



# *French Impressions*

The United States Air Force Concert Band  Washington, D.C.  
Colonel Lowell E. Graham,  
*Commander/Conductor*

Paris, France, has long been considered the romantic capital of the world, and in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it was also the center of Western culture, especially in the arena of musical arts. Prominent French composers not only dictated the direction of their nation's 20th century music, they were also largely responsible for the tutelage of young American composers, whose compositional styles and repertoire represent what is known today as the "American School." Aaron Copland, the "dean of American music," received no formal education, but spent three years studying in Paris. In the 19th century, American composers Louis Moreau Gottshalk and Edward MacDowell were sent to Paris for musical training. Copland's contemporaries Roy Harris, Virgil Thomson and Elliott Carter also were prominent 20th century composers who cultivated America's musical landscape after being trained in Paris.

The modern French masters have left an incredible body of work that continues to excite and thrill audiences today. **The United States Air Force Band** proudly preserves its musical heritage through this collection of French masterpieces, the third in a series of recorded music transcribed for and performed by the men and women of The United States Air Force Concert Band.



DANSE SLAVE—Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894)

*Arranged by CMSgt (Ret.) Lawrence Odum*

Emmanuel Chabrier was welcomed into Parisian musical society as a child prodigy when he was nine years old, having taken his first piano lesson only three years earlier. In spite of his obvious potential as an important musical figure, Chabrier became a law student, and upon graduation took a post at the French Ministry of the Interior, leaving performance and composition as recreational pursuits. It was not until the end of 1880 that Chabrier resigned his government post to spend the last 14 years of his life as a professional musician. Despite his active political career, Chabrier's legacy includes ten operas, seven compositions for voice, six orchestral works and a variety of compositions for piano.

**Danse Slave** is from the third act of his comic opera, *Le Roi malgré lui*. Completed in 1887, the opera ran for one week before the Opera-Comique (Paris' most fashionable comic opera venue) burned down. The title of the work suggests a bohemian theme, but the listener may detect a little Spanish influence. Less than a decade earlier, Chabrier and his wife spent four months in Spain, an experience that had a profound influence on the composer's life, and was the inspiration for the composer's well-known orchestral work, *España*.

ESCALES—Jacques Ibert (1890-1962)

*Arranged by CMSgt (Ret.) Lawrence Odum*

Composer and thespian Jacques Ibert studied the dramatic arts and music at the Paris Conservatory until his training was interrupted by service in the French Navy during World War I. Following the war, he was awarded the Prix de Rome and spent the next three years at the Villa Medici. It was during this three-year period that Ibert traveled extensively in Italy, Spain and Tunisia. His symphonic score **Escales** (Ports of Call) was completed in 1922 following a Mediterranean cruise.

Inspired by the natural beauty of Palermo, Tunisia and Valencia, Ibert created a musical travelogue that conjures up vivid images of exotic ports as seen through the eyes of a young man as he begins to explore the world. **Escales** was first performed in 1924 and remains Ibert's most popular symphonic work.

**MENUET POMPEUX**—Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894)

*Arranged by CMSgt (Ret.) Lawrence Odom*

Chabrier resigned from his post at the French Ministry of the Interior in November 1880. He quickly found work as the chorus director and secretary of the newly founded Nouveaux Concerts, and his compositions were published by Enoch & Constallat. It was during this period that Chabrier composed his *Pieces Pittoresques* (Picturesque Pieces), a set of ten contrasting works for piano. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* offers a quote about these compositions from composer César Franck: "... they link their own time with that of Couperin and Rameau." From this set, Nos. 4, 6, 7 and 10 were arranged as the *Suite Pastorale*; here the Concert Band presents No. 9, **Menuet Pompeux**.

**MARCHE DES PRINCESSES** from *Cendrillon*—Jules Massenet (1842-1912)

*Arranged by CMSgt (Ret.) Lawrence Odom*

Jules Massenet is remembered as an extremely prolific and popular composer of French comic opera. While many of his contemporaries were striving for cultural and spiritual growth through art, it was the accessible, simple nature of Massenet's compositions that attracted Parisian opera-goers. Massenet's musical studies began at an early age with his mother, who gave piano lessons in order to supplement the family's income. When he was just 21, Massenet won the Prix de Rome, and his three years of study at the Villa Medici helped launch a long and successful career that earned this Frenchman the distinction of being the dominant opera composer of his generation.

Massenet had just settled into a genteel country estate when he undertook the writing of *Cendrillon*. The composer, in collaboration with his librettist Henri Cain, created a lavish four-act opera that was completed in 1896 and premiered in the spring of 1899 at the Opéra-Comique (the venue having been rebuilt after the fire of 1887). *Cendrillon* was an immediate success, and received 50 performances before the end of the year. Ever sensitive to the desires of his audience, Massenet included ballet sequences to be performed during scene changes in order to keep the opera-goers entertained.

