

# MAURICE RAVEL

## Selected Favorites

Edited by Maurice Hinson

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This edition is dedicated to  
Gail Berenson with  
admiration and  
appreciation.

*Maurice Hinson*



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## Foreword

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Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) began taking piano lessons when he was seven years old. He began studying harmony two years later, and when he was just 14 he was admitted to the Paris Conservatory. His most important teacher there was Gabriel Fauré. Ravel proved to be a talented student

who showed great originality in his music. In fact, when two of his works were performed for the first time in public, some critics declared that he was a revolutionary and should not be tolerated. He continued to compose, however, and in spite of the critics the public eventually came to consider him as one of the greatest living French composers.

Ravel always worked slowly and carefully on his compositions and his work at times was plagued by interruptions. As a result, his output was small compared to that of many other composers, consisting of only about 50 published works. His compositions, however, gradually have acquired a prominent place in the standard piano and orchestral repertoires and are performed widely today. They include piano solos, a suite for piano duet, two operas, four ballets, several works for orchestra, chamber music, songs and a number of folksong arrangements.

In later life Ravel appeared as both a pianist and a conductor in performances of his works, but he was never noted as an outstanding performer. He held no official posts and had very few students, although one of them (for three months) was the English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams.

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## Ravel's Pianistic Style

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Ravel was first and foremost a composer for the piano. His piano works display technical perfection and always possess the most concise, finished musical form. They are very popular with both the public and pianists.

Ravel's piano music is extremely innovative and is characterized by precise attention to detail, sharp outlines and clear forms. Harmony usually plays a subordinate role to melody and rhythm, and his pianistic textures have a tapestrylike beauty.

“Music, I feel, must be emotional first and intellectual second.”

*Maurice Ravel*

A classicist with Romantic tendencies, Ravel extended the pianistic traditions of Franz Liszt. His music is characterized by biting dissonances filled with consecutive major and minor seconds, extended stretches for both hands, use of the thumb on two notes simultaneously, glissandos and extensive use of the pedal (especially in the upper registers). It frequently uses Hispanic elements as well as early dance forms.

After *Jeux d'eau* in 1901 there is no significant change in Ravel's piano writing, although there is, of course, an added breadth and music mastery. *Jeux d'eau* had a profound influence on the piano writing of Claude Debussy.

Although Ravel's pianistic concepts derived from Liszt, his style stems from Rameau and Couperin in its Gallicism and from Mozart in its classicism. Ravel revered Mozart as the composer who flawlessly achieved the clarity and perfection that he sought in his own compositions, and he remarked once that his own music was “quite simple, nothing but Mozart.”



## Ravel's Musical Influences

Rhythm is the centerpiece of Maurice Ravel's art, and Ravel's deep sense of rhythm makes his music especially well suited to interpretation through dance. A predilection for dance rhythms spans his entire oeuvre, from the stately tread of his *Pavane pour une infante défunte*

(1899) to the jazz swing of some of his later compositions.

With the exception of *Rapsodie espagnole* (1907), all of his orchestral works were composed for the ballet; best known among these are *Boléro* (1928), *Daphnis et Chloë* (1910) and *La valse* (1920).

Much of Ravel's treatment of rhythm is influenced by the dance, and he drew from old dance forms for inspiration. He delighted in borrowing the characteristics of the minuet, pavane, passacaglia, forlane, rigaudon, every variety of waltz, czarda, habanera and bolero, as well as the fox-trot and "blues." "The dance," wrote French writer André Suarès, "influences all Ravel's music, just as it does that of the Spaniards and the Clavecinists."<sup>1</sup> To Ravel, the supremacy of the dance was as much the result of a natural inclination as a conscious intention to give formal structure to his creations. In 1906 he mentioned the genesis of *La valse* in a letter to Jean Marnold: "You know of my deep sympathy for these wonderful rhythms, and that I value the joie de vivre [joy of living] expressed by the dance far more deeply than the Frankist puritanism."<sup>2</sup>

Spanish rhythms had a special appeal for Ravel; *Boléro*, for example, provides a convincing impression of Spain. Ravel was born in the Basque Pyrenees, a region of France near the Spanish border, and some of his earliest recollections were of the melodies of the Basque coast. Thus Spanish rhythms were part of Ravel's natural heritage, and Spanish dance and folk music were always close to his heart.

