

NAXOS

LATIN AMERICAN DANCES

Works for Saxophone
and Piano

D'RIVERA
FRANÇAIX
MILHAUD
PIAZZOLLA
VILLA-LOBOS
WHITNEY

Sándor Rigó,
Saxophone

Christina Leeb-Grill,
Piano



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Jean FRANÇAIX (1912–1997) Cinq Danses exotiques (1961)	5:52	Astor PIAZZOLLA Tango-Études (1987) (version for alto saxophone and piano, 1989)	9:38
1 No. 1. Pambiche	1:06	16 No. 5. $\text{♩} = 120$	2:01
2 No. 2. Baiao	1:18	17 No. 4. <i>Lento meditativo</i>	3:43
3 No. 3. Mambo	1:42	18 No. 6. <i>Avec anxiété</i>	3:52
4 No. 4. Samba lenta	1:10		
5 No. 5. Merengue	0:36		
Astor PIAZZOLLA (1921–1992) Tango-Études (1987) (version for alto saxophone and piano, 1989)	12:38	Paquito D'RIVERA (b. 1948) 19 Invitación al Danzón (2008) (version for soprano saxophone and piano, 2019)	5:32
6 No. 1. <i>Décidé</i>	3:00	20 Vals venezolano (1991) (arranged by Marco Rizo [1920–1998] for alto saxophone and piano, 1996)	1:41
7 No. 2. <i>Tempo Tango pesante. Anxieux et rubato</i>	6:26		
8 No. 3. <i>Molto marcato e energico</i>	3:12	21 Contradanza (1991) (arranged by Marco Rizo for alto saxophone and piano, 1996)	1:50
Darius MILHAUD (1892–1974) Scaramouche, Op. 165c (1937) (version for alto saxophone and piano, 1939)	9:21	22 La Fleur de Cayenne (2014) (version for soprano saxophone and piano, 2019)	3:23
9 I. <i>Vif</i>	3:14		
10 II. <i>Modéré</i>	3:49		
11 III. <i>Brazileira</i>	2:15		
Maurice C. WHITNEY (1909–1984) 12 Rumba (pub. 1949)	2:47	Publishers: B. Schott's Söhne, Mainz. Edition: Schott 4745 1–5, Editions Henry Lemoine. Score reviewed and annotated by Yann Ollivo 6–8 16–18, Universal Music MGB Publications SRL. Edition: Éditions Salabert 9–11, Bourne Co., New York, NY 12, Southern Music Publishing Co. Inc. New York. Edition: Peer Musikverlag GmbH Hamburg 13–15, Hendon Music, Inc. Edition: Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd 19 22, Havana–New York Music Company c/o Publishers' Licensing Corporation. Edition: International Opus 20 21	
Heitor VILLA-LOBOS (1887–1959) Fantasia, Op. 630 (1948) (version for soprano saxophone and piano)	9:50		
13 I. <i>Animé</i>	4:10		
14 II. <i>Lent</i>	2:40		
15 III. <i>Très animé</i>	3:00		

Latin American Dances

Works for Saxophone and Piano

Jean Françaix (1912–1997): **Cinq Danses exotiques**

Jean Françaix was born into a musical family and began composing from the age of six, his inherent musicality having been encouraged early. His musical style is light and clear, showing Ravelian influence and embracing popular styles and dance rhythms. Based on Latin American dances, his *Cinq Danses exotiques* was originally composed in 1957 as a suite in eight movements for two pianos. In 1961 he rewrote five of the movements for saxophone and piano. Each movement is a brief vignette characterised by syncopation and a percussive, jumping accompaniment on the piano. The saxophone holds the principal melodic ideas, alternating between short, staccato phrases and more lyrical melodies as heard in the *Baiao*, *Samba*, and the middle of the *Pambiche*. The fast, energetic *Merengue* completes the suite.

Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992): **Tango-Études**

Astor Piazzolla is recognised for revolutionising the traditional tango, incorporating elements of jazz and classical music to create the new style of 'nuevo tango'. The six *Tango-Études* were originally written for solo flute or violin in 1987. In 1989 Piazzolla reimagined these to be played on alto saxophone by saxophonist Claude Delangle with piano accompaniment.

Étude No. 1, *Décidé*, is characterised by the driving tango syncopation with a leaping melody in the saxophone. The piece then explores more chromatic movement and harmonies, with irregular bar lengths and articulation, weaving the phrases together before the original melody returns with a flourish.

