Abstract

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According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the definition of dance is "to move your body in a way that goes with the rhythm and style of music that is being played." <sup>1</sup>

As you can see in that definition, these two important ways of expressing human feelings, music and dance, are very closely related. Countless pieces of music have been composed for dance, and are still being composed.

It is impossible and useless to count how many kinds of dances exist in the world.

Different kinds of dances have been developed according to their purposes, cultures,

 $<sup>^1\</sup> Merriam-Webster\ Dictionary.\ ``Dance."\ http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dance$ 

rhythm and tempo. For this reason, the field of dance-related music necessarily expanded significantly.

A great deal of dance music has been written for orchestras, small ensembles, or vocals. Along with them, keyboard music also has a huge repertoire of dance pieces. For example, one of the most famous form in Baroque period was suites. Suites usually include 5 or more dance movements in the same key, such as Minuet, Allemende, Courant, Sarabande, Gigue, Bourree, Gavotte, Passepied, and so on. Nationalistic dances like waltz, polonaise, mazurka, and tarantella, were wonderful sources for composers like Chopin, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky. Dance-based movements were used for Mozart and Beethoven's piano sonatas, chamber works and concertos.

Composers have routinely traveled around the world to collect folk and dance tunes from places they visit. For example, Bartok and Balakirev's pieces that are based on folk dances from where they had traveled became famous and are still thought to be valuable for studying and performing today.

For these reasons, it is clear that dance-related music is a very important part of keyboard music. In three dissertation recitals, to expand my performing repertoire and to understand dance-related music deeper, I tried to explore many different styles of dances, and compare interpretations between composers.

This program note contains information about each pieces' composers, related dances, and backgrounds. I hope this will be helpful for a future performer who's seeking an effective dance based keyboard piece.

## Dance Based Music on Piano

by

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## **OFIRST Recital**

## **Topic: Waltzes and Tarantellas**

**Waltz**: A dance in 3/4 time. First beat is heavy, and the remaining two beats are played lightly.

**Tarantella**: Tarantella is a dance in 6/8 time. A dance that took its name from the southern Italian seaport of Taranto. The bite of the tarantula spider (found in the surrounding countryside and also named after the town) was popularly supposed to cause a disease which would prove fatal unless the victim performed a lively dance, Tarantella. <sup>2</sup>

## **Invitation to Dance Op.65**

Carl Maria von Weber (1786~1826) Transcribed by Carl Tausig (1841~1871)

Carl Tausig was a popular pianist and composer, arranger. He became Liszt's pupil at the age of 14, and soon became the Maestro's favorite. He also composed a few pieces such as the impromptu, *Das Geisterschiff* and *Etudes de concert*, all published as op.1; *Tarantelle* and *Réminiscences de Hallka de Moniuszko*, both as op.2; a nocturne with variations entitled *L'espérance* op.3; *Rêverie* op.5; and an étude, *Le ruisseau* op.6. He also arranged many works of popular composers such as Bach, Chopin, Liszt,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6663?q=tarantella&search=quick&pos=2&\_start=1#firsthit

Schubert, Wagner, Berlioz, Weber, and more. <sup>3</sup> His arrangements are well known for their effectiveness and difficulty.

Invitation to dance (Aufforderung zum Tanz) Op. 65, which reperesents a ballroom scene, is known as Rondo Brilliant in D flat major. It gained great fame, and many musicians, such as Lanner, Berlioz, and Weingartner, arranged it for orchestra. <sup>4</sup>

Tausig's arrangement is much longer and more brilliant than Weber's original. He added a cadenza and used a lot of fast scales, octaves, and big leaps to make it sound splendid. The structure of this arrangement is [Intro - Cadenza - A - B - A - C - A - B - A - Coda]. It begins with a slow Intro, followed by a cadenza. And then, a fast and energetic Rondo part comes out. Coda and Intro are similarly slow. In Weber's original, the piece has a strong perfect cadence before the coda, which sounds like final finishing chord. That usually makes the audience easily confused and applaud. But, Tausig got rid of the cadence and wrote only one actual ending at the end of the coda.

