



PA Sinfonia Program Notes
November 21, 2009

Eliot Fisk, world-renowned classical guitarist will be playing Rodrigo's Fantasia para un Gentilhombre. The orchestra will perform Schubert's Symphony No. 9 in C major and the **Camerata Singers** will join the orchestra for 3 Oratorio Choruses from Felix Mendelssohn's Christus, St. Paul and Elijah Oratorios.

Joaquín Rodrigo's Fantasia para un Gentilhombre (Fantasy for a Gentleman) is the second most famous work by this Spanish Composer, his most famous being the Concerto de Aranjuez. The four movements were based upon six short dances for solo guitar written by a 17th century Spanish Composer, Gaspar Sanz. According to Fisk, Rodrigo wrote this piece for Segovia after he and Rodrigo had a bit of a "tiff" because according to legend, Segovia wanted to change things in the more famous Concerto de Aranjuez and Rodrigo didn't want to make any changes. But, Rodrigo always thought of Segovia as a gentleman, hence the Concerto para un gentilhombre title. In addition, it might also be titled this for Gaspar Sanz, the great baroque era guitarist whose themes are used in the manner resembling use of old Italian masters in Stravinsky's Pulcinella or those of baroque guitarists and lutenists in the works of Respighi. Rodrigo composed the concerto in 1954 and Segovia took the solo part at the premiere performance on March 5, 1958 in San Francisco with the San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Enrique Jordá.

Franz Schubert's Symphony #9 in C major, D. 944 is the composer's final symphony and known as the *GREAT* in C Major (which distinguishes it from the Little C Major #6), but this could also refer to the majestic style of the work. It was composed in 1825 -1826 and only received a "play through" in 1827. In 1838, Robert Schumann visited Vienna and found the dusty manuscript of the symphony. He took it back to Leipzig, where the entire work was performed publicly for the first time by Felix Mendelssohn at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on March 21, 1839. Schumann celebrated the event in the Neue Zeitschrift with an ecstatic article in which, in a phrase destined to become famous, he hailed the symphony for its "heavenly length." Schumann is reported to have said he thought it the greatest instrumental work since the death of Beethoven. (Wikipedia)

Since Mendelssohn was responsible for the first true performance of the Schubert C Major Symphony, it seems fitting that the 3 very popular choruses from his Oratorios would also be on the same program. **Felix Mendelssohn's *Christus*** oratorio contains the chorus "There Shall a Star from Jacob Shine Forth." ***St. Paul*** was written 10 years before ***Elijah*** and contains the chorus "How Lovely Are the Messengers." ***Elijah***, written in 1846, depicts various events in the life of the Biblical prophet Elijah (often dramatic) and was composed in the spirit of Bach and Handel, however using more lyricism and orchestral tone color. The Chorus "He Watching over Israel" is the most popular of the three. These are all expertly crafted choruses, showing Mendelssohn at his best, but rarely heard with orchestra as they are most often performed with piano or organ. The tone colors of the orchestrations will lend a different sound to these familiar works which are well-loved and sung by choirs everywhere!