André Suarès saw astutely in Ravel, both artistically and personally, the embodiment of many Spanish traits:

Parisian to his fingertips, he is even so the most Spanish of artists. He answers better than another to one's idea of a great musician in the Spanish cast; he has something of Goya and the picaresque. . . . And let no one think that it was by chance that he made his entrance into music by way of Spain. . . . I recognize Spain in every part of Ravel—in what he is and what he does. This little man is so dry, so sensitive, at once frail and resistant, caressing and inflexible, supple as tempered steel; his large nose and hollow cheeks, his angular and lean figure; his air at once a little distant and yet always courteous—these traits are reminiscent of Spain. And his art, still more decidedly, is of the French tongue touched with a Spanish accent.<sup>3</sup>

"The art of Gipsy music," wrote the Spanish musicologist Eduardo López Chavarri, "has inspired modern composers such as Stravinsky, Debussy and Ravel, who, when they write works of Spanish character, do not claim to make music in the Spanish style, like Bizet, but in the Spanish tongue, or, more correctly, in the tongue of Andalusia."<sup>4</sup> In Ravel's case, this is decidedly true. Manuel de Falla said that Ravel was "more Spanish than the Spanish themselves."<sup>5</sup>

Ravel was attracted to a type of Spanish music derived from Italian musical tradition that in the 19th century evolved into the *zarzuela* (a Spanish opera with spoken dialogue). He was also very interested in flamenco (a repertoire of music and dance of Andalusia in southern Spain). This interest enlivens the habaneras, malagueñas and boleros that frequently appear in his work. Ravel was so attracted to Spain that he sometimes composed in a Spanish style in a "non-Spanish style" work, such as the second movement of his Piano Trio.

1 Roland-Manuel, 123.

2 Orenstein, 134–135.

3 Chase, 301.

4 Roland-Manuel, 122.

5 Goss, 114.

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## About This Edition

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The pieces in this collection represent some of Ravel's finest contributions to the pianist's art. They cover the period of his creative output from the early *Habanera* (1895) to the dances from *Le tombeau de Couperin* (1914–1917). Fingerings, information in parentheses, and most pedal

indications are editorial. Metronome marks are only suggestions from either Ravel or the editor.

Ravel's pedal indications are identified in footnotes. "U.C." indicates use of the *una corda* (soft) pedal. "T.C." (tre corde, or three strings) cancels the *una corda*, so that all strings are struck by the hammer. "SOS" indicates use of the *sostenuto* pedal. "Up SOS" indicates release of this pedal.

Additional information, including the form of each piece and its source, is provided in the section "About the Music." A "Suggested Teaching Order" is provided to assist the teacher. Unusual terms and directions are either translated where they appear in the score or discussed in the "About the Music" section.

When playing the pieces in this collection, experiment with different hand positions to produce different colors. Use imagination when playing these pieces to take the performance beyond the printed page.

The editor hopes that this pedagogical and performance edition will introduce the pianist to some of Ravel's masterpieces and will aid in the understanding of the composer's creative processes.

### Suggested Teaching Order

Arranged from approximately the easiest piece to the most difficult.

*Prélude*

*Valses nobles et sentimentales, II*

*Les entretiens de la belle et de la bête*

*Valses nobles et sentimentales, VI*

*À la manière de Borodine*

*À la manière de Chabrier*

*Mouvement de menuet*

*Oiseaux tristes*

*Pavane pour une infante défunte*

*Valses nobles et sentimentales, I*

*Menuet*

*Habanera*

*Rigaudon*

*Forlane*

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I wish to thank the authors and publishers of the following books from which I have quoted:

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## About the Music

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### *À la manière de Borodine* (In the Style of Borodin)— Valse .....10

A *parody* distorts or exaggerates features of another work with humorous or satirical aims. Parodying an author's style was a popular diversion in France during Ravel's lifetime, both in music and literature.

Ravel used parody technique in writing this charming waltz "in the style of Borodin" in 1913.

This work and the *À la manière de Chabrier* were both tributes to two musicians Ravel had admired since his early youth. Ravel noted the influence of Borodin and the other members of the group of composers known as the "Russian Five": "It is from this period which dates my unpublished and incomplete opera *Shéhérazade* very strongly dominated by the influence of Russian music."<sup>6</sup> His flowing waltz is quite charming and is more capricious than humorous.

