

WIGMORE HALL 125

Sunday 7 December 2025
7.00pm

Ravel: The Complete Piano Works

Bertrand Chamayou piano

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Prélude (1913)

Miroirs (1904-5)

Noctuelles. Très léger • Oiseaux tristes. Très lent • Une barque sur l'océan. D'un rythme souple • Alborada del gracioso. Assez vif • La vallée des cloches. Très lent

Menuet in C sharp minor (1904)

Sonatine (1903-5)

I. Modéré • II. Mouvement de menuet • III. Animé

A la manière de Borodine (1913)

Gaspard de la nuit (1908)

I. Ondine • II. Le gibet • III. Scarbo

Interval

A la manière de Chabrier (1913)

Valses nobles et sentimentales (1911)

I. Modéré, très franc • II. Assez lent, avec une expression intense • III. Modéré • IV. Assez animé • V. Presque lent, dans un sentiment intime • VI. Vif • VII. Moins vif • VIII. Epilogue. Lent

Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn (1909)

Sérénade grotesque (c.1893)

Jeux d'eau (1901)

Menuet antique (1895)

Pavane pour une infante défunte (1899)

Le tombeau de Couperin (1914-7)

I. Prélude • II. Fugue • III. Forlane • IV. Rigaudon • V. Menuet • VI. Toccata



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I am not usually a big fan of the concept of complete works, which is often a tedious exercise where, in addition to a large number of possible redundancies, one is forced to play a number of minor or uninteresting works.

Ravel is a special case: he is one of those rare composers who made it a point of honour to carefully select their works, leaving posterity with a body of work that is as concise as it is perfect.

The complete works for solo piano represent just over two hours of music and include almost every aspects of Ravel, with an incredible diversity of style and variety of inspiration:

- The influence of Spain, as he was a native of the Basque Country, with a mother who sang him lullabies in Basque and Spanish;
- His taste for ancient dances, from the *Pavane* to the *Tombeau de Couperin*, with no fewer than five minuets;
- Tributes and references from Haydn to Borodin, via Chabrier and Gounod;
- The aquatic element, inherited from Liszt's piano but also inspired by his ocean, that of the bay of Saint-Jean de Luz;
- Nature in a broader sense, but also, beyond the birdsong and the murmurings of the forest, the ringing of bells, to the point of obsession in *Le Gibet*.

This is only a brief description of Ravel's piano universe, but all these elements contribute to creating a vast and fascinating landscape, and the fact of immersing oneself in it extensively and without reserve justifies a concert that is a little longer than usual.

I discovered Ravel's music at a very early age, around eight years old, through a pianist friend who owned the score of *Jeux d'eau*. The graphics in this score, which seemed to depict fountains, rivers, and waves, fascinated me so much that Ravel became an anchor throughout my life as a musician. A few months later, I heard the great Vlado Perlemuter, who had worked with Ravel in the 1920s, in concert in my hometown of Toulouse, and that very evening he performed *Jeux d'eau*.

A few years later, I began studying with one of Perlemuter's students, Jean-François Heisser, who became my teacher at the Paris Conservatory, and with whom I studied all of Ravel's music during my teenage years.

Since then, I have never stopped immersing myself in it, recording all these pieces in 2016, and now even directing a festival and an academy named after Ravel, in his native Basque Country.

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