

La valse

For Solo Piano

Maurice Ravel
(Arr. Holden Mui)

cover art by {artist}

for all masochistic pianists

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Program Notes

La valse, poème chorégraphique pour orchestre (“The Waltz, a choreographic poem for orchestra”) is, in the words of Francis Poulenc, “one of the most imaginative, virtuosic, and terrifying orchestral creations of the 20th century.” Conceived as a tribute to Johann Strauss II and the Viennese waltz, it depicts the life cycle of a waltz, from its birth to its eventual destruction. The work exists in three forms: a piano solo, a piano duet, and the orchestral version.

In the preface to the score, Ravel described the opening scene as:

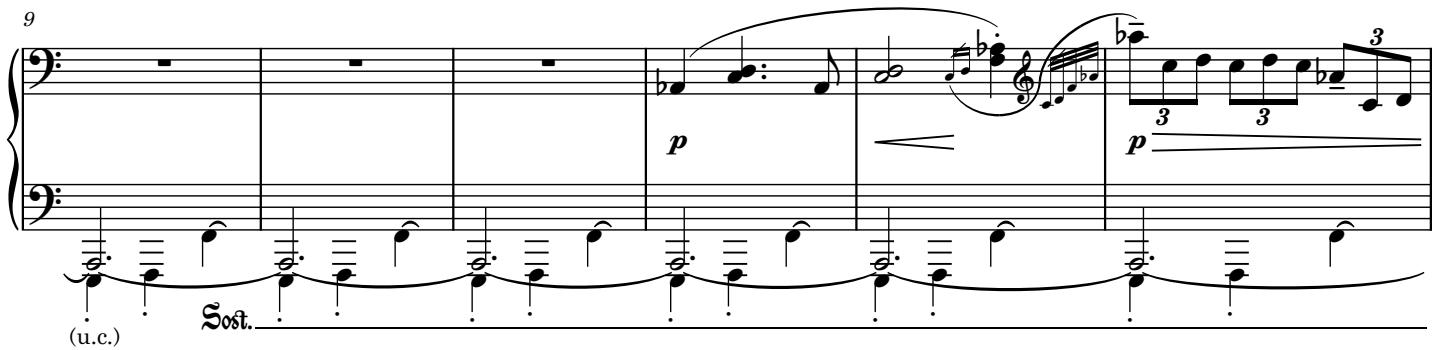
Swirling clouds afford glimpses, through rifts, of waltzing couples. The clouds scatter little by little; one can distinguish an immense hall with a whirling crowd. The scene grows progressively brighter. The light of the chandeliers bursts forth at the fortissimo. An imperial court, about 1855.

In the second half of the work, the themes fragment and recombine in increasingly complex ways as the piece reaches its chaotic climax. In a final gesture, Ravel ends the work with a quadruplet tuple, ultimately obliterating any remaining semblance of a waltz.