## Waltz Op. 38

## Alexander Scriabin (1872~1915)

Scriabin is a Russian composer and pianist. His early piano works were in the romantic style of Chopin whom he greatly admired. However, in his orchestral writings

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/27567#F006550

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e5211?q=invitation+to+dance&search=quick&pos=2&\_start=1#firsthit

and in his later piano sonatas, he became a composer with advanced ideas.<sup>5</sup> This waltz was written within his early career period.

Waltz Op. 38 in A flat major has a few points which separate this piece from traditional waltzes. Although it is in 3/4 time, long and calm phrases do not sound like the traditional waltz. Also, apart from the typical waltz accompaniment with light second and third beats, the left hand plays smooth arpeggiated passages. Features like 4:3 and 5:3 rhythms, and 3-voices writing, which appear frequently in this piece, are hardly seen in typical waltzes.

Scriabin used Rondo form for this waltz. The structure is [A - B - A¹ - C - A² - Coda]. A¹ and A² are like variations of the A section. Different rhythms are used in A¹. The A² section employs octaves to make it sound expanded and heavier. The C section is the longest, and has a short modulation to A major. This piece is finished with very fast and light coda, which is still based on main theme. Scriabin wrote 'volubile(inconstant)' at the beginning of the coda.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Posell, Elsa. Russian Composers. (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967) 79~80

## Mephisto-Waltz No. 1

Franz Liszt (1811~1886)

Mephisto-Waltz No. 1, in 3/8 time, has a subtitle of 'The Dance in the Village Inn (Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke).' Liszt took an episode from Nikolaus Lenau's Faust, and composed this waltz based on the story.

This is how Alan Walker explained this piece.

The half-epic, half-dramatic poem describes how Faust and Mephistopheles stray into a village inn where wedding festivities are in full swing; how Mephistopheles (a jovial enough character, hardly the embodiment of Evil) seizes a violin from one of the band and, by the demoniacal fire of his playing whips the dancers into a frenzy. Faster and faster gets the dance, more and more unbridled the dancers; Faust finds himself a beautiful wench with whom he dances out into the open, followed by the sound of Mephisto's violin, into the wood where only the sound of the nightingale's song is heard and where the couple are 'swallowed by the roaring sea of lust' Liszt's music follows the story closely enough to be described as 'programme music'. <sup>6</sup>



example 1) perfect 5th imitating violin sound

The notes in example 1) are forming perfect 5th intervals. This resembles the tuning sound of violin strings.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Walker, Alan. *Franz Liszt, The Man and His Music* (New York, Taplinger Publishing Company, 1970) 101

The repeated notes in example 2) are the nightingale sound in the forest.



example 2) repeated notes imitating nightingale sound

Mephisto waltz No. 1 is the most well known work among all 4 Mephisto waltzes. It also has different versions; Orchestra and piano-duet version. Liszt dedicated this piece to his beloved pupil, Carl Tausig.

## Tarantella Op. 43

Frederic Chopin (1810~1849)

Chopin's tarantella is in A flat major in 6/8 time. This piece constantly shows typical tarantella rhythm.



example 3) tarantella rhythm at the beginning of Chopin's tarantella

This piece is short, but sounds very enthusiastic and active. Because of its continuous movement of left hand, usage of chromatic passages, and frequent fortissimos.

Chopin wanted this piece to sound like Rossini's work. In his letter to his friend Fontana, he said,

....As to my composition, it does not matter which way it is written, but I should prefer it to be like Rossini's. <sup>7</sup>

The Rossini work he mentioned in his letter is known as 'La danza', which is one of Rossini's best known songs that has a typical tarantella rhythm. Chopin's tarantella was written in 1841, and Rossini's one was written between 1830-35. These two fast and enthusiastic tarantellas have many significant similarities.



example 4) comparison of Rossini's La Danza and Chopin's tarantella

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Niecks, Frederick. *Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician* (New York, Cooper Square Publishers, 1973) 82

## **Danse (Tarantelle styrienne)**

**Claude Debussy** (1862~1918)

Debussy's interpretation of tarantella is quite different from Chopin's. Debussy used a calm, gentle, and less active texture. But it is very colorful and sensitive.

