

January/February 2001

Well, some tours are more difficult than others and many times the schedule can be very hectic. For tours like these, everything needs to be organized to the last detail to allow the artist to practice and sleep. Yes, sleep!

An example of a difficult tour was the Jan/Feb tour 2002, when Manuel went from home to Munich to San Francisco to the Canary Islands (Spain) and back home again.

He left Baltimore at 5pm, arriving in Munich at 7 the following morning. Luckily, his hotel room was ready; often, hotel rooms do not become available until around noon or so. He took a nap and did a little practicing in the evening.

The following morning at 10 am (4 am for him), he rehearsed the Aranjuez with the Munich Rundfunkorchester and Miguel Angel Gomez Martinez. He then had to stay awake for the rest of the day to get used to the time zone. Why? Because the concert was at 11 am the following day and it was necessary for him to sleep that night. After the concert and a scheduled meeting, he practiced the repertoire that he had to play later that week.

The following day, he flew to San Francisco (a 13 hour flight!), arriving at 3pm. Later that evening (and with very little rest), he had to rehearse with Kent Nagano and the Berkeley Symphony at 9pm (6am for him and without having slept!). Once again, he had to try to get used to a new time zone right away, as the concerts and rehearsals were in the evening -- which is actually morning in Munich!

After playing the Aranjuez on Wednesday and Thursday, he played a short one hour recital at 2 pm that Saturday. The plan was to have a car waiting to take him straight to the airport for a 4:45 pm flight to the Canary Islands (leaving little time to meet and greet people after the recital).

The car didn't show up, so a friend took him to the airport, arriving just 40 minutes before an international departure to London. Because of a delay, Manuel missed his connection from London to Barcelona, finally arriving in Tenerife after 23 hours of total travel time!

Though he didn't get to the hotel until around 10 pm, he still did a little practicing because now he had to play the Fantasia with the Helsinki Philharmonic and Leif Segerstam.

After the Canary Islands, he finally came home -- but for less than a week. Then off again for recitals in Mexico on Friday and Ann Arbor, Michigan on Sunday afternoon, but not before having taught one day of lessons and a master class at the Peabody Conservatory.

Speaking of sleeping, Manuel ran into Al Di Meola at the Oporto airport in Portugal early one morning this past summer. They had both played the night before, only 5km apart. They were both very tired. Al talked about some restaurant where they had been taken to dinner after the concert, so Manuel asked him "Did you sleep?" to which Al answered, "Sleep? What's that?"