

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

In the mid-19th century, and following the lead of **Beethoven**, Franz **Liszt** became the rock-star of the piano. Along with pushing the instrument to its technical limits, **Liszt** composed in a new style he described as *Zukunftsmusik* (music of the future), in which he sought liberation from classical rules and a mystical synthesis that combined the arts of music, literature, and philosophy. For his dramatic performances and compositional effort **Liszt** was worshipped by his young admirers (including **Wagner**), but he was also loudly derided by his critics (including **Brahms**), who described his works as an unremitting flow of sound and noise in the guise of music.

Liszt started his virtuoso performing career as a teen-ager and kept up an unremitting touring schedule, well into middle age, that took him to almost every city in Europe with a concert hall. **Liszt** was also a prodigious composer: Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians catalogues over 700 opus numbers—many consisting of multiple works—and, as expected, most are for the piano. Owing to their popularity, many of his piano pieces were orchestrated by himself or others. The six orchestral Hungarian Rhapsodies, of which No. 2 is the most famous, are arrangements of a set of 19 piano pieces by the same name made by **Liszt** and the Austrian composer Franz **Doppler**. (The similarly popular Hungarian Dances by **Brahms** and Slavonic Dances by **Dvořák** were also scored for the piano and later arranged for orchestra.) Unlike other composers of the time, **Liszt** did not actively seek out folk tunes to incorporate into his compositions; rather, he describes hearing and using melodies performed by gypsies in Budapest as the basis for most of the rhapsodies. But in the case of Rhapsody No. 2, **Liszt** admits that the theme was borrowed, with permission, from an unpublished work by the Austrian composer Henrich **Ehrlich** who had sent **Liszt** a manuscript for his approval. (This account was later corroborated in **Ehrlich's** memoir.) The Rhapsody is modeled on the slow-fast structure of the *verbunkos*, a Hungarian soldier's dance, which starts with a somber introduction, the *lassu*, and is followed by the wild *friss*.

Pavane pour une infante défunte

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Maurice **Ravel** is considered to be one of the leading French “post-Impressionist” composers who followed in the footsteps of Claude **Debussy**. He was one of the twentieth century's top piano composers and, like **Berlioz** and **Rimsky-Korsakov**, was also a master of orchestral coloration. While his musical education was guided by his French forbearers—**Debussy** and Gabriel **Fauré**, who was his composition teacher at the Paris Conservatory—**Ravel's** music includes influences from Spain, and Austria, as well as American jazz. (Musicologist Phil Goulding notes that **Ravel** loved to listen to jazz in Harlem night clubs.)

The *Pavane pour une infante défunte* is a prime example of **Ravel's** skill at composing for the piano as well as orchestrating. The piece, which was written for piano while **Ravel** was a student at the Paris Conservatory in 1899, was orchestrated by him in 1910. The pavane was a sedate and dignified processional dance that was popular in the courts

of Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; **Ravel** described the piece as "an evocation of a pavane that a little princess might, in former times, have danced at the Spanish court." It is a piece of lush and resigned reflection which **Ravel** dedicated to his patron, the Princesse de Polignac. When asked by the composer-conductor Manohar **Leide-Tedesco** how he arrived at the title, **Ravel** is reported to have smiled coyly and replied, "Do not be surprised, that title has nothing to do with the composition. I simply liked the sound of those words and I put them there, *c'est tout* (that's all)."

Lakmé Ballet Music

Léo Delibes (1836-1891)

The French composer Léo **Delibes** began his musical career as a church organist. But he had a particular attraction to the theater and thus, at age 35, began composing light operettas at the steady pace of one a year for the next dozen years. During that time he became accompanist at the Théâtre-Lyrique and second chorus master at the Paris Grand Opéra. At the Opéra he was drawn into ballet, which was always a part of French operatic productions. His first ballet, *La Source*, was composed in 1869, and, in the following year, he composed *Coppélia*, which, with its memorable music and superb choreography, was an instant success that brought him true fame. **Delibes** continued to compose both successful ballets and operas, most notably the ballet *Sylvia* and the opera *Lakmé*, the latter considered to be his masterpiece.

Lakmé's story plays out in India, where an English officer falls in love with Lakmé, the daughter of an Indian Brahmin priest. The ballet, which occurs in Act II, takes place in an exotic bazaar where the evocative music conjures the oriental mystery of India.

"Jockey Polka" Op. 278 (Polka Schnell)

Josef Strauss (1827-1870)

Josef was the younger brother of Johann **Strauss, Jr.**, and, like the famous "The Waltz King," Josef also composed waltzes and polkas. Josef often accompanied his older brother on tour and would conduct in his place. His complete works number 283, consisting of waltzes, polkas, mazurkas, quadrilles, as well as orchestral fantasies. Many of Josef's works are considered the equal of his older brother's, and several of Johann's pieces, such as the Pizzicato Polka, were composed in collaboration with Josef. The polka originated in Bohemia in the 1830's and by the middle of the century had become all the rage in Viennese and Parisian salons. The name "polka" is considered to be derived from the Czech term for "Polish Girl." Having become hugely popular in Europe as well as the United States, the polka was even incorporated into highbrow music by composers such as **Smetana** and **Chopin**. Like most polkas, the Jockey Polka is a quick dance in 2/4 time. And, true to its name (*schnell* is the German word for *fast*), the piece cracks the musical whip as it gallops along at record-setting speed.

