



THE KEYBOARD REPERTORY
AS A REFLECTOR OF ART NOUVEAU IN MUSIC

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Addenda

Primary Sources (locations):

Ba'lmont Moscow; Bahr Vienna; Behrens Vienna; Crane London c.1910; Denis Paris; Endell Darmstadt 1897-98 (delete "1900"); Loos Vienna; Morris London; van de Velde Leipzig; Whistler London & Paris (delivered 1885 London); Wilde London (all); Zemlinsky Vienna.

See also the comprehensive primary source-lists in Schmutzler, R., Masinin, L-V., Selig, H. (ed.): opp. cit.

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Repertory

p.647 Paul Hindemith In einer Nacht (1919, op.15)

Corrigenda

Page/paragraph\Note\Example\Analysis)\Quotation

9/5 historische
9/N4, 15 Dahlhaus
24/N7 europäischen
28/N69 Wiesbaden
55/2 add "and Steinway" after "Bechstein" in line 3
65/2 Schumannian
122/Q 1.3 so = se; 1.8 soupire = soupira; 1.11,16 Révait = Rêvait; 1.12 é = à
162/N6 Zemlinskys
164/N8 & 804/Rösing indonesische
274/N18 Schweizerische
274/N25 & 804/Sádecky Hudebni
327/2 1905 = 1903
380/2 ist = its
393/1 anit = anti
397/2 add "arguably" after "course"
451/N5 & 800/Lenski bemahe = beinahe
452/N18 Brailoiu
472/2, 731/7 langourous
635/N33 & 796/Gut add "La cathédrale engloutie" before "prélude"
676/Q 1.4 l'observent
726/Q Rilke wilden; seltsamkeit
730/Q 1.1 l'Ile de France et des; 1.5 participe; 1.8 ne juger
731/Q monde, Körper
732/Q 1.8 add "glacé" after "le vent"; 1.10 parfaite
737/2 Schwarzschwänenreich
751/Q George unsre
751/Q Rilke glanzendern; sir = wir; gragen = fragen
789/N8 l'impressionnisme
789/N12 & 794/Denisov einige; Kompositionstechnik
797/Heister gegen; Zeitschrift für Musik = Musikwissenschaft
800/Leister Universität
807/Stenzl Symposium = Collection

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Since this is the first musicological study of an Art Nouveau repertory as such, it is necessary to proceed systematically by first establishing a comprehensive definition of Art Nouveau that elucidates the set of aesthetic and stylistic principles applying to all its visual, literary and musical manifestations. Thus, rather than attempting direct comparisons between music and painting or literature, all forms of Art Nouveau can be examined against fundamental criteria.

From a consideration of the origins, nature and extent of Art Nouveau, a comprehensive, eleven-point definition of its essential principles is formed, embracing all its visual, literary and musical aspects. In appended chapters the eleven principles are outlined for visual and literary art.

In the main body of the dissertation a hundred and forty-two keyboard works from France, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Russia, England and America are examined in the light of the eleven principles. These are works whose composers had contact with centres of Art Nouveau and were influenced by its art, literature or aesthetic. The works are *avant-garde* compositions of the period, whose specific titles or epigraphs indicate Art Nouveau provenance.

The study shows that it is possible to identify Art Nouveau characters that run through the repertory, and also to connect some of it with the types of piano for which the composers wrote. It shows that differentiation between impressionism, symbolism and Art Nouveau in music is possible, and that specific compositional techniques can be related to the eleven principles.

The methodology of the study reveals archetypal motifs running across the repertory, and its semiology reveals fundamentally new insights into many works, including Skryabin's late compositions, suggesting that the sonatas 6-10, although not all specifically titled, can be seen as comprising a compositional whole, and the terms "Black" and "White" Mass explained.

The study thus suggests some fundamental revaluations of ideas about some music of the time, and points towards further examinations of its various repertories.

DECLARATION

This work contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

TERMINOLOGY

1. A, B^b, C[#], D^{bb}, E^x ... refer to notes in music
2. F, f ... refer to major, minor keys in **certain diagrams**
3. M_1 , M_2 ... refer to motifs
 F_1 , F_2 ... refer to musical figures
 S_1^1 , S_2^2 ... refer to textural strands
- all are explained in text

O^1 , O^2 , O^3 refer to octatonic pitch-sets on C, C[#], D and their inversions at the minor third

WT1, WT2 refer to whole-tone pitch-sets on C, C[#] and their inversions at the tone

4. Super and subscript digits are used to refer to chordal analysis thus, with oblique lines referring to ascending (/) or descending (\) motion:

$$VI7^b \setminus V_4^6 / \#VII_2^4$$

5. Pitch-sets are designated in semitonal intervals, always **ascending** from the root, as
1 = semitone, 2 = tone, 3 = minor third, and so on;
thus the octatonic set = 1212 1212
or a pentatonic set = 23232

Key intervals: 3 = minor third
4 = major third
5 = fourth
6 = tritone
7 = fifth

A bookmark in the form of a key to the Eleven Principles and special pitch-sets referred to in the text is lodged in a pocket inside the front cover.

CHAPTER 1

PREFACE



Introduction: Art Nouveau as strand rather than time-category

The term "Art Nouveau" is, for the purposes of this study, here taken as including Jugendstil, Sezessionstil, Stil Moderne and similar terms and movements¹, and although there is a wide variety of styles and approaches in all these movements and artist-creators, the term is assumed to cover them insofar as they have common ground². Where the other terms are employed it is to be understood that reference is being made to their regional movements and schools as distinct from the world scene. While Jugendstil³ has often been the preferred term in German-speaking countries and parts of eastern Europe, the consensus elsewhere is for Art Nouveau, the term used in more countries then and now. But since as a term it does not encapsulate what all these movements stood for, the common element of "the strand of the mannered fantastic in the arts" is sometimes substituted in this study.

Strands of fantastic and stylized mannerism are always present in the arts, but have periodic flowerings, at which times a significant body of art is created that has its own peculiarities, while echoing some from the past. One such flowering is Art Nouveau, occurring around 1900 in many world centres, and echoing in its mannerism the Rococo style of the eighteenth century, the Mannerist style of the sixteenth and the Flamboyant in architecture of the fifteenth. Its subject is the mysterious or fantastic, which it embraces in opposition to the scientific and positivistic strands of its time.

The terms "strand" [*Faden, brin*] and "influence" are to be preferred to "(time-)category", the last connoting outdated notions of a single *Zeitgeist* governing each cultural epoch⁴, and placing undue strain upon boundary-dates, even when "category" is given the revised sense of "recurrent phenomenon" as in Carl Dahlhaus' *historische Kategorie*⁵. "Category" has the further disadvantage of narrowing its focus towards the

avant-garde, ignoring those who opt to continue to develop a style long after it has ceased to be high fashion. Rather than seeing Art Nouveau as a minor time-category covering the 1895-1905 decade, it may be seen as a most important influence on much culture over a wider time-span, opposing Realism, Historicism, conventional late-Romanticism⁶ and Impressionism, being itself challenged by the emergence of Expressionism and Dadaism, and to some extent supplanted by Surrealism. Using "strand" rather than "category" makes it possible to talk of opposing or interacting movements⁷. Using "influence" (the emergence of a strand into a position of some dominance) removes the necessity to delineate the period with binding and exclusive definition.

It also avoids the difficulty caused by the fact that the time-periods when the visual, literary and musical *avant-garde* (and the fashion industry) wholeheartedly embrace Art Nouveau do not exactly coincide, to say nothing of individual creative artists' taking up and leaving the Art Nouveau milieu at different times. It further means that scholars like Reinhold Brinkmann⁸ and Frits Noske⁹, who argue against accepting Art Nouveau as a category, can nonetheless continue to speak of its influences on some music of the time, which is what they wish to do. That the issue is still to some extent an open one can be seen in two recent publications - firstly the catalogue of the 1987 Munich exhibition of Jugendstil-Secession art entitled *Jugendstil-Musik?*, and secondly Reinhard Gerlach's *Musik und Jugendstil - der Wiener Schule 1900-1908*; the first is questioning and the second affirmative¹⁰.

Narrow dating, therefore, like Fritz Schmalenbach's *Kunstgewerbe* years of 1894-1902¹¹, or the conventional dating of the high period as the decade 1895-1905, merely represent the focus of the movement. More liberal time-definitions date the strand in the visual arts from Mackmurdo's title-page to the book *Wren's City of Churches* in 1883¹², to such architecture as that of Vladimir Tatlin's Monument to the Third International in 1919-20¹³.

In music and literature it can be said to have appeared much earlier, and to have lasted even longer. Some argue for its appearance in Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal* in 1857 and Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*¹⁴ of 1857-65, and even parts of the *Ring-cycle*¹⁵, and for its last breaths in aspects of Richard Strauss' late works in the nineteen-thirties¹⁶. But extreme examples can perhaps be regarded as precursors or echoes. More moderate definitions for literature begin with Joris-Karl Huysman's *A rebours* of 1884 (as much Art Nouveau as Decadent, as is argued in Appendices C and D), Stéphane Mallarmé's *Poesies* of 1887, Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince and Other Stories* of 1888, and Gabriele D'Annunzio's *Andrea Sperelli* of 1889. They finish with Marcel Proust's final revisions of *A la recherche du temps perdu* before his death in 1922, and Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* in 1924.

For music such definitions begin with late Liszt (after 1880) and Wagner's *Parsifal* of 1877-1882¹⁷ to Delius' *Hassan* of 1920. In the keyboard repertory, however, Florent Schmitt's 1920-21 *Mirages*, Kaikhosru Sorabji's *The Perfumed Garden* of 1923 and some of Louis Vierne's *Pièces de fantaisie* published in 1927 (although probably mostly written a little before this date) are close to the last works in the tradition.

The works chosen for this study are selected because, amongst other prerequisites, their titles indicate the sort of fantasy or mannerism peculiar to Art Nouveau. The period to be considered gives sufficient scope to make sure that no important work is needlessly excluded, and no aspect of Art Nouveau's development ignored. It will therefore cover the years *circa* 1880 to *circa* 1925, which embraces everything from late Liszt to early Sorabji.

The need for a comprehensive definition covering all the arts

Although Art Nouveau is seen in every facet of the visual arts simply because it is so easy to recognize as style, it is more difficult to identify in literature and music, even though not only its philosophy but

its practice was that a single spirit should pervade all the arts and life. There is thus a need for a definition that covers all expressions of Art Nouveau and differentiates it from other cultural strands during its period of influence.

The identifying features of this strand of artistic philosophy and practice will be seen to run through visual, literary and musical arts of this time, at first as a small, reactionary tendency to the mainstream but eventually one having a full flowering at the century's turn as a movement to rival and even temporarily eclipse mainstream late-Romanticism, at least in the avant-garde of fashion. This strand is the fantastic, with its great themes being those based on states of dream-transformation, and expressed in highly stylized and mannered technique that is primarily affective - deliberately disorientating and mesmeric, inducing dream.

The spirit and techniques of Art Nouveau as they are common to the visual, literary and musical arts can be summed up in eleven principles, to be outlined in Chapter 3 from the viewpoints of each of the three main artistic categories. They have been derived from a consideration of the phenomena of Art Nouveau in the three arts: the sections dealing with visual and literary Art Nouveau appear as appendices A-D, while that on music comprises the main body of this study, with the keyboard repertory as a conveniently sized body of works from which to draw some conclusions. It should be noted, however, that although the sections on visual and literary Art Nouveau are for reasons of space placed in the Appendix, the eleven principles-model against which the keyboard repertory is considered has first been derived from them before being applied to music. This has been done because to this date there has been less systematic study of musical Art Nouveau as a whole than of its visual and literary counterparts. The eleven principles-model thus derived, however, does not rest on any other study, although it has been formulated by a comparison of as many definitions and lists of characteristics as could be found in the standard

works and critical literature listed in the bibliography. It has also undergone modifications and refinements as musical evidence has caused some reevaluation of generalizations originally based primarily on art and literature.

Musical Art Nouveau has thus not been defined on *a priori* grounds but on empirical ones, by a process that has consisted of continual modification, in the light of detailed study of works, of the hypothesis as to what may be said to constitute a work of musical Art Nouveau. There are two obvious prerequisites, and a third contingent one:

1. There must be reasonable evidence that the composer came into contact with Art Nouveau creators or their artefacts
2. The works must be non-conventional in style so that the keyboard repertory can be differentiated from such things as character-pieces of unsurprising harmony and intention.
3. To keep this study to a reasonable length the only works to be included in the main chapters are those with a title or epigraph providing a definite Art Nouveau cue as to the composer's intention. Other works that have different evidence of Art Nouveau provenance can be the subject of further studies; the issue is briefly discussed in Chapter 21, headed The Third-Order Repertory.

Mannerism

The whole phenomenon of Art Nouveau can be regarded as one of the periodic flowerings of mannerism, as has been pointed out above, which is reflected in those names given it at the time that use "style" as part of the expression, like *Jugendstil*, *Style Horta*, *Style moderne* and even *Style Liberty*. (It is also acknowledged in the pejorative terms applied by contemporaries - *Yachting Style*, *Paling Style*, *Bandwurm Stil*¹⁸.) *Art Nouveau* as a term emphasizes its revolutionary aspect, while *Jugendstil* and *Style moderne* are the only terms that cover both its revolutionary ("Jugend" implying the *avant-garde*) and its manneristic aspects ("Stil",

"style").

Like the Flamboyant, Mannerist and Rococo flowerings of mannerism, Art Nouveau emphasizes virtuosity of style, exaggerations of figure, complex interweavings of motif, and a generally esotericist approach.

Maria Rika Maniates in 1971 suggested these characteristics:

1. domination of formulas and intellectual constructivism
2. exaggerated imitation of past styles and manners
3. artificial intricacy
4. expressionistic ecstasy and demonic surrealism
5. refinement and preciousness¹⁹

It will be seen that the comprehensive definition of Art Nouveau offered later in this study comprises all these points, and Maria Maniates, together with Don Harran in his 1969 article on mannerism in the madrigal, instance Art Nouveau as such mannerism²⁰. Maria Maniates' study discusses the contrasting concepts of mannerism ("artificial, esoteric, free of norms, irrational, bizarre, arbitrary") and classicism ("objectivity, naturalness, normality, clarity, order")²¹ as alternating through modern history, following such paradigms as those of C. Focillon and G.R.Hocke, and contradicting Ernst Curtius's opinion that it is a constant rather than cyclical phenomenon²². Another way to look at the flowerings of mannerism is to consider the basic periods of architecture and art since Roman times (Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Romantic) as tending to fall into phases of early, high and late development, with the early purity of form and simplicity of statement developing into a high phase of elaboration on the original idea, and a late phase of mannerism developing style beyond form and content. This model, in which Art Nouveau can be seen as late romanticism, which it partly is, parallels that of Thomas Kuhn's paradigm for the sciences²³.

Thus it is possible to look at Art Nouveau as mannerism in at least three ways:

1. as a flowering occurring through cyclic or sporadic historical processes
2. as something that is always present
3. as a late-phase phenomenon.

But whatever the cause or nature of its appearance in history around 1900, it is clear that mannerism is an essential focus of Art Nouveau; thus the designating of it at the beginning of this chapter as "the mannered fantastic".

To consider Art Nouveau thus is to see it as a general phenomenon across the arts rather than something primarily to do with the visual arts; its practitioners saw it as holistic, as is documented in Appendix B. While the term "Art Nouveau" will be used throughout this study, in accordance with convention, it will be seen to be inconvenient at times when making frequent reference to its contemporary movements like Impressionism, Symbolism, Decadence, Aestheticism and Expressionism. There is a case for referring to Art Nouveau by the use of a similar abstract noun, which would also have the advantage of avoiding the slight confusion entailed by the use of the French term for a phenomenon that was much wider. "Neomannerism" has been suggested²⁴, and although it was originally used as a pejorative term, there is no other extant, and it may be kept in mind when Art Nouveau is considered as covering all the arts, and when it is compared with contemporaneous movements.

It may be argued, however, that Art Nouveau is more than style, that its other focus on the fantastic in all its forms, particularly in literature, deserves equal emphasis. Yet this is contained within mannerism, for its conceits of style are naturally accompanied by conceits of theme and image. To look at this the other way about: it is natural for fantastic subjects to be expressed in the fantastic stylizations of mannerism. In this view virtuosity of style is not seen as something followed for its own sake, but as following the principle of Decorum in suiting its theme. Thus mannerism is as classical as any system of aesthetics, but follows a Dionysian rather than Apollonian principle, as it were.

This important point, that Art Nouveau is based on a classical,

systematic aesthetic, is the starting-point for the most substantial single musicological study of Jugendstil - that of Reinhard Gerlach²⁵. He sees Jugendstil as Pan opposed to *logos* - the lyric-mystic as against the logic-rational principle, or "chaos" as against symmetry. "Chaos" is not simply disorder, however, but an opposite order or logic - that of the emotions and poetry, that surprise and upset mere rationality with their own mystical or Ideal asymmetries²⁶. These are the Order of the inner being, beyond mere rationality, which conventionally sees them as Disorder, chaos, decadence. Professor Gerlach analyzes some early works of Schoenberg, Webern and Berg in detail and shows that their asymmetries are inherently ordered, but differently from works of conventionally balanced aesthetic²⁷. This is also the finding of this study.

As mentioned above, the repertory of this study has been selected on the basis of its themes as indicated by titles and epigraphs, and since it has also been selected with *avant-garde* rather than conventional music as a pre-requisite, the repertory is in this era of more mannered composition. It is at once obvious that there is a wider repertory of such composition that does not bear specifically fantastic titles, and many of these will immediately suggest themselves. This study is therefore only a beginning, and may help to provide some guidelines for the delineation and examination of this wider repertory.

End-notes

- 1 See a listing of many of the terms in Masini, L-V.: *Art Nouveau*, (Rome, Aldo Martello Giunti, 1976; transl. Fairbairn, L. New York, Crown 1987), 10.
- 2 Klaus Kropfingher's doubts about this equating of regional styles should be noted; his exposition of the problem outlines most of the difficulties to be faced when making a preliminary working definition: Kropfingher, K.: *The Shape of Line*, *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13 (1984), 131-33 and notes 5-8.
- 3 The more recent tendency has been to reserve the term for regional studies, which avoids the need for such lengthy denomination as that of the McCredie Symposium in *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13 (1984). Although the use of "Art Nouveau" as an umbrella term thus, for instance, deprives Paris, Nancy and Brussels of **their** regional terms, this is easily supplied by "Paris/Nancy/Brussels Art Nouveau" It then

- similarly encourages differentiation, when this is necessary, between Secession, Jugendstil, Insel and other groups in the German-speaking centres.
- 4 Dalhaus, C.: *Musik und Jugendstil*, in Stenzl, J.: *Art Nouveau, Jugendstil und Musik*, (Zürich-Freiburg, Atlantis 1980), 74-75.
 - 5 Dalhaus, C.: *Neue Musik als historische Kategorie*, *Musica* XXII/3 (May 1968), 167-72.
 - 6 But see Dalhaus' reservations about the use of "late-Romanticism" in this time-frame in his *Nineteenth Century Music*, transl. Robinson, J.B. (Berkeley, California, University of California Press 1989, orig. 1980), Ch.6.
 - 7 As Jost Hermand, Zoltan Roman, Reinhold Brinkmann and others are concerned to emphasize: see Roman, Z.: *From Congruence to Antithesis: Poetic and Musical Jugendstil in Webern's Songs*, *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13, 197-98, Note 11.
 - 8 Brinkmann, R.: *On the problem of establishing "Jugendstil" as a category in the history of music - with a negative plea*, *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13 (1984), 19-48.
 - 9 Noske, F.: *Visible and audible Art Nouveau: the limits of comparison*, *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13 (1984), 11-18.
 - 10 Münster, R. (ed.): *Jugendstil-Musik? Eine Ausstellung in der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek, München, 1987*; Gerlach, R.: *Jugendstil und Musik in der Wiener Schule 1900-1908*, (Regensburg, Laaber 1985).
 - 11 Schmalenbach, F.: *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Flächen-Kunst*, 65.
 - 12 Illustrated in Masini, L-V.: op. cit., 52.
 - 13 Ibid, 13.
 - 14 Dammert, U.: *Der Jugendstil in der Musik*, *Musica* 20 (1966); but see Reinhold Brinkmann's disparagement of Dammert's approach in *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13 (1984), 21.
 - 15 Dalhaus, C.: *Musik und Jugendstil*, 81-85.
 - 16 See Horst Weber's more serious comment on Ludwig Finscher's half-serious statement about Strauss' *Four Last Songs* as Jugendstil in *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13 (1982), 185.
 - 17 Adorno, T.W.: *Zur Partitur des Parsifal*, (*Moments Musicaux*, Frankfurt 1964), 54-56.
 - 18 Masini, L-V.: op. cit., 10.
 - 19 Maniates, M.R.: *Musical Mannerism: Effeteness or Virility?*, *Musical Quarterly* lvii (1971), 278-79.
 - 20 Ibid, 288-89; Harran, D.: *"Mannerism" in the Cinquecento Madrigal*, *Musical Quarterly* lv (1969), 544.
 - 21 Maniates, R.M.: op. cit., 277.
 - 22 Focillon, C.: *The Life and Forms in Art* (New York, 1948; originally 1934); Hocke, G.R.: *Manierismus in der Literatur* (Hamburg 1959) and *Die Welt als Labyrinth* (Hamburg, 1957); Curtius, E.R.: *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (New York, 1953, originally 1948).
 - 23 Kuhn, T.: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1962), 26.
 - 24 Maniates, M.R.: op. cit., 270-71.
 - 25 Gerlach, R.: op. cit.
 - 26 Ibid, 2-4.
 - 27 Of many instances, perhaps the simplest illustration of this point is that of Alban Berg's op.2/3 *Lied* whose ambiguities actually arise from its micro-symmetries of form and harmony - acrostics, parallels, suspensions: see *ibid*, 245-49.

SCHOLARLY APPRECIATION OF ART NOUVEAU

While the importance of the phenomenon of Art Nouveau-Jugendstil at the turn of the nineteenth century was recognized by its contemporaries, the fact that it faded so quickly meant that its importance in the longer term of the history of the arts and crafts began to be doubted. Whether it may be eventually judged to be the last of the Romantic era or the first of the Modern, it can be seen as the first modern fad (although it was, of course, much more serious than mere fads of fashion that succeeded it), sweeping the world with its novelty and in turn being swept away by its successors, notably Art Deco (*Art Décoratif*) in the years after the Great War.

Its nadir was perhaps the nineteen-twenties, when a popular one-volume history of art like Sir William Orpen's *The Outline of Art*¹ failed even to mention it. Since the nineteen-thirties there has been a gradual reevaluation of visual Art Nouveau, helped greatly by the work of Nikolaus Pevsner² and subsequent writers, as well as exhibitions such as those of Zürich in 1952 and Munich in 1987.

The important collection of studies by Helmut Selig in 1959 (*Jugendstil. Der Weg ins 20. Jahrhundert*)³ began a more widespread scholarly interest, seen in general works like those of Stephan Tschudi Madsen⁴, Maurice Rheims⁵, Robert Schmutzler⁶, Hans Hofstätter⁷ and several others⁸ that have followed the monographs and specialist studies of scholars. Jost Hermand⁹ has set out the history of scholarly studies of at least the German scholarly scene in his *Jugendstil* of 1965, which shows that amongst serious students the subject had never died, even though it was sometimes obscured by the relative proximity of writers in the twenties and thirties to the phenomenon. Richard Hamann, Dolf Sternberger, Nikolaus Pevsner, Fritz Schmalenbach, Kurt Bauch, Robert Schmutzler¹⁰, and others had continued to review Jugendstil from 1914 to the nineteen-sixties.

This grew into a general interest with the publishing of so many popular works and reproductions that by the nineteen-eighties bookshops began to have a regular Art Nouveau section, and the eighties saw an actual fashion revival of Art Nouveau (by now the usual umbrella term for all the contemporaneous terms like Jugendstil, Sezession, Stile Moderne, New Style, Liberty and so on).

The virtual popular ignorance of visual art Nouveau until about the nineteen-sixties perhaps corresponds with the New Grove's failure in the late nineteen-seventies¹¹ to recognize it as a subject of musical scholarship despite the limited but lively debate then beginning to grow in the journals of musical scholarship. This debate was given focus and recognition by the sixteen papers of the Andrew McCredie symposium in Adelaide, 1979¹², (published 1984) and the Jurg Stenzl collection of papers as a Festschrift for Willi Schuh that was published in 1980¹³, (containing German versions of three of the McCredie symposium articles, plus eight new ones). The symposium and collection have themselves inspired further research, from which the articles and publications relevant to this study can be found in the Bibliography. Since the focus of this study is the keyboard repertory, there is a wider body of musical research that is not listed, but which has made it possible for repertory studies to be commenced¹⁴.

