

FAURÉ

authentique

Complete Works for
Cello and Piano

audite

A portrait of two men, Marc Coppey and François Dumont, against a dark background. Marc Coppey, on the left, is a middle-aged man with short grey hair, wearing a dark blue suit jacket over a white shirt, and is smiling while holding a cello. François Dumont, on the right, is a younger man with a shaved head and a light beard, wearing a dark blue patterned shirt, also smiling.

Marc Coppey
François Dumont

GABRIEL FAURÉ (1845-1924)**Papillon, Op. 77** 2:51**Berceuse, Op. 16** 3:25**Sonate N° 1 pour violoncelle
et piano, Op. 109**

I. Allegro 5:18

II. Andante 6:55

III. Allegro comodo 6:25

Romance, Op. 69 3:37**Élégie, Op. 24** 6:30**Sérénade, Op. 98** 3:13**Sicilienne, Op. 78** 3:46**Sonate N° 2 pour violoncelle
et piano, Op. 117**

I. Allegro 6:11

II. Andante 6:56

III. Allegro vivo 4:53

Après un rêve, Op. 71

(Arr. for Cello & Piano by Pablo Casals) 3:13

**Allegretto moderato
for Two Cellos*** 1:13**Berceuse from Dolly, Op. 56/1**

(Arr. for Cello & Piano by Marc Coppey) 2:41

Marc Coppey cello**François Dumont** Érard piano

Pauline Bartissol cello*



“Noble, incomprehensible happiness” – Cello works by Gabriel Fauré

In 1905, Gabriel Fauré travelled once again to Germany to accompany his own chamber music on the piano. Thanks to his previous visits to the Bayreuth Wagner Festival, he was already familiar with the German mentality; later he would also travel to the imperial capital of Berlin, as well as to Bad Ems for a cure. However, his impressions of France’s neighbouring country remained ambivalent, as he wrote to his wife from Frankfurt in 1905: “My music is being criticised for having a somewhat cool effect and for being aloof! There is really no doubt that we are of different origins.”

Whether it truly was due to differences in mentality or the dominance of the German romantic repertoire from Mendelssohn to Richard Strauss, to this day in Germany Fauré has remained the great unknown in the generation of Camille Saint-Saëns and Jules Massenet. With the exception of his much-performed *Requiem* and a few smaller pieces – the *Berceuse*, the *Sicilienne* or the song *Après un rêve*, which has been arranged countless times – in Germany Fauré’s works are rarely programmed in piano recitals or chamber music performances; his most notable opera, *Pénélope*, was not performed on a German stage until 1991.

Fauré’s music for the cello, written across more than four decades, provides another clue as to why he seemed strange and foreign on the other side of the Rhine: the man from southwestern France, who entered the “École Niedermeyer” in Paris (which specialised in church music) at the age of nineteen, was not a classicist who – like his piano teacher and friend Saint-Saëns – was raised in the tradition of Mozart or Beethoven, moving within their melodic models and preferred genres. Fauré’s oeuvre features hardly any symphonies or concertos (he destroyed a symphony in D minor that had already been performed). Instead, during his time as organist at La Madeleine (1877-1905), he developed his own style not only in sacred choral music, but also, and above all, in chamber music, piano pieces and songs.

For the intimate performance setting of the salon, he created works inspired by the modal tonalities of early church music whilst following the flow of the French language – a clear formal conception, yet completely free melodic treatment as well as new and unpredictable harmonies. In the first volume of his monumental novel *In Search of Lost Time*, Marcel Proust describes how his main character Charles Swann completely succumbs to the sense of longing in a “petite phrase” from a violin sonata by the composer Vinteuil: “In a slow rhythm, it led him here, then there and finally to another place of noble, incomprehensible and, at the same time, explicit happiness. And suddenly, when it seemed to have arrived and he was ready to follow, it paused for a moment and abruptly took a different direction. With a new momentum that seemed trivial, melancholy, incessantly soft and faster, it carried him off to unknown perspectives.” A description which, according to musicologist Jean-Michel Nectoux (*Gabriel Fauré: A Musical Life*, Cambridge University Press, 1991), perfectly describes the character of Fauré’s music.

