

## **Latin Dance Suite**

by

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in Music Composition

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## THESIS ABSTRACT

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Master of Music in Music Composition

Title: Latin Dance Suite

The music related to Latin Dances has circulated across North and South America for many centuries. There have been many instances where these traditional dances from each Latin country have also been created in an orchestral setting. Each style is still very distinct especially in its own performance practice. In this thesis performance, my Latin Dance Suite aimed to take influence from these traditional Latin Dances to create an original suite consisting of four movements for chamber orchestra. Coming from a Hispanic background as well as a classically trained background in saxophone performance, my goal for this work was to bridge the disparate classical music community and the Latin community by including different Latin styles in a single piece.

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## DEDICATION

I'd like to dedicate this piece to my parents who have supported my music career since I was 11 years old and my amazing girlfriend Genesis, who is my biggest fan.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. Hastla La Muerte .....	1
II. Pásame Mi Cartera .....	17
III. Mi Amor.....	40
IV. Una Noche Bajo Las Estrellas .....	48
APPENDICES .....	91
A. INSTRUMENTATION PAGE .....	91
B. PROGRAM NOTES .....	92



## INSTRUMENTATION PAGE

Flute I, II

Oboe 1, 2

Clarinet in Bb 1,2

Alto saxophone

Tenor saxophone

Bassoon 1,2

Horn in F 1,2

Trumpet in Bb 1,2

Trombone

Bass Trombone

Percussion 1,2,3,4

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violincello

Contrabass



## PROGRAM NOTES

## I. Hasta La Muerte

The first movement of the piece is a quiet introduction in a minor key with a seductive melody that is passed from instrument to instrument in the orchestra. The intimate relationship is meant to resemble a dance between two partners in a romantic setting.

## II. Pásame Mi Cartera

Contrasting with the first movement, the salsa is twice as fast and full of energy. The percussion instruments are the driving force that maintains the energy throughout the whole piece. In the middle of the movement, there is an open solo section which is customary in salsa music. During this section, the player may choose to perform an improvised solo. There are many dense rhythms, but salsa is grounded in a variety of rhythms that stem from traditional approaches to the dance.

## III. Mi Amor

This is the slowest and most relaxing movement of the suite. This slow movement is meant to resemble a more traditional bolero in which there are three vocal parts as well as three guitar parts accompanied by a simple percussion rhythm. The string section plays as if it is a single guitar. The violin I, violin II, and violas even hold their instruments like a guitar while strumming the strings. The melody is played by the oboe which closely resembles the human voice and is accompanied by the other winds.

## IV. Una Noche Bajo Las Estrellas

For me, the most beloved movement of the suite is the final movement. Not being able to pick one dance from my own culture, I decided to use the melody that is heard throughout the entire piece in both dances. Moreover, I composed the Danzón in a moderate tempo and the Huapango in a quicker tempo. Within this movement there are many climactic points and contrasting slow passages. The melody is the glue that brings this piece together and is circulated throughout many sections within the orchestra. This movement has a powerful ending which also serves as the conclusion of the entire four-movement piece.