

## Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

His early music was guided by same principles and movements Debussy's music (Symbolism, Impressionism); later Ravel developed very distinct style. He was more open to German influences, and also music of Orient and Africa. Ravel's mother was Basque, so he experimented with Basque and Spanish music.

- **Piano works:**
  - ***Pavane pour une infante défunte*** (1899): his earliest well-known piano work; it began as piano piece, later orchestrated (he is considered a great orchestrator)
  - ***Jeux d'eau*** (Fountain or play of water, 1901): idea for piece may be borrowed from Liszt's ***Jeux d'eaux à la villa d'Este*** from ***Années de pèlerinage Book 3***. This piece uses alternate scales and exploratory harmony, such as MM 7th chord. Use of entire keyboard is almost Romantic, but language is impressionistic.
  - ***Sonatine*** (1903-5) is very different from previous works: has very narrow range compared to *Jeux d'eau*, seems very neo-classical, even in its title. Harmony is still experimental, especially with extension of **tertian** sonorities.
  - ***Gaspard de la Nuit***: suite inspired by poetry of early 19th century poet **Aloysius Bertrand** (1807-41) who invented the French version of the Prose Poem.
- **Other works of Ravel:**
  - **Songs**, e.g. ***Trois Poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé*** (1913)
    - **orchestration**: scored for piano, string quartet, flute, clarinet and voice, a group similar to *Pierrot Lunaire* ensemble.
    - harmony is very lush, enhanced by orchestration choices.
    - vocal line is angular (contains large leaps), but still very lyrical
  - ***La Valse*** (1919-20: right after WWI): a dance identified with Vienna and criticized as slightly decadent. Ravel's piece symbolizes the collapse of what had become the signature dance of Vienna, and the society that danced it.
    - Ravel talked about *fantastic and fatal whirling* suggesting disorientation, even hysteria; some have called it expressionistic; it isn't atonal, but the model of the waltz is very distorted.