Program Notes

Can You Can-Can?
This well-known music is from Jacques Offenbach’s popular operetta Orpheus in the Underworld. The words are not!

So You Think You Can Dance (Medley)
This whirlwind of a collection of dance music includes the C+C Music Factory hit “Everybody Dance Now;” the Jackson 5’s “Dancing Machine;” the theme song from the television show “So You Think You Can Dance;” Little Eva’s “The Locomotion;” Metro Station’s “Shake It;” Chubby Checker’s “Let’s Twist Again;” Paula Abdul’s “Straight Up;” the Village People’s “Y.M.C.A.;” Martha and the Vandellas’ “Dancing in the Street;” and Lady Gaga’s “Just Dance.” Can you hear them all?

Step in Time
Many of us associate this song with the movie Mary Poppins. The version we sing for you is from the Broadway musical of the same name. Although this version begins slowly, it gradually builds to a lively, breathless romp. Danced by the chimney sweeps on the rooftops of London, this piece is a showstopper.

Tango to Evora
“Tango to Evora” was originally an instrumental piece by the Canadian Celtic musician Loreena McKennitt. It can be found on her CD The Visit. It was also used in the soundtrack of The Burning Times, a National Film Board of Canada documentary about European witch-hunts of the 16th and 17th centuries. Evora is an historical city in Portugal. This vocal version was arranged by Jon Washburn for the Vancouver Chamber Choir who performed it to wide acclaim at the 1999 ACDA Convention in Chicago.

Ease on Down the Road
From the hit musical The Wiz, a contemporary take on the 1939 film The Wizard of Oz, “Ease on Down the Road” is an equally contemporary take on “Follow the Yellow Brick Road.” We all love that old standard featuring Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion, but it didn’t have quite the same syncopated punch that the newer version does. The tempo marking of this piece says, “Funky, dance four-feel.” Somehow we never seem to think of Judy Garland’s version as “funky!”

The Varsity Drag
The musical Good News opened on Broadway in 1927. It is the story of Tait College football star Tom Marlowe, who falls in love with Connie Lane, a studious coed who is tutoring him so he can pass astronomy and be eligible to play in the big game. Despite debuting the same year as Broadway’s mega-hit Showboat, this little musical with the simple plot was very successful. One of the big dance numbers in the show, “The Varsity Drag” introduced this collegiate dance that was “hotter than hot, newer than new” to the general public.

Stomp Your Foot
Aaron Copland? Dance music? But isn’t he the one who wrote “Simple Gifts?” Well, no. That’s a Shaker tune that he put into his composition Appalachian Spring, which is usually heard as an orchestral suite but was originally a ballet commissioned by Martha Graham. So yes, Copland wrote dance music. Some of his most popular music was originally written for ballet. “Hoedown,” from the ballet Rodeo, for instance, is the music we associate with steak. “Beef.
It’s what’s for dinner.” “Stomp Your Foot,” however, was not written for a ballet. It was written for Copland’s opera *The Tender Land*. It might not make you think of beef, but we hope it makes you want to stomp your…well, you know.

**Blame It on the Bossa Nova**
The bossa nova is a Brazilian music style that became popular in the United States in the late 1950s. The song “Blame It on the Bossa Nova” was a 1963 hit for singer Eydie Gormé. It reached No. 7 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in March of that year. “Blame It on the Bossa Nova” garnered international success as well, reaching No. 1 in Australia, South Africa and Sweden, and No. 2 in Norway. Gormé also recorded a Spanish version, which sold well in Spain, Latin America and Italy. We will be performing the English version of this Latin dance tune.

**Buffalo Gals**
This traditional American song was written in 1844 by minstrel John Hodges and published as “Lubly Fan.” It was extremely popular and minstrels often changed the words to suit the local audience for each performance. It could be sung one night at “New York Gals” and another as “Boston Gals.” The best-known version is named for Buffalo, New York. We considered singing “Pittsburgh Gals,” but it just didn’t have the right ring to it. “Buffalo Gals” was featured most notably in the 1946 Frank Capra film *It’s a Wonderful Life*.

