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Friday, November 6, 2026 • 7:30 PM

DePaul Concert Orchestra

Michael Lewanski, conductor

Mary Patricia Gannon Concert Hall
2330 North Halsted Street • Chicago

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Gannon Concert Hall

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Program

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)
Suite No. 1 from *El Sombrero de Tres Pico* (1919)
I. Mediodia (Afternoon)
II. Danza de la molinera (Dance of the Miller's Wife)
III. El Corregidor (The Corregidor)
IV. Las uvas (The Grapes)

Gabriela Lena Frank (1972)
Concertino Cusqueño (2012)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 36 (1801–1802)
I. Adagio molto – Allegro con brio
II. Larghetto
III. Scherzo: Allegro
IV. Allegro molto

As a courtesy to those around you, please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. Flash photography is not permitted.

Biographies

Conductor, curator, educator, and writer **Michael Lewanski** is a champion of new and old musics. He seeks to facilitate engaged connections between audiences, musicians, composers, and the music that is part of their culture, society, and history. His work hopes to be part of collective, systemic change in the classical music industry. Based in Chicago, he is Conductor of Ensemble Dal Niente, Artistic Director of Lakeview Orchestra, and Associate Professor and Chair of the Performance Studies Department at the DePaul University School of Music, where he works to help the next generation of musicians become thoughtful artistic citizens.

Michael was Curatorial Director of Ear Taxi Festival 2021, a festival of 21st century Chicago music. His wide-ranging guest-conducting has included work with Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNOW Series, the Toledo Symphony Orchestra, Composers Conference, the National Symphony Orchestra of Turkmenistan, Ensamble CEPROMUSIC (Centro de Experimentación y Producción de Música Contemporánea, Mexico City), and the Seattle Modern Orchestra, among many others. He was resident conductor of the SoundSCAPE Festival in Italy in 2017 and 2019. Michael has an extensive discography on major European and US labels as both conductor and producer with Ensemble Dal Niente, Spektral Quartet, Third Coast Percussion, Grossman Ensemble, and others.

A native of Savannah, Georgia, Michael studied piano and violin in his youth; he made his conducting debut at age 13, leading his own composition. At 16, he was the youngest-ever student in the legendary Ilya Musin's class at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He attended Yale University; he subsequently studied with Cliff Colnot (with whom he worked as conducting assistant at the Civic Orchestra of Chicago from 2010 to 2014)and Lucas Vis. He is based in Chicago, and respectfully acknowledges the Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Odawa, Ho-Chunk, Myaaamia, Menominee, Peoria, and Illinois Confederacy among other tribal nations as custodians of the traditional Native land on which he lives and works.

Program Notes

Manuel de Falla (1876-1946)
Suite No. 1 from *El Sombrero de Tres Pico* (1919)
Duration: 14 minutes
The triumvirate of composers Granados, Albéniz, and Falla, are the most important composers of twentieth-century Spain, without question. But, many would award the palm of "first among equals" to Falla. American audiences know him primarily for three relatively early works: The "Ritual Fire Dance" from his ballet, *El amor brujo*; the symphonic suite for piano and orchestra, *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*; and, of course, the music for *The Three-cornered Ha*t. All of these compositions are tuneful, accessible, and either rooted in Spanish folk elements, or French impressionism. However, he went on from the 1920s to explore imaginative and challenging elements of modernism in his stimulating and influential works.

Achieving a modicum of success as a young composer in Madrid from the turn of the century, he turned early on to works for the stage—not only for their practical popularity, but also because he had shown from a very early age a flair for literary and dramatic interests. After composing a series of successful *zarzuela* (popular Spanish musico-dramatic entertainments), he hit the big time in 1905 with his first major opera, *La vida breve*, which incorporated significant elements of traditional Gypsy music. A promised performance that was part of the prize that it won never materialized, so in disappointment, the young Falla left Madrid for Paris. It changed his life. There he met and hobnobbed with the luminaries of French artistic life, including Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, Dukas, and the impresario, Diaghilev. Later, insular Spanish music critics harped on the "impressionisms" in his subsequent compositions, at the expense of Spanish elements, but never mind. At the onset of World War I he moved back to Spain, and achieved much greater recognition as a composer than in his earlier period. *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* dates from this period. His association from that time with the theatrical personage, Gregorio Martínez Sierra and his wife, Maria, resulted in his writing in 1916 the ballet, *El amor brujo*, and the incidental music for a modest pantomime*, El corregidor y la molinera* (The Magistrate and the Miller's Wife).

The latter work was immensely successful, and a fateful visit to Madrid by Igor Stravinsky and the acclaimed impresario of the Ballets Russes, Segei Diaghilev, led to Diaghilev's encouragement of Falla to

extend and enlarge the music to a complete ballet. The little farce, *El corregidor y la molinera*, was based on the novel, *El sombrero de tres picos*, and the expansion of the concept by Falla took the original title. The combination of native Spanish musical material by Falla, Léonide Massine's choreography, and Pablo Picasso's cubist sets and costumes received rave reactions at the première.