Life and soul of the salon

In fact, Fauré did not only provide the (presumed) literary inspiration for Proust’s famous description of the effect of music on his protagonist’s emotional state. During the 1880s and 1890s, Fauré also moved in precisely those high society circles which Proust details in his novels. The real-life models for the eccentric Baron de Charlus or the aloof Duchesse de Guermantes were very familiar to Fauré; fleeing his unhappy marriage, he became a veritable party animal in Paris, who – in the words of the critic Louis Aгуettant – “languorously bathed in fashionable society, wearing the rich smile of an ancient Olympian god after extensive adulation”.

As a result, the cello works newly recorded by Marc Coppey and François Dumont reveal a Janus-faced composer, fluctuating between music for the salon and astonishingly progressive chamber music for connoisseurs. Many of his short pieces developed into real hits and soon earned Fauré the reputation of a salon composer, from which cellists naturally also wanted to profit. The early song *Après un rêve*, in which the memory of an amorous dream is evoked in beautiful, melancholy sweeping gestures, has become almost better known in his arrangements than in the original version. The lullaby (*Berceuse*) of 1879 for violin and piano was also soon recognised by cellists as an ideal encore piece, in which the naive tenderness of the melody unfolds over a swaying piano accompaniment. Fauré placed another popular *Berceuse* at the beginning of a suite for piano four hands, which he entitled *Dolly* – after the nickname of the daughter of Emma Bardac, one of Fauré’s lovers who would later marry Claude Debussy.

The expressive gentleness of Fauré’s infinite melodies and the sophistication of his unexpected harmonic twists would soon become his trademark. Even when he expects the cello to play virtuoso passages, as in *Papillon* (Butterfly), he returns to melodic ecstasy in the middle section. This also characterises his arrangement of the famous *Sicilienne*, Op. 78, for cello and piano (originally conceived as incidental music) for the British cellist William Henry Squire, and the *Romance*, Op. 69, which Fauré dedicated to a salon acquaintance, the industrialist and amateur cellist Jules Griset.

One should probably harbour no illusions about the quality of performances at the time. If one is to believe Emanuel Feuermann, the master cellist of the twentieth century, then the generation of players before Pablo Casals were “technically perfect only insofar as they could play fast. But scratchy and uneasy playing, unbearable glissandi and miserable intonation were generally accepted as normal cello characteristics”. Casals was to set new standards, and he also popularised the work of his friend Fauré in many countries. The Op. 98 *Sérénade* is dedicated to this Catalan revolutionary of cello playing.

Farewell and music of the future – the late sonatas

In addition to *Après un rêve* and the *Sérénade*, Casals had another work in his repertoire which, despite its fashionable title, *Élégie*, formed a marked contrast to Fauré’s salon music. The elegiac melody, set above melancholy C minor chords and replaced in the central section by a piano chant in A flat major, was conceived in 1880 as the middle movement of a planned cello sonata. However, this came to nothing: the *Élégie* became popular in its own right as a solo piece – and it would take almost four decades for Fauré to return to his original plan of writing a cello sonata, which was soon to be followed by another.

When Fauré completed the Sonata in D minor in the summer of 1917, Europe had already been groaning for three years under a horrific, gridlocked war that was killing more soldiers every day. Music had not come to a standstill in Paris, but Fauré had fewer students to look after as director of the Conservatoire, and his failing health and increasing hearing problems forced him to make regular visits to Saint-Raphaël on the Côte d’Azur, where he completed his Cello Sonata. Despite the global political catastrophe, the war years were a phase of extreme productivity for the composer – by now over seventy – during which he developed his highly idiosyncratic late work.

The opening of the Sonata Op. 109 shows that the events of the war did not fail to leave their mark on his music. The harsh accents and echoes of the piano, which disguise the $\frac{3}{4}$ metre, seem like shelling, whilst the jagged cello theme rises above them freely but aimlessly. A rhythmic counterpoint unfolds between the two parts; the music no longer seems to be grounded in a metre or a home key. The melodious second theme, rather more typical of Fauré, provides variety, but here too the

piano contributes drifting accents. For the middle section, Fauré invents new motifs that overwrite and reshape the familiar material – this is composing as a constant, ongoing process, without any certainties or a final goal.

After the powerful D minor conclusion of the first movement, the second begins as a levitating, almost bodiless outline: the cello and piano weave an airy texture with no bassline. Two free-flowing melodies develop, which are varied twice with changing accompaniments and developments. Once again, the piano and cello do not seem to follow a predetermined plan, instead apparently reacting spontaneously to each other. Fauré also refrains from inventing different characters in the finale: the continuous flowing motion of the piano is complemented by trailing cello melodies, winding around the piano's roots here and there and freeing themselves again. In essence, this is one of his piano impromptus and barcaroles with an obbligato string instrument.