Measures 32–69 contain an ornamented chromatic melody reminiscent of Borodin's *Polovtsian Dances* from the opera *Prince Igor*. Bring out the left-hand melody at measures 82–90. Pedal indications are editorial.

Form: Binary. A = measures 1–31; B = 32–69; coda = 70–93.

Source: A. Z. Mathot edition, 1914. Also available in Alfred edition no. 4526.

### *À la manière de Chabrier* (In the Style of Chabrier) "Paraphrase sur un air de Gounod" (*Faust* IIème acte) .....14

In this piece, Ravel paraphrases Siebel's flower song, an aria from the second act of Gounod's opera *Faust*. It is a tribute to how Chabrier composed and also Ravel's interpretation of how Chabrier would write a charming, waltzlike piece. Rubato permeates the piece, and there are numerous places where the pianist should slow down and then return to the original tempo (*a tempo*). The melody should project at all times. At measures 22–25, the melody in the tenor voice must be carefully balanced against the other parts. The remark *un peu en dehors* at measures 12–13 and 24–25 indicates that the inner (tenor) voice should also be slightly emphasized. Be aware of the restricted dynamic range.

Form: Introduction = measures 1–8; A = 9–21; A<sup>1</sup> = 22–37; coda = 37–45.

Source: A. Z. Mathot edition, 1914. Also available in Alfred edition no. 4503.

### *Les entretiens de la belle et de la bête* (Conversations Between Beauty and the Beast) from *Ma mère l'oye*.....17

This piece is from *Ma mère l'oye* (Mother Goose Suite), which Ravel composed in 1908 for one piano, four hands. The suite contains five pieces that are based on French nursery tales. It was written for Jean and Mimi Godebski, the children of some of Ravel's friends. The titles are *Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty*; *Hop o' My Thumb*; *Laideronette, Empress of the Pagodas*; *Conversations Between Beauty and the Beast*; and *The Fairy Garden*. Ravel orchestrated this suite and also used it for a ballet, for which he added extra music. His transcription of *Les entretiens de la belle et de la bête* for solo piano is included in this collection. Ravel said of this suite: "The idea of conjuring up the poetry of childhood in these pieces has naturally led me to simplify my style and clarify my writing."<sup>7</sup>

Measures 1–48, a delicate waltz, seem to be a musical translation of Beauty's first remark printed in the original version: "When I think of your good heart, you don't seem so ugly." Measures 49–105 portray the growling Beast and his answer: "Yes, lady, I have a good heart, but I am a monster." Ravel suggests Beauty's involuntary shuddering in the perfect fourth interval in measures 53–56. In the story, Beauty promises to marry the Beast, which breaks the magic spell that was cast on him, transforming him into a charming prince. A sudden glissando at measure 146 suggests this transformation, and this glorious fantasy ends happily.

The melody must always be well projected. The build-up to measures 101 and 144 should be very sonorous and full. Play the glissando at measure 146 with fingers 2, 3 and 4 of the right hand. The grace notes in measures 147–159 should be played slightly before the beat.

Form: A = measures 1–48; B = 49–105; C = 106–145 (uses material from sections A and B); coda = 146–171.

Source: Durand edition, no number or date listed.

### *Forlane* from *Le tombeau de Couperin* .....22

Of all the early French composers, Couperin appealed most to Ravel. This piece is from the suite *Le tombeau de Couperin* (The Tomb of Couperin) completed by Ravel in 1917. Ravel described it "as a tribute not so much to Couperin himself as to 18th-century French music in general." The "tombeau" form dates from the 17th century and is a musical homage to a deceased person. Each of the six movements that form this suite is dedicated to the memory of a friend killed during the First World War. In spite of its tragic associations, this suite is neither sad nor somber. The six movements are written in dance form: *Prélude*, *Fugue*, *Forlane*, *Rigaudon*, *Menuet* and *Toccata*. According to Madeleine Goss, its simple austerity contains "depth and a poignant sense of humanity not always to be found in Ravel's other compositions."<sup>8</sup>

*Forlane* is written in a moderately serious mood with a rhythmic refrain of austere nobility. The forlane was originally an Italian dance of the early 18th century, in 6/4 or 6/8 meter, somewhat similar to the gigue in character. This movement, with its archaic cadences and pastel tones, evokes the past more than any other movement in the suite, although Roland-Manuel observed that "the only old master to whom any reference is made in the *Forlane* would seem to

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6 Jankelevitch, 20.

