

“SHALL WE DANCE?”

PEDAGOGY COMMITTEE REPERTOIRE SAMPLER CONCERT
NATIONAL FLUTE ASSOCIATION CONVENTION, NEW YORK CITY 2009

Dance (A).....**Tylman Susato**
from Trevor Wye, *Flute Class* (Novello) (c. 1510-1561/64)

Amanda Pappas, flute, assisted by Sarah Pappas, flute

Bourée (B).....**Johann Sebastian Bach**
From Louis Moysé, *65 Little Pieces* (Schirmer) (1685-1750)

Discovering music which is both engaging and comfortably within the capability of the novice flutist is a true pleasure for all involved! Much of the best performance music comes to us from outstanding and well-conceived method books. Such is the case with the first work on the programme! Here, as elsewhere in his method books, Trevor Wye capitalizes on charming and elegant tunes such as this Renaissance-period dance from the pen of the Flemish composer and publisher Tylman Susato to form the basis of the practice materials. In this version, drawn from *Flute Class: A group teaching book for students and teachers*, Wye presents this petite dance in a number of different guises for performance: flute solo, flute duet, flute solo with piano, flute duet with piano. With rare exception, the various parts of most of the ensembles in *Flute Class* build on the current learning presented to that point of the book and therefore are appropriate for students of the same level. This Susato tune, however, carries the added bonus that the tune-line uses only “left-hand” notes and thus is playable by a flutist who is still playing with the right-hand supporting the flute by the barrel.

Few flute libraries are complete without one or more of the collections edited by Louis Moysé, and few flutists of recent generations passed their studies without encountering his iconic *40 Little Pieces*. The collection represented here – *65 Little Pieces in Progressive Order for Beginning Flutists* – is not a remake of *40LP* but rather a charming collection in its own right. Unlike *40LP* which focuses only on works by six Germanic composers of the 18th and very early 19th century, *65LP* runs a broad gamut from Vivaldi to Debussy. Even more to its credit, *65LP* is free of many of the confusing articulations and shockingly long phrases found in *40LP* while offering works of no less beauty, appeal, and challenge. This delightfully leaping *Bourée* credited to J.S. Bach is a prime example of the elegance coupled with true trickiness of passagework to be found throughout the collection!

Scarf Dance (C).....**Cécile Chaminade**
From Hugh Stuart, *Famous Flute Favorites* (Boston) (1857-1944)

Fudge Fandango (C).....**Paul Harris**
From *Chocolate Box* (Novello) (b. 1956)

The jump in difficulty from Level B to Level C is evident in this first selection! Cécile Chaminade is well-known to flutists for her imposing *Concertino*, but she is far better known to the musical world as a first-class pianist and composer for that instrument. *Scarf Dance* is one of those ubiquitous works nearly all of us played – with greater or lesser deftness – as a part of our own piano studies. How lovely, however, to have it transformed to a sparkling version for flute and piano. Nothing shy and retiring to be found is this gypsy-inspired waltz! Rapid excursions through twisting keys and jarring hemiolas are set to confound all but the most confident young flutist.

What student or teacher could resist the draw of a title like *Chocolate Box*? As if the title were not enough to recommend the collection, one taste of the musical treats hidden inside and even the toughest nut will melt into ecstatic oo’s and ah’s. Over stating? Perhaps! But the fact remains: time and again Paul Harris antes-up with originally-composed music which is brilliantly suited to the flute and the sensibilities of flutists. *Fudge Fandango* is just one of the ten dance-inspired works in the collection. This particular fandango departs from expectation, however, presenting the dance in a fanciful 5/4 time with additional changes of metre. Spanish flavour abounds as both flute and piano leap across skittering rhythms from front to finish.

Jenny Lind Polka (D).....**Traditional**
From *Easy Flute Solos, Everybody’s Favorite Series 83* (AMSCO)

Gavotte (D).....**Serge Prokofiev**
From Hugh Stuart, *Famous Flute Favorites* (Boston) (1891-1953)

The *Jenny Lind Polka* is a bit of Americana of unknown origin dating back to the days when the “Swedish Nightingale” herself, under the patronage of P.T. Barnum, was taking the U.S. by storm. As a little New York connection, it appears that this may have been the very tune conceived to introduce a fleet new European dance – the polka – to New York, and thus American audiences in the 1840s. The tune is fresh, the rhythms brisk, and the melody oddly-familiar. With hardly any break for the flutist to breathe, the merry dance relentlessly skips through quick figuration and spiky leaps, calculated to keep the flutist on her toes beginning to end. Like so many tunes found in the *Easy Flute Solos* collection the blend of familiar – even folk and pop – song/dance with extraordinary challenge often makes the impossible possible for the budding-intermediate flutists at this level.

