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Shall We Dance? Lawrence University Symphony Orchestra, March 10, 2017

Lawrence University

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Shall We Dance?

Lawrence University Symphony Orchestra
Mark Dupere, conductor

Friday, March 10, 2017

8:00 p.m.

Lawrence Memorial Chapel

Huapango

José Pablo Moncayo
(1912–1958)

Valse Triste from "Kuolema", op. 44, no. 1

Jean Sibelius
(1865–1957)

The Chairman Dances

John Adams
(b. 1947)

◆ INTERMISSION ◆

Ballet Suite from "Le Cid"

Castillane
Andalouse
Aragonaise
Aubade
Catalane
Madrilène
Navarraise

Jules Massenet
(1842–1912)

Please join us for a reception in Shattuck 163 following the performance.

PROGRAM NOTES

Huapango

JOSÉ PABLO MONCAYO

Born: June 29, 1912, Guadalajara, Mexico

Died: June 16, 1958, Mexico City, Mexico

Composed: 1940-41

Premiered: August 15, 1941, Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, Carlos Chávez

Moncayo composed his short work *Huapango* after being asked personally by his friend Carlos Chávez to compose a piece based on the popular music of the southeast coast of Mexico. He was particularly inspired by the music of Veracruz while visiting the state. Moncayo mentions that he "...went to Alvarado, one of the places where folkloric music is preserved in its most pure form; we were collecting melodies, rhythms and instrumentations during several days." *Huapango* brilliantly encapsulates the spirit of this region and its culture.

The piece begins faintly but determinedly celebratory, slowly growing in volume as if struggling to contain its excitement. This folk dance was traditionally performed on a wooden platform, and Moncayo makes fantastic use of the percussion to help give this effect. The music gradually expands and finally reaches a loud, ecstatic fortissimo by the entire orchestra repeating a vivacious, festive dance-like rhythm. This introductory motif is then intertwined with two distinct, singing themes played by solo trumpet.

Approximately halfway through the work, the atmosphere suddenly relaxes into a more laid-back, siesta-like waltz. A new theme is introduced in this section, a four-verse song that is passed between solos, finally culminating in a grand, sweeping proclamation from the entire orchestra. Suddenly, the mood is shattered as the horns erupt with a reinstatement of the opening fanfare. This section features a glorious duet on the second theme by solo trombone and trumpet, before the orchestra rushes into an exuberant and delirious coda, ending the work with a bang.

Valse Triste from *Kuolema*, op. 44, no. 1

JEAN SIBELIUS

Born: December 8, 1865

Died: September 20, 1957

Composed: 1903

Premiered: April 25, 1904 in Helsinki

Valse Triste was part of the incidental music composed for Sibelius' brother-in-law Arvid Järnefelt's 1903 play, "Kuolema." The version of *Valse Triste* performed today is of the 1904 revision performed in Helsinki that year. The original version of the music for the play has been lost. The play tells the story of Paavali, who in the first act has a dream in which his dying mother begins to dance, which is the basis for this waltz. At the end, her husband comes as Death to claim her. In the second act, Paavali falls in love and marries Elsa after helping a witch, who gives him a glimpse into the future with a ring. In the third and final act, Paavali and Elsa's house catches fire, and in the flames Paavali sees his mother – in a parallel to the opening act, she has come to claim her son. The music's relationship to the play is best described by the program notes for the original production:

"It is night. The son, who has been watching beside the bedside of his sick mother, has fallen asleep from sheer weariness. Gradually a ruddy light is diffused through the room: there is a sound of distant music: the glow and the music steal nearer until the strains of a valse melody float distantly to our ears. The sleeping mother awakens, rises from her bed and, in her long white garment, which takes the semblance of a ball dress, begins to move silently and slowly to and fro. She waves her hands and beckons in time to the music, as though she were summoning a crowd of invisible guests. And now they appear, these strange visionary couples, turning and gliding to an unearthly valse rhythm. The dying woman mingles with the dancers; she strives to make them look into her eyes, but the shadowy guests one and all avoid her glance. Then she seems to sink exhausted on her bed and the music breaks off. Presently she gathers all her strength and invokes the dance once more, with more energetic gestures than before. Back

come the shadowy dancers, gyrating in a wild, mad rhythm. The weird gaiety reaches a climax; there is a knock at the door, which flies wide open; the mother utters a despairing cry; the spectral guests vanish; the music dies away. Death stands on the threshold.”

