☐ *K*eeping the puppets on their toes

The colourful illustration with dancing figures is an adaptation of the cover of a music album entitled *Une soirée chez ma poupée* (an evening with my puppet). This *Petite scène musicale pour piano* was published in Paris in 1914. Music, lyrics and characters allude to various commedia dell'arte and puppet theatre figures. At the beginning of the *soirée musicale et dansante*, the merry-makers come onto the scene in a procession, an *Entrée des Polichinelles*. They also venture a little dance in two-four or three-four time in a *Présentation des Pierrots et des Pierrettes*, in the *Valse des Pantins et des Poupées* (waltz of the puppets) and in a *Ballet des Fantoches* (ballet of the marionettes). Halfway through the recital, they pay their respects to a number of noble ladies, frivolously clad in delightful robes. The players make a *Révérence des Marquises poudrées* (bending the knee to the powdered marchionesses), bowing and curtseying to each other in a stately and amicable fashion.

In the final part, *Départ des invités* (departure of the guests), the visitors are sent on their way to a lively and rumbustious 'Galopade'.

*P*ulcinella and his descendents

Commedia dell'arte is a form of folk theatre which consists of dancing, farce, mime, arcobatics and music. This theatre form originated in Italy in the sixteenth century and gradually spread all over Europe. Many of the figures from commedia dell'arte went on to become stalwarts of both mainstream theatre and folk puppet theatre, and they include *Harlequin*, *Scapino*, *Pierrot*, *Pulcinella* and *Colombine*. The Russian *Petrushka*, the English *Mr Punch* and the French *Polichinelle* are all closely related to Pulcinella.

☐ *M*usic for marionettes

In times gone by, the commedia dell'arte characters were often a source of inspiration for *clownesque performances*, *musical scores* and *masked balls* in which the masked figures ventured on to the dance floor. The names of many compositions are in fact derived from puppet theatre or from characters from farce, as is the case in 'Une soirée ...' mentioned above. Other examples are *The lighthearted Pierrot*, a composition for piano and voice which was published in the Netherlands at the beginning of the last century, and the melodramatic *Pierrot lunaire* by Arnold Schönberg.

Even Haydn wrote a number of marionette operas around 1780, Strauss wrote his *Jolis Pantins* (cheerful Jumping Jacks) polka in 1900, and Gounod (†1893) composed his celebrated *Marche funèbre d'une marionnette* (funeral march for a marionette). We also find the leading figures from English and French folk puppet theatre in musical scores such as *The Punchinello Quadrille*, *Polichinelle et Bébé*, *La mort* (the death) *de Polichinelle* and *Pourquoi monsieur Guignol*.

Many people will be familiar with the *ballets* and *concertos* of Stravinsky (†1971) on this same theme: *Pulcinella* and *Petrushka*. In the nineteen fifties, Hendrika van Tussenbroek wrote lyrics and piano music about *Chinese shadow puppets* and the traditional Dutch puppet *Jan Klaassen*.

☐ *P*uppetry Information Centre

You can find further information about all the above in the various themed exhibitions at the Museum. Would you like to learn more about folk and mainstream puppet theatre? Then browse through the selection of seven thousand or more books in the *Museum's international library*.

Further information about the collection and the exhibitions can also be found on our four-language *website*, which includes a richly illustrated (but Dutch language) *Puppet Theatre glossary of terms* (ABC of Puppetry).

☐ *E*nclosure: adapted cover for *Une soirée chez ma poupée, par Ant. Gilis*. Imprint: E. Weiller, Paris (1914).