7 Roland-Manuel, 52.

8 Goss, 183.



be Domenico Scarlatti.”<sup>9</sup> Ravel asked Perlemuter not to play the last eighth note of measure 1 too heavily:



measure 1

as “it makes only a tiny break before the second beat. There is only a shade of difference between that and making it sound like a grace note.”<sup>10</sup> The grace notes are to be played on the beat. “Ravel insisted on all the repeats.”<sup>11</sup> A delightful canon occurs in measures 59–61. Measures 124–139 should be treated more cheerfully, detached and accented than the opening theme.

Measure 132 should sound like a very quiet answer to measure 124. Measure 140 to the end suggests a music box sonority. “Ravel asked me to observe carefully the difference between the two similar phrases [152–153, 153–154], of which the second is an echo of the first—and not to slow down!”<sup>12</sup>

Form: A = measures 1–29; B = 29–54; C = 55–63; D = 63–96; A = 96–124; E = 124–140; coda = 140–162.

Source: Durand edition, Paris, 1917.

### *Habanera from Rapsodie espagnole* .....28

This harmonically subtle piece was composed in 1895 as the first movement of a two-movement work for two pianos titled *Les sites auriculaires* (Listening Posts). Ravel seems to have had in mind two places (*sites*) which were to be “visited” or comprehended by the ear (*auricular*). *Habanera* evokes a Spanish landscape; it has been called “a masterpiece of balanced rhythm.”<sup>13</sup> The second movement, *Entre cloches* (Among Bells), evokes an unspecified location, engulfed in bell sonorities. *Habanera* was later orchestrated to become the well-known third movement of the *Rapsodie espagnole*. Ravel’s transcription for solo piano is included in this collection.

The origin of this piece was probably in a song Ravel’s mother sang to him as a child.<sup>14</sup> Ravel commented: “I believe that this work, with its ostinato pedal points and its chords with multiple appoggiaturas, contains the germ of several elements which were to predominate in my later compositions.”<sup>15</sup> Ravel probably had in mind his use of Spanish dance rhythms as well as the work’s air of exoticism.

Ravel’s mood indications at the beginning of the piece (“in half-tint and in a tired, fatigued rhythm”) suggest a slow tempo, which is necessary to hear all the harmonic subtleties of the piece. The large, broken chords are difficult to manage, with frequent crossing of hands over the persistent

octave C-sharp pedal point. Keep the tempo steady in measures 1–8 so the ostinato triplet followed by the duplet is easily recognized. Use subtle rubato in measures 9–47, 54–55 and 61–62 to bring out the sensual and languid dance rhythms. Play the in-between measures at a steady tempo to produce the striking contrasts Ravel desired.

Form: A = measures 1–29; B = 30–55; coda = 56–62.

Source: Durand edition, 1911.

### *Menuet from Le tombeau de Couperin* .....32

The minuet (*menuet* in French) was Ravel’s favorite of the old dance forms. This one is less elaborate than some of Ravel’s others, but is enriched by and encloses a musette (measures 33–72), which takes the place of the traditional trio. Ravel suggested to Perlemuter: “This piece must be played at a going [moving] pace, not making it too heavy and always placing the grace notes on the beat.”<sup>16</sup>

Play the ornaments gently. Play measures 9–12 with intensity in spite of the pianissimo indication, since they are more melodic than the opening theme. “Ravel asked me to play the musette in the same tempo [as the minuet] and give a lot of breadth to the following episode [measures 73–80].<sup>17</sup> In measures 73–80 the main theme of the minuet is heard in counterpoint with the musette. Measures 104–123 should be played with an expressive calmness and in tempo to provide a suitable closing mood. At measure 120, the catlike grace-note spring returns to the minuet rhythm. The style here should be “quick and unexpected, like a surprise after the three crystalline chords which precede it [measures 118–120]. These chords should be played strictly in time.”<sup>18</sup> At the end, let the trill die away in the pedal (measures 126–128).

Form: Minuet and musette (takes the place of the usual trio): Minuet. A = measures 1–8; B = 9–24; A<sup>1</sup> = 25–32; musette = 33–72. Main theme of minuet is combined with the musette = 73–80; B<sup>1</sup> = 81–96; A<sup>1</sup> = 97–104; coda = 104–128.

Source: Durand edition, Paris, 1917.