The risqué story is a bit complicated, but the essence is that a village magistrate (whose uniform includes a traditional tricorn hat) tries foolishly to seduce a miller's wife, and ends up making a complete clown of himself. The lecherous magistrate has the miller arrested on trumped up charges, inadvertently falls in the river, jumps into the Miller's bed. Clothes are surreptitiously exchanged, resulting in mixed up identities and competing seductions—you get the idea. But, in the end virtue triumphs and the ridiculous magistrate is suitably humiliated.

Falla extracted two suites for orchestra from the ballet, one from each act. The first suite opens with a very short fanfare for the curtain rise, and we see the mill. Following that is a leisurely depiction of the warm, sleepy afternoon and the magistrate's pretentious procession near the mill (the droll bassoon depicts the latter). The miller, taking a dislike of the magistrate, has his wife tantalize him with a swirling, seductive *fandango* to lure him on. Upon the conclusion of the dance the bassoon/magistrate returns. A tender moment in the music depicts the miller's wife disingenuously teasing him with an offer of some grapes; she then coquettishly runs away. Pursuing her, he's led into an ambush, and the angry husband jumps out of the bushes and frightens away the clownish magistrate with a stick—ending act one.

The success of the ballet came after Falla, Massine, and Diaghilev had taken time and trouble to tour the country and research the native Andalusian materials. That took a while, but paid off handsomely a few years later, at the London première, in 1919. Its Spanish tunes, dramatic storytelling, and brilliant orchestration have made it an audience favorite ever since—even if, like Aaron Copland's populist music of the 1930s—it represents only one facet of the composer's musical style.

Note by Wm. E. Runyan

Gabriela Lena Frank (1972)
Concertino Cusqueño (2012)
Duration: 12 minutes
Concertino Cusqueño, written in celebration of the fine players of the Philadelphia Orchestra on the eve of Yannick Nézet-Ségun's inaugural season as Music Director, finds inspiration in two unlikely bedfellows: Peruvian culture and British composer Benjamin Britten. As a daughter of a Peruvian immigrant, I've long been fascinated by my multicultural heritage and have been blessed to find western classical music to be a hospitable playpen for my wayward explorations. In doing so, I've looked to composers such as Alberto Ginastera from Argentina, Béla Bartók from Hungary, Chou Wen-chung from China, and my own teacher William Bolcom from the US as heroes: To me, these gentlemen are the very definition of "cultural witnesses," as they illuminate new connections between seemingly disparate idioms of every hue imaginable.

To this list, I add Britten, whom I admire inordinately. I wish I could have met him, worked up the nerve to show him my own music, invited him to travel to beautiful Perú with me... I would have shared *chicha morada* (purple corn drink) with him, taken him to a *zampoña* panpipe instrument-making shop, set him loose in a mercado (market) streaming with immigrant chinos and the native indio descendants of the Incas. I would have loved showing him the port towns exporting *anchoveta* (anchovies), the *serranos* (highlands) exporting potatoes, and the *selvas* (jungles) exporting sugar. And I know Britten would have been fascinated by the rich mythology enervating the literature and music of this small Andean nation, so deeply similar to the plots of his many operas, among other works.

Concertino Cusqueño welds together two brief musical ideas: The first few notes of a religious tune, *Ccollanan María*, from Cusco (the original capital of the Inca empire Tawantinsuyu, and a major tourist draw today with the simple timpani motif from the opening bars of the first movement of Britten's elegant Violin Concerto. I am able to spin an entire one-movement work from these two ideas, designating a prominent role to the four string principle players (with a healthy nod to the piccolo/bass clarinet duo and, yes, the timpanist). In this way, while imagining Britten in Cusco, I can also indulge my own enjoyment of personalizing the symphonic sound by allowing individuals from the ensemble to shine.

It is with further joy that I dedicate this piece to my nephew Alexander Michael Frank, born in Philadelphia on February 25th, 2011.

Note by Gabriela Lena Frank

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 36 (1801–1802)
Duration: 32 minutes
Beethoven's second symphony is one of those rare and awkwardly situated works that lie between a composer's "early period," in which they can be forgiven for stylistic derivativeness or a lack of refinement (given the promise they show, etc.), and their fully "mature" phase, in which future generations, comfortable in the wisdom that comes with hindsight, has judged them to have arrived at the style that has had the greatest impact on music history. The *Eroica* symphony, which followed directly, is one of the single greatest events in common practice music history, and is decidedly the latter category. The revolutionary spirit that the Third wears on its sleeve, perhaps not surprisingly, clamors louder to later audiences and composers than the witty and sophisticated originality of the Second. This just-a-little-overlooked quality is precisely what makes it so special.

The insistence and authority of the first movement's slow introduction's opening unison D's are immediately undermined by a lovely but rhythmically ambiguous oboe melody. The strings, looking to get in on the fun, co-opt it, but rapidly lead us to the harmonic wilderness of B-flat major. *Sforzandi* poke out of the texture—at first on the strong beats, then increasing in other places. The music cannot handle the instability and erupts in a unison D minor passage serious enough, eerily, to remind many listeners of the opening of the Ninth Symphony, even though it wouldn't be written for 20 more years.

