

The Swiss conductor, Ernest Ansermet, came from a musical family; he successively studied the clarinet, violin and brass instruments, which he used in fanfares; later he wrote military marches for the Swiss army which he did not consider important. Besides Music, he studied Mathematics in Lausanne and graduated with a Diploma in 1903; until 1906 he taught at the Lausanne Grammar School, then he decided to continue his studies at the Sorbonne and, at the same time, to attend courses at the Paris Conservatory. After his return to Lausanne, he taught Mathematics for one more year before devoting himself entirely to music.

Ansermet was a particular advocate of the Swiss composers Arthur Honegger and Frank Martin. He conducted the first performances of the following works of A. Honegger: *Horace victorieux* (1921), *Chant de joie* (1923), *Rugby* (1928) and *Pacific 231* (1923), which was dedicated to him, and of the following works of Frank Martin: *Symphonie* (1938), *In terra pax* (1945), *Der Sturm* (1956), *Le mystère de la Nativité* (1959), *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* (1963) and *Les Quatre Éléments*, which were dedicated to him. Also important were the first performances of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* (1946) and *Cantata*



MASTERING EQUIPMENT

Digital: Antelope Audio Eclipse 384
Antelope Audio Isochrone 10M Rubidium atomic reference generator

Korg MR2000 DSD recorder

Weiss Saracon Sample Rate Conversion Software

Weiss POW-r Dithering Software

Analog: Studer 810 Reel to Reel with
Custom by JRF Magnetics & Siltech wiring
Nagra 4S custom by JRF Magnetics

Aria tape head pre-amp by ATR Services
Retro Instruments 2A3 Dual-channel tube program equalizer
Sontec MEP-250EX Parametric EQs

VPI Classic Turntable w/ Benz Wood Cartridge
Rogue Audio Phone Pre-amp

Power Sources: PS Audio P10 Power Plant
and Power Plant 300

Power Cords: Purist Audio Design, Essential Sound Products,
Speltz Anti-Cables

Vibration Control: Symposium Acoustics Rollerblocks,
Ultra platforms, Svelte shelves

Sonic Studio CD.1 Professional CD Burner
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ANSERMET conducts DEBUSSY STRAVINSKY RAVEL

L'ORCHESTRE DE LA SUISSE ROMANDE

The three works which collectively form Claude Debussy's *Images* for orchestra, not to be confused with the two sets of piano works that go by the same title, are among the more immediately accessible and directly expressive of his later pieces. Although intended to be performed in succession, the *Images* are frequently heard independently of one another, especially the second, "Iberia," which remains among the composer's most frequently played orchestral works. The three works, which continue to be published as separate titles, were initially released at different times, with the first being composed and published several years after the second and third

The *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (French title: *Symphonies d'instruments à vent*) is a concert work written by Igor Stravinsky in 1920, for an ensemble of woodwind and brass instruments. The piece is in one movement, lasting about 9 minutes. It is dedicated to the memory of Claude Debussy, who died in 1918, and was premiered in London on June 10, 1921, conducted by Serge Koussevitzky.

A piano reduction by Arthur Lourié was published in 1926 (White 1979, 292), a full score appearing only after Stravinsky re-orchestrated the work in 1947.

The *Symphonies* was originally scored for a wind ensemble of 24 players: 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), alto flute, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, alto clarinet in F, 3 bassoons (3rd doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, and tuba. The 1947 revision requires 23 players: 3 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons (3rd doubling contrabassoon), 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, and tuba.

Analysis

In the title of this piece, Stravinsky used the word "symphonies" (note the plural form) not to label the work as an essay in the symphonic form, but rather in the word's older, broader connotation, from the Greek, of "sounding together" (White 1979, 292). The music of the *Symphonies* draws on Russian folk elements, and is constructed of "contrasting episodes at three different yet related tempos".

The chorale which concludes the piece was originally published in the magazine *La Revue musicale* in an edition entitled *Le Tombeau de Claude Debussy*, which included short pieces from several composers,

including Maurice Ravel and Manuel de Falla, dedicated to Debussy's memory. It appeared as a piano score in the *tombeau*.

Reception

The premiere at Queen's Hall, London, was greeted initially by laughter and derision from an audience unaccustomed to Stravinsky's experimental work. According to Arthur Rubinstein, who attended the performance with Stravinsky, laughter broke out during the bassoon segment, and the conductor, Koussevitsky, "instead of stopping the performance and addressing the audience with a few words, assuring them that it was a serious work in the modern idiom, smiled maliciously and even had a twinkle in his eye as he looked over his shoulder at the laughing audience" (Rubinstein 1980, 173). A reviewer for the *Times* reported, however, that the hisses "were no sign of ill-will towards the composer", and subsided when Stravinsky stood up at the end of the performance to bow.

Ravel described the piece as "an evocation of a pavane that a little princess might, in former times, have danced at the Spanish court". The pavane was a slow processional dance that enjoyed great popularity in the courts of Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

This antique miniature is not meant to pay tribute to any particular princess from history, but rather expresses a nostalgic enthusiasm for Spanish customs and sensibilities, which Ravel shared with many of his contemporaries (most notably Debussy and Albéniz) and which is evident in some of his other works such as the *Rapsodie espagnole* and the *Boléro*.

Ravel dedicated the *Pavane* to his patron, the *Princesse de Polignac*. He published it in 1900, but it attracted little attention until the Spanish pianist Ricardo Viñes gave the first performance on April 5, 1902. The work soon became very popular, although Ravel came to think of it as "poor in form" and unduly influenced by the music of Chabrier.

Ernest Ansermet

conducts the L'ORCHESTRE DE LA SUISSE ROMANDE

DEBUSSY Images Pour Orchestre

STRAVINSKY Symphonies for Wind Instruments

RAVEL Pavane Pour une Infante Defunte

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