The music begins softly, imperceptibly, with a skeleton of the waltz structure, before the violins enter with a brooding theme in the distance. As the ruddy light enters the room, a nostalgic theme emerges, swirling faster, but is eventually overtaken by the original theme. The dance comes back, summoning strength and whirling faster, as if maniacally trying to reach fulfilment before forced to descend into darkness once more after a tumultuous interruption, tragically decapitating the memory of the dance; a ruthless reality repelling reminiscence. The first melody is quoted in a quartet of solo violins, as if grieving for the lost dance.

The Chairman Dances: Foxtrot for Orchestra

JOHN ADAMS

Born: February 15, 1947

Composed: 1985

Premiered: January 31, 1986, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Lukas Foss

John Adams wrote *The Chairman Dances: Foxtrot for Orchestra*, on a commission from the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, as “a kind of warmup” to his full length opera, *Nixon in China* (1987), about the former president’s 1972 visit to the communist nation. The title itself has a certain level of ambiguity. Is “Dances” a verb, implying that “The Chairman” is in the act of dancing? Or, perhaps, does “Dances” reference a collection of several dances in relation to “The Chairman”? The answer is, rather satisfyingly: yes. In this “outtake”, originally the final scene of the opera, Madame Mao, The Chairman’s wife, crashes a formal state dinner, attended by President Nixon and his wife. She finally lures Mao to her, and they share foxtrot. So, yes, The Chairman is in the act of dancing, and the music is a collection of several dances in relation to The Chairman.

The piece can be heard as the gradual unfolding of their love story, looking back. We start at the present, and the highly metered eighth notes of the bassoons and violas represent the extremely structured nature of communist life. This eighth note pulse will be present for the rest of the piece, and is the thread which ties it together. Make sure to pay close

attention to how the two note motif of this section has been transformed by the end of the work. Rather than the unsympathetic marker of strict time, the motif becomes a liberating dance shared by The Chairman and his wife as they look at their youth.

As the music continues, it is clear that Madame Mao just wants The Chairman to “come down, old man, and dance”, so she obstructs the flow of waiters, desperate for the attention of her husband. You will hear the music become increasingly chaotic as she becomes more disruptive.

Abruptly the atmosphere changes as she tries a new tactic to win her husband’s eye. This is heard in the high, slinky harmonics of the violins. During her dance she finally begins to catch his attention. Gradually the tempo picks up, and so do the characteristic eighth notes. Out of this texture rises an uplifting melody, a theme that would not sound out of place in a Hollywood film score. This could be Adams’ reference to the fact that Madame Mao was a film actress in Shanghai before the revolution. The section fades away, and a light dance develops. The same two note motif from the beginning of the work is present once again, but now as a dance. The piece ends with “the gramophone winding down”. The solo piano and percussion sections emulate the end of a record, as the dance loses energy. Eventually the dance fades to nothing as Madame Mao and The Chairman remember the days of their youth in the city of Yan’an.

The Ballet Suite from *Le Cid*

JULES MASSENET

Born: May 12, 1842

Died: August 13, 1912

Composed: 1885

Premiered: November 30, 1885, Paris Opéra

This ballet suite is part of a larger opera that catalogues the exploits of Rodrigo/Rodrigue (El Cid) and his love for Chimène in twelfth-century Spain. The libretto was written by Pierre Corneille, who wrote many operas at the height of French power under King Louis XIV. Rodrigue is honor-bound to duel on his father’s behalf against Chimène’s father, and wins. Chimène is then honor-bound to call on the king to sentence Rodrigue to death for the death of her father, much to her heartbreak. With the impending Moorish invasion, Rodrigue is sent off to battle, and returns with enough glory to cancel his debt and wins back the love of

Chimène. The ballet suite takes place during a carnival where the townsfolk dance, featuring seven dances which celebrate and evoke different flavors of Spain, right after Rodrigue kills Chimène's father.

