**1 January 1908** Gustav Mahler (47) conducts his first performance at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. It is Wagner’s (†24) *Tristan und Isolde*. It is a triumph with the public and the press.

*Christmas Greeting* for two sopranos, male chorus, two violins, and piano op.52 by Edward Elgar (50), to words of his wife, CA Elgar, is performed for the first time, in Hereford Cathedral.

**2 January 1908** The third book of the piano suite *Iberia* by Isaac Albéniz (47) is performed for the first time, at the house of Mme Polignac, Paris.

**4 January 1908** Mulai Hafid overthrows his brother Abdul Aziz and is proclaimed Sultan of Morocco at Fez.

**6 January 1908** *Notturno* for orchestra by Ottorino Respighi (28) is performed for the first time, in New York.

**8 January 1908** Frans Schollaert replaces Jules de Trooz as Prime Minister of Belgium.

**9 January 1908** Two works for voice and piano by Igor Stravinsky (25) are performed publicly for the first time, in St. Petersburg: *Spring* to words of Gorodetsky, and *Pastorale*, a vocalise.

Results of a competition for an opera by an English composer, offered by Ricordi of Milan, are announced. *The Angelus* of Edward Woodall Naylor wins. Second place goes to *Sita* by Gustav Holst (33).

**10 January 1908** Mohandas K. Gandhi is sentenced to two months in prison in Johannesburg.

**11 January 1908** Librettist Jules Bois and Vincent d’Indy (56) engage in a duel with pistols in the Parc-des-Princes, Paris. Two shots are fired but no one is hurt. d’Indy has decided not to proceed with an opera written by Bois, *Phèdre et Hippolyte*. This is followed by acrimonious accusations in public periodicals by the two antagonists. They decide to satisfy their honor in this anacronistic and illegal manner. Afterwards, d’Indy goes to a rehearsal.

*Quatre Poèmes* for voice and piano op.8 by Albert Roussel (38), to words of Régnier, is performed for the first time, at the Salle Erard, Paris, the composer at the keyboard.

**12 January 1908** Very large street demonstrations take place in major Prussian cities in favor of universal suffrage.

Claude Debussy (45) conducts for the first time, *La Mer*, in Paris.

**13 January 1908** Near Paris, Frenchman Henri Farman performs the first officially observed closed circle of one kilometer in an airplane, thus winning the Deutsch-Archdeacon Prize of 50,000 francs.

A fire in the Rhoads Opera House in Boyertown, Pennsylvania kills 170 people.

**18 January 1908** *Brigg Fair*, an orchestral work by Frederick Delius (45), is performed for the first time, in Liverpool, conducted by Granville Bantock (39).

**20 January 1908** After living together for three-and-a-half years and producing a child, Claude Debussy (45) and Emma Moyse Bardac marry in the Mairie of the 16th arrondissement, Paris. She is the former wife of banker Sigismond Bardac, and the mother of two.

**21 January 1908** The Sullivan Ordinance is passed in New York City, barring women from smoking in public.

*Der Mann mit den drei Frauen*, an operetta by Franz Lehár (37) to words of Bauer, is performed for the first time, in Theater an der Wien, Vienna.

*The Chambered Nautilus* op.66 for solo voices, female chorus, and orchestra by Amy Cheney Beach (40) to words of Holmes is performed for the first time, in New York.

**22 January 1908** Two Romances op.6 for voice and piano by Igor Stravinsky (25) to words of Gorodetsky are performed publicly for the first time, in St. Petersburg. See 25 December 1907.

In a concert to honor the memory of Edvard Grieg (†0) in Copenhagen, the composer’s slow movement of his unfinished Piano Trio is performed for the first time. It has been 30 years since it was composed. Also premiered are the two completed movements of his String Quartet no.2, composed in 1891.

**23 January 1908** 18:30 Edward Alexander MacDowell dies quietly in the Westminster Hotel, New York, USA of paresis (dementia paralytica-associated with syphilis) aged 47 years, one month, and five days, in the presence of his wife and family. His mortal remains will be buried in Peterborough, New Hampshire. (The possibility has been raised that MacDowell actually died of bromide poisoning. The symptoms are remarkably similar to dementia paralytica.)

**25 January 1908** 10:00 A funeral in memory of Edward MacDowell takes place at St. George’s Church in Manhattan. The family then boards a train to Peterborough, New Hampshire for burial.

**26 January 1908** The earthly remains of Edward MacDowell are laid to rest at his summer home in Peterborough, New Hampshire, facing Mount Monadnock. (It is now the MacDowell Colony)

**27 January 1908** Austrian Foreign Minister Count Alois Aehrenthal announces that a railroad will be built from Sarajevo to Thessaloniki over the Balkans.

British astronomer Philibert Jacques Melotte discovers Pasiphaë, the eighth moon of Jupiter to be observed from Earth.

**28 January 1908** Julia Ward Howe becomes the first woman elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

**29 January 1908** Aleksandur Pavlov Malinov replaces Petur Todor Gudev as Prime Minister of Bulgaria.

**30 January 1908** Mohandas K. Gandhi is taken from his prison cell to meet General Smuts at the Colonial Office in Praetoria. They reach a compromise on the Transvaal Indian Registration Act. Gandhi and all other Indians are immediately freed.

**1 February 1908** As members of the Portuguese royal family cross the Terreiro do Paço in Lisbon in an open coach, young members of a secret political society shoot King Carlos I and Crown Prince Luis Filipe to death. A younger son, Dom Manuel, is wounded in the arm. The Queen escapes injury. 19-year-old Dom Manuel succeeds as King Manuel II. This is the only successful regicide in Portuguese history.

On his fourth trip to the city, Claude Debussy (45) appears as conductor in London for the first time, directing his *Prélude á l’après-midi d’un fune* and *La Mer*.

