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The Cambridge Companion to Ravel

This Companion provides a comprehensive introduction to the life, music and compositional aesthetic of the French composer Maurice Ravel (1875–1937). Leading international scholars offer a powerful reassessment of this most private and elusive musician, examining his work in detail within its cultural context. Supported by many music examples, the volume explores the full range of Ravel's work – piano repertory, chamber works, orchestral music, ballets, songs and operas – and makes illuminating comparisons with the music of Couperin, Gounod, Chabrier and Debussy. The chapters present the latest research focusing on topics such as Ravel's exoticism and Spanishness and conclude by analysing the performance and reception of his music, including previously untranslated reviews. Marking the 125th anniversary of Ravel's birth, the Companion as a whole aims to secure a solid foundation for Ravel studies in the twenty-first century and will appeal to all enthusiasts and students of his music.

The editor, Deborah Mawer, is Lecturer in Music at Lancaster University, where she specialises in French music (c. 1890–1939). She is author of *Darius Milhaud* (1997) and 'Darius Milhaud, *La Création du monde*' (1996), an analytical listening guide. She also writes on music analysis and education.

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years, including *Ravel* (Dent, 1977) for the Master Musicians series, *Ravel Remembered* (Faber, 1987), *Debussy Remembered* (Faber, 1991) and *A Life of Debussy* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

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Chronology of Ravel’s life and career

This chronology is compiled from various sources, but special acknowledgement should be made of Roger Nichols’s work in cementing part of the biographical foundation in his *Ravel* (London: Dent, 1977). For any one year, entries within *contemporary events* are ordered as follows: history; science/literature/arts; musicians/music.

YEAR	RAVEL’S LIFE	CONTEMPORARY EVENTS
1875	Maurice Ravel born at Ciboure, near Saint-Jean-de-Luz (7 March); in summer family moves to Paris	Third Republic founded in France; new Paris Opéra opened; Bizet dies; <i>Carmen</i> premiered
1876		Mallarmé, <i>L’Après-midi d’un faune</i> ; Falla born
1877		Edison invents phonograph
1878	Edouard Ravel (brother) born	Exposition Universelle (Paris)
1879		Sir George Grove, <i>A Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> (London, 1879–89)
1880		
1881		telephone transmission of Paris Opéra performance; Musorgsky dies; Bartók born
1882	piano lessons with Henry Ghys	Stravinsky born
1883		Wagner dies; Webern born
1884		
1885		Berg and Varèse born
1886	harmony lessons with Charles René	Statue of Liberty, New York; Liszt dies
1887		
1888	meets Ricardo Viñes	Borodin dies
1889	attends Exposition; enters junior piano class at Paris Conservatoire	Exposition Universelle (Paris); Eiffel Tower completed; Cocteau born
1890		Nijinsky born; Franck dies
1891	first prize for piano; joins de Bériot’s piano class and Pessard’s harmony class	Rimbaud dies; Prokofiev born
1892		Milhaud and Honegger born
1893	plays Chabrier’s music to the composer (with Viñes); composes <i>Sérénade grotesque</i> and <i>Ballade de la Reine morte d’aimer</i>	Gounod and Tchaikovsky die

