

January/February 2003

Well, finally, it happened...!

Manuel was scheduled to play the *Fantasia para un Gentilhombre* with the Andorra Chamber Orchestra in October 2002. The first rehearsal was scheduled for October 26th, with a concert on the 27th. Nothing unusual about that; he usually only does one rehearsal, plus the general rehearsal.

The conductor, Ignacio Yepes, who is the son of the late guitarist Narciso Yepes, picked Manuel up at his hotel, and as they were driving to the rehearsal, Manuel asked him, "So, what else is on the program?" The conductor said, "Well, we open with Mozart, and then we do the *Aranjuez*..."

Manuel said, "Oh, the *Aranjuez*... Who will be playing the it?" The conductor sort of looked at Manuel laughingly and said, "Ha ha ha, how funny... I'm sure we can find someone to do it! "

Manuel said, "No, really, who will be playing the *Aranjuez*?" The conductor looked at Manuel and laughed some more and looked at the concertmaster, who was there too, and made a comment about how funny Manuel was. Then he said, "Well, **YOU** are playing the *Aranjuez*!"

Manuel, who had been filing his nails in preparation for the rehearsal, stopped filing, looked at him seriously, and said, "No, I'm not. I was asked to do the *Fantasia para un Gentilhombre*, which is what I have prepared."

At this point, there was total silence in the car as everyone stared at each other, trying to figure out who was pulling whose leg...

Well, it turns out that there was a miscommunication somewhere. The orchestra thought they had asked for the *Aranjuez*, while what got to Manuel was that they wanted the *Fantasia*.

Now what? Manuel had not played the *Aranjuez* for 7 months, not even touched it, and the orchestra did not have the score of the *Fantasia*, so they couldn't play it. All this, on their way to the only rehearsal...

What Manuel ended up doing was trusting his memory and his numerous encounters with the *Aranjuez*, and simply going for it. The rehearsal went well, no problems at all, and the following day, they had a run-through and the concert.

Luckily, the concert went well, despite a stressful couple of days. Come to think of it, it is actually amazing that this has not happened before during 27 years of touring. We certainly hope that this will be the first and last time this happens!