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CLASSICS

# RODRIGO

Concierto de Aranjuez  
Fantasía para un Gentilhombre  
Elogio de la guitarra



Charles Ramirez

Chamber Orchestra of Europe  
Douglas Boyd, conductor

# JOAQUÍN RODRIGO

## Concierto de Aranjuez (1939)

- |   |                        |         |
|---|------------------------|---------|
| 1 | I. Allegro con spirito | [6.21]  |
| 2 | II. Adagio             | [11.37] |
| 3 | III. Allegro gentile   | [5.22]  |

## Fantasia para un gentilhomme (1954)

- |   |  |        |
|---|--|--------|
| 4 | I. Villano y Ricercare                             | [5.02] |
| 5 | II. Española y Fanfare de la Caballería de Napoles | [9.19] |
| 6 | III. Danza de las hachas                           | [2.05] |
| 7 | IV. Canario  | [5.31] |

## Elogio de la guitarra (1971)

- |    |               |        |
|----|---------------|--------|
| 8  | I. Allegro    | [5.28] |
| 9  | II. Andantino | [4.18] |
| 10 | III. Allegro  | [4.52] |

Total timings: [59.57]

CHARLES RAMIREZ GUITAR  
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA OF EUROPE  
DOUGLAS BOYD CONDUCTOR

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## JOAQUÍN RODRIGO

*Concierto de Aranjuez*

*Fantasia para un gentilhomme*

*Elogio de la guitarra*

Deep inside Joaquín Rodrigo, there was a man from the Golden Age, Spanish to the core. His personality and figure always reminded me of one of those plebeian noblemen that Velázquez, Ribera or Murillo liked to paint. He was shrewd, rapid, and witty ... his music is light but not commonplace, it is full of joy and at the same time full of melancholy, it is fresh but not ingenuous ... Perhaps for that reason, the most immortal of his music goes hand in hand with the most deeply rooted Spanish traditions: the guitar of Gaspar Sanz, the madrigal, the villancico (Spanish Christmas carol) or the poetry of Saint John of the Cross.

From "En busca del más allá" by Alvaro Marías; ABC, Madrid, July 7, 1999

Published in the Spanish press at the time of Rodrigo's death, this account is a poetically accurate summation of Rodrigo and his music. Imbued with the literature and traditions of his native Spain, it is little wonder that more than 40 of his works include a prominent role for the national instrument, the guitar. Rodrigo,

although no guitarist himself, was intimately acquainted with the instrument and its history. Indeed, many of his guitar compositions celebrate the finest guitarists and lutenists of both the recent present and the distant past. His *Sarabanda Lejana* is dedicated to the 'vihuela of Luis Milán', the *Concierto de Aranjuez* was written for Regino Sainz de la Maza, while Narciso Yepes and Manuel Lopez Ramos are similarly honoured with dedicated works. Naturally, Andrés Segovia, the man who, in the twentieth century, established the guitar internationally and inspired generations of guitarists of every musical hue, was not to be denied, and indeed himself commissioned the delectable *Fantasia para un gentilhomme*.

Rodrigo was born in Sagunto in the Province of Valencia on 22 November 1901, the day of the Roman Catholic feast of St Cecilia, the patron saint of music (his only child was born on Mozart's birthday – Rodrigo's favourite composer). As a result of a diphtheria epidemic he became severely visually impaired in 1905 and attended a college for blind children where his interest in music and literature was encouraged. Having already completed several well-received orchestral and chamber works as a young man, he followed his musical

compatriots and forebears, Isaac Albéniz and Manuel de Falla to Paris, where he studied with the fine composer and great teacher, Paul Dukas. There he met Falla who soon befriended the younger man and continually championed his music. The Spanish Civil War left the composer and his wife stranded in Germany in 1936, eventually returning to Paris, where in 1938, and with the encouragement of the guitarist, Regino Sainz de la Maza, Rodrigo began composing the *Concierto de Aranjuez*. The success of the concerto secured the composer's fame and numerous exalted posts, high honours, lectures, piano recitals, publications and commissions followed in the ensuing decades. Rodrigo died in 1999 having a few years before been raised to the Spanish nobility as Marqués de los jardines de Aranjuez.