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1894		Chabrier dies; Debussy, <i>Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune</i>
1895	leaves Conservatoire	Röntgen discovers X-rays
1896		Bruckner dies
1897	early Sonata for Violin and Piano and <i>Sites auriculaires</i> completed	Concerts Lamoureux (Paris); Brahms dies
1898	returns to Conservatoire for Fauré's composition class; private lessons with Gedalge	Spanish–American War (Treaty of Paris); Mallarmé dies; Gershwin born
1899	composes <i>Pavane pour une Infante défunte</i> ; <i>Shéhérazade</i> (overture) first performed	Boer War begins; Chausson dies; Poulenc born
1900	enters Prix de Rome (first time); leaves Fauré's class	Paris Métro opened; Freud, <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i>
1901	third prize in Prix de Rome; composes <i>Jeux d'eau</i>	Verdi dies
1902	failure in Prix de Rome; starts String Quartet	Debussy, <i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i> completed (begun in 1893)
1903	failure in Prix de Rome; starts <i>Sonatine</i>	Wright brothers' first flight; Wolf dies
1904	Quartet first performed; meets Godebski family	Balanchine born; Dvořák dies
1905	'l'affaire Ravel' (removed after preliminary round of Prix de Rome); signed up by Durand	Russian Revolution; Einstein, <i>Special Theory of Relativity</i> ; Tippett and Jolivet born; Debussy, <i>La Mer</i>
1906	<i>Miroirs</i> and <i>Sonatine</i> first performed; starts <i>La Cloche engloutie</i> and <i>Histoires naturelles</i>	Shostakovich born; Schoenberg, Chamber Symphony No. 1
1907	<i>Histoires naturelles</i> and <i>Introduction et allegro</i> first performed; finishes <i>L'Heure espagnole</i> (vocal score); teaches Vaughan Williams	Picasso, <i>Les Demoiselles d'Avignon</i> ; Grieg dies
1908	<i>Rapsodie espagnole</i> first performed; composes <i>Gaspard de la nuit</i> ; starts <i>Ma Mère l'Oye</i> ; father dies	Rimsky-Korsakov dies; Messiaen born
1909	<i>Gaspard</i> first performed; first concert abroad (London); orchestration of <i>L'Heure espagnole</i> ; starts <i>Daphnis et Chloé</i>	inaugural season of Ballets Russes (1909–29); Albéniz dies
1910	<i>Ma Mère l'Oye</i> first performed at opening concert of Société Musicale Indépendante (SMI); finishes first version of <i>Daphnis</i> (piano score)	Balakirev dies; Stravinsky, <i>L'Oiseau de feu</i> ; Debussy, <i>Préludes</i> (Bk. I)

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1911	<i>Valses nobles et sentimentales</i> first performed (anonymously); <i>L'Heure espagnole</i> premiered at the Opéra-Comique on 19 May	Mahler dies; Stravinsky, <i>Petrushka</i>
1912	ballet productions from orchestrations of <i>Ma Mère l'Oye</i> and <i>Valses nobles</i> (as <i>Adélaïde</i>); <i>Daphnis</i> premiered by Ballets Russes on 8 June, Théâtre du Châtelet; leaves Paris for break	Massenet dies; Cage born; Schoenberg, <i>Pierrot lunaire</i>
1913	orchestrates Musorgsky, <i>Khovanshchina</i> (with Stravinsky) for Dyagilev's performance in June	Britten born; Stravinsky, <i>Le Sacre</i> premiered to uproar in Paris
1914	<i>Trois poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé</i> first performed; orchestration of Schumann and Chopin for Nijinsky; London production of <i>Daphnis</i> ; starts <i>Le Tombeau de Couperin</i>	outbreak of World War I
1915	Piano Trio first performed; produces edition of Mendelssohn; enlists as truck driver	French–American radio link from Eiffel Tower; Einstein, <i>General Theory of Relativity</i>
1916	illness; returns to Paris	Battle of the Somme; Granados dies
1917	mother dies; finishes <i>Le Tombeau de Couperin</i> (piano)	Bolshevik Revolution; Satie, <i>Parade</i>
1918	composes <i>Frontispice</i> ; orchestrates 'Alborada' (<i>Miroirs</i>) and some Chabrier	Debussy dies; Stravinsky, <i>L'Histoire du soldat</i>
1919	holiday at Mégève; <i>Le Tombeau</i> first performed and four movements orchestrated	Paris Peace Conference (1919–20), including Treaty of Versailles
1920	holiday at Lapras; completes <i>La Valse</i> (piano score); declines Légion d'honneur; starts <i>L'Enfant et les sortilèges</i> ; concert in Vienna; ballet production of <i>Le Tombeau</i> ; concert performance of <i>La Valse</i>	formal inauguration of League of Nations; Ballets Suédois (1920–5); Stravinsky, <i>Pulcinella</i>
1921	moves to 'Le Belvédère'	Saint-Saëns dies
1922	Sonata for Violin and Cello first performed; orchestrates some Debussy; concerts abroad (England, Holland, Italy)	BBC set up; Joyce, <i>Ulysses</i> ; Eliot, <i>The Waste Land</i> ; Stravinsky, <i>Mavra</i>
1923	further concerts abroad (as above and in Belgium); starts Sonata for Violin and Piano and <i>Ronsard à son âme</i>	regular Eiffel Tower broadcasts; BBC music broadcasts; Stravinsky, <i>Les Noces</i>