When the war was over, a young generation of composers, also including an increasing number of female composers, set the tone in Paris. The traditional concept of music was radically expanded, the dances at music halls, jazz and everyday music pushed the boundaries of the old forms, and contact with modern literature and art produced provocative new stage projects. Fauré, who had to resign as director of the Conservatoire in 1920 due to his age and poor health, was unimpressed by all this and pursued his own path. A year later, in the Pyrenean town of Ax-les-Thermes, close to Andorra and his birthplace of Pamiers, he composed a large part of his second Cello Sonata in G minor, which he dedicated to Charles Martin Loeffler, a Berlin-born American musician.

Once again, Fauré uses the cello almost exclusively as a melodic instrument, which in the first movement indulges in canons and dialogues with the piano, accompanied by restless rhythms. The andante middle movement is unique: a commission by the French government, Fauré had composed it as a “chant funéraire” for the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Napoleon Bonaparte's death. In May 1921 it was performed at the Dôme des Invalides in Paris by the head of music of the Republican Guard in an arrangement for military orchestra. In the context of the sonata, the ceremonial and highly elegiac piece seems like a valediction to his own time, which had begun during the Second Empire and ended in the misery of the First World War. The finale, by contrast, points far into the future – especially with its roaming harmonies, which are completely detached from convention and tradition without, however, resulting in a new musical system, as had been the case with his contemporary Arnold Schoenberg. In May 1922, the Sonata Op. 117 was premiered in Paris by the cellist Gérard Hekking and the pianist Alfred Cortot.

“Fauré authentique”: The title of this album refers not only to the interpretation by Marc Coppey, who fully engages with the fluid rhetoric of Fauré's musical language and does not impose on it a perpetual *espressivo*, which would be stylistically incongruous. The authentic element is, first and foremost, the extremely transparent piano sound: the 1891 Érard grand piano, from the collection of the instrument museum at the Cité de la musique - Philharmonie de Paris, measures 2.12 metres in length and is tuned to A = 435 Hz. Fauré loved Érard pianos above all else and not only played them in his Parisian flats, but also had them transported to his holiday destinations. Fauré, the master of song, piano and chamber music, particularly appreciated the deeply colourful range of the Érard with its rich overtones and clear bass register. It was the ideal instrument for the French salon, blending perfectly and poetically with voices and string instruments.

audite



**ÉRARD GRAND PIANO,
PARIS, 1891**

Collection Musée de la musique,
E. 987.9.1

Serial number: 67024

Range: AAA – a⁴, 85 keys

Double-escapement action

Two pedals: una corda, forte

Tuning: a¹ = 435 Hz

Length: 2.12 m

This grand piano, built in March 1891, is a typical example of the instruments made by Érard in the latter half of the 19th century. Over 10,000 examples of this model were produced from 1850 to 1931 without interruption or major changes, and, from the beginning of the 20th century, Érard called it «little grand piano» no. 1. Perfectly suited for the salon, it formed the cornerstone of the company's offerings.

From the very beginning, the instrument was built according to Érard's own design principles, which were adopted by all piano manufacturers. Particularly noteworthy is the double action patented in 1821 by Sébastien Érard (1752-1831), which allows notes to be repeated more easily than on instruments with a single action, as well as the agraffes (patented in 1808), which ensure better stability of the strings when vibrating, or the harmonic bar, which enables a purer reproduction of high notes (patented in 1838).

This model in the Musée de la musique also features parallel strings and dampers beneath the strings, which give the instrument a sound that is particularly well suited to vocals or chamber music. Produced in May 1891, the piano was acquired in December of the same year by the company Desprez & Cie, which may have been founded by Armand Desprez, the director of the Élysée Montmartre and later of the Casino de Paris and the Folies-Marigney theatre.

Thierry Maniguet
Curator at the Musée de la musique

MARC COPPEY cello

Recognised for his celebrated interpretations as soloist, his extensive exploration of chamber music with some of the finest musicians today, and a dedication to widening the cello literature, Marc Coppey is considered to be one of the world's leading cellists – in addition, now with a growing reputation as a fine conductor on the international podium.