Rarely has an avowedly classical piece of music, and especially one written in the twentieth century, enjoyed such spectacular critical and especially popular success as has Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*. Such is its exalted place in the popular imagination that it seems strange to learn how young it is – a mere 70 or so years. The concerto is to the guitar repertoire what Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto or Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto are to the repertoire of their own

respective instruments, and like the Tchaikovsky it has spawned numerous musical arrangements and popular interpretations, most strikingly from the world of jazz. Miles Davis and Gil Evans famously arranged the slow movement of the *Concierto* on the album *Sketches of Spain* and The Modern Jazz Quartet recorded their version a number of times. Songs based on or quoting the *Concierto* have also been recorded by the likes of The Shadows, Fairuz, Demis Roussos, Led Zeppelin and Buckethead. Known in the brass band world as 'Concerto de Orange Juice', it has permeated the movies (*Brassed Off*), and television and radio advertising to an extraordinary degree. Today the internet is swamped with performances of all kinds, with on-line guitar tablatures enabling budding guitarists to follow and learn the piece at their own pace.

The work was first performed at the Palau de la Musica, Barcelona on 9 November 1940, with Regino Sainz de la Maza, the work's dedicatee as soloist and César Mendoza Lasalle conducting the Barcelona Philharmonic Orchestra. Many press commentators immediately recognised its importance to the country's musical canon, praising its fusion of classical music with distinctly Spanish influences. Six years later

Narciso Yepes was introduced to Rodrigo, who gave him the manuscript. Rising to the challenge of the new and formidable technical difficulties in the guitar part, Yepes' performances in the late 1940s, when still only in his early 20s, brought international fame to the work as well as recognition of his own talent. His first performance in Paris brought forth the following rave review from the respected journal, *The Strad*

A concert with the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra ... included a splendidly restrained performance with Narciso Yepes of Joaquín Rodrigo's *Guitar Concerto*. This must surely be the only successful concerto written for the instrument. The beautiful balance of ideas and harmonies, the sensitive atmosphere and orchestration are an ever fresh delight.

As with many classical piece which have assumed international popular success, the concerto has now and then been less appreciated by critics than by audiences. Certainly it avoids the extremes of some twentieth-century music of the period, but it is far from conservative. Its melodies, idiom and textures spring from Rodrigo's deep knowledge and love of Spanish culture, folklore and history and his distinctive musical voice and deft individual handling of

orchestral sonority make for a work which is both modern and, as Rodrigo put it, 'neo-casticisma' – 'faithful to tradition'. The great British guitarist, Julian Bream, had this to say about Rodrigo on his death: 'The success of *Concierto de Aranjuez* has somehow eclipsed Rodrigo's other works. They need to be brought out and rediscovered, and Rodrigo should not be considered the author of only one work because the future will undoubtedly reveal other treasures to us'. More than ten years on, Rodrigo's works are being praised, performed recorded and rediscovered as never before – at least in part due to the fame of the *Concierto*.

While Rodrigo gave the world its first modern masterpiece for guitar and orchestra, it was Andrés Segovia, as a performer, who kick-started the guitar's entry onto the world stage. His influence can hardly be underestimated, and the range of compositions edited by, or specifically composed for him is extensive and influential. Segovia was forced to leave Spain during the Spanish Civil War and was thus not available to champion the *Concierto de Aranjuez*. In fact he never played the work, although he claimed to like it. On being asked by Charles Ramirez why he had not played it, he commented that he felt some

of the guitar part was not well written, being too high to bring out the true sonority of the guitar. However, Rodrigo did write the *Tres piezas españolas* and, more importantly, the *Fantasia para un gentilhomme* specifically for Segovia in 1954. Rodrigo's wife, Victoria Kamhi describes the genesis of the *Fantasia*:

It was in 1951 that Segovia asked Joaquín for a new concerto for guitar and chamber orchestra. In order to exchange ideas, he came one summer afternoon to our chalet in Torrelozanes and stayed to have supper ... After the triumph of *Concierto de Aranjuez* in Paris, Joaquín felt no great desire to compose another concerto, and he postponed the work. One day, however, he told me that he had thought it over and that he would write a "Suite" on themes collected by Gaspar Sanz, the famous guitarist of the court of Felipe IV. The title would be *Fantasia para un gentilhomme*, and he would also dedicate it to Andrés Segovia, whom he greatly admired, as a tribute ... At Christmas, Andrés Segovia unexpectedly came to our house, asking to look over the score ... Just as I was accompanying him at the piano in the first measures, there was a power failure, and the whole apartment was plunged into darkness. Thanks to two

candles, we surmounted the difficulty. The work played marvellously under the great artist's fingers, and the tenuous light lent an archaic atmosphere, very fitting, above all for the 'dance of the torches'.

