



Women Who Shaped the Musical World: Performers, Patrons, Composers, Muses ... and more

Dr. Rachel Franklin

Monday, January 12 - February 9, 2026 - 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. ET

Feb. 9th: Women of the Ballet Russe

After spending more time with the highly influential American heiress Winnaretta Singer, we appreciate the beautiful harp music of French composer Germaine Tailleferre before moving on to Serge Diaghilev's Ballet Russe. This legendary gathering of artists is venerated for its great male innovators such as Nijinsky, Bakst, and Stravinsky. But many of its most extraordinary artists and contributors were women. Nijinsky's sister Bronislava Nijinska was one of ballet's most distinguished creators, both as a dancer and choreographer. The avant-garde artist Natalia Goncharova designed groundbreaking costumes and scenery for ballets such as the Golden Cockerel and Les Noces. And the brilliant, charismatic heiress Ida Rubinstein braved incarceration in an asylum by her horrified family to become one of the most fearless modern dancers in Paris, acting, commissioning, and eventually directing her own ballet company with Nijinska as a leading choreographer.

Works explored, media used

Igor Stravinsky, 1882-1971

"Renard" (The Fox), burlesque tale sung and played for two tenors, two basses and ensemble. 1922.

Commissioned, dedicated to Winnaretta Singer-Polignac, 1865-1943

- Le Balcon Company, Maxime Pascal
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U977r0nntEk>

Francis Poulenc, 1899-1963

Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra. 1932. Commissioned by and dedicated to Winnaretta Singer-Polignac

- Katia and Marielle Labeque
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PORdUzO2JdU>

Germaine Tailleferre, 1892-1983

Sonata for Harp, 1953

- Anne-Sophie Bertrand

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jkeg3fSGaHk>

Nikolai Rimsky Korsakov (1844 -1908)

Scheherazade, Op. 35 - 1888, Ballet Russes ballet – 1910, Vaslav Nijinsky, Ida Rubinstein

- Mariinsky/Bolshoi Theatre, Kristina Kretova, Igor Kolb

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SAgCxEuXDY>

La nave (The Ship), 1921

- Directors: Gabriellino D'Annunzio, Mario Roncoroni. Stars: Ida Rubinstein, Alfredo Boccolini, Ciro Galvani

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdYRrc7kG4M>

Maurice Ravel, 1875-1937

Bolero, 1928

- Commissioned and danced by Ida Rubinstein. Choreography: Bronislava Nijinska. Scene and Costumes: Alexandre Benois. Revived by Anna Nezhnaya Roles: Ilze Liepa- Dancer Alexander Chernov- Stranger in Black Dancers of the Kremlin Ballet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYE125CEnMQ>

Igor Stravinsky, 1882-1971

Firebird, 1910

- Marinsky Ballet, Ekaterina Kondurova & Ilya Kuznetsov

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHuckyEehzg&list=RDmHuckyEehzg&start_radio=1

Insights: The Legacy of Nijinska, Royal Ballet

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BS7q4vp01tQ&list=RDBS7q4vp01tQ&start_radio=1

Francis Poulenc, 1899-1963

Les Biches, 1924

- Royal Ballet, Hostess solo. Hostess - Zenaida Yanowsky

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAPFKUA7mQI>

Igor Stravinsky, 1882-1971

Les Noces, 1924

- Choreography: Bronislava Nijinska. Design: Natalia Goncharova. Bride: Anna Sysoeva. Bridegroom: Sergei Popov. Mariinsky Theater Ballet Orchestra

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLay_67WOFM&list=RDiLay_67WOFM&start_radio=1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDGl6bcVqSM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jK1AnbMHQeY>

A number of you have reached out to me asking about my live concert performances. For my upcoming performance of Beethoven's 4th piano concerto with the Washington Sinfonietta, please click on this link: <https://washingtonsinfonietta.org/>