This piece is in E major, but it modulates to E flat major and e minor for short time in the middle. Its structure is rondo with [A - B - A - C - A - Coda] sections.

General style of Debussy's works include pentatonic scales, diminished harmonies, tritones, and hemiolas which are characteristics of impressionism music. Debussy successfully merged those characteristics to tarantella, without losing its inherent enthusiasm.

## Piano Concerto No. 2 Op. 22

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835~1921)

Saint-Saëns' 2nd piano concerto in g minor was written in 1868, and premiered by the composer himself with Anton Rubinstein conducting the orchestra. This piece begins with slow a movement. The 2nd movement is fast and active, and the 3rd is the fastest tarantella movement.

#### I. Andante sostenuto

The first movement has a slow cadenza-like piano solo at the beginning. After the orchestra comes in, the piano plays the main theme. The 2nd theme begins with light

and colorful 32nds in right hand over a gentle arpeggio in left hand. That dolcissimo part turns to Un poco animato with stormy passages. There is an impressive cadenza followed by a slow section that is similar to the cadenza-like part at the beginning, which leads this movement to the end.

## II. Allegro scherzando

The 2nd movement in E flat major has the tempo of Allegro Scherzando. Different from the serious mood of the 1st movement, this movement is delightful and rhythmical. Usage of fast and light chords, dotted rhythms and rapid scales make this movement sound almost like dance music.

#### III. Presto

This extremely fast g minor movement begins with 2 measures of the piano solo's impressive repeated triplets. Typical tarantella rhythm is heard throughout this movement. Continuous triplets create strongly agitated mood.



example 5) Tarantella rhythm in 3rd movement

There appears long sequences with trill in the middle of the movement.



example 6) sequences with trills

# **O** Second Recital

**Topic: Suites and Nationalistic Dances** 

## French Suite No. 3 in B minor, BWV 814

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685~1750)

In Oxford Music Online, suites are defined as "In a general sense, any ordered set of instrumental pieces meant to be performed at a single sitting; during the Baroque period, an instrumental genre consisting of several movements in the same key, some or all of which were based on the forms and styles of dance music."8

 $<sup>^{8} \</sup> http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/27091?q=suites\&search=quick\&source=omo\_gmo\&pos=2\&\_start=1\#firsthit$ 

J. S. Bach wrote suites for the keyboard instrument, including English Suites, French Suites, and Partitas. This French suite No.3 provides beautiful melodies and typical styles of each dance movement.

Allemande - A moderate duple-metre dance

Courante - Fast and rhythmical movements in triple meter

Sarabande - A slow dance with triple beat in 17th century Europe

Anglaise - A 17th- and 18th-century country dance, usually in quick duple time

*Menuet-Trio-Menuet* - Minuet: A stately dance in triple metre, usually 3/4. Trio:

A second minuet with contrasting style

Gigue - A dance typically in triple or compound duple metre, moderate to quick tempo, and with predominantly dotted rhythms<sup>9</sup>

## **Suite Bergamasque**

**Claude Debussy** (1862~1918)

The French Poet Paul Valaine's popular work, "Fêtes galantes" influenced

Debussy to write this suite. Fêtes galantes is made up of 12 poems, and the first poem is

'Clair de Lune.'

Clair the Lune

Votre âme est un paysage choisi

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/00613?q=allemande&search=quick&source=omo\_gmo&pos=1&\_start=1#firsthit

Que vont charmant masques et **bergamasques** 

Jouant du luth et dansant et quasi

Tristes sous leurs déguisements fantasques. (omitted below)

Inspired by this poem, Debussy named this suite 'Bergamasque', and wrote the third movement under the poem's title.

As in the Tarantella's case, Debussy's impressionism style is well melted in this structure, suite, which was popular decades ago. Debussy opens this set of music with a prelude movement.

#### Prelude

This movement begins with a strong ascending arpeggio. A lot of dynamic contrast make this piece exciting to listen to. And Debussy did not give up his well-known style with pentatonic scales, diminished chords, tritones, and so on.

### Menuet

It is hard to find the typical minuet rhythm in this movement. But this movement is rhythmical and playful.

