Ravel Paper

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Maurce Ravel's *Pavane pour une infante défunte* (composed in 1899) was one of his first published pieces (1900). The piece was commissioned and dedicated to Winnaretta Singer, Princesse Edmond de Polignac, a major patron of the arts in Paris.[1] It was officially premiered in 1902 by the pianist Ricardo Viñes, and was well received by the audience.[2] Ravel later explained that he chose the title due to its alliteration, in that the music evokes 'a pavan that a little princess might, in former times, have danced at the Spanish court.'[3]

The works of Edgar Allan Poe had a significant influence on Ravel due to its compositional methods and aesthetic ideals.[4] He later declared that 'my greatest teacher in composition was Edgar Allan Poe'.[5] However, in relation to the *Pavane*, Poe argued that melancholy is the most legitimate poetic tone and that the death of a beautiful woman is the most poetic subject.[6] Ravel did title it *Pavane* in accordance with Poe's topic, but it was only chosen because he liked the sound of it.[7] Ravel ultimately found a deeper source of true melancholy later in his career, in which more geared towards human guilt and suffering shown by the poet, Paul Verlaine's imprisonment.[8]

1. Maurice Ravel, *Pavane pour une infante défunte*, ed. Alexandra Marx (München: G. Henle Verlag, 2018), https://www.henle.de/media/ec/3a/04/1697725850/1260-1697725850-sync.pdf.
2. Ravel.
3. Ravel.
4. Gerald Larner, *Maurice Ravel*, 20th-Century Composers (London: Phaidon, 1996), 43, 59–60, 228, ISBN: 0714832707.
5. Larner, *Maurice Ravel*, 43.
6. Larner, *Maurice Ravel*, 43.
7. Larner, *Maurice Ravel*, 59.
8. Larner, *Maurice Ravel*, 43.

With the *Pavane*'s success, Ravel orchestrated it for a small orchestra in 1910, premiering in 1911,[9] which became even more popular after its orchestration.[10] Despite the *Pavane* becoming popular in salons and among amateur pianists, by 1912,[11] Ravel has his own reflections on it that is quite harsh and self-critical.[12] He criticized the piece for showing too much imitation of Chabrier and Fauré's style,[13] and not much originality.[14] Along with the critiques, the *Pavane*'s fame was attributed less to the composition itself and towards the interpretations of its performers.[15]

The *Pavane* reflects a 16th century slow processional dance,[16] originating in Europe. It is said that the name comes from the Latin *pavo* or French *paon* meaning peacock.[17] The dance was a slow dance, often performed at the weddings of girls of high status.[18] The use of classical dance forms was part of a broader revival among other French composers such as Saint-Saëns.[19] From a stylistic standpoint, the *Pavane* draws heavily on classical and 19th century precedents. The elements include a five-part rondo form, firmly rooted in G major with a brief turn to G minor, and reliance on classical compositional means (repetition, sequence, pedal point, contrary motion), and the frequent use of 9th chords.[20] Despite the convention framework, Ravel portrays the melodic development in a more mature style. The opening melody in measures 1–2 with the accompanying detached impression of a lute accompanying[21] leads to a continuation in measures 3–4, ending on a half cadence in measures

9. Ravel, *Pavane pour une infante défunte*.
10. Larner, *Maurice Ravel*, *Maurice Ravel*, 60.
11. Ravel, *Pavane pour une infante défunte*.
12. Roland-Manuel, *Maurice Ravel*, trans. Cynthia Jolly, Contemporary composers (London: D. Dobson, 1947), 28–29.
13. Larner, *Maurice Ravel*, *Maurice Ravel*, 60.
14. Roland-Manuel, *Maurice Ravel*, *Maurice Ravel*, 28–29.
15. Roland-Manuel, *Maurice Ravel*, 28–29.
16. Ravel, *Pavane pour une infante défunte*.
17. Madeleine Goss, *Bolero: The Life of Maurice Ravel* (New York: Henry Holt / Co., 1940), 58–61.
18. Goss.
19. Ravel, *Pavane pour une infante défunte*.
20. Peter Kaminsky, *Unmasking Ravel: New Perspectives on the Music*, Eastman Studies in Music (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2011), 86–90, ISBN: 9781580463379.
21. Norman Demuth, *Ravel*, The Master Musicians (London: J.M. Dent, 1947), 50–53, ISBN: 0883556901.

6–7.[22] At measure 13, the first episode rises over a repeated chords over a pedal point.[23] At the cadence of that section, starting at measures 25, Ravel uses independently moving block dissonances of 9th and 13ths, a features of Debussy's works.[24] The opening theme returns again at measure 28, this time more complex, with large open voicings doubling the octave and 15th, and leads into the G minor section at measure 40, with a dominant 13th[25] at measure 42. The theme then returns for the final time at measure 60, this time in it's most florid form with the lute effect doubled in 16ths.[26] In addition, in the final cadence section **En élargissant beaucoup** spanning measures 70–72, the pianist is faced with large voicings of chords, requiring much pedal control.[27] The *Pavane* shows Ravel's technical skill in melodic development which foreshadows the[28] of his maturity in his later works.