The proliferation of studies and books on individual artists and media since 1970, as well as serious entries in all general encyclopaedias and art histories show that the period is very much an established factor in the visual arts and crafts and is beginning to be recognized in the literary arts. There are questions over its dating, however, that will be discussed below, although there is universal agreement that it was centred around 1900.

Literary Art Nouveau

Viktor Klotz¹⁵ and Walter Lennig¹⁶ in the late nineteen-fifties,

together with Jost Hermann in the nineteen-sixties¹⁷ helped draw together the serious study of literary manifestations of Jugendstil. This field of study has produced a fairly general consensus that there is indeed literary Jugendstil (and hence by implication literary Art Nouveau in general) and that many of its features can be defined and illustrated, as in such studies as that of Jost Hermand¹⁸, Dominik Jost¹⁹ and Edelgard Hajek on the general picture²⁰ and some detailed work on individual authors, as in that of Karl Eugene Webb on the early Rilke²¹. Jost Hermand's *Jugendstil: ein Forschungs-bericht 1918-1964* to some extent shows the whole research picture from some of the earliest post-Art Nouveau critique onwards, and devotes nearly half its space to literary Jugendstil, beginning with articles in 1933 and 1935. In 1972 Hermand was able to devote a whole book to literary Jugendstil - his *Der Schein des schönen Lebens*²² that discussed both writers and themes with strong claims to Jugendstil character. So it is that besides the young Rilke there are periods in the outputs of Stefan George, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Arno Holz, Alfred Mombert, George Trakl, Ernst Stadler, Richard Dehmel, Max Dauthenday, Else Lasker-Schüler, Gustav Sack and Eduard Stüchen that have received close examination as literary Jugendstil to this date²³; doubtless more will follow, particularly for French and English poets and writers. Dominik Jost suggests that at least twenty others, not all German, are worthy of consideration²⁴. That all is not settled and agreed in this field is attested by Edelgard Hajek's 1971 study that faces the many problems of establishing literary material as being Jugendstil²⁵.

Musical Art Nouveau

The existence of many links between artists, poets and musicians in ballets, plays, operas, cabarets, magazines, belles-lettres and so on in the Art Nouveau period naturally suggested an Art Nouveau influence on music as well, although the first specialist discussion of this only began to appear at the end of the nineteen-sixties, with Reinhold Brinkmann's

Schoenberg und George in 1969, followed by other specialist studies like Gösta Neuwirth's on Wagner's *Parsifal*²⁶, and general ones like that of Helmut Rosen²⁷, which helped to generate the real interest that has since followed. But Professor Neuwirth's study of *Parsifal* raises the question of the time-boundaries of Art Nouveau, since Wagner composed the music-drama between 1877 and 1882. Admittedly, much of the impact of this work and *Tristan und Isolde* (1857-59, first produced at Bayreuth 1865) followed their productions in centres like Munich and Paris close to 1900, but this then prompts other questions like the influence on Art Nouveau of Wagner and other musicians, and its influence on them.

Definitions of Art Nouveau

Debate about the temporal and stylistic boundaries, and in fact the whole definition of Art Nouveau, has been under scholarly discussion from the outset, partly because after the Great War there was a general rejection of the whole phenomenon in favour of Art Deco and other fashions; perhaps there is nothing (except itself) so misunderstood by an epoch as its immediately preceding one. The question of definition will be considered first.

In 1935 Fritz Schmalenbach (whose consistently minimal views on Art Nouveau will be taken as representing one extreme) relegated it to the decorative arts and crafts²⁸ while affirming its importance²⁹, perhaps in answer to Walter Benjamin, who in 1933 saw it merely as "a great and unconscious attempt at retrogression"³⁰. Precisely the opposite view was espoused by Kurt Bauch in 1955 who saw it as the beginning of the whole modern movement, "der Anbruch der Moderne"³¹. Perhaps it may be seen as both, as a watershed between Romanticism and Modernism, with elements of both, just as the Renaissance was partly mediaeval and partly new³². This view will be examined later, but meanwhile it is easy to see Art Nouveau's decorative obsessions springing from Romanticism's later floridity of curving line, just as its deliberate stylizations of figure and line

anticipate the explorations of different representations of reality in Expressionism, Cubism, Art Deco, and other twentieth-century movements.

Many writers on visual Art Nouveau have pointed out its similarities in respect of mannerist curvilinearity to the Rococo: both are late-cycle phenomena (in the sense that the Rococo can be seen as Late Baroque and Art Nouveau as Late Romanticism) and thus show the tendency to floridity and focus on ornament characteristic of other late-cycle stages (like the Flamboyant in Gothic architecture, for instance - yet another source of inspiration to Art Nouveau). Such concentration on stylization is excessive, or mannerist, and there can be no doubt that many artists drew direct inspiration from the Rococo.

Definitions of visual Art Nouveau are considered later in more detail, but Edelgard Hajek has provided a tentative one for music that is useful: "the effective tendency of all realms of international art towards stylization around the turn of the century, in so far as this tendency shows both formal and ideological, that is, stylistic agreement"³³. Hajek's definition omits Art Nouveau's fundamental focus on the fantastic, but centres around the concept of stylization (or mannerism, the same thing but a stronger term: mannerism is the pursuing of stylization to an extreme). This is held to be common to literary and visual Art Nouveau and so must be by extension true for any musical counterpart; it also affirms the geographical universality of the phenomenon. It therefore makes it difficult to talk of different emphases or varieties of Art Nouveau, as Viennese Sezessionstil, Munich Jugendstil, Glasgow Modern Movement and so on if one may have characteristics not fully shared by others. For instance, the floral curving motifs of Munich and the straighter lines of the Glasgow Movement are both considered Art Nouveau. Meyer Shapiro talks of "the unhomogeneous, unstable aspect, the obscure tendencies towards new forms" in the various manifestations of Art Nouveau³⁴. The problems of the scope of definition are well discussed by

Klaus Kropfnger and Reinhold Brinkmann in the first parts of their contributions to the Adelaide Symposium of 1979³⁵. Carl Dahlhaus' contribution to the Stenzl collection addresses the philosophical implications of definition, examining the concept of *Stilwille* (stylistic intention) and the theory of *Stilkunst* as opposed to Realism at the turn of the century, and the important notion of *doppelten-Mimesis* - that reality of feeling is identical in life and music (which obviously provides philosophical common ground for all the arts in the period)³⁶. Following the lead of art historians, attention has also been paid to the writings of the artists, poets and musicians of the period, particularly to those who like Henry van de Velde could articulate at a deep level the aspirations of themselves and others. Others, like Debussy, were far more cryptic and poetic in their thinking, but from them all some consensus developed that is examined later in this study.

An additional note is provided by Reception Theory in comparative literary criticism, particularly that formulated by Hans Robert Jauss³⁷, in which any view we may form of Art Nouveau is inevitably coloured by us and our milieu: we merely form our viewpoint on Art Nouveau rather any really objective one. In this light it may be that our reconsideration and reevaluation of Art Nouveau tells us as much about the later twentieth century as it does about the turn of the nineteenth. This is one aspect of the Art Nouveau debate that as yet has received little attention, but now that the twentieth century has seen the full and barren flowering of the technological revolution we are perhaps more sympathetic to the statement made by Art Nouveau against mass production, proletarianism and functionalist principles³⁸. In studying Art Nouveau, therefore, we are also studying ourselves.

The temporal boundaries of Art Nouveau have been a source of disagreement, with a minimal definition like that of Schmalenbach covering only the years 1894-1902³⁹, as against Kurt Bauch's⁴⁰ that would include

Edvard Munch, Käthe Kollwitz and Ferdinand Hodler, generally considered to have become Expressionionists after about 1904. Even this may be restrictive, for if late Richard Wagner is to be considered on the one hand and even late Richard Strauss on the other, the period will need to be widened to consider its beginnings in the 1880s to some final development after the Great War. It is clear that there was a very short period of the phenomenon during which it was the principal concern of the artistic *avant-garde*, possibly as short as the 1894-1902 span that Schmalenbach claims, and that most younger artists, writers and musicians, like, say, Edvard Munch, William Butler Yeats and Arnold Schoenberg moved on to new fields soon afterwards. But others seem to have continued to work in this style, at least in literature and music, just as mass fashion did until 1914, so that some elasticity of dating is necessary, depending on whether one is talking of the possible antecedents, the exponents of the high period around 1900, or those who stayed to see it developed to ultimate conclusions like Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* (1909-10) or Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (1924). Possibly now outdated considerations of *Zeitgeist* influenced scholars of Schmalenbach's generation to feel that by 1902 Art Nouveau had "finished" and Expressionism "begun" - that there could not be two such distinctively different movements coexisting. This may be true for the *avant-garde*, but not all artists are innovators, some preferring to develop more fully what the *avant-garde* in its haste has tasted briefly and then discarded. To explore, not exploit, is the occupation of *avant-gardes*, but it must not be thought that once they have discovered then discarded something there is no more to be said with it. Others can see further into its possibilities and remain to develop it more fully.

In the light of this it seems more logical to consider any point in cultural history as being a *mélange* of partially or completely conflicting tendencies operating simultaneously, so that Realism, Historicism, the

beginnings of Expressionism, the tail-end of Impressionism and the still-developing Post-Impressionist group of styles are all to some extent contemporaneous with Art Nouveau⁴¹. This is an important point, for it is not at all clear that all those contributing to the whole debate over accepting Art Nouveau as a recognized musical category or character are merely arguing over it as one of many contemporary influences and movements, or whether they feel that there should be a period inserted in the elementary history books as there is for the Baroque or Classical or Romantic eras. Whatever the earlier debate, ever since Carl Dahlhaus' vanquishing of both Hegelian *Zeitgeist* and Marxist historical theory for music⁴² there can be no question of considering Art Nouveau as a period that followed Romanticism and preceded Expressionism or anything else, just as it is misleading to consider Romanticism as the only musical strand in the period from Beethoven to Brahms.

There seems to have been from the first a fairly general agreement that despite regional differences enough common spirit and technique existed amongst Art Nouveau artists to make it reasonable to treat the separate colonies of activity at Glasgow, London, Paris, Nancy, Brussels, Darmstadt, Munich, Vienna, Barcelona, Amsterdam, Helsinki, Budapest, Belgrade, Moscow and so on as one, for the purposes of discussion, while recognizing that there were some important differences.

Another restrictive position, however, besides that of considering only a narrow time-range, refuses to consider even painting to have been part of Art Nouveau proper. Schmalenbach disagreed on this with Richard Hamann from the beginning, and had hardly changed his views even in 1966⁴³. Schmalenbach's narrow field of study has in the end not even the virtue of making discussion simpler, for it seems to raise more questions of exclusion than it answers by its limited inclusion. Scholars since Schmalenbach have in fact tended to treat painting as the prime medium of Art Nouveau and argued from its imagery, style and meaning towards

literary and musical linkage. But the importance of the plastic and monumental arts is not overlooked, as scholars frequently adduce comparisons involving all the media from architecture to *faience* in their consideration of Art Nouveau; the general defence for this is the principle of *Gesamtkunstwerke* (or perhaps *Gesamtlebenkunst*), held by the most advanced and successful practitioners of Art Nouveau, and enunciated by their theoreticians at the time (as is examined in the chapter dealing with the essence of visual Art Nouveau - Appendix B).

Before considering a comprehensive definition for Art Nouveau on which this study can be based, it is necessary to look at recent musicological studies that focus on linking musical and visual Art Nouveau; these are the most recent and intensive in the whole field of the subject, and may be seen as defining the questions that this study attempts to address.

Current musicological approaches

There are six main methods of arguing for or against the linking of music to Art Nouveau that are discernible in recent scholarship, which may be combined in various ways. Part of the confusion in the whole debate arises from the failure of one writer to realize that another is justifiably proceeding according a different route, adducing a different sort of evidential matter to illustrate and justify his or her position. All methods have value in adding to the general enlightenment on the subject; all are necessary, but some may be thought insufficient by themselves to convince.

A common problem all face is that in the end they must rely to some extent at least on *argumentum per exemplum*, a method not in itself conclusive, but relying on the weight of probabilities. The same can be said of each method: none is by itself conclusive, but to some extent relies on the supporting evidence from the others, so that a general probability of greater or lesser extent is amassed. Another problem is

that of unconscious selectivity in choosing examples, so that a skewed viewpoint is formed, but perhaps the normal process of scholarly review by one's peers is enough to ensure that this is soon corrected.

The six approaches to linking music with Art Nouveau are:

1. **Essential features**

The method of Horst Weber, Frits Noske and to some extent Klaus Kropfnger in the McCredie symposium is to try to identify the essence of Art Nouveau and see whether any music can be said to possess these essential qualities. Weber's paper posits the twin factors of figure and ground as the fundamentals of both painting and music, arguing that what in non-Art Nouveau work is ground becomes figure in Art Nouveau itself, and is thus allegory⁴⁴. Frits Noske finds three essential features: the asymmetrically undulating line culminating in a whipshape, the reduction of space to mere surface at the expense of perspective, and ornament as determining factor⁴⁵. Klaus Kropfnger singles out the shape of line as the single vital feature in determining structure, although he seems to imply that there are other factors governing non-structural features⁴⁶.

That there is some difference over the essential features of Art Nouveau does not invalidate the method, for in each paper the writer is only considering the features relevant to a single composer. Each is specific about the need for a systematic approach, which his paper endeavours to provide.

As a method it has clear strengths, although it relies firstly on a consensus being developed as to what body of essential features can be said to comprise Art Nouveau, which will only be established with more scholarly debate, and secondly on the success of making sufficiently clearly the links between visual, literary and aural evidence.

The method is an obvious one for the establishing of links between visual and literary Art Nouveau where, because of literature's relatively specific articulation of subject matter, parallels are more easily found.

In this writers like Richard Samuels are following the method of Madsen⁴⁷, Sternberger⁴⁸, Hermand, Schmutzler, Hofstätter and others in attempting to sum up the essence of visual Art Nouveau. Professor Samuels, for instance, quotes primary evidence to build up a background for the essential features of Art Nouveau, for which he actually uses Geoffrey Warren's formulation⁴⁹.

2. The evidence of imagery and device

This is the most common approach, for the obvious reason that Art Nouveau imagery is so distinctive, and settings of Art Nouveau texts or scenes in song or instrumental tone-painting are such an inviting point of departure. Edward Lockspeiser⁵⁰, Klaus Stahmer⁵¹ and Hans Hollander⁵² treat imagery in a general way, while others like Arthur Wenk⁵³, William W. Austin⁵⁴, Jean-Michel Nectoux⁵⁵, Gösta Neuwirth⁵⁶, Hermann Danuser⁵⁷ and Gerald Abraham⁵⁸ discuss specific images.

The argument from imagery seems very persuasive, for the music of the period readily conveys suggestions of water, flowing, gliding, waving, suspension of time (which, like depth, is limited in Art Nouveau), and so on, especially with the enlarged palette of effects being explored by composers (modes, whole-tones, chromatics, augmented and diminished intervals and chords, non-functional harmonies, unresolved cadences and crescendos, atonalities, new rhythmical effects, and exploration of new ornamental figures). The persuasiveness is at first emotional, as is seen in the rather poetic responses of Hans Hollander to musical effects he sees as being like Art Nouveau images: his calling wholetonal effects sexless (in the sense of the androgenous Art Nouveau youth rather than the Art Nouveau *femme fatale*), for instance, proves rather ambiguous and unhelpful; it is proper for the musicologist to seek something more than such subjective evidence and unsystematic approach. Careful accumulation of the evidence of imagery, however, can produce a much more convincing argument by sheer weight of evidence, particularly where there is a

literary text or a clear visual cue that can be seen to have prompted the music. There can also be cases where Ockham's Razor would indicate that a link between visual/literary and aural imagery is the simplest explanation, or cases where there is no other likely explanation.

The most interesting of the arguments from imagery are those that deal with the suspension of time-space dimensions, where there is motion but no progress, as Carl Dahlhaus⁵⁹ and others have argued. This is a key feature of the essence of Art Nouveau by any reckoning; it therefore becomes a part of the method of argument used in 1. above.

There are many hazards involved in giving weight to imagery-evidence. For instance, other artistic strands contemporary with Art Nouveau may use similar images, so that imagery of water, say, may be Realist/Naturalist tone-painting or Symbolist icon as readily as it may be Art Nouveau fluidity, intangibility or the seemingly innocuous element from which emerge sirens. Identifying imagery, therefore, is hardly enough, because some evidence of the composer's intentions in using it may be needed as well, so that scholars accordingly examine composers' lives, writings and backgrounds thoroughly.

3. The approach from first principles

Reinhold Brinkmann constructs a theoretical model of what an imaginary ideal Art Nouveau composition would comprise⁶⁰, and then searches possible candidates to see if it can be shown that they fulfil his criteria for Art Nouveau authentication, as it were. It should be noted that Professor Brinkmann's title for his discussion indicates that he is addressing the question of whether there can be said to be a category in musical history called "Art Nouveau", which is a much more difficult task than showing that a particular piece or composer has Art Nouveau characters. He therefore remains sceptical at the end of his paper, although his earlier *Schoenberg und George* (1969) perhaps gives more grounds for optimism. As in some other writers it is not entirely clear

what he means by "category", which concept he remains sceptical about, but he seems to establish that some elements of composition may be said to have Art Nouveau characters.

Carl Dahlhaus naturally adopts the method of arguing from first principles in *Musik und Jugendstil*, which is his leaning in other cognate discussions like *Realism in Nineteenth Century Music*, the sixth chapter of his *Nineteenth Century Music*, and the tenth chapter of his *Esthetics of Music*⁶¹. Without being as systematic as Brinkmann he proceeds largely from the theory of *doppelten-Mimesis* to identify ornament⁶² and the paradox of motion without progress in *Zeitenthobenheit* (suspension of time)⁶³, and argues for evidence of them in various harmonic and other compositional devices.

4. Contemporaneity and connexion.

When a composer like Debussy surrounds himself with Art Nouveau (as well as Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art-works), sets music to Art Nouveau poetry, and is well acquainted with most of the leaders in visual and literary Art Nouveau in the Paris of the time, there is strong circumstantial evidence of his music's containing Art Nouveau characters as well. Supporting evidence of intention, like letters and theoretical or critical writing (again present in Debussy's case, although often ambiguous), can help make the case. It still remains, however, for actual close study of the music itself to demonstrate a reasonable linkage between the visual or literary sources of its possible inspiration. In a strong case like that of Debussy, at least between about 1888 and 1913, the circumstantial evidence of contemporaneity can put his status as composer strongly influenced by Art Nouveau (besides other things, notably Symbolism) almost beyond argument.

This is a method that is to be found in the studies of Kurt von Fischer⁶⁴, Elise Kuhl Kirk⁶⁵, Zoltan Roman⁶⁶, Theo Hirsbrunner⁶⁷, Francois Lesure⁶⁸, Andrew McCredie⁶⁹, Graham Strahle⁷⁰ and Edward Lockspeiser (his

Debussy studies)⁷¹. The chief composers considered are Debussy, Chausson, Charles Koechlin and Webern, but there are several other composers for whom there is strong circumstantial evidence of affinity with Art Nouveau, notably, of course, Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler. It is only proper that at this stage of research such composers should receive most attention: techniques of analysis of Art Nouveau characters that these studies may elucidate can serve as paradigms for more difficult cases.

It is of course quite possible that a composer can be surrounded by and appreciate Art Nouveau visual art and literature and yet not compose under these influences, as when Schoenberg, Bartok and Webern moved onwards from their earlier work, or when Saint-Saens for the most part continued in traditional Romantic manner; conversely, Richard Strauss may be thought to have continued composing in an Art Nouveau manner long after its period of high influence had been succeeded by other movements. What is looked for is *innere Nähe* (inner nearness, essential sympathy), which, like so many of the factors in such study, is an intangible but important one.

5. Studies of harmony and structure

By itself this might be thought a difficult procedure for discussing possible links between the Art Nouveau media, but Ray Longyear⁷², Klaus Kropfinger⁷³ and Lewis Wickes⁷⁴ amass sound analytical detail about the music they consider, while Marie-Clair Beltrano-Patier briefly⁷⁵ refers (to harmonic features of Fauré's *mélodies*. Structure is as demanding a subject as harmony, so that Roy Howat's study of Symbolist aspects of structure in Debussy⁷⁶ opens for discussion the issue of the distinction between Symbolism and Art Nouveau, which is considered throughout this study. William Austin's study of Satie connects elements of Art Nouveau timelessness to his structural method.

What these writers do is to concentrate on the actual processes of forming patterns and structures of compositional procedure that show

likeness across artistic media. They do not concentrate on the sort of instrumental music that as a rule has neither text nor title to indicate connexion, but their method shows the way for such music. As a necessary precondition they do advance some circumstantial evidence of connexion during their analyses, of course: without some sort of hint from contemporaneity or connexion it is difficult to see such analysis remaining unambiguous.

6. Evidence of mannerism

This is a character firmly associated with Art Nouveau, whose use in the McCredie symposium is illustrated by Lewis Wickes⁷⁷ and Ludwig Finscher⁷⁸. As a method it has the advantage that it is not dependent on the evidence of imagery as are some of the other methods, although it does, of course, need some evidence from contemporaneity or connexion. These latter are, however, not so important as in other methods because in general Art Nouveau is easily recognizable for its relative extremity of effect. Mannerism implies emphasis upon, even insistence upon, characteristically stylized effects and devices that are either non-functional, considering the way music conventionally is constructed and flows, or are actually insistent, to the point where their effect may become obsessive. It thus involves repetition, which may go beyond the conventional bounds of taste and balance to produce an atmosphere just as precious or hypnotic as that of a Klimt canvas or Beardsley drawing; in effect this produces a new aesthetic of balance, one heavily slanted towards effect.

Mannerism or stylization was of course not confined in the period to Art Nouveau, for even Realism had its stylizations, but in general its stylizations were not employed in a sufficiently extreme fashion to qualify as mannerism. The semi-rhetorical formulae of *imitatio* used by realistic tone-painting of, say, the Storm pieces so beloved of French organ virtuosi of the period, are in one sense just as much stylizations

as the gestures of Art Nouveau, but realist music nowhere uses the rhetorical gesture for its own sake, taking it to the extreme of constructing a whole work on gesture, and attempting to explore its deeper musical possibilities, as does Liszt's *Csárdás obstiné* or Ravel's *Le gibet* (from *Gaspard de la nuit*). Realism's effects are there for a secondary purpose; in Art Nouveau they are the purpose.

Carl Dahlhaus makes the point that if such use of stylization is essentially an opposite to realism, then one should look in form, genre and style for clues to Art Nouveau character⁷⁹, an approach which is briefly considered in Chapter 21 of this study.

The whole question of mannerism as Art Nouveau character is not simple: while there are some relatively restrained but clearly Art Nouveau musical compositions (like, for instance, Alexander Zemlinsky's *Fantasien über Gedichte von Richard Dehmel*) that might not at first seem amenable to mannerist analysis, they are in a minority. Further examination of musical Art Nouveau may well address the question as to whether mannerism of some form or extent may be a necessary factor in all of its compositions, even if it is not the only one. If it can also be shown that in the period mannerism is or tends to be solely Art Nouveau, the firmest base for establishing musical Art Nouveau as a type will have been established.

General

It is not to be thought, of course, that the studies adduced above as exemplars of each method confine themselves to that method: all examine imagery, all attempt some form of philosophical justification of their approach and philosophical understanding of their composers' approaches, and all argue for some evidence of contemporaneity or connexion, for instance, but each tends to give weight to one method more than to others.

The six methods may be thought to proceed on the assumption that Art Nouveau music derives from visual and/or literary Art Nouveau, but in most

studies there is reference made not only to the principle of *Gesamtkunstwerk* but to the fact that many contemporary Art Nouveau spokesmen claimed that music was the central, originating medium from which the others took their inspiration, at least in a formal sense (Walter Pater's "All art aspires to the condition of music", for instance⁸⁰). Whether music causes visual and literary Art Nouveau or the other way about - and doubtless there are cases of each - some sort of linkage needs to be shown.

Depending on the musical works under consideration in any study it is obviously more helpful to consider as many of the six approaches as possible than to expect one to suffice, for it is in the end only sheer weight of contributing evidence that can make a case for Art Nouveau music.

This study attempts to explore the problem of definition and delineation of musical Art Nouveau in a systematic way drawn from all six methods. The approach adopted is to form a model based on the Essential Principles approach, subsuming all the six methods outlined above.

