Performance begins at 8 p.m.; Preview talk with Alan Chapman begins at 7 p.m.

MANUEL LÓPEZ-GÓMEZ • CONDUCTOR | PABLO VILLEGAS • GUITAR

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)  
Capriccio espagnol, Op. 34
Alborada
Variazioni
Alborada
Scena e canto gitano
Fandango asturiano

Joaquin Rodrigo (1901-1999)  
Fantasía para un gentilhombre
(Fantasy for a Nobleman)
Villano y Ricercare
Españoleta y Fanfare de la Caballeria de Nápoles
Danza de las Hachas
Canario
Pablo Villegas

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)  
Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64, TH 29
Andante – Allegro con anima
Andante cantabile con alcuna licenza
Valse: Allegro moderato
Finale: Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace

The Friday, March 11, concert is generously sponsored by Symphony 100.
Beginning with a theme in the horns, the *Alborada* is a set of five variations during which the sections of the orchestra exchange sparkling solo lines; for example, a clarinet solo from the first variation is taken over by solo violin, while the clarinet co-opts a violin cadenza. By the end of the *Alborada*, virtually every section of the orchestra has been showcased in exacting, highly exposed play.

The second section begins with a Scene and Gypsy Song, a sequence of five cadenzas to balance the five variations in the *Alborada*. This is followed by the dramatic Fandango of the Asturias (a region of Spain) that integrates themes already heard, braiding them into a finale of fevered intensity.

It’s not necessary to follow this complex architecture to hear the unity it provides. Most of all, the Capriccio is a blood-stirring suite full of color, texture and drama that confirmed Rimsky-Korsakov’s strengths to his contemporary audiences, as it does to us today. Upon reviewing the score, Tchaikovsky wrote to Rimsky-Korsakov that “your [Capriccio espagnol] is a colossal masterpiece of instrumentation, and you may regard yourself as the greatest master of the present day.”

### Fantasy for a Nobleman

*Instrumentation: 2 flutes (second doubling on piccolo), oboe, bassoon, trumpet, strings, solo guitar
Performance time: 21 minutes*

### Background

Look at those dates! So many of classical music’s great geniuses led tragically short lives—Mozart, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Bizet all died in their thirties—that when we encounter those blessed with longevity, we rejoice. The Spanish composer Joaquin Rodrigo, though blind by diphtheria at age 3, lived to be 98. He credited the apparent calamity of his illness for his lifelong involvement in music.

Rodrigo made rapid progress at the conservatory in Valencia, graduating early and going on to Paris, where he studied with Paul Dukas at the École Normale de Musique. But while he absorbed the elements of French style and refinement, his music remains Spanish to its very core. With Manuel de Falla (b. 1876) and Enrique Granados (b. 1867), Rodrigo was central to the flowering of musical creativity that raised the prominence of Spanish music in the 20th century. These composers burst upon the music world like a new discovery, though their cultural lineage extended back centuries. Musicians and audiences greeted them like long-lost brothers, but their distinctively Iberian sound, drenched in folk melodies and in the traditions of Spanish church music of the Baroque period, was like nothing to be heard in the rest of Europe.

While Manuel de Falla gained renown for ballet scores that traveled with Serge Diaghilev’s *Ballets Russes*, and Granados’ orchestral and piano compositions earned their standing as repertory staples (and his opera *Goyescas* in opera houses including the Met), Rodrigo became known for his remarkable concertos. They reflect the Spanish affinity for the guitar; the two best-known examples, his *Fantasy for a Nobleman* and the Concierto de Aranjuez, are both for that instrument. But there are other notable examples, including a spectacularly original concerto for harp. Rodrigo composed the *Fantasy for a Nobleman* in 1954 for Andrés Segovia, and though it is often mistakenly associated with Molière’s *Le Bourgeois*
NOTES

JOAQUÍN RODRIGO (1901-1999)

Gentilhomme—inspiration for many musical adaptations—the gentleman of Rodrigo’s title is actually Segovia himself.