### *Movement de menuet from Sonatine* .....36

This is the second movement of the *Sonatine*, which Ravel composed between 1903 and 1905. This movement, in minuet tempo in D-flat major, resembles Prokofiev’s *Classical Symphony* in that both are modal and written in neoclassic style. The trio traditionally associated with the minuet is missing. Be careful of overpedaling this movement—the harmonies must not sound thick. The tempo is slow but moving and the rhythms must be very precise.

The form is sectional and might be described as rondolike: A B C A C coda. Measures 13–32 contain Romantic and Impressionistic harmony tinged with whole-tone color (measure 14). Measures 33–52 serve as a linking passage between the previous B section and the return of A that could be thought of as taking the place of a trio in a more traditional movement. Bring out the left-hand part in measures 39–43, as it is an augmentation of the right-hand part and provides a duet with the right hand. Stress lightly the rising alto line in measures 49–52; this highlights the return to the A section. In measures 53–64, the harmonies of the A

9 Roland-Manuel, 81.

10 Perlemuter, 71.

11 Ibid., 72.

12 Ibid., 73.

13 Goss, 116.

14 Davies, 15.

15 Orenstein, 142.

16 Perlemuter, 76.

17 Ibid., 77.

18 Ibid., 77.

section are modified to end in the tonic. The final four measures should be very broad.

Form: **A** = measures 1–12; **B** = 13–32; **C** = 33–52; **A** = 53–64; **B** = 65–77; coda = 78–82.

Source: Durand edition, 1905. Also available in Alfred edition no. 2600.

***Oiseaux tristes* (Sad Birds) from *Miroirs* .....40**

This melancholy and subtle piece, translated as “Sad Birds,” is from *Miroirs*, a collection of five pieces Ravel composed to reflect the Symbolist poets and the Impressionist painters’ efforts to capture moods of nature. The work is dedicated to Ricardo Viñes, who gave the first performance on January 6, 1906.

Ravel said of this collection:

The *Miroirs* form a collection of pieces for piano which mark, in my harmonic evolution, a very considerable change which disconcerted the musicians who, up to that time, had been accustomed to my style. The first of these pieces to be written—and the most typical of all—is the second in the collection: *Oiseaux tristes*. I evoke some birds lost in the torpor of a very gloomy forest in the warmest hours of the summer.<sup>19</sup>

The fact that each piece carries a suggestive title has led some listeners to look mistakenly for a program within the collection. *Miroirs* is picture music but not program music. It isn’t necessary that the pieces in *Miroirs* be performed as a group; rather, individual pieces may be played separately. Ravel used the word *collection* rather than *suite* in describing *Miroirs*. The pieces are linked only by their “reflective” character.

The musical materials of *Oiseaux tristes* consist of repeated notes interspersed with birdlike trills and a plaintive descending major third that suggests the sound of a distant cuckoo at the beginning and end. Use rubato in thematic passages, especially in the opening bird-call motif. Alfred Cortot advises the performer that *Oiseaux tristes* depicts “not only the monotonous cooing of birds but also the autumnal panorama with its denuded trees and setting sun.”<sup>20</sup>

The cadenza that appears at measure 25 is full of Ravel’s incipient polytonality. Two superimposed keys (E-flat minor and D-flat major) predominate. Begin the measure slowly and gradually increase speed. The first 20 measures of the piece form a dynamic arch that begins and ends pianissimo, with an agitated central episode that reaches forte in measure 13. A short coda from measure 26 to the end reestablishes the tonic key of E-flat minor.

Form: **A** = measures 1–9; **B** = 10–20; **A**<sup>1</sup> = 21–24; cadenza = 25; coda = 26–32.

Source: E. Demets, 1906. Also available in Alfred edition no. 2599.

***Pavane pour une infante défunte* (Pavane for a Dead Princess).....44**

This work was composed in 1899 and given its world premiere by Ricardo Viñes on April 5, 1902. It was the first of

Ravel’s works to achieve real popularity. It is dedicated to the Princess Edmond de Polignac, a painter and wealthy member of the French aristocracy, who was born Winnaretta Singer of the American sewing machine family. For 40 years her salon was one of the most prestigious in Paris. Ravel expressed his ideas on interpretation of the piece to Marc Pincherle:

Do not attach more importance to this title than it has. Avoid dramatizations. This is not the funeral mourning for a girl who has just died, but the evocation of a pavane which could have been danced by a small princess in days of old, at the court of Spain.<sup>21</sup>

Ravel insisted that this work be played calmly, in strict time, without any passionate or sentimental rubato, and not too slowly. He told one young pianist in exasperation, “I have written a pavane for a dead princess, not a dead pavane for a princess!” It must have been exaggerated performances like this that elicited Ravel’s comment: “I hate to have my music interpreted: It suffices merely to play it.” But Ravel could not have meant such a statement literally. What he probably meant was that he hated to hear his music overinterpreted.