#### Clair de lune

Slow and colorful piece. This movement is one of the most widely known of Debussy's works and is played independently a lot. Beautiful arpeggios with calm melody describes the light of the Moon perfectly.

## **Passepied**

Continuously moving eighth notes accompany the Baroque-like melody. Frequent 3-voice-writing reminds the listeners of polyphonic music.

## Polonaise in A-flat major Op. 53

Frederic Chopin (1810~1849)

The fact that Chopin was born in Poland is well known. Although he moved to Paris, he always had his hometown in his heart, and wrote a lot of music based on his home country's traditional tunes.

Polonaise is a Polish dance. It is usually characterized by this rhythm. <sup>10</sup>

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example 7) typical polonaise rhythm

Chopin's Polonaise Op. 53 has a Rondo form which goes like this: [Intro - A - B - A - C - A - Coda]

Impressive ascending chromatic scales opens this piece. Main theme in A section sounds heroic, strong and rhythmical.

B section is short, but has clear polonaise rhythm.

 $<sup>^{10}\</sup> http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/22035?q=polonaise\&search=quick\&pos=1\&\_start=1\#firsthit$ 



example 8) polonaise rhythm in B section

The C section is in the key of E major. The left hand plays continuous octaves of 16th notes with staccatos while right hand is playing another heroic melody. It is followed by a long transitional part which drives the music to final A section.

The Coda is very strong, like a fanfare.

#### **Adios Nonino**

Astor Piazzolla (1921~1992)

Piazzolla was a tango composer and bandoneon performer. He composed this piece shortly after his father's death and titled it after his father (Vincent Nonino Piazzolla)'s middle name.

On the journey from the airport to West 92nd street, Piazzolla saw the familiar New York sights pass by and thought of his childhood. So far he had borne his loss with calmness, but the next day, after lunch, he asked Dede (wife) and Poupee (Wife's sister) to leave him alone for a while. They went into the kitchen, from where they heard him sighing. Neither of them dared open the door. There was silence at first, then the sound of the bandoneon. Piazzolla was playing "Nonino," a pleasant, chirpy tango from the Paris days written in honor of Vincent. He paused, and then began a new, absolutely haunting elegiac tune. It was the sequel. "The sighs became terrible," Dede recalls. "I had never seen him cry like that, or indeed cry in any way." 11

This work became world a renowned piece and Piazzolla arranged this piece into many different ensembles, and performed many times.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Azzi, Maria/Collier, Simon. Le Grand Tango 'The Life and Music of Astor Piazzolla' (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000) 76

The piano solo version of Adios Nonino begins with the cadenza-like part with little senses of tonality and beat. After this heavy and dark part, a slow theme, which will be used throughout the whole piece, is given.

The actual tango rhythm comes out after the slow section. The frequent changes of tempo between parts gives dynamic feeling. And interestingly enough, the composer tries to imitate the bandoneon sound with the piano in many places.

## "Islamey": Oriental Fantasy

**Mily Balakirev** (1837~1910)

Balakirev traveled to the Caucasus and heard the folk dance tunes, which encouraged him to write "Islamey": Oriental Fantasy. <sup>12</sup> This piece is well known for its extremely difficult technique.

This piece can be divided into 5 sections: *Allegro Agitato - Andantino espressivo - Tempo I - Allegro Vivo - Presto furioso* 

Two different themes are shown in first Allegro Agitato section.

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 $<sup>^{12}\</sup> http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e543?q=islamey\&search=quick\&pos=16\&\_start=1\#firsthit$ 



example 9) Two themes at the beginning

In example 9), **A** theme is in first line, and **B** theme is in second line. They will keep on appearing in various forms.

There are also two themes in Andantino espressivo section.



example 10) C theme in Andantino espressivo section



example 11) **D** theme in *Andantino espressivo* section

In Tempo I section, Balakirev used the A, B, and C theme again. The following

Allegro Vivo section is a variation of the C and D theme. And the final Presto furioso

section contains tunes similar to the A and C theme. In other words, Balakirev used 4

different themes in different shapes with different combinations.

Considerably difficult techniques, including repeated notes, fast octave passages,

thirds, big leaps, sometimes stops the listeners from finding out the enjoyable musical

ideas. But being able to listen to how Balakirev treated the folk tunes in various forms

will be able to give great excitement.