What to Listen For

The musicologist and commentator George Jellinek, who was not inclined to exaggerate, called Rodrigo’s concertos revolutionary and said that their freshness resulted from Rodrigo’s use of the second interval. Even listeners with no musical background are likely to have heard about other harmonic intervals—thirds, fourths, fifths, and so on—but seconds, comprised of two notes that lie next to each other on the piano keyboard, are rarely mentioned. And we do hear them frequently in the Fantasy for a Nobleman. But are they so fully responsible for the concerto’s distinctive sound? Or do they function more like the rainfall on a Paris streetscape, adding a poetic dimension to a scene that is already beautiful?

The concerto is comprised of three movements developed from traditional Spanish dance forms, starting with the 17th-century villano introduced in the violin. This opens onto the ricercare, a fugal section. In the second movement we hear the stately dance rhythm of the españoleta composed, according to the movement’s title, as a Fanfare de la caballería de Nápoles (Fanfare for the calvary of Naples), which was formerly under Spanish rule. This is followed by Danza de las hachas, a “hatchet dance,” traditionally performed with torches (as in the Ritual Fire Dance from de Falla’s El Amor Brujo). The concerto ends with a brilliant canario, a folk dance from the Canary Islands that builds in dramatic intensity, culminating in a dazzling cadenza for the guitar.

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Symphony 100 (Friday night)

Symphony 100 is an exclusive membership group that offers adult music education opportunities and several unique events or field trips available only to members. Membership is limited to 100 women, who support special projects of the Symphony through an annual contribution of $1,000. We appreciate their support!

Symphony No. 5

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (third doubling on piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, bass trombone, tuba, timpani, strings

Performance time: 50 minutes

Background

We program annotators must always remember that your opinion as a listener is more important than ours; we are here to help equip you to listen and enjoy. But sometimes a little digging can make that simple task a bit complicated, even when the composer is one whose greatness and popularity are not in doubt—like Tchaikovsky. Pacific Symphony’s ongoing attention to Tchaikovsky gives us all a chance to deepen our own opinions about a composer whose life and works continue to provoke speculation and even controversy.

How is it that a composer who died more than a century ago sparks new debates among listeners? Biographical research, for one thing. Each year sheds more light on Tchaikovsky’s torment over his sexual identity and his unhappy marriage. During his lifetime these were taboo subjects, especially in his native Russia, but more recently they have spurred analysis and gossip—even movies. When Ken Russell found Tchaikovsky’s life ideal for a juicy, highly sexualized biopic, he had to call it The Music Lovers to differentiate it from a 1969 Russian feature titled Tchaikovsky. Even the composer’s death remains the subject of partisan disagreement, though less hotly debated than it once was: Was it suicide, or wasn’t it?

Regarding Tchaikovsky’s standing among the great composers, it’s interesting to note that his two most popular scores among American listeners—The Nutcracker and The 1812 Overture—were works he considered failures and professed to dislike. But when it comes to The Nutcracker, critical opinion has overridden Tchaikovsky’s, and his three great ballet scores, along with his operas and symphonies, are his masterworks. And though it is dangerous to look for composers’ lives in their music, we can safely say that Tchaikovsky’s symphonies come closest to being a kind of musical diary of an incessant brooder.

Tchaikovsky was mindful of his image as a composer whose reputation would survive him and as a public figure in Russian society. He also felt that Beethoven had elevated the symphony to a form reserved for big, philosophical ideas expressed in a dramatic arc. Before writing his fourth symphony, which preceded the fifth by more than a decade, he had been impressed with the musical representations of fate that he had heard in Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5 and Bizet’s Carmen, and he made his own fourth symphony an account of a fateful struggle for his own destiny and his yearning to live a life of mature respectability. Progress on it was agonizing, and he found it difficult to resolve. But fate was a theme he would return to in his fifth symphony and in the sixth, his last.

