

Gabriel Fauré

Pavane



This month our classical maestro **Bridget Mermikides** transcribes a famous piece by one of France's most respected and celebrated 19th century composers.

ABILITY RATING

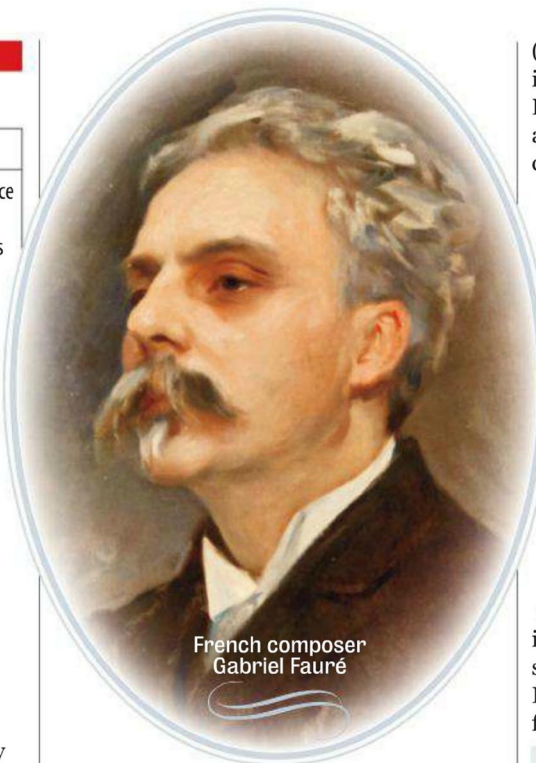
● ● ● ● ● Moderate

INFO	WILL IMPROVE YOUR
KEY: E minor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plucking finger independence
TEMPO: 64 bpm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simultaneous part playing
CD: Tracks 20-21	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Repertoire of classical pieces

THIS ISSUE'S CLASSICAL column brings you an arrangement of a work by one of France's greatest composers. Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) was an organist, pianist and respected teacher whose importance in the history of classical musical history was only fully appreciated years after his death. Just as Beethoven is considered the bridge between the classical and romantic eras, Fauré's advanced compositional concepts can be seen as linking a 19th Century Chopin-esque romanticism with 20th century modernism.

Fauré's harmonic and melodic ideas though considered 'dangerously modern' by many of his contemporaries, have had an enduring influence on both high art and popular music. Fauré wrote hundreds of beautiful works for solo instruments (particularly piano), voice, small ensemble and orchestra, but one of his most famous and popular is undoubtedly the Pavane in F# minor originally written for piano in the late

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French composer
Gabriel Fauré

1880s and then later arranged by the composer for orchestra with an optional chorus, as well as in the form of an orchestral and dance 'choreographic spectacle'.

Although Fauré described his Pavane as “elegant, but not important” it was met with a huge success and remains a frequently performed and recorded work of the piano and orchestral repertoire. Its haunting melody, hypnotic rhythm and adventurous harmony combine to create a work that is at one musically startling and fully accessible to a wide audience. It is remarkable how fresh it still sounds with harmonic and melodic devices that seem to preempt jazz and pop

(listen to bars 53-57 for example), and its influence on Fauré's students Ravel and Debussy and the impressionism movement is also evident. The Pavane has also been covered by diverse artists from Jethro Tull and Lee Ritenour, to Il Divo, S Club 7, Bill Evans and Barbra Streisand. It has also found its way into popular culture, appearing as one of the 1998 World Cup themes, the 2009 film Mr Nobody and the Return To Zork computer game.

I've transposed the original down a tone to the guitar-friendly key of E minor, and arranged the haunting melody in the upper part with arpeggios in the bass accompaniment, as well as some counter melodies and larger chords at important moments. You'll need to spend some time with this to keep the melody legato (smoothly connected from one note to the next) and pay attention to the tempo indications which give the piece its evocative shape. Have fun with this beautiful piece, and I'll be back next issue with another great work for your repertoire. 