**3 February 1908** Three selections from the song cycle *La Chanson d’Eve* op.45 by Gabriel Fauré (62) to words of Van Lerberghe, are performed for the first time, at Salle des agriculteurs, Paris the composer at the piano. See 26 May 1909 and 20 April 1910.

**4 February 1908** Francisco Joaquim Ferreira do Amaral replaces João Franco Ferreira Pinto Castelo Branco as Prime Minister of Portugal.

Igor Stravinsky’s (25) Symphony in E flat op.1 is given its first public performance, in a public sight-reading by the Court Orchestra in St. Petersburg. See 27 April 1907.

**5 February 1908** Béla Bartók (26) finishes his Violin Concerto and sends the score to its dedicatee, his lover, the violinist Stefi Geyer. See 13 February 1908 and 30 May 1958.

**7 February 1908** Ernst II replaces Ernst I as Duke of Saxe-Altenburg.

Incidental music to LC Nielsen’s play *Willemoes* by Carl Nielsen (42) is performed for the first time, at the Folketeatret, Copenhagen.

*Symphonic Sketches* by George Whitefield Chadwick (53) is performed completely for the first time, in Boston. Critics are universally positive. See 21 November 1904.

**8 February 1908** The Second Symphony of Sergey Rakhmaninov (34) is performed for the first time, in St. Petersburg, conducted by the composer.

**9 February 1908** Incidental music to Benzon’s play *Parents* by Carl Nielsen (42) is performed for the first time, in Copenhagen.

**11 February 1908** Theodorus Heemskerk replaces Theodoor Herman de Meester as first minister of the Netherlands.

*The Dynasts* by Thomas Hardy is published.

*Suite: Les rêves de Columbine* op.65 for piano by Amy Cheney Beach (40) is performed for the first time, in Boston.

**12 February 1908** An automobile race from New York to Paris by way of Siberia begins in Times Square. Six cars from four countries are entered.

**13 February 1908** After six months in hopeless love, Béla Bartók (26) ends his relationship with the 19-year-old violin prodigy Stefi Geyer, in Budapest.

Jules Massenet’s (65) ballet *Espada*, to a story by Maugars (pseud. of Baron Henri de Rothschild), is performed for the first time, at the Opéra, Monte Carlo.

**14 February 1908** *Déclin d’amour* op.13/1 for voice and piano by Charles Koechlin (40) to words of Sully-Prudhomme is performed for the first time, in Paris.

**16 February 1908** The last program at Telharmonic Hall in New York takes place. The second season is only one week longer than the first.

**18 February 1908** Japan formalizes the agreement of last 24 February and makes it effective.

Lee de Forest receives a US patent for “space telegraphy” or radio.

**21 February 1908** Book Two of the piano work *Images*, by Claude Debussy (45) is performed for the first time, in Paris.

**23 February 1908** *Parting*, for male chorus by Leos Janácek (53), is performed for the first time, in Brünn (Brno).

*Nox* op.15/3 for voice and orchestra by Charles Koechlin (40) to words of Leconte de Lisle is performed for the first time, in Paris the composer conducting. Also premiered is the orchestral arrangement of Koechlin’s *Au loin* op.20/2. See 7 April 1897.

**24 February 1908** In the case of *White-Smith Publishing Company v. Apollo Company*, the Supreme Court of the United States holds that a piano roll manufacturer may record any music it wishes, regardless of the wishes of the copyright holder. Victor Herbert (49) filed a brief in support of White-Smith. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, in a separate, concurring opinion, writes, “A musical composition is a rational collocation of sounds apart from concepts, reduced to a tangible expression from which the collocation can be reproduced either with or without continuous human intervention.” (Waters, 342)

**27 February 1908** An explosion in the Rosita Vieja Coal Mine near San Juan de Sabinas, Coahuila, Mexico kills 200 people.

Incidental music to Aristophanes’ play *Lysistrata* by Engelbert Humperdinck (53) is performed for the first time, in the Berlin Kammerspiele.

Piano Quintet op.67 by Amy Cheney Beach (40) is performed for the first time, in Potter Hall, Boston, the composer at the piano.

**28 February 1908** Two bombs are thrown by a pro-democracy advocate at the car carrying Shah Mohammed Ali in Teheran. Some guards are killed but the Shah is not hurt.

**29 February 1908** The first public performance of Igor Stravinsky’s (25) *Faun and Shepherdess* op.2 for mezzo-soprano and orchestra to words of Rushkin takes place in St. Petersburg. See 29 April 1907.

**4 March 1908** String Quartet no.5 op.104 by Charles Villiers Stanford (55) is performed for the first time, in Leeds.

A fire in Lakeview Elementary School in Collinwood, Ohio (now part of Cleveland) kills 175 people, almost all of them children.

**5 March 1908** *Drake’s Drum* op.22 for voice and piano by Arthur Farwell (35) to words of Newbolt is performed for the first time, in Omaha.

**6 March 1908** Two works for cello and piano by Frank Bridge (29) are performed for the first time, in Kensington Town Hall: *Elégie* and *Scherzo.*

**7 March 1908** Mayor Mark Breith of Cincinnati tells his city council that women are physically unfit to operate automobiles.

Franz Schubert’s (†79) opera *Die Bürgschaft* D.435 is performed for the first time, in concert, in Vienna, 92 years after it was composed.

**8 March 1908** The overture *Song of Destiny* op.84 by Alyeksandr Glazunov (42) is performed for the first time, in the Great Hall of St. Petersburg Conservatory.

**10 March 1908** Australian Edgeworth David and four others become the first people to reach the top of Mt. Erebus, in Antarctica (3,800m). They are all members of the Shackelton expedition.

The first lieder recital devoted entirely to the works of Franz Schreker (29) takes place in Vienna.

