

## **Let's Dance!**

### **I. Announcements**

#### **A. Blawenburg Band Holiday Concert**

December 12, 2026 at 3 pm. Location: Kendall Hall, College of New Jersey

Details on this and other Band performances are available at <https://blawenburgband.org>

### **II. The Role of Dance in Western Music**

- A. While daily life in Medieval Europe was heavily influenced by religious norms and edicts, even the Catholic Church was obliged to recognize dancing was popular throughout Europe, and it even permitted (although reluctantly) priests and other religious leaders to join in dancing (sometimes in disguise...).
- B. The earliest known secular dances, primarily instrumental, were estampies and royal dances from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Moving into the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, we find a growing set of branles, basse dances, galliards, and other forms. These were not only well-known among the common people but were often performed for nobility and royalty. Over time, dances that originated with peasants and those of low status were embraced by the most powerful in society.
- C. In the Baroque period, dance forms from the Renaissance were increasingly used in solely instrumental contexts—most notably, the “dance suite”, which became an important format for composers such as Bach, Telemann, Rameau and others.
- D. The origins of the ballet can be traced back to royal dance festivals in France in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, and over time, court ballets in France became not only spectacles for royalty, but a genre of instrumental music on their own. These court ballets at times also included vocal music, and during the development of opera in France under Lully and Rameau, including a ballet within an opera became “de rigueur.”
- E. By the time we get to the classical era (Haydn, Mozart, early Beethoven), dances are now formally included within many compositions. The minuet, a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time dance whose origins can be traced to 17<sup>th</sup> century France, becomes a ubiquitous in many classical period symphonies by Haydn, Mozart and others. This “classical” minuet was typically combined with a trio within a four-movement symphony.
- F. With the transition from Classical to Romantic music (and later), dances are no longer restricted to ballets or as symphonic movements. Composers such as Brahms and Dvořák compose entire sets of dances for piano (later arranged for orchestra), dances are used as the basis for programmatic works (Saint-Saens “Danse Macabre”), operas include dances within their plots, and works for the stage (i. e., musicals, other works,

but not operas) often include dances integrated within their structure. Composers such as Chopin and Tchaikovsky (and many others) compose dances imbued with nationalist sentiment. And in the period from 1910-1950, we find composers such as Stravinsky, Respighi and Bartok utilizing dance forms from the Renaissance and Baroque periods to inspire original works of their own.

### **III. What's Being Danced and Where?**

- A. France—branles, court ballets
- B. Italy—saltarello, operatic dances
- C. United Kingdom—jumps
- D. Germany—dance suites
- E. Poland—mazurka
- F. Russia--trepak
- G. Spain—fandango, gallarda
- H. Austria-Hungarian Empire—minuet, Czech dances (furiant, kolo), waltz

### **IV. Today's Music**

- A. Claude Gervaise, "Branle de Bourgogne" (1550)
- B. Simone Molinaro, "Saltarello" (1565-1615)
- C. John Playford's English Dancing Master, "The Shaking of the Sheets" (1651)
- D. Georg Philipp Telemann, "Wassermusik" (ca. 1740)
- E. Luigi Boccherini, Guitar Quintet in D Major, "Fandango" (1771)
- F. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Symphony No. 36, "Linz", "Minuet and Trio" (1783)
- G. Frederic Chopin, 2 Mazurkas, "Opus 7, Nos. 1 and 2" (1830-31)
- H. Johann Strauss II, "Artist's Life" waltz (1867)
- I. Antonín Dvořák, "Slavonic Dances Opus 46 No. 1 and Opus 72, No. 7" (1878, 1886)
- J. Giuseppe Verdi, Aida, "Dance of the Moorish Slaves" (1871)
- K. Peter Tchaikovsky, Mazeppa, "Gopak", (1883)

### **V. You Tube Films**

- A. Claude Gervaise, "Branle de Bourgogne" (1550):  
[https://youtu.be/AUnNnx2jUNg?si=t6o3m\\_tmigSaOFIs](https://youtu.be/AUnNnx2jUNg?si=t6o3m_tmigSaOFIs)
- B. Saltarello, [https://youtu.be/\\_2qLHouwdN4?si=Dm-z-DK3USo7bYO0](https://youtu.be/_2qLHouwdN4?si=Dm-z-DK3USo7bYO0)
- C. Playford's English Dancing Master, "Grimstock",  
<https://youtu.be/JcQDGxsKdDg?si=u7jxv8U2D34VVCKW>

- D. Telemann, Suite La Puitan, Rondeau “Der Hexen Tanz”  
<https://youtu.be/4zThPjqI81o?si=fGT6jc3MObFqPAmv>
- E. Vives, Doña Francisquita, “Fandango” <https://youtu.be/KtluKoVbwls?si=-MprSEBtRsgqn63r>
- F. Haydn, String Quartet in D Major, Opus 64, No. 5, “Lark”, “Minuet”  
[https://youtu.be/O9i5vsXjr0c?si=-PnIITjB\\_VHVUUr1](https://youtu.be/O9i5vsXjr0c?si=-PnIITjB_VHVUUr1)
- G. Chopin, “Mazurkas, Opus 24, No. 2 and Opus 41, No. 2”  
<https://youtu.be/RvY8rRm02WQ?si=x1Uv4SCQ7uPcd23u>
- H. Johann Strauss II, “Roses from the South Waltz”  
<https://youtu.be/h3c04xZJqfY?si=4fgW-OQE5ZeG1Ddp>
- I. Dvorak, “Slavonic Dances (piano 4 hands), Opus 72, No. 2 and Opus 46, No. 5”  
<https://youtu.be/m0ukuHdWGOI?si=pDHdK91-Em31uvTJ>
- J. Verdi, Ballet Music from “Otello”, Act 3,  
<https://youtu.be/hvkxUaJZXOg?si=YRC7-wIuaOVaVUf9>
- K. Tchaikovsky, “Eugen Onegin, Polonaise”  
<https://youtu.be/vdrKncioRYo?si=dPHmacRMxpKO1TQQ>

## VI. Sources

- A. Geoffrey Hindley, editor. *Larousse Encyclopedia of Music*. Crown, 1987.
- B. Don Michael Randel, editor. *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Harvard University Press, 2003.