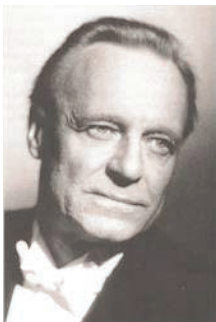


André Cluytens was among the leading French conductors of his time. His father, Alphonse Cluytens, was also a conductor, and recognized the boy's musical talents. André was enrolled in the Royal Flemish Conservatory at the age of nine. He studied in the piano class of Emile Bosquet, and received first prize for piano at the age of 16. The next year he won first prize in harmony, theory, counterpoint, and fugue.

His father was conductor at the Royal French Theater of Antwerp. André became his assistant and a choirmaster there. When an illness prevented Alphonse from conducting, André made his performance debut in 1927 in Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de perles*. After that experience he devoted his efforts to orchestral and opera conducting rather than choral work, and he became a resident conductor in the house.

In 1932 he accepted a position as the musical director of orchestral concerts at the Capitole de Toulouse, and he became a French citizen. In 1935 was appointed the opera director in Lyons. He was an assistant of Josef Krips in a summer series in Vichy and, once again, was called on to substitute when that conductor could not perform. He became musical director of the Lyons Opera in 1942, conductor of the Conservatoire Concerts and the French National Radio Orchestra in Paris in 1943, and in 1944 conducted at the Opéra de Paris. From 1947 to 1953 he was music director of the Paris Opéra-Comique, and in 1949 was appointed as principal conductor of the Conservatory Concerts. He retained that position for the rest of his life. In 1955 he was invited to conduct *Lohengrin* at the Bayreuth Festival, the first French person to appear on the podium there. He debuted in the United States in 1956, and in Britain in 1958, when he substituted for Otto Klemperer. He formed a close relationship with the Vienna State Opera, which he first conducted in 1956, becoming a permanent guest conductor in 1959. In 1960 he became conductor of the Belgian National Orchestra in Belgium, also holding that post until his death. He also formed a close link with the Berlin Philharmonic, with which he made a notable recording of the Beethoven symphonies. However, he was primarily known for French repertoire, premiering works by Françaix, Jolivet, Messiaen, Milhaud, Tomasi, Büsser, and Bondeville. He was invited back to Bayreuth in 1965.



Maurice Ravel
Daphnis et Chloé
Complete Ballet
with Chorus
Andre Cluytens
René Duclos Chorus,
Orchestre de la Société du Conservatoire Paris

Ravel once called Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* "one of the few miracles in the history of music," but surely his own *Daphnis and Chloe* is no less miraculous. Written for Diaghilev's *Ballet Russes* and premiered in 1912 (the year before the same company gave us *The Rite of Spring*), Ravel scored the work for a huge orchestra (employing both a wind machine and a wordless chorus) that he then used for an incredibly wide variety of expressive and sonic effects. Later he called it "a choreographic symphony," "a vast musical fresco," but in fact there are no words to properly describe *Daphnis and Chloe*: almost a hundred years after its premiere, it remains a unique creation, truly one of a kind.

Cluytens' approach creates a *Daphnis et Chloé* of flexibility and passion. Listening to this seductive performance I was constantly thinking of André Cluytens, a past master of interpreting Debussy and Ravel. Ravel is notoriously difficult to record on disc, notably because of the gigantic orchestral forces needed and the astonishingly beautiful sounds that the orchestrations require.

The Paris Conservatoire Orchestra of that time was the perfect ensemble

for French repertoire, and still produced the authentic French sound which Ravel will have heard in his mind when scoring the music. André Cluytens had been the Orchestra's chief conductor for over a decade, and he was known as a master interpreter of French romantic music. Cluytens' integration of the brilliant and diaphanous orchestral effects with the electric quality of the *Choeurs Rene Duclos* remains one of those miracles of sound a true master of the idiom can achieve. This is a rendition to stand along that of Charles Munch, the athletic performance to raise the roof!

André Cluytens exemplifies a strong, clean style in his approach to Ravel. Every gesture and expression expresses the joy that he felt in making music. Like his countryman Pierre Monteux, he was among the most elegant of conductors, with a clear stick technique and an unbroken channel of communication between him and the orchestra members, and his *Daphnis et Chloe* benefits from his long experience to the manner born.

Maurice Ravel Daphnis et Chloé Complete Ballet

Andre Cluytens / René Duclos Chorus

Orchestre de la Société du Conservatoire Paris

1-Introduction et Danse Religieuse / Nocturnes

**2-Danse des Guerriers / Lever du jour / Pantomime /
Danse generale**

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