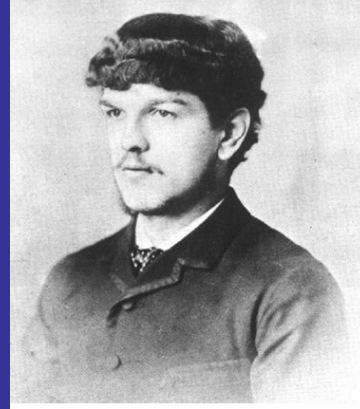


**CLAUDE ACHILLE
DEBUSSY 1862-1918**

Studied at the Paris Conservatoire (1872-1880). In 1884 he won the **Grand Prix de Rome**. Returning from Rome he became associated with the **symbolist group of poets led by Mallarmé**



CLAUDE ACHILLE DEBUSSY 1862-1918

He visited **Bayreuth** for the first time in 1880 and for a short time came under the influence of **Wagner's music**. Also at this time he came into contact with oriental music, presented at the Paris Exposition of 1889

DEBUSSY

Apart from composing , he spent his later years **playing** and **conducting** in European cities, he also worked occasionally as a **music critic**.

The term “**Impressionist**” often used to describe his music is only partly appropriate to it: Debussy himself always felt closer to the **symbolist movement**



Nevertheless certain works seem to evoke the **descriptive image** through suggestion of **mood** that is the **musical equivalent of impressionism in the visual arts**.

DEBUSSY

The colouristic use of **unresolved harmony** and the use of **sonority** as a structural element in his composition are the most striking and influential aspects of Debussy's mature style

Debussy.

It was apparent early on that Debussy conceived music in a novel way, but it took him time to assimilate and crystallize his ideas. *Prelude a l'apres midi d'un faune* marked the definitive spreading of his wings. Thereafter, he took every genre (orchestral, vocal, piano and chamber music) to new realms.

His ability to perpetually build on his innovations and to renew himself creatively, could leave even his most ardent followers confused

DEBUSSY

Though he has been called an Impressionist, his allusions to **many idioms and movements**, always masterfully integrated, are stamped with an individuality and inventiveness that defy all categorization. His interest in contemporary as well as ancient artistic currents, and of foreign, **often exotic influences (including Spain and the Orient)** reflected his insatiable curiosity and abhorrence of repetition.

DEBUSSY

PRELUDE A L'APRES-MIDI D'UN FAUNE

Composed 1894

Debussy's first major orchestral experiment was notwithstanding its striking novelty, immediately hailed as a masterpiece. Its escape from formal rigour and its highly imaginative orchestral colours heralded the dawn of a **new age for Classical music**. The seductive flute theme is contrasted by another melody that is the culminating expressive point of the work



DEBUSSY

Two other pieces I would like to play for you one is a small piece of his purely orchestral work **LA MER** (the sea). It consists of three Symphonic sketches of seascapes. It is the closest thing to a Symphony he would ever compose

1. De l'aube a midi sur la mer
2. Jeux de vagues
- 3 Dialogue du vent et de la mer

DEBUSSY

The second piece is a short extract from his Nocturnes suite called **Sirenes** which uses ladies voices (wordless) to emphasise the sea and possibility of Sirens nearby to lure sailors onto rocks.

DEBUSSY

He became very popular between 1900 and 1911 and was engaged as a conductor and as an occasional music critic.

His early works utilized the Phygian mode as well as the whole-tone scale which creates a sense of floating, ethereal harmony. He was beginning to employ a single, continuous theme and break away from the traditional A-B-A form

DEBUSSY

In his middle years he progressed with his style of composition and avoided analytical dissection and attempts to **force images** from his music. He said “let us at all costs preserve this **magic peculiar to music**, since of all the arts it is most susceptible to magic”.

DEBUSSY

Finally I would like to play two pieces which in my view demonstrated the genius of Debussy. He was throughout his composing life listening to and incorporating harmonies and chord progressions from other cultures such as the Javanese gamelan music and its use of the pentatonic scale. He also touched upon the Jazz idiom which was developing in the USA.



Throughout his life and after his death in 1918 he was widely regarded as one of the most influential composers of the 20th Century. His harmonies considered radical in his day, were influential to almost every major composer of the 20th century, especially the music of Ravel, Stravinsky, Messiaen, Bartok, Boulez, Steve Reich and Phillip Glass

DEBUSSY

He also influenced many important figures in Jazz, most notably Gershwin, Bill Evans, Monk, Ellington, Hancock and Jimmy Giuffre.