**11 March 1908** Daniel Chennevière (Dane Rudhyar) (12) undergoes a very serious operation in Paris which results in the loss of a kidney. His recuperation will be long and will require him to stop piano lessons and lose half of a school year.

Several works by Charles Koechlin (40) are performed for the first time, in Théâtre des Arts, Paris: The second two of the *Quatre poèmes de “La bonne chanson” de Paul Verlaine* op.24 for voice and piano, *Berceuse phoque* op.18/1, for voice and piano to words of Kipling (tr. Fabulet and d’Humières), *Sur la grève* op.28/1 for voice and piano to words of d’Humières, the first two of the Trois pièces op.34 for basson and piano, and Trois pièces op.34bis for flute, bassoon and piano. The composer is at the keyboard for the first, second, and last of these. See 26 November 1917.

**12 March 1908** *Six Elegies* for piano by Ferruccio Busoni (41) are performed for the first time, in the Beethovensaal, Berlin by the composer. Most of the material is reworked from earlier compositions.

**13 March 1908** Gunnar Knudsen replaces Jorgen Gunnerson Lovland as Prime Minister of Norway.

**15 March 1908** Maurice Ravel’s (33) *Rapsodie espagnole* for orchestra is performed for the first time, at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris.

**20 March 1908** Incidental music to Holstein’s play *Tove* by Carl Nielsen (42) is performed for the first time, at the Dagmarteatret, Copenhagen.

*Penthesilea* op.18 for soprano and orchestra by Karol Szymanowski (25), to words of Wyspianski, is performed for the first time, in Lvov. Critics are mixed.

**21 March 1908** Three songs by Frederick Delius (46) for solo voice and orchestra are premiered in Liverpool. They are *Twighlight Fancies*, to words of Bjørnson, *The Bird’s Story*, to words of Ibsen, and *The Violet*, to words of Holstein.

**22 March 1908** Albert Roussel’s (38) Symphony no.1 “Le poème de la forêt” op.7 is given its first complete performance, at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels. See 15 December 1904 and 10 November 1907.

Piano Trio op.102 by Max Reger (35) is performed for the first time, in Leipzig, the composer at the keyboard.

**23 March 1908** A letter to *The Times* of London announces the formation of The Musical League to promote the exchange of ideas among composers and musicians, and hold an annual festival. The president is Edward Elgar (50), the vice president is Frederick Delius (46). Other members include Granville Bantock (39) and Alexander Mackenzie.

Gabriel Fauré (62) accompanies American vocalist Susan Metcalfe in a recital of his songs before Great Britain’s Queen Alexandra and Russian Empress Maria Fyodorovna, at Buckingham Palace.

Two Korean immigrants attack and shoot US diplomat Durham Stevens in San Francisco. They charge him with complicity in, and support of, the Japanese occupation of Korea.

**25 March 1908** American diplomat Durham Stevens dies of wounds he suffered two days ago.

**31 March 1908** United States troops depart Cuba, thus ending the second American occupation of the island.

**4 April 1908** Over the next three days, Percy Grainger (25) will record 48 cylinders of folksongs in Gloucestershire.

Lawrence Luellen of Boston incorporates the American Water Supply Company of New England in Massacusetts to manufacture his recent invention, a disposable paper drinking cup (later known as the Dixie Cup).

*King Estmere* op.17 for chorus and orchestra by Gustav Holst (33) to anonymous words is performed for the first time, in Queen’s Hall, London.

**6 April 1908** *Saga Dream* op.39, an orchestral work by Carl Nielsen (42), is performed for the first time, in Copenhagen the composer conducting.

Herbert Henry Asquith replaces Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

Two works for violin and piano by Frank Bridge (29) are performed for the first time, in Bechstein Hall: *Gondoliera* and *Morceau characteristique*.

**7 April 1908** Albert Roussel (39) marries Blanche Preisach.

**8 April 1908** Incidental music to Strindberg’s play *Swan White* op.54 by Jean Sibelius (42) is performed for the first time, at the Swedish Theatre, Helsinki, under the composer’s direction.

**9 April 1908** Four sections from *Sappho* for voice and orchestra by Granville Bantock (39) to words of Sappho (tr.Wharton) are performed for the first time, in Queen’s Hall, London, conducted by the composer. The four sections are Prelude, Stand Face to Face, Friend, The Moon Has Set, and Bridal Song.

**10 April 1908** The first meeting of The Musical League takes place in Birmingham. It is chaired by the vice president, Frederick Delius (46). 79 members are present.

**12 April 1908** *Marycka Magdónova*, for male chorus by Leos Janácek (53) to words of Bezruc, is performed for the first time, in Prostejov.

A fire in Chelsea, Massachusetts kills 19 people and destroys 3,000 structures.

**14 April 1908** Denmark grants suffrage to all men and women over 25.

The *New York Times* informs its readers that Gustav Mahler (47) will conduct three concerts of the New York Symphony Society next season.

**15 April 1908** An informal committee meets in New York and organizes four Festival Concerts to be conducted by Gustav Mahler (47) next season at Carnegie Hall. A fundraising letter goes out to potential contributors.

**21 April 1908** This is the date that Frederick Cook claims to have reached the North Pole.

**23 April 1908** The North Sea Convention is signed in Berlin by representatives of Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Sweden. It maintains the status quo in territories bordering the North Sea.

The Baltic Convention is signed in St. Petersburg by representatives of Denmark, Germany, Russia and Sweden. It maintains the status quo in regions bordering the Baltic.

Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (64) suffers his first attack of angina pectoris.

Gustav (47) and Alma Mahler sail for home aboard the *Kaiserin August Viktoria* after his first season in New York.

**24 April 1908** Two tornadoes cross Louisiana and Mississippi causing 234 deaths.

**26 April 1908** The first International Psychoanalytic Congress convenes in Salzburg.

*Recouli* for orchestra by Heitor Villa-Lobos (21) is performed for the first time, in Teatro Santa Isabel, Paranguá, the composer conducting.