• Third Recital

**Topic:** Ballet music and other dance-related pieces

Symphony No. 7 Op. 92

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) Transcribed by Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Beethoven's symphony No. 7 in E major's total duration is about 40 minutes. So,

I decided to include 2 contrasting movements, the 2nd and 4th movements.

This symphony was not titled as a "Dance" nor did Beethoven mention anything

about dance. But, clearly, it has many significant dance elements: repeatedly used

rhythm, frequent use of dotted rhythm, light going passage, and so on. Wagner calls the

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whole Symphony 'the Apotheosis of the dance; the dance in it highest condition; the happiest realisation of the movements of the body in an ideal form.' <sup>13</sup>

Franz Liszt, who was a great admirer of Beethoven, transcribed all the 9 Symphonies of the great composer to piano solo pieces. This work shows the combination of Beethoven's beautiful music and Liszt's tremendous pianism.

## 2nd movement Allegretto

This movement was one of the most popular Beethoven's repertoire when he was alive. After its premier, this movement was encored. 14 This movement is in Theme and Variation form.

Talking about the theme and variation form, this movement did not employ a normal theme and variation form. This movement can be analyzed like this:  $[A - A^1 - A^2 - A^3 - B - Fugue(based on A) - B^1 - Coda(based on A)]$ . From the given theme A to  $A^3$ , it looks like a normal rondo. But a totally different theme appears after that and will

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Grove, George. *Beethoven and His Nine Symphonies* (New York, Dover Publications, 1962) 244

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Grove, George. *Beethoven and His Nine Symphonies* (New York, Dover Publications, 1962) 236

have a variation for that theme, too. Theme and variation with 2 themes are called 'Double Variation.' This movement is a good example of the double variation form.

Not only the form, but the beginning of this movement is also unique. The first theme is given in a low and quite sound which makes the part very impressive.

## 4th movement Allegro con brio

The 4th movement is in sonata form. It sounds very energetic with its continuous movement and loud sound. There are many fortissimos, and one fortissisimo(fff) appears at the end. Because of many dance elements, this movement makes a perfect dancing mood.

#### **Nutcracker Suite**

Mikhail Pletnev(1957-

Pletnev is a Russian pianist, composer, and conductor. He won a gold medal and first prize at the Tchaikovsky competition in 1978 at the age of 21. As a composer, his works include the Classical Symphony, Triptych for Symphony Orchestra, Fantasy on Kazakh Themes, and Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra. His two transcriptions for piano, Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite and Sleeping Beauty, are popular concert

repertoires for pianists. He also founded the RNO (Russian National Orchestra), and still leading the group. <sup>15</sup>

Pletney's Nutcracker suite has 7 movements.

- 1. March
- 2. Dance of sugar-plum fairy
- **3.** Tarantella
- 4. Intermezzo
- **5.** Trepak(Russian Dance)
- **6.** Chinese Dance
- 7. Andante Maestoso

Pletnev successfully added his pianism in these transcriptions without damaging the Tchaikovsky original.

 $<sup>^{15}\</sup> http://russiannationalorchestra.org/about/musicians/Pletnev/$ 

#### **Totentanz**

Franz Liszt(1811-1886)

The word 'Totentanz' means 'Dance of Death.' It was inspired by the *Orcagna Fresco's* The Triumph of Death which the 27-year-old Liszt had seen while traveling through Italy with the Countess d'Agoult, and which had a tremendous impact on him. Liszt composed this work based on the medieval chant, Dies Irae. Dies Irae means 'Day of Wrath.' This short medieval tune was recreated by many composers such as Mozart, Verdi, Saint-Saëns, and Berlioz.

Totentanz is written for solo piano and orchestra. Later it has been arranged as a piano solo version by the composer. It is a single movement work with theme and variation form. Dies Irae is transformed in various styles and appears continuously in 5 variations and the long brilliant part after them.

 $<sup>^{16}</sup>$  Walker, Alan. Franz Liszt, The Man and His Music (New York, Taplinger Publishing Company, 1970)  $273\,$ 

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