Étude No. 2, *Anxieux et rubato*, starts with melancholy descending runs in the saxophone between a three-note motif, supported by held chords in the piano. In contrast, Étude No. 3, *Molto marcato e energico*, is energetic. The fast-moving melody quotes *El pueblo unido jamás será vencido!* ('The people united shall never be defeated!'), an

anthem used by the Chilean resistance against Pinochet.

Étude No. 4, *Lento meditativo*, is the closest to traditional tango, with clear phrases that are regular in length. However, the use of different keys for each of the three sections still places it within Piazzolla's tango nuevo. The meditative quality of the movement can be heard as phrases are gradually developed with embellishments.

Étude No. 5, $\text{♩} = 120$, is the only movement in the suite with a single theme throughout. It remains in the same minor key, and Piazzolla embellishes the ideas as though improvising. The melody has his characteristic descending line and a 3, 2, 3 and 3, 3, 2 metre, unlike the 3, 3, 2 metre common in Piazzolla's work.

Étude No. 6, *Avec anxiété*, is filled with chromaticism. The long first section focuses on a rhythmic idea with a 3, 3, 2 pattern which is gradually developed with larger leaps in pitch and the common descending melodic idea.

Darius Milhaud (1892–1974): **Scaramouche, Op. 165c**

Darius Milhaud is considered one of the most prolific and key modernist composers of the 20th century. He borrowed from his theatrical work to create the original two-piano composition of *Scaramouche* in 1937 and redrafted it for saxophone and piano in 1939. The first and third movements use themes from music he wrote for Molière's children's play *Le Médecin volant*, while the middle, slow movement recycles ideas from Jules Supervielle's 1936 comedy, *Bolívar*.

The first movement, *Vif*, is busy and bustling, evoking a Parisian street scene with a discordant busker. While the tune is simple, it tumbles up and down the saxophone and piano, with the youthful audience reflected in the almost nursery song style. The middle movement, *Modéré*, has a gentle, singing theme with the song in the saxophone and the response in the piano accompaniment. The famous third movement, *Brazileira*, is a fast rumba, idiomatic of the folk music of Brazil, which showcases Milhaud's signature polytonality and the virtuosity of the performers.

Maurice C. Whitney (1909–1984): Rumba

Maurice C. Whitney was an American high school music teacher whose compositions primarily focused on small ensembles, choirs, and theory books. The *Rumba* for saxophone and piano was published in 1949 and dedicated to the American saxophonist Sigurd Raschèr who was instrumental in the development of the classical repertoire for the saxophone. The piano provides the rumba beat throughout the piece, with the saxophone part showing the virtuosity of the player in the *altissimo* register of the saxophone with slap tonguing and fast runs in the spaces of the melody.

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959): Fantasia, Op. 630

One of the foremost Latin American composers of the 20th century, Heitor Villa-Lobos is described as 'the single most significant creative figure in 20th-century Brazilian art music'. He wrote over 2000 works, his style combining traditional Brazilian folk music with the European classical tradition. The *Fantasia* for soprano saxophone and orchestra was written in 1948 and was dedicated to the French saxophonist Marcel Mule. Mule, however, was uninterested and in 1951 Waldemar Szpilman was invited to premiere the work on tenor saxophone. (At the time, the *Fantasia's* passages of extremely high range were difficult to perform so a transcription was prepared one tone lower for the premiere.)

In three movements, the calmer and slower middle movement (*Lento*) is bracketed by the upbeat and energetic first (*Animé*) and third (*Très animé*), showcasing traditional Brazilian rhythms. The virtuosity of the instrument is demonstrated throughout the music with rapid movement up and down the saxophone. The last movement has an interesting metre, with the seven beats in a bar being divided into three then four.

Paquito D'Rivera (b. 1948): Invitación al Danzón
(version for soprano saxophone and piano)

Born in Cuba, Paquito D'Rivera was taught saxophone by his father, a classical saxophonist who introduced him to American jazz. He was a founder member of the Orquesta Cubana de Música Moderna and Quinteto Cubano de Jazz but found the communist regime put too many constraints on musical genres. While on tour in Spain in 1980 he defected to the US where he pursued his love of differing musical styles. A clarinettist, saxophonist and composer, D'Rivera is the only musician to have won GRAMMY Awards in Latin jazz and classical.

Invitación al Danzón was originally written for clarinet trio, and on request, D'Rivera created this version for saxophone and piano specifically for Sándor Rigó. The slower *Invitación* section calls the dancers ready for the *Danzón* – you can hear the saxophone and piano intertwining their phrases as if talking to each other. The *danzón* is a traditional Cuban dance in which the dancers often stop to listen to virtuosic instrumental sections. While the piece maintains the classic Cuban–Latin American syncopation and lilt, you can clearly hear the influence of jazz upon D'Rivera's compositional style.

