

Pavan for a Dead Princess is not only one of Ravel's most beguiling and skillfully wrought compositions—a sort of shimmering miniature in pastel tints—but also a model of writing for a small instrumental group. It was written originally as a piano piece; later, Ravel orchestrated it for two flutes, oboe, pairs of clarinets, bassoons and horns, harp and string section.

Bolero is undoubtedly Ravel's most popular work. Written for the great dancer Ida Rubinstein, it quickly found its way into the concert repertoire, for it is an amazing orchestral tour de force. First performed in America by Toscanini in November 1929, Bolero was an immediate sensation and made Ravel almost an American national hero. This extraordinary piece has withstood popular enthusiasm without parallel, and its hypnotic rhythm, hot colors, and crushing climax never fail to excite and fascinate listeners.



RAVEL

La Valse
Pavan for a Dead Princess
Bolero

DEBUSSY

Afternoon of a Faun
Printemps
Nuages
Fêtes

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CHARLES MUNCH *Conducting*

During his distinguished career as conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch programmed music ranging from Bach to Piston, but the French repertoire has always been his special claim to fame. In this recorded program, he turns to some of the best-known masterpieces of Debussy and Ravel. Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun was composed by Debussy in 1892–94. He was inspired by a pastoral poem of Mallarmé; however, he stated that his work was not a synthesis of the poem, but rather "a series of scenes against which the desires and dreams of the Faun are seen to stir in the afternoon heat."

Printemps is early Debussy. It was composed in 1887 during the composer's stay in Rome as a winner of the Prix de Rome. He found inspiration for this symphonic suite in Botticelli's painting "La Primavera."

La Valse was written by Ravel for Diaghileff's Ballet Russe, but it was first heard in concert, in December 1920. "I feel," said Ravel, "that this work is a kind of apotheosis of the Viennese waltz, linked in my mind with the impression of a fantastic whirl of destiny. I have given it the setting of an Imperial Court, about 1855

Nuages and Fêtes are two of Debussy's three Nocturnes for orchestra. The composer explained that here the title Nocturnes is meant to convey "the various impressions and the special effects of light that the word suggests. Nuages renders the immutable aspect of the sky and the slow, solemn motion of the clouds, fading away in gray tones slightly tinged with white. Fêtes gives us the vibrating, dancing rhythm of the atmosphere with sudden flashes of light. There is also the episode of the procession (a dazzling fantastic vision) which passes through the festive scene and becomes merged in it."



Debussy & Ravel - Charles Munch - Boston Symphony Orchestra

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1 Debussy - Prelude To The Afternoon Of A Faun

2 Debussy - Printemps

3 Ravel - La Valse

4 Debussy - Nuages

5 Debussy - Fêtes

6 Ravel - Pavan For A Dead Princess

Horn [solo] – James Stagliano

7 Ravel - Bolero

Recorded by RCA 1963 • Producer – Richard Mohr • Engineer – Lewis Layton



For more info e-mail us:
admin@highdeftapetransfers.com
or visit our website:
www.highdeftapetransfers.com

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