

魔鬼圓舞曲

李斯特 (一八一—一八八六)

李斯特以鋼琴技巧大師及作曲家的姿態展開他的音樂事業，是同輩中最傑出的音樂家之一，也是最技驚四座的鋼琴家。據說李斯特演奏其他作曲家的作品時，第一次讀譜就已經能夠作出最精彩的演奏，接着就用他出神入化的技巧將作品修飾得美倫美奐。李斯特身邊永遠都有一大群崇拜者前呼後擁，其中有不少都是鋼琴家。他認為藝術家有責任為未來培育人才，不應該有任何私心和吝嗇，所以他授徒從不收費。李斯特以一個藝人的身分成名，雖然享受因此帶來的名利，但內心卻是一位嚴肅認真的音樂家，他作品數量之多這一點，就足以證明。雖然李斯特的鋼琴作品在技巧上要求甚高，但作品同時也是感情真摯動人。《魔鬼圓舞曲》是李斯特最受歡迎的作品之一，單以鋼琴獨奏就足以令人興奮不已。

樂曲介紹由紀大衛教授撰寫
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Lindaraja

Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918)

The Alhambra of Granada in Spain consists of an ensemble of historical-artistic monuments created over a span of more than 600 years by cultures as diverse as Muslim, Renaissance and Romantic. Lindaraja is one of these, and its aspect and the feelings it produces in the viewer inspired Debussy to compose this piece for two pianos, in April 1901. At one time Debussy described Spanish folk-music as 'one of the richest in the world', and, like other French composers, he was drawn to aspects of Spain, producing a number of pieces with a Spanish theme. In *Lindaraja* great play is made over the typical Spanish rhythm which divides a 2/4 bar into two quavers and three triplet quavers, or the other way round. In general the piece evokes the laziness induced by the summer heat in Spain, and the somewhat exotic nature of the monument and its surroundings.

The Nutcracker Suite, Op. 71

Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky (1840 - 1893)

(arr. Nicolas Economou)

March

Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy

Russian Dance (Trepak)

Arabian Dance

Chinese Dance

Dance of the Reed-Pipes

Waltz of the Flowers

On the 20th of February, 1892, Tchaikovsky put the finishing touches to his ballet *The Nutcracker*. This was the second part of a programme which was to begin with an opera called *Iolante*. This opera contained so little tension of any kind that even the music

of Tchaikovsky could not infuse it with enough life for it to last beyond the first few performances. *The Nutcracker*, however, has become one of the composer's most loved pieces. Tchaikovsky was in fact never really happy with the story, but nevertheless he produced music which brilliantly served the purpose. Shortly after completing the score he made an arrangement of some of the numbers as a suite, and then arranged that for the piano.

Nicolas Economou (1953-1993) was a Cypriot pianist, composer and conductor of some renown. At one time he recorded his arrangement of the *Nutcracker Suite* for two pianos with Martha Argerich. This arrangement has been praised for conjuring up the colours so splendidly achieved in the original.

Beginning with a toy soldiers' march, the suite continues with a series of highly individual dances. The sugar plum has all the sweetness one could want; the *Russian Dance* is highly energetic; the Arabian and Chinese dances each has a special colour and feeling; the reed-pipes (three flutes in the original) trip about in sophisticated fashion; finally, the *Waltz of the Flowers*, the longest of all the pieces, brings all to a sumptuous conclusion.

Three Tangos

Ástor Piazzolla (1921 - 1992)

(arr. Pablo Ziegler)

Verano Porteño

Milonga del Angel

Liebertango

Piazzolla, a bandleader and bandoneon player, had been a prodigy on the instrument when young. The family moved to New York in 1924, but Piazzolla returned to Buenos Aires in 1937, where he had lessons from Ginastera. Later he received a scholarship to study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. On his return to Argentina in 1955 he founded the Octeto Buenos Aires, and later the Quinteto Nuevo Tango, and through these ensembles promoted his new versions of the tango. This 'nuevo tango' did not go down well with the old guard, but as time went on attitudes completely reversed and Piazzolla became admired as the saviour of the tango, since interest in the old style had declined. In all Piazzolla produced about 750 works, including some music for films (*Tangos: the Exile of Gandel* and *Sur*). Always instantly recognizable as South American, Piazzolla's music brings the spirit of Argentina and the new tango very vividly to the fore in all his pieces.

The Blue Danube Waltz
(after Arabesque by Schulz-Evler)

Johann Strauss II (1825 - 1899)
(arr. Abram Chasins)

The Blue Danube Waltz must surely be the most popular of all the waltzes penned by members of the Strauss family during their time as the waltz kings of Vienna. It is one of those pieces in which the composer has found exactly the right touch for what he had set out to achieve, and audiences all over the world have recognized and enjoyed this ever since. In the days when virtuoso piano playing was all the rage Andrey Schulz-Evler, a Polish pianist who lived from 1852 to 1905 made a wonderful, virtuoso transcription of the waltz for solo piano. This was greatly enjoyed by virtuoso pianists for a time. Joseph Lhevinne, for example, produced a scintillating performance of it for the player piano. Abram Chasins (born in 1903) was a brilliant American pianist, and he made the present arrangement of the *Blue Danube* for two pianos, based on the Schulz-Evler version. If this is even half as much fun as the solo piano version it will be a magnificent treat.

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune

Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918)

In 1890 Debussy met the poet Mallarme, who invited him to contribute to a project for the theatre based on his poem *L'après-midi d'un faune*. Nothing came of this idea, but later, in 1893, after he had attended Mallarme's Tuesday salon for two years, Debussy returned to the idea, and produced the prelude. He later arranged the piece for two pianos. Those who know the original will find it hard to imagine that the beautiful colours of that could be reproduced in a two-piano version, but Debussy's skill and originality in writing for the piano ensures that the work sounds as well, if different, as on the orchestra. The ebb and flow of the music is splendidly realized in the two piano setting.

MephistoWaltz

Franz Liszt (1811 - 1886)

One of the most extraordinary musicians of his time, Liszt began life as a virtuoso pianist and composer, and was undoubtedly the most astounding pianist of the age. It was said of him that the best performance he gave of other composers' works was when he first read them at sight. Thereafter he would embellish them with his prodigious technique. He was ever surrounded by an admiring clique, many of whom were indifferent pianists. He never charged for giving lessons, believing that the artist had a duty to the future and should give of himself without stint. He earned a reputation as a showman first and foremost. In fact, although he no doubt enjoyed his popularity, he was at heart a deeply serious musician, as his enormous output of compositions shows. Although his piano music is often highly demanding and indeed virtuosic, the music is always sincere and deeply felt. The *Mephisto Waltz* is one of his most popular compositions, exciting enough when played on one piano.

Programme notes by Professor David Gwilt

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