

AT FESTIVAL CONCERT

Famed Spanish Pianist To Appear in Concert

Madame Amparo Iturbi, hailed as Spain's greatest woman pianist, will be guest soloist Friday, May 3, with the South Bay-Torrance Symphony Orchestra. The Joslyn Center performance will culminate a two-week Spanish Festival sponsored by the Torrance Recreation Department and the orchestra.

Miss Elyse Aehle will conduct. Mme. Iturbi will play two selections by the great Spanish composer Granados, "The Lady and the Nightingale" and "Compliments" from his Goyescas suite. Her portion of the program will also include Chopin's second Nocturne and his first Ballade.

AT THE age of 14, Mme. Iturbi was privileged to meet Granados, the greatest Span-

ish composer of the day. She had been studying piano in her hometown of Valencia and traveled to Barcelona to appear in concert.

In her soft Spanish accent, Mme. Iturbi recalled that Granados was sitting in the third row and was so impressed that he invited her to repeat the entire concert in his home for his students.

"His personality was a tremendous sensitivity of a man. Tremendous! And he was a great pianist himself," she related, stressing that Granados' style is not easy to capture.

GOING ON to pursue a concert career, Mme. Iturbi has toured Europe, Latin America, the United States, and even Alaska as a featured soloist with countless symphony orchestras. She has

played for such notables as the Spanish royal family, composer Maurice Ravel, harpsichordist Wanda Landowska, and the Spanish painter Sorolla Bastida.

Highlight of her career was being knighted by the Queen of England, an honor which entitles her to be known as Dame Amparo Iturbi.

Considering the impact of her childhood on her concert career, Mme. Iturbi recalls that she began her study of the piano at the age of seven. "My mother was a very receptive woman, but she couldn't play a note. Neither could my father!"

IN FACT, Mme. Iturbi's father was more than surprised when she and her older brother Jose Iturbi turned out to be concert

artists. But the concert stage seemed so natural for the young pianist that she is not sure just when she finally decided on a concert career.

"You don't decide to be something. You are something," she emphasized.

Even before she took up the piano, Mme. Iturbi showed great promise as a musician. At the age of 6, she was already a lusty vocalist, and by 10, she could sing all the well-known operatic arias.

However, the former child prodigy believes she damaged her natural voice by straining too hard at an early age. At one point, she was struck dumb for a month with a bad case of laryngitis.

DID HER parents have to prod her to practice? Some-

times. But Mme. Iturbi soon came back to look upon the piano as a toy. A "very serious toy," in her words.

Far from relaxing her rigid practice schedule, Mme. Iturbi says she now practices "much more and much better than ever, I hope."

A resident of the United States for the past 31 years, Mme. Iturbi currently lives in Beverly Hills, still making concert appearances and cutting records. She likes to knit and crochet, and claims a passion for the theater. She would love to be an actress but feels she lacks the talent.

Mme. Iturbi was guest of honor Sunday at banquet heralding the Spanish Festival in Torrance. She received a key to the city to add to her souvenirs.



MADAME AMPARO ITURBI
Guest Artist

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