

# **Timeline of the History of La Belle Époque: The Arts**

# 1870

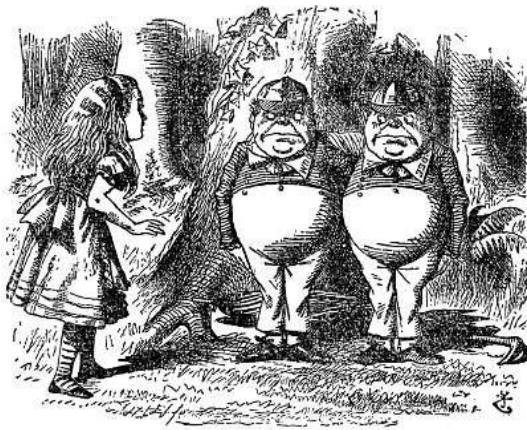
The *Musikverein*, home to the Vienna Philharmonic, is inaugurated in Vienna on January 6. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is established on April 13, without a single work of art in its collection, without any staff, and without a gallery space. The museum would open to the public two years later, on February 20, 1872. Richard Wagner premieres his opera *Die Walküre* in Munich on June 26.



Opening reception in the picture gallery at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 681 Fifth Avenue; February 20, 1872. Wood engraving published in *Frank Leslie's Weekly*, March 9, 1872.

# 1871

Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Aida* premieres in Cairo, Egypt on December 24. Lewis Carroll publishes *Through the Looking Glass*, a sequel to his book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). James McNeill Whistler paints *Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1*, commonly known as "Whistler's Mother".



John Tenniel – *Tweedledee and Tweedledum*, illustration in Chapter 4 of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, 1871.

Source: Modern Library Classics

# 1872

Claude Monet paints *Impression, Sunrise*, credited with inspiring the name of the Impressionist movement. Jules Verne publishes *Around the World in Eighty Days*.



Claude Monet – *Impression, Sunrise (Impression, soleil levant)*, 1872.

Oil on canvas.

Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris.

# 1873

*Société Anonyme Coopérative des Artistes Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs* (Co-operative and Anonymous Association of Painters, Sculptors, and Engravers) (subsequently the Impressionists) is organized by Monet, Camille Pissarro, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Alfred Sisley in response to frustration over the Paris Salon.

*Impression, Sunrise* and other works by this group are shown in April 1874 at the First Exhibition of the Impressionists, which takes place in the Paris home of the photographer Nadar.



Pierre-Auguste Renoir – *The Dancer (Danseuse)*, 1874. Oil on canvas.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Exhibited at the First Exhibition of the Impressionists, 1874

# 1874

Camille Saint-Saëns premieres *Danse macabre* on January 23. A memorial exhibition of drawings and watercolors by Viktor Hartmann is held at the Imperial Academy of Arts in Saint Petersburg, Russia; this inspires Hartmann's friend Modest Mussorgsky to compose *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Edgar Degas paints *The Dance Class*.



Edgar Degas – *The Dance Class*, 1874. Oil on canvas.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

# 1875

Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen* premieres on March 3 at the Opéra-Comique in Paris. Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 premieres in Boston on October 25. Thomas Eakins paints *The Gross Clinic*. The Art Students League is founded in New York.



Prudent-Louis Leray – Poster for the Premiere of Georges Bizet's *Carmen*, 1875. Lithograph published by Choudens Père et Fils and Impressions Lemercier et Cie. Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

# 1876

The Impressionists exhibit at the home of Paul Durand-Ruel at 11 rue Peletier in Paris in April. Wagner premieres his operas *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* (the last of his *Ring Cycle* series) in Bayreuth, Germany on August 16 and August 17, respectively. Johannes Brahms premieres his Symphony No. 1 on November 4; the symphony had taken Brahms 21 years to complete. Renoir paints *Bal du moulin de la Galette*.