A protégé of Lord Yehudi Menuhin and Mstislav Rostropovich, Coppey first shot to international acclaim at the age of 18, winning First Prize and 'Prize for the Best Bach Performance' at the prestigious Leipzig Bach Competition (1988). Soon thereafter, he made major debuts in Paris and Moscow in collaboration with Yehudi Menuhin and Viktoria Postnikova and performed at the Évian Festival. Since then, Coppey has carved out an impressive solo career, working regularly with many of the world's finest orchestras and conductors.

An avid chamber music player, he has explored and performed the cello repertoire intensively with renowned artists and ensembles. From 1995 to 2000 he was a member of the Ysaÿe Quartet.

The breadth of Coppey's repertoire is testament to his profound musical curiosity: alongside mainstream cello literature, he is a champion of lesser-known and contemporary works. He has given the world premieres of cello concertos by Lenot, Mantovani, Meïmoun, Monnet, Tanguy, and the French premieres of works by Carter and Tüür.

His recordings, spanning all musical epochs, have been highly praised by critics worldwide and have received several international awards as well as nominations for the International Classical Music Awards (ICMA) and the German Record Critics' Award (PdSK).

In addition to his solo career and his chamber music activities, Marc Coppey is Professor at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris and gives master classes across the globe. He is artistic director of the Colmar Chamber Music Festival as well as the Zagreb Soloists. He was made *Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres* by the French Cultural Ministry in 2021.

Marc Coppey was born in Strasbourg. He studied cello at the conservatory of his hometown, continued at the Paris Conservatoire and at Indiana University in Bloomington, USA. Today he resides in Paris. He performs on a rare cello by Matteo Goffriller (Venice, 1711), the "Van Wilgenburg".

FRANÇOIS DUMONT piano

French pianist François Dumont's international career was launched by his prize-winning successes at the Chopin, Queen Elisabeth, Clara Haskil, and Monte Carlo Piano Masters competitions. He just made his debut in the mythical Musikverein in Vienna. Other highlights include performances of Liszt's *Totentanz* with the Orchestre National de France, conducted by François-Xavier Roth and a Chopin programme at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris.

Born in Lyon, he studied with Pascale Imbert, Chrystel Saussac and Hervé Billaut. At the age of fourteen, he entered the Paris Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique and studied with Bruno Rigutto. He subsequently studied at the prestigious International Piano Academy Lake Como with artists such as Dmitri Bashkirov, Leon Fleisher, Murray Perahia, Fou Ts'ong and William Grant Naboré at the Lieven Piano Foundation.

Leonard Slatkin chose him as the soloist to record the two Ravel Piano Concertos with the Orchestre National de Lyon. Dumont has appeared as soloist with orchestras around the world such as the Mariinsky Theatre and Cleveland Orchestras. Numerous solo appearances have taken him amongst others to Chopin festivals in Paris, Nohant, Geneva, La Roque-d'Anthéron, Piano aux Jacobins and Kennedy Center in Washington. He is also regularly invited to China, Japan and South Korea.

His discography includes over 40 CDs, with solo, chamber and concerto works from Bach, Mozart, Chopin to Messiaen. Chamber music is an important part of Dumont's musical life, with partners such as Sayaka Shoji, Marc Coppey, Augustin Dumay, Laurent Korcia, the Pražák and Voce quartets, and he explores Lieder repertoire with his wife, the soprano Helen Kearns.

Much involved in contemporary music, he actively collaborates with composers such as Bacri, Dusapin, Finzi, Lacaze, Murail, Tanguy. Passionate by transmission, Dumont is piano professor at the Haute école de musique de Genève – Neuchâtel.

PAULINE BARTISSOL cello

She is a graduate of the Paris Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse (CNSM) and the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln. From 2007 to 2019 she was principal cellist of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and has been teaching at the CNSM in Paris since 2013 alongside Marc Coppey, whose student she was for many years. Since 2021 she is appointed professor at the Conservatoire à rayonnement régional de Boulogne-Billancourt and Pôle supérieur d'enseignement artistique Paris-Boulogne.

Due to her multifaceted experience, she regularly performs as a solo cellist with renowned symphony orchestras. She can be experienced at events such as the Juventus Festival in Cambrai, the Quartz Festival in Brest, or the Bernaola Festival in Vitoria-Gasteiz.

Until 2022 she was member of the Trio Salzedo, for which R. Nillni, Z. Gerenabarrena, J. M. Figuera, B. N. Loira and N. Senk specially composed works. Bartissol is particularly interested in rare repertoire, to which she devotes herself as a founding member of the French chamber music group Le Déluge with pianist Laurent Wagschal.

GABRIEL FAURÉ

audite

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