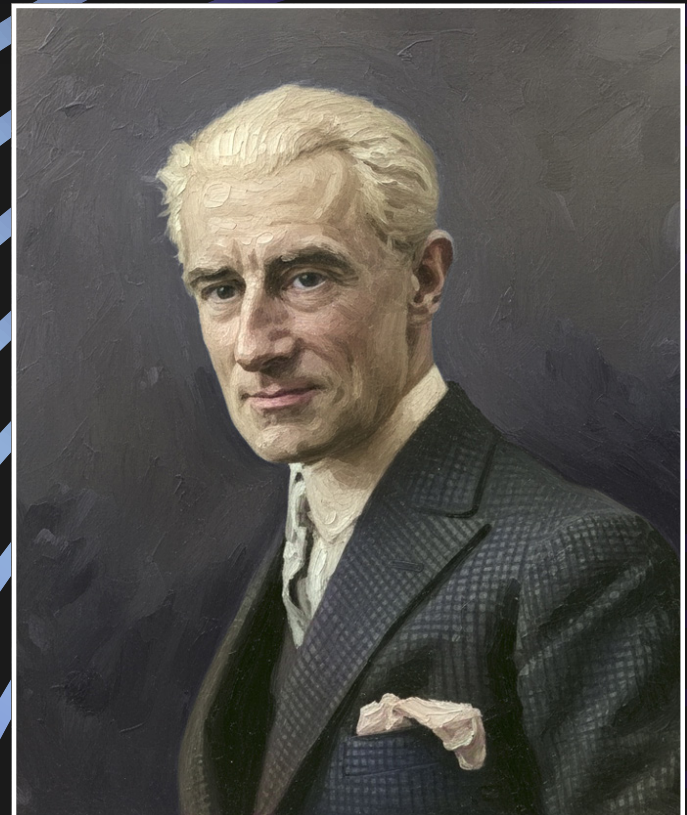


# RAVEL

## Boléro

London Symphony Orchestra

Louis FRÉMAUX



**Maurice Ravel**

***Boléro, M. 81*** (15:42)

**London Symphony Orchestra**

**Louis Frémaux, *conductor***

Recorded at Walthamstow Town Hall, London, 1989

Producer: **Edward J. Fisk**

Engineer: **John Timperley**

Originally issued in 1989 on Collins Classics EC 1024-2

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

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*Boléro*, described by the composer, **Maurice Ravel**, as a 'piece for orchestra without music', has jokingly been referred to as the triumph of technique over everything else. It was composed in 1928, a year which had seen Ravel conduct an exhausting three-month tour of North America during which time he cemented a friendship with Gershwin and listened to jazz whenever possible. As with *Pavane* Ravel was amazed at *Boléro's* popularity. On the face of it, the work is simplicity itself: two melodies, each of the same length repeated AABB several times over a long crescendo. Each time the pattern is repeated a different combination of instruments takes over the reins so that the constant repetition of the melodies never palls. Shortly before the close the pattern changes slightly over a change of key. In view of Ravel's fascination with mechanical objects it is hardly surprising that he had hoped to see *Boléro* staged as a ballet set in a factory but this did not happen during his lifetime. The initial staging of the ballet, as seen at the Opéra on 22 November 1928, was set in a decadent Barcelona club. The dance gained an even larger audience in the 1934 Paramount film *Boléro* as performed by George Raft and the notorious fan dancer Sally Rand. It became familiar to a later generation when famously used by the ice dancers Torvill and Dean.

## NOTES ON THE ARTIST

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The distinguished French conductor **Louis Frémaux** was born in 1921. For ten years from 1956 he was chief conductor of the Monte Carlo National Opera Orchestra before briefly taking up a post in Lyons. As Music Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra between 1969- 78 Frémaux heightened the profile of this now world- famous orchestra, recording prolifically. After leaving Birmingham he took over the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

**James Murray**

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