

Darius Milhaud (1892-1974) Suite for clarinet, violin and piano, Op 157b (1936)

*Ouverture*

*Divertissement*

*Jeu*

*Introduction et final*

Milhaud was classically trained at the Paris Conservatoire by Charles Widor and privately by Vincent d'Indy. In Harlem in 1922 he encountered jazz and its influence permeates his music. He fled to the US in 1939 and taught at Mills College in California. Dave Brubeck was a graduate student of his there as was Burt Bacharach whom he told "Don't be afraid of writing something people can remember and whistle. Don't ever feel discomfited by a melody". Milhaud wrote rapidly and extensively in a wide range of forms, including 12 Symphonies, 21 Concertos, 18 String Quartets (Nos 14 and 15 can be played simultaneously as an octet!), and many film and incidental music scores including the well known *Le Boeuf sur le toit*.

The suite is based on the incidental music that Milhaud wrote for Anouilh's play *Le voyageur sans bagages*. A docile, but severely amnesic World War I veteran, Gaston, is claimed by a rich family as their son Jacques Renaud. Jacques had been violent as a young man, killing his best friend. Although the presence of small scar proves to Gaston that he is indeed Jacques, he hides this proof from the family. When another family turns up looking for their lost child, Gaston tells them of his scar thereby allowing them to prove to the Renauds that he is indeed their child. Gaston later writes to the Renauds telling them that Jacques is dead. The somber overall theme of the play is only really apparent in the Introduction to the last movement.