



ART AND MUSIC

CEZANNE

Music of His Time

includes music by:

BERLIOZ



BIZET



CHABRIER



DUPARC



FAURE



SATIE



DEBUSSY



RAVEL



with Notes and Chronology



8.558179

Paul Cézanne

(1839–1906)

Music of His Time

Hector Berlioz (1803–1869)

The Trojans at Carthage

1 Prelude 5:01

San Diego Symphony Orchestra / Yoav Talmi
Naxos 8.553195

Georges Bizet (1838–1875)

L'Arlésienne, Suite No. 2

2 Pastorale 5:47

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra / Anthony Bramall
Naxos 8.550061

Emmanuel Chabrier (1841–1894)

10 Pièces pittoresques

3 Mélancolie 2:09

4 Improvisation 4:47

Georges Rabol, piano
Naxos 8.553009

Henri Duparc (1848–1933)

5 Chanson triste 3:25

6 Le Manoir de Rosemonde 2:37

7 Elégie 3:07

Paul Groves, tenor / Roger Vignoles, piano
Naxos 8.557219

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

Masques et Bergamasques, Op. 112

8 Gavotte 3:44

9 Pastorale 4:22

RTE Sinfonietta / John Georgiadis
Naxos 8.553360

Léon Boëllmann (1862–1897)

Piano Quartet in F Minor, Op. 10

10 Finale: Allegro 7:50

Ilona Prunyi, piano / Béla Bánfalvi, violin /
János Fejérvári, viola / Károly Botvay, cello
Naxos 8.223524

Erik Satie (1866–1925)

- [11] **Gymnopédie No. 1:**
Lent et douloureux 2:41
Klara Körmendi, piano
Naxos 8.550305

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

- [12] **Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune** 10:33
Jan van Reeth, flute /
BRT Philharmonic Orchestra / Alexander Rahbari
Naxos 8.550262

Louis Vierne (1870–1937)

- 24 Pièces en style libre, Op. 31**
[13] **Epitaphe** 3:58
Simon Lindley, organ
Naxos 8.550581

Claude Debussy

- Nocturnes**
[14] **Nuages** 7:34
BRT Philharmonic Orchestra / Alexander Rahbari
Naxos 8.550262

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

- Miroirs**
[15] **Noctuelles** 4:18
[16] **Oiseaux tristes** 3:47
François-Joël Thiollier, piano
Naxos 8.550683

TT 76:37



Mme Cézanne in a red armchair, c. 1877; courtesy AKG

Paul Cézanne

(1839–1906)

Music of His Time

As styles change, so art history needs labels to describe them. The desire to sort things and group them is irresistible, and no sooner do we look at a painting than we start deciding whether to call it Baroque or Rococo, Romantic or Realist, Cubist or Futurist. The labels are convenient and helpful – except when they become confusing. It seems obvious, for instance, that Post-Impressionism must have come later than Impressionism, and so in a sense it did. The ideas of Van Gogh and Gauguin certainly arose as a reaction to what Monet, Pissarro and others had achieved in the 1870s. But if we look at the dates of Cézanne, the man generally regarded as the central Post-Impressionist, we find that he was an exact contemporary of Monet and Renoir. He even presented his works in Impressionist exhibitions – where they came in for some of the most cruel criticism ever directed at that group of painters.

So would it be right to say that Cézanne was also an Impressionist, at least before he became a Post-Impressionist? At this point a discreet refusal to come out with a straight answer is probably the best option. Yes, Cézanne kept a loose connection to some members of a group that used to meet in the Café Guerbois in Paris, including Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Manet and Degas; yes, he did paint landscapes in the open air using an avant-garde technique. But no, he was never really one of their number and he did not share their ideals.

Two things in particular mark Cézanne out as very different. First, his interest in permanence, the underlying structure of things: Cézanne was concerned to convey form and solidity, whereas the Impressionists were fascinated by the fleeting moment – the way light could be seen to play on a certain scene. Second, modernity. The Impressionists were thoroughly inclusive when it came to subject matter, and they had a particular liking for the symbols of social change. Railways, boating, day-trippers, café life, entertainment generally were favoured subjects. Cézanne, by

contrast, blotted the modern world out of his canvases. Everything is traditional, secure, untainted. His landscapes are unpopulated; if there is a viaduct, there is no train. Monumentality, not topicality, is the aim.

