

JOAQUÍN TURINA PÉREZ (1882 - 1949)

‘LA ORACIÓN DEL TORERO’

Allegro moderato

Born in Spain, Turina studied in Italy and at the prestigious *Schola Cantorum* in France, before returning to Spain. There he continued composing, his style now heavily influenced by the traditional music of Andalusia with its many types of Flamenco, including the much loved Malagueñas and Fandango.

Turina’s list of compositions includes orchestral, stage and chamber works, not all of them reflecting his Spanish heritage as clearly as this particularly idiomatic piece.

Having mixed with the likes of Ravel and Debussy, it is no surprise to find Turina’s use of musical colour, particularly vivid and evocative.

‘La Oración del Torero’ or ‘The Bullfighters Prayer’ (1925), is perhaps Turina’s most well known work. It was originally written for lute quartet, but having been lost, it was rewritten for string quartet and later also adapted for string orchestra.

This is certainly programmatic music at its best, telling the story of a fight to the death between a bull and toreador. Already from the expectant, hushed opening, the music insinuates the murmuring crowds and festive spirit of a hot, sultry Spanish afternoon. Announcements are made, the bull enters and the spectacle begins.

The fight is fierce yet paced until a final tremendous outburst leaves only one victor standing. Here, rather than composing odes of praise for the winner, Turina accompanies the smitten on his inevitable journey to heaven, where amidst clouds of angels, he finally comes to rest.