**27 April 1908** The Games of the Fourth Olympiad of the modern era open in London.

Carl Ruggles (32) marries Charlotte Snell, a professional singer, in St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Winona, Minnesota.

**29 April 1908** Carl Ruggles (32) conducts the first performance of the Winona Symphony Orchestra in Winona, Minnesota. The orchestra was founded largely through his efforts. It is his first performance as a conductor and is very successful.

**30 April 1908** The Japanese cruiser *Matsushima* explodes and sinks at Mako in the Pescadores Islands taking 206 of her crew of 350 with her. An accident is blamed.

**1 May 1908** In this month’s edition of *The American Journal of Science*, Bertram B. Boltwood confirms his discovery of a new radioactive element, Ionium.

**2 May 1908** In the fugue portion of the Prix de Rome, the only female candidate, Nadia Boulanger (20), quite consciously composes an instrumental fugue instead of the required vocal fugue. This will cause a controversy with some judges not wanting her to continue. However, the majority votes in her favor and she will go on to win the second prix.

Gustav (47) and Alma Mahler arrive at Hamburg aboard the *Kaiserin August Viktoria* after his first season in New York.

**7 May 1908** The first two of the *Quatre poèmes de “La bonne chanson” de Paul Verlaine* op.24 for voice and piano by Charles Koechlin (40) are performed for the first time, in Paris, the composer at the keyboard. Also premiered is Koechlin’s *La guerre* op.14/9 for voice or chorus and orchestra to words of Banville

**12 May 1908** Jean Sibelius (42) undergoes an exploratory operation for a tumor in his throat. He is advised to see a German specialist, but has no money for the trip. Sibelius and his wife (who is pregnant) will visit every bank in Helsinki for a loan without result until finally, the director of an insurance company empties the day’s take into the composer’s pockets without explanation. In Berlin, the tumor will be removed.

**14 May 1908** *A Welcome Song* op.107 for chorus and orchestra by Charles Villiers Stanford (55) to words of the Duke of Argyll is performed for the first time, at the opening of the Franco-British Exhibition in London. The composer conducts 300 voices.

**16 May 1908** Percy Grainger (25) enters a recording studio for the first time. He records, for the Gramophone Company (HMV), the *Hungarian Rhapsody no.12* by Franz Liszt (†21), his own arrangement of Charles Stanford’s (55) *Irish March-Jig—Maguire’s Kick*, and the cadenza from the first movement of Edvard Grieg’s (†0) Piano Concerto.

**19 May 1908** *Sonata española* for violin and piano by Joaquín Turina (25) is performed for the first time, in Paris.

**22 May 1908** *L’abbaye* (part 1) op.16 for solo voices, chorus, organ, and orchestra by Charles Koechlin (40) is performed for the first time, in Salle Gaveau, Paris.

**23 May 1908** Cecil Sharp (48) writes to Percy Grainger (25) congratulating him on his folksong collecting, but stating his strong reservations about the use of the phonograph. Sharp thinks it makes the singers nervous. And he believes that an exact record of the performance is not the goal, but rather its artistic effect.

**24 May 1908** A chorus by Edward Elgar (50), *Follow the Colours*, to words of Stretton, is performed for the first time, at the Royal Albert Hall, London. It is produced under the title *Marching Song*. See 10 October 1914.

**25 May 1908** Today and tomorrow, Percy Grainger (25) collects a significant number of Lincolnshire folksongs on 66 cylinders, in Brigg.

Pursuant to agreements signed last Fall, the Central American Court of Justice is inaugurated in Cartago, Costa Rica.

**30 May 1908** Three songs by Charles Koechlin (40) to words of Leconte de Lisle are performed for the first time, in Paris the composer at the keyboard: *Les rêves morts* op.13/2, *Dans l’air léger* op.21/1, and *Le colibri* op.17/1.

**4 June 1908** The ashes of Emile Zola are placed in the Pantheon. During the ceremony a journalist, Louis Grégori, fires twice at Alfred Dreyfus slightly wounding him. Grégori will be acquitted.

*A Mass of Life*, for soprano, alto, tenor and baritone soloists, chorus, and orchestra, by Frederick Delius (46) to words of Nietzsche, is performed for the first time, in its incomplete form, in Munich. The press is generally positive but a few are scathing. See 7 June 1909.

The ballad *King Gorm the Grim* op.64 by Horatio Parker (44) to words of Fontane (tr. Whitney), is performed for the first time, in Norfolk, Connecticut.

**9 June 1908** Charles Ives (33) is married to Harmony Twichell in Asylum Hill Congregational Church in Hartford, Connecticut by her father, the minister there. They will honeymoon in the Berkshires and then live in New York.

**13 June 1908** *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery is published in London, New York and Toronto.

**14 June 1908** The Fourth Navy Bill is passed by the German Reichstag. It authorizes funds to build four more capital ships.

**15 June 1908** A diploma of this date states that “Monseiur Satie, Erik (42), a pupil on the course of counterpoint, has passed the end-of-year examinations with distinction and that he fulfils the conditions required for devoting himself exclusively to the study of composition.” The diploma is signed by Vincent d’Indy (57), Albert Roussel (39), and the secretary of the Schola Cantorum, Paris.

**17 June 1908** Igor Stravinsky’s orchestral work *Fireworks* is performed for the first time, a few hours after the wedding of the dedicatees, Maximilian Steinberg and Nadezhda Rimsky-Korsakov on the composer’s 26th birthday. See 6 February 1909.

*Installation March* op.108 for military band by Charles Villiers Stanford (55) is performed for the first time, for the installation of the new chancellor of Cambridge University.