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1924	<i>Tzigane</i> first performed; concerts in Spain	Fauré and Puccini die
1925	<i>L'Enfant et les sortilèges</i> premiered on 21 March in Monte Carlo; starts <i>Chansons madécasses</i>	Satie dies; Boulez and Berio born
1926	concerts abroad (Belgium, Scandinavia, Germany, Britain); <i>L'Enfant</i> performed on 1 February at the Opéra-Comique; <i>Chansons madécasses</i> first performed; concerts in Switzerland	
1927	Sonata for Violin and Piano first performed; first signs of neurological upset; begins North American tour	Lindbergh Atlantic flight; Stravinsky, <i>Oedipus Rex</i>
1928	arrival in New York; back in France by late April; award of Hon. D.Mus. (Oxford); <i>Boléro</i> premiered at the Opéra; concerts in Spain	Janáček dies; Barraqué and Stockhausen born
1929	concerts abroad (England, Switzerland, Austria); starts the piano concertos; <i>La Valse</i> first staged at the Opéra	Wall Street crash, New York; Dyagilev dies
1930	'Quai Maurice Ravel' opened at Ciboure; finishes Concerto for the Left Hand	Stravinsky, <i>Symphony of Psalms</i> ; Milhaud, <i>Christophe Colomb</i> premiered
1931	finishes Concerto in G; complete rest urged by doctor	d'Indy dies
1932	piano concertos first performed (Vienna and Paris); starts <i>Don Quichotte à Dulcinée</i> ; taxi accident (October); concert in Switzerland	
1933	finishes composition of <i>Don Quichotte</i> ; more obvious symptoms of degenerative brain disease	Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany; Duparc dies
1934	treatment at Swiss clinic; orchestration and first performance of <i>Don Quichotte</i>	Elgar, Delius and Holst die; Birtwistle and Maxwell Davies born
1935	tour of Spain and North Africa with Léon Leyritz; second Spanish trip	Berg and Dukas die
1936	further decline in health	Spanish Civil War; BBC television broadcasts; Respighi and Glazunov die
1937	brain operation attempted; ten days later Ravel dies (28 December)	Paris Exposition; Gershwin and Roussel die; Shostakovich, Fifth Symphony

Note on the text

In order to avoid unnecessary repetition, references to frequently cited Ravel texts are given in short-title form in the supporting endnotes (and Appendix); the full reference can be found in the Select bibliography. Where no author is given for a short title, the item is usually an unsigned interview with Ravel (or his 'An autobiographical sketch', as dictated to Roland-Manuel). Unless otherwise indicated, endnote references relate to the most recent edition of any text detailed in the Select bibliography. More occasional references to Ravel (and non-Ravel) literature are given in full at their first citation in the notes for any one particular chapter.

Across the book, there are so many references to Arbie Orenstein's celebrated source book of Ravel readings that it makes sense to abbreviate this as follows:

RR Arbie Orenstein (ed. and trans.), *A Ravel Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

References to articles or interviews reprinted in *RR* are given in their English translation; however, since *RR* is presently out of print, the original source is also included in the full reference (unless stated otherwise, page numbers are for *RR* only and include Orenstein's editorial notes). Titles given in French refer to the original source (or, if appropriate, to its reprint in Orenstein's French edition: *Maurice Ravel: Lettres, écrits, entretiens* (Paris: Flammarion, 1989)); translated quotations in the text have usually been supplied by the author of the chapter.

Musical references employ a mixture of bar numbers and rehearsal figures depending on the available editions of the work concerned. Rehearsal figures are still the main means of referencing orchestral or staged works, and so the following shorthand has been used in the main text: Fig. 1⁻¹ refers to the bar preceding Figure 1; Fig. 1 denotes the relevant bar-line (analogous to the start of a movement or scene); Fig. 1⁺¹ refers to the first full bar of Figure 1. This shorthand is used just to identify a particular starting point; to avoid any confusion, extent is indicated more fully, as in Fig. 1, bars 1–2.

In musical discussion the sign '/', as in G/F# or major/minor, indicates a simultaneity whereas the sign '–', as in G–F# or I–V, indicates a progression. Separation of pitches by commas indicates a neutral, basic listing, such as for the components of a scalic collection or chordal formation. Modes are referred to in the same way as major or minor scales (e.g. C major), hence C aeolian or E phrygian.