Stepping simultaneously backward and forward in time, the *Gavotte* by Prokofiev is the composer’s early 20th-century rendition of the leaping 17th-century French folk dance. During the course of the 18th century the gavotte was taken into the courts of Europe and ultimately became highly refined in air and manner. Prokofiev’s vision of the gavotte as portrayed in his famous *Classical Symphony* is, however, no dance of refined elegance, but rather more of a clumsy, comic, irregular, “ugly-stepsister” to the older folk version of the dance. Contorted keys and death-defying leaps constantly test the limits of flute performance at this level. Many such challenges for flutists ready to make the leap into full intermediate repertoire may be found in Hugh Stuart’s excellent collection of light classical *Famous Flute Favorites*.

Badinerie from *Suite in b minor* (E)..**Johann Sebastian Bach**
From Voxman, *Concert and Contest Collection* (Rubank) (1685-1750)

Dodd’s Odd Job (E).....**Mike Mower**
From *Musical Postcards* (Boston) (b. 1958)

Because of its origin as the finale of the great *Orchestral Suite no 2* by J. S. Bach, one must assume that a badinerie is a dance – probably relating to the earlier French badinage. In point of fact, however, the term seems to have been used for the first time ever when Bach named this particular work. Surely, if this is the example of the dance to give birth to the name, the badinerie must be seen as a quick and lively dance. Still, probing back into the etymology even further, we have to pick up on the connection of “jest,” “banter,” and “repartee” associated with the older term and joy at the jabbing, tripping, stuttering, and playful turns of melody and step given to the work by Bach. This is J.S. Bach at his most exuberant! Lucky for the intermediate flutist, for whom the full *Suite* would prove too formidable, single excerpts from the larger work appear – scattered throughout the numerous excellent collections recommended in the *Selected Flute Repertoire Guides*.

There is no doubt that the United Kingdom has been home to an extraordinary number of superior flutist-musicians: one only needs to scan this convention’s programme guide to be convinced of that! And so, it is by no mere stroke of serendipity that, yet again, a British flutist has stepped forward with a remarkable collection of unique and original works for intermediate flutists. In *Musical Postcards* (as with the companion volume, *Junior Musical Postcards*), Mike Mower has given flutists 10 newly-composed pieces, each styled after the folk music from a different corner of the world. Much of the fun of *Musical Postcards* is the accompanying CD which includes accompaniment tracks recorded by no-holds-barred musicians from the World Music scene. The CD itself is fun enough to listen to, but to play along! ... oh! ... what a “hoot!” *Dodd’s Odd Job* is Irish in inspiration. It is exciting to play with the tin whistles and drums of the CD,

but is also completely effective with piano accompaniment. Hard as all get-out, generally speaking, the works in these collections are sure to kick any intermediate flutist into over-drive.

Sonata III from "Il Pastor Fido" (F)..... Antonio Vivaldi
II. Allegro ma non Presto (1678-1741)
III. Sarabande
IV. Corrente
V. Giga

We don't really know to whom we should credit the composition of the set of six "Il Pastor Fido" sonatas: common practice has attributed these to Antonio Vivaldi, but modern scholarship suggests that Nicolas Chédeville "borrowed" a number of tunes and dances from Vivaldi and other composers, and cobbled together – "in the style of Vivaldi" – these sonatas from those tunes. The intrigue is fun, but in a manner of speaking, it's no matter, really! What counts is the brilliance and beauty of the works themselves, however it is that they came about. The *Sonata III*, like the second and fourth of the set, is more dance suite than sonata. After the second-movement *Allegro*, itself a sort of extension of the opening *Prelude*, the three dance movements are absolutely characteristic of the courtly dances which grant their names to the movements: slow and sultry, running and shuffling, leaping and merry! As a set of sonatas, however, these works provide a timely and elegant bridge for intermediate students to begin to experience the Baroque language prior to setting off toward the great sonatas of the High Baroque.