Pierre-Auguste Renoir – *Bal du moulin de la Galette*, 1876. Oil on canvas.  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



# 1877

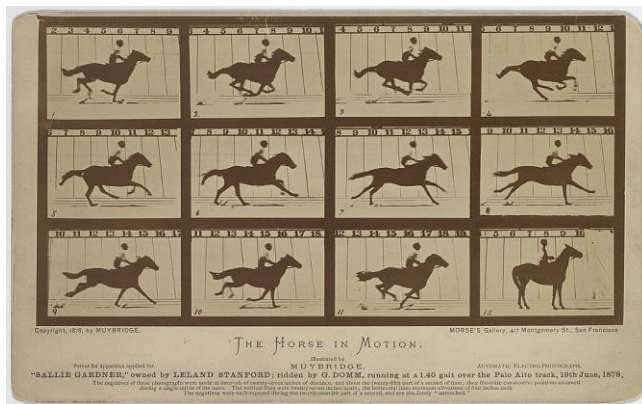
Tchaikovsky premieres his ballet *Swan Lake* on March 4 at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow; the premiere is not well received. Whistler exhibits his *Nocturne in Black and Gold – The Falling Rocket* in May. On July 2, John Ruskin notoriously pans Whistler's painting, provoking the artist to sue Ruskin for libel; this causes a sensational subsequent trial. Brahms premieres his Symphony No. 2 on December 30 in Vienna.



F. Gaanen – Design for the décor of Act II of *Swan Lake*, Moscow, 1877.

# 1878

Sir William S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan's comic opera *H.M.S. Pinafore* premieres in London at the Opera Comique on May 25. Eadweard Muybridge produces a sequence of stop-motion still photographs, *Sallie Gardner at a Gallop*, a predecessor to silent film, in California. Leo Tolstoy publishes *Anna Karenina* in complete book form in Moscow.



Eadweard Muybridge – *The Horse in Motion: Sallie Gardner at a Gallop*, June 19, 1878.

Photographic print on card.

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.

1879

Henrik Ibsen premieres his drama *A Doll's House* at the Royal Danish Theatre in Copenhagen. Édouard Manet paints *In the Conservatory*. Degas paints *Miss La La at the Cirque Fernando*.



Édouard Manet – *In the Conservatory (Dans la serre)*, 1879. Oil on canvas.  
Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

# 1880

Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* premieres in London on April 3. Richard Strauss completes his first major work, his Symphony in D Minor, on June 12, at the age of 16.



Drawing of the Major General from the program of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company children's production of *The Pirates of Penzance*, 1884.

1881

Jacques Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* premieres in Paris on February 10. Brahms premieres his Piano Concerto No. 2 in Budapest on November 9. Whistler paints *Harmony in Pink and Grey (Portrait of Lady Meux)*.

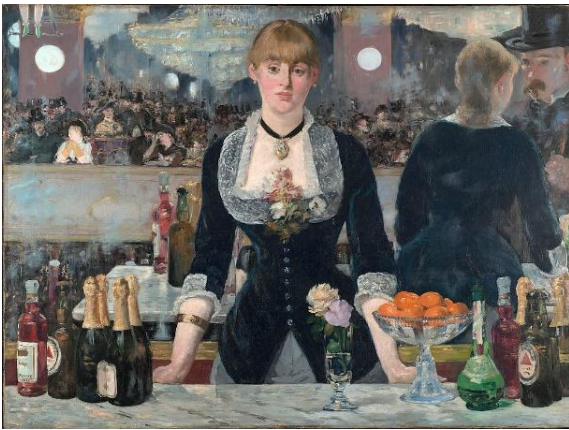


James McNeill Whistler - *Harmony in Pink and Grey (Portrait of Lady Meux)*, 1881. Oil on canvas.

The Frick Collection, New York.

1882

Wagner premieres his opera *Parsifal* at the Bayreuth Festspielhaus in Bavaria on July 26. Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* premieres in Moscow on August 20. Manet paints *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, his last major work.



Édouard Manet - *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, 1882. Oil on canvas.  
Courtauld Gallery, London.

# 1883

Carlo Collodi first publishes *The Adventures of Pinocchio* in book form in Italy in February. Robert Louis Stevenson publishes *Treasure Island* in book format in London on May 23. Renoir paints *Dance at Bougival*, *Dance in the City*, and *Dance in the Country*, for Durand-Ruel.



Pierre-Auguste Renoir – *Dance at Bougival*, 1883. Oil on canvas.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



# 1884

Anton Bruckner premieres his Symphony No. 7, his first major success, in Leipzig, in December. John Singer Sargent exhibits his controversial portrait *Portrait of Mme \*\*\* (Madame Pierre Gautreau)* at the Paris Salon and is scandalously met with poor public and critical reception; the painting is now known as *Madame X*.



John Singer Sargent – *Madame X (Madame Pierre Gautreau)*, 1883-84.