**18 June 1908** *Nature* publishes a letter from AA Campbell Swinton called “Distant Electric Vision.” It explains the fundamentals of television transmission.

*An Electrical Method of Counting the Number of a-Particles from Radio-active Substances* by Ernest Rutherford and Hans Geiger is read to the Royal Society of London. It describes what will become the Geiger Counter.

The *Kasato Maru* arrives at the port of Santos with the first Japanese immigrants to Brazil.

**20 June 1908** *The Fairies* for voice and piano by Arnold Bax (24) to words of Allingham, is performed for the first time, in Bechstein Hall, London.

**21 June 1908** Early morning. Nikolay Andreyevich Rimsky-Korsakov dies at his summer home in Lyubensk, St. Petersburg government, of angina pectoris, aged 64 years, three months, and three days.

**24 June 1908** Funeral services for Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov are given in the church of the St. Petersburg Conservatory. The body of the composer is interred in the cemetery of the Novodyevichi Monastery. Igor Stravinsky (26) will later remember that it was “one of the unhappiest days of my life.”

Shah Mohammed Ali of Persia attempts a second coup to restore his autocracy.

The United States severs diplomatic relations with Venezuela because President Castro refuses to compensate Americans hurt by his coup of 1899.

**25 June 1908** Newlyweds Charles (33) and Harmony Ives move into their new home at 70 West 11th Street, New York.

Claude Champagne (17) receives a senior level diploma in piano from the Dominion College of Music in Montreal.

**27 June 1908** *Der Geburtstag der Infantin*, a pantomime by Franz Schreker (30) to his own story after Wilde, is performed for the first time, in Vienna.

**28 June 1908** While on their honeymoon, Charles (33) and Harmony Ives take a walk along the Housatonic River in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. It is an experience that will inspire Ives to compose *The Housatonic at Stockbridge.*

**29 June 1908** Fourteen Bagatelles op.6 for piano by Béla Bartók (27) are performed for the first time, in the Vienna piano class of Ferruccio Busoni (42). See 12 March 1910.

**30 June 1908** 07:00 A massive explosion of undetermined origin happens in the Podkamennaya Tunguska River basin in Siberia. The force of the blast is so strong it knocks people down 60 km away. Eyewitnesses report an intense streak of light in the sky accompanied by loud roaring. It is measured by seismographs and barometers around the world. (No scientist will visit the site until 1927 when trees are found destroyed within 30 km of the epicenter, but no crater.)

Manuel de Falla (31) plays his *Cuatro piezas españolas* for Claude Debussy (55) in Paris. See 27 March 1909.

**1 July 1908** SOS becomes the officially recognized international maritime distress signal.

Max Reger (35) receives an honorary DMus from the University of Vienna.

Alban Berg (23) presents himself before Army medical examiners in Vienna and is declared unfit for military service.

**5 July 1908** Turkish army units in Macedonia rebel, led by Ahmed Niyzai.

Claude Debussy (45) signs a contract with the Metropolitan Opera, New York, to produce his opera project *La Chute de la Maison Usher*.

**10 July 1908** Dutch physicist Heike Kamerlingh Onnes liquefies helium for the first time, at four degrees Kelvin, at the University of Leiden. It is the lowest temperature achieved on Earth to date.

**11 July 1908** During a strike by dockworkers in Malmö, three Swedes explode a bomb in a ship housing British strikebreakers. One person is killed, 23 are injured.

**13 July 1908** A pan-Slav conference opens in Prague led by Karel Kramar. Those assembled resolve to revolt against Austria in the event of a war against Russia.

**14 July 1908** Prince Taro Katsura replaces Kimmochi Saionji as Prime Minister of Japan.

**16 July 1908** In the first concert devoted entirely to the music of Arnold Bax (24), his String Quintet in G is performed for the first time, in Aeolian Hall, London.

**20 July 1908** Petar Velimirovic replaces Nikola Pasic as Prime Minister of Serbia.

**21 July 1908** The Turkish Committee of Union and Progress demands that Sultan Abdülhamid II restore the constitution or 100,000 troops will march on Constantinople and depose him.

Great Britain lays claim to part of the Antarctic continent from 20°W to 80°W. South Georgia, the South Shetland Islands, the South Sandwich Islands, South Orkney, and Graham Land are all placed under the dependency of the Falkland Islands.

*Dance rhapsody* for orchestra by Frank Bridge (29) is performed for the first time, at the Royal College of Music, directed by the composer.

**22 July 1908** Küçük Mehmed Said Pasha replaces Mehmed Ferid Pasha replaces as Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire.

**23 July 1908** A Committee of Union and Progress (the “Young Turks”) led by Enver Bey, proclaims a revolution in favor of a new constitution, at Thessaloniki. Turkish troops stationed there join the rebellion.

**24 July 1908** Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II restores the constitution of 1876. He retains the titles of Sultan and Caliph but has no more effective political power.

**26 July 1908** In an internal reorganization of the Department of Justice, US Attorney General Charles Bonaparte creates the Bureau of Investigation. In 1935 it will be renamed the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

**30 July 1908** George Shuster of the United States arrives in Paris, the victor in the New York-Paris automobile race. It has taken 169 days.

**31 July 1908** Max Reger (35) receives an honorary DMus from the University of Jena.

**1 August 1908** Carl Nielsen (43) enters upon duties as conductor of the Royal Orchestra, Copenhagen.

*To Build a Fire* by Jack London is published this month in *The Century Magazine*.

**5 August 1908** While attempting the first 24-hour flight, the Zeppelin LZ-4 makes an emergency landing in Echterdingen near Stuttgart. A storm loosens it from its moorings and it crashes into woods, catching fire. The airship is totally destroyed.

**6 August 1908** Kibrisli Mehmed Kamil Pasha replaces Küçük Mehmed Said Pasha as Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire.