Waltz from *Masquerade Suite*

Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978)

Aram **Khachaturian**, the brilliant composer of Armenian ancestry, became one of Russia's premier composers rather late in life. He showed no particular musical ambition until age 19 when, upon his own initiative, he applied to a music school in Moscow where he studied the cello. He began to compose in his mid-twenties and his first compositions, for violin and piano, were published by the Armenian State Publishing

House. He finished his studies in 1934 and soon produced larger works, such as a symphony, a violin concerto, and several ballets. As his career flourished, **Khachaturian** progressed to the first rank of Soviet composers, producing works for the concert hall, ballet and theater stage, and film.

Masquerade is a verse play written in 1835 by the Russian romantic writer Mikhail Lermontov. The four-act play, set in 1830's St. Petersburg aristocratic society, highlights the rebellious spirit and noble mind of the protagonist, Yevgeny Arbenin. It is often compared with Shakespeare's *Othello* in its essential story line, as the protagonist, in trying to defend his honor while blinded by jealousy and pride, murders his wife. **Khachaturian** composed incidental music for the play that was staged in Moscow in 1941 and later arranged the music into a five-section suite. The famous waltz was inspired by the heroine's words, "How beautiful the new waltz is! Something between sorrow and joy gripped my heart." **Khachaturian** beautifully expresses this ambivalence between joy and sorrow by weaving the joyful Viennese-sounding music of the middle section into the swirling but sad music of the waltz's opening and closing sections.

"Strike Up the Band"

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Gershwin, born in Brooklyn as Jacob **Gershwin**, was an American composer and pianist. **Gershwin's** compositions spanned popular and classical genres—from Tin Pan Alley where he earned \$15 a week composing songs and making player piano rolls, to the Broadway and Hollywood stages, where he became one of the best paid composers of all time. Among his best known works are the orchestral compositions *Rhapsody in Blue* and *An American in Paris*, and the opera *Porgy and Bess*. He wrote most of his vocal and theatrical works, including more than a dozen Broadway shows, in collaboration with his elder brother, lyricist Ira Gershwin. Because **Gershwin's** compositions bridged musical styles, his concert works—recognizably jazzy—as well as his popular songs, were admired by an ever-widening public. "Strike Up the Band" was written for the 1927 musical *Strike Up the Band*, a satire on war and militaristic music. Although the show was not successful, the instrumental version of the title song has become a popular favorite.

Carousel, Selections (arr. Bennett)

Richard Rodgers (1902-1979)

Rodgers is one of only a few people to have achieved an EGOT—winning an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony. And there's good reason, as he composed more than 900 songs for 43 Broadway musicals in addition to writing music for films and television. His collaboration with Oscar Hammerstein II produced works that are considered to be the pinnacle achievement of the American musical stage: *Oklahoma!*, *South Pacific*, and *The Sound of Music*. *Carousel*, which premiered on Broadway in 1945, was the second work by Rodgers and Hammerstein II, following the spectacular success of *Oklahoma!* The story depicts the travails of a carnival barker who falls in love with a mill-worker. The show includes the well-known songs "If I Loved You," "June Is Bustin' Out All Over," and "You'll Never Walk Alone." **Rodgers** later wrote that *Carousel* was his favorite out of all his musicals.

Hollywood Highlights

Arranged by Deane Kincaide

A medley of songs from Oscar-winning motion pictures:

“Hooray for Hollywood”	“The Continental”	“Lullaby of Broadway”
“The Way You Look Tonight”	“Sweet Leilani”	“It Might As Well Be Spring”
“Swinging on a Star”	“Mona Lisa”	“Secret Love”
“Three Coins in a Fountain”	“Love is a many splendored Thing”	
“High Hopes”	“Call Me Irresponsible”	“Born Free”
“The Days of Wine and Roses”	“The Way We Were”	“Evergreen”
“You Light Up my Life”	“Theme from Shaft”	“Star Wars”
“Thanks for the Memories”		

“The Shadow of Your Smile”

Johnny Mandel (1925 –)

Mandel, who hails from New York, is a successful and popular composer and arranger of songs, film music, and jazz. His songs have been performed by the elite of America’s singers, including Barbara Streisand, Tony Bennet, Shirley Horn, and Frank Sinatra. “The Shadow of Your Smile,” with music by **Mandel** and lyrics by Paul Francis Webster, won the 1965 Academy Award for Best Original Song in the film *The Sandpiper*. The song’s winsome melody perfectly matches the lyric’s resigned remembrance of fleeting love.

“The Stars and Stripes Forever”

John Philip Sousa (1854-1932)

Sousa, known as the “American March King,” (in order to distinguish him from Kenneth **Alford**, the British “March King,”) was, as the composer of the official marches of the US Marine Corps, “Semper Fidelis,” and of the United States, “The Stars and Stripes Forever,” properly born in the nation’s capital, Washington D.C. He was musically precocious and first studied the violin. But, as his father was a trombonist in the Marine Band, young **Sousa** was destined to join that group, in which he learned to play every wind instrument (and he kept at the violin). He eventually became the head of the Marine Corps Band and went on to compose 136 marches. “The Stars and Stripes Forever” was published in 1897 and, ninety years later, declared the National March of the United States of America by an act of Congress. However, the millions of listeners of all ages who have swayed, marched, or hummed along with this most stirring music didn’t take nearly that long to recognize and admire the march’s musical and patriotic pizzazz.