

## PIERRE-OCTAVE FERROUD

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Pierre-Octave Ferroud had a short life which ended in the most tragic circumstances. Had he lived he may well have been a force to reckon with. Some of the works he left are of very high quality.

He was born in Chesselay near Lyon on 6 January 1900. He studied harmony in 1920 with Edouard Commette a local organist. He went to Strasbourg later in 1920 to study with Joseph Guy-Ropartz and performed his military service in that area.

Ferroud had an almost obsessional admiration for the composer Florent Schmitt and wrote a book about him although Ferroud died 31 years before Schmitt did. Ferroud wrote a piano work Prelude and Forlane for Schmitt in 1924.

It was in Paris in 1923 that Ferroud got to know Schmitt and, in 1932, he helped form the chamber contemporary group Triton with Henry Barraud, Jean Rivier and Emmanul Bondeville. Ferroud also became a music critic with the journal Paris Soir and other journals.

His first recognised work was Andante cordial of 1919 to 1926, a short orchestral work. His first piano work was called Types and was written between 1922 and 1924. He also composed three studies for piano in 1922 and, in 1924, his Foules (Crowds) for orchestra appeared. Also in 1924 he completed his Ballet Le Percher which translates as the pig-breeder. In 1927 France saw his Serenade for piano and orchestra and his comic opera, Chirugie.

His earliest works such as the Sarabande for orchestra is a gentle, reflective piece concentrating on atmosphere. Debussy and Satie elevated the sarabande to become a name for an individual piece. The three pieces for solo flute, completed in 1921, is a bright work which have been taken up by concert flautists.

He was greatly admired by fellow French composers particularly Francis Poulenc who was devastated by Ferroud's death and wrote several religious works in memory of Pierre-Octave Ferroud.

Prokofiev was the dedicatee of Ferroud's Sonata in A minor for cello and piano of 1930 and Prokofiev was impressed with Ferroud's Symphony in A which was dedicated to Koussevitzky. It is a good piece which has won many friends. However, Prokofiev did not like Ferroud's opera.

The Violin Sonata of 1929 contains such complex music.

But to return to the Symphony. It is in three movements: Vivace, Andante espressivo assai and allegro con brio. The first movement has a lot to offer and contrasts orchestral flourishes with lyrical music. The slow movement has an amazing build up and is the best movement. The finale stops and starts and does not maintain its con brio. But it contains some good music and an excellent coda. The orchestration is first class and it is not wishy-washy French impressionism.

One of his last works, which is very well-written, is his String Quartet in C which he started in 1932 and completed in the year of his death, 1936. There is an attractive Wind Trio for oboe, clarinet and bassoon of 1933 dedicated to Filip Lazar.



While walking on a road in Debrecen, Hungary on 17 August 1936 he was killed in an accident with a car and he was decapitated. He was 36.

Works include:

Andante cordial for orchestra (1919-1926)  
Three pieces for solo flute (1920-1921)  
A Contre-coeur (Ambiguous heart) (1922-1925)  
Srabande (1920-1926)  
Sarabande for piano (1920)  
Au parc monceau (1921-125)  
Three Studies for piano (1922)  
Types for piano (1922-1924)  
Foules for orchestra (1922-1924)  
La Percher (1924)  
Prelude and Forlane for piano (1924)  
Five poems of Tourlet (1927)  
Spirituel for guitar (1926)  
Serenade for piano and orchestra (1927)  
Chirurgie, comic opera (1927)  
March: L'eventail de Jeanne (1927)  
Serenade for orchestra (1927)  
Serenade for piano, four hands (1927)  
Sonata in C (1928)  
Sonatine for piano (1928)  
Monte-Carlo (1928)  
Five poems of Valery (1929)  
Jeunesses, ballet (1929-1933)  
Chansons de Foue (Songs of the madmen)  
Sonata for violin and piano (1929)  
Sonata for cello and piano (1930)  
Symphony in 1 (1930)  
Fables for piano (1931)  
Three poems of Supervielle (1932)  
Three poems of Goether (1932)  
Wind Trio in E (1933)  
Pas redoublé (1934)  
Sonnere pour le Hérault (1935)

Had he lived what other gems might he have written?

[\*Sonatine for Piano \(score\)\*](#)

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