Although Ravel emphasized that his primary influence was Chabrier, his admiration for Debussy and influence is also apparent.[29] For example, the parallel ninths in the 1899 *Pavane* is quite similar to that found in Debussy's 1896 'Sarabande,' which Ravel later orchestrated[30] in 1922.[31] In regards to Chabrier, his 1887 opera, *Le Roi malgré lui* include successions of both diatonic and chromatic ninth chords. This technique that Chabrier uses can be stemmed from Chopin's *Nouvelle étude* in D♭, which uses sequential sevenths.[32] Howat writes that Ravel, Debussy, and Chabrier all use a technique called harmonic ellipsis. This means they ignore the typical classical resolution of a chord, instead immediately jumping to the next ninth chord.[33] Ultimately, this technique of harmonic ellipses became a defining element of Ravel's own composition style.[34]

22. Kaminsky, *Unmasking Ravel: New Perspectives on the Music*, *Unmasking Ravel*, 86–90.
23. Demuth, *Ravel*.
24. Demuth, *Ravel*, 50–53.
25. Demuth, *Ravel*, 50–53.
26. Demuth, *Ravel*, 50–53.
27. Demuth, *Ravel*, 50–53.
28. Demuth, *Ravel*, 50–53.
29. Deborah Mawer, *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, Cambridge Companions to Music (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 72–73, ISBN: 0521648564.
30. Larner, *Maurice Ravel*, *Maurice Ravel*, 228.
31. Mawer, *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, 72–73.
32. Mawer, *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, 72–73.
33. Mawer, *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, 72–73.
34. Mawer, *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, 72–73.

The issue of the tempo in the *Pavane* has been a subject of debate in regards to the performance and interpretation of it. Piano editions prior to 1913 have the metronome marking as ♩ = 80, while the tempo of editions after 1913 have been reduced to ♩ = 54, which is mirrored in the 1912 orchestral score.[35] The absence of corrections in Ravel's personal copy and the lack of tempo indications in the orchestral autograph complicate this matter.[36] Ravel's sarcastic comment to Charles Oulmont who performed the *Pavane*, saying that Oulmont "wrote a 'Pavane for a Dead Princess' not a 'Dead Pavane for a Princess,"'[37] suggests that Ravel resisted excessively slow interpretations. To further complicate this matter, Ravel's own piano roll recording in 1922, when analyzed, fluctuates by more than 10bpm, and the dynamics diverges from the printed music[38] despite insisting that it should be played calmly without any *rubato*.[39] This suggests that both the tempo and dynamics in *Pavane* should be flexible and up to the interpretation of the performer.

Your Lie in April

The *Pavane* is a key piece of music that appears in various forms of popular culture, most notably in the anime/manga series *Your Lie in April* and the visual novel *White Album 2*. In both works, the music is strategically placed not just as background sound, but it serves as a thematic and narrative device that address the characters' internal conflicts, growth, and relationship. In *Your Lie in April*, the *Pavane* is used as a heavy symbol for the inevitable death of the female lead, Miyazono Kaori. The piece's title, despite Ravel's assertion that it is not literally about a dead princess, is used in such a way in the series to represent Kaori as the 'dead princess' as the piece's title is directly linked to Kaori's deteriorating health. The piece is also used in conjunction with the Japanese novel *Ichigo Doumei* by Masahiro Mita, a story about a suicidal boy who meets a hospitalized girl.[40] In Episode 16, *Pavane* starts

35. Ravel, *Pavane pour une infante défunte*.
36. Ravel.
37. Ravel.
38. Ravel.
39. Demuth, *Ravel*, *Ravel*, 50–53.
40. gregorsamsa11, "After Reading Ichigo Doumei...," September 14, 2017, https://www.reddit.com/r/ShigatsuwaKiminoUso/comments/7076cj/spoiler_after_reading_ichigo_doumei/.

to play at 20:33 and at 21:15, Kaori directly quotes from *Ichigo Doumei* "Want to commit double suicide?" The musical context in which *Pavane* plays is in conjunction to her fate with the novel's tragic theme.

In Episode 17 (6:58), Kousei heard *Pavane* being playing on the way home and reacts with intense denial, running away and saying ""I don't want to hear it... I don't want to hear any stupid Ravel..." Kousei is not literally rejecting the composer, he is rejecting the tragedy that the piece entails, the fate the Kaori will be the 'dead princess'. In Episode 18 (18:52), Kousei solidifies this rejection and responds with "I can't commit double suicide with you." This is his refusal to accept her fate and his refusal to be the one to play *Pavane* for her funeral.

Ultimately, Kousei performs Rachmaninoff's arrangement of Tchaikovsky's "Rose Adagio" and "Garland Waltz" from *The Sleeping Beauty* as a stark contrast from the *Pavane*. *The Sleeping Beauty* is a fairy tale about a princess who wakes up from a long sleep, which symbolizes Kousei's wish for Kaori, to have a happy ending.

White Album 2

In *White Album 2*, the *Pavane* serves a different function. It used to mark the beginning nature of the music and eventually ugly romantic relationship between Kitahara Haruki and Touma Kazusa. Early in the *Introductory Chapter*, Haruki plays the melody of *Pavane*while Touma plays the piano arrangement. This moment is significant because it is the first time it is directly mentioned that Touma accompanied Haruki. The music literally brought them together.

The accompanying piano is described by Haruki as "a mysterious sound that would pull pranks on me, guide me, and even show me my weaknesses simply through hearing it." By using the *Pavane*, a piece culturally associated with melancholy and a final fate, the narrative foreshadows the emotional tragic nature of their relationship.

Ravel's *Pavane* has outsourced its origins to become a cultural symbol in Japanese media. In *Your Lie in April*, it portrays death and denial, while in *White Album 2*, it represents

an ultimately fated relationship. These two reinterpretations show the capacity of music to show different themes that are devoid of the original concept.