



# Chamber Music Maryland

## JEAN-EFFLAM BAVOUZET, PIANO

Sunday, May 11, 2025, 4:00pm

Smith Theatre, Horowitz Visual and Performing Arts Center

Howard Community College

*This performance is sponsored by Gerald & Francoise von Mayer*

### **JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809):**

Sonata No. 31 in A-flat major

I. Allegro moderato

II. Adagio

III. Presto

### **MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)**

Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn

### **MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)**

Valses Nobles et Sentimentales

I. Modéré, très franc

II. Assez lent, avec une expression intense

III. Modéré

IV. Assez animé

V. Presque lent, dans un sentiment intime

VI. Vif

VII. Moins vif

VIII. Épilogue: Lent

### **MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)**

Gaspard de la nuit

I. Ondine

II. Le Gibet

III. Scarbo

--intermission---

### **JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809):**

Sonata No. 59 in E-flat major

I. Allegro non troppo

II. Adagio cantabile

III. Finale: Tempo di Menuet

### **MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)**

Le Tombeau de Couperin

I. Prélude. Vif

II. Fugue. Allegro moderato

III. Forlane. Allegretto

IV. Rigaudon: Assez vif

V. Menuet: Allegro moderato

VI. Toccata. Vif

*Jean-Efflam Bavouzet appears by arrangement with Harrison Parrott |*

*[www.harrisonparrott.com](http://www.harrisonparrott.com); [www.bavouzet.com](http://www.bavouzet.com)*

# PROGRAM NOTES

## Sonata No. 31 in A-flat major

JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)



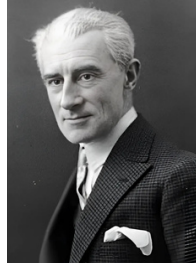
Composed around 1776, Haydn's Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major, reflects his growing command of the classical keyboard sonata. Written during his long tenure at the Esterházy court, this sonata is elegant, inventive, and full of the wit and charm that define

his style. The opening Allegro moderato unfolds with lyrical grace and surprising turns of phrase—Haydn invites the listener into a refined world, but never without his characteristic playfulness. The central Adagio is intimate and expressive, exploring subtle harmonic shifts and delicate ornamentation that highlight Haydn's sensitivity to nuance and pacing.

The sonata concludes with a brilliant Presto, a fast-paced finale bursting with energy and rhythmic drive. Full of sudden contrasts, sparkling passagework, and clever twists, the movement captures Haydn's love of musical surprise. Though less often performed than his later "London" sonatas, this early work reveals the composer's unique voice—at once sophisticated and full of life, bridging the elegance of the past with the wit and vitality that would define the Classical era.

## Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)



Maurice Ravel composed Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn in 1909 as part of a centenary tribute to Joseph Haydn, commissioned by the Revue musicale mensuelle de la Société Internationale de Musique. Six composers—Ravel, Debussy, Dukas, d'Indy,

Hahn, and Widor—were invited to contribute short piano pieces based on a musical cryptogram derived from Haydn's name. Using German notation, the letters correspond to specific pitches: H = B natural, A = A, Y = D, D = D, and N = G. Ravel employs this five-note motif throughout the piece, marking it clearly in the score, and exploring it through inversion and retrograde variations.

Though less than two minutes long, the Menuet is calm yet quietly expressive, evoking the poise and symmetry of the Classical era while bearing Ravel's distinct harmonic signature. Subtle and restrained, it transforms a technical constraint into a graceful homage—honoring Haydn not with grandeur, but with clarity, elegance, and depth.

# PROGRAM NOTES

## Valses Nobles

**MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)**



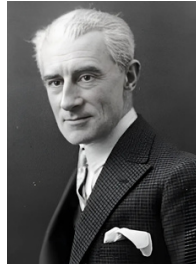
Maurice Ravel composed *Valses nobles et sentimentales* in 1911 for solo piano, drawing inspiration from the elegant Viennese waltzes of Schubert—whose own collections bore the same titles. Ravel's suite of eight short waltzes explores a delicate balance between past

and present: evoking the refined world of 19th-century ballroom dance while infusing it with early 20th-century harmonic daring and textural clarity. He wrote, "The title sufficiently indicates my intention to compose a set of waltzes in the style of Schubert."

The work begins with bright rhythmic energy, then moves through dreamy, melancholic, and sometimes bittersweet moods. Harmonies shift unexpectedly, dissonances gently blur the dance rhythms, and each movement feels like a memory—at once distant and vividly alive. The suite was first performed anonymously at a Parisian concert where audiences were invited to guess the identity of each composer, sparking lively debate and divided opinions. Ravel later expanded the work into an orchestral version, which became the basis for the ballet *Adélaïde, ou le langage des fleurs*.

