

DANCES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Program Notes:



Sicilienne:

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), the composer of *Sicilienne, Op.78*, was a pianist, organist, French composer and teacher. Fauré was known for his harmonic richness and melodic innovations, and he was particularly noted for his sensitive and graceful songs, piano and chamber music. Fauré's *Sicilienne* is the most popular piece from the opera: "*Pelléas et Mélisande*" that was also an orchestral Suite. In 1898, Fauré scored "*Sicilienne*" for cello and piano in addition to many other arrangements for flute, violin and piano.



Romanian Folk Dances:

Were composed in 1915 by the Romanian composer Béla Bartók. They were originally composed for solo piano, and reworked it for orchestra two years later. It is a set of six pieces based on folk tunes that would have originally been played on fiddle or fife. Each of the six movements is quite short, with the entire piece lasting only about 5 minutes.



Berceuse:

Op. 16, is a short piece written by Gabriel Fauré, in or about 1879. This "cradle song," set in a gently rocking 6/8 meter, was composed originally for solo violin and piano. It was later transcribed for piano four hands as a set of six pieces (Dolly Suite): Berceuse, Mi-a-ou, Jardin de Dolly, Kitty Valse, Tendresse, and Pas Espagnol.



Children's Games (Jeux d'enfants):

Composed in 1871 as a suite of 12 colorful miniature pieces in by the French composer Bizet and is considered one of the gems of piano duet literature. Although were first composed for piano four hands, this work later became more famous as an orchestral suite in 1880.



Les Chevaux aux Bois : (fast wooden horses)

This Merry- Go- Round has a continuous breathless melody. The last miniature movement in this series is # 12: **Le Bal** (the dance), a very light fast dance full of the vivacious energy of children.



Tango: from the ballet suite "Souvenir":

Was written in 1952 by the American composer Samuel Barber. These duets for one piano were intended to be played with his friend. They were later orchestrated and commissioned by the Ballet Society. The suite consists of a waltz, schottische, pas de deux, two step, hesitation tango, and gallop.



Hungarian Dances:

One of his most well-recognized works, Brahms' *Hungarian Dances* is a set of 21 dances inspired by Hungarian folk music, a diverse genre home to the colorful blend of the aural histories of Hungarians and Hungarian minorities living in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Moravia, Croatia, and other neighboring nations. Originally written for piano, the *Hungarian Dances* were later arranged (by Brahms and other composers) for full orchestra.



Vocalise:

A song by Sergei Rachmaninoff, composed and published in 1915 as the last of his 14 Songs or 14 Romances, Op. 34. Although *Vocalise* has no text, the other thirteen songs in this collection were set to poems written by some of Russia's most famous Romantic poets. This most famous song was transcribed for cello, violin, and many other solo instruments.



Csardas:

Composed in 1904 by the Italian composer Monti, it is a very popular as well as fiery concert and encore piece that is based on gypsy folk music. This virtuoso concert piece shows off the technique of the violinist with its lively tempo, dynamic, and character changes.



Tico Tico no Fuba:

Its name comes from a bird (sparrow), and Fuba is a type of maize flour, hence the name (sparrow in the cornmeal), was composed by the renowned Brazilian composer Zequinha de Abreu in 1917. This music is a choro music, popularly called chorinho, an instrumental genre of the Brazilian popular music originated in Rio de Janeiro, has resulted from the Brazilian musicians being exposed to European styles and music such as polka in hemionos: addition to African rhythms, which give it its improvisatory and exciting mixture of colors.



Traditional Middle Eastern Songs by Fairuz:

These selections comprise of 5 songs by the Lebanese Legend Singer (Fairuz), which means Turquoise in Arabic. Born in 1935, this famous singer is among the most widely admired and respected singers in the Arab world. She was known as "Ambassador to the stars" because of her numerous international festivals she participated in. Born from a Syriac Orthodox family, Nouhad Haddad (Fairuz), married the famous composer: Assi Rahbani, who helped shape her music career, and is mother to Ziad Rahbani, a famous singer and composer. Fairuz has performed in concerts throughout the Middle East and in famous opera houses all around the world. Perhaps the most noted contribution of Fairuz and the Rahbanis is in the arena of musical theatre. Musical plays or Operettas were the cornerstone works of the Rahbani Trio: Fairuz, Assi and Mansour. They produced over 25 popular musical plays and were the first to produce world-class Arabic musical theatre. Selections include:

#1: Aker Ayam Al Sayfieh: The last summer days: has a beautiful nostalgic melody reminiscing childhood play and family memories.

