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DANCE

MZ Duo



DELPHIAN

Contra
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MZ Duo

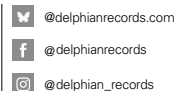
David Zucchi *soprano saxophone*
Iñigo Mikeleiz-Berrade *accordion*

1	Aileen Sweeney (b. 1994)	The Mirrie Dancers	[8:07]
2	Enrique Granados (1867–1916) arr. MZ Duo	Danzas españolas	
3		Galante-Minueto	[2:30]
4		Oriental	[4:34]
		Andaluza	[5:23]
	Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) arr. MZ Duo	Le Tombeau de Couperin	
5		Prélude	[3:34]
6		Forlane	[5:03]
7		Menuet	[4:15]
8		Rigaudon	[3:07]
9	Alex Paxton (b. 1990)	Water Butt: lovers, snorkel	[9:14]
	Béla Bartók (1881–1945) arr. MZ Duo	Dance Suite	
10		I. Moderato	[3:21]
11		II. Allegro molto	[2:14]
12		III. Allegro vivace	[2:38]
13		IV. Molto tranquillo	[2:06]
14		V. Comodo	[1:00]
15		VI. Finale: Allegro	[3:50]
Total playing time			[61:04]

All works are premiere recordings / premiere recordings in this arrangement

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Parish Church, Haddington
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Notes on the music: dancing doubles

Invented in 1829 by the Viennese-based, Armenian-Romanian organ maker Cyrill Demian, the accordion is a viral success story of instrumental design. Quickly gaining popularity for its ease of use, portability, versatility and strong sound projection, it rapidly became a mainstay of several European popular musical traditions. Then, thanks to waves of emigration from Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it soon spread globally, becoming as important to Argentine tango, US zydeco and Korean trot as it was to Czech polka, Jewish klezmer and English Morris. Although invented shortly afterwards (Adolphe Sax patented fourteen variants of his eponymous instrument in 1846), the saxophone took longer to be widely adopted. The instrument only started to become popular in the early twentieth century, first through vaudeville and ragtime music, then from the 1920s onwards in jazz. Since then, however, it has become emblematic.

Outwardly very different, both instruments have similar strengths that led them to become widely used in popular and dance music throughout the twentieth century, particularly before the general use of amplification. Both project strongly (making them suitable for a variety of informal settings, both indoors and out); both are agile,

making them capable of crowd-pleasing virtuosity, high degrees of ornamentation and crisp melodic clarity; and both can carry a smooth, singing line. It is into these qualities that the duo of Inigo Mikeleiz-Berrade and David Zucchi lean with this, their debut recording. All the works here, in one way or another, borrow from the rhythms, contexts and sheer ebullience of popular dance. Given the rarity of both instruments within the classical sphere, it is unsurprising that all but the two new commissions (from Aileen Sweeney and Alex Paxton) feature in the duo's own arrangements. Yet the ease with which the music of composers from Enrique Granados to Béla Bartók responds to the duo's soundworld speaks to the adaptability of their two instruments to almost any popular type.

We begin in the far north of Europe – specifically, the Shetland Isles and Norway. The title of Aileen Sweeney's **The Mirrie Dancers** derives from a Shetland term for the northern lights ('mirr' being shimmer in the extinct Northern Isles language of Norn), and her music is inspired by folk traditions from the region. She mentions in particular the Halling, or *hallingdansen* – a highly athletic folk dance of rural Norway, performances of which often end with a challenge to kick a hat from the end of a

pole held two metres above the ground. The music to the Halling is made up of continually repeated and varied melodic fragments (typically played on the fiddle) that generate and inspire the dancers' necessary leaping and spinning, and Sweeney uses this musical technique to slowly wind up and then wind down the energy of her composition. But one can also hear in her music evocations of the drones and chanters of bagpipes, as well as the characteristic 'snapping' ornaments of traditional Scottish music.

Moving south, Granados's twelve **Danzas españolas** are works of his youth, composed while he was completing his piano studies in Paris in the late 1880s; he gave their first performance in 1890 after returning to Spain. An instant success, they established his name as a composer of significance in his home country and were subsequently published in four volumes between 1892 and 1895. Although Granados does not draw on any pre-existing traditional melodies, he was already under the influence of the composer and musicologist Felipe Pedrell, one of the founders of the Spanish national school of music, and elements of Spanish music run throughout his twelve pieces. The first is often titled 'Minuet' or 'Galante', although more strictly

it is a bolero – a late eighteenth-century dance typically accompanied by guitar and castanets (whose crisp percussive flourishes Granados captures with his staccato chords). It is dedicated to Granados's wife, Amparo Gal, whom he married in 1893. The second, 'Oriental', nods towards the Moorish history of Al-Andalus with its long, flowing melodies and enigmatic, guitar-like arpeggio accompaniment. These influences are brought to the fore with the fifth dance, 'Andaluza', to which Granados gives a flamenco feel by means of a sinuous melodic line and an accompaniment imitative of guitar strumming. This perspective is further heightened on this recording by a slow, quasi-improvised introduction much like those given by the guitar in true flamenco performances.