Tchaikovsky began work on his Symphony No. 5 in May of 1888. He had just returned to Russia after an extensive and highly successful European tour, and moved into a new house in the town of Frolovskoye after visiting the larger city of Tbilisi. Musicologists note that he encountered difficulties in the symphony’s composition at first, but later gained momentum; it seems likely that any obstacles he encountered difficulties in the symphony’s composition at first, but later gained momentum; it seems likely that any obstacles would have been consistent with moving back to Russia and into a new house after his extended absence. These days we might say he was “getting his seat adjusted.”
In the symphony’s first movement, which moves from an andante to an allegro pace, the “fate” theme comes at us with almost assaultive intensity and a sound that somehow combines funereal gravity with suspense about what might come next. The symphony progresses from this somber opening through an andante second movement that is full of Tchaikovsky’s poetic melancholia. But there is also a feeling of emotional instability here, as though the sadness we have heard so far, for all its brilliance, need not inevitably prevail. Movement three, dominated by three waltzes, allows us further opportunity to relax, breathe and contemplate the emotional journey on which Tchaikovsky is taking us. When we reach the final movement, it is clear that the music is reaching for resolution. Are you convinced by this expression of triumph? Once it comes, it has taken us from the symphony’s ominous opening in E minor to E major.

Like most listeners, I can only imagine the pleasures of playing Tchaikovsky’s Fifth. But surely it is almost as much fun to hear. Whether it ranks among the canon’s great symphonies is for each listener to decide. But according to critical orthodoxy, the one element that has been openly doubted—indeed, seems always to be in question when Tchaikovsky’s compositions are scrutinized—is its authenticity of emotion. Throughout the Fifth we hear Tchaikovsky earnestly seeking to probe feelings of profundity and depth, especially in its outer movements. Whether or not we are persuaded, there seems little doubt of Tchaikovsky’s sincerity of feeling. Among the many doubts that tormented him were those raised by critical opinion; he seems to have been so credulous and insecure that he believed his harshest critics and declared the symphony a failure. Modern audiences and musicians have overruled him and his critics, making Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 5 one of his most popular works.

Michael Clive is a cultural reporter living in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. He is program annotator for Pacific Symphony and Louisiana Philharmonic, and editor-in-chief for The Santa Fe Opera.

What to Listen For

The sheer abundance of melody in Tchaikovsky’s symphonies can eclipse their superb craftsmanship, but it is ever-present, both subtle and spectacular. Like all his symphonies, Tchaikovsky’s Fifth is deeply personal and is characterized by a sense of yearning. It is unified by thematic elements that return in every movement, and we can associate these with Tchaikovsky’s contemplation of personal fate. Even so, we can sense his struggle in expressing the authenticity and urgency of this quest, and, in the fourth movement, resolving it; he worried that the finale might seem overstated or insincere.

But the result is a glorious “blowfest.” This is a term your annotator first encountered in the late 1980s in Baltimore, when he was studying and teaching at the Peabody Conservatory. It was more respectful than it sounded, and it was lovingly applied to this symphony, which gives all the players in the pit—not just the brass and woodwind players, who literally blow into their instruments—a chance to play loud, long and hard in passages with high stakes. In Tchaikovsky’s Fifth, any choir in the orchestra can sound heroic.

In the criticism class where I learned this term, I was the only student who had not played professionally in an orchestra, and my classmates’ enthusiasm for Tchaikovsky’s symphonies, and for the Fifth in particular, surprised me. Not that I didn’t like these works, but as a listener I had long observed a certain snobbish resistance to them among the most eminent music critics—a group that everyone in the class aspired to join. In writing by the rightly revered critic and scholar Nicolas Slonimsky, a compatriot of Tchaikovsky’s who loved Russian music and whose knowledge of it was encyclopedic, you can almost see his lip curl as you read his description of Tchaikovsky as a prolific melodist. His implication: Sure, great melodies are okay if you like that sort of thing.