End-notes

- 1 This book is typical of the biases and omissions of its time and its source: Orpen, W.: *The Outline of Art*, (London 1923, revised 1942 and 1950, still without mentioning Art Nouveau).
- 2 Pevsner, N.: *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, (London, Faber & Faber 1936), revised as *Pioneers of Modern Design. From William Morris to Walter Gropius*, (London, Penguin 1960), the 1936 chapter reprinted in Hermand, J.: *Jugendstil. Ein Forschungsbericht 1918-1964*, (Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1965) (
- 3 Selig, H. (ed.): *Jugendstil. Der Weg ins 20. Jahrhundert*, (Heidelberg/München, Keyser'sche Verlag 1959).
- 4 Madsen, S.T.: *Art Nouveau*, (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1967), originally 1956, in Norwegian; transl. Christopherson R.I., (London, Architectural Press 1973).
- 5 Rheims, M.: *The Age of Art Nouveau*, transl. Evans, P., (London, Thames & Hudson 1965).
- 6 Schmutzler, R.: *Art Nouveau, Jugendstil*, (Stuttgart, 1977); (transl. Roditi, E., London, Thames & Hudson 1964).
- 7 Hofstätter, H.H.: *Geschichte der europäischen Jugendstilmalerei*, (Köln 1968); *Art Nouveau*, (Baden-Baden, Holle 1968).
- 8 Most notably Masini, L-V.: op. cit.; Amaja, M.: *Art Nouveau*, (London-New York 1966); and Cremona, I.: *Il Tempo Art Nouveau*, (Florence 1964); plus other more popular works that concentrate on reproductions rather than commentary, like Lorenz, O.: *Art Nouveau*, (London, Bibliophile Books

- 1985); Warren, G.: *The All-Colour Book of Art Nouveau*, (London, Cathay Books 1974).
- 9 Hermand, J. & Hammann, R.: *Stilkunst um 1900* (Vol. 4 of *Gründerzeit. Deutsche Kunst und Kultur von der Gründerzeit bis zum Expressionismus*), (Berlin, Akademie 1973).
- 10 Hermand, J.: *Jugendstil* (all these writers are reprinted or printed here)
- 11 Sadie, S. (ed.): *The New Grove*, vols 1-20, (London, Macmillan 1979). Although both New Grove and the *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie* (ed. Eggebrecht, H.H.) have articles on Expressionism and music, and New Grove on Impressionism and music, neither Art Nouveau nor Symbolism is recognized.
- 12 McCredie, A.D. (ed.): *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13, (1984).
- 13 Stenzl, J. (ed.): op. cit.
- 14 The first of these has been that by Sylvia Sowa-Winter for the harp: *Die Harfe im Art Nouveau*, (München & Salzburg, Katzbichler 1988).
- 15 Klotz, V.: *Jugendstil in der Lyrik*, Akzente 4, (1957).
- 16 Lennig, W.: *Der literarische Jugendstil*, Deutsche Universitäts-Zeitung 13, (1958).
- 17 Hermand, J.: *Lyrik des Jugendstils*, (Stuttgart, Philipp Reclam 1964); idem: *Jugendstil*, 402-12.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Jost, D.: *Literarischer Jugendstil*, (Stuttgart, J.B. Metzler 1969).
- 20 Hajek, E.: *Literarischer Jugendstil, vergleichende Studien zur Dichtung und Malerei um 1900*, (Düsseldorf 1971).
- 21 Webb, K.E.: *Rainer Maria Rilke and Jugendstil*, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina 1978).
- 22 Hermand, J.: *Der Schein des schönen Lebens*, (Frankfurt, Athenäum 1972).
- 23 Brinkmann, R.: *Schoenberg und George. Interpretation eines Liedes*, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 26, (1969), 26ff; Frisch, W.: *Schoenberg and the poetry of Richard Dehmel*, (Schoenberg Institute, 1986); Holz, Trakl, Mombert, and Stadler receive chapters in Hermand, J.: op. cit.; the rest are examined in Jost, D.: op. cit., ch. 5.
- 24 Jost, D.: op. cit., 41 et passim.
- 25 Hajek, E.: *Methodenprobleme beim Vergleich der Künste in literarischer Jugendstil*, (Düsseldorf 1972).
- 26 Neuwirth, G.: *Parsifal und der musikalische Jugendstil*, (1971)
- 27 Rosen, H.: *Musik und bildene Kunst*, (1971).
- 28 Schmalenbach, F.: *Jugendstil. Ein Beitrag zu Theorie und Geschichte der Flächenkunst* (Wurzburg 1935); *Jugendstil und neue Sachlichkeit* (1936), reprinted in Hermand, J.: *Jugendstil*, 65-77.
- 29 See Sterner, G.: *Jugendstil, Kunstformen zwischen Individualismus und Massengesellschaft*, (Köln 1977), 146.
- 30 Benjamin, W.: *Rückblick auf Stefan George*, in *Gesammte Schriften III*, (Frankfurt/Main 1972), 394.
- 31 Bauch, K.: *Einleitung to Seling, H*: op. cit., 9-36.
- 32 See Dahlhaus, C.: *Nineteenth Century Music*, , 332-339.
- 33 Hajek, E.: *Literarischer Jugendstil*, 12.
- 34 Shapiro, M.: *Style (Anthropology Today, Chicago 1953)*, 293.
- 35 Kropfinger, K.: *The Shape of Line*, 131-168; Brinkmann, R.: *Jugendstil as Category*.
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THE ELEVEN ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES OF ART NOUVEAU

An Empirical Model for Defining Art Nouveau

All the approaches summarized in the first chapter - those of musicological scholarship - proceed from different definitions of Art Nouveau. The same can be said of the various definitions used in the more scholarly works on visual and literary Art Nouveau, discussed in Appendices A and C respectively. Therefore, before further studies can advance the subject significantly, the task of establishing a satisfactory definition that can cover all the arts must be attempted. This is the topic of this chapter, and the method adopted is based on two sources - firstly on the art-works themselves, particularly those generally felt to be at the core of Art Nouveau, and secondly on the various definitions so far formulated by the more scholarly writers on Art Nouveau.

There is consensus as to what the key works of visual Art Nouveau are - those that may be seen to be common to, or obviously similar to, the large collections in the general studies of Richard Schmutzler, Hans Hofstätter, Lara-Vinca Masini, Maurice Rheims and to some extent in lesser works like those of Otto Lorenz, Geoffrey Warren and those works concentrating on particular crafts of Art Nouveau, of which Siegfried Wichmann's study of ornament is a typical example¹. This body of reproductions and photographs tends towards a consensus as to what constitutes Art Nouveau, a reference point against which definitions must be tested, with the reservation that because of the uncertainty of status of any individual work it may take more than one contrary instance to invalidate a hypothesis, and that scholarly review over time is the ultimate proving ground.

There is a slowly growing consensus about literary and musical canons, seen in the subjects of the studies edited by Jost Hermand and Dominik Jost for literature, and of Andrew McCredie and Jurg Stenzl for music. Of the book-length studies, those of Karl Eugene Webb on Rilke,

and Reinhard Gerlach on the early music of Schoenberg, Webern and Berg have done much to further the subject.

Since, however, it is in the visual arts that there is most agreement as to a core of works that can be said to be representative of Art Nouveau, it is on this base that a definition has been formed, and then applied to literature and music.

Approaches to defining visual Art Nouveau

The most usual approach of writers has been to give a historical narrative of Art Nouveau in the main European centres, which thus explains the general origins of the movement and helps establish a canon of its works, but does little to define the essential points they have in common.

It is possible, however, to find amongst this narrative approach those points that these writers seem to regard as essential, and these will be considered below.

There is occasionally some confusion between **essence** (for instance, repetitive rhythms in line and pattern) and **attribute** (curved line - it is not the curves that are essential, but the "rhythmic tension"² in line, for such repetitive rhythm is seen in the straight lines of the Glasgow School and even in straight lines of lettering or bordering). The important point for this study is that linkage between the arts can properly only be made at the level of essential principles, not at that of attributes that may be contingent to a particular art, school or artist.

Defining visual Art Nouveau

The various terms Art Nouveau, Jugendstil, Sezessionstil and so on were first applied to the visual arts, and most of the theory that developed subsequently, at least to about 1965, has been intended to apply only to these. The extension of the term into the fields of literature and music has been guided by various definitions that have drawn upon the philosophical and aesthetic principles adduced for visual art. These principles have been gradually forming as the critical literature has

developed the subject, so that it is now possible for the problems of definition and linkage between the arts to be treated systematically. The fact that its artists tended to feel that Art Nouveau was essentially holistic - embracing all the arts - is the main justification for seeking to establish a comprehensive definition that may be used for delineating part of the musical repertory as being Art Nouveau.

Essence and attribute in definitions

The two are often confused when defining an art that, like Art Nouveau, rests so much on style. The difference between essence and attribute is often a nice one not easy of definition. In the case of Art Nouveau, attributes, that is, contingent variables like sinuous line, peacocks, swans, sirens, entwined flora and so on, may be catalogued as if these were essential ends in themselves for the artists as much as, for instance, the principle of stylization. But such attributes may not be common to different artists, and are in principle not comparable between the arts: a Horta staircase is not a Strauss progression³.

Concentration on attributes at the outset is confusing: it is as pointless and wrong as to say that preoccupation with Classical subjects, exaggerated costume and line-drawing is the essence of Beardsley, or that modes, wholetones and pentatonics are the essence of Debussy in mid-period: Beardsley is still Beardsley and Debussy still Debussy even when their works do not employ these attributes. Their essence lies behind contingent imagery or pitch-sets, in philosophical and aesthetic principles that can be adduced from their work and their writings.

The search for a definition of visual Art Nouveau

This may be said to begin with Richard Hamann's 1914 *Die deutsche Malerei im 19 Jahrhundert*, from which the chapter titled *Jugendstil und dekorativer Archaismus in der deutscher Malerei* was reprinted in Jost Hermand's 1965 symposium⁴. The title of Richard Hamann's chapter suggests that archaism is a defining essential, which sits oddly with the French

movement's title *Art Nouveau*, but is certainly accords with the principles identified in this study as interweaving, flat dimensionality, and ambiguity (symbolistic intention), all of which are of at least mediaeval provenance. (Hermand's main emphases are firstly on *Linienprinzip*, or line as the principle on which compositional construction of the picture proceeds, secondly on arabesque, or curve that has dynamic and emotional energy, and thirdly on the lack of depth⁵.)

Ernst Michalski's *Die entwicklungsgeschichtliche Bedeutung der Jugendstils* of 1925 follows the Hamann approach of setting out the historical development and letting the evidence speak for itself⁶. His main emphasis is on the S-line that, like Hamann, he sees as the foundation of design. He also raises the important issue of the holistic nature of Art Nouveau, and is later quoted approvingly by Robert Schmutzler on this point.

Dolf Sternberger's 1934 article sees ornament as the central issue, taken from its usual function of added decoration to be the main principle of structure. The importance of sensuousness is dealt with in his 1942 study, and in 1952 he stresses the fantasy-element in his *Zauberbann*⁷.

Nikolaus Pevsner, like Sternberger and Hamann, states in *Der Jugendstil* of 1936⁸ that the long sinuous line is the *leitmotiv* of Jugendstil, and instances Mackmurdo's title-page to *Wren's City of Churches* as the early paradigm. Other important features are firstly concern with decoration rather than meaning (presumably its meaning as normally interpreted in the context of that which it is decorating); and secondly organic (structurally essential) decoration.

Peter Mayer in 1937 stresses the tensions between articulation and ornament, modernity and symbolism⁹. The first point is interesting, for he seems to mean by *Gliederung* [articulation] what in this study is included under the principle of interweaving: rather than having the elements of a picture incorporated into the twin functions of principal

figure and decoration of that figure, all elements are equal and decorative, so that the structure of the picture is seen as multiple and contrapuntal rather than monolithic.

Other writers show what they consider the essential features of Art Nouveau by their titles: to Hilton Kramer it is *The Erotic Style*¹⁰, and Patrick Waldberg supports this with his *Eros, Modern Style*¹¹. These writers, however, are conscious that they are drawing attention to only one of its aspects, but the one they consider needs emphasizing in the discussion of the nineteen-sixties when there is a resurgence of scholarly interest in Art Nouveau.

Robert Schmutzler's 1962 work¹² presents a wide collection of reproductions, mainly from painting and illustrations. There is a detailed and comprehensive historical account, from which some incisive comments on essential points can be gleaned. Among these are the statements "an ornamental surface-movement where the ornament remains dominant...by its very nature, this ornament is always flowing" (p.9); "they are signs closely connected with form, meaning and symbol" (9); "the Manneristic principle of the *figura serpentina*" (10); "Metamorphosis...plays an essential role in the world of forms, patterns and ideas of Art Nouveau" (10); "the human figure as an asymmetrical, plastic ornament" (10); "a narcissistic style...a line is in love with itself" (12) - which refers to stylization and the repetitive rhythm of line (as well as to the influence of the Narcissus myth on Art Nouveau symbology); "exhibitionist" style - thus the symbol of the peacock (14); "esoteric...the dream life...*die Insel...l'art pour l'art*" (15); asymmetry of focus, simplification of line, reduction of dimensions (30); disguise of form (261); dissatisfaction with the merely human (262); the Dionysian principle - Pan, nymphs and satyrs' orgiastic natures (272). He also stresses (11) the holistic dream of a universal art that Ernst Michalski notes in 1925. Schmutzler is himself mostly clear about the difference

between essence and attribute, or principle and illustrations of it, but does not specifically distinguish them, or set out a summary of attributes. All those mentioned above fit the eleven principles model introduced below, but without covering it comprehensively.

Maurice Rheims' *The Age of Art Nouveau* (English translation 1965)¹³ is presented from the viewpoint of all the arts, but with architecture comprising the first and largest chapter, reflecting his own predilection. He has a representative selection of illustrations with a paragraph of commentary on each that helps define his approach. His introduction is devoted to the broad historical origins of the movement, and while he specifically denies that it is an aspect of the *belle époque*, he is less clear about what it is. He does say, however, that on the one hand it represents the last workings-out of bourgeois mannerism - presumably that seen in the tendency to over-decoration (although he finds the excessive use of symbolism to be part of bourgeois mannerism, which would have displeased the Symbolists), and on the other it is a revolutionary exploration of technique and spirit that shows the way to later revolutions in twentieth-century art. It is anti-historicist, and either sensuous or frankly sensual, and develops the art of ornament to perfection. He sees its architecture as functional and in tune with its age, although this seems a little inconsistent with his denial of it as expressing *la belle époque*.

Stephan Tschudi Madsen's important 1956 work, revised in 1967¹⁴, first stresses undulating line as the principal ornamental characteristic, and notes that with all its restless energy the line is balanced (15). He goes on to discuss five different aspects of its form as it appears in different centres: first is the abstract and structural, almost sculptural and dynamic nature of its composition; second its floral and plant inspiration; third its linear, two-dimensional conception; fourth its geometrical aspect; and fifth its animal-inspired forms. He notes its

transformational nature, its use of ornament as the essence of structure, its two dimensional nature, its desire to be "new", and the "cult of line".

Hans Hofstätter's 1968 *Art Nouveau*¹⁵ has an extensive range of illustrations and commentary that approaches the subject artist by artist in each country. This approach thus differs again from those of Rheims and Schmutzler, so that between them they have, respectively, focuses on the various arts, on centres of activity, and on artists. As with Schmutzler, it is possible to glean his views on the nature of Art Nouveau although they are not set out systematically. He sees it firstly as being oriented partly to the traditional afunctional principle and partly to the modern-pointing functionalist one (p.7) but does not elaborate this. Art Nouveau is holistic (7,14), opposed to mechanization and industrialization (7), symbolistic (8-9), about the transformation of nature through stylization and limited dimensionality (9,11), and uses outlining to make everything part of a design (11). There are two other aspects that are not clear - positive and negative forms (12), and his concept of painters using meditative experience in composition of the elements as design (12). He also seems firmly committed to the idea of Art Nouveau as an epoch, without dating it beyond saying that it lasted about twenty years.

Lara-Vinca Masini's *Art Nouveau* of 1976¹⁶ is copiously illustrated and is based around a survey of different nations' arts and artists, but with an effort to make a balance between representation of the various arts and crafts, including architecture. Again there is no clear defining of its principles, but she does try to approach this problem from the viewpoint of all the arts. Nature is the basis of their forms and images (p.38), reduced to the "rhythmic energy" and "symbolic quality of line" (38); there is limited dimensionality (40) and a uniting across the arts (42). Thereafter she concentrates on particular images and attributes - symbols, the dance, and the "rhythmic, convoluted line pulsating with

movement is the ultimate motif of the Art Nouveau style" (47). Her summing up is that Art Nouveau is "essentially a two-dimensional ornamental style which explores the possibilities of line and the forms which they describe" (48).

Siegfried Wichmann's *Jugendstil-Art Nouveau* of 1977 emphasizes ornament, asymmetry of line-form, and, in painting, a tension between symbolism and abstraction¹⁷.

Otto Lorenz' book¹⁸ mainly confines itself to illustrations of posters, but its text deals more generally, and since it is not extensive deals with the subject as a whole. His text is therefore halfway between those of Rheims, Schmutzler, Hofstätter and Masini on the one hand, and those of the encyclopaedists on the other. The latter, constrained in compass, must attempt single-sentence definitions, but Lorenz is a little more full: "stress on the ornamental, the heavy stylization by rhythmic overemphasis on form and the dominance of line" (5), and then recourse to attributes, like the other authors mentioned in this paragraph: frequent references to Gothic art, the creeping plant motif, elongated feminine forms - but amongst these are "dancers and walkers...frozen in mid-step" and "it is not the activity which is most important, but the appearance of the person doing it" (5), which refer to timelessness and ambiguity.

Collating and considering all these points

There is thus some difference as to what comprises the essential principles of Art Nouveau, although there is a wide consensus over curved line. But curved line is attribute, not essence, and cannot cover important cases like that which Stephan Tschudi Madsen calls the "rectilinear" style of Berlin, Austria and Scotland, seen in Peter Behrens' title-page for *Feste des Lebens und der Kunst* of 1900¹⁹ or Charles Rennie Macintosh's chair of 1899-1901²⁰. The curved and straight lines have in common, however, a rhythmic tension that is certainly found through all Art Nouveau. It is therefore vital to focus on the aesthetic

and stylistic principles that attributes/features such as curved and straight lines have in common.

The richness and diversity of Art Nouveau makes this approach the only satisfactory way of encompassing it all. It is also clear that its diversity forbids a simple or singly-based definition, perhaps not even one based on line, for Edvard Munch's *Madonna - Loving Woman - Conception* of 1895-1902 de-emphasizes it, as does Charles Shannon's *Female Nude* from *Jugend No.48* (1897)²¹, to mention only two examples. Behind each of these is the rhythmic tension normally associated with line in Art Nouveau, but here expressed in shape.

Seeking for the principles behind particular examples of imagery and feature makes it possible to compare different forms of Art Nouveau, from pictures, architecture, jewellery, furniture and sculpture to literature, theatre and music. But while many artists thought of music as the paradigmatic form because it seemed the most "pure" form, freed of specific emotional or intellectual content, as it were, it is in the visual arts that definition of the phenomenon has been first sought by the writers mentioned above, with literary and musical examples being justified by comparisons with the visual arts. This has therefore been the point from which this study commences, although it bears in mind that behind **all** manifestations of Art Nouveau it is necessary to see the strand of the stylized fantastic that runs through every age and informs all the arts, but has particular flowerings like this one around 1900. Thus while the visual arts can serve as the starting-point in the definition process, there is a similar aesthetic and stylistic intention, (or horizon, in hermeneutic terms), that like others at the time crosses the arts and infuses all those artists whose works can be said to be of Art Nouveau inspiration. It is this meta-aesthetic that unifies the eleven principles arrived at in this study.

The process of forming the eleven essential principles

From a consideration of the points made by the writers mentioned above, and from the evidence of the main body of works that can be considered to be widely accepted as constituting its corpus - those illustrated and discussed by these writers - eleven points have been delineated as covering everything essential to the body of Art Nouveau works as a whole, even if some are featured more than others in any one work. The aim has been to be as comprehensive as possible, with eleven points actually being a collation and summarizing of many more suggested by the early stages of the process.

Detailed discussion and justification of each point with reference to the main body of visual and literary Art Nouveau is necessarily somewhat lengthy, and has accordingly been placed in Appendices B and D, and a summary made below.

The final stages in the process of refining the definition have been to compare the eleven headings with literature and music. The problem of equivalences across the arts has to be solved: for instance, neither pictorial art nor lyric poetry has a time dimension, and music has no depth in the visual sense. But just as perspective technique can give non-Art Nouveau pictures the illusion of depth, so certain other techniques used in music and poetry can make comparisons across the mediums possess reasonable validity. That is, there are not always simple or exact equivalences, but ones where a complex of techniques combine to produce the **effect** of equivalence. Thus it is that a combining of devices like pedalpoint or ostinato with non-functional harmonic progression can produce the illusion of lack of depth, just as the combination of perspectival techniques like vanishing-point, relative lengthening and shortening of figures, and shading of colours gives the illusion of three dimensions on a canvas.

Following is the briefest summary possible of the eleven essential principles of Art Nouveau. The justifications for these principles in the ~~visual and literary arts are given at some length in the~~ Appendix, while that for music occupies the chapters that are the main body of this study.

The eleven essential principles of Art Nouveau

These have been arranged as follows:

1	Originality & universality]	style and intention
2	Sensuality]	character
3	Mystery		
4	Ambiguity		
5	Extremity]	
6	Stylization]	method
7	Emphasis on detail		
8	Repetition		
9	Interweaving]	
10	Absence of depth]	dimensionality
11	Timelessness]	

The principles compared across art, literature & music

1. Originality and universality of style

As will be documented in Appendices B and D, both these essentially interconnected features are conscious aims of Art Nouveau creators, who thereby seek to show the way of the future as they then see it, and also to differentiate themselves from the mainstream of conventional art as seen in the academies and conservatories.

True art is that which covers and expresses the whole of life, thought and feeling; it is a way of life. It is necessary for there to be a new style if it is to be expressible in all mediums, and since this new style is based upon nature and the symbolistic approach the various images and techniques of the different media will be able to inhere in common principles.

Art Nouveau is not all new, of course. From the vantage point of hindsight it is possible to see that Art Nouveau looks back as well as forward, using techniques and themes from Classical, mediaeval, Rococo and

Romantic models as well as new ones, but the movement certainly sees itself as innovatory, and is so regarded by its contemporaries. Some of the more important new techniques in each of the arts can now be mentioned.

In the visual arts (which term is in this study used to include everything that is not literary (including theatrical) or musical (including all forms of music drama from opera to cabaret), figures are outlined, motifs interwoven into patterns, both are stylized, perspective is flattened, motion is frozen into gesture, and everything made symbolic. Natural forms are stylized, exaggerated, patterned, and figure is frequently lost in pattern, so that picture becomes design.

In literature, plot becomes a series of dream-sequences, dramas begin to be emancipated from notions of the "well-made play" (plays where all elements are in simple aesthetic and dramatic balance with each other), there is surfeit of description and sensation, fantasy-settings, and circularity of action rather than the progression of a linear plot. There is also an exploration of strange sensations, much use of mannered device like alliteration, exploration of synaesthetic description, and use of characters more as symbols than as fully rounded psychological entities.

The new sound realms made possible by the use of new techniques of composition ideally suit the music of the fantastic. Thus there are unusual pitch-sets, harmonies and methods of development; there are unresolving discords, indefinite cadences, irregular and conflicting rhythms and unusual structural principles. The overriding characteristic is the emancipation from adherence to conventional diatonic harmonies and modulatory procedures.

Much of this novelty of technique in the three arts will be uncovered in the descriptions of the other ten principles below.

2. Sensuality

All Art Nouveau is in essence sensual because of its being based on natural forms and reflecting nature's rhythms. It emphasizes effect over form, seeking always an expression that works directly and indirectly on the feelings. Much of its art is frankly sexual, and all is so at least by implication.

Visual art uses curves that wind and interweave sensuously, so that feminine models and attributes are favourite subjects. Curves are languid, explicitly or implicitly erotic, and often based on the whiplash shape that held so many associations at the time, whether of vine tendrils, the splash of water, the flying of hair, or sadistic-sexual implication. Even the morbid is viewed erotically, taking the Romantic love-and-death theme to a typically exaggerated extent.

In literature sensuality can be treated directly, whether in an Arcadian/Insel setting to a decadent one, but in the majority of plots and poems it is merely a constant undercurrent of implication and innuendo. The very sound of words and declamatory phrase is designed for effect: the whole work is a matter of feeling, of states of excitement or ennui rather than action. Sensation is paramount.