Maurice Ravel began his six-movement suite for piano, **Le tombeau de Couperin**, in July 1914. Before World War I broke out he had completed just one movement, 'Forlane'. When he returned to the suite in 1917, the war was deeply mired in the trenches of the Western Front; Ravel himself had served at Verdun as a driver for the Thirteenth Artillery Regiment. What had begun as a 'suite française' in tribute to the music of the French eighteenth century that Ravel loved so much now took on altogether more complex layers. After the war, he orchestrated four

Notes on the music: dancing doubles

movements (the four that have been arranged here), creating in the process one of his most popular works. Following a mellifluous 'Prélude', the 'Forlane' is rhythmically and harmonically adventurous (at one point, Ravel crams all twelve notes of the chromatic scale into a single bar; reportedly, the conductor Camille Chevillard could only listen with his hands over his ears). Based on the *furlana*, a north Italian folk dance with Slavic roots, it is in a fast 6/8, although still somewhat less lively than its traditional form. Along with the 'Rigaudon', this is one of two movements based explicitly on movements by Couperin, who includes a forlane in the fourth of his *Concerts royaux*.

Ravel's movements all have an almost *moto perpetuo* sense of momentum, achieved by overlapping antecedent and consequent phrases – a technique that he learnt from Malaysian poetry. The numerous harmonic and rhythmic feints and sleights of hand that he lays on top not only update his Baroque inspiration but also keep the music's surface joyfulness teetering on the edge of irony. Seven of his friends who were lost in battle are memorialised in the dedications of his movements (the fourth, 'Rigaudon', is dedicated to the brothers Pierre and Pascal Gaudin, killed by the same shell on their first day at the front). Nevertheless, Ravel's music

remains light-hearted, even sunny in outlook, following Gallic tradition that memorials need not necessarily be sombre affairs.

If anything, Alex Paxton's music is outwardly even more joyous: he has described his compositional process as one of asking himself at any given moment: 'What is the most sonically sensual thing that can happen?' The cheekily punning **Water Butt: lovers, snorkel** is marked, characteristically, with the instruction 'Always beautiful. Always expressive. Always changing and inconsistent'. The last of these points to how Paxton creates joy, through almost continual surprise and accretion. (Space or airiness can also be considered an addition, so the music isn't condemned to increase endlessly in density.) Several passages for saxophone – particularly where there are repeats – are to be ad libbed; they are always marked with some variation of 'trilly, exciting, busy, beautiful'. Glissandi, overblows and falsetto singing add to the music's over-caffeinated, over-sugared effect: there are no explicit dance references in Paxton's piece, but it is not hard to imagine oneself waltzing and skipping unsteadily home after one heck of a night out.

The pluralistic attitude exhibited throughout this album would have appealed to Bartók,

who expressed something similar in his **Dance Suite**, composed for orchestra in 1923 and arranged for piano two years later. Although, unusually, he does not incorporate any actual folk tunes, Bartók introduces across his six movements forms of 'idealised peasant music' (his words) from North Africa, Hungary and Romania. (A seventh movement, based on Slovakian music, was drafted but rejected.) Commissioned as part of the fiftieth-anniversary celebrations of the unification of the three cities of Buda, Óbuda and Pest, the *Dance Suite* was not a success at its first performance – it was overshadowed somewhat by Kodály's *Psalmus Hungaricus*, composed for the same occasion – yet it has gone on to become one of the composer's most popular works.

Bartók's first and fourth movements allude to Arabic music: the first in its chromatic melody, symmetrically disposed around an A–B flat semitone; the fourth – the only slow movement of the set – in its recollection of a type of urban folk music the composer had heard on a visit to Tangier in 1906. The saxophone introduces an imitation of Romanian folk violin music – in fast irregular metre and over a G–D drone in the accordion – in the middle section of the third movement. And Bartók's own Hungary

features in the bagpipe-like outer sections of that movement and in the aggressive 'Allegro molto' of the second, a movement that bears resemblance to passages in the ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin*, which he was composing at the same time. Each movement is also separated by a slow ritornello that is a further imitation of Hungarian folksong. The fifth movement features a theme so primitive it stands in for a sort of *ur*-folk music, while the sixth stirs all the previous movements together in an invigorating, multicultural climax.

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Tim Rutherford-Johnson is author of Music after the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture since 1989 (University of California Press) and The Music of Liza Lim (Wildbird), co-author of Twentieth-Century Music in the West (Cambridge University Press) and editor of the Oxford Dictionary of Music's sixth edition.

Biography

MZ Duo is made up of Canadian saxophonist David Zucchi and Spanish accordionist Iñigo Mikeleiz-Berrade. 2021 winners of the Royal Over-Seas League Annual Music Competition's Mixed Ensemble Prize and 2022 City Music Foundation Artists, the Duo's repertoire spans everything from reimagined traditional works to modern repertoire and improvisation, all vividly rendered by the unique combination of saxophone and accordion.

