



The Exquisite Enigma of Maurice Ravel: Polished Perfection, Hidden Genius

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Wednesday, July 23, 2025 - 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. ET

Week 2, July 23rd: "I never look back; I do not want to repeat myself."

Following devastating experiences at the front during the Great War, Ravel used irony, jazz, cabaret and other modern popular styles to extend his language and express his evolving aesthetic. Whatever style he chose to explore, his music remained utterly individual, both intensely sophisticated and profoundly moving.

After completing our survey from last session with his piano trio followed by his electrifying *La Valse*, we continue with the delicate but wrenching work that directly reflects his war years, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, then to the violin tour-de-force *Tzigane*, his opera *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, and piano concertos for one and both hands. Our grand finale is his astonishing, hypnotic *Boléro*.

Works explored, media used:

Trio, 1914

- Janine Jansen, Torleif Thedéen, Denis Kozhukhin

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

La Valse, 1914-1919

- Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Pablo Heras-Casado - conductor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIMJ6Ri-LMM>

Le Tombeau de Couperin, 1914-1917

- Pierre Boulez, Berlin Philharmonic
- also: Jaime Martin, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra

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

Tzigane, 1924

- Matthew Hakkarainen, Mathilde Nguyen

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_hZEjKGsro

Sonata for Violin and Cello, 1922

- Roland Greutter, Andreas Grünkorn

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAVp1_0VYc

L'Enfant et les Sortilèges, 1925

- Oper Köln

Piano concerto in G,

- Hélène Grimaud, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Vladimir Jurowski

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ji-a9zE4IE4>

Concerto for the Left Hand, 1931

- Samson François, André Cluytens, Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flNyZul1NrY>

Don Quichotte à Dulcinée, 1933

- Sebastià Peris, Orquesta Sinfónica de RTVE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6c7MDcCJkEM>

Boléro, 1928

- Opéra National de Paris, choreography - Maurice Béjart, soloist - Hugo Marchand

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAakXD_MpzE