So too with music: repetition is carried to the point where its effect on the listener is mesmeric, or merely so patterned that there is a subliminal effect. Rhythmic pulse is very important here: there can be different layers of pulse so that the less obvious underlying ones can be felt rather than noticed. Chromatically curving motifs and highly chromatic harmonies affect the senses directly, producing effects analogous to slight dizziness.

3. Mystery

All Art Nouveau is about the mystery of nature and its unseen forces rather than the seen and familiar in life and art. Thus its subjects and shapes are from natural forms and its rhythms reflect nature's. The

traditional view of nature has always been that of animism, that behind perceived natural forms and processes are unseen but felt powers. Thus humans are dwarfed by trees and even flowers, and surrounded by gods. Thus also the drawing room or boudoir is an unnatural setting, so that society and sophistication are mocked. In a setting of nature the true, sensual natures of man and woman are seen: they are children of nature, not society.

Literature illustrates this dichotomy between sophistication and naturalness, and introduces gods and the awareness of the Other Realm as a commonplace into settings and situations. Whenever man presumes wisdom, authority or virtue he is made to look petty and ridiculous. The rhythms of nature are those of life, but they are fundamentally mysterious. When characters use their free will they make fatal decisions; when they act naturally the results are surprising but beautiful.

In music, strangeness of sound, a hypnotic pulse and tonal disorientation combine with sensual effects to produce an effect of mystery. Parallel progressions, particularly of chromatically moving chords, strange pitch-sets with tritones, wholetones, exotic scales, augmented triads and the like can all be used to make a work heavily slanted towards atmospheric effect rather than the dramatic contrasts on which the paradigms of conventional musical development rest.

4. Ambiguity

Art has always featured allegory, with subtle layers of symbolic meaning beneath the obvious primary meaning denoted by the composition of its objects and figures. Allegory can be a greater or lesser component of a work - it is the *raison d'être* of mediaeval art, but hardly appears in Impressionism beyond references to the pastoral or the simple interior still-life. With Pre-Raphaelite art come a few pictures so obscure, so focused on symbolism that their titles and primary meanings are at least as cryptic as their symbolism²². Art Nouveau pictures are more symbolical

than representational, emphasizing a basic ambiguity in both subject and symbol, with woman as innocent really being woman as creature of nature's powers to entrap men with strange guile, and man, who as dandy in a society of polished sophistication, is in fact vapid and ridiculous in the face of the mysteries of the unseen. There is also ambiguity of imagery - hair that falls and intertwines like vines, for instance.

In literary Art Nouveau the most celebrated ambiguity is found in the comedy of manners, constructed as it is around paradox and epigram. This is also the age of the mythological dream-play, often in verse. Poetry is by its very nature ambiguous, of course, but Symbolist and Art Nouveau poetry take this to an extreme.

In the novel there is a basic ambiguity of purpose that principally results from the de-emphasis of plot. Plot as such is not abolished, of course, but while it appears to be the preoccupation of the novel as in conventional literature, it is constantly being delayed, confused, and lost in the texture and detail of episodes (the real centres of interest), so that the basic purpose of the novel seems ambiguous.

A basic ambiguity in Art Nouveau music results from exactly the same shifting of focus, but it is in the detail that the greatest ambiguities are found, particularly in texture: multitonality, non-diatonic pitch-sets, separation of the functions of the hands, complexity of texture, motif being lost in figuration or arabesque, as accompanimental figuration overshadows or replaces melody. Titles and epigraphs are deliberately ambiguous. Discords resolve into discords, moves towards cadence are diverted, pieces have indefinite endings.

5. Extremity of effect

The tendency, and in many cases the overt aim, of artists in all three fields is to use devices well beyond the point where they fit into a balanced whole. The intention is to produce a work that from an aesthetic viewpoint is asymmetrically proportioned. Where a particular device can

be used simply for its effect there may be an exaggeration of emphasis upon it, giving rise to a new aesthetic of proportion. This is, of course, the essence of mannerism, both historically and ontologically.

The visual arts use lines or motifs derived from natural forms and repeat or exaggerate them fantastically. Their subjects can be extreme, or the overall composition excessively textured on the one hand or utterly bare like a poster on the other.

Literature can have hyperboles, characters and actions so fantastic and exaggerated that they become caricatures and conceits. There may be whole episodes devoted to the listing of my lady's jewels, lapdogs, beauties or despairing lovers, or all the vices that an ageing and bored roué has indulged. Affectations like these are taken to the point of surfeit for deliberate effect.

In music accompanimental effects may overshadow melody, discordance may be dwelt upon, or repetition taken to the extremes of ostinato, and such works as Ravel's *Bolero*, or works based on repetitive bell-peals, created.

6. Stylization

This is the principle of simplifying the elements of an artistic creation into a unit that can then be formed into patterns. Visual art takes natural forms like hair, leaves, vines, waves, birds and animals and draws them very simply so that the essence of their shape or movement is captured, and the patterns like borders, waving leaves, grass or trees that are formed from them reflect their identities. People are refined into caricatures that are half human and half the sweep of the pen; rivers and hills deliberately become curves on a flat page. These exaggerated, distorted or simplified figures become mannerisms of brush or pen that proliferate into patterns.

In literature the mannerisms of alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, repetitions, resonances, oxymoron and the like are used to

give verse and prose an effect of patterning. Style is cultivated as an end in itself.

In music motif becomes arabesqued figuration and forms patterns with accompanimental figures. Figures are formed into repetitive or interwoven sequences, sequences patterned into phrases and phrases into sections until the whole piece looks and sounds like a series of patternings. Figure and motif can become flourish of all kinds and form into fantastic texture.

7. Emphasis on detail

In a picture with normal perspective there are two points that draw the eye - the vanishing-point, towards which all the perspectival lines devolve, and the lines in the composition of figures or landscape that guide the eye towards the centre of composition (normally not the same point, but tending to be at a harmoniously proportionate point like the Golden Section). When depth is removed from a picture, as discussed below in Principle 10, there is no vanishing point to attract the eye, or more accurately, to give a point of reference that justifies the geometry of drawing distant objects smaller. In Art Nouveau pictures the absence of this vanishing-point means that proportionate composition of the various elements of figure and object, although present, is seen without perspectival context and thus fails to focus the eye in the same manner on its centre of balance. Without this reference point the eye therefore circles the picture as if untethered or lost; the brain registers its proportions but cannot make the same sense of them. In this way all the elements in an Art Nouveau picture are equal, however proportioned, so that there is no resting-place for the eye, which circles the picture as the various lines wind about each other. There can thus be an endless focusing on the detail of such a picture, without any definite end-point to the perceptual process.

In literature the equivalent of the vanishing point is the focus on

the dramatic outcomes of plot; with this dimension lessened or absent there is a focusing on the detail and patterning of episodes and character's actions - but from the point of view of what they do rather than why they do it, since they are without realistic psychological depth. The focusing on detail fascinates the reader because the actions of these flat (and thus symbolic) characters, being almost automatic, retrace deep experiences that echo structures and archetypes of dream.

There is also a focus on such things as the mannered phrase, the gesture, the profusion of detail that builds to surfeit, and the implications of metaphor and symbol, but these fall under Stylization.

In Art Nouveau music the process is exactly similar to that of literature: there is a focusing on the immediate rather than on the whole work as a linear sequence. Thus the microstructure rises to prominence, and similarities and repetitions between sections take on more significance. "Microstructure" here refers to any dimension below the level of the work as a whole - to a work's main sections, to phrases, whether four-bar or otherwise, to sequences within the phrase, and even to groups of notes within a motif or figure. At these levels things like texture, affective mannerisms, cycling, echoing and patterning are seen to be the main focuses of the work.

8. Repetition

In all three arts, focusing on detail reveals, besides the things mentioned above, repetition. In particular, it focuses on what Lara-Vinca Masini terms "rhythmic tension"²³ in line, where a line in a picture will have an undulation, curve or shape, regular or asymmetrical, that gives it rhythmic force, especially in conjunction with other lines. This rhythm is then reflected in the larger repetitions of the work, like those of similar figures - maidens, peacocks, patterns.

The larger repetitions are seen in such things as locks of hair, trees, vines, folds of dress, swans, black silhouettes, flowers - all of

which tend to appear in repetitions, or if alone, with repetitive lines that form patterns. Thus the picture is a series of echoes and cross-references, a maze that leads the eye to make many similar journeys across its surface. This is something like the optical effect of a pattern of waving or kinked lines that the brain sees as moving, as if the eye actually vibrates to its rhythms. All this repetition is thus highly affective, having a mesmeric effect on the viewer that enhances the sensuality and mystery noticed above.

In literature, repetition is just as much a basic procedural principle. In prose, whether of novel or play, there is much affective repetition of line and phrase of the sort normally only seen in verse, and in verse itself the effect can be highly exaggerated, as in Arno Holz or Gerard Manley Hopkins. There is deliberate use of rhythmic vocable-groups (for instance, consonance) and word-groups to set up rhetorical effects that appeal directly to the senses. As well as these rhythms there is repetition on larger scales. Episodes tend not only to be equal in status, but to feature echoes of others, so that any sense of overall plot-direction is thereby weakened.

In music there is firstly a tendency to repeat a new phrase-segment immediately to let its significance be felt, and secondly, to use affective repetition of fragments of motif and figuration. This often develops to the point of ostinato, which is a major feature of the repertory. Motif itself tends to be repeated unchanged rather than developed, the pitch or accompanimental texture changing instead. Whole sequences can be repeated, often in alternation with others. Repetition at all these levels tends to replace development, and instead to produce a mesmeric effect on the listener that helps make the music's sensuality and mystery all the more effective.

9. Interweaving

Not only is line rhythmical and patterned but this patterning is

based on the principle of interweaving, just as plant forms tangle and twine about each other in nature - artists see this as a life-principle and use it as a stylistic model, thereby showing the mystery and order of nature where all things are interdependent. It is the principle used for all borders, locks of hair, folds of dresses, and the composition of all the figures and other elements that comprise a picture. Instead of being seen as elements of realistic representation, line and figure are seen as elements of design. Interweaving is thus as much the generating principle of the whole picture as repetitive rhythm, and the interweaving is itself rhythmical.

In the conventional novel the various strands of plot have always been seen as gradually enmeshing over time, but in the Art Nouveau plot there is a series of repetitive patterns (Principle 8). These patterns are formed by interweaving rather than enmeshing, the difference being that plot-strands enmesh gradually and usually only once, while interweaving involves a pattern of repeated and interdependent interactions. This can be on the levels of language-motifs, of themes, and even of whole episodes. In poetry there is some use of forms that repeat lines in an ordered pattern, and also much repetition of phrase.

There is another important aspect to interweaving: characters without psychological depth in unreal settings interweave rather than react, forming plots that are repetitions of simple archetypal sequences rather than structures with the normal emphasis on linear development. These elements of character and setting cannot develop a plot with dramatic inevitability or surprise but can form the patterning of symbolically predestined outcomes of poetic justice and order.

In music, as will be shown in Principle 10, the equivalent of lack of depth is seen in motifs that are not developed and harmonies that are not resolved according to normal practice. There is therefore an emphasis on motifs as figures (and figures as the equivalents of motifs), and on

harmonies as tone-colours rather than stepping-stones along a modulatory path. Motifs, figures and tone-colours are units that interweave to produce music that is patterned, rather than units whose function is as parts of a linear whole.

10. Absence of depth

Art Nouveau abandons perspective because like mediaeval art it regards symbolism as all-important, and wishes to distance itself entirely from realism. The figures and backgrounds of its pictures appear together on a flat plane without depth.

Literature's analogous method is its avoidance of realism, seen firstly in its fantastic settings where, as in a dream world, the strange and symbolic is normal. It is also seen in its characters, who are without real psychological depth, being deliberately drawn as stereotypes for symbolic, not realistic purposes. There is an avoidance of dramatic contrast, with sequences following one another in a comparatively level manner.

Depth is not a dimension in the musical universe, but progression of harmonic sequence is, and over a pedalpoint, one of the most important features of the repertory, this becomes frozen. Ostinato, which is really flourish over a pedalpoint, is an extension of the same device. Allied with this is non-functional harmony, where the normal process of concord-discord-concord is abandoned in favour of a tendency to use chords and movement between them in an existential way, with each having its own *raison d'être* and a relationship with its fellows around it that is based on equality of identity of sound, not on its function as step in a logical harmonic sequence.

11. Timelessness

Time is of course not a dimension of static visual art, yet art can attempt to portray movement. Art Nouveau abandons even this, and shows gesture rather than motion, attitudes rather than actions. This is in fact partly achieved through a mixture of devices that includes the flat surface, but the important point here is its symbolic intention: a dancer represents the rituals of nature, a kiss represents the timelessness of the lovers' universe, and a dandy's bow to another is the falseness of sophistication.

Time is an important dimension of the literary narrative, so that when it is suspended the characters appear to be in a dream state. There is a general de-emphasis of plot, with a playing and replaying of dream-sequences and remembered ones. Actions tend to take place in characters' inner time rather than real time, and are revealing of states of feeling rather than being primarily directed to the linear progression of plot.

Poetry (except in narrative verse) is like pictorial art in its not extending over time, so that the effect of timelessness is achieved through other means, particularly those based on the tenseless phrases of infinitival, participial or verbless constructions.

Music cannot be sounded except over time, but it has a dimension that is as crucial to it as time is to narrative - that of linear development towards resolution of harmony, through the normal diatonic processes of excursions and modulations that lead towards cadence. When this is checked or abandoned there is a feeling that there is motion without progression. As in literature, interest tends to focus on the immediate rather than on the overall linear process. A simple way to put it is that time is forgotten in the concerns of the moment. Henri Bergson's *time espace* is this timelessness of the absorbed consciousness, as distinct from *time durée* of ordinary activity or narrative²⁴. Edmund Husserl sees this *time espace* as stretching infinitely while a melody is

still sounding, but making only a single moment²⁵. Roman Ingarden differentiates the "intentional" time of notated music from the "real" time of sounded music, and while the first is not tethered in any particular part of time, the second can be experientially timeless when the music does not progress through normal modulatory paths but seems to cycle endlessly through unresolved sequences²⁶. Husserl's time-retention is not accompanied by time-protention - the expectation of progress. Carl Dahlhaus sees *Zeitkunst* as the two times of retention (that part of the immediate past that we are still aware of while listening to the immediate present) and the sounds of the immediate present itself²⁷. These can be experienced in either of the Bergsonian times, but in Art Nouveau they are felt in *time espace*, and the sounds of the immediate present are mingled with echoes of retained time.

The absence of conventional harmonic process throws the focus off the linear macrostructure on to the immediate focus. This is a lessening of the dramatic element and an increasing of the sensuous, so that the attention is absorbed with the present rather than on the larger focus of how the work as a whole is developing. Such a non-linear, experiential focus is, in varying degree, an essential method of Art Nouveau music, felt even in apparently normally progressing modulation (where this is used) in its failure to reach normal dramatic goals as the music goes on evenly, or if it does attain to climax, in the failure of that climax to achieve conventional dramatic resolution.

Conclusion

Only from the basis of a comprehensive model like this can a systematic study of a whole repertory be attempted. The eleven principles, of course, are philosophical rather than thematic or technical, so that it is necessary to consider these latter aspects in the course of the following chapters. It will also be necessary to divide a relatively large repertory like that for the keyboard into categories for

convenient consideration, and this will now be addressed.

End-notes

- 1 Wichmann, S.: *Jugendstil. Art Nouveau*, (München, Schuler 1977).
- 2 Masini, L-V.: op. cit., 41.
- 3 See, for instance, Frits Noske's rejection of attempts by Eduard Reeser, Gerhard Nestler, Hans Hofstätter and Hans Hollander to do this, in Noske, F.: op. cit., 12-13.
- 4 Hermand, J.: *Jugendstil*, op. cit., 1-7.
- 5 Hamman, R. & Hermand, J.: *Stilkunst um 1900*, 243.
- 6 Hermand, J.: op. cit., 8-46.
- 7 Ibid, 27-46, 100-106, 145-155.
- 8 Ibid, 47-65.
- 9 Ibid, 78-86, particularly 78-89.
- 10 Kramer, H.: *The Erotic Style*, Arts 34 (Sept 1960), 22-26.
- 11 Waldberg, P.: *Eros Modern Style*, (Paris, 1964).
- 12 Schmutzler, R.: op. cit.; the quotations are from the opening and closing chapters.
- 13 Rheims, M.: op. cit.; the introduction is 7-11.
- 14 Madsen, S.T.: *Sources of Art Nouveau*, particularly 15-53 (in the later edition).
- 15 Hofstätter, H.H.: *Art Nouveau*; the material is drawn from the first chapter 7-18.
- 16 Masini, L-V.: op. cit.; the references are from the second chapter 36-53.
- 17 Wichmann, S.: op. cit.
- 18 Lorenz, O.: op. cit.; the references are to the Introduction, 5-8.
- 19 Hermand, J.: *Jugendstil*, 113.
- 20 Wichmann, S.: op. cit., 81.
- 21 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 115, 81.
- 22 For instance, *Autumn Leaves* by John Everett Millais, 1855-56, but see a possible interpretation in Hilton, T.: *The Pre-Raphaelites*, (New York, Abrams 1970), 78-79.
- 23 Masini, L-V.: loc. cit.
- 24 Bergson's concepts of experiential and real time need to be seen in the context of his views of the nature of art-works as being composed of fluid, discontinuous, transitory elements: see Edler, A.: *Zur Beziehung einiger Grundfragen bei Bergson zum musikalischen Denken nach 1900*, Kongress-Bericht über den Internationalen Musikwissenschaftlicher Kongress, Berlin 1974, (ed. Kuhn, H. & Nitschke, P., Kassel, Bärenreiter 1980) 467-70.
- 25 Husserl, E.: *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-consciousness*, transl. Churchill, J.S., (Bloomington, Indiana University Press 1964).
- 26 Ingarden, R.: *Untersuchungen zur Ontologie der Kunst, Musikwerk, Bild, Architektur, Film*, (Tübingen, Niemayer 1962), 101.
- 27 Dahlhaus, C.: *Esthetics of Music*, 76-77.

THE PIANO AROUND 1900:

ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE ART NOUVEAU REPERTORY

Introductory summary:

There were two types of piano, whether grand or upright, around 1900, and the characteristics of each type can be shown to have influenced the sort of music written for them. The first type is the modern piano, virtually the same as that of today's German instrument (1992) in tone and design, and developed in the later years of the nineteenth century. The second type is one with an older, less responsive action and/or inferior stringing and design. This older type, essentially descended from the original wood-framed instrument, tended to have an inbuilt characteristic tone well suited to simple melodic music, so well that such music frequently sounds dull on the modern instrument. Its real but limited beauties make even banal music sound appealing, which helps explain the popularity of much lesser-quality character-piece composition. However, it is unsuited to music of complex textures, which needs the more neutral sound of the modern instrument, and needs its sensitive action that can more easily permit different levels of volume and touch for the various strands of such textures.

These textures, particularly in rapid *pianissimo*, scarcely possible on the older instrument, could hardly have been conceived without the modern one, which most of the composers in this study owned. The two significant known exceptions are Erik Satie and Léos Janáček, whose keyboard textures are simple and melodic, especially when viewed against the complexities of Debussy, Ravel, Szymanowski or Sorabji. There are also some very simple pieces amongst late Liszt, who was known to play simpler instruments as well as modern, and Federico Mompou made a cult of extreme simplicity that seems more suited to the older type of instrument.

But for the great majority of the avant-garde repertory of this

study it seems clear that there is a close connexion between instrumental technology and composition.

Construction

The modern grand piano around 1900¹ had a one-piece cast-iron frame with cross-stringing and double escapement action. It was made in Germany then by Bechstein, the leading marque until at least the Great War², by Steinway, Grotrian-Steinweg, Rönisch and many others, in Russia by Becker and Rönisch, in Austria by Pflug and Lauberger & Gloss. In England Broadwood (after 1897)³ and in France Érard (from 1901)⁴ made it beside their older hybrid designs, but by this time both had ceased to be the important makers they had been fifty years earlier.

The hybrid designs were partly modern and partly old - either a one-piece iron frame with single-escapement action (Blüthner of Leipzig⁵, Bösendorfer of Vienna⁶, Broadwood of London⁷) or a composite frame with double-escapement action (Érard). (The composite-framed instrument was essentially a wood frame strengthened with iron bars and plates bolted together, with straight stringing and, except for Érard, with single-escapement action ("English" action, Blüthner/Kriegelstein action, or Viennese *kapsel*-action - the last unchanged since Mozart's day).

The double-escapement action⁸ has proved to be superior, and was in 1900 recognized as such by most musicians, but there was a carriage-trade demand for the older type, seen particularly in England and Vienna, and also in the fact that Blüthner retained their old action until 1930⁹.

The upright piano fell into the same two types - modern and hybrid, with the same makers producing hybrid uprights as produced hybrid grands. The modern type as made in Germany by many makers large and small was then, in the hands of such makers as Bechstein, Knake, Lipp, Blüthner, Feurich, Grotrian-Steinweg and Rönisch at least equal in tone to small grands and has not been surpassed since (nor often equalled). The underdamper, tape-check action was by its nature still inferior to that of

a double-escapement grand, but immeasurably better than the older sticker actions still being used up to the eighteen-nineties in England, and better than various overdamper actions, including those of Blüthner.

The British and French mainly continued to regard the upright as a cheaper instrument, which it certainly sounded¹⁰, while Blüthner, as with their grands, used a one-piece frame with excellent sound potential but continued to make alongside their underdamper instruments an inferior overdamper action; it is significant that as a company they found much support in the conservative market of England¹¹.

Tonal types

Tone depended on three main factors - firstly whether the piano had a one-piece iron frame, secondly the country of origin, and thirdly whether it had a double-escapement action (grands).

1. Only if it has a one-piece iron frame can the piano, whether grand or upright, be strung to the maximum potential offered by the very best steel strings. With such a frame the only limiting factors on the diameters and tensions of the steel strings are the stiffness and strength of the steel itself, which since well before 1900 has been at the limits of technology¹².

The string that is of the largest diameter without undue stiffness, and pulled to the greatest safe tension before it begins to stretch, produces a tone that, compared to a string of lesser calibre,

1. has a more balanced development of partials¹³
2. has more volume (= energy to drive a thicker soundboard) and vibrates longer
3. has a more complex vibration at all levels of volume without sacrificing fundamental or balance of partials¹⁴

This has several important corollaries. From the first point it follows that the tone is more rounded and pleasant, especially at the critical *fortissimo* levels.

From the second, it follows that there is an increased range of volumes, as well as extra ability to fill concert rooms or compete with orchestras. From the third it follows that there is more development of upper partials to make **tonal** variation increase with **volume** variation, but with a greater percentage of the fundamental at all volumes, giving greater carrying power (as with the Stradivarius). The last corollary flows from all three points - a larger and heavier hammer can be used without sacrificing tone at the extremes of volume.

2. The country of origin affected tone¹⁵. When Bechstein and other German firms quickly adopted American modernizations¹⁶ in the eighties they nonetheless remained faithful to the tonal ideals of their country, while extending them in the new ways now possible. The Bechstein kept to the rounder, richer German ideal while the American Steinway was more brilliant, as it still is, and as the Asian pianos that favour the American style are today. To this day there is an appreciable tonal difference between the American and German Steinway¹⁷.

French pianos around 1900 mostly favoured a thinner (that is, with less fundamental) tone seeming to have touches of French pipe-organ *Hautbois* or soft *Trompette* about it¹⁸ that is partly a function of shortness of prolongation, for it is most easily recognized in the small cottage uprights of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These little pianos can be very beautiful in simple music that can sound uninteresting on modern grands, because of this characteristic tone. The Érard grand, sharing this sound, was the dominant French instrument of the conservatoire and concert platform at least to 1900, and like the cottage piano, but to a lesser extent, it has a characteristic tone that cannot be supplied by the modern instrument. It was Ravel's favoured piano¹⁹. The second maker, Pleyel, had a less rich but still French tone²⁰.

The English tone was not as organ-reedy as the French, but like it had a well-developed harmonic characteristic at all volume levels that

gave a more rounded, rich tone²¹. The second maker, Collard & Collard, had a less rich and softer tone that was more beautiful because less loud. Like the Broadwood, its tone was much the same at all volume-levels.

In Austria a different tonal ideal again was retained - that owing much to the older wooden-framed grand made until 1860. Like the French and English, its tone was well developed even at softer levels, and had something of the violin about its treble, and a buzzing, thin bass that made the Viennese instruments of 1780-1830 so suitable for playing with string chamber groups²².