**15 August 1908** Women are now allowed to attend university in Prussia.

**16 August 1908** United States troops are called out to restore order in Springfield, Illinois where race rioting has killed three people and injured 75.

**17 August 1908** Émile Cohl releases his animated film *Fantasmagorie* in France. (considered by many as the first cartoon)

**23 August 1908** Forces of new Sultan of Morocco Mulai Hafid defeat those of his brother, old Sultan Abdul Aziz at Marrakesh.

**24 August 1908** *Algeria*, a musical play by Victor Herbert (49) to words of MacDonough, is performed for the first time, at the Apollo Theatre, Atlantic City. See 31 August 1908.

**28 August 1908** The United States Army accepts its first powered aircraft, an airship designated SC-1. It was built by the Baldwin Airship Company of Hammondsport, New York.

**29 August 1908** Edward Elgar (51) resigns as Peyton Professor of Music at the University of Birmingham.

**31 August 1908** *Algeria* , a musical play by Victor Herbert (49) to words of MacDonough, is performed for the first time in New York, at the Broadway Theatre. See 24 August 1908.

**1 September 1908** The Hejaz Railroad opens between Damascus, Mecca, and Medina.

**2 September 1908** Frank Bridge (29) marries Ethel Elmore Sinclair, a violinist, at St. Mary’s Church, Fulham. She is an Australian who attended the Royal College of Music at the same time as Bridge.

**9 September 1908** *The Wand of Youth* *Orchestral Suite no.2* by Edward Elgar (51) is performed for the first time, in the Public Hall, Worcester, under the baton of the composer. Also premiered is Hubert Parry’s (60) *Beyond these voices there is peace* for soprano, bass, chorus, and orchestra to words of the Bible and the composer.

**16 September 1908** Foreign Ministers Izvolsky of Russia and Aehrenthal of Austria meet at Buchlau (Buchlov) in Moravia. Accounts vary as to the outcome, but Russia seems to have acceded to Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Austria agreed to passage of Russian warships through the Dardenelles.

General Motors is created in Flint, Michigan by William Crapo Durant of Buick Motor Company.

**17 September 1908** Before a crowd of 2,000 people at Fort Myer, Virginia, Lt. Thomas E. Selfridge, U.S. Army, becomes the first airplane fatality when a craft in which he is traveling loses its propeller at an altitude of 25 meters. The pilot, Orville Wright is seriously injured.

**19 September 1908** The Symphony no.7 of Gustav Mahler (48) is performed for the first time, in the Jubilee Exhibition Hall, Prague, under the baton of the composer.

**20 September 1908** Pable de Sarasate dies in Biarritz at the age of 64.

**24 September 1908** Camille Saint-Saëns (72) replies to a letter from Alfredo Casella (25) asking him to look at one of his works. The elder master tells the younger, “Do you want some good advice? Do as I have done; since I was seventeen years old, I have never shown my work to anyone.”

*Jubal* op.35/1, a song for voice and piano by Jean Sibelius (42) to words of Josephson, is performed for the first time, in Helsinki.

**25 September 1908** German deserters from the French Foreign Legion are taken by force from a German consular official in Casablanca, causing tension between Germany and France.

**28 September 1908** *The Fairest of the Fair*, a march by John Philip Sousa (53), is performed for the first time, at the Boston Food Fair.

Billed as “the largest musical production ever attempted in this country”, *Little Nemo*, a musical play by Victor Herbert (49) to words of Smith after McKay, is performed for the first time, at the Forrest Theatre in Philadelphia. See 20 October 1908.

**1 October 1908** The Model T is introduced to America by Henry Ford. They are $825 each.

**3 October 1908** Frederick S. Converse (37) and his family sail from Boston heading for Europe. He will try to make his music known and performed there.

**5 October 1908** In the midst of the Young Turk revolt, Prince Ferdinand and the Malinov government proclaim the full independence of Bulgaria in the Church of the Holy Martyrs, Turnovo. Ferdinand assumes the title King of the Bulgarians.

*The Prima Donna*, an operetta by Victor Herbert (49) to words of Blossom, is performed for the first time, at the Studebaker Theatre in Chicago. See 30 November 1908.

**6 October 1908** Austria-Hungary also takes advantage of the Turkish situation by annexing Bosnia-Herzegovina under the terms of the Congress of Berlin, to the great annoyance of Serbia and the Turks.

Incidental music to Euripides’ (tr. Murray) play *Hippolytus* by Granville Bantock (40) is performed for the first time, in the Gaity Theatre, Manchester.

**7 October 1908** Serbia mobilizes its armed forces in reaction to the annexation of Bosnia.

**8 October 1908** Edvard Grieg’s (†1) incomplete opera *Szenen aus Olav Trygvason*, to words of Bjørnson, is performed for the first time, in Christiania (Oslo).

**9 October 1908** Violin Sonata no.1 op.11 by Albert Roussel (39) is performed for the first time, at the Salon d’Automne, Paris.

**12 October 1908** Taking advantage of the confusion in Constantinople, and three months after the great powers began to withdraw their troops, the assembly on Crete proclaims union with Greece.

A constitutional convention meets in Durban to discuss the union of the various British possessions in southern Africa.

Niels Thomasins Neergaard replaces Jens Christian Christensen as Prime Minister of Denmark.

**13 October 1908** 100,000 suffragettes attack the Houses of Parliament but only one makes it as far as the House of Commons. She is carried off. 24 suffragettes are arrested. Parliament bans women from the building.

**14 October 1908** *A Room With a View* by EM Forster is published.

*Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* op.100 for soprano, baritone, chorus and orchestra by Charles Villiers Stanford (56) to words of Tennyson, is performed publicly for the first time, in Bristol, the composer conducting. See 14 June 1907.

