

Meet Alberto Ginastera!



"To compose, in my opinion, is to create an architecture... In music, this architecture unfolds in time... When time has past, when the work has unfolded, a sense of inner perfection survives in the spirit. Only then can one say that the composer has succeeded in creating that architecture."

1916-1983

- Alberto Evaristo Ginastera was an Argentine composer.
- He was born in Buenos Aires to parents who were devoted to agriculture, trade, and crafts.
- He entered the Williams Conservatory at age 12.
- He visited the United States at age 29.
- As a leader in representing musical nationalism, he frequently used Argentine folk and popular elements in his compositions.
- Yale University awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1968.
- An extremely meticulous composer, he composed fifty-five works including some music for theater and movies.
- Ginastera's works feature use of microtones (intervals that are smaller than a half step) as well as serial and chance organizational structures.

We can thank Argentina for:
The Tango
The ball-point pen

Did you know...
In Argentina it is considered very rude if you yawn. If you are invited to an Argentine home, bring a gift of flowers or imported chocolates. Bird-of-paradise flowers are highly prized.



Link up to learn more about Alberto Ginastera!

- www.classical.net/music/comp.lst/ginastra.html
- members.tripod.com/~ostinato/ginasbio.html
- www.naxos.com/composer/ginaster.htm
- www.sfsymphony.org/templates/composer.asp?nodeid=33&strchar=F
- www.stevenestrella.com/composers/index.html?composerfiles/ginastera1983.html

Lesson Focus: Music and Dance

Lesson Plan for “Malambo” from *Estancia*, Op. 8a by Alberto Ginastera

Standards addressed:

- Standard 3: Responding To and Analyzing Works of Arts
- Standard 4: Understanding The Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of The Arts

Performance indicators: Students will:

- use appropriate terms to reflect a working knowledge of the musical elements; use terminology from music and dance to analyze and compare the structures of musical and other artistic works.
- identify the cultural contexts of a performance or recording.

Objectives: Students will:

- understand the purpose of the composition and how it relates to the culture.
- demonstrate an understanding of the form of this composition.

Materials needed:

- Information about the composer (see previous page)
- Video from *RiverDance*
- Recording of “Malambo”

Listening/Viewing Repertoire:

- Video from *RiverDance* (see suggested website below)
- Recording of “Malambo” (see suggested website below)

Prior Knowledge:

- Musical terms and concepts: dynamics, crescendo, staccato, form
- Families of instruments – particularly the percussion family
- Understanding that music and dance are quite related and both contribute to our culture.

Procedures:

- Discuss the popular show *RiverDance* which came to Rochester last spring. Many students may have seen the show or viewed commercials for “RoadRunner” that feature Michael Patrick Gallagher. In *RiverDance*, the dancing focuses on the Irish heritage. However, other cultures also have their own style of dancing. “Malambo” is an example from a Latin American culture.

Did you know...

This culminating section of *Estancia* represents an energetic dance (similar to the tango) associated with the gauchos. The tough horsemen known as the gauchos are one of the best-known symbols of Argentina and can be compared to the American cowboy.



Listen to “Malambo.”

- The final movement is called “Malambo” but is also known as “Danza Final.” In this selection, there are three sections which seem to imitate a dance competition amongst the gauchos. In the beginning, there are simple exhibitions by individual gauchos.
- The sounds are very staccato and the rhythms pulsate. At the end, the imagery could be interpreted as all of the gauchos performing at the same time. However, their individual styles are juxtaposed to form a loud and boisterous final section.
 - This section is repetitive and includes development of the dynamics as well as increasingly higher pitches. More and more sounds are added to build towards the middle section.
 - This section is more complex with themes that alternate. A crescendo builds to a fortissimo. Ginastera’s characteristic use of microtones can be heard in this segment.
 - The final section is extremely loud throughout. The pulsating rhythms and clashing tonalities are exciting. The percussion section of the RPO should be exciting to view throughout this section.

Indicators for success: Students will:


- indicate an understanding of this composition by utilizing appropriate musical terms.
- indicate an understanding of this composition as related to the art of dance.
- understand the cultural heritage of this composition.

Lesson extension: The complex rhythms of this piece may make the basic pulse difficult to detect. Have your students clap half notes, quarter notes and eighth notes in time to the music.

Additional Information:

The "malambo" was born in the loneliness of the plain around 1600. Among our dances, it is an exception because it does not have lyrics, the music of the guitars accompany this dance that only men perform. The dancer shows off with the tap dancing, the "cepillada" (brushing) (to graze the floor with the sole of the foot), the "repique" (the hit with the heels and the spur) or the "floreos." His feet hardly touch the ground.

Ginastera’s most famous work in this genre was the ballet *Estancia* (1941). “Malambo” is the fourth section from this ballet. *Estancia* was originally commissioned by the American Ballet Caravan and Lincoln Kirstein as they toured throughout Latin America. However, the ballet was never produced by that company. It depicts life as a *gaucho* (Argentine cowboy) on a cattle ranch (estancia) and is based upon a poem by Jose Hernandez. Like Aaron Copland’s *Rodeo* (1942) and *Billy the Kid* (1938), *Estancia* contains quotes of actual folk tunes in the music.

 **Link up to learn more!**

- www.classicalmidiconnection.com OR www.polleng.freemove.co.uk/gp_danza.mid
- www.riverdance.com
- www.gauchodelplata.com/Malambo.htm
- www.argentour.com/pampa56i.html