

# Wells Fargo

presents

OAKLAND EAST BAY SYMPHONY

**OPENING NIGHT CONCERT**

**November 18, 2005 - 8:00PM**

PARAMOUNT THEATRE, OAKLAND

Michael Morgan, *Music Director & Conductor*

## PROGRAM

**Modest Mussorgsky**

**Prelude to Act I (“Dawn on the  
Moscow River”) from *Khovanshchina***

**Guillermo Galindo**

***Trade Routes***

## INTERMISSION

**Sergei Rachmaninoff**

**Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Opus 27**

- I. Largo; Allegro moderato
- II. Allegro molto
- III. Adagio
- IV. Allegro vivace

Season Guest Artist travel generously provided by SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

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## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Modest Musorgsky (1839-1881)**

#### **Prelude to Act I (“Dawn on the Moskva River”) from *Khovanshchina***

Just before the second version of *Boris Bodunov* was unveiled in 1872, Musorgsky wrote to the critic Vladimir Stassov: “It is gratifying to think that when we are arraigned for *Boris*, we shall already be looking into the distant musical future, thinking of *Khovanshchina*, living *Khovanshchina*.”

Based on events in seventeenth century Russia, shortly before the rise of Peter the Great, *Khovanshchina* occupied Musorgsky on and off for eight years. It was still unfinished at his death. Rimsky-Korsakov completed the opera, but, as Anatol Liadov put it, “it seems easy enough to correct Musorgsky’s defects, but when it is done, it is impossible not to feel that the result is no longer Musorgsky.” In 1959 Dmitri Shostakovich made a new orchestration of the work that was more faithful to Musorgsky’s intent.

Rimsky-Korsakov had conducted excerpts from *Khovanshchina* in 1878. The first complete performance was given by the Musico-Dramatic Society in St. Petersburg on February 21, 1886.

Completed in September, 1874, the Prelude to the first act depicts a winter daybreak over Red Square in Moscow. Musorgsky himself subtitled the music “Dawn on the Moskva River.”

### **Guillermo Galindo (b.1960) *Trade Routes***

*Trade Routes* is a musical tour through a contemporary American city. The journey offers a musical interpretation of city life, the rhythm of its streets, the diversity and daily dramas of its citizens. It is a collage of random synchronicities, a complex chance operation interconnecting life styles, religions, foods and spices, values and cultural traits. Images constantly move at internet speed, from the individual to the collective and vice versa. In *Trade Routes* people stop being statistics to finally become human.

### **Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)**

#### **Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Opus 27**

“To hell with them!” wrote Rachmaninoff in 1907. “I don’t know how to write symphonies, and what is more I have no real desire to write them.” His aversion to symphonies was a direct result of the disastrous failure of his First Symphony in 1897.

By the fall of 1906, he had changed his mind. Moving to Dresden with his wife Natalya and three-year-old daughter Irina, Rachmaninoff began his Second Symphony. He still had misgivings. “When I get it written,” he said, “and then correct my First Symphony, I give my solemn word--no more symphonies.” Thirty years later, he would violate this vow with his Third Symphony.

Despite his secrecy about the work, word of the Symphony leaked to the Russian newspapers. From Dresden in February, 1907, Rachmaninoff wrote to a friend: “I have composed a symphony. It’s true! It’s only ready in rough. I finished it a month ago, and immediately put it aside. It was a severe worry to me and I am not going to think about it any more. But I am mystified how the newspapers got onto it!”

The first performance took place in St. Petersburg on February 8, 1908. The composer conducted the Russian Musical Society. One critic wrote that the work “may be overlong for the general audience, but how fresh, how beautiful it is!” A week later, Rachmaninoff repeated his success in Moscow. By the end of the year he won his second Glinka Prize and received 1000 rubles.

After an early performance in the United States, Philip Hale wrote: “The reasons for the popularity of this Symphony are not far to seek. The themes are eminently melodious, and some of them are of singular beauty; there is rich coloring; there are beautiful nuances in color; there is impressive sonority; there are frequent and sharp contrasts in sentiment, rhythm, and expression; there is stirring vitality. Mr. Rachmaninoff in this Symphony is Romantic in the old and accustomed forms. He does not surprise or perplex by experiments in harmony; his form is essentially academic and traditional. Here is another case of new wine in old leather bottles, but first all the bottles were put in thorough order, patched, strengthened, and cleaned.”

Biographer John Culshaw writes: “Rachmaninoff’s opening theme is not simply a motto denoting fate; it is a strain which epitomizes the spirit of the symphony, and it moves through the work like a ghost, bringing forward new material and hovering in the background while the material is being stated and developed.”

~ Program Notes by Charley Samson, copyright 2005