

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Maurice Ravel was born Joseph-Maurice Ravel on March 7, 1875, in Ciboure, France, to a Basque mother and Swiss father. In 1889, at the age of 14, Ravel began taking courses at the Paris Conservatoire, a prestigious music and dance school located in the capital of France, studying under Gabriel Fauré.

Maurice Ravel was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire at age 14, and later studied with Gabriel Fauré. He continued to study at the Conservatoire until his early 20s, during which time he composed some of his most renowned works, including the *Pavane pour une infante défunte* (*Pavane for a Dead Princess*; 1899); the *Jeux d'eau* (1901), also known as "Fountains" or "Playing Water," a piece that Ravel dedicated to Fauré; the String Quartet in F major (1903); the *Sonatine* (circa 1904) for the solo piano; the *Miroirs* (1905); and the *Gaspard de la nuit* (1908).

When war broke out in 1914, Ravel was completing his Piano Trio, but then volunteered for war service and, after failing to be accepted as an air force pilot, served as a driver in the Motor Transport Corps. Ravel's later works include the *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, a suite composed circa 1917 for the solo piano, and the orchestral pieces *Rapsodie Espagnole* and *Boléro*. Possibly the most famous of his works, Ravel was commissioned by Sergey Diaghilev to create the ballet *Daphnis et Chloé*, which he completed in 1912. Eight years later, in 1920, he completed *La Valse*, a piece with varying credits as a ballet and concert work.

Ravel died in Paris, France, on December 28, 1937. Today, he remains widely regarded as France's most popular composer. He is remembered for once stating, "The only love affair I have ever had was with music."