

a chorus to the orchestra to represent the invisible servants who wait on Psyche in Eros' enchanted garden. Today, however, Psyché is frequently performed without the chorus

Daphnis and Chloé was the largest work Ravel was ever to compose, occupying him from early 1909 until April 5, 1912. It is also widely regarded as his most impressive achievement, and among the greatest ballet scores of the twentieth century. The work calls for an enormous orchestra, with approximately fifteen distinct percussion instruments and a wordless chorus, heard both offstage and onstage. Given its sheer size, the ballet score is much better known by excerpts, and when heard in concert, is usually represented by one of two suites that Ravel extracted from it. The first suite, of 1911, draws material from the "Nocturne," "Interlude" and "Danse guerrière," while Ravel designated the final three numbers: "Lever du jour," "Pantomime," and "Danse générale" as Suite No. 2, following the score's completion in 1912.

Based on the pastoral drama by the Greek poet Longus, the ballet's scenario was devised by Mikhail Fokine, a classically trained dancer and choreographer for Sergie Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. In his autobiographical sketch, the composer described its conception: "In writing it I sought to compose a broad musical fresco, less concerned with archaic fidelity than with loyalty to the Greece of my dreams, which in many ways resembled that imagined and depicted by French artists at the latter part of the eighteenth century. The work is constructed symphonically on a very strict tonal plan, by means of a few themes, the development of which assures the work's homogeneity."

DEBUSSY

Nocturnes - Nuages

Nocturnes - Fêtes

FRANCK

Psyché Et Eros

RAVEL

Daphnis and Chloe - 2nd Suite

Georges Prêtre

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Beecham Choral Society



Nuages and Fêtes, received their premiere on 9 December 1900 in Paris by the Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Camille Chevillard. The third movement *Sirènes* could not be staged because the female choir needed for it was unavailable. The complete work was premiered by the same orchestra and conductor on 27 October 1901. Though these initial performances received a cool response from the public, they were more positively hailed by fellow musicians. A review by Pierre de Bréville in the *Mercure de France* has been translated as saying: "It is pure music, conceived beyond the limits of reality, in the world of dreams, among the ever-moving architecture that God builds with mists, the marvelous creations of the impalpable realms."

For several years after its publication, almost until the day he died, Debussy continued to tinker with the composition, at first making corrections to dozens of errors in his copy of the published score, then moving on to adjusting small passages and fundamentally revising the orchestration. Debussy made many subtle changes to *Sirènes* to integrate the wordless singing of the women's chorus with the orchestra. Two of these scores exist with Debussy's changes in different colors of pencils and inks, and often these changes are contradictory or simply alternate versions. As Debussy told conductor Ernest Ansermet when the latter asked which were the right ones: "I'm not really sure; they are all possibilities. Take this score with you and use whatever you like from it."

Debussy continued to modify the composition just as he had for the seven years prior to its publication, sometimes just not satisfied or sometimes thinking of a new experiment in sound, a new color combination of instrumental timbres he hadn't heard yet. Many of these changes were finally incorporated into a "definitive version" published in 1930 by Jobert. This version continues to be performed today.

A comprehensive version addressing many more of Debussy's "possibilities" was published in 1999 by Durand, edited and annotated by Denis Herlin. One reviewer states "in this new critical edition for the Debussy oeuvres complètes, all of the most important questions concerning the establishment of a text of the *Nocturnes* for practical performance have been confidently answered." Herlin has carefully traced and analyzed four printings of the *Nocturnes* by Fromont, ending in 1922; multiple scores by Jean Jobert between 1922 and 1930; multiple versions of a heavily revised Jobert score appearing between 1930 and 1964; a 1977 edition by Peters of Leipzig; and a study score from Durand.

The *Nocturnes* were performed as a ballet in May 1913, with Loie Fuller dancing. The *Nocturnes* are considered one of Debussy's most accessible and popular works, admired for their beauty and for holding new possibilities and wonder upon repeated hearings.

Psyché is a massive symphonic poem in four parts that Franck composed in 1886–87 at the same time as his *Violin Sonata*. It is one of five *poèmes symphoniques* he composed under the influence of Franz Liszt.

Psyché et Eros: The final movement portrays the lovers' first meeting – the initial slow, hesitant moments suggesting an initial shyness and presumably the consummation of their love before *Psyche's* disastrous act of disobedience. Even *Apuleius* is rather prim about what exactly the two are up to during their meetings. *Eros* and *Psyche* have their own themes, his initially stated in the cellos and brass, *The music is sentimentally erotic, the themes initially flowing together like a conversation between the two lovers. Franck later develops and entwines them contrapuntally. Franck subsequently added*

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1 Nocturnes - Nuages

2 Nocturnes - Fetes

3 syche And Erdos

4 Daphnis And Chloe - Second Suite

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