Oil on canvas.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



# 1885

Gilbert and Sullivan premiere *The Mikado* in London on March 14. Brahms premieres his Symphony No. 4 in Meiningen, Germany on October 25. Sargent paints *Portrait of Robert Louis Stevenson and his Wife*.



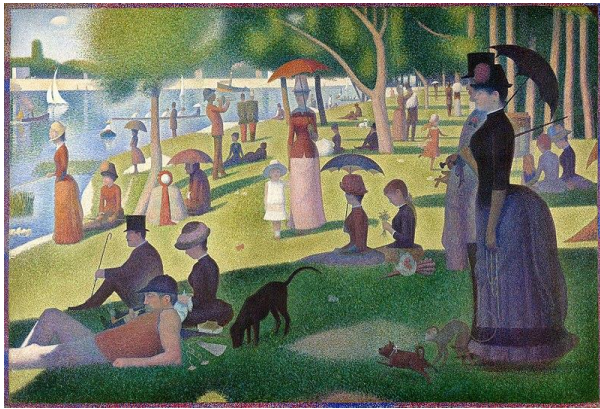
John Singer Sargent – *Portrait of Robert Louis Stevenson and his Wife*, 1885.

Oil on canvas.

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas.

# 1886

Robert Louis Stevenson publishes *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in New York and London between January 5 and January 9. Arturo Toscanini makes his conducting debut with an Italian opera company in Rio de Janeiro on June 25. Georges Seurat exhibits *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*.



Georges Seurat – *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* (*Un dimanche après-midi à l'Île de la Grande Jatte*), 1884-86. Oil on canvas.

The Art Institute of Chicago.

# 1887

Verdi premieres his opera *Otello* at La Scala in Milan on February 5. Brahms's Double Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra premieres in Cologne on October 18, 1887.

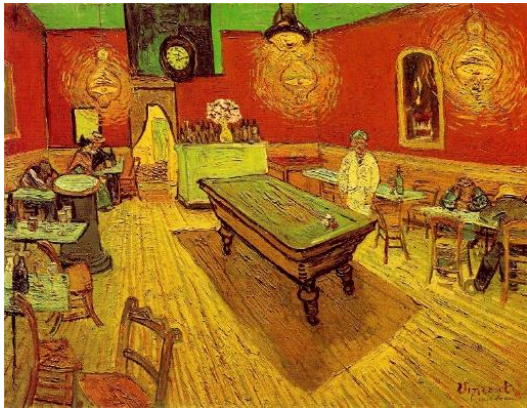


Alfredo Edel – Design for costume of Desdemona from *Otello*, Teatro alla Scala, Milan, 1887. Watercolor on paper.

Archivio Storico Ricordi, Milan.

# 1888

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov composes and premieres his symphonic suite *Scheherazade*. Tchaikovsky premieres his Symphony No. 5; the work receives mostly unfavorable reviews, prompting the composer to write, “I have come to the conclusion that it is a failure.” Paul Gauguin paints *Vision After the Sermon*. Vincent van Gogh paints *The Night Café*.



Vincent van Gogh – *The Night Café (Le Café de nuit)*, 1888. Oil on canvas.  
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

1889

Eakins paints *The Agnew Clinic*. Van Gogh paints *The Starry Night* in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence. The Moulin Rouge cabaret opens in Paris on October 6.



Vincent van Gogh – *The Starry Night*, 1889. Oil on canvas.  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

# 1890

Tchaikovsky premieres his ballet *The Sleeping Beauty* at the Imperial Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg on January 15. Pietro Mascagni premieres his opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* on May 17 at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome. Van Gogh dies on July 29.



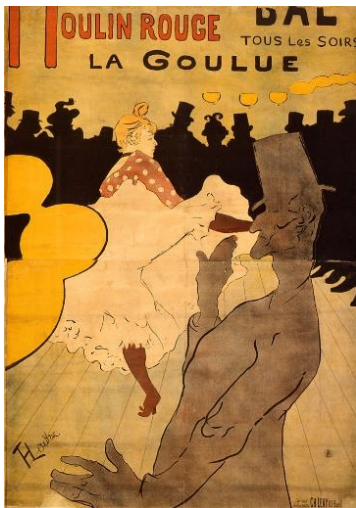
Depiction of a scene from Pietro Mascagni's opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* at the opera's world premiere, 17 May 1890, Teatro Costanzi, Rome.