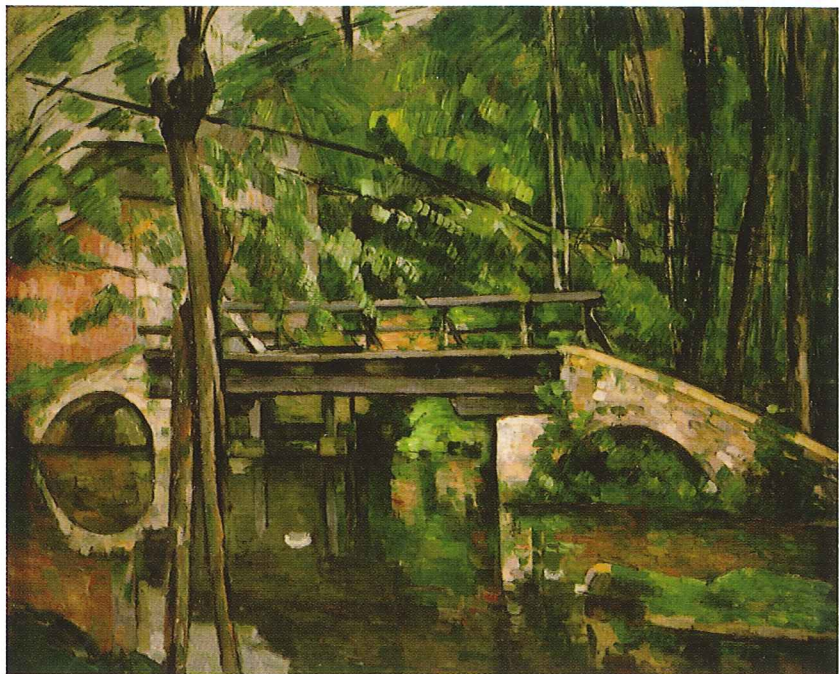
But by a nice irony, it was not the modern-minded Impressionists who provided the essential pathway to Modernism. When Matisse referred to ‘the father of us all’, and Picasso to ‘the mother who protects her children’, they both had in mind the same man: Paul Cézanne.

Cézanne

Cézanne was one of those frequent and unenviable figures in the history of the arts, the son who turns out to be a disappointment to a powerful father. The father in this case was an importer of felt hats who in 1839, the year of Paul’s birth, established himself in Aix-en-Provence, in southern France. Later he raised his station in life by transforming himself into a successful banker. The son of such a man, he decided, would do well to train for the law. Paul, however, wrote poetry and had very different ideas. So too did a close friend from school, one Emile Zola, who dreamed of a literary career. It was Zola who dragged the shy and reserved Cézanne to Paris in 1861 to broaden his artistic outlook by studying at the Académie Suisse. Despite the occasional loss of nerve, followed by flight towards home, Cézanne persevered with the life drawing that formed the basis of his instruction – a minor torment for a man who was never at ease in the presence of nude models.

Zola was inclined to be exasperated by the hesitancy and general slowness that characterised Cézanne. He knew his friend had great talent, but bringing it to the surface was another matter. Nor did Cézanne shine in company. He would sometimes join the group, originally centred around Manet, that tended to congregate in the Café Guerbois to debate the purpose of art, life and anything else that took their fancy. Cézanne had been very well educated, and he certainly knew more about literature than those around him. But he remained obstinately rough and uncouth in company, almost wilfully so. On one occasion he made a point of not shaking the hand of the impeccably dressed Manet, explaining that he had not washed his own. The airs and refinements of Parisian society were not for him.

