



Your Panorama track for

March 2019 is our second reading of an Erik Satie composition (see also "Je Te Veux," April 2018) and our fourth from composers working in Belle Époque Paris (see also "Sicilienne, Op. 78" by Gabriel Fauré, August 2014, and "Je Veux Vivre" by Charles Gounod, October of that year).

This is also our second release in a series featuring the trio: myself on clarinet, Michael Ward-Bergeman on accordion and Doug Garrison on drums

(see also "Bessarabian Balaban," which we sent you last month, Feb 2019). We began in the studio last Friday with an arrangement which we captured after a few takes. For this session Michael brought out the "Cadillac," his extra massive, custom built Bugari accordion (check out the fat low end on the bass side). Then Doug and I returned Tuesday and added additional percussion, Doug on the bongos and me on tambourine.

The tune is cast in an altered minor scale, evoking a Middle-Eastern atmosphere. Coming from Satie, this made us think more of a parlor exoticism than any attempt at folkloric authenticity. Although we did set our version to an Arabic groove called "maqsoom," Michael chose to go abstract for his accordion solo. Let us know what the overall effect on your ears is.

Erik Satie (1866-1925) flunked out of the Paris Conservatory not once but twice yet went on to be one of the most important composers from pre-war France. Not only did his work inspire younger composers like Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel but, according to Wikipedia (which Panorama supports financially and invites you to do the same) he is also cited as foreshadowing such cultural movements as the Avant Garde, Surrealism, Minimalism and Theater of the Absurd. His whole musical frame of reference was very original and quite in contrast to that of the late-romantic period in Europe.

The Belle-Époque (1871-1914), a period of peace and prosperity in France, saw the rise of the French bourgeoisie and many of the things we now associate with the City of

Lights: the Eiffel Tower, the Impressionist and Expressionist movements in painting, the Art Nouveau style in the decorative arts, the Moulin Rouge, the Folies Bergère and the Bohemian lifestyle in Montmartre where Satie was a resident.

"Première Gnosienne," as the name implies, is the first in a set of pieces begun in 1890 and published in 1893. "Gnosiennes" is a word that the composer himself invented and there exists some ambiguity as to his intentions. It is known that Satie had an interest in Gnosticism, an esoteric branch of early Christianity which held that the material world was created by lower gods and that matter was essentially trapped Spirit. To achieve salvation, humans must attain "Gnosis," the Greek word for knowledge.

Another theory is that Satie had in mind the story of Theseus and the Minotaur which is set in the ancient of Knossos (or Gnosos) on the island of Crete.

Thanks for listening and Happy Mardi Gras. We hope this track adds a unique vibe to your celebrations. Oh and look for Panorama Brass Band out in the streets this week. If you see us holler!



Ben Schenck

Panorama Jazz Band / Panorama Brass Band

New Orleans, LA

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Credits:

Panorama Jazz Band Trio

Ben Schenck - Clarinet, Tambourine

Michael Ward-Bergeman - Accordion

Doug Garrison - Drums set, Bongos

Music - Public Domain

Arrangers - Ben Schenck, Michael Ward-Bergeman + Doug Garrison

Published by Snack Daddy Music (ASCAP)

Recorded (Feb 22 + 26, 2019), edited, mixed and mastered by Lu Rojas at Oak Street Recording, New Orleans, LA

Cover photo - Ben Schenck

Graphic design - Ben Schenck