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



# 1891

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec produces around 3,000 color lithographic copies of *Moulin Rouge: La Goulue*. Seurat dies on March 29. The Music Hall in New York (later known as Carnegie Hall) has its grand opening and first public performance on May 5; Tchaikovsky is guest conductor.



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec – *Moulin Rouge: La Goulue*, 1891. Color lithograph.  
Indianapolis Museum of Art.

# 1892

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle publishes his first collection of Sherlock Holmes stories, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, in London on October 31. Tchaikovsky premieres his ballet *The Nutcracker* at the Imperial Mariinsky Theatre on December 18. Toulouse-Lautrec paints *La Goulue Arriving at the Moulin Rouge*.



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec – *La Goulue Arriving at the Moulin Rouge (La Goulue arrivant au Moulin Rouge)*, 1892. Oil on cardboard.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



# 1893

Tchaikovsky premieres and conducts his Symphony No. 6 (“Pathétique”) in St. Petersburg on October 28, nine days before his death. Antonín Dvořák’s Symphony No. 9 (*“From the New World”*) premieres at Carnegie Hall in New York on December 16. Edvard Munch paints *The Scream*.



Edvard Munch – *The Scream*, 1893. Oil, pastel and tempera on cardboard.  
Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo.

# 1894

The tenor Enrico Caruso makes his operatic debut. Oscar Wilde's play *Salome* is first published in English in February, with illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley. Claude Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* premieres in Paris on December 22.



Aubrey Beardsley – “The Peacock Skirt,” illustration for Oscar Wilde’s *Salome*, 1894.

# 1895

Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* premieres at St. James's Theatre in London on February 14. Wilde is arrested on April 6 and is convicted and sentenced to two years of hard labor on May 25 of "unlawfully committing acts of gross indecency with certain male persons." The Berlin Wintergarten theatre becomes the site of the first cinema in history, with a short movie presented by the Skladanowsky brothers, on November 1. Auguste and Louis Lumière display their first motion picture in Paris on December 28. Sir Frederic Leighton paints *Flaming June*.



Sir Frederic Leighton – *Flaming June*, 1895. Oil on canvas.  
Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico.

# 1896

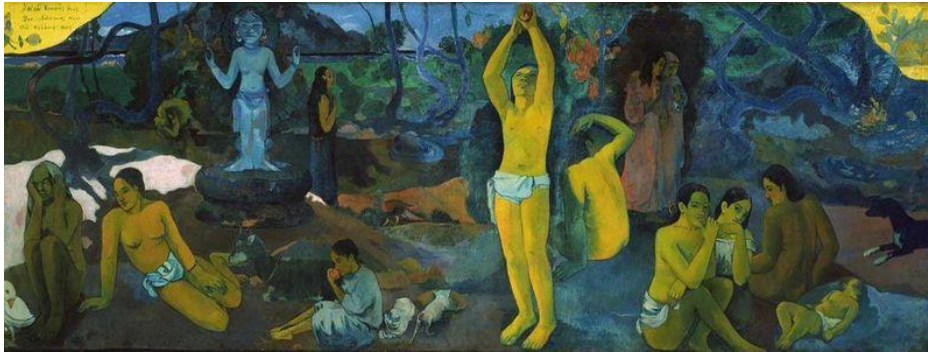
William Merritt Chase establishes the Chase School of Art (now the Parsons School of Design) in New York. Giacomo Puccini premieres his opera *La bohème* in Turin, Italy on February 1. Richard Strauss premieres his tone poem *Also sprach Zarathustra* in Frankfurt on November 27. John Philip Sousa composes his march *The Stars and Stripes Forever* on December 25.



Adolfo Hohenstein – Poster for the 1896 production of *La bohème*  
Published by G. Ricordi & Co.

# 1897

The Vienna Secession is founded by Gustav Klimt, Koloman Moser, Josef Hoffmann, Joseph Maria Olbrich, and Max Kurzweil, on April 3. Wilde is released from prison on May 19 and goes into exile in Paris. Gauguin paints *Where do We Come From? What Are We? Where are We Going?*



Paul Gauguin - *Where Do We Come From? What are We? Where are We Going?* (*D'où Venons Nous / Que Sommes Nous / Où Allons Nous*), 1897-98.