The pavane was popular in the 16th century and served as an introductory dance to the galliard. It was intended to express ceremonial dignity. Ravel’s version is a piece of great charm and beauty. Try to make the accompaniment sound like a lute, a plucked string instrument that was important in early Spanish and French music.

Form: Rondo. **A** = measures 1–12; **B** = 13–27; **A** = 28–39 (with varied accompaniment); **C** = 40–49 and repeated, 50–59; **A** = 60–72 (varied with more elaborate accompaniment).

Source: E. Demets, 1900. Also available in Alfred edition no. 2599.

***Prélude* .....50**

This charming piece was composed in 1913 as a sight-reading piece for the Paris Conservatory piano competitions. It is dedicated to Jeanne Lelue, and Ravel wrote to her in a letter of August 3, 1913:

General Picquart has perhaps made you aware of my intention to dedicate to you my sight-reading piece which will be published by Durand under the title of *Prélude*.

It is only a trifle; the remembrance of an artist who has been sincerely moved by your musical qualities. Continue to play as you have for yourself alone, without worrying about the public. It is, moreover, the best way to obtain its favor.<sup>22</sup>

Besides being an outstanding pianist, Lelue was a fine composer, as evidenced by her co-winning the 1923 *Prix de Rome*, a prize Ravel himself never succeeded in winning. Jeanne Lelue was one of the two little girls who gave the first performance of Ravel’s *Ma mère l’oye* (Mother Goose Suite).

19 Roland-Manuel, 41.

20 Cortot, 34.

21 Bruyr, 54.

22 Chalupt, 21.

The *Prélude* involves some interlocking of the hands (measures 10–15) and contains a few unexpected harmonies. Its gentle lyricism, relaxed tempo and interesting inner voices affirm Ravel's gifts as a superb miniaturist. There is a clarity of melodic line throughout, but never at the expense of accompanimental atmosphere. The writing is beautifully detailed. This piece can serve as an elegant encore or as part of a larger grouping of pieces.

Technically and interpretatively, *Prélude* is Ravel's most simple piano composition. A fine performance requires a good combination of reticence and expressiveness. The editor suggests playing the piece twice, taking a bigger ritard in measures 23–27 the second time through.

The left hand should be raised above the right in measures 10–15 for ease of performance. Ravel wrote only two pedal markings. The first, in measure 2, is simply to indicate use of pedal in the piece. The second is in measure 20 beginning under the left-hand part and continuing through to the second beat of measure 22. All other pedal markings and all fingerings are editorial. The metronome mark is Ravel's.

Form: A = measures 1–9; B = 10–15; A<sup>1</sup> = 16–24; coda = 24–27.

Source: Durand edition, 1913. Also available in Alfred edition no. 3596.

#### ***Rigaudon from Le tombeau de Couperin* .....52**

The *rigaudon* is a 17th-century Provençal dance. The *assez vif* tempo marking indicates animated playing, and the rhythms should be played crisply. The first two measures serve as an introduction to the dance. The bass line in measures 3–7 should stand out discretely. The continuity of the bass line is very important to the entire piece. Perlemuter noted that "the rhythm is continuous, but the sonority must vary. Thus in this passage [measures 10–15] Ravel asked for a brassy sound."<sup>23</sup> In measures 37–68, the melody must have a penetrating sonority even though the dynamic level is pianissimo. The pedal indication at measure 37 means to use pedal in this section (measures 37–68) rather than to depress the pedal continuously. Measures 69–92 must be played with a thin, mysterious sonority. Take a very slight ritard at measure 92. Measures 122–123 embellish the main theme with a surprising and effective modulation. The final two measures should be strong and very rhythmic.

Form: A = measures 1–36; B = 37–92; A = 93–128.

Source: Durand edition, 1917.