The French, English and Austrians, therefore, tended to keep to a tone that was partly produced by the harder hammers their designs needed to keep up with modern-piano volume-levels, and partly by traditional methods of case and soundboard construction. This tone is not neutral when soft, having a characteristic asymmetrical development of harmonics, and merely deepens when loud; it can become even more asymmetrical and inharmonious when very loud, and is frequently coarse. This contrasted with the neutral soft tone of the modern instrument that kept a more symmetrical development of harmonics as it became louder. Despite the disadvantages of the older types, music written with them in mind needs to be heard on them as well as on the modern type if all its dimensions are to be appreciated fully.

3. The single-escapement actions of the composite-framed instruments, except for the Érard, severely limited their flexibility, but this was not noticed as long as music of the Beethoven-Mendelssohn-Brahms sort was played on them, which compared to Debussy or Sorabji's music tends to have fewer dimensions of sound operating simultaneously. It is significant that except for the Érard, little of the music of the Art Nouveau repertory was written for them. In England at least the great drawing-rooms favoured Bechsteins²³, which were probably the instruments of Bax and Bridge, as of Debussy²⁴.

Action²⁵

The double-escapement action has two advantages - firstly, the key need only be raised about a third of its travel before the action is ready to repeat the stroke, which not only means faster and easier repetition, but quickness of repetition without necessarily increasing the volume, so that soft and rapid repetitions are possible.

Secondly, it has more leverage. The extra leverage makes it possible to deliver a more powerful blow and thus gives a wider dynamic range, but much more importantly, it gives better control, just as an Australian Aborigine's spear-thrower gives both extra impetus and control to a spear. Thus it is possible to control and differentiate different levels of volume for the various strands of texture in contrapuntal or complex movement of parts; it is easier to "bring out" inner parts, and to have more variation between blending and separating strands²⁶.

Voicing of hammers²⁷

A paradoxical corollary of a greater leverage and a heavier hammer is a greater capacity for, and variety of, softer effects. The hammers in single-repetition actions around 1900 needed to be kept as hard as possible to compete with the volume of the modern pianos, but this inevitably limited softer playing. The usual result was that the older type of piano was less loud, particularly in the higher regions, and less soft, and even when soft had a harder tone.

The hammer-felts on the modern piano can be voiced so that the outer millimetre or two is softened to make the string at quiet volume-levels develop fewer harmonics, with a velvety, almost sine-wave tone being possible at *pianissimo* levels as the soft felt dampens upper partials. The felt is allowed to become harder towards the centre of the hammer-head, which then increasingly comes into play as the string is struck harder, so that this deeper felt controls the *forte* levels, and encourages upper partials. But the initial impact even at loud levels is with the

softer outer layers, so that the string is struck more gradually and begins its vibration more evenly, making *fortissimo* tone less harsh while still of full volume.

Damping

Dampers became larger and more efficient as the modern piano developed, and were a factor changing the whole nature of the piano in a manner that is not usually recognized; the whole subject of damping efficiency and prolongation/arrest of vibration as against use of the sustaining pedal in the piano of the nineteenth century needs still to be studied²⁸. Dampers also needed to extend farther upwards in the compass - to G two octaves from middle C, but were still omitted from the highest notes so that sympathetic vibrations could help treble resonance.

Next to the double-escapement action, the highly efficient dampers of the modern grand are the most significant modifiers of playing flexibility and tone. Even in the most rapid repetition the damper stills the string somewhat between repetitions, so that the string begins and ends its vibration at each stroke in much the same way, and with something like its normal tone. If the sustaining pedal lifts the damper during this repetition, the string is being struck while it is still sounding, causing irregularities of vibration that can quickly result in pronounced inharmonicities²⁹ that are dramatic in effect. The same differences in tone can be seen at all levels of repetition with dampers raised, from trills to ordinary playing.

The use of the sustaining pedal, therefore, can have a major effect on tone as well as on texture; even a chord played after the pedal has been depressed sounds different from one that is played and held while the pedal is depressed.

Other constructional features

In 1900 Steinway used two important features that others did not, but they mainly concerned extra volume and prolongation in the treble,

particularly in concert-hall playing. First was the duplex scaling, in which the overlength of string between soundboard bridge and hitchpin was passed over a secondary bridge, so that it was tuned at a multiple of the fundamental and vibrated in sympathy with it³⁰. This increased the volume in the critical higher regions where for technical reasons it is hardest to maintain a volume commensurate with the bass and with the demands of the concert hall. But it also subtly coloured the tone at lower volumes.

Blüthner used a fourth string tuned to a multiple of the fundamental and actuated by sympathetic vibration³¹, and although it is still used on some of its recent pianos with modern action, it is not nearly as effective. (There are, however, some who feel that it gives a silvery tone in soft playing something like the *una corda* effect, but this is limited because the fourth string is not of the same length as the others.)

The second feature was a resonating horn attached to the underside of the instrument and connected to the iron frame near where the treble strings pass under it. This added extra power to the highest few treble notes, and is an example of using the sound-carrying and sound-influencing properties of the iron frame (that its early opponents decried³²) for the betterment of tone and power.

The centre pedal³³ was used only by Steinway in Europe, among the prominent makers, although it was also used by the minor maker Boisselot in Paris. This selective sustaining pedal has obvious uses in complex textures, but the composers who most used these textures - the French composers influenced by Debussy - mostly did not have it, relying instead on half-pedalling effects.

Bösendorfer introduced around 1900³⁴ their Imperial Concert Grand 290 (centimetres) whose compass extended down to the C below the normal A, and at some stage began production of a 235cm smaller concert grand that extended to F below the normal A (both models still in production). Some

music was written for the Imperial, like Kodaly's Op.3 pieces (1909-10); and Ravel's *Une barque sur l'Océan* specifies the G[#] below A (bar 45, which cannot be simply achieved by detuning bottom A, because this note is used as A in other places³⁵). *Scarbo* has at least three cases where bottom A is used instead of the logical G[#] below it (394, 401, 408). It is thus likely that Ravel knew this instrument and admired this quality in it³⁶.

Soft effects on the modern piano

This range of effects is of the highest importance for the compositions of late Liszt³⁷, Debussy, Sorabji³⁸, Griffes³⁹, Skryabin, and Szymanowski. All these composers make extensive use of soft effects in a way that is quite new to keyboard music, and it cannot be coincidental that they are all in contact with the modern piano. (Perhaps the first such piece is Liszt's 1883 *Les jeux d'eaux à la villa d'Este*, whose new techniques of delicate filigree must have been written for his Bechstein) As a contrast, Janáček is pictured as owning a Viennese piano with *kapsel* action⁴⁰, and his composition does not feature the delicate effects of the composers mentioned above. Ravel also features soft effects, but his Érard's double-escapement action made these possible; it is not known whether his instrument was of modern construction (Érard made both types at least to the Great War), but it would seem to have been difficult to have played *Gaspard de la nuit*, with its very complex *pp* and *ppp* textures, on the older instrument.

These softer effects are achieved and varied through the use of the three pedals.

1. The most important is the left pedal that shifts the action to play two instead of all three strings (from the tenor upwards), or one instead of two (in the octave or so below that), and, in the lowest single-string bass notes, with the side of the hammer-face. Less well realized by pianists is the secondary effect, that the two strings are struck by new portions of the hammer-head that have not been slightly hardened by *forte*

playing. The first factor produces the silvery aspect of tone, caused by the sympathetic vibration of the unstruck left-hand string, which reinforces the first few upper partials rather than the fundamental, and the second factor produces the velvety aspect of tone from the softer felt.

When the pedal is depressed less than to its full extent, the range of tones possible is widened as the left-hand string is slightly struck with the edge of the hammer-head, and different areas of felt, between those normally used for *tre corda* and *una corda* are brought into play.

2. The use of the right or sustaining pedal in very soft playing allows sympathetic vibration of all the strings, besides sustaining the sounds of strings struck. It may be that even at these levels faint differential and summational tones are produced that have threshold effects on tone and texture.

When undamped strings still sounding are struck again their new vibration begins differently, with slight irregularities producing inharmonicities that can have the effect of faint brass percussion-instrument sounds, or those of bells being re-sounded (where the effect has the same cause).

Half-peddalling effects, where, as with the left pedal, the pedal is slightly or partially depressed, graduate the tonal modifications that the pedal can make. In particular, the "feathering" technique (the barest depression of the pedal so that the dampers are partly touching the strings, as lightly as a feather), actually produces a faint buzzing that can add another tonal nuance. It also delays the damping of the strings struck for a second or so, so that there is an overlapping of consecutive notes, and each note will end with a stifled buzz. (The ear is very much influenced by the minute transient effects that begin and end vibration of string or pipe)⁴¹.

3. The centre (selector) pedal (meaninglessly termed "sostenuto") that

selects the dampers already raised and holds them off those strings only, narrows and concentrates all these sustaining effects. It is especially useful with the very low bass notes, for these will more easily vibrate sympathetically than higher ones, but chords or notes up to the mid-treble can be selected and thereby selectively colour whatever else is being played.

The important use of this pedal tends to be in soft effects, for in louder ones sympathetic vibration tends to become obtrusive just as it does with the right pedal.

Half-peddalling techniques are just as effective with this pedal as with the other two.

The skilful mixing of the uses of all three pedals obviously multiplies the effects possible, so that pedalling can become an art of the greatest subtlety.

Playing styles

Since some recorded and piano-roll material of composers and performers of the day is available for comparison with present-day playing, it is clear that apart from exceptions like Rakhmaninov, Artur Schnabel and Ferruccio Busoni, pianists, whether of professional or modest ability, tended to be more free with rubato, to be more inclined to let the left hand lead when attacking a two-handed chord, to be more obviously expressive, to prefer more subtle and therefore milder voicing of their pianos (or to play generally less loudly except in forceful passages), and to take freedoms with directions, tempi and even the notes themselves. In other words, their playing was more mannered. Since mannerism is a feature of the Art Nouveau repertory the mannerisms of composition and playing style are most probably connected.

One factor that seems not to be considered when playing mannerisms around 1900 are discussed is the influence of the change from older to modern instruments. On the older instrument with its more

characteristically individual tone, simple pieces like *mélodies* sound more effective than on the more neutrally-toned modern one. Janáček and Satie both wrote for this sort of instrument⁴², and use plain styles with uncluttered textures. Naive and folk effects like those of the nationalist variety (Grieg's *Lyrical Pieces*, early Kodaly and Bartók) acquire a poignancy not possible on the modern instrument. The simpler of Liszt's late compositions can gain much from the characteristic tone of the older instrument, and if photographs are to be trusted he did not confine himself to the modern grand pianos he owned⁴³.

The appealing, if limited, tone of the older instruments was above all suited to carrying a melody, even though its sustaining power was not as good as that of modern piano. Recital programmes were full of what is now regarded as second-rate music that featured easily-grasped tunes with various floridities of accompanimental convention, music that sounds highly effective on older instruments but loses some of its poignancy on the modern piano. Its artifice is, on the modern piano, revealed for what it really is. To adapt this music to the modern instrument means that there must be some exaggeration of style of the types mentioned above. There are other factors, of course, the chief of which is the theatrical sort of keyboard demeanour associated with the Lisztian rather than the Clara Schumanian performer, and also a generally more sentimental approach that aimed for emotional effect rather than transmitting the composer's intentions authentically.

Conclusions

1. The soft effects possible on the modern instrument are not possible on the older, so that those of Liszt⁴⁴, Debussy, Ravel, Dukas, Schmitt, Berners, Sorabji, Griffes, Bax, Bridge, Ireland and Szymanowski of the composers discussed in this study, could hardly have been conceived except on the modern instrument. It is known that Janáček and Satie did not have the modern instrument for domestic use, and their music shows relatively

little of the extreme softness sustained over long passages, and/or rapid soft filigree, of the others.

2. There is a much wider range of both tone and volume on the modern instrument that makes the use of sharp contrasts in Szymanowski, Stravinsky and Skryabin in particular more intelligible⁴⁵.
3. Sustained *fortissimo* playing as in Rakhmaninov, Stravinsky and Skryabin is not taxing on the ear because on the modern instruments for which they wrote these sounds are still harmonious, with a relatively symmetrical development of harmonics.
4. Sustained levels of lesser volumes, particularly the very quietest ones, common in the relatively undramatic Art Nouveau repertory (apart from the exceptions of point 2 above) are not dull because there is good tonal variety possible through subtle use of pedals.
5. This is also helped by the ease with which the strands of texture can be differentiated by sensitive playing.
6. Virtuosity, particularly in rapid *pianissimo* passages like those of Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit*, the Skryabin sonatas and Sorabji's *Le jardin parfumé*, is only really possible or effective on the modern instrument.
7. The monochrome but characteristic effects of the older piano are, amongst other things, especially suited to music that is very simple or naive like that of the simpler late Liszt works, Janáček and Satie. This sort of music can easily lose much interest on the modern piano unless there is marked use of rubato and agogic accenting.
8. There may be connexion between the mannerisms of composition noticed in the repertory of this study and those of many virtuosi of the day, and both may be influenced by the nature of the piano for which they are written⁴⁶.

Summary

Overall, it is possible to see a relationship between the development of the piano and the development of the Art Nouveau piano

repertory, which was an *avant-garde* one largely associated with the newly-developed modern piano. In particular, the extreme *pianissimo* effects, and sustained, relatively non-dramatic music of much of the repertory, were only possible on the modern instrument. Where composers like Janáček and Satie did not have at least domestic access to such instruments their textures and piano-writing are much simpler.

End-notes

- 1 The title was used as such for Lawrence M. Nalder's 1927 authoritative technical work (London, Musical Opinion 1927; reissued Old Woking, Surrey, Unwin Brothers 1977).
- 2 Weitzmann, C.F.: *A History of Pianoforte Playing and Pianoforte Literature*, (New York, Da Capo 1969, originally 1897), 275-76.
- 3 Good, E.M.: *Giraffes, Black Dragons and Other Pianos. A Technological History from Cristofori to the Modern Concert Grand*, (Stanford, California, Stanford University Press 1982), 217.
- 4 *Ibid*, 215.
- 5 Edwin Good's defence of the Blüthner action as being "entirely adequate for anyone short of Liszt or von Bülow" is based on the factor of repetition alone, ignoring the inherent diminished leverage and control that makes many subtleties of texture impossible, as explained later in this chapter. Good, E.M.: *op. cit.*, 208, 175; *Liszt Society Journal* 15 (1990), 57.
- 6 Bösendorfer may have made modern-action pianos beside their *kapsel*-action ones from about the turn of the century, like Broadwood and Érard. The *kapsel* action or *Prellmechanik* is discussed and illustrated in Harding, R.E.M.: *The Pianoforte. Its History Traced to the Great Exhibition of 1851*, (Old Woking, Surrey, Gresham 1978; originally 1933), chapter 3/II.
- 7 The single-escapement "English action", like the *kapsel* action dating from before 1800, and used with variants by British makers until 1914. See Harding, R.E.M.: *op. cit.*, chapter 5.
- 8 Now universal with only minor differences between makers. It is the original Érard action as modified by Herz and standardized by such action-makers as Schwander in Germany by about 1870. See Blackham, E.D.: *The Physics of the Piano*, *Scientific American* (Dec. 1965), 93. (Also available in Kent, E.L.: *Musical Acoustics. Piano and Wind Instruments*, (Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross 1977), 15.)
- 9 There is as yet insufficient historical research on the point, but it is likely that the single-escapement actions of firms like Blüthner, Bösendorfer and the English leaders were partly preferred by those who bought their pianos because the actions had a satisfying "feel" based on the simple frictional resistance of the single escapement and checking of the hammer, rather like the feel of a tracker-action organ (an initial firm resistance suddenly changing to an easy resistance). The more complex set of processes that can be felt (in slow playing at least) in the modern action is less easily satisfying. Jury reports from the various international exhibitions of the last half of the nineteenth century might illustrate this. Piano salesmen have

- traditionally thus turned simplicity into a virtue when advocating the older style of piano; a study of advertisements might support this.
- 10 Erlich, C.: *The Piano. A History*, (London, Dent 1976), 149.
 - 11 Good, E.M.: op. cit., 213; Erlich, C.: op. cit., 75-76, 79.
 - 12 Dolge, A.: *Pianos and their Makers*, (New York, Dover 1972; originally 1914), 123-6; Good, E.M.: op. cit., 217-18.
 - 13 Kock, W.E.: *The Vibrating String Considered as an Electrical Transmission Line*, *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 8 (1937), 233.
 - 14 Blackham, E.D.: op. cit., 88. As soon as a string is given any tension it acquires stiffness; this increasingly lessens simple sine-wave motion, so that complex motions ensue.
 - 15 The comments here and in the paragraphs following on tonal differences, are derived from knowledge gained through restoration and playing of many instruments of the period.
 - 16 Often called, especially in its own brochures, the "Steinway system" - an indeterminate advertising term simply meaning a piano designed from the beginning as overstrung one-piece frame with double-escapement action. Chickering perfected the one-piece iron frame for production in the eighteen-thirties [Spillane, D.: *History of the American Pianoforte. Its technical Development and the Trade*, (New York, Da Capo 1969; originally New York 1890), 92]; overstringing was invented and produced by Henri Pape from the eighteen-twenties [Good, E.M.: op. cit., 158]; the double-escapement action by Érard in 1820-21 [Harding, R.E.M.: op. cit., 320]; Steinway was the first successfully to produce and market all these together in a harmonious design.
 - 17 The reasons for these differences are partly to do with design and materials (the American piano is designed to cope with air-conditioned buildings and uses some American woods that are better suited to its conditions) and partly different voicing ideals. See Browning, D.: *Finding the Sound*, in Gaines, J.R. (ed.): *The Lives of the Piano*, (New York, Holt Rinehart & Winston 1981), 108, 111.
 - 18 This can be heard on recordings of period performers or instruments like those of (LP records) *Welte-Mignon 1905* (Telefunken 6.35016 1-5), and more recently Ronald Smith on instruments from the *Colt Clavier Collection - Oryx 1803*.
 - 19 Good, E.M.: op. cit., 216.
 - 20 Some of the technical reasons for different national or maker tonal ideals are explained in Adlam, D.: *The Anatomy of the Piano*, in Gill, D. (ed.): *The Book of the Piano*, (Oxford, Phaidon 1981), 36-38; the basic acoustical physics is dealt with in McFerrin, W.V.: *The Piano - its Acoustics*, (Boston, Tuners Supply Co. 1972), chapters 3-5.
 - 21 The characteristic Broadwood tone can be traced back to its earliest models, seen in the many recordings on original instruments, such as *The Broadwood Heritage*, (L'oiseau-Lyre LP No. DSLO 540 of 1978).
 - 22 Again seen on many recordings, for instance on Archiv 2-LP set No. 2708 025, with Jörg Demus playing Viennese and English instruments; Peter Serkin's performances of Beethoven and Schubert on a Viennese Graf piano (Pro-Arte Digital PAD 111, 168, 171, 181); Jörg Ewald Dähler performing Schubert on a Viennese Brodman (Claves D508 1-3).
 - 23 Erlich, C.E.: op. cit., 75.
 - 24 There is as yet insufficient interest in even recording the names of the piano-marques and types owned by or favoured by composers, let alone any attempts to relate such information to their compositions. The only composer for whom even listing has been seriously begun is Franz Liszt: Gábry, G.: *Franz Liszts Klaviere*, *Studia Musicologia XX* (1978), 389-402; see also Burger, E.: *Franz Liszt. A Chronicle of his Life in Documents*, transl. Spencer, S., (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press 1989; German original 1986); Keeling, G.:

- Musical Life - the Liszt Pianos - Some Aspects of Preference and Technology*, New Hungarian Quarterly 22 (1986), 224-32.
- 25 There is little scientific research available on the technical, as distinct from claimed, advantages of the historically important actions, but some indications may be gained from White, W.B.: *Theory and Practice of Piano Construction*, (New York, Dover 1975; originally 1906), 96-112; Wolfenden, S.: *A Treatise on the Art of Pianoforte Construction*, (Old Woking, Surrey, Unwin Brothers 1977; originally 1927), 111-127; Nalder, L.M.: op. cit., chapter 8.
- 26 This was the point made by Charles Hallé on his examining the Érard action at the time of the Great Exhibition of 1851. See Liszt Society Journal 15 (1990), 57.
- 27 The three works named in Note 24 also discuss hammer-voicing (122-132; 149-155; 129-139 respectively. See also Dolge, A.: op. cit. 97-105. There is also a variety of piano technicians' handbooks that discuss voicing and revoicing.
- 28 Some discussion of this is beginning to occur in journals: Rowland, D.: *Early Pianoforte Pedalling*, Early Music 13/1 (Feb. 1985), 5-17; Nicholson, L. et al.: *Playing the Early Piano* (Early Music 13/1 (Feb. 1985); Badura-Skoda, P.: *Playing the Early Piano* (Early Music 12/4 (Nov-Dec. 1984), 477-80.
- 29 Inharmonicitities (upper partials out of tune with the fundamental) are always the rule in all stretched strings, increasing their sharpness according to a square law based on their mode number [Shuck, O.H. & Young, R.W.: *Observations on the Vibrations of Piano Strings*, Journal of the Acoustic Society of America 15/1 (1943), 1] and are responsible for pleasing tone [Fletcher, H., Blackham, E.D. & Stratton, R.: *Quality of Piano Tone*, Journal of the Acoustical Society of America 34/6 (1962), 760-61]. Unpleasantness of tone is caused by irregularities in their mutual balance. See Shankland, R.S. & Coltman, J.W.: *The Departure of the Overtones of a Vibrating Wire from a True Harmonic Series*, Journal of the Acoustical Society of America 10/3 (1939), 161, 166.
- 30 Some other pianos left sections of the treble overlengths undamped so that there could be sympathetic resonance, a practice still used today by Grotrian-Steinweg. It was not as effective because it was more random and because it seemed to resonate inharmonicitities as well as partials more than did the duplex system.
- 31 Named the Aliquot system, and although differently achieved it is essentially similar in its theory (at least as far as the string itself is concerned) to the Steinway Duplex system. The idea goes back to the use of undamped overlengths of stringing used by William Frederick Collard in 1821 for "reverberation" [Harding, R.E.M.: op. cit., 354].
- 32 Rimbault, E.F.: *The Pianoforte*, (London, Robert Cocks 1860), 168, quoting approvingly the privately printed *Musical Instruments in the Great Industrial Exhibition of 1851*; Erlich, C.: op. cit., 122-23.
- 33 There is some confusion over its invention, Edwin Good (op. cit., 22, 196) claiming Blanchet et Roller in the eighteen-forties, and mentioning Steinway's patent of 1875, while Cyril Erlich (op. cit., 54) claims Montal in 1862.
- 34 Erlich, C., in *The Piano*, New Grove Musical Instrument Series, (London, Macmillan 1988), 69. It is interesting that the Imperial Grand illustrated does not have a centre pedal, now standard, whereas the 1923 model used by Paul Badura-Skoda in the Harmonic Records compact disc H/CD 8505 does.
- 35 It is possible, however, that the bottom two notes could be detuned a semitone each.
- 36 See James, B.: *Ravel. His Life and Times*, (Speldhurst, Kent, Midas; New York, Hippocrene; 1983), 106-07, where the grand on the left with Ravel in his Le Belvédère may be a Bösendorfer. The other grand on the right

- is definitely an Érard.
- 37 The Bechstein firm lent him a new concert grand each year in the eighteen-eighties for Weimar, the last of which, 1886, is still in the Liszt Museum: Wilkinson, A.: *Liszt*, (London, Macmillan 1975), 96; Hirt, F.-J.: *Stringed Keyboard Instruments 1440-1880*, (Boston, Boston Book and Art Shop, 1968, transl. of Olten, Switzerland, Urs Graf Verlag 1955), 84. The piano (1886) is wrongly dated by Hirt. There is a photograph of another 1886 Bechstein concert grand installed for Liszt in Sydenham, London, for his last visit there in that year (Good, E.M.: op. cit., 210).
- 38 Kiakhosru Sorabji was intensely interested in piano technology, wrote about it, and possessed a specially modified Steinway grand. See Sorabji, K.S.: *Mi Contra Fa*, (London, Porcupine Press 1947), 224-28.
- 39 Anderson, D.K.: *The Works of Charles T. Griffes. A Descriptive Catalogue*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.M.I. Research Press 1983), 3, records that his family home had a Steinway square grand, which would have been a one-piece frame. Griffes knew modern German instruments from his student years in that country.
- 40 Stedron, B.: *Léos Janáček*, (Prague, Artia 1955), illustration 6. The piano pictured, now in the Janáček museum in Brno, can be recognized as having a *kapsel* action because of the wires connecting the front of the pedals to the action. The name-plate is not discernible from the photograph, but may be Petrof.
- 41 Fletcher, H., Blackham, E.D. & Stratton, R.: op. cit., 535-41.
- 42 Satie's domestic instrument was a small French upright, in very poor condition at his death. His other main experience of pianos was those of the cabarets and night-clubs that he played for a living - again almost certainly French uprights.
- 43 There are quite a few photographs of the older Liszt at such instruments; see Hirt, F.J.: op. cit., 85, where the upright is a German Selinke und Spinnagel, of Leipzig; Gábry, G.: op. cit., 389-402.
- 44 The Liszt inclusion needs qualification: his more bravura works demand the modern grand, but the very simple ones like *En rêve* may be thought actually to sound better on an upright of the day with a pronounced characteristic tone. He appears to have continued to play simpler instruments as well as his modern ones - see previous note.
- 45 It is the double-escapement action that is primarily responsible for this. See Note 25.
- 46 See note 17, and also such recordings as *The Golden Age of Piano Virtuosi* (Decca DA 41, 42, 43, using Ampico rolls).

