

Come Dancing, Strictly Da Capo!
Programme Notes

España, Rhapsody (1883)

Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-94), Arr. Robert Clérissé

Though he wrote a great deal of music, including several operas, most people only know a single work by Chabrier - this vivid, sun-drenched evocation of Spain composed after the composer took a memorable trip to Andalusia, where he heard flamenco for the first time. Letters from his journey dance so lasciviously on the edge of the erotic that only the tamest may be quoted here:

“Since coming to Andalusia I haven't seen a really ugly woman... I won't let on what these women display, but they display it beautifully. [With] their arms bare and their eyelashes so long they could be curled:... they spend their time laughing, gesticulating, dancing, [and] drinking.”

Quite an intimate observation, considering that he brought his wife on the trip!

In *España*, Chabrier utilizes the dance forms of the *Jota* and *Malaguena*. The first, a national dance, is in 3/8 time. The *Malaguena* is a popular dance in triple time and is similar to the Fandango; it is usually accompanied with castanets and tambourine, or guitar.

Tequila (1958)

Daniel Flores (b. 1929, a.k.a. "Chuck Rio"), Arr. Masato Myokoin

You may not know the name but you will almost certainly be familiar with the sound. Chuck Rio (born Danny Flores) wrote and played the saxophone on *Tequila* by the Champs, a group he formed with Dave Burgess in 1957. *Tequila* introduced the Latin sound to the rock'n'roll generation and Flores' gravel voiced vocal interjections are familiar to just about every generation of record buyer. Originally released as an instrumental B-side to Burgess's *Train to Nowhere*, it charted quickly and hit number one on 28 March 1958.

Four Dances from "West Side Story" (1957)

Scherzo; Mambo; Cha-cha; Cool (Fugue)

Leonard Bernstein (1918 – 1990), Arr. Ian Polster

Leonard Bernstein's music to *West Side Story* brought a new dimension to Shakespeare's classic love story of Romeo and Juliet and the underlying dynamics of social and racial strife. Now a concert piece in its own right, the Symphonic Dance Music has been excerpted from *West Side Story* and scored for band by Ian Polster.

The *Scherzo* is the first of four movements; it displays a characteristic lively and animated rhythm in triple time interspersed with soft, almost tentative, rhythms of changing meter. The transition into the *Mambo* is abrupt and dominated by the percussion and brass. The third movement, *Cha-cha*, is soft and graceful, in contrast to what has preceded it. The *Fugue* is built upon a swing-style "bop" rhythm that underscores the conflict between the Sharks and the Jets.

The Slavonic Dances: A Symphonic Suite (1878)

Dance No. 8 (furiant - presto); Dance No. 4 (sousedská – tempo di minuetto); Dance No.3 (polka – poco allegro)

Antonín Dvorák (1841-1904), Arr. Jim Curnow

The Slavonic Dances were originally written as duo-piano pieces but were welcomed with such extraordinary public and critical acclaim that they were immediately transcribed for orchestra. Dvorák took the liberty of using Brahms's *Hungarian Dances* as a pattern for his dances. However, in contrast to Brahms who used the original melodies of Hungarian folk dances, Dvorák created entirely stylized versions of the characteristic Slavonic dances using the folk rhythms only, and composing his own original music. Dvorák captured the spirit of the folk dances of his native Bohemia, as well as those of Slovakia, Moravia, Silesia, Serbia, Poland, and Ukraine.

So successful were the original *Dances*, Dvorák's publisher requested him to compose more of the spirited, light-hearted works and Dvorák duly obliged with a second series eight years later. Beyond fulfilling a commission, Dvorák's Slavonic Dances were, for him, a political statement. The late 19th century brought an increasing awareness of national identity to various ethnic groups in Europe and Dvorák took the opportunity to celebrate in music the Slavic cultures of Central Europe, then under the repressive control of the Austrian Empire.

Unsquare Dance (1961)

Dave Brubeck (b.1920), Arr. Robert W. Smith

Dave Brubeck is best-known as a jazz pianist, and as the author of such favourites as *Unsquare Dance* and *Take Five* (which was actually written by his long-time musical partner, alto saxophonist Paul Desmond). Brubeck experimented with time signatures through much of his career, recording *Take Five* in 5/4, *Pick Up Sticks* in 6/4, *Unsquare Dance* in 7/4, and *Blue Rondo A La Turk* in 9/8, an experimentation begun with his attempts to put music to the odd rhythms generated by various machines around him on his parents' cattle ranch in a small town in the western United States.