#### ***Valses nobles et sentimentales* (Noble and Sentimental Waltzes)**

The title of this work, unique among Ravel's piano works (since it comes directly from Schubert's *Valses nobles*, Op. 77, and *Valses sentimentales*, Op. 50), "sufficiently indicates that I was intent on writing a set of Schubertian waltzes," noted Ravel. He stated that he had no motive for composing these pieces "beyond the delicious and ageless pleasure of a useless occupation."

The *Valses nobles et sentimentales* consists of seven short

waltzes with a longer epilogue in which the principal themes are restated and elaborated in a nostalgic mood. The three waltzes in this edition, numbers I, II and VI, make a convincing and effective group.

#### **I. Modéré—très franc .....57**

The first two measures feature highly dissonant sonorities. The first chord is actually an enharmonic dominant 13th chord. Its resolution in measure 2 is a G major (tonic) triad with an added second (A) and sixth (E). The opening two measures, Ravel remarked, consist of a linear progression: E-sharp (beats one and two) to F-sharp (beat three) to G (prolonged through measure 2). The vigorous activity of the unresolved appoggiaturas sets the tone of this incisive waltz. Following the introductory measures 1–4, there is a balanced 16-measure phrase that modulates to and cadences in the key of the dominant, D major.

The B section (measures 21–60) features thematic material from the exposition set in a bold manner using chromatic harmony. The A section return (measures 61–80) is the same length as the opening and contains the same thematic materials in the same order. Strength without harshness is required for this waltz.

Form: A = measures 1–20; B = 21–60; A = 61–80.

#### **II. Assez lent—avec une expression intense .....60**

The second waltz uses many augmented triads. The melodic section in part A is built on the Aeolian mode beginning on D. The *rubato* indication at measure 25 is one that appears rarely in Ravel's scores. It should be played more as a hesitation than as a big, romantic rubato. Play all grace notes gently; do not let this piece drag.

This waltz unfolds thematically and harmonically in binary form laced with the *ritornello* idea. The form consists of an introduction and a binary pattern, the whole of which repeats.

Form: Introduction = measures 1–8; A = 9–24; B = 25–32; Introduction returns 33–40; A = 41–56; B = 57–64.

#### **VI. Vif .....63**

This waltz in C major is the most monothematic of all the pieces in the set. The basic melodic element of this piece is a rising half-step progression. This is extended in measures 37–44, where the melody begins on B and rises to C, C-sharp, D, D-sharp, E, E-sharp, F-sharp, G, G-sharp, and A. The B section is a variation of the A section, with new material developed at measure 29. This serves as a long transition to a return of the A section, which is repeated exactly. This waltz requires careful hand independence and should not be hurried.

Form: A = measures 1–16; B = 17–44; A = 45–60.

Source: Durand edition, 1911. Also available in Alfred edition no. 1116.

23 Perlemuter, 74.



# À la manière de Borodine

(In the Style of Borodin)

Valse

Allegro giusto (♩ = ca. 152)

The musical score is written for piano in 3/4 time, featuring a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo is marked 'Allegro giusto' with a quarter note equal to approximately 152 beats per minute. The piece is in the style of Borodin and is a waltz.

The score is divided into five systems, each with a measure number in a box at the beginning of the first staff:

- System 1 (Measures 1-4):** Starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and fingering (2 1, 3 1, 4 1). The left hand has a bass line with slurs and fingering (3, 1).
- System 2 (Measures 5-8):** Continues the melodic and bass lines. The right hand has slurs and fingering (4, 5, 5, 4 2 1). The left hand has slurs.
- System 3 (Measures 9-12):** The right hand has a more active melodic line with slurs and fingering (3 2 1, 5, 4 1, 3 1, 5). The left hand has slurs and a fingering (1).
- System 4 (Measures 13-16):** The right hand has slurs and fingering (4 1). The left hand has slurs and a fingering (2). The dynamic changes to piano-piano (*pp*) in measure 14.
- System 5 (Measures 17-20):** The right hand has slurs and fingering (5 2, 5). The left hand has slurs.

# Menuet

from *Le tombeau de Couperin*

Allegro moderato ♩ = 92

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a treble and bass clef. Measure numbers 7, 13, 19, and 26 are indicated in boxes at the start of their respective systems. The piece begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. A circled 'a' above the first measure indicates a specific performance instruction. Fingering numbers (1-5) are placed above or below notes to guide the performer. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. A performance instruction *p espressif (with emotion and feeling)* is written in the right margin of the fourth system. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 26.

(a) Ravel suggests that grace notes are to be played on the beat.