CHAPTER 5

DIFFERENT ORDERS OF KEYBOARD ART NOUVEAU I

It is arguable that some works can more obviously be considered part of the Art Nouveau keyboard repertory than others, and that there will be different ways in which they can qualify, as it were, for this description. Works may be directly inspired by Art Nouveau, may treat its leading motifs or themes, or merely be part of its general milieu. The approach taken in this study is to proceed from the primary evidence of works' titles or epigraphs, seen against the overall context of Art Nouveau's mannered and fantastic milieu.

There are also two important pre-requisites that are necessary conditions for a work's being considered of Art Nouveau character. Firstly, there must have been at least some circumstantial evidence that the composer was exposed to Art Nouveau influence, and here the evidence may be strong, as in the case of Debussy, or general, as with most others, who worked in centres where Art Nouveau was strong, and could hardly have escaped knowledge and at least some influence of it. (Since the repertory of this study is that with specific literary, theatrical or artistic reference, it is clear that its composers were the sort of people who were aware of and inspired by the wider fields of art.)

Secondly, the works themselves must show some originality of compositional procedure to justify their being linked to Art Nouveau as a movement that consciously desired to be "new" in style, and to differentiate them from such orthodox and unadventurous works as, for instance, the many characteristic pieces written at the time for the amateur pianist¹. (Such a work may be titled *Fantastic Dance* or *Naiads*, for instance, but show in its music nothing extreme or mannered, nothing that is not composed entirely within the conventions of normal diatonic practice.)

Evidence of composers' exposure to Art Nouveau

Visual Art Nouveau flourished particularly in European capitals and regional centres, and in most of these was closely connected with certain magazines and periodicals, as can be seen in the comprehensive listing in Lara-Vinca Masini's study²; it is partly from these publications that direct linking of visual and literary Art Nouveau is possible. Most general works or articles on Art Nouveau take a historico-geographical approach to their expositions³, and thus comment on the local peculiarities of style and subject-matter that tended to develop there, (as, for instance, Hans Hofstätter's differentiation between the styles of St Petersburg and Moscow⁴), besides emphasizing the similarities and cross-fertilization that were more important. Above all they emphasize the conscious effort these artists and writers made to find out about the latest developments in Art Nouveau elsewhere, particularly in the inspirational centres of London, Munich, Berlin and Paris, which they visited if they could.

Each of the composers considered in this study worked in a recognized centre of Art Nouveau activity during the years of its influence: Claude Debussy, Paul Dukas, Maurice Ravel, Erik Satie, Abel Decaux, Louis Vierne and Charles Koechlin in Paris, Florent Schmitt in Nancy and Paris, Federico Mompou in Barcelona and Paris, Vítězslav Novák and Josef Suk in Prague, Alexander Zemlinsky in Vienna, Prague and Berlin, Karol Szymanowski in Warsaw, Sergei Rakhmaninov in St Petersburg and Moscow, Alexander Skryabin in Moscow, St Petersburg, Brussels and elsewhere while he travelled as recitalist, Igor Stravinsky in St Petersburg and Paris, Lord Berners in London and Paris, Arnold Bax, John Ireland, Kaikhosru Sorabji and Frank Bridge in London, Charles Griffes in Berlin and New York, Leos Janáček at Brno and Prague, and in the last years of his life Franz Liszt moved through Paris, London, Vienna, Munich and other European centres. Each was an important figure (or part of an important circle of creative artists)

who saw himself as an innovator and thus was aware of developments in the arts generally.

However, since Art Nouveau is not yet generally established as a significant phenomenon in musical history, scholarly attention is not yet routinely directed towards the evaluation of it as being amongst the formative influences upon many composers of the period. Even in the case of Debussy, who has been directly connected to Art Nouveau, amongst other movements, by some of his biographers⁵ because he possessed some Art Nouveau (as well as Impressionist⁶) art-works, and was familiar with Samuel Bing's *L'Art Nouveau* gallery⁷, most biographers fail even to mention the term *Art Nouveau* in text or index; Edward Lockspeiser alone devotes a full chapter to the subject, and points out that "not for nothing was the first concert devoted entirely to Debussy's works given, on 1 March 1894, in the gallery of La Libre Esthétique in Brussels, then the main centre of the Art Nouveau movement"⁸.

Connexions between Art Nouveau and Symbolism

In this study frequent reference must of necessity be made to works of the Symbolist movement, whether visual or literary, alongside discussion of Art Nouveau. The two movements are very closely interconnected, both being in essence about the fantastic and having a common ideology, seen in crucial subjects like *Insel*, dream, the transformation and ambiguity of appearances, perceptions and time, the exotic, the grotesque, death and evil, and also seen in common symbols like Eros, Pan, Pierrot, the Four Elements, water, woman, dream and timelessness. The two movements are nonetheless differentiable, if only because there are works of symbolist artists like Gustave Moreau, Odilon Redon, Puvis de Chavannes, George Frederick Watts and others in the period that show little or no Art Nouveau stylization (partly because these artists formed their styles before this period).

The difference between the two movement in music may be summarized

thus: music that is about the fantastic may well be symbolist, particularly if it shows evidence of proportionate or numerological division, but music that is also highly mannered and affective is Art Nouveau. This difference will be amplified and deepened through discussion of the repertory in the succeeding chapters.

Differentiating Art Nouveau from other musical strands

In this study the term Art Nouveau is taken to refer to works in which Art Nouveau is the primary, but not always the only, influence or character to be observed. For instance, realist as well as dream references may be inferred in Janáček's *Po zarostlem chodnicku I*⁹, and Debussy owned Impressionist as well as Art Nouveau objects or paintings, so that both these sources of inspiration (amongst others) can be useful in the understanding of some of his works. This can be so even though the borderlines between Art Nouveau and other influences are not always easily defined, nor clearly differentiated by the composer.

The observer's viewpoint is also crucial: it may be thought on that on one level Debussy's *Des pas sur la neige* (*Préludes I/6*) is a simple impressionist-narrative rendering of a sad tale, or that on another level it approaches expressionism in its evocation of inner agony through discords and broken rhythms. On a third level its insistent repetition of its rhythm might be seen as the affective mannerism of Art Nouveau. If any one such approach claims to be definitive, however, its author can be accused of understating certain other perspectives that may be seen from different viewpoints. Given the complexity of cultural strands around 1900 any such single-perspective approaches are in general likely to be too simple an account of artistic phenomena. This study therefore concentrates on those works where specific reference indicates that Art Nouveau is the most important, but not necessarily the only, strand of artistic inspiration. Works where other strands seem of more importance are not considered.

It is possible to differentiate Art Nouveau from symbolism and impressionism in music. Art Nouveau is concerned with such things as ambiguities, patterns, resonances, distortions, transformations and the lack of full dimensionality. Symbolism is concerned with proportion of structure or harmonic techniques, numerological techniques, and hidden codes; it tends to use more diametrically and dramatically opposed motif-pairs and sections. Impressionism is mainly concerned with natural imagery for its own sake rather than as symbol, and tends to make it a distinctive feature rather than incorporating it into the texture of motif and figure. Impressionism's subjects and moods, insofar as they derive from the painters' movement of the later nineteenth century, tend to be limited to the picturesque, the pastoral and simple beauty.

It is unfortunate that by extension almost any music that uses imagery as tone-painting, no matter for what purpose, has become included under the general term "impressionism". Thus even fantastic, grotesque, dream, mythical or exotic imagery - the very stuff of Art Nouveau and symbolism - is often considered impressionism, which distorts impressionism's emphasis on simple beauty, and draws attention from the symbol-bearing nature of fantastic imagery in Art Nouveau and symbolism.

Classifications of musical Art Nouveau

The works chosen for consideration in this study have been divided into:

1. **First-order**

Those works whose titles, epigraphs or reference are clearly of Art Nouveau provenance

2. **Second-order**

Those works with titles whose provenance is arguably Art Nouveau but usually thought impressionist

3. **Third-order**

(a) works with generic titles like Arabesque or Barcarolle that are suggestive of Art Nouveau,

(b) works with neutral titles (sonata, study, prelude and so on) that are written by the same composers and may be considered on purely musical grounds to have affinities with their Art Nouveau works

Thus there are varying degrees of probability as to Art Nouveau attribution. A paradigm of musical Art Nouveau in the general repertory is Richard Strauss' *Salomé*, based on Oscar Wilde's play, written for Sarah Bernhardt - actress and Alphonse Mucha's favourite model - and published in 1894 with Aubrey Beardsley's drawings¹⁰. As will be seen, there are works in the keyboard repertory with similarly impeccable claims to Art Nouveau status.

End-notes

- 1 Represented by such pieces as Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*, Macdowell's many collections (opp 9, 13, 15, 20, 25, 83, 84, 88), Saint-Saens' opp. 72, 80, 85, 88, 100 and *Valses*, and Godowsky's *Triakontameron*.
- 2 Masini, L-V.: op. cit., 402-3.
- 3 Significant examples are those of Kurt Bauch, Robert Schmutzler, Hans Hofstätter and Lara-Vinca Masini; significant exceptions are Maurice Rheims and Geoffrey Warren (op. cit.)
- 4 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 251.
- 5 The only monographs to discuss Art Nouveau and Debussy are Lockspeiser, E.: *Debussy: His Life and Mind*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1978, originally 1962); Jarocinski, S.: *Debussy, Impressionism and Symbolism*, transl. Myers, R. (London, Eulenberg 1976), originally in Polish edition 1966; and Wenk, A.: *Debussy and the Poets*, (Berkeley, California 1976). The subject receives mention by various writers in Halbreich, H. (ed.): *Debussy, (Collection génies et réalités)*, (Paris, Hachette 1972), particularly Marcel Schneider 7-21.
- 6 But according to Marcel Schneider, he preferred Symbolists and Art Nouveau painters to Impressionists: see Halbreich, H. (ed.): loc. cit.
- 7 Idem, chapter by Philippe Jullian, 69. Debussy was even more familiar with Edmond Bailly's bookshop and publishing house L'Art Indépendant, the source of much Symbolist and *ésotérisme*: Howat, R.: op. cit., 167-8.
- 8 Lockspeiser, E.: op. cit., Vol.1/11, 119.
- 9 For instance, the rustling-wind semiquaver rhythmic figure of 2 bar 1, or the owl-screech triplets of 10 bar 1.
- 10 The English translation (by Lord Alfred Douglas).

CHAPTER 6

FIRST-ORDER MUSICAL ART NOUVEAU

This is music that has the strongest claim to being Art Nouveau because its titles or epigraphs clearly indicate this provenance. It will for convenience be divided into two groups:

1A Works whose titles or epigraphs denote **Art Nouveau art-works**, its central symbol of **Pan**, or its **stylistic features**. There are also titles or epigraphs based on **verse that is Art Nouveau/Symbolist** or **similar verse outside the period** but still of the strand of the mannered fantastic, and treated as Art Nouveau (for instance, the free verse of Aloysius Bertrand). These will be examined from this chapter (6) to Chapter 10.

1B Works whose titles or epigraphs denote Art Nouveau **symbols or themes** (for instance, seductress, Ondine, ambiguities). These will be discussed from chapters 11-18, and preceded by a summary of Art Nouveau symbols and themes that forms a part of the comprehensive delineation of Art Nouveau that is a purpose of this study.

THE 1A GROUPWorks based on Art Nouveau pictures

There is one case in the keyboard repertory where the composer makes direct attribution to a recognised work of visual Art Nouveau - Debussy's *Les fées sont d'esquises danseuses*, based on the Arthur Rackham¹ illustration to J.M.Barrie's 1904 *Peter Pan* that Debussy is known to have seen² in *Peter Pan dans le jardins de Kensington* published in Paris, 1907³, and mentioned by him in a letter to Robert Godet of 3rd January, 1912⁴. Thus the work of three important Art Nouveau figures is joined in this piece - James Barrie's *Peter Pan*, Arthur Rackham's illustration of one of its moments, and Debussy's evocation of this.

Before this work can be discussed the question of the provenance of Debussy's titles needs to be considered. The titles to his *Préludes* were placed at the end of the music, doubtless to avoid the simple programmatic interpretations given to character-pieces (which these are not) and to

emphasize that the music comes first. It is sometimes stated that he "like Schumann ... gave titles to his works only after their composition"⁵, which seems a remarkable inference to draw from the composer of *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and *Six épigraphes antiques*, which were specifically written to texts by Mallarmé and Pierre Louÿs (the latter work recomposed in 1914 from occasional music for a reading of Louÿs' poems in 1901). Even if true, it is only those seeking after programme, like the amateur critics of the day so much detested by Debussy, who have their methods thereby invalidated.

The more subtle approach of those who have realized this is to search for imagery instead of narrative, usually as evidence of impressionism, as can be seen in the interpretations of Robert Schmitz, Léon Vallas, Nicholas Seroff, Robert Nichols, Raymond Park and others⁶. But whether titles are afterthoughts or end-placed epigraphs is irrelevant to the approach of this study, for what these titles or epigraphs do reveal as a whole is the mixing of many literary, artistic and exotic influences on Debussy's creativity, and most importantly the bent of his imagination towards the fantastic, which is fundamental to Art Nouveau.

It can hardly be denied, of course, that elements of tone-painting and even of programme enter into the creation of some pieces, as is evidenced in *Des pas sur la neige* (*Préludes I/6*), which is perhaps part snowscape and part *Winterreise*, and even if narrative programme is denied in this piece there is undeniable imagery of halting steps and growing tragedy in the rubrics alone. Nonetheless, its use of strange harmonies, pedalpoints and ostinato show that mixed with its tone-painting there are some traces of Art Nouveau method and imagination. Various pieces in the Debussy *Préludes* may therefore be seen as covering the spectrum from tone-painting (impressionist or otherwise) to Art Nouveau, but as will be seen in the second-order repertory, there has been some misconception about the status of certain pieces. There can be little doubt that the subject of

Les fées is fantastic, however, or, as will be shown, that its composition is mannered.

While in general the later Romantic musical view of fairies as seen in character-pieces receives its most celebrated expression in Mendelssohn's incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (where it accords with the literary view of them at the time as ethereal, almost characterless beings) Art Nouveau returned to the traditional European view of them as being powerful, capricious and always potentially malevolent. Robert Schmitz feels that Debussy intends the weaker nineteenth-century meaning⁷, but has not stated his grounds for this; any viewing of Rackham's many illustrations shows that at the very least he sees a malevolent side to his fabulous creatures. It is true that Rackham's *The fairies are exquisite dancers* illustration appeared in a story which appears to accord with the weaker view because Peter Pan is a children's figure who is essentially harmless, like the fairies around him (although Captain Hook and the crocodile are not), but there is equally good reason for the opposite view that Debussy (and Rackham) had the possibility of the Art Nouveau stronger sense in mind, the view of their milieu: Art Nouveau denotation is essentially ambiguous, so that fairies' apparent innocence belies their darker side. When Rackham's picture is seen in the context of his other work on supernatural beings there can be no doubt of this: his gnomes are misshapen and while apparently like comical grandfathers are somehow malignant; the trees are gnarled into smiling but menacing faces and figures; rock, earth and plants are so much bigger than children and fairies in typical Art Nouveau manner that they are frightening - nature's realm in Rackham drawings thus possesses the same ambiguities as the gingerbread house in *Hansel and Gretel*. J.M.Barrie's gentle fairy tale - a typical children's work of its time - is transformed into something more sinister in Rackham, and Debussy is as sensitive to this as to the darker undertones in Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et*

Mélisande. Ambiguity of reference is of course essential to Art Nouveau.

The important feature of the title, as distinct from the illustration, is that fairies, being supernatural, dance exquisitely, because their motion is, like their realm, ideal. Their realm is that of air, in mediaeval terms one of the Four Elements - important Art Nouveau symbols - so that they are not bound by the grossness of earth, as are humans.

This last point is immediately in Debussy's music in several ways.

1. Almost all the music is set in the higher regions of the piano, representing air, with the bass (earth) only being employed in the mid-sections, and even there mostly reserved for pedalpoints.
2. The whole piece is a series of tensions between exotic pitch-sets, excluding familiar diatonic sounds. The resultant strange sonic realm parallels that of the supernatural.
3. The many parallel progressions mean that there is a lack of the normal developmental progression seen in diatonic harmony, producing an effect of timelessness as harmonies seem to circle endlessly rather than move in a linear fashion.
4. This circling is that of dance, with interweaving of hands, motifs and pitch-sets echoing that of the fairies' movements.
5. Almost the whole work takes place over pedalpoints, bass or inverted, so that there is the feeling of movement over a flat plane, just as Art Nouveau pictures lack depth. Rackham's picture shows a fairy dancing on a cobweb - in effect dancing on air - in a realm without normal dimensions.

These points will now be discussed in turn.

1. Music set in treble

The only exceptions to this are the use of single, repeated bass notes for pedalpoints (except for a short passage of circling movement in bars 67-72), whose deepness actually seems to accentuate the general avoidance of the tenor register. (The horn-calls that are the sole use of

the tenor register will be mentioned later.) There is also an interesting ascent in 28-31 that travels through an irregular scale (partly echoing the sharps/naturals duality of the opening figure of the piece) from the second-lowest \underline{B}^b to the \underline{D} in the treble stave, perhaps symbolically spanning the distance between earth and air.

2. Exotic pitch-sets

The work is constructed freely around these pitch-sets:

- tritonic 444, or three major thirds [A in the analysis below]
- octatonic 1212 1212 [B]
- varieties of the pentatonic 23232 [third bar of C, first bar of D]
- the natural harmonic series chord of b^7_5 [D & E]

[The pitch-sets are counted in ascending semitonal intervals. The numerals in the sets above represent the complete set; Debussy often uses only part of a set - for instance, omitting \underline{C}^\sharp from the octatonic set of bar 16, and omitting the \underline{B}^b from the third bar of C in the analysis.]

Analysis 1a:

Analysis 1a: Musical notation showing pitch sets A, B, C, D, and E. A: LH 444, RH 435. B: BARS 6-11, OCTATONIC-BASED (2 1 3 2 1 2). C: LH UPPER (4 1 4 2 1), LH LOWER (3 2 3 2 2), RH (1-5). D: 57, 58, PENTATONIC (4 1 4 2 1), HAR. SERIES (3 2 3 2 2). E: 107-10, 111-17, HAR. SERIES (4 4 4).

Debussy: *La fees sont d'exquises danseuses*, elements

These pitch-sets have different significances in this work. The 444 set, or the set of major thirds, is the basis of the opening figures, where it appears as a resultant of the opposed nature of the hands - the

left on the naturals and the right on the sharps. It is given as 444 (first chord in the analysis) and immediately contradicted by 435 - the diatonic major triadic chord (second chord), so that as well as naturals-sharps opposition there is a 444/435 opposition. (This complexity is reflected throughout the work in other oppositions that will be noticed below.) The 444 set is found throughout the work, appearing on A[#] in 32-36, G^b in 37-44, and in the reprise of the **A** figuration at the end of the piece. Its augmented triad $\#^5_3$ seems throughout the work to be contrasted with simple 5_3 , as when $\#5$ and 5 are trilled. Since trills are a major part of the work (dominating it entirely in 6-14, 73-90 and appearing elsewhere) it seems that Debussy is again emphasizing the essential difference of the airy (the strange sound of the $\#^5_3$) and earthly (5_3) dimensions.

If the larger picture of the **A** figuration is examined, the notes through which the upper component of the left-hand naturals-based segment moves can be seen in the first bar of **C**; the set is 12414 [always counting in **ascending** order]. For the lower component - the one taken by the ear as the "bass" of the sequences - the set is 22323, or the pentatonic set. Thus the "bass" echoes the right-hand sharps-based component of the **A** figuration, but based on C as against E^b. Here the sonic effect is of two pentatonic dimensions offset with respect to each other, and with respect to the naturals-based set that is the whole left-hand part of the figuration. These airy dimensions do not intersect in the familiar way of earthly (diatonic) ones.

The octatonic set is used loosely in the bar 16 example quoted above, for its final two notes are of reversed intervals 12 instead of 21, but the set is important in the horn-calls (bars 9-12, to be discussed later). It is a set that is of great importance in the Art Nouveau repertory. It is symmetrical, which appeals to those like Skryabin who wish to see this as echoing divine or cosmic perfection, and it offers

great flexibility of harmonic possibilities, since it encourages exploration of non-diatonic chords and melodic lines. Finally, like the other exotic pitch-sets, it sounds strange to ears accustomed to diatonics.

The pentatonic set can be a symmetrical 23232 or, in its inversions, asymmetrical, which is the way Debussy employs it here. He uses it freely, often dropping from the sharps to transpositions on the naturals, as in the figuration of the opening bars already seen above, or in bar 27. Whereas in *Pagodes* he is mainly concerned with purity of his pentatonic pitch-sets, in *La fées* he is again, in places like bar 27, deliberately transforming into a different dimension of the set to show that airy dimensionality is unlike that of earth.

The chord of the seventh ($b^7_5_3$) occurs in the natural harmonic series as the fourth to seventh partials, and this is always in orchestral music associated with horns and trumpets, that in the days before valve-instruments were limited to such notes. In pairs or threes they were limited in their middle ranges to triadic and seventh chords, so that the association of the natural series and the sounds of nature was thus established, and is a musical *topos* often referred to in the *Art Nouveau* repertory. As with the other pitch-sets Debussy is free in his juxtaposing it with non-harmonic series sets, and with the two possible versions of the seventh partial, that falls between the diatonic sixth and flat seventh, so that he renders the chord 6_5_3 or $b^7_5_3$:

Analysis 1b:



Debussy: *Les fées sont d'exquises danseuses*, 55-58

The bar 54 analysis shows the 6_5_3 form and the bars 58-64 analysis the $b^7_5_3$ form. Since the former is also available from the pentatonic pitch-set

(see the last part of the analysis above), Debussy features interplay of the two sets throughout the work, as in the bar 57 analysis above.

3. Parallel progressions

Simple examples of this occur in such sequences as those bars 28-29 where minor triads descend chromatically over an ascending scale. Although the sequences takes place over an A^b pedalpoint the parallel movement tends to vitiate any sense of tonal horizon, producing a slightly dizzying effect. Similar chromatically descending sequences occur under the inverted trill-pedals of bars 73-90.

The function of these chords is always to move chromatically, clouding any sense of fixed perspective that might be provided by the bass pedalpoints to the dancing of the melody. ("Clouding" is used in the sense of making something ambiguous, as distinct from "veiling", the partial concealment of, say, one tonality by another. Both are typical Art Nouveau practice, and differentiated throughout the repertory.) In bars 67-72 the chromatic downwards movement is balanced by the rising scale that is not simply chromatic, modal or whole-tone: the combined effect is mysterious and atonal, eclipsing the A^b pedal that lasts for the first two of the four bars).

4. Circling and interweaving

The figuration that opens and closes the piece sets a pattern of circling that is seen everywhere throughout. The hands, occupied with the complex levels of figuration illustrated in Analysis 1a, descend in parallel through a fourth, ascend a fourth, descend once more, and echo this descent at the octave, thus circling around the note C . When the trills begin over the horn-calls of bars 6-12 they circle around the E^b pedal. The pattern of tying figuration to such pedals, real or implied, is one of the bases of the whole work, and in a simple sense represents dance-steps on the stretched cobweb of Rackham's picture. But in a deeper sense, since it prevents linear development of harmony, all the

repetitions that necessarily follow suggest movement without progress - fairies circling in a timeless realm, music's expression of the traditional fairytale's "once upon a time" setting in no time or place.

This is further seen in the almost total lack of developmental progression as this is normally understood. None of the work's sections is repeated, the nearest being a return at bars 91-106 of the motifs of the first section, which is virtually the first part of the coda. Other sections (beginning at bars 24, 52, 67, 73) are not repeated or transformed.