Since their debut concert at the Vale de Cambra Classical Music Festival (Portugal) in 2019, the duo have performed across the UK and Europe at major venues and festivals, including appearances at Wigmore Hall, St Martin-in-the-Fields, Edinburgh Fringe, Lake District Summer Music Festival, Barnes Music Festival, Newbury Spring Festival, Music@Malling, Rye Arts Festival, Buxton International Festival, the Rosengart Collection Museum (Lucerne), St George's Bristol, and the Daylight Music series at Union Chapel, London. They have appeared on BBC Radio 3's 'In Tune' with Sean Rafferty, and have held residencies at Music at Brel and Ferrandou Musique. Collaborations include performances with violinist Emma Purslow and tabla player Kuljit Bhamra.

The duo is dedicated to the generation of new repertoire, and has premiered works by composers including Robin Haigh, Aileen Sweeney, Roxanna Albayati, Angela Slater, Brian Elias, Michael Hughes and Alex Paxton. New commissions and projects for the duo have been supported by the Marchus Trust, City Music Foundation, the RPS Susan Bradshaw Composers' Fund, the Nicholas Boas Charitable Trust and the Vaughan Williams Foundation.

Individually, the two musicians have distinguished themselves as performers of classical, contemporary, experimental and improvised music, and hold teaching positions at Goldsmiths, University of London and the Conservatorio Superior de Música de Navarra. Ensembles and orchestras the two have worked with include Explore Ensemble, Riot Ensemble, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Glyndebourne Opera, Opera North, Alex Paxton's Dreammusics Ensemble, and Ferio Saxophone Quartet.



Acknowledgments

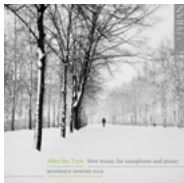
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Also available on Delphian



After the Tryst: new music for saxophone and piano

McKenzie Sawers Duo
DCD34201

Sue McKenzie and Ingrid Sawers, leading advocates of the rapidly growing repertory for soprano saxophone and piano, make their second Delphian outing with a survey of some of its recent British highlights. James MacMillan's poignant lyricism gives way to contained ecstasy, then increasingly unfettered vitality, in a pair of seminal works by Michael Nyman. In evocative miniature dramas by Sally Beamish and Judith Weir the instrument gives voice respectively to the half-human, half-spirit nature of Shakespeare's Caliban and to the life and death of a condemned Scottish bagpiper.

'A fine demonstration of the soprano sax's potential, in which not the least pleasure is Ingrid Sawers' astute and sensitive accompaniment ... Sue McKenzie [plays] with faultless technical control'
— Gramophone, May 2018

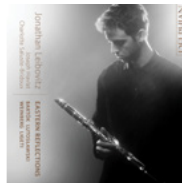


J.S. Bach: Goldberg Variations

Samuele Telari *accordion*
DCD34257

Samuele Telari's instrument is essential to his conception of this eternally fresh, kaleidoscopic work. The accordion's bellows bring out and intensify dynamic contrasts in the slower variations, while the sparkling, faster ones are powered by a pure virtuosity that flows along the two manuals, imitating or chasing one another in resonant stereophony. Bach's immortal masterpiece shines with new light here, keyboard dexterity meeting a string-like expressivity, both heightened by Telari's interpretative subtlety and impeccable control.

'The whole recording is joyful'
— BBC Radio 3 Record Review, July 2021



Eastern Reflections: Bartók – Lutosławski – Weinberg – Ligeti

Jonathan Leibovitz, Charlotte Saluste-Bridoux, Joseph Havlat
DCD34319

The middle of the twentieth century was a period of tremendous conflict and upheaval throughout the world. Composers responded sometimes directly, sometimes more obliquely to the horrors of fascism, war and state-controlled communism. Here, on his debut album, clarinetist Jonathan Leibovitz has brought together works by Eastern European and Soviet composers that draw on the folk-music heritage of their native lands while also bearing witness to powerful currents of history. Leibovitz's charm and compelling artistry are matched by the contributions of pianist Joseph Havlat and, in Bartók's *Contrasts* and a short Ligeti transcription, violinist Charlotte Saluste-Bridoux.

'a valuable addition to the already impressive list of recordings [of Weinberg's Clarinet Sonata] ... superb sound quality, and a very fine debut' — Gramophone, Awards issue 2024



Origines et départs: French music for clarinet and piano

Maximiliano Martín, Scott Mitchell
DCD34280

Born in the Canary Islands and resident for many years in Scotland, clarinetist Maximiliano Martín here explores the ways in which music can express national character as well as tracking more personal life journeys. Maxi's infectious personality is reflected in this deeply personal album, a joyous exploration of French repertoire (from the tenderness of Saint-Saëns's Clarinet Sonata to the playfulness of Poulenc's) that is supplemented by recent works from the two places he calls home: exquisite miniatures from the Scottish composer Eddie McGuire and the Tenerife-born Gustavo Trujillo.

'The performances are strong, at times strikingly intense ... large in gesture and scale' — Gramophone, April 2022