The first dance is a *Castilliane*, from Castille prominently featuring clacking castanets and a swinging melody, popcorned around the orchestra. A more stable, accented, and grounded melody interrupts this lightness, before returning to a faster reiteration of the first melody, which flurries in tempo with zooming scales to the exuberant ending. The second dance, *Andalouse*, is from the southern region of Spain, Andalucia, and is more romantic and lyrical than its predecessor. Featuring a sweeping and lush habanera rhythm in the bass, with a yearning melody from upper strings and flute, we are spun up in heightened intensity and gently rocked back down. The third is a playful relief from the ardent *Andalouse*, an *Aragonaise* from Aragon, in northern Spain. With a multitude of flying notes from the strings and lifted, dotted rhythms, this movement is reminiscent of a Jota - a dance with Aragon origins, with a Basque tambourine beat and triple meter.

The fourth, *Aubade*, is a respite from the flurry of activity, with smaller instrumentation and a more intimate, introverted quality. It is not from a particular region, rather, it is a morning love song, of the same ilk as the sarabande, with a second beat emphasis from the strumming strings, with mentions of chirping morning birds and general sweetness. The fifth movement, *Catalane*, is from the region where Massenet visited when he discovered the motif for the ballet suite, and is a sardana dance, usually performed in a circle interlocking hands. It begins with a brash fanfare opening, and a sultry melody following, snaking around the pillars of the habanera in the bass. The sixth movement, *Madrilène*, is from Madrid, and is in two parts: song, then dance. The first part features faraway winding notes that converse between the flute and English horn in a songlike duet. This melody fragments, swirling upward into an entirely new section, with brassy chords and a festive rousing ricochet from the strings. The *Navarraise* is the final movement, and brings back the four successive notes from the very opening, with a boisterous and ornamented melody, reprising the *Aragonaise* and other parts with sparkling, speedy spicatto springing the suite to a close.

Massenet visited Spain only once, and wrote in his memoirs: "As I speak of the ballet in *Le Cid*, I remember I heard the motif, which begins the ballet, in Spain. I was in the very country of *Le Cid* at the time, living in a modest inn. It chanced that they were celebrating a wedding and they danced all night in the lower room of the hotel. Several guitars and two

flutes repeated a dance tune until they wore it out. I wrote it down. It became the motif I am writing about, a bit of local color which I seized. I did not let it get away.” Massenet took this motif and used the compositional form of a typical French art song, which fans deemed, “committed to the great honor of our national school... the composer thus gives us the excellent formula of a truly French art accessible to the understanding of the crowds without losing anything of its height.”

It may seem bizarre to hear French composers depicting “Spanish” music, and even stranger still to hear this music used as an exultation of French music. But in fact, the most stereotypical and iconic “Spanish” music is most often written by French composers – *Carmen* by Bizet, *Iberia* by Debussy, *España* by Chabrier. As a sense of moral bankruptcy swept through France towards the end of the 19th century, new musical sounds and revivals of nationalist texts provided a popular escape from the perceived societal corrosion of the country. Many operas depict this societal corrosion and overlay acts of cruelty, perfidy, betrayal, loose sexual desires, and general lawlessness with the musical coding of “Spanish” music. It may be more effective and honest to hear this music as an evocation of exoticism, which juxtaposes the “better music of France” with the lesser music of “others.” *Le Cid* takes us on a musical tour of Spain through the admittedly biased eyes of a Frenchman. While this music is not authentic by any means, it is an undeniable masterwork by a master composer.