DANSE BACCHANALE from *Samson et Dalila*—Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)  
*Arranged by CMSgt (Ret.) Leigh D. Steiger*

Camille Saint-Saëns was the son of an audit clerk for the French Ministry of the Interior, the same agency that employed Emmanuel Chabrier. With that and many other common links, it seems inevitable that Chabrier and Saint-Saëns were destined to meet. Indeed, the two were colleagues and friends, the latter often hosting the former in his home. Both Chabrier and Saint-Saëns were recognized as child prodigies, and during their lifetimes both men delved not only into musical arts, but were intensely interested in painting, poetry and literature. In addition, Saint-Saëns studied astronomy, archaeology and philosophy.

Saint-Saëns also was a prolific writer. He authored books, articles and letters in addition to his large musical repertoire that includes 13 operas. Of the 13, sadly, only *Samson et Dalila* remains in the standard repertoire. The **Danse Bacchanale** comes from the third act, and it represents the celebration of the Philistines after capturing Samson through Dalila's betrayal.

The music in **Danse Bacchanale** captures Saint-Saëns' artistic philosophy, which is stated in his memoirs: "Music is something besides a source of sensuous pleasure and keen emotion, and this resource, precious as it is, is only a chance corner in the wide realm of musical art. He who does not get absolute pleasure from a simple series of well-constructed chords, beautiful only in their arrangement, is not really fond of music." The opera *Samson et Dalila* received its world premiere on December 2, 1877, in Weimar, Germany.

DAPHNIS ET CHLOE—Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)  
*Arranged by CMSgt (Ret.) Lawrence Odom*

The repertoire of Maurice Ravel embodies the spirit of French Impressionism, and to the modern listener, his music sounds melodic, warm and soothing. Therefore, it is hard to believe that as a young man, Ravel was expelled twice from the Paris Conservatory for refusing to apply traditional techniques to his compositions. Ravel's unremarkable academic record and unconventional compositional style resulted in his being eliminated from the competition for the Prix de Rome five times. The rejection of his entry for the fifth time, when Ravel was 30 years old, and well established as a major voice in Parisian art circles, sparked a scandal for the Conservatory that made front-page news.

In spite of his academic failures, Ravel's life in Paris exposed the young artist to international elements that would forever influence his compositions including the 1889 Paris World Exposition where he first heard the Javanese gamelon, as well as Russian music performed in concerts by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov. It was this early "Russian connection" that eventually led to an important commission from the great choreographer Sergi Diaghilev for the ballet music to **Daphnis et Chloe**. Ravel began work in 1909 and spent three years completing the ballet. During that period, Claude Monet painted his "Water Lilies" series, Winston Churchill became a newlywed, and Frank Lloyd Wright built his Robie and Adams houses in Chicago. The world had yet to experience the first of its World Wars.

The story of **Daphnis et Chloe** comes from a third century Greek play by Longus. One of only a half dozen novels that still exist from that period, it has been translated at least eight times, one of the most famous adaptations being Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*. The action follows that of a traditional love story: hero and heroine fall in love, are separated by a series of climactic events, and are ultimately reunited. Ravel may have drawn inspiration for his ballet from a Longus quote that states: "No one has ever escaped love altogether, and no one ever will, as long as beauty exists and the eye can see."

The ballet **Daphnis et Chloe** received its world premiere on June 8, 1912, at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. The first orchestral suite, one of two Ravel extracted from the score during the ballet's composition was premiered on April 2 of the same year. On this recording, the Concert Band performs an arrangement of the second orchestral suite.

LA MER—Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

*Arranged by CMSgt (Ret.) Lawrence Odom*

It is common for contemporary music lovers to consider the music of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel in the same category; indeed the two Frenchmen were colleagues who shared many common experiences. However, it is Debussy, the elder, who is known to have dominated the Parisian musical scene until his death in 1918, and Ravel who reigned over French musical culture in the period following the first World War. It is typical to find the music of both composers on concert programs of the day and both were students at the Paris Conservatory. Like Ravel, Debussy attended the 1889 Paris World Exposition and was influenced by the exotic elements in the Russian music performed by Rimsky-Korsakov and the Javanese gamelon, but he responded in a different way. In the music of Claude Debussy, one can hear the influence of the gamelon, with its mystical, circular repetition of ideas that seem to have no beginning and no end.

Debussy's father was a professional seaman, who expected his son to follow in his footsteps. The creative muse proved to be a stronger influence on the young man, but throughout his life, Claude Debussy remained fascinated by the mysteries of the ocean. He finally reconciled his passion for the sea through the art of composition; the result is his three-movement symphony, **La Mer** (The Sea).

Virtually every discussion of **La Mer** includes the famous quote from Debussy in a 1903 letter to his publisher, which reads: "You may not know that I was destined for a sailor's life.... I have always held a passionate love for her [the sea]." The work was completed in 1905, and it premiered in Paris the same year. Its three movements are titled *De l'aube à midi sur la mer* (From Dawn to Noon on the Sea), *Jeux de vagues* (Play of the Waves) and *Dialogue du vent et de la mer* (Dialogue of Wind and Sea).