## Gaspard de la nuit

**MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)**



Maurice Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit* (1908) is a virtuosic tour de force—and one of the most evocative works ever written for solo piano. Based on three poems by Aloysius Bertrand from his collection of the same name, the piece conjures a world of supernatural beauty

and dread. Ravel sought not only to bring these eerie poems to life in sound, but also to outdo Balakirev's *Islamey* in technical difficulty, creating a work that tests the outer limits of pianistic control, color, and imagination.

The first movement, *Ondine*, depicts a seductive water nymph singing beneath the moonlight, inviting the listener to visit her shimmering kingdom beneath the waves. Her song glistens with rippling textures and cascading figures before she vanishes, rejected. *Le Gibet* offers a stark contrast: a grim meditation on death. A bell tolls endlessly as we witness a lifeless body hanging from the gallows at twilight, suspended in a motionless landscape of despair. The final movement, *Scarbo*, is a dizzying nightmare—its namesake a malevolent goblin who skitters, spins, and disappears with demonic unpredictability.

Through its dazzling sonorities and vivid imagery, *Gaspard de la nuit* invites listeners into a shadowy dreamscape where poetry and sound become inseparable. It remains one of Ravel's most enigmatic and thrilling achievements.

# PROGRAM NOTES

## Sonata No. 59 in E-flat major

JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)



Composed in 1790, Haydn's Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob. XVI:49, is one of his most elegant and expressive keyboard works. Written for Maria Anna von Genzinger—a close friend and amateur pianist—the sonata reflects both a growing intimacy in their

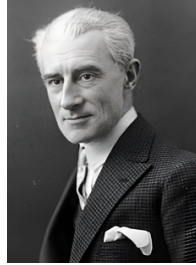
relationship and Haydn's increasing exploration of the piano's expressive range. In a letter to Genzinger, Haydn described the second movement as “quite new... it contains many things I shall analyze for Your Grace when the time comes; it is rather difficult but full of feeling.”

The opening Allegro non troppo moves with clarity and charm, full of rhythmic vitality and thematic play. The Adagio e cantabile, in B-flat major, offers a richly ornamented melody touched with moments of melancholy, hinting at a deeper emotional undercurrent. The final Tempo di Menuet features two contrasting Trio sections—including a surprising turn to E-flat minor—before returning to the main theme with subtle variation.

Delicate, expressive, and structurally inventive, this sonata showcases Haydn at the height of his creative powers and marks a pivotal point in the evolution of the Classical piano sonata.

## Le Tombeau de Couperin

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)



Maurice Ravel composed Le Tombeau de Couperin between 1914 and 1917, during the height of World War I. Each of its six movements is dedicated to the memory of a friend who lost their life in the war, making it both a personal memorial and a broader

reflection on loss. The title references the 17th-century French tradition of the tombeau, a musical tribute to the deceased, and while it nods to the Baroque composer François Couperin, Ravel noted that the work is “not so much to Couperin alone as to 18th-century French music in general.”

Despite its somber dedication, the music is graceful, restrained, and often luminous—more an evocation of life and elegance than of grief. Each movement takes the form of a Baroque dance or prelude, filtered through Ravel's refined harmonic language and crystalline textures. The suite also includes his only published fugue, showcasing his deep engagement with classical forms. Le Tombeau de Couperin was Ravel's last solo piano work and was later orchestrated into a beloved four-movement suite. In both versions, it stands as a quiet triumph—turning mourning into music of poise, clarity, and enduring beauty.

## TONIGHT'S ARTISTS



**Jean-Efflam Bavouzet** is an award-winning French pianist celebrated for his expressive artistry and dynamic international career. He performs with leading orchestras including the Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, BBC Symphony, London Philharmonic, and Budapest Festival Orchestra, collaborating with conductors such as Vladimir Jurowski, Gianandrea Noseda, and Leonard Slatkin.

Renowned for his interpretations of Debussy and French repertoire, Bavouzet appears regularly at major venues including Carnegie Hall, the BBC Proms, Verbier, Aspen, and Bravo! Vail. He is currently in residence at Wigmore Hall, presenting a multi-season series of solo and chamber performances. In 2025, he continues to perform internationally while expanding his acclaimed discography.

Bavouzet records exclusively for Chandos Records. His award-winning catalog includes complete cycles of Haydn and Beethoven sonatas, Prokofiev and Bartók concerti, and Mozart concertos with the Manchester Camerata. His recordings have earned Gramophone Awards, Diapason d'Or, and BBC Music Magazine accolades.

He is also a champion of underrepresented French composers such as Pierné and Magnard and has worked closely with leading musical voices including Pierre Boulez, Vladimir Ashkenazy, and György Kurtág.

Bavouzet serves as International Chair in Piano at the Royal Northern College of Music and is an advisory board member of Pianofest in the Hamptons.