He also had a profound impact on contemporary soundtrack composers such as John Williams.(Schindler`s List) and Claire de Lune was going to be used in Walt Disney`s Fantasia but was deleted at the last minute

INTERVAL

COFFEE BREAK

**The Russian Revolution and its
effect on Russian composers and
their music**

Initially the new Russian leadership encouraged experimental work in all the arts, theatre, cinema, painting and sculpture. The creators who came out of the Revolution honestly believed that their art and Russian politics were headed in the same direction. But by 1930 the entire scale of values had shifted

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Through one of the ironies of history, revolutionary Russia began to turn out art of a banality and uniformity of expression that represented the antithesis of revolution. Some of the shift Represented the bourgeois character of Stalin. But more than that it represented official Soviet doctrine stemming from the words of Lenin “Art belongs to the people”

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

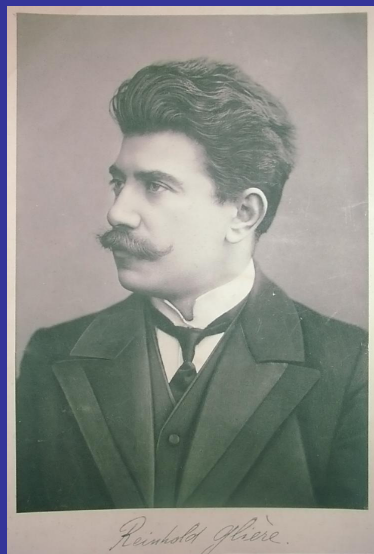
Art was turned into a vehicle for Soviet propaganda and “Socialist Realism” came into being. Stalin banned any kind of adventurous music on the grounds that it represented “decadent imperialistic capitalistic formalism” Composers could not compose such music and audiences could not hear it!! The worst thing that a composer could be accused of was “formalism”

Reinhold Gliere
1857 - 1956

He started out at 9 years old as a violinist and studied at the Moscow Conservatory. He graduated in 1900 and was employed as a music teacher in the Gnesin music school in Moscow.

Whilst still a student and teacher in Moscow he composed his first Symphony (1899) It illustrates clearly enough his preference for the relatively Western Classicism of Tchaikovsky rather than the **Nationalism of the FIVE.**

GLIERE



GLIERE

From 1920 until his retirement in 1941 he taught composition at the Conservatory in Moscow. He showed particular interest in ethnic music from the minorities of the Soviet Union.

During his career he occupied a number of official positions. In the early years of the Revolution he headed the music section of the Moscow Department of Popular Education and was Chairman of the Organising Committee of USSR Composers.

GLEIRE

His work was officially recognised by various state awards, including the title of People`s Artist, bestowed in 1938.

This was in contrast to the condemnation of the music produced by various composers such as Prokofiev and Shostakovich.

He produced a Ballet – The Red Poppy which was praised as the first truly Soviet ballet on a revolutionary subject

GLIERE

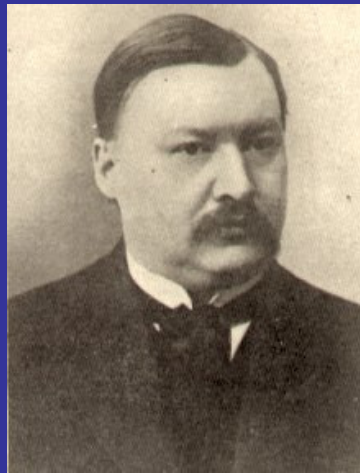
I am going to play three pieces of Gliere which have either given me much pleasure or indicate the range of his composing skills.

Firstly the third movement of his first Symphony

Secondly his Russian Sailors Dance from his famous Red Poppy Ballet.

And thirdly the second movement from his Second Symphony

GLIERE



ALEXANDER GLAZUNOV
1865 - 1936

He was born in St Petersburg to a wealthy publisher. He was a genius studying the piano at nine and composing at eleven. When he first appeared in public in 1882, the 16 year old was hailed as truly brilliant composer who summed up all the achievements of the Russian Nationalist school, an astonishing natural talent that promised a bright future for Russian Music



GLAZUNOV

“This boy will put us all in the shade” predicted Borodin. For later generations, however, Glazunov the Director of the St Petersburg Conservatory had become the embodiment of stale tradition. Prokofiev gleefully recounted his horror at his spiky dissonances, and at the end of his life Stravinsky would still shudder with distaste at the very mention of his name.

GLAZUNOV

Unfortunately he had a morbid craving for alcohol, though credit is given for his dedication to the Conservatory and its students in the hungry, dangerous decade after the 1917 Revolution.

Despite the hardships he suffered he remained active as a conductor, conducting concerts in factories, clubs and Red Army posts. He spent his last years in Paris a disinherited ghost from the past who had nothing to offer the modern world

GLAZUNOV

I would like to play part of the second movement his Symphony No 2 and two other pieces

1 Meditation Opus No 32

2 Ballade i n F Major Op No 78