Oil on canvas.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

# 1898

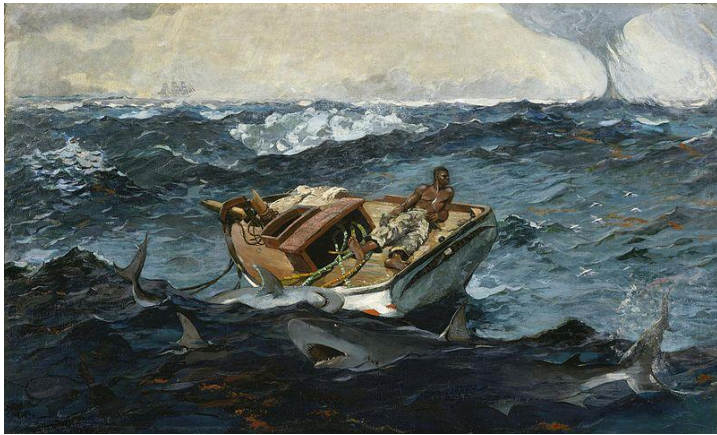
The Berlin Secession is founded in Germany on May 2. Gabriel Fauré composes his *Pelléas et Mélisande* Suite as incidental music for a play by Maurice Maeterlinck. Félix Vallotton creates his *Intimités* series of woodcuts.



Félix Vallotton – *Intimités (Intimacies): Le Mensonge (The Lie)*, 1898. Woodcut. Musées d'art et d'histoire, Geneva; Cabinet d'arts graphiques.

1899

Jean Sibelius premieres his Symphony No. 1 in Helsinki, Finland on April 26. Sir Edward Elgar premieres his *Enigma Variations* in London on June 19. Winslow Homer paints *The Gulf Stream*.



Winslow Homer – *The Gulf Stream*, 1899. Oil on canvas.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

## 1900

Puccini premieres his opera *Tosca* in Rome on January 14.  
Sibelius premieres his tone poem *Finlandia* in Helsinki on July 2. The Wallace Collection opens in London. Mary Cassatt paints *Young Mother Sewing*.



Mary Cassatt – *Young Mother Sewing*, 1900. Oil on canvas.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



# 1901

Toulouse-Lautrec dies on September 9. Sergei Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 has its first complete performance on October 27. Pablo Picasso begins his "Blue Period," most likely prompted by the suicide of his friend Carles Casagemas.



Pablo Picasso – *The Old Guitarist*, 1903. Oil on canvas.  
The Art Institute of Chicago.

## 1902

Sibelius premieres his Symphony No. 2 in Helsinki on March 8. Enrico Caruso makes the first million-selling recording in Milan for the Gramophone Company on April 11. The movie *Le Voyage dans La Lune (A Trip to the Moon)*, by Georges Méliès, premieres at the Théâtre Robert-Houdin in Paris on September 1. Beatrix Potter publishes *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, with her own color illustrations, in a trade edition in London in early October.

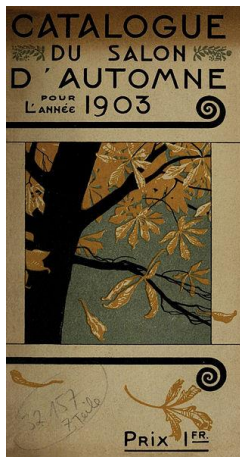


Film still from Georges Méliès – *Le Voyage dans la Lune (A Trip to the Moon)*, 1902

Source: Roger-Viollet

# 1903

Isadora Duncan develops the free dance technique. Bruckner premieres his Symphony No. 9 in Vienna on February 11. Gauguin dies on May 8. The first Salon d'Automne (Autumn Salon) opens in Paris as a reaction to the conservative Paris Salon; included in the show are Pierre Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard, Jacques Villon, and others.



Catalogue cover for the 1903 Salon d'Automne, Paris.

Source: Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

# 1904

Puccini premieres his opera *Madama Butterfly* at La Scala in Milan on February 17; a revised version opens in Brescia on May 28. J.M. Barrie premieres his play *Peter Pan; or, the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up* in London on December 27. Archer Milton Huntington founds the Hispanic Society of America in Lower Washington Heights, New York. Picasso departs from his “Blue Period” and starts his “Rose Period”.



Pablo Picasso – *L'acteur* (*The Actor*), 1904. Oil on canvas.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

# 1905

Emma Orczy's play *The Scarlet Pimpernel* premieres in London on January 5. Debussy premieres his piece *La Mer* in Paris on October 15. The Fauves, led by Henri Matisse and André Derain, exhibit for the first time at the Salon d'Automne in Paris.



