</b> I. Allegro non troppo                  | <b>7:40</b> |
| <b>2</b> II. Scherzando: Allegro molto          | <b>4:04</b> |
| <b>3</b> III. Intermezzo: Allegretto non troppo | <b>5:59</b> |
| <b>4</b> IV. Andante                            | <b>7:04</b> |
| <b>5</b> V. Rondo: Allegro                      | <b>7:57</b> |

Joan  
**MANÉN**  
(1883-1971)

**Violin Concerto No. 1 'Concierto español', Op. A-7 (1898, rev. c.1935) 30:11**

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| <b>6</b> I. Allegretto ben moderato         | <b>13:32</b> |
| <b>7</b> II. Lamento – Adagio ma non troppo | <b>8:53</b>  |
| <b>8</b> III. Allegro molto                 | <b>7:46</b>  |

**Tianwa Yang, Violin**  
**Barcelona Symphony Orchestra**  
**and National Orchestra of Catalonia**  
**(Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya)**  
**Darrell Ang**

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