About the Composer

Moritz Moszkowski, famous pianist, teacher, and composer, was born in Breslau, German Silesia, on August 23, 1854, and died in Paris on March 4, 1925. He studied at the Dresden Conservatory, the Stern Conservatory, and the Kullak Academy in Berlin, where he subsequently taught. Following his first public recital in 1873, he continued to perform throughout Germany and in Paris, where he established a reputation as a pianist and teacher. In 1897, he made Paris his headquarters. Moszkowski was admired for his finished, graceful playing, and for his many audience-pleasing compositions. The best of his salon music is of the highest caliber.

Many Americans went to Europe to study with Moszkowski. His philosophy of piano teaching and fingering, like that of Chopin, took into account the physiology of the hand and the topography of the keyboard. He had a wonderful gift for composing for the hand. A delightful melodist, his work can sparkle with humor. Virtuosi such as Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943), Josef Hofmann (1870–1956) (who studied with Moszkowski), Josef Lhevinne (1874–1944), Vladimir Horowitz (1903–1989), and Jorge Bolet (1914–1990) always found a place for his pieces on their programs.

About the Music

The Spanish Dances, Op. 12, are probably Moszkowski's most famous piano works. In an interview for the September 1912 issue of the magazine The Etude, Moszkowski described how he composed the Spanish Dances when he was 17 years old (in 1871). Being short of funds at the time, Moszkowski went to his young friend and composer Philipp Scharwenka (1847–1917) to borrow some money. Philipp, who was broke also, suggested that Moszkowski compose something to sell to a publisher. The result was the Spanish Dances. Publisher Carl Simon in Berlin accepted the works, which were released some weeks later. The dances are listed in the 1901 Simon catalog in two volumes: Edition 380 contains the first three dances (C major, G minor, and A major) and Edition 381 contains the remaining two dances (B major and D major).¹

These pieces were very popular during Moszkowski’s lifetime and greatly admired. They are brilliant with attractive melodies, and are polished and elegant. The pieces are beautifully conceived for the instrument and have a winning appeal. They often sound more difficult than they are and lie well under the hands.

At the time these works were composed, there was very little Spanish piano music available or even known. This helped make these “exotic” pieces very popular. Moszkowski added to the Spanish flavor by naming the fifth dance “Bolero.”

About This Edition

The Simon catalog of 1901 lists 35 editions of these dances, arranged for piano solo and many other combinations of instruments.2 Other publishers released several editions in the 1880s. Peters became the publisher for Moszkowski’s compositions in the 1880s, and released an edition in 1883. An earlier edition (ca. 1875), released by Peters but showing the Carl Simon (Berlin) imprint, is the source for this current edition (Peters was known to print works of other publishers under license at this time).

In this edition, fingering and all parenthetical material are editorial and can be changed by the performers.

Form

All five dances are written in rondo form.

No. 1: \( A = \text{measures 1–19}; \quad B = 19–35; \quad A_1 = 36–51; \quad C = 51–83; \quad A_2 = 84–99. \)

No. 2: \( A = 1–16; \quad B = 17–32; \quad A_1 = 33–48; \quad C = 48–64; \quad D = 64–80; \quad C_1 = 80–97; \quad A_2 = 97–145. \)

No. 3: \( A = 1–36; \quad A_1 = 36–67; \quad B = 68–100; \quad C = 100–131; \quad B_1 = 132–164; \quad A_2 = 164–180; \quad A_3 = 180–195; \quad \text{coda} = 195–207. \)

No. 4: \( A = 1–16; \quad B = 17–32; \quad A_1 = 33–48; \quad C = 49–68; \quad D = 68–84; \quad C_1 = 84–100; \quad A_2 = 101–116; \quad B = 117–132; \quad A_3 = 133–148. \)

No. 5 (Bolero): \( A = 1–20; \quad A_1 = 21–36; \quad B = 37–52; \quad A_2 = 53–74; \quad \text{coda} = 75–94. \)

Sources Consulted


\[ ^2 \text{Ibid., pp 95–97.} \]
Spanish Dances, Op. 12

No. 1

SECONDO

Allegro brioso \( \frac{q.}{\_} = 63 \)

Continue to arpeggiate the chords for a more “guitar-like” sound.

Moritz Moszkowski
(1854–1925)
Moderato ($\text{\textbf{j}} = 138$)

No. 2
Con moto (\( \frac{\ddot{\text{}}}{\ddot{\text{}}}=69\))

No. 3

Secondo RH is over primo LH for 32 measures.
Con moto \( (\frac{3}{4} = 69) \)

No. 3

Secondo RH is over primo LH for 32 measures.
No. 4

Allegro comodo ($ \frac{\text{j}}{\text{=} 126}$)