(*Eleanor Legault, Bryn Rowke, Nathaniel Sattler, LSO Musicians*)

Lawrence University Symphony Orchestra

VIOLIN I

Maddy Brotherton
Laura Duggan
McKenzie Fetters
Abigail Keefe
Eleanor Legault
Sylvia Middleton#
Margaret Norby
Joan Shalit
Rachael Teller
Katie Weers

VIOLIN II

Lily Agnew
Jessica Gehring
Trace Hybertson
Wendell Leafstedt
Clancy Loeb
Amanda Milne*
Alex Quinn
Rehanna Rexroat
Winifred Waters

VIOLA

Laura Burke
Lia Eldridge
Gabriel Hartmark
Meghan Murphy
Nat Sattler
Julia Tibbetts
Gawain Usher*
Matthew Wronski

VIOLONCELLO

Maggie Anderson
Julian Bennett
Allison Brooks-Conrad
Natalie Galster*

VIOLONCELLO, cont.

Julia Johnson
Adam Korber
Alex Lessenger
Mikaela Marget
Henry McEwen
Sarah Ogden
David Sieracki
Evan Stroud
Joshua Tan
Noah Whiteman

BASS

Jeanette Adams
Sterling Boyd
Jessica Cable
David De Stasio*
Emmett Jackson*
Clay Knoll
Sarah Krysan
Zoe Markle
Steven Traeger

FLUTE

Madeleine Leonowitz (picc)
Kaira Rouer (picc)
Erec VonSeggern* (picc)

OBOE

Brandon Chapman*
Nick Kalkman (EH)
Maralee Mindock
Delaney Olsen

CLARINET

Abbey Atwater
Daniel Bernstein*
Nathan Gornick (bass)

BASSOON

Andrew Hill
Renaë Tuschner*

TRUMPET

Dean Chen
Chad Erickson
Ricardo Jimenez
Isaac Mayhew

HORN

Emma Jensen
John O'Neill
Zach Prior
Bryn Rourke*
Nick Suminski

TROMBONE

Justin Coyne*
Jeremy Andrin
Tanner Stegink (bass)

TUBA

Tim Platt*
Isaac Portoghese

PERCUSSION

Koby Brown
Sean Goldman
Brian Mironer
Dylan Senderling

HARP

Lily Atkinson

PIANO

Ethan Valentin

*Denotes principal or section leader

#Denotes concertmaster

LSO Stage Crew

Justin Coyne
Carl Johnson
Nicoletta Pignatello

LSO Librarians

Renaë Tuschner
Adam Korber
McKenzie Feters

We gratefully acknowledge the important role all of the Lawrence faculty play in preparing our students academically and musically, from our colleagues in music history and theory, to our colleagues in sight-singing, aural skills and keyboard skills, and to our colleagues in the liberal arts. We give special thanks to the studio instrumental faculty.

Special Thanks to the Lawrence University Conservatory Instrumental Artist Faculty

Samantha George, violin
Wen-Lei Gu, violin
Matthew Michelic, viola
Janet Anthony, cello
Mark Urness, bass
Nathan Wysock, guitar
Suzanne Jordheim, flute
Erin Lesser, flute
David Bell, clarinet
Howard Niblock, oboe
Sumner Truax, saxophone
Steve Jordheim, saxophone
Carl Rath, bassoon

James DeCorsey, horn
Jeffrey Stannard, trumpet
John Daniel, trumpet
Nick Keelan, trombone
Tim Albright, trombone
Marty Erickson, tuba and
euphonium
Dane Richeson, percussion
Catherine Kautsky, piano
Michael Mizrahi, piano
Anthony Padilla, piano
Kathrine Handford, organ

Upcoming Performances

Friday, April 21, 8:00 p.m., Handel: *The Messiah* with the Lawrence Choirs

Sunday, April 23, 3:00 p.m. with guest conductor Matthew Arau

Friday, June 2, 8:00 p.m.

As a courtesy to the artists and to those in attendance, please be aware that sounds such as whispering and the rustling of programs and cellophane wrappers are magnified in the hall. Please turn off all watch alarms, pagers, and cellular telephones. And please, no flash photography.