Cézanne was still fighting the world as he searched for his own style. The works of



The Bridge at Maincy, c. 1879; courtesy AKG

the 1860s include some with violent and erotic undercurrents, remarkably at odds with his later paintings. His ambitions at this time mirrored those of almost every French artist: to have his paintings accepted by the Paris Salon, which had appointed itself as the sole arbiter of artistic taste and decorum. Cézanne's works were regularly turned down, along with those of Monet, Manet and any other painter who failed to satisfy the Salon's increasingly wearisome and academic formulae. It was Camille Pissarro who eventually pointed him in the right direction, persuading him that he should immerse himself in nature and learn the recently developed art of painting in the open air. From 1872 onwards, when Cézanne went to live in Auvers, near Pissarro's home, the two men made regular expeditions into the surrounding countryside, often working on their landscapes side by side.

As Cézanne doggedly pursued his own path, so he gradually fell out of sympathy with Impressionism. Some friendships endured, and as late as the 1890s he was still glad of the chance to meet up again with Monet and Renoir. But their paintings, to his eye, were fluffy and insubstantial, too far removed from the ideals of composition that he found in the great artists of the past, many of whom he had himself devotedly copied over many years of study in the Louvre. His own art spoke of something timeless and unchanging, and the best place for him to create it was back in Provence. There by the Mediterranean he could find the brightest light and the most intense colours.

Recognition came very late. His supporters had always been few and he was reliant on a small allowance from his father for financial security. Every year until 1885 he submitted a painting to the Salon, and every year, almost without exception, it was turned down. Even Zola had lost faith, and the friendship was finally destroyed in 1886 when Cézanne read *L'Œuvre*, a novel by Zola in which the hero, a painter of genius, becomes increasingly embittered with the world and kills himself. But the real Cézanne did not despair. He simply kept on painting, until the world finally caught up with his ideas and his peaceful existence in Aix was disturbed by an unwelcome stream of young painters eager for instruction.

Music of the time

When Cézanne was a young man the greatest composer in France was Hector Berlioz (1803–1869). That, however, was not how the French saw it. In 1838 the opera *Benvenuto Cellini* had been a failure at the Paris Opéra, since when Berlioz had found it almost impossible to get his works performed in his own country. He was not even considered worthy of a teaching position at the Conservatoire, and so was reduced to earning his bread through musical journalism, a task that he despised even while fulfilling it brilliantly. Outside France, however, there were many admirers of his highly dramatic and impassioned music, and he spent much of his time touring Germany, Russia, England and other places to conduct performances of his own works.

The masterwork of his later years was *The Trojans*, a vast epic opera based on the second and fourth books of Virgil's *Aeneid* (track 1). Berlioz wrote the work – including the libretto – from pure love of the original poem and its subject, knowing that his chances of ever getting it satisfactorily staged were very slim. Producers were shy of becoming involved with a project that made such enormous demands, both musically and theatrically. Finally the proprietor of the Théâtre-Lyrique agreed to take it on, but only on condition that the opera was split into two halves and the first half (the taking of the city of Troy) was omitted. This truncated version (the Trojans at Carthage, with its tale of Queen Dido and Aeneas) was first performed in 1863; though Berlioz declared the production a ‘contemptible parody’ of what was intended he was surprised to find it warmly praised in the press: for him this was a most rare pleasure.

Parisian audiences at this time, the era of the Emperor Napoleon III, wanted to be pleased rather than challenged. Music, like painting, was stultifying in the hands of a reactionary minority and change was inevitable. The first signs of a musical revival came early in 1871 with the foundation of the Société Nationale de Musique, which took as its motto *Ars gallica*. Shortly after this Georges Bizet (1838–1875) abandoned many of the conventions of the *opéra comique* to produce his single masterpiece *Carmen*, in which real characters took over the stage for the first time and sentimentality gave way to genuine emotions.

