

Domenico Scarlatti: Sonata in D major, K. 96  
(c. 1740?, 4 minutes)  
Domenico Scarlatti: Sonata in F major, K. 6  
(1738, 3 minutes)

Scarlatti, a prodigy, was appointed organist and composer to the royal chapel in Naples at age 16. He subsequently served at the Cappella Giulia in the Vatican, the patriarchal chapel in Lisbon, and at the Spanish court in both Seville and Madrid. Although he composed operas, cantatas, and liturgical pieces, he is remembered today mainly for his 555 keyboard sonatas. They are typically single movements of three to six minutes duration, in AB binary form, and often require a virtuoso performer. Some evoke Portuguese and Spanish folk music. They are often seen today as pointing forward out of the Baroque era into the style of the burgeoning Classical era. Most of the sonatas remained unpublished during Scarlatti's lifetime, including the D major Sonata, K. 96, with its stately hunting call-like figuration and gigue rhythm. The lively F major Sonata, K. 6 was among the works that were published, appearing in the 1738 collection *Essercizi per Gravicembalo*.

Maurice Ravel: Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn  
(1909, 2 minutes)

1909 marked the one hundredth anniversary of the death of Franz Josef Haydn. Six composers, including Ravel and Claude Debussy, were asked by the *Revue musicale mensuelle de la Société Internationale de Musique* to write a short piece honoring the great Classical composer. Ravel's contribution was this charming Menuet, only 54 measures long, in which Haydn's last name becomes a main theme of the work: H (B natural)-A-Y (D natural)-D-N (G natural). Many of the occurrences of this idea are marked in the score, including several that use inversion (turning the theme upside down) or retrograde motion (playing the theme backwards).

Maurice Ravel: Jeux d'eau  
(1901, 6 minutes)

While he was a student at the Paris Conservatoire, Ravel's music started to be heard more frequently. He was lumped in, by many critics and listeners, with Impressionists like Claude Debussy, whose music Ravel loved but felt was quite different from his own. One of Ravel's works that attracted the Impressionism label was *Jeux d'eau*, dedicated to his teacher Gabriel Fauré and given its first performance by Ravel. The title translates as “Playing Water” or “Fountains,” and evokes the play of water through its fast, shimmering cascades of notes – perhaps indicative of the work's atmosphere is the quotation that appears at the beginning of the score, “The river god laughs as the water tickles him.” The scintillating piano writing is sometimes reminiscent of works by Franz Liszt, one of Ravel's heroes.

Maurice Ravel: Ma mère l'oye (Mother Goose)  
(1911-12, 15 minutes)

Ravel often remarked on the kinship he felt with children. When he met artist Cyprian Godebski in 1904, he also quickly befriended Godebski's two young children, Mimie and Jean (ages six and seven), for whom he wrote a set of five simple pieces for piano, four hands, based on several of their favorite fairy tales, including some from Charles Perrault's famous collection of Mother Goose stories. Ravel's music proved to be too difficult for them to play, however, so the first public performance, in Paris on April 20, 1910, featured Jeanne Leleu and Geneviève Durony (themselves not much more than ten

years old). Several months later, Ravel orchestrated the five pieces, and in 1911 he added more music to create a ballet.

In the delicate “Pavane of Sleeping Beauty in the Woods,” Princess Florine, the Sleeping Beauty, pricks her finger on a spindle and falls asleep. She sleepwalks, accompanied by two guards assigned her by a Good Fairy. Tom Thumb appears in the next tableau, “Hop o' My Thumb.” Tom is wandering in the woods, dropping breadcrumbs behind him to help him find his way out. But birds, heard in trills, eat them up. A pentatonic melody heralds “Laideronnette, Princess of the Pagodas,” in which a wicked witch has turned a princess into an Ugly Little Girl. The Girl meets a serpent, and they travel to the country of the Pagodas, tiny people with bodies made of jewels who play for the Girl on instruments made of nutshells. Ultimately the serpent is transformed into his original form as King of the Pagodas, the Girl becomes a princess again, and the two marry.

In “Conversations of Beauty and the Beast,” Beauty, depicted in a quiet waltz, accepts Beast's marriage proposal, and with a glissando Beast changes into a handsome prince. In the concluding “The Fairy Garden,” the Prince and Princess Charming are blessed and sent away by the Good Fairy to live happily ever after. The music begins with a lovely, hushed melody that builds in a long crescendo, with wedding bells hinted at in the powerful climax.

Program notes by Chris Morrison