Suite de Ballet (G)..... Ralph Vaughan Williams
II. Humoresque (1872-1958)
III. Gavotte
IV. Passepied

Few composers are as capable as Ralph Vaughan Williams at blending the characteristics of old and new, and blurring the line between nationalities. Here in the *Suite de Ballet* he does just that: taking old Baroque dances and reinterpreting them as new, and infusing these French dances with an unmistakably British flair. In fact, only the titles are French (and Baroque)! The music is thoroughly British (and modern)! The Humoresque is really a jaunty gig in disguise with punctuating rhythms and saucy harmonies. The gently moving, vaguely modal Gavotte reads like a set of variations on an English folk song, more than a true dance. The Passepied is, for all intents and purposes, a high-strumming reel with a languid central song, complete with "string-crossing" fiddle chords in the flute part. It's a delightful pastiche which keeps the flutist moving with hardly a break from the first rushing strides to the final dramatic plunge.

Réverie et Petite Valse (H)..... André Caplet
(1878-1925)

There comes a time in the life of most flutists when one begins to contemplate the great Paris Conservatoire works. As tempting as it is to launch forward and tackle this virtuoso repertoire, it may well be advisable to take an intermediate step. The *Réverie et Petite Valse* by André Caplet is just the right type of work to fill that bill. The work is in no way unchallenging! In many respects the work demands greater prowess in the areas of rhythm, ensemble, and key than do its "Concours-cousins." Still, the technical demands are more restrained without relinquishing that quintessential French warmth of melody and wash of harmony. The dream-like *Réverie* never has opportunity to settle, but rather wafts in and out of a hauntingly beautiful landscape. The *Valse*, on the

other hand, delivers on its name as it traipses off in a merry 1-2-3, flexing across the metre but never relinquishing it.

Six Études Tanguistiques (I)..... Astor Piazzolla
VI. Avec anxiété (1921-1992)

Astor Piazzolla made a life's pursuit out of collecting and codifying examples of tango music from his native Argentina. While many folks more readily associate instruments like the guitar and the bandoneon with the tango, in fact the flute was one of the original instruments of the tango band. Leaving the work of a full band to one single flutist hardly seems fair, however. Nevertheless, the stage is set for just such a proposition through these six amazing tango-etudes: not etudes in the traditional sense of the word, but concert studies which explore the many sides of the multifaceted tango. A frantic breathlessness and hurtling *anxiété*, save for the briefest of melodic moments, mark the character of this particular tango, demanding extremes to dare and daunt even the most advanced flutist.

Charanga (J)..... Michael Colquhoun
(b. 1951)

It is no secret that the flute has been one of, if not *the* major instrument in the music of most known cultures worldwide. It should come as no surprise then to find the flute taking the lead in a particular style of Salsa music known as the Charanga. Salsa – an Hispanic-American urban dance-style music with deep African and Cuban roots – is as popular today as ever. The Charanga, however, as a specific style of Salsa, with its often complicated flute improvisations, is rarely singled out for performance these days. In his opening remarks regarding the piece, Michael Colquhoun calls this piece "... a cubist portrait of Charanga, and is dedicated to all the great Latin Charanga flutists." While this is not "beat-box" flute, some of the elements are there, with the flutist required to perform a wide array of non-traditional sonorities. Colquhoun further notes that "... the constant switching between ... [the] sonorities will require a lot of slow, careful practice before starting to speed the piece up to the tempo indicated." Always good advice! Still, even with ardent practice, this is a true flutistic *tour de force*.

Medieval Suite (K)..... Katherine Hoover
V. Demon's Dance (b. 1937)

Our fantasies of Medieval Europe most often conjure images of knights in shining armour and fair damsels in the most extraordinary gowns. Katherine Hoover's *Medieval Suite*, however, is in no way such an idyllic portrait; rather it is a depiction of the violence, inhumanity, and corruption of the age. Each of the five movements is a snapshot, a scene drawn from Barbara Tuchman's frank history of 14th-century France, *A Distant Mirror*, which dissolves our fictitious notions of life all those centuries ago. Of the five movements, the last one – Demon's Dance – is by far the most frantic and panic-stricken. Hoover sets the scene: "The 'Demon's Dance' was a desperate marathon dance done by some in hopes of avoiding the Black Plague." Jerking, twitching, thrashing, flailing: the movement careens in ever-increasing frenzy until it seems that the flutist-*cum*-dancer is equally likely to die of exhaustion as of the Black Plague. At these highest levels, such are the expressive, musical, and technical demands placed on the flutist.

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