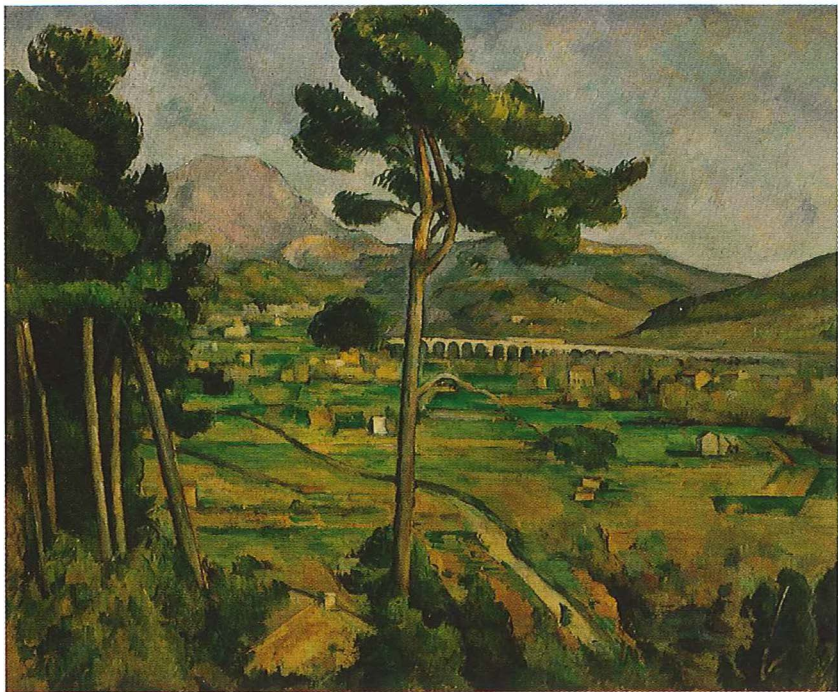
Bizet's acute sense of characterisation had already been demonstrated in the music for Alphonse Daudet's *L'Arlésienne*. Martin Cooper has explained its appeal:

There is no escaping the Provence of the *Arlésienne* music; the landscape is not merely a background to the work, it is the main character, always present and perpetually active, and Bizet's music catches exactly the vigour and simplicity, the emotional torridity and the tragic fatality which underlie the uncompromising contours of the countryside.

In Daudet's *mélodrame* spoken words alternated with incidental music. This dramatic form was by then outdated and the production in 1872 was a failure. However, Bizet swiftly adapted and rescored four excerpts from the music for full orchestra, and a second suite, just as full of sparkle and lyricism, was produced after Bizet's death by his friend Ernest Guiraud (track 2).

One of the most intriguing figures in French musical history is Emmanuel Chabrier (1841–1894). He was nearly forty before he finally took the decision to resign his safe post as a civil servant and devote himself full-time to music, the great passion of his life. Behind an apparently rustic and simple exterior was concealed an acute mind with an interest in literature and painting as well as music. At the time of his death Chabrier owned eleven Manets, eight Monets and six Renoirs. His lack of formal training and his semi-amateur status have led some to view Chabrier as merely an interesting oddity. Others have shown more respect. Ravel claimed that Chabrier's influence on him was greater than that of anyone else; Poulenc, whose admiration extended to the writing of an affectionate memoir, stated that the *10 Pièces pittoresques* of 1881 are as important for French music as the preludes of Debussy. In the two pieces included here (tracks 3 and 4) the most striking features of Chabrier's style are plain to hear: the sudden harmonic changes, the natural gift for melody, the penchant for dramatic contrasts, all reflecting the wit, verve and boisterousness that endeared him to his many friends.

One of those friends was Henri Duparc (1848–1933), a musician of enormous ability who became increasingly debilitated by a nervous hypersensitivity that eventually made it impossible for him to carry on composing. Had he enjoyed the



Mont Sainte Victoire seen from Bellemeue, c. 1885; courtesy AKG

natural robustness of Chabrier, Duparc might have become one of the leading figures in French music. As it was, his output was tiny – a mere handful of songs produced over a span of about fifteen years. Yet even this slender achievement has been quite enough to secure Duparc’s reputation. These are some of the most wonderful songs ever written in any language – refined, sensitive, dripping with sentiment that never turns sickly. Duparc had a faultless ear for harmonic direction, ensuring strict control of overall structure within a sound-world that is unmistakably Wagnerian. His chosen poems are highly charged, shot through with an almost obsessive melancholy, telling of love that seems to foreshadow death (tracks 5–7).