The fast sonata form section slips into focus almost undetected, and the cellos play a theme of stunning unoriginality—merely an ascending major triad adorned by some turns. While its repetition at a loud dynamic level by the full ensemble seems at first conventional, the key areas rapidly move to foreign territory, and we feel lucky to arrive in the dominant (A major, the correct key for the second theme), a straightforwardly jaunty march played by the clarinets. This theme, though, cannot satisfactorily cadence in A major, and halts abruptly. Subdued rumbles of the first theme emerge in the string

section, and while the cadence is achieved, its stability is undermined by the strange accents on bewildering beats, and the return of the D minor interruption from the introduction. After the entire exposition is repeated, a development section first of great energy, then humor, ensues, eventually becoming trapped in the tense key of F-sharp minor. Its energy unravels suddenly, and recapitulation is upon us without warning. Though it proceeds exactly as the exposition had (with the exception of correcting the key areas to D major), it also fails to produce a real sense of a durable tonic. This is left to a fitful coda that finally, after an anguished wall of loud music (including a bass-line that ascends through the entire twelve notes of the chromatic scale) finds a truly joyous and unquestionable resolution in D major. The main theme of the movement is recast to span an entire octave to celebrate.

The 3/8 slow movement, naively in the dominant (A major—rather than the subdominant, G major, or another common key), seems not to understand what all the fuss was about. Its lackadaisical violin theme cannot quite maintain the energy to get very loud. A listener may assume that, again, they will be experiencing a sonata form movement, with a second theme, and a modulation to the dominant. Here, however, the self-indulgence of the theme seems to affect the form itself—two long but very different thematic worlds ensue, each one seemingly revealing another potential pitfall. The first has the accents on the wrong beat and engages in flirtations with the minor mode; while the second becomes so severely metrically ambiguous as to completely lose a sense of where beat 1 is. The complacency and nonchalance of the closing theme in the second violins and cellos (followed by sunny horn calls) seems entirely unearned. The development section seems to reap the results of the exposition's laziness by not being able to escape minor keys. Its exuberant, fortissimo recapitulation is a false one, again rapidly devolving into minor keys and further crisis. Just as suddenly, though, the sun emerges (in the form of the clarinets), and the actual recapitulation returns to the exposition's unhurried world. The coda produces a moment of true sublimity as the entire orchestra plays the main theme in a subdued tone of voice while the flute plays above. This is all negated by a playful close, and we cannot help but wonder how seriously to take the movement.

There are no questions about the *Scherzo* (back in D major), though, as it is all fun and games. After relentlessly emphasizing downbeats, a sudden move to B-flat major puts the accent unexpectedly on a beat

2 for a moment. The trio section features a charming and nonchalant oboe theme, which is fake-seriously interrupted by the string section.

The Finale is among Beethoven's most humorous creations. Beginning with a silly and harmonically ambiguous two-note slur, the theme leaps downward immediately and stops abruptly. The form is a sonata-rondo: ABACABA. The B section, acting as the second theme, is serene and singing, though as in earlier movements, shows a tendency to collapse into the minor mode. The C section is more for-real serious than the interruption of the previous movement's trio. Perhaps most remarkably: this Finale features an incredibly long and indecisive coda, complete with both genuine hilarity and surprising stops and starts. All is well, though, and the symphony concludes as the movement's opening figure is heard affirming the tonic (D major) for the first time. The brass section hints perhaps(?) at the opening movement's main theme towards the end—a benefit of Beethoven's strategy of using deliberately unremarkable melodic material.

Note by Michael Lewanski

Personnel

FLUTE
Ume Hashimoto
Sho Roash
Madeline Saltzgiver
Emma Tomita

OBOE
Jose Alvarez
Charlie Janka

CLARINET
Finley Jones
Megan Rideout Redeker

BASSOON
Alejandro de Jesus
Jonah Hartwig
Lukas Jaskunas
Dylan Neff

HORN
Henry Dix
Olivia Owen
Brooks Wallace

TRUMPET
Katelyn Fahey
Emmett Needles
Jack Polacek

PIANO
Giuliano Garcia

CELESTE
Zhou Yi

HARP
Eva Anderson

PERCUSSION
Julia Baker
Aleo Esparza
Claire Guglielmi
Adriana Harrison

VIOLIN
Angela Rojas, *concertmaster*
Chelsea Lind
Brian Shih
Ender Miranda-Estrada
Kay Lyn Ham
Jui-Yu Chang
Cecilia McIntyre, *principal 2nd*
Chien Chien Wu
An Ching Yang
Connor Pruett
Sofia Concha Pinto

VIOLA
Peter Dudek, *principal*
Abigail Huss
Catherine Wicker
Alyssa Dzien
Rose Skidmore

CELLO
Audrey Chen, *principal*
Eyal Kalev Guetzkow
Reese Melton
Yejeong (Jenny) Lee
Addison Swan
Jesus Avila

BASS
Daniel Mokelke, *principal*
Jaxen Wilson
Madison Kehl
Iris Eppinga

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