La valse

Tempo of a Viennese Waltz

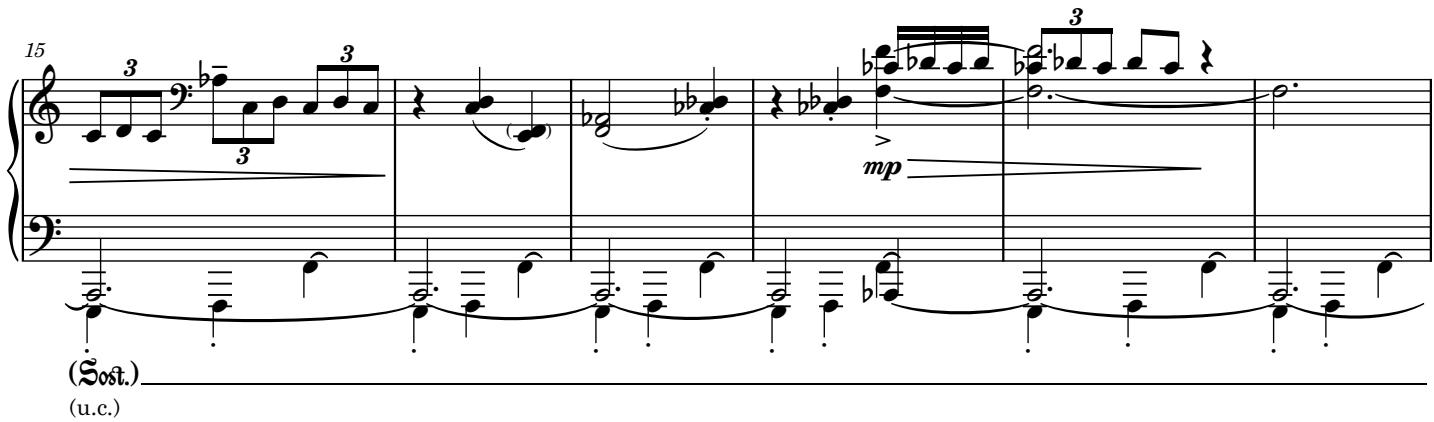
una corda



9

p

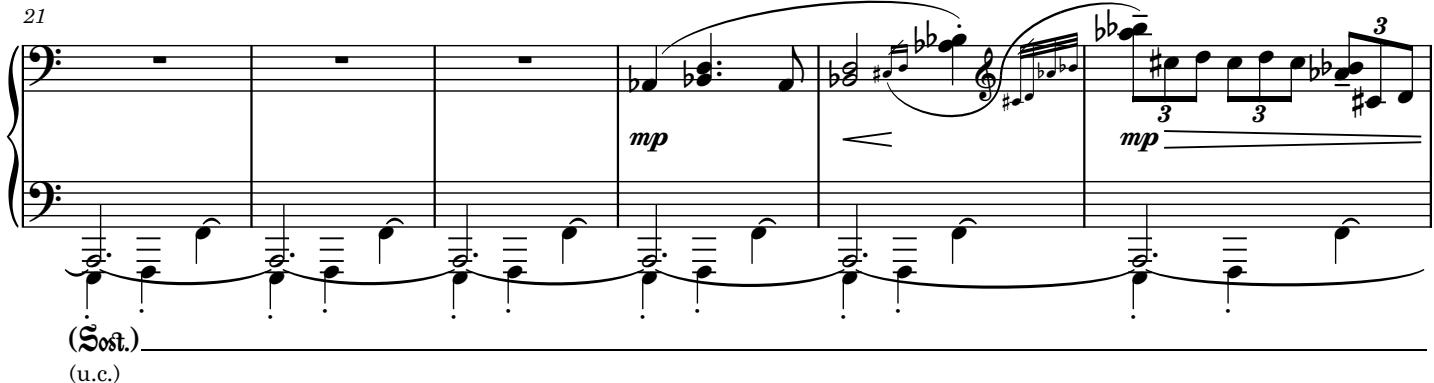
(Sost.)
(u.c.)



15

mp

(Sost.)
(u.c.)



21

mp

(Sost.)
(u.c.)

27

(Sost.)
(u.c.)

33

(Sost.)
(u.c.)

40

(u.c.)

46

(u.c.)

50

(u.c.)

54

(u.c.)

59

(u.c.)

67

expressive

pp
(u.c.)

72

(u.c.)

77

(u.c.)

82

(u.c.)

87

(u.c.)

92

(u.c.)

97

(u.c.)

101

(u.c.)

106

mf

5 5 5 5 5

5 5 5 5 5

pp

7 7

(u.c.)

108

5

5

5

5

7

7

pp

(u.c.)

111

5

5

5

6

6

7

7

6

(u.c.)

114 *8va* *p*

(u.c.)

118

(u.c.)

122

(u.c.)

125

(u.c.)

Musical score for piano, featuring two staves (treble and bass) across five systems (measures 129-150). The score includes dynamic markings like *p*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, and *p*; performance instructions like *u.c.* and *tre corde*; and articulation marks such as slurs, grace notes, and accents. Measure 129 starts with a forte dynamic. Measure 134 features a melodic line with eighth-note triplets. Measure 139 begins with a piano dynamic and a forte dynamic. Measure 144 shows a transition with a dynamic change from *mf* to *p*. Measure 150 concludes the page with a dynamic change from *p* to *f*.

Musical score for piano, featuring five staves of music. The score consists of two systems of measures, each starting with measure 156.