TECHNIQUE FOCUS

SITTING POSTURE

An important aspect of technique in classical guitar playing is adopting the correct sitting posture. The guitar is placed on the left thigh (for right-handed players), which is raised by placing the foot on a footstool. The left knee should be pointing forwards and the right knee to the side so the guitar rests on the inside of the right thigh. The guitar should be positioned at angle where the neck is pointing slightly upwards, and the right forearm rests on the larger bout of the instrument. This should hold the instrument securely in place and give ease of facility for both hands.



TRACK RECORD Check out the Orchestre de Paris recording Fauré: Requiem & Cantique (Virgin 2011). This is a wonderful collection of Fauré's orchestral and choral works including the Pavane. To hear how comfortably the Pavane sits with a jazz interpretation, listen to the fantastic Bill Evans Trio With Symphony Orchestra (1990).

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 21

[Bars 1-4] For the opening four bars there is suggested plucking hand fingering. Do work on to master this as it is intended to help create a well-organised and intelligent technique that creates a smooth and connected performance. The main principles are that the thumb takes care of the bass notes and the third, second and first fingers ('a' 'm' and 'i') line up with first, second and third strings - as a general rule. The thing to avoid is repeatedly plucking with the same finger when switching strings - a big no no! The majority of the notes are played free

stroke with the occasional rest stroke on the melody. All notes with the stems pointing upwards are melody notes and we should try to make this stand out clearly from accompaniment. On the second half of bar 2 a barre at the 2nd fret is needed for two beats, after which the indicated fretting hand fingering helps achieve smooth sounding melody and accompaniment. The technical principles established in the first few bars should be maintained throughout the piece. Attention to these details is the key to a masterful performance!

♩ = 64

1 p i m i p i m i a i m i a i m i m a a a a a p i m i a m a a m a i m i m

5 B B/A Em/G Em7 Am7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 C7

9 B Em Cmaj7 D Bm7 C Am7

13 B B/A G G7/F Em7 Dm7 Cmaj7 C7 B7sus4 B7

17 Em B B/A Gmaj7 F#13 B D/F#

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 21

[Bars 10-24] At bar 10 we repeat the main tune and at bar 14 a barre at the 3rd fret is required, jumping to the 7th fret on the third beat. Bar 15 is a stretch, particularly when reaching for the final B note. The fretting hand then jumps back on bar 16 to try to keep the melody smooth. A 2nd-fret barre is needed for the last two beats of bar 16. From bars 18 to 24 we have triplets involving 'three against two' rhythms - don't play the second triplet too early or the effect is lost.

[Bar 26] I played this bar slightly staccato (or detached) to emulate the pizzicato strings of the orchestra, but this is not essential given that it is impossible to do this through the rest of the piece in this arrangement. There are various counter melodies and harmonisations that have also not been possible to incorporate into this arrangement but I feel the main theme in its nostalgic simplicity has been nicely captured.

Chords: Gmaj7, G, A7sus4, A7, Bm/F#, A7sus4, A7, Bm/F#, A7sus4, A7, D, Am/C

Chords: B, Em, Cmaj7, D, Bm7

Chords: C, Am7, B, B/A, G, G7/F, Em7, Dm7

Chords: G7, Cmaj7, C7, B, Em, Cmaj7, D, Bm7

Chords: C, Am7, B, B/A, G, G7/F, Em7, Dm7

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 21

[Bars 47 to end] From bar 47 to 49 is a sparsely orchestrated cello melody, which is followed by the final melodic line (played on a flute in orchestral arrangements but good for us to know as it helps with how we might 'feel' this section). This time only the first two notes of the melody are played and repeated in triplets to an ascending scale leading to the ending bars. If you listen to the original

orchestral version you will notice there is a section in the middle of the piece that I decided to use artistic licence and cut out. This was due to it simply not working successfully on solo guitar. As always, take your time learning this lovely piece and remember that paying attention to the technical details will help towards a masterful performance!

Chords: Cmaj7 C7 B7sus4 B A7#11 Cmaj7 C7 B7sus4 B A7#11

Chords: Cmaj7 C7 B7sus4 B Em Em/D C G/B Cmaj7 G5/D Em/B G5/D

Chords: Em/B F#b9 B Em B Em F#7/C# Em7/B A7

Chords: Em F#7/C# Em7/B A7 Em/G F#7 Em7/B A7

Chords: G B7 Em B7 Em