#2: Ya Lour Houbuki: This song appeared in the play Meis al Rim (ميس الريم) written by the Rahbani Brothers and starring Fairuz. It is a love song to a girl named: Lour (Laura): translation of the 1st verse:

Your love has tormented my heart
And I had given you my love and affection
Don't you recall our wonderful nights together
And the pledge we made to be true to each other?

#3: Atini Naya Wa Ghani: (Give me the flute and sing):

Poetry written by the famous Lebanese writer: "Gibran Khalil Gibran" from his poem: "Al Mawakeb". It was composed by Nijib Hankash and performed by Fairuz.



Malaguena:

from the Spanish suite: Andalucia, was originally a piano solo work, published in 1928 and was transcribed to numerous instrumentations amongst which this piano-four hand arrangement. Ernesto Lecuona, famous composer, wrote this arrangement in a rich authentic Cuban style.



Habanera:

As it is originated in Cuba, the name "Habanera" is derived from the Catalan word "havanera", which Havana is the capital city of Cuba. This famous piece was composed by the violin prodigy and composer Pablo di Sarasate. Born in Spain, Sarasate started his violin studies at the age of five and later studied at the Paris Conservatory. In 1859 he began the concert tours that made him famous throughout the world. His playing was particularly admired for sweetness and purity of tone, perfect intonation, and a flawless technique. Sarasate composed more than 57 works for violin and orchestra, most of which were performed by the composer himself. Perhaps the best known of his works is Zigeunerweisen (Gypsy Airs) (1878), *Carmen Fantasy* (1883) for violin and orchestra on themes from Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen*. Probably his most performed and widely known shorter pieces are his four books of Spanish Dances, of which, Habanera, Op. 21, #2.



Libertango:

Argentinian composer Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992), is considered "The world's foremost composer of tango music. Born in Mar del Plata, Argentina, of Italian immigrants, he moved to New York City at age 4. As a young child, he would listen to his father's records of the tango orchestras and was exposed to jazz and classical music from an early age. Piazzola has revolutionized tango music by incorporating elements of jazz and classical music into the traditional tango.

About the Artists

Bassam Nashawati, violinist



Born in Damascus Syria, Mr. Bassam Nashawati began playing the violin at the age of seven. After graduating from the Arab Institute of Music, he immigrated to the United States to pursue his musical studies at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and earned a Bachelor's degree studying with the late Isadore Tinkleman. Mr. Nashawati continued his musical education with renowned professor Donald Weilerstein at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he earned both a Master's and Professional Studies degrees.

After performing with the New World Symphony, Mr. Nashawati joined the San Antonio Symphony's first violin section in fall 1999 and held a position as an adjunct faculty at St. Philip's College for several years. He has appeared many times as a recitalist and

soloist with the Syrian National Symphony in his native country performing the Beethoven Violin Concerto, which took him on a tour to the US in 1998. Bassam has been playing with the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra during the summers since 2004, founded and led by Daniel Barenboim, in addition to playing several chamber music concerts in Argentina and as part of the Salzburg Music festival in Austria.

Lama Nashawati DeVries, pianist



Lama was born in Damascus Syria, she studied piano at Conservatory of Music in Damascus. At the age of 18, she pursued further her musical studies in the United States and received her bachelor's degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music in 1996. She has performed in many solo and chamber music recitals including performing Beethoven's 3rd piano concerto with the Syrian National Symphony in 1998. In 2003, she returned to the Middle East and taught at the High Institute of Music in Damascus and at the Conservatory of Music in Zahle, Lebanon. In 1999 she left to study at L'Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris on a one-year scholarship as well as studying French at Alliance Française. Ms.

Nashawati Devries obtained her master's degree in French Literature from the University of New Orleans in 2020 and is currently a French teacher in Cy Fair ISD and a private piano instructor.

Holly Foster, pianist



Holly Foster got her bachelor's degree in piano performance from The Florida State University, where she performed Bartok's Third Piano Concerto with orchestra, performed duo piano with her partner Eric Levine in competitions and recitals, studied harpsichord with Dr. Karyl Louwenaar and pedagogy with Dr. Victoria MacArthur. She was one of seven national finalists in the MTNA Young Artist Competition. Holly received her master's degree in piano performance with Abbey Simon at the University of Houston Moores School of Music, where she also taught precollegiate piano for 9 years. She has taught piano for 30 years, adjudicated local events and created a masterclass for grad students to work with younger students. She has accompanied

students at local high schools.

About the Duo pianist: Holly and Lama met at Northwest Houston Music Teachers Association in 2016 and started performing together around the Houston/Cypress area. They enjoy sharing their love of music at benefit concerts to help others.