

Montgomery Philharmonic 2016 - 17

Our 11th Season – Inspired by...

Concert 1, October 23, 2016 – Inspired by Dance

Márquez | Ravel | Respighi | Dvorak

About Maurice Ravel –

Joseph-Maurice Ravel was a French composer, pianist, and conductor. He is often associated with impressionism along with Claude Debussy, his elder contemporary, although both composers rejected the term.

Ravel went to the Paris Conservatory as both a pianist and a composer and won his first prize for piano in 1891. He studied harmony with Émile Pessard and composition with Gabriel Fauré. It is said that Ravel was an average student both in piano and composition. In 1895, he was expelled from the Paris Conservatory because he had been there for several years and was no longer winning any prizes. At about this time, Ravel's father introduced him to Erik Satie. Ravel recognized Satie's genius and was a champion of his music.

Born: March 7, 1875, Ciboure, France

Died: December 28, 1937, Paris, France

Compositions: Daphnis and Chloé ballet, Bolero, L'Infant et les sortilèges, Rhapsodie Espagnole for orchestra, String Quartet, many works for piano alone and two pianos, Le tombeau de Couperin, Sonate for violon et violoncelle, 2 sonatas for violin and piano, Chansons madécasses for soprano, flute, and piano, La Valse for Orchestra, several pieces for voice, chorus, and orchestra, Piano trio in A minor

Siblings: Édouard Ravel

Parents: Marie Delouart, Joseph Ravel

Le Tombeau de Couperin (1914–1917, 1919) – Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Maurice Ravel wrote *Le Tombeau de Couperin* as a piano suite in 1914. The original work was called *Suite française*, but World War I interrupted the composition while Ravel served in the French army. When he returned to the composition and completed it in 1917, Ravel was a different person because of the war. At 39, he managed to enlist in the French army after having been rejected 19 years earlier for being too small. Ravel first served as a military nurse's aide at Saint-Jean-de-Luz in September 1914 and then became a truck driver for the 13th Artillery Regiment at Verdun in March 1915. After returning from the war, his mother passed away, so again the piece was put on hold. But, the piece percolated in his mind. Finally, *Le Tombeau de Couperin* was the first composition that he finished, but this time, he knew that it had to be a piece written for piano and then orchestrated. It was important to him that each movement be dedicated to a friend that he had lost in the war and that the piece paid homage to French 18th-century music—more specifically to the French master, François Couperin.

When Ravel orchestrated the piece, he left off the military dedications; also, he did not orchestrate two of the original pieces, the Fugue and the Toccata. The first dance is a Prélude dedicated “to the memory of Lieutenant Jacques Charlot,” a musical friend. This movement is a tour de force for the solo oboist. Movement two is a Forlane dedicated to Lieutenant Gabriel Deluc, who does not otherwise appear in the Ravel biography. This Forlane is a lively dance in 6/8 meter. Movement three is a Menuet with the musette section in the minor key inscribed to Jean Dreyfus, at whose parents' house Ravel had completed *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. Finally, movement four is a Rigaudon dedicated to his childhood friends Pierre and Pascal Gaudin. This Rigaudon is a lively French folk dance in duple meter that brings the suite to a delightful close.

Instrumentation – 2 flutes (one doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (one doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, trumpet, harp, strings

Artifacts –

Maurice Ravel designed the first edition cover

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_tombeau_de_Couperin#/media/File:Rav_TdeC.jpg –

Score Used by Charles Munch when he conducted the New York Philharmonic

<http://archives.nyphil.org/index.php/artifact/ae10c9fa-989c-439a-a00f-9e2cedcaf6b5/fullview#page/1/mode/2up>

Photo of Ravel in his garden in France

<http://archives.nyphil.org/index.php/search?search-type=singleFilter&search-text=Ravel&doctype=visual&search-dates-from=&search-dates-to=#assetId=c4364f42-428b-475b-8017-177bfb786f5b>



1. Modest Mussorgsky & Maurice Ravel : Pictures At an Exhibition, Le tombeau de Couperin - RAI Naples Symphony Orchestra & Sergiu Celibidache
2. Ansermet Conducts Ravel - Le Tombeau De Couperin - EP - Ernest Ansermet and L`Orchestre de la Suisse Romande
3. Ravel: Complete Orchestral Works - Claudio Abbado & London Symphony Orchestra
4. Boulez Conducts Debussy & Ravel - Pierre Boulez



1. Le tombeau de Couperin (orchestra): Full Score [A8064]
2. Le Tombeau de Couperin and Valses Nobles et Sentimentales in Full Score (Dover Music Scores)
3. Ravel: Sheherazade; Le Tombeau de Couperin / Debussy: Ballades de Villon
4. Ravel: Piano Concertos; Menuet Antique; Le Tombeau de Couperin; Fanfare