5. Pedalpoints

These appear in different forms - as basses in bars 14-29, 42-46, 52-56, 60-61 and 77-99; as inverted pedals in the form of trills in bars 6-10 and 73-100, in both cases with bass pedals; and most importantly as the chordal figures already noted, that shift chromatically to cloud tonal perspective. Where pedals occur, the harmonic movement above them is frozen and unresolving, producing the feeling of being in a sonic realm that does not have normal harmonic dimensions. This is analogous to the flat surfaces of Art Nouveau pictures, where depth, normally suggested by perspective, is deliberately omitted so that, as in mediaeval pictures, the attention is focused not on realistic but on symbolic portrayal.

A complementary feature of the work is the lack of melody, for most of the interest is in the "accompanimental" filigree, just as in visual Art Nouveau it is the swirl of line and detail that tends to capture the attention as much as the figure of the composition itself. When in bar 91 the opening figures reappear as reprise, the effect is not that any time has passed, because there has been no normal linear harmonic development; the effect is simply that of Art Nouveau repetition.

In the first section (bars 1-23) there is no melody, just a pair of contrasting curves, seen at the top of each group of five notes in bars 1-4; when the curves reappear in bars 11-12 the actual notes are altered,

and altered again in the staccato quavers of bars 13-14. When this filigree-section reappears at bar 101 to begin its coda, again the actual notes of the curves are not consonant with each other or anything else, but their movement is curved. Thus Debussy's music is not progressing but curving endlessly, so that when it is looked at from this viewpoint as well as that of the pedalpoints it is again seen to be non-linear.

It can thus be seen that there is no melodic-motif that is anywhere developed or even returned to in the whole piece, with unity being achieved instead by repetition of similar curves rather than by development of motifs based on recognisable notes, scales or sequences. This is essential Art Nouveau method: the manneristic repetition of motivic, figural or rhythmic units to form patterns and create mesmeric effect. In this connexion the traditional belief in magic fairy-rings (where fairies have danced), with fairies as creatures of the spirit realm where perfection of form obtains, and thus dancing in the perfect form of a circle, may be seen reflected in the roundel (*Ronde, Reigen*) or round dance which was performed to an endlessly repeating tune or round; Debussy may well be using a deliberate parallel in the circularity of *Les fées*⁸.

Dream

Music that relies on a subliminal perception of rocking-motion curves shows another vital aspect of Art Nouveau - its emphasis on the unconscious and dream. To consider Arthur Rackham's illustration is to be alive to all the connotations that fairies' dancing suggests - their dancing in magic rings, their invisibility, their small-sized realm, their perfection and beauty, their powers over humans, and so on. The Rackham picture denotes fairies dancing on cobwebs, but its connotations are more important, and a sensitive poet like Debussy accordingly makes his musical effects by suggestion rather than statement⁹.

Art Nouveau motivic archetypes

There are three archetypal motifs illustrated in this work that

occur throughout the repertory, and are of such importance that they will receive some introductory comment here.

Horn-motif

The first concerns the left-hand *marque* figure of 6-12 (hM) that is like imagery of fairy horns, and which would be orchestrated here by French horns. Such horn-imagery is found throughout the repertory, and tends to be associated with distant effects or echoes, particularly those suggesting the unseen powers of nature. As here, the characteristics of the horn-motif are broken rhythm and altered triadic harmony, the acciaccaturas and quasi-dotted rhythm providing the broken rhythm, and the altered triads by alternations of the octatonic chords, as indicated by O¹ and O².

Example 1:

The musical score for Example 1 is divided into two systems. The first system shows measures 8-11. The piano part (left) features a complex rhythmic pattern with acciaccaturas and quasi-dotted rhythms. The horn part (right) is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes annotations for horn motifs (hM) and octatonic chords (O¹, O²). The second system shows measures 15-16. The piano part includes a trill section marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a crescendo (*cresc.*). The horn part is marked with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic and includes annotations for horn motifs (hM) and octatonic chords (O²).

Debussy: *Les fées sont exquises danseuses*, 9-11, 15-16

Panpipe motif

These begin with a long note (often trilled) and then break into flourish, and are usually heard in the treble, as if played by panpipe or flute. The effect is of a sustained invocation that bursts into emotion, and is not unlike some birdsong. The first of these appears here in 15-16 (ppM), and the long trill-section of 73-85 is directly followed by a

reprise of the opening flourishes, so that the whole episode might be seen as the effect *in magna*.

Winding-motif

This is a sensuous undulation around a note, or around an ascending or descending scale. It is essentially the method of arabesque, and analagous in form and effect to that of visual art. In this work it is seen as such movements as that of the circling motions described earlier, and represented by the curving of the right-hand figure in the example above (WM), which is replicated all through the work. The effect of this winding movement is pleasantly sensuous, particularly when it is combined with parallel progressions that also suggest some loss of horizon or dimensional reference.

The symbolism of these motif-types is clear, signifying the unseen powers of nature that from the fantastic realm impinge upon the realm of the seen and real through the senses.

Summary

It is significant that this, the work in the keyboard repertory with the most clear Art Nouveau credentials, illustrates so well its important principles like mystery (the strange sounds of exotic pitch-sets and the archetypal motifs), limited dimensionality, timelessness, interweaving and others summarized in Chapter 3. (It also shows originality, extremity of effect {for instance, the long trill-passage}, the generative effect of the line-elements of trill and flourish, and the other principles of the eleven, but here as in subsequent discussions, attention is paid more to the points of greater rather than lesser significance.) Above all, the work illustrates that the focus of the Art Nouveau repertory is on effect rather than image, the important emphasis always being not on the tone-painting aspect of imagery (if any) but its sensuous, mysterious effect in combination with that of ostinato, repetition, ambiguities and other patternings in the work's figuration.

End-notes

- 1 For Rackham an as Art Nouveau figure see Chadwick, E.M. in Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 88-91, and Gettings, F.: *Arthur Rackham*, (London, Studio Vista 1975).
- 2 Park, R.R.: op. cit., 385-6; Hooreman, P.: *Les fées sont d'esquises danseuses" dans Claude Debussy: textes et documentes inédites* (Numero spécial de la Revue de musicologie, ed. Francois Lésure (Paris, Heugel et Cie., 1962), 104-107. Godelieve Spiessens claims that Liszt was the first thus to base a work on a painting: Spiessens, G.: *De beeldende kunsten als inspireibron voor de muziek, Vlaanderen (Tielt) XXXIV/2* (March-April 1985), 74-80.
- 3 Lésure, F.: *Claude Debussy*, (Genevre, Editions Minkoff 1975), 168.
- 4 Debussy, C.: *Lettres à deux amis*, (Paris 1942), 132.
- 5 Vogel, J.: *Leos Janáček, his life and works*, (London, Paul Hamlyn 1964), 199.
- 6 Schmitz, E.R.: *The Piano Works of Claude Debussy*, (New York, Dover 1966; originally Ontario, General Publishing, and London, Constable, 1950); Park, R.R.: *The Later Style of Claude Debussy*, (Michigan, University of Michigan 1967).
- 7 Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 169.
- 8 The Round or *Reigen* is found throughout the period: Alban Berg's op. 6/2 is so titled, and instances are mentioned by Andrew McCredie in opera (op. cit., 230), where they are linked to the nature of the text and plot.
- 9 Hooremann, P.: op. cit., 104-07; Spiessens, G.: op. cit., 74-80; Leslie, L.: *Bildungsmusik - Musikbilder Beziehungsgeschichten: zwischen Tonkunst und Malerei* (Neue Zeitschrift für Musik 149 (April 1988), 11; Pecman, Rudolf: *Hudba á vytvarné umené* (Music and the visual arts), symposium in Frydku-Mésthú 1977, particularly Krutova, Alena: *The visual imagination of Debussy as illustrated in his Préludes* (Materialy 3).

WORKS BASED ON PAN AS PERSONIFICATION OF MYSTERY

Pan - the central Art Nouveau symbol

The mythology of Art Nouveau is centred around the mystery of nature in opposition to an age focusing on the works of man in such things as engineering marvels, the wealth produced by commerce and the brilliance of fashionable society in *la belle époque*. As the supreme animist god, from ancient times personifying passion and caprice, Pan embodies the essential mystery of the world that dwarfs mere man and his pretensions. Pan is the key figure through the whole of Art Nouveau, both as satyr/faun¹ and symbol of the supernatural forces of nature². Pan, the central Classical symbol of animism, was chosen as the title of the Berlin Jugendstil magazine between 1895 and 1900; it is significant that its only rivals amongst the wealth of Art Nouveau and associated publications listed by Lara-Vinca Masini are, with the exception of *Die Insel*, less central to Art Nouveau although nonetheless connected to it - *Hyperion* (Munich), *Die Insel* (Berlin), *Ver Sacrum* (Vienna), *Hermes* (Florence), *Chimera* (Warsaw) and *Le Toison d'or* [The Golden Fleece] (Moscow). All the other magazine-titles are political statements (*Art Nouveau*, *Jugendstil*, *Simplizzimus*, *Novissima*) or ones with conventional art-magazine names (*L'art et l'idée*, *The Studio*). *Die Insel* is a powerful and central Art Nouveau concept, but Pan as a personification of so many characteristics - the mystery and power of nature, sensuality, perpetual seeker after beauty and sensation, capricious and wanton, everywhere immanent - is the most comprehensive and rich symbol.

Apart from the many illustrations for the covers of the Berlin magazine *Pan* his most important and extensive treatment in visual art is that by Aubrey Beardsley, in whose illustrations he is a ubiquitous figure³ making a wry comment on the amorous pretensions of the main subjects; while perhaps only in *Dancing to Pan's Pipes*⁴ is he an ageing roué reminiscent of the faun in Stéphane Mallarmé's *L'après-midi d'un*

faune, he is always an ambiguous figure - old in sophistry, eternally young in passion, as he appears throughout literary Art Nouveau generally - for instance in the poems of Otto Julius Bierbaum, Georg Trakl and Georg Heym that Jost Hermand gathers under the Pan theme in his *Lyrik des Jugendstils*⁵.

To Claude Debussy, Vitezslav Novák, Florent Schmitt, Paul Dukas and to writers like Kenneth Grahame, E.M. Forster and Saki (Hector Hugh Munro)⁶, Pan is essentially an icon of the mystery and power of the unseen in nature, that element entirely excluded from the picturesque and comfortable pastorals of Impressionism. It is, however, a recurring icon in Art Nouveau pictures⁷.

For three of the composers whose works are discussed in this section, Pan and his domain was a subject returned to in other pieces. Debussy developed the Pan-legend in other music, including, besides the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, *La flûte de Pan* (*Chansons de Bilitis*, 1897-98), *La faune* (*Fêtes galantes II*, 1904) and *Syrinx* (for solo flute, 1912), all of which feature panpipe-motifs⁸. Vitezslav Novák wrote an *Eklogy* (Op.10, 1896) for piano and *Toman a lesni panna* (Toman and the wood-nymph, Op.40, 1906-07) for orchestra, but his most important work in this genre is his major tone-poem *Pan* op.43 of 1910, arranged by him for orchestra in 1913. Florent Schmitt's *Dionysiaques* (Op.62, 1914) for orchestra and military band is cognate, for Dionysus was always under the spell of the satyr Silenus, the son of Pan.

The keyboard works based on the concept of Pan begin with Debussy's four-hands arrangement of *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* of 1905⁹, but is dominated by the most extensive opus of the entire Art Nouveau keyboard repertory - Vitezslav Novák's *Pan*, a major work in five movements (dealing with Pan's domain - mountains, sea, forests, Woman) of almost an hour's duration.

Two other works are Florent Schmitt's *Et Pan, au fond des blés*

lunaires, s'accouda, (Mirages Op.70\1) [also known as *Tristesse de Pan*, the title given to the 1925 orchestral version] based on a poem by Paul Fort¹⁰], and Paul Dukas' *La plainte, au loin, du faune...*, which not only specifically refers to the Pan-faun *topos* but to Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*¹¹. The Dukas and Schmitt pieces are *tombeau* works following the death of Claude Debussy¹², and thus symbolize Debussy as the Pan of Art Nouveau, inspiring and dominating his whole domain of fellow composers as Pan leads the spirit world.

Debussy: *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*

This work was written in 1892-94 and arranged by him for two pianos in 1905. As a key work in the orchestral Art Nouveau repertory it similarly is of great importance to the piano repertory.

It begins with a motif rippling up and down like a panpipe, perhaps in the 1895 orchestral original the progenitor of other panpipe-motifs in the Art Nouveau period, many of which will be noticed in the keyboard repertory.

Example 2:

Assez lent

PIANO I

p doux et expressif

PIANO II

pp *M* *Assez lent*

Debussy: *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, 1-4

The sequence ends with a little curve or quasi-turn (the first half of bar 3) and finishes with the Piano 2 entry on a chord that contains thirds: these elements of turn and thirds, here combined in the same sequence with

the panpipe-motif, take on a separate existence as the horn-motifs of other works in the repertory, including the works on the Pan-topos to be discussed in this section. The two motifs contrast there as their fragments do here - in melodic shape and in rhythm - but both are sensuously curved.

It has two melodic features - its chromaticism and its somewhat indefinite tonal perspective, emphasized by its being heard solo for its original statement; both these features influence the nature and effect of the florid arabesque that later develops from the motif. James Hepokoski notes that Debussy tends to begin such monophonic openings to pieces with a prolonged note that sets the tonal point around which the melodic line arabesques¹³, but while this defines the pitch around which the melody weaves, the actual tonality is vague because of the chromatic nature of the arabesque¹⁴. When the first chords appear in bars 4-9 their "non-confirming or contradictory" nature¹⁵ adds to the tonal indefiniteness. All these features, together with its uneven rhythmic nature - semiquavers and triplets - create ambiguity typical of Art Nouveau from the outset.

The motif's initial chromatic complexity turns to floridity as it is developed in bars 22-24, 27-28 and 31-36, but this arabesque is interspersed with long-held notes or more deliberate motion - again an ambiguity of procedural method. An interesting example of this is seen in the sequences that follow bar 48: the regular motions of both pianos' parts from 55-60 is offset by the irregularity of the Piano 1 melody and the syncopations of the Piano 2 accompanimental chords, with the two pianos mixing in increasingly complex textures from bar 63. At bar 79 there is a return to a regular accompanimental motion (Piano 1), and from this point the two different sorts of motion oppose each other for the rest of the piece, with the two pianos often exchanging roles from one sequence to another, as seen in sequences like those of bars 37-43.

The two pianos are almost always used in contrasting textures, but

in ambiguous fashion interchange them frequently. For instance, the arabesque of Piano 1 in bars 27-29 is countered by the parallel chord-progressions of Piano 2. In bars 24-25 and 27-29 the arabesque development of the panpipe-motif contrasts with the alternating semiquaver chords as accompanimental texture in the other. These chords produce a shimmering effect that again is ambiguous in effect, particularly in bars 83-85, 90-93, where they occur between harp-like arpeggiated chords and tremolando chords of a firmer perspective.

At this point the importance of the latter half of the panpipe motif - the slow curve of bars 3 and 4 - can be noticed. This latter half of the motif takes on a life of its own as it develops into the melody of bars 17 to 20, from which point, together with the motif-scrap first heard in bar 5 (Piano 1 left hand) it becomes a unit developed in a series of contrasting sequences to those developed from the first half of the panpipe motif (for example, the Piano 2 sequences in contrast to the arabesque of Piano 1 in bars 24-31). The two halves thus become two motifs; their being announced together at the work's beginning (and by the same instrument in the orchestral version) is perhaps significant as parallelling the mixing of present and past in the faun's musings (see lines 2-5, quoted below). They can be seen as panpipe-motif and horn-motif, even though they are undifferentiated in the opening of this piece.

(They are not always well differentiated in music. In pastoral music the actual type of shepherd's pipe or flute being imitated cannot always be inferred from the orchestral instrument chosen to represent it. Pan traditionally plays the panpipes, but these pipes and the shepherd's pipe may be represented by either flute or oboe/cor anglais orchestrally. The horn in pastoral illustrations (paintings, decorations, sculpture) is differentiated from the pipe in its having a bell, although putti and angels sound instruments that can look like anything from cornetts/trumpets/oboes to hunting horns, on the whim of the artist. But

while the differentiation in illustrations is perhaps not very significant symbolically, panpipes and horns are distinct sonic symbols in Art Nouveau, the former denoting Pan and the latter other creatures of the spirit-world, as already seen in *La fées sont d'esquises danseuses*¹⁶). The later works discussed in this section on Pan are constructed around pairs of motifs that seem to be derivable in form from these two initial motif-units of *L'après-midi*.)

The indefiniteness of tonality sensed at the outset, partly resulting from the chromatic freedom of the pan-pipe motif and partly from its being heard solo, is furthered when it returns over a harmonic foundation set up by Piano 2 in bars 11-20. The listener to the opening bars may well be quite unable to fix the motif over any clear sense of tonal foundation, particularly when the Piano 2 chords in bars 4-8 contradict with their modulation ($VI^{\#6} \setminus bV^7$) any perspective that may have been forming. The players, with an E key-signature on the scores in front of them to suggest tonality, are little better off, for the harmonized passage begins in D, not E, at bar 11, finishes on E[#] in bars 19 and 20, and only once touches E as root¹⁷ (in the course of modulation from V to #I):

Analysis 1:

11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
$bVII^7 \rightarrow$	$_$	$VII-V-I-\#I$		VII^7	$\#V-V-\#IV$		\rightarrow	$\#I$	\rightarrow

Debussy: Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune 11-20

For the main statement of the main motif this is very ambiguous harmonization, but it merely carries on the sense of indefiniteness established at the opening. It is not until the motif is developed into arabesque in the following sequences that E is established as root, but the parallel progressions over this in bars like 24 and 27-28 immediately begin to cloud its certainty. From bar 55 the use of tonic and tritone (as dominant), as well as the continuous use of unresolved sevenths as root chords (for instance bars 75-78), and the use of first-inversion

rather than root chords in bars 79-80 and 83-84, all add to the sense of shifting and uncertain harmonic perspective throughout the piece. The analogy with Art Nouveau's dream or fantasy-world, where boundaries are veiled or ambiguous, is simply made, and the difference between this piece and conventional pastorals is as obvious as that between an Arthur Rackham fantasy and an Impressionist *plein-air* scene with *bourgeoises chez campagnes*.

That such Debussyan harmonic practice is "non-functional" is now a cliché of analytical criticism¹⁸, but what is not always noticed is that the result is in effect a series of shorter or longer pedalpoints, harmonic progression being suspended as the music rests on a series of relatively unrelated chords, each of which is for its duration the plane upon which melodies or voice-parts move. The alternating chords of bars 4-9 are thus opposing planes that parallel the two planes of the faun's musings in Mallarmé's poem - the past and the present, both dreamlike, timeless and insubstantial:

*Si clair,
Leur incarnat léger, qu'il voltige dans l'air
Assoupi de sommeils touffus.*

*Aimai-je un rêve?*¹⁹

[
Their light incarnadine, that it lilts in the air
Drowsy with tufted slumbers.

Did I love a dream?]²⁰

The slowly transforming harmonies over the D pedal following (bars 11-12) make the sense of pedal indefinite, and the apparent glimpse of "functional" resolution to E in bar 13 also becomes indefinite as it slides a semitone upwards only two beats later.

While parallels like this between music and poem are present throughout the work it is not clear that there is any simple linear relationship, as has been pointed out by Laurence Borman, who argues that *Jeux* may be closer to Mallarmé's text than the *Prélude l'après-midi* in this respect²¹. The whole question is complicated by the often obscure

nature of symbol and reference in Mallarmé's poem, and the difficulties this gives rise to in music set to it have been discussed by Theo Hirsbrunner, Helga Böhmer, Helmut Schmidt-Garre, John Crotty and David Headlam with respect to Mallarmé and this poem *inter alia*²². Debussy's exploitation of tonal and harmonic indefiniteness that accords with the deliberate ambiguity of the poem, (together with some motivic symbolism²³) is the true parallel - not any linear correspondence that may be thought to be discerned. Since neither poem nor music proceeds according to established formal procedures²⁴ there would seem to be little point in attempting any but the most tentative kinds of narrative or linear parallels between music and text²⁵. The work is thus a paradigm of the way Art Nouveau texts are treated in music: narrative is either ambiguous or virtually absent because of the general setting in *time espace*, so that the various images of text and music are woven into patterns rather than arranged as markers along the sort of linear narrative typical of a tone-poem. Musical imagery thus has a fundamentally different purpose in Art Nouveau, one that cannot justifiably be compared to musical impressionism; in the latter imagery is raised to become a feature, in the former, it is subordinated to become a basis for figure.

Thus it is more difficult to align textual with musical imagery in Art Nouveau. The difficulties of similarly establishing parallels between symbol and music have been noted by Peter Gulke, who nevertheless suggests one in this work between time and tonality²⁶. This study will suggest, however, that time in musical Art Nouveau is more connected with repetition, and ambiguities of tonality with ambiguities of boundary and perspective in Art Nouveau's dream world.

A final point about the relationship between the methods of Art Nouveau and those of Debussy in this piece needs to be made. In the sort of picture where swirls of stylized line appear in such profusion and force that they obscure the nominal subject (Mucha, Beardsley, Klimt,

Behrens, for example), each unit of line becomes to some extent an end in itself, fascinating the eye with its richness. In the same way each pedalpoint is its own rich world, its sensuousness of sound being its own justification for existence, not its relationship with surrounding tonal centres or its position along a line of harmonic progression, if any. There is, on another plane, a relationship between all these units: in a picture this consists of the overall pattern created, and in Debussy's music it is the effect of being in a strange harmonic world where normal harmonic signposts are absent, veiled or pleasantly distorted. The various pedal-units, then, stand in an existential rather than a direct relationship to each other and to the whole. The passage beginning with bar 55 may be taken as a convenient illustration:

Example 3:

Debussy: *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, 55-63

Bars 55-58 have the bass in Piano 1 alternating between D^b and its tritone G , which harmonically speaking is the antithesis of a conventional direct relationship (like tonic-dominant, for instance), so that its effect is disorientating. The sustained stream of syncopated Piano 2 chords is changed by only one accidental²⁷, but the effect is radical - from 5_3 to 7^b_2 , as if one plane dissolves into another or one scene into another in a transitional cinematic double exposure. The succeeding bass movements in

bars 59-62 make fairly normal harmonic sense as a unit (III-VI-V-I, based on D), but not in relation to the preceding unit, nor that following (bars 63-66) where the bars 55-58 pattern reappears and the tonal base varies between D^b and G. Thus the four-bar units of this sequence bear only an existential relationship to one another as disparate planes of harmony alternate, again parallelling the synchronous rather than diachronous nature of the poem (the mixing of past and present rather than progressing through time in normal narrative manner).

Vitezslav Novák: Pan, básen v tónech [Pan, a tone poem]

This major work for piano (and **the** major work in the keyboard repertory) in five movements, later (1913) set for orchestra by him, consists of a prologue and four parts of Pan's domain - mountains, sea, forest and woman. Each movement is constructed from parts of the Pan-theme statement (*Prolog*, bars 1-16), mostly appearing in disguised form, just as Pan is everywhere secretly in nature, imbuing it with his spirit. Karel Srom, introducing the 1963 edition, expresses some idea of the connotations of the work's overall title, referring to "Pan, enticing the nymphs with his shepherd's pipe, as the vital force in nature and the personification of fertility"²⁸. *Mountains* and *Forest* as comprising mystery are also understandable choices following Novák's revelatory experience of nature and traditional music in the remoteness of Valassko in 1896²⁹. Nature as personified in Pan is seen in the 1897 *Jugend* woodcut by Thomas Sturge Moore - *The Pan Peak* - showing a mountain in whose form Pan with his pipes is discerned³⁰; Novák could well have known this picture, as also other Jugendstil representations of him, like the famous cover of the April-May 1895 *Pan* magazine³¹. *Sea* is a less common setting for Pan, but as water it is a crucial Art Nouveau icon, its flat surface mirroring and reversing reality as well as concealing the powers in its depths, and its fluidity of form showing above all mystery and changeability of mood. In this work Pan is understood as reigning over

the world of waves, fish and nereids as much as over woodland, animals, dryads and naiads. Such nymphs of sea, tree and river are feminine, while Pan is masculine, ruling over them as over the whole of nature, although not without uncertainty when pursuing woman. Woman as part of Pan's domain is thus a typically ambiguous Art Nouveau concept: she is essentially mysterious, and as personified in the Syrinx legend is enticing and capricious, with the power to bewitch Pan and yet elude him, remaining as a tantalizing echo. Pan is traditionally drawn irresistibly to love, so that even he is under woman's thrall - almost as if the natural order is reversed and he is part of woman's domain. The mystery of woman, the joys of pursuit and the ecstasies of love dominate the final movement, *Woman*. Besides imagery of the chase there is imagery of the dance - so often associated with woman in Art Nouveau, as in the dancing nymph who taunts Pan in Ephraim Mose Lilien's illustration from *Jugend*, Henri Toulouse-Lautrec's *La Gouloue*, *Jane Avril*, *Loie Fuller* and *Marcel Lender* posters, and many others³².

