

Capriol Suite (1926) Peter Warlock (1894–1930)

British composer Peter Warlock is the pseudonym for Philip Arnold Heseltine, who was born into a wealthy family with strong artistic connections. While it was Sibelius's fifth symphony that first inspired David Lyon's imagination, it was a performance of Frederick Delius's *Lebenstanz* at Royal Albert Hall that made a profound impression on Warlock. Delius became a mentor to him at an early age and was a lifelong friend.

Deciding not to follow the family tradition of work in the stock exchange or civil service, Warlock never established a conventional career. He was a published music critic, a music editor, and perhaps most significantly, a revolutionary scholar in the study, arrangement, and transcription of early music. To some, it was as if he led a double life, writing confrontational and controversial music critiques published under his given name while writing songs in his own original style using the pseudonym. It was during this period in his life, the 1920s, where much of his music was written, including his most famous work, the *Capriol Suite*.

This suite for string orchestra is set of six contrasting dances in a renaissance style. Each movement is based on music in a manual of renaissance dances by the French priest Jehan Tabourot (1519–95). Coincidentally, this manual, *Orchésographie*, was also published under a nom de plume, the anagram Thoinot Arbeau. The essence of Warlock's *Capriol Suite* is new and innovative; his treatment of the dances is very free and bears little resemblance to the tunes in their original form. Because of this, the work is widely considered more of an original composition than an arrangement of existing material. Each of the dances is presented in the order in which they appear in Tabourot's manual with this exception of *Bransles*, which includes portions of several different tunes. Each movement title reflects the specific dance being portrayed, for example *Mattachins* is a sword dance, and *Bransles* are country dances. The fifth and perhaps most famous movement's title derives its name, *Pieds-en-l'air*, from the instruction given to the dancer, rather than the style of dance itself. Translated literally, *Pieds-en-l'air* means "feet in air," instructing the dancer to glide across the floor as if their feet never touch the ground. Of particular note is Warlock's occasional use of more adventurous harmonies. These discords, used very sparingly, not only exhibit Warlock's unique stamp but also reveal these dances in a distinctly modern light.