

Program Notes

Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov (1859–1935): *Procession of the Sardar* (1895)

Procession of the Sardar is the final movement of **Ippolitov-Ivanov's *Caucasian Sketches, Suite No. 1***, composed in 1895. A student of Rimsky-Korsakov, Ippolitov-Ivanov developed a deep interest in the folk music of the Caucasus during his years working in Tbilisi (then Tiflis), Georgia. This suite captures the vibrant colors and exotic rhythms of the region while showcasing his talent for **orchestration and vivid musical storytelling**.

The “Sardar” refers to a **Persian or Caucasian military leader or prince**, and the piece depicts his grand procession with **dignity, stately rhythm, and brilliant fanfares**. A commanding trumpet theme sets the tone, supported by rich brass harmonies and steady percussion, while sweeping string lines and colorful woodwind interjections provide contrast and texture. The music conveys a sense of **noble pageantry and Eastern grandeur**, blending folk-inflected melodies with Russian romantic orchestral color.

Procession of the Sardar has become Ippolitov-Ivanov's most frequently performed piece, bringing to life a vision of a distant land and offering a rousing, picturesque close to his *Caucasian Sketches*.

Program Notes - continued

Georges Bizet (1838–1875): *Jeux d'Enfants* (Children's Games), Op. 22 (1871)

Georges Bizet composed *Jeux d'Enfants* (Children's Games) in 1871 as a **suite of twelve short piano duets** depicting various children's games and toys. The work sparkles with wit, charm, and elegant simplicity, offering glimpses into the playful, imaginative world of childhood.

Bizet later orchestrated five of these movements into a concert suite, which has become a beloved orchestral gem:

1. **L'escarpolette (The Swing)** – Light, gentle, and lilting, capturing the gentle sway of a swing.
2. **La toupie (The Top)** – Spirited and whirling, evoking the spinning of a toy top.
3. **La poupée (The Doll)** – Tender and delicate, reflecting a child's affection for a doll.
4. **Petit mari, petite femme (Little Husband, Little Wife)** – A playful miniature waltz, portraying children imitating adult roles.
5. **Le bal (The Ball)** – A lively dance, full of rhythmic energy and bright orchestral color, closing the suite with a sense of joyful celebration.

Despite its lighthearted subject, *Jeux d'Enfants* showcases Bizet's **gift for melody, graceful phrasing, and brilliant orchestration**. Composed just four years before his death, it reveals the composer's ability to blend sophistication with warmth and playfulness, offering audiences a delightful window into the innocence and whimsy of childhood.

Program Notes - continued

Aaron Copland (1900–1990): *Variations on a Shaker Melody* (1967)

Aaron Copland's *Variations on a Shaker Melody* is an orchestral arrangement of the beloved Shaker tune “**Simple Gifts**,” famously used in his ballet *Appalachian Spring*. This melody, gentle and dignified, is often associated with American simplicity and optimism, qualities that became central to Copland's musical identity.

The piece began as part of *Appalachian Spring* (1944), where “Simple Gifts” appears in a set of variations that capture the spirit of rural America. In 1967, Copland extracted and reorchestrated these variations as an independent concert piece, allowing audiences to enjoy the Shaker melody in a focused, standalone form.

The theme itself is presented with **clarity and directness**, followed by variations that add rhythmic energy, harmonic color, and shifting textures while preserving the tune's straightforward charm. Copland's orchestration highlights bright winds, warm strings, and transparent harmonies, reflecting the open landscapes and hopeful spirit often associated with his music.

Variations on a Shaker Melody remains a **gentle, uplifting work**, demonstrating Copland's ability to transform a simple folk tune into a piece of quiet grandeur that resonates with American audiences and beyond.

Program Notes - continued

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Wicked

Program Notes - continued

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953): *Lieutenant Kijé Suite*, Op.60 (1934)

Background & Origin

Originally composed as the soundtrack for a 1934 Soviet satirical film about a fictitious officer who mysteriously exists through bureaucratic blunder, Prokofiev's music elegantly blends wit, irony, and lyricism. He later arranged a standalone orchestral suite of five movements, which premiered in Paris in December 1934 and quickly became part of the international repertoire

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Musical Style

Prokofiev's score is known for its **brilliant orchestration** and **memorable melodies**, mixing satirical military gestures with moments of tenderness and nostalgia. It introduces saxophone and cornet to evoke a distinct color palette laphil.com.

Movements & Highlights

1. Birth of Kijé

- Opens with a distant cornet fanfare over the orchestra—a musical “announcement” of the nonexistent officer—followed by a brisk, playful march and a lyrical saxophone motif representing Kijé himself

2. Romance

- A hauntingly beautiful love theme based on “The little grey dove” appears, sometimes sung by baritone. The saxophone adds an intimate, bittersweet quality, subtly recalling Kijé's fictive narrative

3. Kijé's Wedding

- A festive and ceremonial movement, brimming with pomp and charm. It alternates between celebratory fanfares and more humorous cornet solos

4. Troika

- Depicts a joyful winter sleigh ride: sleigh bells, pizzicato strings, and a fast tempo evoke the brisk motion of a three-horse sleigh, buoyed by a Russian folk tune

5. Burial of Kijé (*The Funeral*)

- The suite closes in retrospective fashion, weaving together earlier themes—fanfare, romance, wedding—ending in a wistful cornet echo that evokes Kijé's poignant “demise”

This suite showcases Prokofiev's unique ability to **blend satire and sentiment**, creating a musical narrative that's at once humorous, touching, and vividly orchestrated. It marked one of the earliest landmark Soviet film scores and remains one of his most cherished concert works.

Program Notes - continued

“A Jewish Tone Poem” arranged by Peter Fuch, edited by xx Fuchs, Peter Fuchs, Piano

This piece was arranged by our Conductor Emeritus, Peter Fuchs. Peter will be performing the piano solo with the orchestra. The piece is dedicated to the Miami Holocaust Memorial. Peter will be giving remarks about the piece during the concert.

Program Notes - continued

José Pablo Moncayo (1912–1958): *Huapango* (1941)

José Pablo Moncayo's *Huapango* is often called the **second national anthem of Mexico** for its vibrant, joyful spirit and celebration of Mexican identity. Composed in 1941, it draws its material from the *huapango*, a lively Mexican dance form from Veracruz characterized by **complex rhythms and cross-rhythms between 6/8 and 3/4 time**, and the energetic footwork of dancers on a wooden platform.

Moncayo based *Huapango* on **three traditional huapango songs**—"El Siquisiri," "El Balajú," and "El Gavilancito"—**carefully preserving their folk character while crafting a sophisticated orchestral piece**. Brilliant brass fanfares, colorful woodwind passages, and pulsing rhythms create a festive, driving energy that rarely pauses, sweeping the listener into the excitement of a Mexican dance celebration.

Since its premiere by the Mexico City Philharmonic under Carlos Chávez in 1941, *Huapango* has become Moncayo's most famous work and a staple of orchestras worldwide, offering audiences a **radiant, rhythmically compelling snapshot of Mexican musical tradition in a symphonic frame**.