Of the musical values that critics such as Slonimsky look for in ranking a great symphony, two are beyond dispute in Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 5: beauty and craft. Yes, Tchaikovsky’s melodic gifts are abundant here, along with his harmonic mastery and his ability to sustain a large, complex symphonic architecture.
In 2015-16, Music Director Carl St.Clair celebrates his 26th season with Pacific Symphony. He is one of the longest tenured conductors of the major American orchestras. St.Clair’s lengthy history solidifies the strong relationship he has forged with the musicians and the community. His continuing role also lends stability to the organization and continuity to his vision for the Symphony’s future. Few orchestras can claim such rapid artistic development as Pacific Symphony—the largest orchestra formed in the United States in the last 50 years—due in large part to St.Clair’s leadership.

During his tenure, St.Clair has become widely recognized for his musically distinguished performances, his commitment to building outstanding educational programs and his innovative approaches to programming. Among his creative endeavors are: the vocal initiative, “Symphonic Voices,” which continues for the fifth season in 2015-16 with Puccini’s *Turandot*, following the concert-opera productions of *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *La Traviata* and *Carmen* in previous seasons; the creation six years ago of a series of multimedia concerts featuring inventive formats called “Music Unwound”; and the highly acclaimed American Composers Festival, which highlights the splendor of the William J. Gillespie Concert Organ in 2015-16 with music by Stephen Paulus, Wayne Oquin and Morten Lauridsen.

St.Clair’s commitment to the development and performance of new works by composers is evident in the wealth of commissions and recordings by the Symphony. The 2015-16 season continues a slate of recordings of works commissioned and performed by the Symphony in recent years, including William Bolcom’s *Songs of Lorca* and *Prometheus* and James Newton Howard’s *I Would Plant a Tree*, plus his Violin Concerto featuring James Ehnes. These join Elliot Goldenthal’s Symphony in G-sharp Minor, released in 2014-15; Richard Danielpour’s *Toward a Season of Peace*, released in 2013-14; Philip Glass’ *The Passion of Ramakrishna*, and Michael Daugherty’s *Mount Rushmore* and *The Gospel According to Sister Aimee*, both released in 2012-13. St.Clair has led the orchestra in other critically acclaimed albums including two piano concertos of Lukas Foss; Danielpour’s *An American Requiem* and Goldenthal’s *Fire Water Paper: A Vietnam Oratorio* with cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Other commissioned composers include Zhou Long, Tobias Picker, Frank Ticheli and Chen Yi, Curt Cacioppo, Stephen Scott, Jim Self (Pacific Symphony’s principal tubist) and Christopher Theofanidis.

In 2006-07, St.Clair led the orchestra’s historic move into its home in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall at Segerstrom Center for the Arts. The move came on the heels of the landmark 2005-06 season that included St.Clair leading the Symphony on its first European tour—nine cities in three countries playing before capacity houses and receiving extraordinary responses and reviews.

From 2008-10, St.Clair was general music director for the Komische Oper in Berlin, where he led successful new productions such as *La Traviata* (directed by Hans Neuenfels). He also served as general music director and chief conductor of the German National Theater and Staatskapelle (GNTS) in Weimar, Germany, where he led Wagner’s *Ring Cycle* to critical acclaim. He was the first non-European to hold his position at the GNTS; the role also gave him the distinction of simultaneously leading one of the newest orchestras in America and one of the oldest in Europe.

In 2014, St.Clair became the music director of the National Symphony Orchestra in Costa Rica. His international career also has him conducting abroad several months a year, and he has appeared with orchestras throughout the world. He was the principal guest conductor of the Radio Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart from 1998-2004, where he completed a three-year recording project of the Villa–Lobos symphonies. He has also appeared with orchestras in Israel, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South America, and summer festivals worldwide.

In North America, St.Clair has led the Boston Symphony Orchestra (where he served as assistant conductor for several years), New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the San Francisco, Seattle, Detroit, Atlanta, Houston, Indianapolis, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver symphonies, among many.

