

## **Paul Dukas (1865-1935)**

Paul Dukas was a French composer, teacher, and critic, best known for his orchestral works and his influence on French music at the turn of the 20th century. Born on October 1, 1865, in Paris, France, Dukas showed early promise as a musician and began his formal education at the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied composition under notable teachers such as Théodore Dubois and Jules Massenet.

Dukas's most famous work is *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (1897), a symphonic poem inspired by Goethe's ballad of the same name. The piece gained widespread acclaim for its inventive orchestration and vivid musical storytelling, and it remains a staple of the orchestral repertoire. The work's success established Dukas as a significant figure in French music.

In addition to *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, Dukas composed several other notable works, including the *Symphony in C Major* (1896) and *The Magic Mirror* (1896), a ballet that reflects his interest in orchestral color and narrative. His only opera, *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* (1907), is admired for its dramatic intensity and orchestral texture, though it is less frequently performed than his orchestral works.

Dukas was also a dedicated teacher and critic, serving as a professor at the Paris Conservatoire from 1908 until his death. His teaching influenced many young composers, and he was known for his rigorous standards and exacting methods. He was a member of the French musical establishment and contributed to various music journals, providing critiques that shaped the direction of French music.

Despite his significant contributions to music, Dukas was known for his perfectionism and often withdrew or destroyed works that did not meet his high standards. This self-critical approach led to a relatively small output of music, but his existing works continue to be highly regarded.

Paul Dukas passed away on May 17, 1935, in Paris, leaving behind a legacy of influential orchestral and operatic music.