

DANZAS BRILLANTES

Danzas Brillantes is a three movement work for band of about ten minutes in duration. The composition was commissioned by Stephen E. Panoff, Director, and the Tallwood High School Symphony Band of Virginia Beach, VA in memory of Maria S. Diaz, a superb french horn player and 2000 graduate of Tallwood High School who died in a tragic auto accident in August 2001. The composition was composed as a celebration of her life and a monument to her ceaseless spirit while applauding the achievement of this great ensemble which she loved so much. Maria gave a phenomenal performance of my virtuoso work "Movement for Horn and Band" in May 2000. I was very taken by her awesome artistry. Therefore, I am honored to have been chosen by Maria's parents to compose this work in her memory.

Throughout the composition, ***Danzas Brillantes*** is imbued with Spanish stylistic musical elements symbolic of Maria's Latin heritage. However, all the musical material is entirely original and there are no quotations from other works.

The first movement, *Con Bravura*, is exuberant in character. Spanish-isms are piled on top of each other and tossed around the entire ensemble while castanets further enhance the colorful nature of this movement.

Rhapsody-Sonando (dreaming), the second movement, is the sensitive emotional core of the work. The movement begins with a chant-like melody in the horns which symbolizes the deep Catholic faith of the Diaz family. This chant-like melody is first accompanied by hollow open harmonies similar to those used in the parallel organum of early Christian music. The chant is developed throughout the movement while mournful and introspective Spanish-isms provide contrast. A variety of moods are explored ranging from sadness to sudden emotional outbursts. The french horns come back to close the movement.

The last movement, *Flamenco*, brings the work to a feverishly exciting close with the constantly shifting accents and meter changes which are so much a part of the Spanish style. This athletic movement is a technical tour de force which shows off the entire ensemble. The final measures of the piece build and build to a joyous final chord in D major in tribute to the great talent of Maria S. Diaz.

Danzas Brillantes is translated into English as bright or brilliant dances. These adjectives describe not only the mood of much of the music but also the persona of Maria S. Diaz.

Aldo Rafael Forte
Composer
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