

Tarrega - Recuerdos de Alhambra (Memories of the Alhambra)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 11 January 2012 20:14 - Last Updated Thursday, 19 March 2015 15:21

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The *tremolo* study '**Recuerdos de la Alhambra**' composed in 1896 is, without doubt, the most famous piece by the Spanish composer and guitarist Francisco Tárrega, bringing back memories of the fortified Moorish palace situated on a hill in the Spanish city of Granada.

Francisco Tárrega was inspired by visit to the Alhambra two years previous in composing this piece.

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The Alhambra Palace was one of the greatest architectural wonders of the world when it was created in the 13th and 14th centuries and remains so today. It is unlikely that any future civilisation will ever be able to match the magnificence and mysticism of the Alhambra Palace - truly an extraordinary fairytale palace.



Alhambra

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Francisco Tárrega was born on November 21, 1852, in Villareal, Castellon, Spain. An accident in his early childhood permanently impaired his eyesight. He was taught his first lessons on guitar by Eugeni Ruiz, ironically a blind musician. In 1862, concert guitarist

Julian Arcas,

on tour in Castellon, heard young Francisco play and advised Tárrega's father to allow Francisco to come to Barcelona for study with him. Tárrega's father agreed, but insisted that he take piano lessons as well.



Julian Arcas

By his early teens, Tárrega had become proficient on both instruments. In 1874 he enrolled at the Madrid Conservatory where he would study composition under **Arrieta**. He had brought along with him a recently-purchased guitar, made in Seville by Antonio Torres. Its superior sonic qualities inspired him both in his playing and in his view of the instrument's compositional potential. When Arrieta heard his student Tárrega in a guitar concert, he convinced him to focus on guitar and abandon ideas of a career involving the piano.



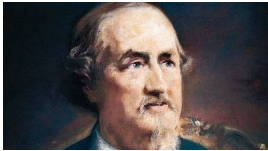
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Francisco Tarrega

During winter 1880, Tarrega substituted his friend and guitar player Luis de Soria in a concert in Novelda (Alicante), city where he meets his future wife **Maria Rizo**. In 1881 he goes to France. After a wonderful concert in Lyon, he arrives to Paris and meets the most important VIPs. He plays in several Theaters, being even invited to play for the Queen of Spain Isabel II, and later he continues his tour to London. He returns from there to Novelda to get married with Maria Rizo.



Emilio Arrieta

The new family moves to Madrid, then they move to Barcelona, travelling from there to many places for playing. This is Tarrega's mature period. He starts frequent tours. Perpignan (France), Cadiz (Spain), Nice (France), Mallorca (Spain), Paris, Valencia,



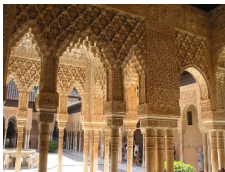
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Francisco Tarrega

In Valencia he meets a lady that influenced him: **Conxa Martinez**, rich widow that takes him under artistic protection. She allowed him and his family use of a house in Barcelona, where he would write the bulk of his most popular works. Later she took him to Granada, where the guitarist conceived the theme for his famous Recuerdos de la Alhambra, which he composed on his return and dedicated to his friend Alfred Cottin, a Frenchman who had arranged his Paris concerts.



Alhambra - Court of the lions

From the latter 1880s up to 1903, Tárrega continued composing, but limited his concerts to Spain. In 1900 Tárrega visited Argel, where he heard a repetitive rhythm played on an Arabian drum. The following morning he composed his famous **Danza Mora** based on that rhythm.

In January 1906, he was afflicted with paralysis on his right side, and though he would eventually return to the concert stage, he never completely recovered. He finished his last work, **Oremus**, on December 2, 1909. He died 13 days later.

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Alhambra is a city in Spain. The Spanish language translation of Washington is "Washington".

The Alhambra is a palace and fortress complex in Granada, Spain. It is one of the most important monuments of Moorish architecture in Spain.

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