

Hsin-Hao Vincent Yang
piano

Recital in partial fulfillment of the
Doctor of Musical Arts degree, 2027
Student of Wha Kyung Byun

Saturday, February 1, 2025
8:00 p.m.
Williams Hall

PROGRAM

Maurice Ravel
(1875–1937)

Pavane pour une infante défunte
(*Pavane for a Dead Princess*)

Le tombeau de Couperin (The Grave of Couperin)

Prélude
Fugue
Forlane
Rigaudon
Menuet
Toccata

Intermission

Franz Schubert
(1797–1828)

Piano Sonata in C Minor, D. 958
Allegro
Adagio
Menuetto: Allegro – Trio
Allegro

Maurice Ravel emerged during a pivotal moment in French musical history, when artistic and political ideologies were undergoing dramatic transformation. As a student at the Paris Conservatory, Ravel witnessed the French musical establishment's deliberate shift away from German/Austrian Romanticism. This growing sense of French musical identity flourished under teachers like Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), with whom Ravel studied.

It was during these formative years that Ravel composed *Pavane pour une infante défunte* (Pavane for a Dead Princess), the work that first brought him widespread recognition. The pavane, a Spanish-influenced stately processional dance that flourished in 16th-century courts, provided Ravel with both structural inspiration and historical resonance. The composer himself noted that the piece was "an evocation of a pavane that a little princess might, in former times, have danced at the Spanish court."

Fifteen years later, Europe was plunged into the devastation of World War I. Ravel, driven by his strong political convictions, volunteered for military service during Germany's invasion of France. The war's profound impact on him manifested in *Le tombeau de Couperin* (The Tomb of Couperin), a suite of six pieces each dedicated to friends who perished in the conflict. While the collection's title honors François Couperin (1668-1733), Ravel explained that it was "in reality less homage to Couperin alone than to French music of the 18th century." This work became a cornerstone of Neoclassicism, a post-war movement that sought to reclaim and reinterpret France's musical heritage through modern sensibilities.

Franz Schubert, despite his tragically short life, left an enduring musical legacy that continues to resonate today. He emerged onto Vienna's vibrant musical scene as the Classical Era was drawing to a close, largely through the revolutionary works of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1826). Beethoven's influence was so profound that subsequent composers, willingly or not, found their music shaped by his innovations. Schubert, who deeply admired Beethoven and even served as a pallbearer at his funeral, found himself overshadowed by Beethoven's towering presence - recognition of Schubert's genius would only come decades later.

In the final months of his life, while battling both financial hardship and failing health, Schubert composed his last three piano sonatas as a unified collection. These works, particularly the Sonata in C minor, D. 958, represent the peak of his artistic maturity. The first of the set, the C minor sonata bears clear traces of Beethoven's influence, especially recalling his 32 *Variations in C minor* (WoO. 80) and the *Pathétique Sonata* (Op. 13). Yet Schubert makes the work distinctly his own through his use of cyclic motive - connecting movements with musical motives and harmonies in a way that would later inspire countless Romantic composers.

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