Gaspar Sanz was a seventeenth-century composer, priest and guitarist, particularly renowned for his three-volume pedagogical treatise on the classical guitar, *Instrucción de musica sobre la guitarra española*. Rodrigo selected a number of themes by Sanz, expanding them into a 20-minute concerto for guitar and orchestra, uniting Segovia and Sanz through the centuries with the marriage of ancient dances and his own brand of twentieth-century lyricism. The gentleman of the title is normally assumed to be Segovia, but presumably also refers to Sanz as a 'gentleman' of the court. The first performance of the work, on March 5 1958, with the San Francisco Symphony under the baton of Enrique Jordá, was another great success for both composer and soloist.

His *concertante* compositions aside, Rodrigo wrote some two dozen other works for solo guitar. Amongst these, the *Elogio de la guitarra*, composed in 1971, is a remarkable testament to the breadth and depth of Rodrigo's

understanding of Spain's national instrument. This *Ode (or Tribute) to the guitar* is a substantial work in the manner of a sonata and demands a formidable technique from the performer. It seems to have been originally conceived as a work for guitar and orchestra by the Italian Composer, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, reflecting facets of the guitar and, naturally, also of Spain itself: nobility, church polyphony and, of course, the dance. Unfulfilled at his death, Castelnuovo-Tedesco's idea was proposed to Rodrigo by the guitarist, and eventual dedicatee, Angelo Gilardino. Rodrigo kept to the original plan and title, but decided against including orchestral accompaniment or explicit movement titles. The composer himself wrote of the piece, 'My intention was to demand a precise and infallible technique of the guitarist, as well as a profound sensitivity to the framework and thematics of the music. I have composed my 'challenge' to the guitarist...' – and a challenge it most certainly is. The opening sonata form movement expresses the nobility of the guitar in its use of grand chordal movement, while its successor is described by Rodrigo as evoking an 'ancient Castilian cathedral'. The final movement makes what Rodrigo's wife described as 'diabolical requirements' on the player and dances on to a dramatic and thrilling climax – a

suitable homage to the instrument for which the composer helped create a new golden age.

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## BIOGRAPHIES

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### CHARLES RAMIREZ

Charles Ramirez was taught to play the guitar in his native Gibraltar by William Gomez, himself a pupil of the renowned Narciso Yepes. He made his debut on London's South Bank in 1974, his final year as a student of the Royal College of Music, where he had been the first guitarist chosen to play a concerto – the *Concierto de Aranjuez*. He soon established a reputation as an artist of rare skill.

His repertoire is wide-ranging and he has given the world premiere of large-scale compositions by leading composers such as Erika Fox, Jeremy Dale-Roberts, John Lambert and Naresh Sohal.

The guitar duo with his wife, Helen Kalamuniak, performed the first transcription for two guitars of JS Bach's *Goldberg Variations* and also Manuel de Falla's complete ballet *El Amor Brujo*, amongst others.

He was appointed Professor of Guitar at the RCM aged 25, a position he has held ever since and where he also teaches at the college's Junior Department. His influential teaching led to the publication of the highly successful *Technical Development for Guitarists*, which is considered to be a reference manual for many teachers and students.

In this recording Charles Ramirez plays guitars by Teodoro Perez and Renato Barone.



## CHAMBER ORCHESTRA OF EUROPE

Acknowledged as one of the finest orchestras in the world, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe was founded in 1981 by a group of young musicians graduating from the European Union Youth Orchestra. It was their ambition to continue working together at the highest possible professional level, and of that original group, eighteen remain in the current core membership of fifty. The members of COE pursue parallel careers as international soloists, Leaders and Principals of nationally-based orchestras, as members of eminent chamber groups, and as tutors and professors of music. The Chamber Orchestra of Europe provides an excellent illustration of how Europeans can come together artistically to create a strong European ethos. It is the players' wealth of cultural backgrounds and shared love of music-making which remain at the heart of their inspired performances.