Vals venezolano • Contradanza
(arr. Marco Rizo for alto saxophone and piano)

Vals venezolano and *Contradanza* respectively pay tribute to two prolific Latin American composers: the Venezuelan guitarist Antonio Lauro and the Cuban pianist Ernesto Lecuona. *Vals venezolano* is a spirited waltz filled with syncopation and rich jazz harmonies on the piano. The *Contradanza* is a lively piece honouring the traditional Cuban genre. The saxophone flies around the melody with contrasts in dynamics between the initial statement of an idea and the echo.

La Fleur de Cayenne
(version for soprano saxophone and piano)

La Fleur de Cayenne is based on the rhythms of the Venezuelan joropo. A little like a fandango, the joropo is a mélange of African, South American and European musical ideas. It is a fast dance that begins as a dialogue between saxophone and the piano in compound time with cross-rhythms and syncopation. The metre changes briefly to a straight four before returning to the compound feel. The piece ends with a diminuendo of scales leading to the final unanimous syncopation. This arrangement was also created by D'Rivera for Sándor Rigó.

Claire Tomsett-Rowe

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Thanks to Roland Dowdy, III, Northwestern University, who kindly shared his 2007 doctoral dissertation, *The Saxophone Music of Heitor Villa-Lobos: The Restoration of the Fantasia and the Discovery of A Roseira*, for the Southern Music Publishing edition of *Fantasia, Op. 630* by Heitor Villa-Lobos used for this recording.

Sándor Rigó, Saxophone • Christina Leeb-Grill, Piano



When you think of the saxophone you think of jazz, but composers such as Berlioz, Bizet and Debussy were already intrigued by this instrument that was invented in 1846. The saxophone has remained a well-loved solo instrument in classical repertoire, its sound possibilities explored by Glazunov, Ravel, Hindemith, Milhaud, Villa-Lobos and Piazzolla among others. Saxophonist Sándor Rigó and pianist Christina Leeb-Grill have cultivated this rich musical soil and discovered pieces that are rarely performed or recorded, thus broadening our understanding of classical music and, on this recording, Latin American styles. As a duo, Rigó and Leeb-Grill perform only original compositions and avoid arrangements of works written for other instruments. This, they argue, is the only way to bring out the true characteristics of the saxophone and maintain authenticity. Rigó and Leeb-Grill began performing together in 2006 and have given concerts in Austria, Hungary, Italy, Switzerland, Canada and the United States. In 2008 they made a recording of works by Pierre Max Dubois for the Hungaroton label; *Latin American Dances*, recorded in 2020, is their first recording for Naxos. Rigó studied in Győr, Hungary and then at the University of Music in Vienna first in clarinet, then classical and jazz saxophone. He performs with various jazz, world, and classical music ensembles and as a soloist. Sándor Rigó is a Yanagisawa artist. Leeb-Grill studied in Vienna and performs as a soloist and chamber musician.

www.sandor-rigo.com
www.leeb-grill.info

Virtuoso duo Sándor Rigó and Christina Leeb-Grill have taken Jean Françaix's description of his own work, 'musique pour faire plaisir', as the motto for this programme. Dance styles and rhythms are at the heart of this repertoire, from the spectacular *Brazileira* with which Milhaud concludes his theatrical *Scaramouche*, through Piazzolla's refinement of tradition in his *Tango-Études*, to the Brazilian rhythms showcased in Villa-Lobos's *Fantasia*. Paquito D'Rivera adapted his *Invitación al Danzón* especially for this recording, providing Sándor Rigó with space to demonstrate his brilliance in improvisation.

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6–8	Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992): Tango-Études Nos. 1–3 (1987, arr. 1989)	12:38
9–11	Darius Milhaud (1892–1974): Scaramouche, Op. 165c (1937, arr. 1939)	9:21
12	Maurice C. Whitney (1909–1984): Rumba (pub. 1949)	2:47
13–15	Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959): Fantasia, Op. 630 (1948)	9:50
16–18	Astor Piazzolla: Tango-Études Nos. 4–6 (1987, arr. 1989) Paquito D'Rivera (b. 1948):	9:38
19	Invitación al Danzón (2008, arr. 2019)*	5:32
20	Vals venezolano (1991, arr. 1996)*	1:41
21	Contradanza (1991, arr. 1996)*	1:50
22	La Fleur de Cayenne (2014, arr. 2019)*	3:23

***WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING**

Sándor Rigó, Alto saxophone **1–12 16–18 20 21**

Soprano saxophone **13–15 19 22**

Christina Leeb-Grill, Piano

A detailed track list and full publishing details can be found inside the booklet.

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