Henri Matisse – *La femme au chapeau* (*Woman with a Hat*), 1905. Oil on canvas. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

# 1906

Gustav Mahler premieres his Symphony No. 6 in Essen, Germany on May 27. Paul Cézanne dies on October 22 in Aix-en-Provence, France. Matisse paints *Le bonheur de vivre*. Picasso paints his *Portrait of Gertrude Stein*.



Pablo Picasso – *Portrait of Gertrude Stein*, 1906. Oil on canvas.  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

# 1907

On January 27, the Metropolitan Opera removes Richard Strauss's opera *Salome* from its repertoire, following protests that the opera was indecent. Klimt paints *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I*. Matisse paints *Blue Nude*. Picasso paints *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*.



Gustav Klimt – *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I*, 1907.

Oil, silver, and gold on canvas.

Neue Galerie New York.

# 1908

“The Eight”, a precursor to the “Ashcan School” founded by Robert Henri, give their first and only group exhibition at New York’s Macbeth Gallery in February. Rachmaninoff premieres his Symphony No. 2 in St. Petersburg on January 26.



Robert Henri – *Laughing Child*, 1907. Oil on canvas.

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.



# 1909

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti first publishes his *Futurist Manifesto* in *Le Figaro* on February 20. The Ballets Russes, produced by Sergei Diaghilev, opens a tour on May 19 in Paris at the Théâtre du Châtelet, bringing Russian ballet to the Western world. Rachmaninoff premieres his Piano Concerto No. 3 in New York on November 28. Picasso and Georges Braque create the first works of analytical cubism.



Pablo Picasso – *Fruit Dish*, 1908-9. Oil on canvas.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

# 1910

The first public radio broadcast takes place, with live performances of *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* from the Metropolitan Opera being transmitted on the airwaves on January 13. Igor Stravinsky's *The Firebird* (*L'Oiseau de feu*), his first major work and a commission from Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, premieres in Paris on June 25.



Tamara Karsavina as the Firebird and Michel Fokine as Prince Ivan in the 1910 Ballets Russes ballet *The Firebird*.

# 1911

Mahler conducts his last concert with the New York Philharmonic, where he had been principal conductor since 1909, on February 21; he dies on May 18. Stravinsky premieres his ballet *Petrushka* in Paris on June 15. Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* is stolen from the Louvre in Paris on August 21 by Vincenzo Peruggia; its theft and subsequent return bring it worldwide fame.



“60 Detectives Seek Stolen ‘Mona Lisa’,” *The New York Times*, Thursday, August 24, 1911.

# 1912

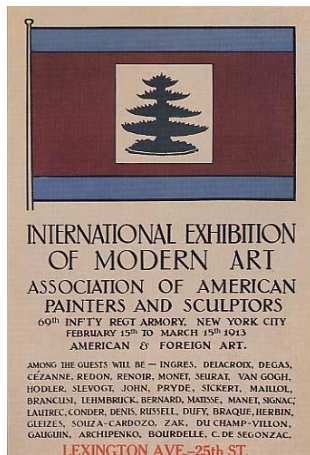
*Der Blaue Reiter Almanac* (The Blue Rider Almanac) is published in May and features works by Franz Marc and Wassily Kandinsky. Mahler's Symphony No. 9 premieres posthumously on June 26 in Vienna. Marcel Duchamp paints *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*.



Marcel Duchamp – *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*, 1912. Oil on canvas. Philadelphia Museum of Art.

# 1913

The Armory Show (International Exhibition of Modern Art) opens in New York on February 17 and closes on March 15, exhibiting European avant-garde art to the American public. Stravinsky premieres his ballet *Le Sacre du printemps* (*The Rite of Spring*) with the Ballets Russes in Paris on May 29, provoking one of the most famous classical music riots in history.



Poster for the 1913 International Exhibition of Modern Art (Armory Show).

# 1914

Edgar Rice Burroughs first publishes *Tarzan of the Apes* in book form. Ralph Vaughan Williams completes his original version of his piece *The Lark Ascending*. Giorgio de Chirico paints *The Mystery and Melancholy of a Street*.



Giorgio de Chirico – *The Mystery and Melancholy of a Street*, 1914.

Oil on canvas.

Private Collection.

Timeline research and design by Alex C. Maccaro