

MMME NOTES

as a guideline. *Slavonic Dance No. 7* is a Skocna dance – one which requires a good deal of leaping – Dvořák ends it with a polka. In 1886, Dvořák wrote a second set of *Slavonic Dances* – the Op. 72.

PAVANE POUR UNE INFANTE DÉFUNTE

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Although today the music of the French composer and pianist, Maurice Ravel, is some of the most well-known and admired classical repertoire, such as his *Boléro*, he did struggle for a number of years before he received public recognition. One of his earliest successes was the *Pavane pour une infante défunte*, which the Spanish pianist, Ricardo Viñes premièred in Paris in 1902; another well-loved work – the *Jeux d'eau* – was also premièred by Viñes on that evening. Both of these works were written while Ravel was studying composition with Gabriel Fauré at the Conservatoire de Paris. Ravel was also an excellent transcriber and orchestrator. He published an orchestrated version of the *Pavane pour une infante défunte* in 1910, which has been very useful for others who might wish to transcribe the work for different instrumental combinations, such as for four guitars. Interestingly, that version was not premièred in Paris but in Manchester at Charles Hallé's Gentlemen's Concerts on 27 February 1911 with the orchestra conducted by Sir Henry Wood.

GYPSY DANCE

Georges Bizet (1838–1875)

The *Gypsy Dance* or *Chanson bohème* comes from his opera *Carmen*. The ending of the story, with the death of the heroine, Carmen, caused an uproar after the première at the Opéra-Comique in Paris on 3 March 1875 because audiences were accustomed to being 'entertained' by opera and didn't want too much of the harsh reality of life presented to them. The season continued with 48 performances but in June 1875, before the end of the season, Georges Bizet died suddenly of a heart attack; a greater tragedy perhaps even than the death of *Carmen*. The story is set in Seville, Spain, around 1820, when Carmen, a beautiful and vibrant gypsy

steals the heart of corporal Don José. The *Gypsy Dance* opens the Second Act with a feeling of great excitement but ominous anticipation. When she redirects her attentions to the bullfighter Escamillo, Don José murders *Carmen* in a fit of jealousy.

HUNGARIAN DANCE NO. 5

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Brahms based his series of *Hungarian Dances* on actual Hungarian folk melodies, although some of the 21 Hungarian Dances were original compositions. They were completed in 1869; he originally wrote them for four hands at the piano; in other words for two pianists to play on the same piano but then later arranged them for a variety of ensembles, including arranging the first ten for piano solo. The *Hungarian Dance No. 5* was based on the csárdás by Kéler Béla, which was called *Bártfai emlék*; although, at the time of writing, Brahms thought that it was a traditional folksong. He later arranged the *Dance No. 5* for full orchestra.

INTERVAL

CUBAN LANDSCAPE WITH RUMBA

Leo Brouwer (b. 1939)

The Cuban composer, conductor and guitarist, Leo Brouwer, has written a series of works under the title of *Cuban Landscape*, which includes *Paisaje cubano con lluvia* (*Cuban Landscape with Rain*), (1984) for guitar quartet or guitar orchestra and *Paisaje cubano con campanas* (*with bells*) (1986), *Paisaje cubano con ritual* (1989) for bass clarinet and percussion, *Paisaje cubano con tristeza* (*with sadness*) (1989) and more recently *Paisaje cubano con fiesta* (2007).

With the *Cuban Landscape with Rumba* (1985), Leo Brouwer combines Afro-Cuban rhythms with the use of avant-garde styles, such as minimalism and aleatoric (chance) techniques to create a new sound world moving away from the traditional sound of four guitars. In this piece, Brouwer uses the full collection of dances under the *rumba* category, that is, the *guaguancó*, the *yambú* and the *columbia*.

THREE DANCES

Jonas Tamulionis (b. 1949)

The Lithuanian composer Jonas Tamulionis has won over 40 prizes for his compositions. He has written a number of works for the Baltic Guitar Quartet, including the *Three Dances*: 'The first dance is fast and temperamental. No particular folk melody is used in it, but the tones, especially in the middle part, are of an archaic character. The second dance is slow and quiet; it is based on a melody of the folk dance *Počtaljonas* (Postman), which later polyphonically blends into the melody of the Lithuanian song *Ant kalno gluosnys* (Willow on the Hill). Theme of the third dance is based on the South African folk melody *Tant Hesse se Witperd* (Aunt Hesse's White House). This dance is fast and polyphonic with various percussion imitating effects used in it.'

SUMMER DANCE

Chris Ruebens (b. 1975)

Since the age of 17 Chris Ruebens has played and sung in blues, rock, pop and disco bands and music theatre productions. Composing has always been a part of his career. Chris writes: 'it is in memory of the summer of 2008, in which my adventure in Lithuania began. At the end of that summer, the BGQ asked me if I would be interested in joining them, which meant moving to Lithuania as soon as possible, so we could start right away with preparing the CD recording of *Dancing with guitar*. A few weeks later, I arrived in Vilnius with a suitcase and my guitar. Soon the idea came up that we should add one more piece, from a Belgian composer. The result was *Summer Dance*, a song full of energy, a sunny melody and catchy rhythms.'

FROM SOIREEES MUSICALES

No. 8 LA DANZA

Gioacchino Rossini (1792–1868)

La Danza is in the form of a Neapolitan *tarantella*. When Rossini began publishing his song collections called *Soirées musicales* from 1830–35, they were well received immediately. *La Danza* was so appealing that Franz Liszt wrote a transcription for piano during Rossini's lifetime; it inspired Frédéric Chopin to write his own *tarantella*: *Tarantelle in A-flat*, Op. 43 [1]; and in more recent years, this show-piece has been made more famous and popular by the tenor Luciano Pavarotti. The original *tarantella* is known for its fast rhythm, which accelerates during the piece to a hypnotic, almost frenzied, pace. Rossini's *La Danza*, originally for voice and piano, is a more elegant version; the text was by Conte Carlo Pepoli (1796–1881).

GITANA LINDA

Chris Ruebens (b. 1975)

Gitana Linda was written in 2010, despite its title, Chris Ruebens explains that: 'it has not a clear story behind it. The main theme is inspired by guitarists of the *flamenco Nuevo* school, such as Vicente Amigo. With this piece, I tried to break away from the classical way of writing for guitar ensembles and see where that would bring me. The experience of playing a lot with jazz musicians inspired me to leave space for improvisation, to work with percussion accompaniment and to write a pure percussion section, adding the *cajón*.'

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SOME LACCS FUTURE EVENTS

CARLOS BARBOSA-LIMA, (Brazil),
Brazilian music for the guitar.

OLEG TIMOFEYEV, (Russia)
Music by Russian Seven-String guitar.

JAVIER CONTRERAS, (Chile),
Chilean guitarist and composer will perform "Magallanes", concerto for guitar and orchestra.

CONCHITA DE ANTUÑANO, (Mexico),
Mezzo-Soprano and CECILIO PERERA, guitar, classical Latin American and Spanish songs.

PRAGUE GUITAR QUARTET, (Czech Republic),
will play: Ravel, Janáček, Prokofiev, Grieg and Fauré.

PATRICK VENA, (Finland),
Will introduce Finnish music (UK Première), by Rautavaara, Niemi, Klami, Muro, and Latin American repertoire.