A strong advocate of music education for all ages, St.Clair has been essential to the creation and implementation of the Symphony’s education and community engagement programs including Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles, Heartstrings, Sunday Casual Connections, OC Can You Play With Us?, arts-x-press and Class Act.
Conductor Manuel López-Gómez is taking the musical world by storm as one of the most exciting talents to emerge from Venezuela’s internationally renowned music program, “El Sistema.” Maestro José Antonio Abreu, founder of El Sistema, wrote: “Thanks to his exceptional human spirit, high sense of professional responsibility and authentic artistic vision, Manuel is one of the principal and most brilliant leaders of the musical process in Venezuela.”

The 2014-15 season came to a triumphant close with a highly successful debut with Washington’s National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center, in a program of North and South American music. Following hugely successful debuts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and Gothenburg Symphony, López-Gómez is increasingly recognized not only for his ground-breaking work as music director of El Sistema in Colombia but also as a guest conductor of visionary and inspiring capabilities.

López-Gómez began his musical life in violin, piano, chamber music and composition. He performed in the violin section of the Simón Bolívar Orchestra for many years, where his talent for conducting was noticed early on and nurtured by his mentor Maestro Abreu. Following early projects assisting Gustavo Dudamel both with symphony orchestra and opera projects (La Bohème, La Traviata and Don Giovanni), López-Gómez has distinguished himself as a conductor in his own right.

As well as his work in Colombia, López-Gómez visits South American orchestras regularly including the Simón Bolívar Orchestra. Active also in opera, he conducted the world-debut of the recently orchestrated opera Atahualpa by Carlo Enrico Pasta in Lima, Perú, where he shortly returned to conduct a production of Gounod’s Romeo and Juliet.

In October 2014, López-Gómez assembled and conducted an orchestra of various El Sistema musicians for a televised performance at the UN General Assembly in New York City, with Lang Lang as soloist. Other highlights from the 2014-15 season included his return to the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France as well as performances with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Brussels Philharmonic and the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie and Württembergische Philharmonie in Germany. He began the season with his debut at the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, performing Wagner and Dvořák. In the summer of 2015, he conducted a production of Il Viaggio a Reims at the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro, Italy.

He looks forward to conducting engagements with the San Francisco Symphony, Czech Philharmonic and further afield with the Seoul Philharmonic and Sydney Symphony orchestras.

The soul of the Spanish guitar runs in Pablo Villegas’ blood. Born and raised in La Rioja, Spain, he is distinguished by performances as charismatic as they are intimate. With his singing tone and consummate technique, his interpretations conjure the passion, playfulness and drama of his homeland’s rich musical heritage.

At just 15, Villegas won the Andrés Segovia Award, launching a succession of international wins that include Gold Medal at the inaugural Parkening Competition. He became the youngest of his generation to appear with the New York Philharmonic, conducted by the late Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, and has since performed for the Dalai Lama and Spanish royal family.

Villegas has collaborated with orchestras in more than 30 countries, including the New York, Los Angeles and Israel Philharmonics and the Boston, San Francisco, Houston and Toronto Symphonies. In the 2015-16 season, he makes debuts with six orchestras including the Cincinnati and Santa Barbara Symphonies, and Norway’s Bergen Philharmonic.

He launches the season with the release of his Harmonia Mundi label debut, Americana, a solo album on which he explores New World guitar traditions from tango to bluegrass. Previous recordings include Histoire du Tango, with violinist Augustin Hadelich, and Manuel Ponce’s Concierto del sur, a platinum title for Sony Classical. He also recently recorded three Rodrigo concertos with the National Orchestra of Spain.

A dedicated champion of new music, it was Villegas who premiered Rounds, the first guitar composition of Academy Award-winner John Williams, and gave the world and European premiers of Concerto of Rio de Janeiro by Sérgio Assad.

In 2007 Villegas founded the Music Without Borders Legacy (MWBL), a non-profit organization that seeks to bridge cultural, social and political boundaries through classical music, reaching more than 15,000 at-risk children and youth to date.