Measure 156: The first staff (treble clef) starts with a dynamic *p*. The second staff (bass clef) has a dynamic *p* and a bass note. Measure 157 continues the melodic line in both staves.

Measure 162: The first staff begins with a dynamic *f*. The second staff has a dynamic *p* and a bass note. Measure 163 continues the melodic line.

Measure 168: The first staff begins with a dynamic *p*. The second staff has a dynamic *p* and a bass note. Measure 169 continues the melodic line.

Measure 174: The first staff begins with a dynamic *p*. The second staff has a dynamic *mf* and a bass note. Measure 175 continues the melodic line.

Measure 180: The first staff begins with a dynamic *p*. The second staff has a dynamic *f* and a bass note. Measure 181 concludes the piece.

186

192

198

204

210

216

220

expressive

226

233

238

expressive

244 *mf*

250

256 *mf*

262

268

273 *8va*

279 *mf*

285 *mf*

291 *sf*

303

309

315

8va

321

325

329

333

338

343

A musical score for piano, featuring two staves (treble and bass). The score consists of five staves of music, each starting with a measure number and ending with a repeat sign. The key signature changes frequently, indicated by various sharps and flats.

Staff 1 (Treble Clef):

- Measure 348:** Starts with a sharp. Measures show eighth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes. Key signature changes to one sharp at the end.
- Measure 353:** Starts with a sharp. Measures show eighth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes. Dynamics include *f*.
- Measure 358:** Starts with a sharp. Measures show eighth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes.
- Measure 363:** Starts with a sharp. Measures show eighth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes. Dynamics include *ff*.
- Measure 369:** Starts with a sharp. Measures show eighth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes. Dynamics include *f* and *mp*.

Staff 2 (Bass Clef):

- Measure 348:** Shows quarter-note patterns.
- Measure 353:** Shows quarter-note patterns.
- Measure 358:** Shows quarter-note patterns.
- Measure 363:** Shows quarter-note patterns.
- Measure 369:** Shows quarter-note patterns.

374

379 *expressive*

384

391 *expressive*

397

403

408

413

417

422

426

poco accel.

431

436

ff

a tempo

441

p

Sost.

446

p

(*Sost.*)

451

(Sost.)

457

(Sost.)

463

468

p

472

476

480

486

492

Musical score for piano, page 10, featuring five staves of music. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *ff*, *mf*, *p*, *sf*, and *v*. Measure 497 starts with a forte dynamic *f* in the bass clef staff. Measure 504 begins with a forte dynamic *ff* in the bass clef staff. Measure 510 starts with a forte dynamic *ff* in the bass clef staff. Measure 516 starts with a forte dynamic *ff* in the bass clef staff. Measure 522 starts with a piano dynamic *p* in the bass clef staff.

526

532

536

541

547

552

557 *8va*

ff

(8)

565

f

575

580

585

590

595

600

605

610

615

620

accel.

625

630

635

639

Tempo I

643

gliss.

6

fff 3

8ba

8va -

647

651

ff

655

accel.

.....

Animated

660

666

sf

Musical score for piano, page 10, featuring five staves of music. The score consists of two systems of measures.

Measures 672-677: The top staff shows a melodic line with grace notes and slurs. The bass staff provides harmonic support with sustained notes and chords. Measure 677 concludes with a dynamic *f* and measure 678 begins with a dynamic *sf*.

Measures 678-682: The top staff continues with a melodic line. The bass staff features eighth-note patterns. Measure 682 ends with a dynamic *ff*.

Measures 683-687: The top staff maintains its melodic line. The bass staff features eighth-note patterns. Measure 687 ends with a dynamic *ff*.

Measures 688-692: The top staff shows a melodic line. The bass staff features eighth-note patterns. Measure 692 ends with a dynamic *p*.

Measures 695-699: The top staff shows a melodic line. The bass staff features eighth-note patterns. Measure 699 ends with a dynamic *p*.

701

707

Held back expressive

A tempo

713

719

725

730

f
fff
gliss.
mf
ff

8ba

734

ff f
fff
mf
ff

8va accel.

739

f
ff f
ff f

745

ff

Without slowing down

750

ff