## *About The Arrangers*

Retired Chief Master Sergeant Lawrence Odom is a native of Heavener, Oklahoma. A graduate of the University of Oklahoma School of Music, he began his Air Force career in 1958 as a pianist with the Strolling Strings. After harp studies with Heinz Gunter in Germany, and Jeanne Chalifoux in Alexandria, Virginia, Chief Odom became the Band's harpist and soloist for The White House and U.S. Department of State. Following retirement in 1978, Chief Odom was appointed principal harpist with the Kennedy Center Opera Orchestra and subsequently earned degrees in mathematics, chemistry and pharmacy. Still active as a performer and arranger, Chief Odom recently retired from pharmacy and currently devotes himself full time to music. He continues to add to his more than 200 arrangements and transcriptions held in The United States Air Force Band's library, and is featured as a guest artist on this recording.



Retired Chief Master Sergeant Leigh D. Steiger began his 29-year career with The United States Air Force Band in 1968. Equipped with a dual degree in clarinet and music education from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, he performed on clarinet, bass clarinet and saxophone with The United States Air Force Concert Band and Symphony Orchestra. He also served as the assistant noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the Concert Band, and later as The United States Air Force Band's First Sergeant. Steiger has contributed nearly 40 arrangements to the Band's library.

## *Selections*

1|Danse Slave (5:37)

Emmanuel Chabrier  
*arr. CMSgt (Ret.) Lawrence Odom*

Escales<sup>1</sup>

2|Palermo (6:14)

3|Tunis Nefta (2:37)

4|Valencia (5:44)

Jacques Ibert  
*arr. CMSgt (Ret.) Lawrence Odom*

5|Menuet Pompeux (6:47)

Emmanuel Chabrier  
*arr. CMSgt (Ret.) Lawrence Odom*

6|Marche Des Princesses (4:35)  
from *Cendrillon*

Jules Massenet  
*arr. CMSgt (Ret.) Lawrence Odom*

7|Danse Bacchanale (7:24)  
from *Samson et Dalila*

Camille Saint-Saëns  
*arr. CMSgt (Ret.) Leigh D. Steiger*

8|Daphnis et Chloe (16:01)

Maurice Ravel  
*arr. CMSgt (Ret.) Lawrence Odom*

La Mer

9|De l'aube à midi sur la mer (9:17)

10|Jeux de vagues (6:44)

11|Dialogue du vent et de la mer (8:13)

Claude Debussy  
*arr. CMSgt (Ret.) Lawrence Odom*

Total Time 79:26

<sup>1</sup> Released with Permission of Editions LeDuc/Theodore Pressor Co.

## The United States Air Force Concert Band

Colonel Lowell E. Graham—*Greeley, CO*—Commander/Conductor  
Chief Master Sergeant James H. Moseley II—*Beaumont, TX*—Manager

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TSgt Sharon Weinberg Nokes\*—  
*Philadelphia, PA*

MSgt Lucille Johnson Snell—  
*Albuquerque, NM*

TSgt Stacy Newbrough—*Iowa City, IA*

### Oboe

TSgt Erin Gittelsohn\*—*Long Island, NY*  
MSgt Dale Jones\*\*\*—*Rural Retreat, VA*

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CMSgt James Moseley—*Beaumont, TX*

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### B-Flat Clarinet

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MSgt Elizabeth Campeau—*Pinckney, MI*

TSgt Jeffrey Snavely—*Milwaukee, WI*

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TSgt Bryan Guidry—*Bedford, TX*

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CMSgt (Ret.) Johnny Woody\*\*—

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MSgt Robert McConnell—*Wadsworth, OH*  
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MSgt William Adcock—*San Jose, CA*  
MSgt Clarence Mitchell—*Portsmouth, VA*

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MSgt Jeffrey Gaylord—*Western Springs, IL*  
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SMSgt Chris Matten—*Catasauqua, PA*

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TSgt William Jones\*—*Stormville, NY*  
TSgt Joseph Bello—*Naperville, IL*

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SMSgt Jan Duga—*Columbus, OH*  
SMSgt William Porter—*Alcoa, TN*

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*Lynchburg, VA*  
TSgt Joan Hovda—*Decorah, IA*  
TSgt Vivian Podgainy—*Dix Hills, NY*  
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TSgt Erin Eyles—*Springfield, VA*

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TSgt Matthew Murray—*Winona, MN*

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SMSgt Mark Carson—*East Fulton, OH*  
TSgt Erica Kadison—*Louisville, KY*  
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MSgt Eric Sabatino—*Long Island City, NY*  
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*Heavener, OK*

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MSgt Marek Vastek—*Warsaw, Poland*

◦ Concertmaster

\* Principal

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MSgt Russell Collieran—  
*Lindenhurst, NY*  
MSgt Kevin Sapp\*—  
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TSgt Ryan Carson—  
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TSgt Kenneth Maxwell—  
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TSgt Robert Harrelson—  
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TSgt Eric Sullivan—  
*Wilson, NC*

° Assistant Director

\* Section Leader

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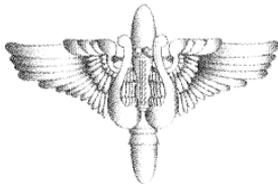
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**U.S. AIR FORCE**

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Colonel Lowell E. Graham, *Commander/Conductor*

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