

Memorial Concert for Edward Chapman
Beethoven Club, 263 S. McLean, Memphis, TN
Saturday, February 28, 2026, 3:00 p.m.

An Afternoon of Musical Reflection

Elegy, Op. 22 (1940)

Gerald Finzi
(1901-1956)

Brian Ray, piano
Daniel Gilbert, violin

Images (Book 1)

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

- I. Reflets dans l'eau
- II. Hommage à Rameau
- III. Mouvement

Brian Ray, piano

Le tombeau de Couperin (1917)

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

- I. Prélude
- II. Menuet
- III. Rigaudon

Brian Ray, piano

Suite in the Old Style (1972)

Alfred Schnittke
(1934-1988)

- I. Pastorale
- II. Minuet
- III. Fugue
- IV. Pantomime

Brian Ray, piano
Daniel Gilbert, violin

PROGRAM NOTES

The majority of musical works by British composer Gerald Finzi were settings of English poetry for voice or choir; he favored texts by British authors such as Thomas Hardy, William Shakespeare, Christina Rossetti, and William Wordsworth. Finzi chose texts that were of a reflective nature, likely mirroring his youthful feelings of loss for his three brothers, his father, and his first composition teacher. He also composed a small yet significant body of instrumental works. The **Elegy** was originally conceived as the slow movement of an unfinished large-scale sonata for violin and piano. After working on this project for several years, Finzi decided that the single completed slow movement (now titled *Elegy*) could stand by itself in concert. Completed in 1940, it received its premiere in 1954 and was finally published in 1983.

In 1901-1907 Claude Debussy composed a cycle of six piano pieces which he published as *Images I* and *Images II*; they represent primary examples of his pianistic Symbolist/Impressionist musical language. Symbolism was a French literary movement whose identity derived from implied allusive and poetic nuance found in the French language; concrete meaning was of secondary nature. *Reflets dans l'eau* is an example of 'water music' whose texture is created by flowing notes and extended depression of the piano's damper pedal in order to create an aquatic aural texture in which the listener imagines both reflections within the water but also the poetic nature of water itself. The metaphors of nature, reflection, and water were key images in Symbolist poetry. *Hommage à Rameau* is an homage to the Baroque composer and theorist Jean-Phillipe Rameau; it also forges a link of Debussy's musical Modernism to the musical past of the French Baroque. Debussy thus placed himself within the long historical trajectory of great French composers. *Mouvement* is a toccata which employs ostinato figures and culminates in whole-tone melodies and harmonic ambiguity.

Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel were staunchly proud of their French heritage. Ravel was horrified at the destruction that he witnessed when he served in World War I. In response to this experience, he composed *Le tombeau de Couperin* for piano solo in 1914-17. 'Tombeau' is the French word for 'tomb', yet it also exists as the descriptor of a musical work which honors the memory of someone who has passed. Ravel considered the composer François Couperin (1668-1733) as the exemplar of French Baroque music, yet he used the Baroque composer and his works as metaphors for a more perfect French past which contrasted with the destruction of France wrought by World War I. While composing a keyboard suite inspired by French Baroque dance suites, Ravel's true intention was to pay homage to five friends who were killed in battle in World War I; he dedicated each of the suite's five movements to their memories. Ravel's celebration of a past age was his delicate and dignified method of expressing grief for his current age, the most subtle expression of which may be found by the use of a quote of the *Libera me* movement of Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem* in the *Menuet* section of the *Menuet*.

The Russian composer Alfred Schnittke was considered to be the musical Modernist heir to Dmitri Shostakovich. His *Suite in the Old Style* was composed in 1972 and premiered in March 1973. Schnittke recycled material from his more conservative compositional work as a composer for films and cartoons in order to create this five-movement work, an homage to the suite form of the 18th century. His intention was to employ a musical language which allowed him to 'write quite naively for once' and to use music of the present to contemplate music of the past.