

Capriccio espagnol, Op. 34, is the common Western title for a five movement orchestral suite, based on Spanish folk melodies, composed by the Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov in 1887. Rimsky-Korsakov originally intended to write the work for a solo violin with orchestra, but later decided that a purely orchestral work would do better justice to the lively melodies. The Russian title is Каприччио на испанские темы. The work has five movements, divided into two parts comprising the first three and the latter two movements respectively..

The first movement, Alborada, is a festive and exciting dance, typically from traditional asturian music to celebrate the rising of the sun. It features the clarinet with two solos, and later features a solo violin with a solo similar to the clarinet's.

The second movement, Variazioni, begins with a melody in the horn section. Variations of this melody are then repeated by other instruments and sections of the orchestra.

The third movement, Alborada, presents the same asturian dance as the first movement. The two movements are nearly identical, in fact, except that this movement has a different instrumentation and key.

The fourth movement, Scena e canto gitano ("Scene and gypsy song") opens with five cadenzas — first by the horns and trumpets, then solo violin, flute, clarinet, and harp — played over rolls on various percussion instruments. It is then followed by a dance in triple time leading attacca into the final movement.

The fifth and final movement, Fandango asturiano, is also an energetic dance from the Asturias region of northern Spain. The piece ends with an even more rousing statement of the Alborada theme.

It is scored for piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes (one doubling on cor anglais), 2 clarinets (in B, A), 2 bassoons, 4 horns (in F), 2 trumpets (in B, A), 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, tambourine, castanets, harp, and strings.

Kondrashin



Khatchaturian - Masquerade Suite

Kabalevsky - The Comedians, Op. 26

Tchaikovsky - Capriccio Italien, Op.45

Rimsky-Korsakov - Capriccio Espagnol, Op.34

Kiril Kondrashin Conducting The RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra



Masquerade was written in 1941 by Aram Khachaturian as incidental music for a production of the play of the same name by Russian poet and playwright Mikhail Lermontov. It premiered on 21 June 1941 in the Vakhtangov Theatre in Moscow. The music is better known in the form of a five-movement suite.

Khachaturian was asked to write music for a production of *Masquerade* being produced by the director Ruben Simonov. The famous waltz theme in particular gave Khachaturian much trouble in its creation: moved by the words of the play's heroine, Nina – "How beautiful the new waltz is! ... something between sorrow and joy gripped my heart." – the composer struggled to "find a theme that I considered beautiful and new". His former teacher, Nikolai Myaskovsky, attempted to help Khachaturian by giving him a collection of romances and waltzes from Lermontov's time; though these did not give immediate inspiration, Khachaturian admitted that "had it not been for the strenuous search" for the appropriate style and melodic inspiration, he would not have discovered the second theme of his waltz which acted "like a magic link, allowing me to pull out the whole chain. The rest of the waltz came to me easily, with no trouble at all." Khachaturian dedicated the waltz to the actress who played Nina, Alla Kazanskaya.

The Comedians, Op. 26, is an orchestral suite of ten numbers by Dmitry Kabalevsky. It is one of his best-known and best-loved works.

In particular, the "Comedians' Galop" (No. 2) is the single most famous piece of music he ever wrote. It has the same recognition factor as an easily accessible work by a Soviet composer as the "Sabre Dance" from Aram Khachaturian's ballet *Gayane* (1942).

In 1938 or 1939, Kabalevsky wrote incidental music for a children's play called *The Inventor and the Comedians*, by the Soviet Jewish writer Mark Daniel. The play was staged at the Central Children's Theatre in Moscow, and it was about the German inventor Johannes Gutenberg and a group of travelling buffoons. Mark Daniel died young the following year.

In 1940, Kabalevsky chose ten short numbers from the incidental music and arranged them into a concert suite.

The Capriccio Italien, Op. 45, is a fantasy for orchestra composed between January and May 1880 by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. A typical performance of the piece lasts about 15 minutes.

The *Capriccio* was inspired by a trip Tchaikovsky took to Rome with his brother Modest as respite from the composer's disastrous marriage with Antonina Miliukova. It was in Rome, however, that the observant Tchaikovsky called Raphael a "Mozart of painting."

While in Rome, he wrote to his friend Nadezhda von Meck:

I have already completed the sketches for an Italian fantasia on folk tunes for which I believe a good fortune may be predicted. It will be effective, thanks to the delightful tunes which I have succeeded in assembling partly from anthologies, partly from my own ears in the streets.

Conductor JoAnn Falletta says:

We are hearing foreigners' views of Italy. . . . *Capriccio Italien* has great power, even though it's practically a pops piece, Tchaikovsky knows what the instruments can do in a virtuoso way. He brings them to their limit in the most thrilling fashion. He has a gift for mixing families of instruments just right – like cantabile strings along with mighty brass. I hear the ballet element in everything Tchaikovsky writes, in his sense of rhythm. You can practically dance to both these scores!

The piece, initially called *Italian Fantasia* after Mikhail Glinka's Spanish pieces, was originally dedicated to the virtuosic cellist Karl Davydov and premiered in Moscow on 18 December 1880, with Nikolai Rubinstein conducting the Imperial Russian Musical Society. – tion six months later. One feature of the work that remained was a passage in the second movement in which the violin soloist steps out of the spotlight to allow for an extended oboe solo. The 19th-century virtuoso violinist Pablo de Sarasate so objected to this that he refused to play the piece. Joachim, however, recognized that the oboe passage provided a deft contrast with the violin itself and did not protest.



Kondrashin

**Khatchaturian - Masquerade Suite • Kabalevsky - The Comedians, Op. 26
Tchaikovsky - Capriccio Italien, Op.45 • Rimsky-Korsakov - Capriccio Espagnol, Op.34**

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Khatchaturian - Masquerade Suite 18:02

- 1. Waltz 4:31**
- 2. Nocturne - violin, Oscar Shumsky 3:54**
- 3. Mazurka 2:44**
- 4. Romance 3:51**
- 5. Galop 3:02**
- 6. Kabalevsky - The Comedians, Op. 26 14:54**

7. Tchaikovsky Capriccio Italien, Op.45 15:49

- Rimsky-Korsakov Capriccio Espagnol, Op.34 15:07**
- 8. Alborada 1:13**
- 9. Variazioni 5:02**
- 10. Alborada 1:11**
- 11. Scena E Canto Gitano 4:37**
- 12. Fandango Asturiano 3:04**
- Total Time 1:05:22**

Khatchaturian & Kabalevsky Recorded by RCA 1960

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Producer - Richard Mohr & Engineer - Lewis Layton

Transferred from 4-track tapes

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