Over the years the COE has developed especially close relationships with Claudio Abbado, Bernard Haitink and Nikolaus Harnoncourt, and works frequently with Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Semyon Bychkov, Vladimir Jurowski, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Sakari Oramo, Andrés

Schiff and Mitsuko Uchida. The COE has strong links with the Lucerne Festival, the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, the Styriarte Festival in Graz, and also with certain of the major concert halls in Europe. These include the Cité de la musique in Paris, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Alte Oper in Frankfurt, the Philharmonie in Cologne and the Opéra in Dijon.

The Orchestra has made over 250 recordings, many of which have won prestigious international awards including three Gramophone "Record of the Year" awards with Claudio Abbado and Nikolaus Harnoncourt. COE has also won two Grammys and the MIDEM "Classical Download" award. DVD releases include Mozart's *The Magic Flute* directed by Kenneth Branagh, and Schubert's *Alfonso & Estrella* conducted by Nikolaus Harnoncourt. During 2010 the COE has released three concert DVDs, firstly Richard Strauss' *Metamorphosen* and *Bourgeois Gentleman* and Ravel's *Piano Concerto in G* with Hélène Grimaud and Vladimir Jurowski; secondly Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* and *Mass in C Major* conducted by Nikolaus Harnoncourt at the 2007 Styriarte Festival in Graz; and thirdly Schumann's *Symphony No. 2 in C major*, Sibelius' *Rakastava*, for strings and percussion, *Valse Triste* and *Violin*

*Concerto in D minor* with Vladimir Ashkenazy and Valeriy Sokolov.

The COE was appointed an "Ambassador" of the European Union in 2007, and benefits from generous support from the EU Culture Programme and The Gatsby Charitable Foundation.



## DOUGLAS BOYD

Douglas Boyd is currently Music Director of Manchester Camerata, Chief Conductor of the Musikkollegium Winterthur, Principal Guest Conductor of the Colorado Symphony Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of City of London Sinfonia.

He was born in Glasgow and studied with Janet Craxton at the Royal Academy of Music in London, and with Maurice Bourgue in Paris. A founding member and Principal Oboist of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe until 2002, he now conducts them on a regular basis.

In addition to his concerts with Manchester Camerata Douglas Boyd appears with many of the UK's major orchestras. Over recent years these have included the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players, BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Northern Sinfonia.

Amongst the orchestras with which Douglas Boyd has appeared on the continent of Europe

are Gürzenich Orchestra of Cologne, Orchestre National de Lyon, Tonhalle Orchester Zurich, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Budapest Festival Orchestra and the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg.

Further afield he recently made a hugely successful visit to Australia conducting both the Sydney and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras for the first time. He will return to the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in 2011 for a major two week project. He also made his conducting debut in Japan with the Nagoya Symphony Orchestra to which he has been re-invited.

In 2000 Douglas Boyd made his North American conducting debut with the Gardner Chamber Orchestra. In 2001 he conducted at the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego and at the end of 2002 made his debut with the St Paul Chamber Orchestra in Minnesota becoming an Artistic Partner in 2004 a position which he recently relinquished. In May 2008 they undertook a series of concerts at Zankel Hall, New York.

Douglas Boyd is fast developing his interest in opera and in 2008 conducted *Die Zauberflöte* for Glyndebourne Opera on Tour. In 2009 he conducted *Fidelio* for Garsington Opera and returned in 2010 for *Le nozze di Figaro*, where

his conducting received critical praise from the national press. He recently made his debut with Zurich Opera.

Douglas Boyd is also committed to working with students and has conducted the orchestras of the Royal College of Music, Royal Northern College of Music, Guildhall School of Music, Oxford and Cambridge Universities and the National Youth Orchestra of Norway. Douglas

Boyd's recording of the Bach *Concerti for DG* marked his recording debut as director/soloist and his first recordings as a conductor with Manchester Camerata of Beethoven Symphonies No 2 and No 5 and Mahler Symphony No 4 (on Avie) received universal critical acclaim. He has recently recorded Schubert Symphonies with the St Paul Chamber Orchestra on their own label.





## In Memoriam Bishop Charles Caruana

Recorded at Auditorio Baranain, Pamplona, Spain from 16-17 October 2010, and Sherbourne Manor, Warwickshire, from 13-14 December 2010.

Executive Producer - Carlo Ramirez

*Concierto de Aranjuez and Fantasia para un gentilhombre*

Producer and Editor - Nicholas Parker

Recording Engineer - Mike Hatch

Recording Assistant - Craig Jenkins

*Elogio de la guitarra*

Recording Engineer - Luca Martegani

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