Duparc had been one of the founder members of the Société Nationale de Musique in 1871. Another was Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924), for whom the next twenty years were a frustrating period. Although he produced a steady flow of songs and piano pieces, many of them miniature masterworks, he often felt undervalued and unable to reach a wider public. Ambroise Thomas, director of the Paris Conservatoire, refused him a teaching post on the grounds that he was too revolutionary; not until 1896, after Thomas’s death, was Fauré invited to teach composition at the Conservatoire, where his pupils included Maurice Ravel and Nadia Boulanger. Nine years later Fauré was himself director of the Conservatoire, sweeping away the most reactionary elements of that institution with a ruthlessness of purpose which belied his gentle and charming exterior. As a composer, Fauré preferred to concentrate his energies on songs and chamber works. The suite *Masques et Bergamasques* (tracks 8 and 9), written just before his retirement from the directorship in 1920, is one of the few occasions he wrote for full orchestra.

The legacy of Léon Boëllmann (1862–1897) consists largely of pieces for organ, including a well-known *Suite gothique*. But before his untimely death, aged only thirty-five, he also wrote a few works for orchestra and some chamber music. The Piano Quartet, composed around 1890, is a bold and original piece that deserves wider exposure. Boëllmann creates a certain antique flavour by using Gregorian modes within the standard harmonic patterns (a device rather favoured in this period), yet the overall effect is spontaneously fresh. The rhythmic energy of the finale (track 10) is unstoppable, and in a climate of perpetual motion a profusion of ideas blossoms effortlessly.



Mont Sainte-Victoire seen from Les Lauves, c. 1904–6; courtesy AKG

There could be no greater contrast than the music of Erik Satie (1866–1925), described by Stravinsky as the oddest – but also the most consistently witty – person he had ever known. Satie was – who knows? Crackpot, visionary, poseur? All three? He has been called ‘a weird Socrates’, inspiring the subversion of anything that might represent normality or good taste. His own musical powers were limited, even mediocre, but the influence of this reclusive enigma was extraordinary. His earliest works, such as the three *Gymnopédies* for solo piano (dating from 1888), are notable for their plain gravity. No room is allowed for any emotional gesture in the utterly simple melody that rises and falls over a gently modal accompaniment (track 11).

Satie was a loner by nature, who lived an increasingly hermit-like existence. His most important friendship, until it finally went sour, was probably with Claude Debussy (1862–1918). The two were united by a dislike of the grandiosity and thick textures that were standard features of the pro-Wagnerian camp. Debussy himself did more than anyone to give a wholly new direction to music when he wrote his *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* in 1894. This was indeed a defining moment: in the judgement of Pierre Boulez, modern music was awakened by this work (track 12). It is based on a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé which evokes a pagan world of ancient times, in which a faun (a Pan-like creature, half-goat, half-man) lies resting in the midday heat and feels a stirring of excitement at the sight of some passing nymphs. The veiled sensuality of the poem is mirrored in the music, with its long, seductive opening melody on the flute and its shifting, ambiguous harmonies.

A year or two before starting on that historic work, Debussy had begun a set of pieces called ‘Three scenes at twilight’, intended for the great Belgian violinist Ysaÿe, who was also honoured with the dedication of the String Quartet in 1893. For one reason or another the work became transformed, and eventually appeared in 1900 as three orchestral pieces, without a solo violin part, under the title *Nocturnes*. In the first of these, ‘Nuages’, the large forces are handled with characteristic subtlety; from the first meandering, chromatic notes of the cor anglais a slowly moving cloudscape is conjured up through ever-changing string textures. At the close, magically subdued brass chords drain all colour from the scene (track 14).

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) felt something approaching reverence for Debussy, but this did not prevent him from betraying some irritation when critics suggested

that anything worthwhile in his own music could be traced to the influence of the older composer. As he pointed out, his own piece *Jeux d'eau*, written in 1901, could fairly be regarded as anticipating a 'special type of writing for the piano' for which Debussy had been given the credit. There were indeed elements in Ravel's writing which could offer inspiration to Debussy, and for a few years a fascinating process of cross-fertilisation took place between the two.

