



Smithsonian Associates

A Celebration of French Music

Dr. Rachel Franklin

Tuesday, April 4, 2023 - 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET

WK 3. SYLLABUS & WORKS

April 4: Passing the Flame

Camille Saint-Saëns was Gabriel Fauré's deeply revered teacher. And Fauré was equally influential as the chief mentor for Maurice Ravel. Connections continue on a less exalted level as singer Emma Bardac was mistress to both Fauré and Claude Debussy! Whether composing religious works or fantasy tableaux, Fauré, Debussy and Ravel combined sensuality and extreme refinement.

Today we begin with instrumental and piano virtuosity by César Franck and Saint-Saëns, followed by Fauré's beautiful *Requiem*. We explore Ravel's shimmering homage to his fallen friends during the Great War, "*Le Tombeau de Couperin*" plus his charming short opera, *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*. We gain a fascinating insight into Debussy's own piano style through a Welte-Mignon piano roll recording, before our grand finale, his watery symphonic masterpiece *La Mer*.

Works explored, media used:

César Franck, 1822-1890: Sonata in A major for Violin and Piano, 1886

- Kaja Danczowska (violin), Krystian Zimerman (piano)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCp5XC2rsEM&t=715s>

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921):

- Piano concerto no. 2, Op. 22, 1868. BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Lara Melda

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NE5mjx7tDzw&t=1270s>

- Carnival of the Animals, 1886. Published 1922. Sheku Kanneh-Mason and family

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10Z1eNq21yc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOx7zmO5ppw>

etc.

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924): Requiem, Op. 48, 1890

- John Eliot Gardiner, Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937):

- Le Tombeau de Couperin, 1917. Pierre Boulez, Berlin Philharmonic, oboist Albrecht Meyer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5Acvznd7Ts>

- L'Enfant et les Sortilèges, 1925. Oper Köln

Claude Debussy (1864-1918):

- Debussy plays Debussy, La Soirée dans Grenade, recorded 1913

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bjj3-0ZMoM8>

- La Mer, 1905, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Sir Georg Solti. Video by Gilda Tabarez.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNSHd3sMXcM>