Malambo from *Estancia Dances*

Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)

*Click here to see the BSO perform this piece.*

**About the Composer and Piece**

Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983) was Argentina’s most significant classical music composer in the middle of the 20th century. Like many of his South American colleagues, he combined European training with an interest in local folk music. His 1941 ballet score *Estancia* (“Ranch”), which illustrates life on Argentina’s vast cattle ranches, was commissioned for the American Ballet Caravan, a precursor to the New York City Ballet. The energetic, macho finale, Malambo, is based on a competitive dance of the country’s cowboys, or “gauchos.”

**Vocabulary**

dynamics: Dynamics tell how loudly or softly music is being played.

glissando: A glissando is a rapid run of notes played with no break to get from a starting note to an end note.

percussion instruments: Percussion instruments are musical instruments that make sound when they are struck with another object, often a mallet or stick. Percussion instruments can also be shaken, plucked, or scraped.
Listening Activities

The Story in the Music

Listen to Malambo from Estancia Dances, an orchestral piece that tells the story of a dance competition. How did Ginastera use music to build the drama of the competition? What do you notice about the way the horns play together? Which instruments play glissandos? How did Ginastera use the glissandos to move the drama of the competition to a new level?

Dance

Now picture the dancers on stage. How do you think they would move to the music? If you were to create art that shows that movement, how would you draw it? Create a drawing or painting that is inspired by this piece.

Percussion

Ginastera used a lot of percussion instruments in the Malambo. How many can you identify? Using household objects, can you play along with some of the percussion parts? Pay close attention to the rhythms and match them as closely as you can!