** INTERVAL **

Blue Tango (1951)

Leroy Anderson (1908 – 1975), Arr. James D Ployhar

The music of Leroy Anderson is firmly entrenched in American popular culture. Anderson turned out hit after hit during the '50s and '60s. His best-known works include *Sleigh Ride*, *The Syncopated Clock*, *Fiddle-Fiddle* and *Blue Tango*.

He wrote nearly all his pieces originally for orchestra, then transcribed most of them himself for band and often for other groups of instruments. It was his own recording of *Blue Tango* that made Number 1 on the Hit Parade of 1952.

Anderson is renowned for his individual way with the percussion section and his love of playing around with musical sound effects such as the typewriter sound, the clock-ticking and the horse neigh at the end of *Sleigh Ride*. However, *Blue Tango*, Anderson's most-covered song, is a novelty among his novelties: a simple, lovely tune with no gimmick. It uses the traditional Argentine tango rhythm but without the melodramatic flash of authentic tangos. As a popular song written specifically for a string orchestra, it was naturally picked up and covered by Mantovani, Kostelanetz, and all their counterparts.

Dancerics (1999)

Lull me beyond thee; Catching of Quails; My Lady's Rest; Quodling's Delight

Kenneth Hesketh (b.1968)

The term *Dancerics* can be found in a copy of Playford's *Dancing Master*, a collection of folk and popular tunes of the 17th century used by master fiddle players to teach dance steps to a nobleman's house or a King's court.

Dancerics has been described as a newly written set of 'amiable antiquities'. Where the old occurs it has been adapted in mood and composition and is often interspersed with completely new material. The contemporary harmonies and rhythms bring a breath of new into these themes and add drama to the suite. The first movement, *Lull Me Beyond Thee*, is gentle and lilting, almost a barcarole, and is very much a reverie. The original tune had the name *Poor Robin's Maggot* - maggot, however, in the 17th century, meant whim or fancy.

Catching of Quails is a colourful, buoyant scherzo on an original melody. The thematic material is shuttled around the band to contrast with full-blooded tutti. *My Lady's Rest* is a tender pavane, also on an original melody, with Moorish leanings. Beautiful solo passages, expressive contrapuntal writing and warm tutti provide an opportunity to show off the most lyrical of playing. The final movement, *Quodling's Delight* is a clever combination of the 17th century melody, *Goddesses*, with an original contrasting melody, creating a rousing finale.

Molly on the Shore (1920)

Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882-1961)

Born in Melbourne, Australia, Percy Grainger was based in London from 1901 to 1914, where he established a career as a concert pianist and private teacher. He also collected, transcribed and arranged English folksongs, including the highly popular *Molly on the Shore*, *Shepherd's Hey* and *Handel in the Strand*. With the outbreak of World War I, Grainger moved to the USA where he lived for the rest of his life, rapidly establishing himself both as a pianist and as a composer.

Grainger's athleticism became the source of legend; he once bounded on stage and jumped over the grand piano for a dramatic entrance. He was known for his long hikes, often between cities on a concert tour, and once arrived for a performance in his gym shorts with his tuxedo rolled up under his arm.

Molly on the Shore is based on two reel tunes from Cork, Ireland: *Temple Hill* and *Molly on the Shore*, which Grainger found in Charles Stanford Villiers's *The Complete Petrie Collection of Ancient Irish Music*. He made the first setting of the melodies for *Molly on the Shore* in 1907 for string quartet as a birthday gift for his mother. He arranged it for orchestra in 1914, for piano in 1918 and for band in 1920. In 1938 he made an arrangement for alto sax and piano.

Ballet music from the Opera Prince Igor (1890)

Alexander Borodin (1883-1887)

Alexander Borodin, composer of *Prince Igor*, one of the greatest of all Russian operas, once said that for him 'music was a pastime, a relaxation from more serious occupations'. Those 'more serious occupations' were the disciplines of science and medicine, in which he also achieved international fame.

In 1864 he met Balakirev, and through him César Cui, Modest Mussorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov. In this way he became a member of 'The Five' who were also sometimes called 'The Mighty Handful'. As nationalism swept across the European continent and elsewhere, they, along with artists and musicians all over Russia, wanted to create art and music that was distinctly Russian, turning away from the influences of Western Europe.

Musically speaking, Borodin was the least committed but most gifted of the five composers. His best work, the Opera *Prince Igor* remained unfinished at his death in 1887, after eighteen years on the drawing board. It was finally completed and orchestrated by Glazunov and Rimsky-Korsakov. *Prince Igor* is set in the 12th century, when a barbarous and nomadic people known as the Polovtsians invaded southern Russia. The story concerns the capture of Prince Igor and son Vladimir of Russia by the Polovtsian leader, Khan Konchak.