

In 1829, the celebrated author Washington Irving travelled to Granada, in southern Spain, which he described as "a most picturesque and beautiful city, situated in one of the loveliest landscapes that I have ever seen." He was granted access to the legendary Moorish palace and fortress, the Alhambra, by the governor and archbishop of Granada. His seventeen-year old guide was Mateo Ximenes, a self-described "son of the Alhambra," whose family had lived within its walls for hundreds of years. Irving fell entirely under the spell of the place and its legends. In 1832 he published *The Tales of the Alhambra*, a collection of essays and stories. As he put it, "The following papers are the result of my reveries and researches during that delicious thralldom. If they have the power of imparting any of the witching charms of the place to the imagination of the reader, he will not repine at lingering with me for a season in the legendary halls of the Alhambra." The book was an immediate success and has never been out of print since its first publication.

William David Brohn's *The Tales of the Alhambra* is not a narrative, but rather an impressionistic response to Irving's book, whose fairy stories and legends are full of musical interludes and the singing of birds. Brohn has employed these to convey the atmosphere and enchantments that so beguiled Irving during his sojourn inside the splendid and mysterious Andalusian palace.

The world premiere of *The Tales of the Alhambra* was on February 26, 2011 at the Wharton Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan with the Michigan State University Symphony Orchestra conducted by Leon Gregorian.

William David Brohn (1933–2017) was born in Flint, Michigan. He graduated from Michigan State University in 1955 with a Bachelor of Music degree and in 1958 earned a Master of Music degree from the New England Conservatory. Subsequent studies took him to Tanglewood and Salzburg, Austria. In 1996, he was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Fine Art from Michigan State.

Brohn orchestrated scores for more than twenty Broadway shows, for numerous West End (London) productions, for the National Theatre, and for the Shakespeare Festival (Stratford-upon-Avon). Among these are *Miss Saigon*, *Oliver!*, *The Secret Garden*, *Crazy for You*, *Ragtime*, *Sweet Smell of Success*, *Curtains*, *Wicked*, and the Gershwins' *Porgy and Bess*. In 1987 he adapted Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* score for live presentation with the Eisenstein film, an adaptation that is played frequently by symphony orchestras. His orchestrations won a Tony Award in 1988 and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Orchestrations on three occasions.

Brohn provided arrangements for Liza Minnelli, Renee Fleming, James Galway, and Placido Domingo on CD and in concert. Later, he became something of a specialist in arranging repertory for so-called "crossover" artists, among them violinist Joshua Bell and sopranos Marilyn Horne and Kristin Chenoweth. Brohn arranged and orchestrated scores for the Boston Pops, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Indiana Symphony Orchestra, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, and The New York Philharmonic. He collaborated with conductors such as Andre Previn, John Williams, and Keith Lockhart. Acclaim for Brohn's scores commissioned by the American Ballet Theater, New York City Ballet, Agnes de Mille, Twyla Tharp, and Christopher Wheeldon further broadened his achievements into the world of dance.