**I Could Have Danced All Night**
Published in 1956, “I Could Have Danced All Night” was a fan favorite from Lerner and Loewe’s hit musical *My Fair Lady*. It was sung on Broadway by the first Eliza Doolittle, Julie Andrews, after an impromptu dance with her tutor, Henry Higgins, leaves her exhilarated and breathless. As the song says, we are going to dance all night – or at least sing about it!

**Country Dances**
Hold on to your cowboy hats! This a cappella creation by Ward Swingle (of Swingle Singers fame) includes no fewer than thirteen familiar country dance tunes. Good luck hearing them all!

**Dancing Queen**
Who doesn’t love ABBA? Their music is infused with their signature harmonies and driving rhythm that makes you want to sing along. The success of the 1999 Broadway musical and 2008 movie *Mamma Mia* has introduced a new generation to this Swedish group from the 70s and 80s. “Dancing Queen,” released in 1976, was ABBA’s biggest hit. A worldwide sensation, it reached number 1 in the United States, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, West Germany and Zimbabwe.

**Charleston**
Which came first, the song or the dance? In this case, it was the dance. Named for the harbor city of Charleston, South Carolina, the Charleston dance developed in the early 1920s. In 1923 Cecil Mack and Jimmy Johnson wrote the song “Charleston” to accompany the dance. The song appeared in the 1923 Broadway musical comedy *Runnin’ Wild* and was later featured in a number of movies that were set in the 1920s, including *Roxie Hart* (1942), *Margie* (1946), *It’s a Wonderful Life* (1946) and *Tea for Two* (1950).

**It’s Raining Men**
Released at the height of the disco era, “It’s Raining Men” was made popular by a group known as The Weather Girls. Yes, seriously. It was written by Paul Jabara and Paul Shaffer (the band leader from Late Night with David Letterman), and was first offered to and turned down by Diana Ross, Donna Summer, Cher, and Barbra Streisand before being accepted by Martha Wash and Izora Armstead of The Weather Girls. Their version sold more than six million copies worldwide.
Stray Cat Strut
“Stray Cat Strut” appeared on the first album of American rockabilly band the Stray Cats. It was first released in 1981 in the UK, where it reached No. 11. It was released a year later in the United States and peaked at No. 3 on the *Billboard* Hot 100. The video became as popular as the song due to its frequent airing on the newly-launched cable television channel MTV. It featured the band playing in an alley while an irate neighbor threw things at them. Please don't throw anything at the PCC men. But feel free to snap your fingers as they sing.

Linus and Lucy
If you have seen a Peanuts animated television special, you have seen the Peanuts characters dancing to this tune as Schroeder plays it on his toy piano. Written by Vince Guaraldi, “Linus and Lucy” was released on his 1964 album *Jazz Impressions of a Boy Named Charlie Brown*. It first appeared on television in the 1965 special *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and has been featured in most of the Peanuts television specials since. Whether your favorite is Charlie Brown, Sally, Peppermint Patty, Linus, Lucy or Snoopy, you just might want to unleash your inner Peanuts character when you hear this music.

Shut Up and Dance
Don't take offense at the title. Written and recorded in 2014 by the band Walk the Moon, it is considered an anthem for letting go of frustration and having fun. “Shut Up and Dance” is the band's biggest hit to date. It peaked at No. 4 on the *Billboard* Hot 100, hit no. 1 in Poland, and peaked within the top ten in Australia, Canada, Germany, Israel, Ireland and the UK. So sit back, release your frustrations and enjoy one of the newest dance numbers in our concert.

The Real of Heart
The Pittsburgh Concert Chorale is proud to be one of twelve choruses across the country to participate in Chorus America's commissioning consortium. “The Real of Heart” was composed by Bob Chilcott and will be premiered by the twelve choruses this spring before the music will be released for general distribution. It is published by Oxford University Press and bears the names of the commissioning choirs inside the front cover. You are the first audience in Pennsylvania to hear this work.