

**TAP TO WATCH**

Vincent Larderet plays
Ravel's Scarbo

Vincent Larderet

The French pianist on his appreciation of Ravel – and recording the composer's complete works for solo piano

What has prompted you to record Ravel's complete solo piano music?

The Ravel 150th centenary is in 2025 – that's when my second volume is released. This undertaking marks the fulfillment of a long process devoted to this composer across my career. The release of the fourth and final volume is planned for 2027.

No doubt Ravel is a composer close to your heart?

He has always been one of my favourite composers since young (alongside Scriabin and Brahms). I clearly remember first discovering Ravel's works for orchestra (performed by the late Seiji Ozawa), and perhaps his greatest masterpiece for piano – and one of the most emblematic works of all piano literature – *Gaspard de la nuit*. When I was about 12, I used to draw, and I made a portrait of Ravel, which I wanted to include in the booklet of this first volume. It's like a wink to the composer who I've been fascinated with from a very young age.

When did you start studying Ravel's music?

From very early on – and the first work I played was *Jeux d'eau*. I didn't immediately 'specialise' in his music because I wanted to gain a broad repertoire. But after my studies, I felt the desire to work on the complete works (that includes the two piano concertos and chamber music), particularly through my lineage to Vlado Perlemuter.

Why does the set comprise four volumes, when most 'complete' solo works come in two?

After issuing the world-premiere recording of the *Daphnis et Chloé* Suite for Piano in 2014, it struck me that the tradition of recording Ravel's piano works on two discs is a misrepresentation – omitting, as it does, a number of rare or unpublished pieces – and is in need of a rethink in favour of a comprehensive approach. The transcriptions are most commonly passed over, even though they were created by Ravel himself or by some of his close collaborators with his approval.

How have you decided to programme the four albums?

I will be mixing some 'standard' well-known works with world premiere renditions to make it more attractive for the listener. With the exception of the first volume, which is devoted only to familiar works.

You studied the scores of the famous pianist and pedagogue Vlado Perlemuter. What makes them unique?

After I won the Brest International Piano Competition under the honorary chairman of Vlado Perlemuter, I was privileged to study his annotated scores which he made during his collaboration with Ravel in 1927. They have been an infinitely precious resource for me, revealing all sorts of secrets of interpretation: his markings are very detailed and pertain to musical expression as well as to aspects such as tempi, pedalling, phrasing and tonal colours. They highlight the sophistication of the Ravelian style and the aesthetic purity demanded by the composer in which any form of affectation was taboo. They are deserving of being considered authentic Urtexts, and the copious errors perpetrated in published editions have also been corrected.

Who are your favourite Ravel interpreters from the past?

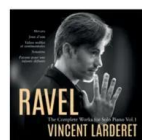
Perlemuter is unique and definitely my favorite Ravel interpreter. Among the French school, I can't say I'm fond of Samson François, who didn't respect the scores enough. I especially love André Cluytens as conductor for the complete orchestral works.

What technical qualities are needed in order to play Ravel successfully?

The most important quality is undoubtedly an immense range of sound colours, a great clarity of playing combined with transcendental virtuosity. Let us not forget that with *Gaspard de la nuit* Ravel wanted to compose something more difficult than Liszt's *Transcendental Studies* and Balakirev's *Islamey*. Perlemuter used to say that from his side, the 'Noctuelles' from *Miroirs* is the most difficult Ravel work.

What might be an accessible Ravel piano piece for the intermediate-level pianist?

I advise to start with the Menuet from the *Sonatine* which is accessible and from the Neoclassical style of Ravel. ■



Vincent Larderet's first volume of the *Ravel Complete Works for Solo Piano* is out now on Avie Records (AV2623). Further information can be found at www.vincentlarderet.com.