**15 October 1908** The Violin Concerto op.101 of Max Reger (35) is performed for the first time, in Leipzig.

**17 October 1908** *Reveille* op.54 for male chorus by Edward Elgar (51) to words of Harte, is performed for the first time, in Blackpool.

**18 October 1908** Belgium formally annexes the Congo Free State.

**19 October 1908** *Evening Mood*, for male chorus by Carl Nielsen (43) to words of Hauch, is performed for the first time.

**20 October 1908** The first successful hydrofoil is tested on Bras d’Or Lake, Nova Scotia. It is named the *Dhonnas Beag* and was invented by Alexander Graham Bell.

*Gleich zu Gleich* for vocal quartet by Alphons Diepenbrock (46) to words of Goethe, is performed for the first time, in Diligentia, The Hague. *Wandrers Nachtlied* vocal quartet, Goethe;

Billed as “the largest musical production ever attempted in this country”, *Little Nemo*, a musical play by Victor Herbert (49) to words of Smith after McKay, is performed for the first time in New York, at the New Amsterdam Theatre. See 28 September 1908.

**21 October 1908** *Abendgang* op.111a/3 for soprano, alto, and piano by Max Reger (35) is performed for the first time, in Dresden, the composer at the piano.

**24 October 1908** *Lamia*, a symphonic poem by Edward MacDowell (†0), is performed for the first time, in Symphony Hall, Boston 20 years after it was composed.

**26 October 1908** Voting take place in Canada for the Eleventh Parliament. The Conservative Party makes modest gains but Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberals continue to govern.

**27 October 1908** Frederick S. Converse (37) and his family arrive at their new home in Vivez, Switzerland.

*Letter to KS Stanislavsky from S. Ra.*, a song by Sergey Rakhmaninov (35), is performed for the first time, in Moscow.

**28 October 1908** An interview with Kaiser Wilhelm II is published in the *Daily Telegraph* of London. The Kaiser did have the interview vetted with his Foreign Office as required by law, but they apparently did not check it for content. In the interview, the Kaiser said that generally speaking, Germans don’t like British, that France and Russia tried to get Germany to enter the Boer War against Britain, and the German naval buildup was aimed at Japan, not Great Britain. "You English are mad, mad, mad as March hares.”

**29 October 1908** Italian engineer Camillo Olivetti founds Olivetti SpA in Ivrea. He will not produce typewriters until 1910.

*A Cantata for the Anniversary of Copenhagen University* op.24 by Carl Nielsen (43) to words of Møller, for soprano, tenor, and bass soloists, male chorus, and orchestra, is performed for the first time, at the university.

**30 October 1908** The Piano Sonata no.1 of Sergey Rakhmaninov (35) is performed for the first time, in Moscow.

**31 October 1908** The Games of the Fourth Olympiad of the modern era close in London. 2,008 athletes from 22 nations took part in the competition over six months and four days.

*Auf dem See* for vocal quartet by Alphons Diepenbrock (46) to words of Goethe, is performed for the first time, in the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam.

**3 November 1908** Voting in the United States ensures the election of Secretary of War William Howard Taft over William Jennings Bryan. Mr. Taft’s Republican majority in the House of Representatives remains virtually undisturbed.

**4 November 1908** The first meeting of the Permanent Committee of the International Organization of Public Health takes place in Paris.

Richard Gerstl, the 25-year-old painter from whom Arnold (34) and Mathilde Schoenberg have both taken lessons, and who eloped with Mathilde, kills himself after Anton von Webern (24) convinces Mathilde to return to her husband.

Anton von Webern’s (24) Passacaglia no.1 for orchestra is performed for the first time, in the Vienna Musikverein, conducted by the composer.

**7 November 1908** Six Recital Pieces for violin and piano op.103a by Max Reger (35) are performed for the first time, in Prague, the composer at the keyboard.

**8 November 1908** Variations on an Original Theme for piano by Alban Berg (23) is performed for the first time, in Vienna.

**12 November 1908** Gustav (48) and Alma Mahler, their daughter and governess sail from Hamburg aboard the *Amerika* making for New York.

**13 November 1908** Andrew Fisher replaces Alfred Deakin as Prime Minister of Australia.

The Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works is revised in Berlin by many nations assembled.

Theme, Variations and Fugue for organ and orchestra by George Whitefield Chadwick, is performed for the first time, in Jordan Hall, Boston, conducted by the composer on his 54th birthday.

**14 November 1908** Emperor Kuang-hsü (Guangxu) of China dies in Peking.

Count Dietrich Hülsen-Haeseler, head of the German Imperial Military Cabinet, collapses and dies at a dinner in Donaueschingen, in the presence of Kaiser Wilhelm.

**15 November 1908** The Empress Dowager of China, Tzu Hsi (Cixi), dies in Peking at the age of 73.

Belgium takes over administration of the Congo Free State.

Richard, Baron Beinerth replaces Max Vladimir, Baron von Beck as Prime Minister of Austria.

**16 November 1908** Music to Lavedon’s film *L’assassinat du Duc de Guise* by Camille Saint-Saëns (73) is performed for the first time, in the Salle Charras, Paris. This is the first known film score by a major composer.

Arturo Toscanini makes his North American debut with the Metropolitan Opera in New York and a production of *Aida*.

**17 November 1908** Piano Quintet op.23 by Hans Pfitzner (39) is performed for the first time, in Berlin.

**18 November 1908** *Eton Memorial Ode* by Hubert Parry (60) is performed for the first time, at Eton College, in the presence of King Edward and Queen Alexandra.

**20 November 1908** Four Songs op.39 for voice and piano by Arthur Foote (55) to words of Baumbach (tr. Bancroft), are performed completely for the first time, in Boston.

In an official ceremony, the cornerstone is laid for the new Boston Opera House. Inside the stone is a compartment containing compositions by John Knowles Paine (†2), Edward MacDowell (†0), George Whitefield Chadwick (54), Charles Martin Loeffler (47), Horatio Parker (45), Amy Beach (41) and Frederick S. Converse (37).