Whatever each may have gained from the other, profound emotional differences remain. Debussy's music, however carefully constructed, aims to achieve an effect of freedom and improvisation. Ravel relied to an unusual extent on fixed, unchanging elements to anchor a piece and ensure the continuous, logical progression of thought. Sometimes this function is fulfilled by a single pattern insistently repeated – hence Stravinsky's scathing dismissal of Ravel as a 'Swiss watchmaker'. Yet a strict framework can sometimes contain capricious changes of mood and direction, mirroring the unpredictability of the natural world; two such pictures of nature are 'Noctuelles' and 'Oiseaux tristes' (tracks 15 and 16), from the set of piano pieces called *Miroirs*.

Louis Vierne (1870–1937) was one of the finest organists of the generation taught by César Franck and Charles Widor. Although almost blind, he succeeded in winning first prize for organ at the Conservatoire in 1894, where he later became Widor's assistant. Organist of Notre-Dame from 1900 onwards, he produced a great cycle of six symphonies for solo organ, in addition to many shorter pieces such as the sombre 'Épitaphe' (track 13).

Hugh Griffith

Chronology

	Cézanne	Contemporaries
1839	born in Aix-en-Provence	Alfred Sisley born 1748 Jacques-Louis David born
1840		Monet born; Zola born
1841	sister Marie born	Chabrier born; Renoir born
1842		Mallarmé born
1844		Verlaine born
1845		Fauré born; Berlioz <i>The Damnation of Faust</i> ; Wagner <i>Tannhäuser</i>
1848	father sets up his own bank in Aix	Duparc born; Gauguin born; revolution in Paris leading to abdication of Louis Philippe; Louis Napoleon elected president
1849		Chopin dies
1850		Maupassant born
1851		Louis Napoleon dissolves National Assembly
1852	attends school and becomes friends with Emile Zola	beginning of the Second Empire with Louis Napoleon, now Emperor Napoleon III
1853		Van Gogh born; Verdi <i>La traviata</i> ; Wagner begins to write music for <i>Das Rheingold</i>
1857	begins to study at Municipal School for Drawing in Aix	Wagner begins work on <i>Tristan und Isolde</i>
1858		Puccini born; Eugène Boudin introduces Monet to painting in the open air
1859	studies law at Aix University; father buys a property near Aix, the Jas de Bouffan	Gounod <i>Faust</i>
1860	obtains father's permission to study art in Paris	Mahler born

	Cézanne	Contemporaries
1861	studies at the Académie Suisse in Paris and meets Impressionists	
1862		Debussy born
1863	exhibits a painting in the Salon des Refusés (works rejected by the main Salon)	Delacroix dies; Manet <i>Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe</i> rejected by the Salon; Berlioz <i>The Trojans</i>
1864		Richard Strauss born
1865		Wagner <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> ; Manet <i>Olympia</i> exhibited in the Salon
1866	<i>The Abduction</i>	Offenbach <i>La Vie Parisienne</i>
1867		Ingres dies; Baudelaire dies; Universal Exhibition in Paris
1869	lives with his mistress, Hortense Fiquet; <i>The Black Clock</i>	Berlioz dies; Matisse born
1870	evades military service by moving south to L'Estaque, near Marseille	Vierne born; Franco-Prussian War; Napoleon surrenders at Sedan; declaration of the Third Republic; Paris besieged
1871		Proust born; Paris Commune followed by repression; armistice with Prussia
1872	birth of son, Paul; moves to Auvers in company of Pissarro	Bizet <i>L'Arlésienne</i> ; Monet <i>Impression, Sunrise</i>
1874	shows paintings at first Impressionist exhibition; <i>A Modern Olympia</i> (after the painting by Manet)	
1875		Ravel born; Bizet <i>Carmen</i> ; Bizet dies
1876		first performance at Bayreuth of Wagner's complete <i>Ring</i> cycle
1877	shows paintings at third Impressionist exhibition	Saint-Saëns <i>Samson et Dalila</i>
1878	the existence of his secret family is revealed to his father, who reduces his allowance	Wagner begins work on <i>Parsifal</i>

