

Charles Munch Born: September 26, 1891 – Strasbourg, Alsace, France

Died: November 6, 1968 – Richmond, Virginia, USA

The eminent Alsatian-born French conductor, Charles Munch (originally, Münch), was the son of the Alsatian organist and choral conductor Ernst Münch (1859–1928). His elder brother was the choir-master and professor of music, Fritz Münch. Charles studied violin at the Strasbourg Conservatory and with Lucien Capet in Paris. At the outbreak of World War I (1914), he enlisted in the German army; made a sergeant of artillery, he was gassed at Peronne and wounded at Verdun; after the end of the war (1918) and his return to Alsace-Lorraine (1919), he became a naturalised French citizen.

Having received further violin training from Flesch in Berlin, Charles Munch pursued a career as a soloist; was also professor of violin at the Leipzig Conservatory and concert-master of the Gewandhaus Orchestra there. In November 1932, he made his professional conducting debut in Paris with the Straram Orchestra. He studied conducting with Szendrei in Paris from 1933 to 1940. He quickly rose to prominence; was conductor of Paris's Orchestra de la Société Philharmonique from 1935 to 1938, and in 1936 became a professor at the École Normale de Musique. In 1938 he became music director of the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, remaining in that post during the years of the German occupation during World War II; refusing to collaborate with the Nazis, he gave his support to the Resistance, being awarded the Légion d'honneur in 1945.

Charles Munch made his USA debut as a guest conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in December 1946; a trans-continental tour of the USA with the French National Radio Orchestra followed in 1948. In 1949 he was appointed music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which he and Monteux took on its first European tour in 1952; they took it again to Europe in 1956, also touring in the Soviet Union, making it the first USA orchestra to do so. After retiring from his Boston post in 1962, he made appearances as a guest conductor; also helped to launch the Orchestre de Paris in 1967.

Charles Munch acquired an outstanding reputation as an interpreter of the French repertoire, his performances being marked by spontaneity, colour, and elegance. French music of the 20th century also occupied a prominent place on his programs; he brought out new works by Roussel, Milhaud, Arthur Honegger, and others. He wrote *Je suis chef d'orchestre* (1954).



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS

RAVEL

DA PHNIS THE CHOE

**CHARLES MUNCH
BOSTON SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**

(THE 1961 RECORDING)

Daphnis et Chloé is a ballet with music by Maurice Ravel. Ravel described it as a "symphonie choréographique".

The scenario was adapted by Michel Fokine from a romance by the Greek writer Longus thought to date from around the 3rd century AD. It concerns the love between a goatherd and a shepherdess. It is in one act and three scenes.

Ravel began work on the score in 1909 after a commission from Sergei Diaghilev. It was premiered at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris by his Ballets Russes on June 8, 1912. The orchestra was conducted by Pierre Monteux, the choreography was by Michel Fokine, and Vaslav Nijinsky danced the part of Daphnis. The strikingly original sets were designed by Léon Bakst.

The work is written for a large orchestra consisting of piccolo, 2 flutes, alto flute, 2 oboes, English horn, E-flat clarinet, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 3 bas-

oons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, tam-tam, wind machine, triangle, bass drum, field drum, castanets, tambourine, celesta, crotales, glockenspiel, 2 harps, wordless choir and strings. When Diaghilev took the ballet to London in 1914, he omitted the chorus, which prompted Ravel to send an angry letter to The Times newspaper.

At almost an hour long, Daphnis et Chloé is Ravel's longest work. The music, some of the composer's most passionate, is widely regarded as some of Ravel's best, with extraordinarily lush harmonies typical of the impressionist movement in music. He extracted music from the ballet to make two orchestral suites, the second of which is particularly popular. The complete work is itself performed more often in concerts than it is staged.

Ravel Daphnis et Chloe

Charles Munch • Boston Symphony Orchestra

Part I 28:35

- 1 Invocation to the nymphs
- 2 Entrance of Daphnis and Chloe
- 3 Dance of the young girls around Daphnis
- 4 Doreon's advance to Chloe
- 5 Daphnis reasserts his love for Chloe
- The Dorcon-Daphnis dance contest for a kiss from Chloe
- 6 Doreon's grotesque dance
- 7 The gracious dance of Daphnis
- 8 The triumph of Daphnis and the ecstatic union with Chloe
- 9 Entrance of the temptress Lyceion and dance of veils
- 10 The invasion of the pirates and Daphnis's unsuccessful efforts to save Chloe
- 11 Invocation to Pan by the nymphs and the prayer of Daphnis's

Part II 26:40

- 12 Interlude
- 13 The orgiastic dance of the pirates
- 14 Bryaxis orders Chloe to be brought forward and to dance
- 15 Chloe's dance of supplication
- 16 Creatures of Pan appear and frighten the pirates, who flee in terror, leaving Chloe alone with a shining crown
- 17 Sunrise. Daphnis prostrate at the grotto of the nymphs
- 18 Daphnis and Chloe are reunited
- 19 Lammon tells how Pan saved Chloe in memory of his love for the nymph Syrinx. Daphnis and Chloe act out the story
- 20 Pan (Daphnis) fashions a flute from some reeds, on which he declares his love for Syrinx (Chloe)
- 21 Abandoning their roles, the lovers embrace and kneel at the altar of the nymphs
- 22 Girls dressed as bacchantes enter with tambourines
- 23 Young men invade the scene, and joyous tumult prevails in tribute to the triumph of the lovers

Recorded BY RCA 1961 Boston Symphony Hall
Engineer – Lewis Layton Producer – Max Wilcox



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