**21 November 1908** Gustav (48) and Alma Mahler, their daughter and governess arrive in New York for his second season of conducting in the city.

**25 November 1908** *The Christian Science Monitor* founded by Mary Baker Eddy, is published for the first time, in Boston.

**28 November 1908** An explosion in a coal mine in Marianna, Pennsylvania kills 154 of the 155 people in the mine at the time.

**29 November 1908** Gustav Mahler (48) conducts the first of three concerts with the New York Symphony Orchestra.

**30 November 1908** *The Prima Donna*, an operetta by Victor Herbert (49) to words of Blossom, is performed for the first time in New York, at the Knickerbocker Theatre. See 5 October 1908.

**1 December 1908** Piano Sonata no.5 by Alyeksandr Skryabin (36) is performed for the first time.

**2 December 1908** Two-year-old P’u-i (Puyi) or Hsüan-T’ung (Xuantong) succeeds to the throne as Emperor of China.

Voting for the New Zealand Parliament results in continued rule by the Liberal Party.

A revolt against Austrian rule begins in Bohemia.

**3 December 1908** A constitution is adopted in China calling for representative government by 1916.

Symphony no.1 op.55 of Edward Elgar (51) is performed for the first time, in Free Trade Hall, Manchester. The size of the crowd is kept down by a heavy fog and the performance is less than perfect, but the critics and the public are very appreciative.

**7 December 1908** As Hans Richter begins to rehearse Edward Elgar’s (51) Symphony no.1 for its London premiere, he introduces the work by saying, “let us now rehearse the greatest symphony of modern times, and not only in this country.”

**8 December 1908** Piano Trio no.2 op.65 by Arthur Foote (55) is performed for the first time, in Boston at Fenway Court, the home of Isabella Stewart Gardner.

**9 December 1908** Three works for voice, piano and viola obbligato by Frank Bridge (29) are performed for the first time, in Broadwood Concert Rooms, London, the composer at the keyboard: *Far, far from each other*, to words of Arnold, *Music when soft voices die*, to words by Shelley, and *Where is it that our soul doth go?* to words of Heine (tr. Kroeker).

**10 December 1908** Midnight. Olivier Eugène Prosper Charles Messiaen is born at 20 boulevard Sixte Isnard in Avignon, first of two children born to Pierre Messiaen, an English teacher and Shakespeare scholar, and Cécile Sauvage, a poet.

*Sevilla* op.2, a suite for piano by Joaquín Turina (26), is performed for the first time, in Seville.

The Symphony no.4 “Poem of Ecstasy” by Alyeksandr Skryabin (36) is performed for the first time, in New York.

**11 December 1908** Elliott Cook Carter, Jr. is born on West 95th Street, between Riverside Drive and Westend Avenue, in New York City, second of two (and sole surviving) children born to Elliott Cook Carter, Sr., a lace importer and Florence Doris Chambers.

The symphonic poem *In a Summer Garden*, by Frederick Delius (46), is performed for the first time, in Queen’s Hall, London, conducted by the composer. The audience is warmly appreciative. The reviewers are not impressed.

**14 December 1908** The act of the Australian Parliament authorizing the building of a new capital at Canberra receives royal assent.

**15 December 1908** The Metropolitan Opera in New York announces a contest for an opera in English composed by a native-born American. See 3 May 1911.

**16 December 1908** Incidental music to Jean-Aubry’s play *Le marchand de sable qui passe* op.13 by Albert Roussel (39) is performed for the first time, in the Salle de l’Enseignement, Le Havre.

**17 December 1908** The first legislature of the Ottoman Empire since the restoration of the constitution meets, with a large majority for the Young Turks.

**18 December 1908** Claude Debussy’s (46) piano suite *Children’s Corner* is performed for the first time, in the Cercle musical, Paris.

**19 December 1908** Arturo Alberto de Campos Henriques replaces Francisco Joaquim Ferreira do Amaral as Prime Minister of Portugal.

While Venezuelan dictator José Cipriano Castro Ruiz is in Europe seeking medical treatment, Vice-President Juan Vicente Gómez Chacón seizes power.

Three folksong arrangements for chorus and orchestra by Gustav Holst (34) are performed for the first time, at Morley College, London: *On the Banks of the Nile,* *The Willow Tree,* and *Our Ship She Lies in the Harbour.*

**20 December 1908** *Introduction and Dance of Salomé* op.90 by Alyeksandr Glazunov (43) is performed for the first time, for a production of Oscar Wilde’s *Salome* in the Great Hall of St. Petersburg Conservatory.

**21 December 1908** The String Quartet no.2 of Arnold Schoenberg (34) is performed for the first time, in the Bösendorfersaal, Vienna, to the accompaniment of whistles and catcalls. The *Neue Wiener Tageblatt* will report on the concert in its police blotter.

**24 December 1908** After a rancorous public hearing, Mayor George McClellan of New York revokes the licenses of all 550 movie houses in the city. Many clergymen testify that the movie theatres open on Sunday and show immoral films. The order is later rescinded.

**25 December 1908** Elvira Puccini (wife of Giacomo Puccini (50)) publicly confronts her servant Doria Manfredi, accusing her of an affair with her husband.

**28 December 1908** An earthquake in centered in Messina, Italy, and the subsequent tsunami, kill 80,000 people. Messina, Reggio di Calabria, and other seaside towns are destroyed.

**31 December 1908** Sergey Prokofiev (17) performs for the first time in public, including seven of his own compositions: *Fairy Tale, Snowflakes, Reminiscence, Elan, Prayer, Despair* and *Diabolic Suggestions*. The concert takes place in the Reform Church Hall, St. Petersburg, sponsored by the Society for Contemporary Music.

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