	Cézanne	Contemporaries
1879	<i>The Bridge at Maincy</i>	
1880		Offenbach dies; Flaubert dies
1881		Picasso born; Manet <i>Bar at the Folies-Bergère</i> ; Chabrier <i>10 Pièces pittoresques</i>
1882	has a painting accepted for exhibition at the Paris Salon	Stravinsky born; Wagner <i>Parsifal</i>
1883		Wagner dies; Manet dies; Chabrier <i>España</i> ; Japanese exhibition in Paris
1884		Massenet <i>Manon</i>
1885		Victor Hugo dies
1886	marries Hortense and settles near Aix; on death of his father he inherits the Jas de Bouffan	eighth and last Impressionist exhibition; Franck Violin Sonata
1887		Verdi <i>Otello</i> ; Fauré Requiem
1888		Satie <i>Gymnopédies</i>
1889		Universal Exhibition in Paris; Eiffel Tower built
1890	makes his only journey outside France, to Switzerland; exhibits with Les XX in Brussels	Van Gogh dies
1891		Rimbaud dies
1892		
1893	begins work on three large pictures of bathers, <i>Les Grandes Baigneuses</i> , still unfinished at his death	
1894		Chabrier dies; Debussy <i>Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune</i>
1895	one-man exhibition at Vollard's gallery, Paris	
1896		Verlaine dies
1897	mother dies; forced to sell the Jas de Bouffan	Dukas <i>The Sorcerer's Apprentice</i>
1898		Mallarmé dies

Cézanne	Contemporaries
1899	Sisley dies; Monet begins <i>Waterlilies</i> series at Giverny; Debussy <i>Chansons de Bilitis</i>
1900	Debussy <i>Nocturnes</i>
1901	Verdi dies; Toulouse-Lautrec dies; Ravel <i>Jeux d'eau</i>
1902	Zola dies; Debussy <i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i>
1903	Pissarro dies; Gauguin dies; Debussy <i>Estampes</i> , Ravel String Quartet
1904	
1905	Debussy <i>La Mer, Images I</i> ; Ravel <i>Miroirs</i>
1906	dies
1908	Ravel <i>Gaspard de la nuit</i>
1910	Debussy <i>Préludes I</i> , Stravinsky <i>Firebird</i>
1911	Stravinsky <i>Petrushka</i>
1912	Massenet dies; Ravel <i>Daphnis et Chloé</i>
1913	Stravinsky <i>The Rite of Spring</i>

Front cover picture: *Apples and oranges*, 1895/90; courtesy AKG

Back cover picture: Self-portrait, c. 1880; courtesy AKG



ART
AND
MUSIC



Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) received almost no recognition until the last years of his life, but is now widely regarded as one of the key figures in the development of modern art. His structural use of colour was the starting point for the Fauve painters; his strongly geometric approach to composition led directly to Cubism. On this CD, the world of Cézanne is given a musical perspective with a carefully chosen selection of pieces by the finest composers of his time. Inside, Hugh Griffith provides explanatory notes on his life and musical environment.

Hector Berlioz		Léon Boëllmann	
The Trojans at Carthage		Piano Quartet in F Minor, Op. 10	
1	Prelude	5:01	10 Finale: Allegro 7:50
Georges Bizet		Erik Satie	
L'Arlésienne, Suite No. 2		11 Gymnopédie No. 1:	
2	Pastorale	5:47	Lent et douloureux 2:41
Emmanuel Chabrier		Claude Debussy	
10 Pièces pittoresques		12 Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune 10:33	
3	Mélancolie	2:09	Louis Vierne
4	Improvisation	4:47	24 Pièces en style libre, Op. 31
Henri Duparc		13 Epitaphe 3:58	
5	Chanson triste	3:25	Claude Debussy
6	Le Manoir de Rosemonde	2:37	Nocturnes
7	Elégie	3:07	14 Nuages 7:34
Gabriel Fauré		Maurice Ravel	
Masques et Bergamasques, Op. 112		Miroirs	
8	Gavotte	3:44	15 Noctuelles 4:18
9	Pastorale	4:22	16 Oiseaux tristes 3:47

TT 76:37

The Naxos Art and Music series presents the composers active during the lives of the leading painters and sculptors, setting a musical context to their work.

NAXOS

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Playing time
1:16:37

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