

“Joyas españolas”

“Spanish Jewels,” a recital of Spanish lyric art

Karen Esquivel, contralto
Gustavo Castro, piano

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

7:30 pm

University of Idaho Administration Building Auditorium

PROGRAM

Tonadillas del majo (Songs of the Majo*).....Enrique Granados

1. El majo discreto 1867-1916

2. El majo olvidado (F. Periquet)

3. El majo tímido

La maja dolorosa (The Sorroful Maja*)

1. ¡Oh muerte cruel!

2. ¡Ay majo de mi vida!

3. De aquel majo amante

Poema en forma de canciones (Poem in the Form of Songs).....Joaquín Turina

1. Dedicatoria 1882-1949

2. Nunca olvida (R. Campoamor)

3. Cantares

4. Los dos miedos

5. Las locas por amor

Siete canciones populares españolas (Seven Popular Spanish Songs).....Manuel de Falla

1. El paño moruno 1876-1946

2. Seguidilla murciana

3. Asturiana

4. Jota

5. Nana

6. Canción

7. Polo

INTERMISSION

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| Aria from <i>Acis y Galatea</i> | Antonio L  teres |
| Confiado jilguerillo | 1673-1747 |
| | (J. Ca  zares) |

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| Aria from <i>Els Pirineus</i> | Felip Pedrell |
| Can  o de l'estel | 1841-1922 |

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|---|----------------|
| Two arias from <i>El gato mont  s</i> | Manuel Penella |
| Junt   dende chavaliy   | 1880-1939 |
|   Sole  !   N  ! | |

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| Aria from <i>La vida breve</i> | Manuel de Falla |
|   Vivan los que r  en! | 1876-1946 |
| | (C. Fern  ndez Shaw) |

* Majo/Maja was the name for Spanish lower-class people, from Madrid in particular, who enjoyed exaggerated outfits and sense of style.

Performer Biographies:**Karen Esquivel**

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.

Esquivel has participated in the Des Moines Metro Opera and Sante Fe Opera apprenticeship programs, where she covered the role of Gaea in Strauss's *Daphne*. Her experience covers performances in music theater to opera to oratorio. Esquivel performed as the contralto soloist in performances of Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, Schubert's *Mass in C*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Dvorak's *Requiem*, Pergolesi's *Magnificat*, Falla's *El Amor Brujo*, Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, Durufl   *Requiem*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, and Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*.

Esquivel has performed the roles of Fillipyevna in *Eugene Onegin*, Dame Quickly in *Falstaff*, Orph  e in *Orph  e et Euridice*, Katisha in *The Mikado*, Baba in *The Medium*, Une Voix in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, the Sorceress in *Dido and Aeneas*, Servilla in the baroque intermezzo *Il marito giocatore e la moglie bacchettona*, Do  a Sof  a in the premiere of *The Tango of the White Gardenia*, Desir  e in *A little Night Music*, Bloody Mary in *South Pacific* and Aunt Eller in *Oklahoma!*.

She has enjoyed directing over 40 stage productions, from Baroque to Contemporary opera, as well as creating costume and set designs. Since 1997 she has formed a duo with her husband, Costa Rican

pianist/coach Gustavo Castro, with whom she has performed recitals in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, France, and the USA.

Esquivel has presented on the theme of Spanish Opera, which was her area of study for her Doctoral treatise, *“El Gato Montés: A Victim in Spain's Struggle to Establish A National Operatic Identity.”*

She served as Director of the Compañía Lírica Nacional de Costa Rica and taught at the Universidad de Costa Rica, the Universidad Nacional, and founded, along with her husband, a 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 throughout Costa Rica, in an effort to bring opera to the community. Esquivel currently serves on the Board of the Kenyan Classical Singers Organization, a program whose goal is to discover and support young, talented singers from Kenya.

Esquivel has served as Adjunct Faculty at Albany State University and Valdosta State University and is currently a Senior Instructor of Voice and the Director of the Opera Ensemble at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon.

Gustavo Castro-Ramirez

As a collaborative pianist, the Costa Rican born pianist and opera coach Gustavo Castro has performed a vast repertoire with singers and instrumentalists, including works from the baroque to the contemporary musical periods. This activity has taken him to perform recitals in Costa Rica, El Salvador, France, Nicaragua, and the United States. Since 1997 he performs regularly in a duet with his wife, American contralto Karen Esquivel.

Dr. Castro has collaborated in productions with opera companies and programs such as Astoria Music Festival (OR), Butler Opera Center (TX), Cascadia Chamber Opera (OR), Costa Rica National Lyric Company (CR), Florida State Opera (FL), Eugene Opera (OR), Opera Bend (OR), and Opera Nova Costa Rica (CR). He has served as opera conductor, assistant conductor, chorus master, rehearsal pianist, continuo player, and orchestra pianist in about 50 different operatic productions.

As an active member of the National Opera Association (NOA), Dr. Castro has presented, alongside Dr. Esquivel, lectures on French and Spanish Baroque Opera. In 2012 he won the NOA Twenty-eighth Scholarly Papers Competition for outstanding scholarly papers on operatic subjects. His article “Spanish Operatic Identity vis-à-vis Bizet’s Carmen” was published in The Opera Journal in June 2013.

Thanks to technology Dr. Castro has been able to remain internationally active during the pandemic through zoom masterclasses with singers from Costa Rica and Kenya. He serves as co-director of Opera Nova Costa Rica, as board member of the Kenyan Classical Singer’s Organization, and as adjudicator for the NOA Dominic Argento Chamber Opera Composition Competition.

Dr. Castro holds degrees from Florida State University, the National Conservatory of Music of Strasbourg (France), the University of Costa Rica, and the University of Texas at Austin. In the past he has taught at the University of Central Missouri, the University of Costa Rica, the National University of Costa Rica, and the University of Oregon. Dr. Castro works as Vocal Coach and Collaborative Pianist at the University of Idaho Lionel Hampton School of Music.