

El Llanto de los Sueños (2007)
(The Weeping of Dreams)

Cantiga
Madrugada
Alborada

El Llanto de los Sueños draws on ideas and images from the poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca. The music suggests a dream-like nostalgia for the Andalusia of the nineteen-twenties and early thirties, when Manuel de Falla and Lorca were revitalising flamenco and local culture. The title is taken from the first line of Lorca's poem *Las seis cuerdas (The Six Strings)* – 'La guitarra hace llorar a los sueños' ('The guitar makes dreams weep'). The music borrows the colours and harmonies that Debussy and Ravel blended in their Spanish music – a potent cocktail of Andalusian folk music, early jazz, 19th-century Romanticism, and French Impressionism.

The sources for the brief song-like prelude, *Cantiga*, are Lorca's *Six Galician Poems* of 1932 and the medieval *Cantigas de Amigo* (love songs written to be sung on the Pilgrimage to Santiago). The second movement takes its name from Lorca's poem *Madrugada (Before the Dawn)*, but evokes nocturnal images from many of his poems. The opening theme is a gentle serenade, but as the evening turns to night, the melody becomes lost in a confusion of moving shadows. Little by little the dawn bells begin to fracture the darkness and light gradually dissolves the night. When the serenade melody returns, it has been transformed; it has lost its innocence and is now imbued with melancholy. The piece ends with eight distant tolls of a morning bell.

Alborada is based on Lorca's poem *Baile*, which depicts an old and slightly unhinged Carmen dancing through the streets of Seville at dawn, frightening the inhabitants. She is a little deranged and only half-remembers the dances of her younger days – strains of her *Habanera* and *Seguidilla* struggle to be heard. Carmen's attention flits quickly from one memory to another and the character of the music darts about from mood to mood. She tries to recall the *Seguidilla* one last time, but she cannot form it properly in her mind. She gives up and starts her final dance, which builds to a frenzied climax.

El Llanto de los Sueños is dedicated to David and Maria Russell. The first performance was given by David Russell at Kings Place, London, on 30th October 2008. The score is published by Cadenza Music www.cadenza-music.com

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