The five movements will be examined for evidences of the importance of two motifs basic to the concept of Pan, for the building of mystery through ambiguities, including duality of structure, and for the use of manneristic devices emphasized in Art Nouveau music, like ornament³³, pedalpoints and ostinato.

Like *L'après-midi* and the other works in this study with "Pan" or "faun" in their titles, Novák's *Pan* features a panpipe-like theme. Such motifs are mostly seen at the outset of each work: *Pan* (17-24), *L'après-midi* (1-5), *La plainte, au loin, du faune...* (Paul Dukas, 1921) (3-4), *Tristesse de Pan* (Florent Schmitt, *Mirages/1*, 1920) (7-8)³⁴ (and *Pour invoquer Pan*, from Debussy's *Six épigraphes antiques*, 1914, which will be discussed later) (1-9). These motifs recall such others as those of Debussy's *Syrinx* for solo flute (a mixture of modal and chromatic effects) and the opening episode (the entrance of the little fauns) in Gabriel



Pierné's ballet *Cydalise et le chèvre-pied*, 1923) using the first five notes of the whole-tone scale. In addition there are usually horn-calls also associated with distant sounds (an important Art Nouveau *topos* embodied in Franz Schreker's *Die Ferne Klang* and Paul Dukas' *La plainte, au loin, du faune*) and spirits - "the horns of Elfland faintly blowing"³⁵, already noticed in *Les fées sont danseuses esquises* and *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (3-4), and to be seen below in *Pan* (4-10), *Tristesse de Pan* (2-3, 5-6), and in *La plainte, au loin, du faune* (5-6).³⁶

Although the five movements of Vitezslav Novák's *Pan* comprise by far the largest work (nearly sixty minutes in performance) in the Art Nouveau keyboard repertory (the nearest approach by another work being the three movements of Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit* that make about half this length), Novák's suite has several factors giving it unity and form. The plan of the work can be summarized thus:

PROLOGUE	MOUNTAIN	SEA	FOREST	WOMAN
horn-motif	Mountain-P	S-F ₁	horn-motif	W-F ₁
panpipe-M ₁	M-M ₁	S-M ₁	F-M ₁	W-M ₁
P-M ₂	M-M ₂	S-M ₂	F-M ₂	W-M ₂
P-M ₃	M-M ₃	S-M ₃	F-M ₃	W-M ₃
Mountain-P				
Sea-M ₁	Mountain-P	S-F ₂	Forest-C	W-F ₂
Woman-M ₁				
Forest-C				

[M = motif; F = figure; P = prelude; C = coda. The motifs and figures for each movement are prefixed by initials to distinguish them from those of other movements.]

Novák: *Pan*, macrostructure

Each of the movements is in three sections - prelude, patterning (where three motifs interweave), and coda, indicated by the three horizontal groupings. The horn-motif occurs twice, the Mountain-Prelude three times, and the Forest-Coda twice. The echoes that these repetitions make are spaced throughout the work in the asymmetrical but patterned manner that is reflected in the micro-structures of the individual movements, but

space does not allow for this to be shown. Such asymmetry is also noticeable in that the third and fifth movements do not have preludes and codas that are echoes of sections of the Prologue's coda; their echoes are perceivable in the way their motifs are derived from earlier material or from each other, by inversions, retrogrades and other transformations.

The analysis invites the hypothesis that the work was originally planned as a three-part suite - Prologue, Mountain and Forest, which would give a more symmetrical structure; as it is, however, the interpolation, subsequent or not, of the Sea and Woman movements, with their self-contained structures, adds another dimension of form to the whole, giving it significant asymmetry. This hypothesis might be tested by examination of Novák's manuscripts and notes, which might show the addition of the Sea and Woman segments at the end of the Prologue. As a three-movement suite the segments outlined in bold type would have formed the interlinking boundaries of the three movements. The hypothesis also explains the disordered sequence of segments at the end of the Prologue, compared to the actual final order of the movements: the Forest-Coda was perhaps designed as the final coda of the original suite.

Analysis 2a:

PROLOGUE	MOUNTAIN	FOREST
horn-motif	Mountain-P	horn-motif
panpipe-M	M-M ₁	F-M ₁
P-M ₂	M-M ₂	F-M ₂
P-M ₃	M-M ₃	F-M ₃
Forest-C	Mountain-P	Forest-C

Novák: Pan, hypothetical original plan

If the hypothesis were supported it would also vitiate any suggestion of narrative sequence of a stream's progress from mountain to sea as in Smetana's *Vltava*, a point that will be returned to below. As it is, the extension of Pan's domain to include Sea and Woman is a brilliant stroke, for it firmly links woman and water as part of the Pan-topos, and transforms the work musically with its two most lively movements. It is

as if Novák gained so much skill and confidence from what he had already composed that he was able almost completely to transform his original conception from the more quietly lyrical and reflective nature of the three original movements into the quite vast and dynamically varied conception that the final form embodies.

This whole work is formed from the two main motifs (horn and panpipe), as will be shown, and they give it unity. But so varied and profuse are the transformations of motif and figure that within this simple base there is endless variety. In this way it is exactly similar to a typical Art Nouveau picture that is composed of intricate patternings of similar line-shapes. It will also be noticed that within each movement and mid-section Novák breaks from the dual-motif basis of sonata-form that depends on dramatic contrast. The movements, in triple form, are constructed like the whole work (I+pre-echoes, II+III, IV+V), and the mid-sections like the movements. This triple form is, in the timeless (*time-space*) Art Nouveau milieu, a firm statement against the *time-durée* linearity of sonata-form's exposition-development-recapitulation. To sum up the work's structure: it is built asymmetrically from echoes and transformations on several levels, and all these reflect Pan's ambiguity and immanence. He, as represented by the horn-motif and panpipe-motif of the first seventeen bars of the work, is everywhere in it, but in different guises.

Pan's great scope and variety of pianistic detail³⁷ are held together by the motifs of horn and panpipe presented at the beginning of the *Prolog*. So important are these motifs that most of the other motifs and figurations are at least partly derived from them. It is necessary to consider the full statement of these motifs (the **Pan-sequence** of bars 1-18) at the outset to see how the whole work is developed from its constituents:

Example 4: Lydian Mode

Largo **F Pedal** → Poco più mosso, ma molto tranquillo

pp sempre, misterioso

due Ped.

h M

non arpeggio

6

12

8

mf dim.

ppm

17

8

Stesso tempo (♩ = ♩), non troppo legato

pp dolce

tre corde

I

VII 6/4

echo

I

VII 6/4

Novák: Pan, Prolog 1-20

This sequence consists of two elements - firstly the brief **horn-motif** of bar 3 and the first beat of bar 4, and secondly the **panpipe motif** of bars 17-18. The horn-motif expresses mystery and distance, the panpipe-motif seductiveness. The ways in which these effects are achieved will be discussed below, but first a brief commentary on the structure of the *Largo* prelude to the Prologue is needed, so that its ostinato and echo features can be seen as setting an Art Nouveau pattern from the outset.

The *Largo* introduction is set in Lydian mode (the white-note scale on F, without key-signature), and begins with a two-bar ostinato figure in the bass over an F pedal. The right hand also takes up this ostinato from bars 6-14, but syncopated at the distance of one bar, so that the effect is of an echo rising through the compass; this second figure begins from and falls to the dominant, so that there is ambiguity of tonal centre in addition to that given by the modal harmonies. These harmonies can be seen in more detail as follows, except that the initial pattern of right-hand echoing in bars 6-12, obvious from the music, has been omitted from

the diagram:

Analysis 3:

F pedal					
1	2-12	13-14	15	16	
-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+					
(RH) \flat VII-I- \flat IV $^6_{4b}$ -III 6_4 -VI 4 -V 6_5 -VII 6_4 -VI -					
\flat III-V	I-V-VI-X-I 9_5	I 9_7 \flat_{4b}	I 7	-I 7	I

Novák: *Pan - Prolog*, Pan-sequence 1-17

It will be seen that the *Largo* falls into four sections - firstly the preliminary bar 1 in which there is an ambiguous diminished fifth on the flattened supertonic before the tonic pedal is established, so that there is mystery from the outset in this most unusual opening: it directly contradicts the following pedal. Secondly are bars 2-12 in which the syncopated echo of the horn-motif gradually grows and rises, always coming to rest at the dominant, so providing further ambiguity of tonal centre, for in effect it establishes a second pedal at the fifth. Thirdly, bars 13-15 (beat 1) superimpose a third tonal centre at the flattened sub-dominant, and fourthly the Lydian mode is restored in 15(second beat)-16 in preparation for the more straightforward, that is, unified, tonal centres of the *Stesso tempo* main movement.

Important elements in the whole Pan-sequence quoted above that show its mystery include the initial diminished fifth interval (bar 1) that contrasts with the Lydian modality of the whole statement and becomes the basis for its half-modulation in bar 13; the consecutive intervallic fifths (bar 2) that form a 9_4 chord (bars 4, 9); intervallic fifths separated by a second (bar 3) that form a chord of the tenth (bar 9, beat 3); consecutive thirds (passim) and fifths (bars 11-13). Most important, perhaps, is the overall shape of the horn-motif (bars 3-4, left hand) from which the whole Pan-sequence is developed: a fifth and upwards second is followed by a fifth and downwards second, an asymmetry (that is, a symmetry of balancing but not identical proportions) that results from the first progression being based on I and the second on VI. If the D is

taken as being roughly the sixth overtone of the natural series (usually arbitrarily represented a semitone higher, but actually lying between these two notes) then the horn-motif is seen as being derivable from that series, and appropriately "natural". Later pan-pipe motifs and figurations in the work tend to feature the first four or five notes of the wholetone scale that can result from a simply sloped or curved cutting of the tops of a set of pan-pipes which is how they are generally fashioned - again a "natural" series, depending on the steepness of the slope. Throughout the Pan-sequence the key intervals of second, third, diminished fifth, fifth, sixth and ninth are established, together with a mild loosening of tonality that is later developed from its Lydian modality into wholetone, pentatonic and chromatic passages. These elements are all first developed in the *Prolog* and worked out fully in the other four movements, each of which emphasizes its own mixing of them.

It is important to note that terms like "developed" and "worked out fully", normally implying expansive and derivational treatment of motif and harmonic sequence, are in Art Nouveau, as will be argued in the course of this study, to be understood relatively: Art Nouveau "development" tends towards varieties of repetition only, in the manner of the arabesque patterning of line in drawings.

Example 5:

Novák: *Pan: Prolog*, 33-39

In Example 5, over a B^b pedal, figures based on the alternation of thirds move constantly, but over a bass that is either a pedal or is simply shifting to a new pedal rather than engaging in harmonic progression. Despite much movement of figure in these bars there is no harmonic progression: 34 is identical to 33 but at the octave, 35 sees the motion of third-figures (derived from those of the Panpipe-motif), now articulated into intervals, continued, while under the A inverted pedal the bass moves through a tritone in whole-tone steps. The thirds-figures now embellish the new pedal of B^b with patterns that vary at each bar, but maintain an unchanging harmonic foundation of diminished sevenths.

Continuing beyond bar 40 the following picture emerges:

Analysis 4:

41-44	45-52	53-56	57-58	59-60	61
F	A	A^b	G^\sharp	$G-F^\sharp$	F

Novák: *Pan: Prolog*, 41-61

The notes indicated on the second line of the diagram are pedalpoints; Novák makes no effort here to modulate, but simply shifts from one pedal to another, so that the paradoxical effect of all pedalpoints in Art Nouveau is clearly observed - that despite the seeming reinforcement of tonal centre with pedals, sense of tonal centre is actually diminished because it is not reinforced by harmonic progression. Such progression in conventional diatonic harmony is always felt to be going **from** a tonal centre **to** another, or curving around the diatonic steps from the tonic and falling back to it. Thus in normal harmonic progression there is a sense of direction that is lost when music, as in Art Nouveau, spends so much of its time shifting between pedalpoints, each of which bears only a relative relationship to those preceding and following. Such harmony might be thought of as "existential", for the different pedals are relatively independent clusters of embellishment-figures patterned on a flat plane, rather than a series whose clusters are related by the depth-dimension of a common harmonic logic.

The arabesque or patterning of figure that forms these clusters can be seen in the very nature of the panpipe motif itself. Partly deriving from the horn-motif in its white-notes/Lydian character, the **pan-pipe motif** (bars 17-18) that ends the Pan-sequence is distinguished by its long initial single note that is followed by a breaking up into a complex turn or curving figure; it is seen fully developed in the *andante pastorale* section (bars 61-92) of the *Prolog*, with the contrast between the long note and the turn being fully exploited:

Example 6:

Novák: Pan, Prolog 59-71

The long single note beginning the pan-motif is in fact a characteristic of all the panpipe motifs mentioned above - *L'après-midi* (1-5), *La plainte, au loin, du faune...* (3-4), *Tristesse de Pan* (7-8) and *Pour invoquer Pan* (1-9)³⁸. James Hepokoski notices this in respect of Debussy where he begins a piece or a sequence with a single line of melody, and adds to the two mentioned above *Syrinx*, *L'isle joyeuse* and *Le petit berger* (*Coin des enfants*/5)³⁹, amongst others. It seems, however, that rather than just being a Debussyan procedure its implications as a panpipe/shepherd's pipe motif are widespread in the period, so that, to use Helmut Christian Wolff's term⁴⁰, this is an Ur-motiv, but of general,

not merely Debussyan importance, signifying the sensuality of the seemingly innocent pastoral motif - that behind the pipe's simple notes is Pan himself, his creatures and his powers. The same can be said of the horn-motif, whose elements of altered triad and broken rhythm are also to be found in all the pieces mentioned above, except, of course, for the single-line *Syrinx*.

The brief pre-echoes of the later movements that are found in the last two pages of the *Prolog* show that the contrast of the two elements of the pan-pipe motif (the single note and the florid figuration) is vital throughout the work, seen in the interplay of long notes and complex figuration, mostly comprised within the curves of the horn-motif. At the end of the *Prolog* the chief motifs of the subsequent movements are previewed, and these are seen to echo both panpipe and horn motifs: *Mountains* in bars 115-20, *Sea* in 121-131, *Woman* in bars 132-137, *Forest* in 139-150⁴¹.

(In the pre-echo quotations at the end of the *Prolog*, the order in which these quotations appear is significant, since it does not follow that of the tone-poem itself (which is [Prologue], *Mountains*, *Sea*, *Forest*, *Woman*). This departure from sequence is further evidence, apart from any hypothetical considerations of original form, that the work is not to be considered as comprising any sort of linear narrative of scenes in the manner of tone-poems. Furthermore, although the panpipe-motif is able to be seen as a water-image throughout the work - as mountain-stream, waves, forest rain, in the middle movements (and just possibly naiad-nereid in *Woman*), it is not to be thought that water-imagery connects the movements in an actual sequence like that in Smetana's *Vltava*, where a tiny mountain stream eventually becomes a river flowing into the sea. The concept of sequence is eliminated by *Forest*'s being placed after *Sea*, and the idea of water-imagery as connecting theme is eliminated because there is no primary connexion between water and woman, although water can be one of

woman's venues - as nereid, mermaid or Siren. The overall title *Pan* and the main substance of the *Prolog* between the introductory Pan-sequence and the coda (121-150), which is development of the panpipe motif, shows clearly that Pan and the two motifs (horn and panpipe) are the connecting links, and that the work is a thematic and patterned, not a narrative, whole.)

Throughout *Pan*, melodic motif is transformed into figuration or partially concealed in the lush passage-work: this suggests Pan's immanence, and is also a feature that is to be seen generally in Art Nouveau music where, as in pictures, motif becomes patterned accompaniment that itself becomes the main focus of interest. This process is clearly seen in the *Prolog*: 1-16, 17-28, 39-60, 65-77, 107-114 (that is, most of the movement), which establishes the procedure for the other movements. The figuration beginning at bars 80-81 of *Sea* derives from the panpipe-motif, the actual motif appearing in modified form in bars 81 and 83 but disguised by the actual similarity of the contiguous and similarly pitched figuration, and by the reverse figuration of the left hand; the immanence of Pan in waves and spray is signified by the way the motif is disguised as part of the wave-figuration. In the passage beginning at bar 127 of the same movement the Pan-motif is disguised in the bar 130 *grazioso* fragment because it has been introduced by the simple pastoral rocking figures of bars 137-39, and seems at first just more of the same until its echoing in the left hand in bar 131 reveals its real nature. The mystery of the original in the prologue is in the guise of pastoral frolic throughout the passage, so that Pan's mystery is seen behind the playfulness of nereids, dolphins⁴² or waves that this imagery denotes at its primary level. In both cases the technique is exactly like that of literary allusion - there is obvious primary reference to images like waves and dolphins, but hidden secondary reference to the panpipe as signifying sensuality, and to the mystery and power of Pan as god of

nature. This ambiguity of reference is typical throughout the whole work whenever these motifs are heard.

After the horn and panpipe motifs, the most important feature of the whole work of five movements is perhaps the prolixity and sensual affectiveness of the figuration, just as it is in fellow-Czech Alphonse Mucha's posters: transformations of motif into arabesque, filigree, arpeggiations and other passage-work are interwoven with passages of motivic, wholetone and modal pitch-sets, just as surrounding and entwining a Mucha maiden are wisps of hair, strands of ornament, fronds of leaf and vine, symbols of zodiac and figures of frieze⁴³.

The patterning of motif in the whole work is transformational, being based on variations in the shape and rhythm of the motif by using devices like retrograde, inversion and various subtle forms of figuration. The horn-motif at the beginning of the *Prolog* is based on an asymmetrical rhythm of crotchet-minim (bar 3, Example 3.).

Example 7:

Novák: Pan, Prolog 17-30

This asymmetry is developed in left-hand figures from bar 17 into several

different figurations (17, 22, 26, 29) whose asymmetry of rhythm is seen against regularity of figure in the other hand, or interspersed in the left hand in the bars intervening. Another type of patterning shows stylization of form, this time with figuration in symmetrical rhythms, the antithesis of their source in the horn-motif (bar 3, Example 4):

Example 8:

Novák: Pan, Prolog 121-125

Here the initial echo of the horn-motif is gradually evolved into the symmetrical-rhythm accompanimental figure of bar 124, seen against a transformed horn-motif, inverted and similarly symmetrical.

The figures of the other hand in the examples above show obverse and reverse stylization of motif-line: at the beginning of the *Prolog* the horn-motif is announced in thirds in the right hand (bars 6-7, Example 4), which are stylized into the obverse reversals of the alternate thirds of the right hand of bar 17; alternate thirds in different forms dominate the figuration of the first two pages of the piece.

Example 9:

Novák: Pan, Prolog 36-37

Their reverse stylization is seen as alternating fourths, first separately

in the right hand in bar 25 and then combined with simple thirds.

The five movements, although permeated in these ways by figures developed from the horn and panpipe motifs, have their own motifs that also become the basis for accompanimental arabesque, and can generate sub-motifs, often in combinations with the two principal motifs. For instance, *More (Sea)* begins with the scalar figure of bars 1-13 that is seen in various modifications until the transformation motif enters to the accompaniment of the scalar figure in bar 38. This cross-fertilization, as it were, immediately produces the rocking central motif (in bar 42) which is thereafter developed in Art Nouveau fashion - repetition with minor modifications against a constantly transforming accompanimental figuration. All this variety and profusion of figuration is held together by the triple-rhythms that permeate almost the whole five movements; figuration and rhythm, with their constant echoing of the *Prolog* motifs and those of the individual movements, constitute a highly repetitive patterning analogous to that of line in Art Nouveau pictures. It is not any one of these elements that may be seen as an analogue to line, but their repetitive combination.

The listener to the piano-version original, rather than to the later orchestral one, becomes very conscious of the unceasing movement of the accompanimental figuration. Its abundance and vigour may partly be to do with running water imagery as Karel Srom suggests⁴⁴, but principally derives from the flourish at the end of the Pan-pipe motif (*Prolog* bar 17), which becomes the enlivening principle of exuberant figuration running through the entire work. This is the *obstiné* whose energy and kaleidoscopic variety gives this long and complex work its spell-binding effect - for the unceasing rhythms of the figuration are as sensuously affective as the fantastic curving lines of Mucha, Klimt, Beardsley or Behrens pictures. This affective aspect of patterning is as important to music as the hypnotic repetition of patterned line in pictorial Art

Nouveau.

Mystery, an element essential to Art Nouveau, is indicated from the outset of the *Prolog* by extreme quietness and blurring of effect (*pp sempre, misterioso, due pedale*), but especially by the initial atonality of the tritone in bar 1 over the Lydian modality of the whole Pan-theme (the white-note scale based on \underline{F} , bars 1-16) and the loosened tonality of bars 13-15. The *pp dolce* pan-pipe passage from bars 17-28 continues the Lydian-mode feeling of strangeness that is augmented by the whole tones of the melodic line in the *Andante pastorale* section (bars 61-92, seen at its clearest in bars 61-64 and similar passages. At the outset of the *Animato* section there are parallel-chord effects in bars 99 and 101 that have a strangeness of sound because of the sense of harmonic disorientation produced by such contradictions of normal harmonic progression. In the pre-echoes of later movements in the last two pages of the *Prolog* there are tastes of the main motifs of the other movements, and that in bars 115-120 (*Mountains*) has its horn-call clashing softly with the *pianissimo* inverted pedal, particularly at the first beats of bars 116 and 119, and the second of bar 120. The *Woman*-motif in bars 132-137 ends in an inconclusive strangeness as its harmony moves in parallel sequence with the descending bass (bars 134-137), and the slow pre-echo of *Forest* (bars 139-150), with its broken time and suspensions (bars 142-144) again produces an effect of mystery.

Mountains begins with the horn-call foreshadowed in the *Prolog* but emphasizes its tendency to bitonality with more pronounced (but soft, and therefore mysterious) discords in bars 6 and 7: against a sustained I^3_5 on \underline{G} there is an articulated IV_1^{-4} just below it. This sets the pattern for much of the rest of the movement, where even in a diatonic passage like the *maestoso* (bars 76-91) the hands are moving somewhat contrapuntally, with Novák allowing clashes like those of the first beats of bars 77 (LH \underline{C} + RH \underline{D}^6_2) and 85 (\underline{D} minor: LH \underline{D}^4 + RH $\underline{D}^7_5_3$) as the slow chordal movement

(doubtless representing the massiveness of the mountains) lets these clashes have full effect. As in the later movements, Pan's presence is always disguised in the horn-motif elements from which each forms its material, but appears directly in the movement's moments of quiet mystery - the horn-call sequences that open and close *Mountains*.

More (Sea) uses a tonal palette that mixes wholetones (bars 1-12), pentatonics (bars 14-15, 22-24), elements of the natural harmonic series (28-29, 97) and parallel harmonies (that is, whole chords or harmonies moving up or down an interval virtually or completely unchanged, so that normal tonality is loosened). A bass tritone from the *Prolog* horn-motif sets the scene for its atmosphere of mystery and is furthered by the following parallel harmonies that prepare for the free harmonies of the five pieces. This motif (perhaps in this movement a triton's horn - tritons being Pan's creatures as much as fauns and satyrs) is central to *More*, particularly in the long scherzo-section bars 94-174, where it is often hidden in runs (bars 94-97, 110-114, 148), is fragmentary (127 - the tritone) or is rhythmically altered (125, 137, 150). Wherever it appears, however, it symbolizes Pan in the waves, among the fishes or in the sea-spray. The rocking-motif introduced in bar 42 is based on a reversal of part of the horn-motif and presented in a pentatonic form (becoming a sustained passage of pentatonics in bars 98-103), and the tritonic element appears in unexpected places like bar 30 (G#) where it transforms the progression into one with wholetone character. The pentatonic fragment of horn-motif in bars 94-97 is preceded by wholetone runs in bar 93 and followed by figures based on the natural harmonic series in bar 98: Novák is clearly associating these exotic (non-diatonic) sounds with Pan's reed-pipes - they are the sounds of nature whose strangeness shows mystery.

One of the most subtle effects is that of the *Largo* prelude to the *Prolog* (Example 4), repeated verbatim as the introduction to the fourth movement, *Les (Forest)*, where thirds move in parallel in the Lydian mode

of the first twelve bars (the white-note scale on F) which has a second dimension in its being by notes chosen from the natural harmonic scale, as explained earlier. The two passages of parallel thirds are over a firmly stated F bass pedal, but each time the thirds move through a B the ear is impelled to believe that the bass should have shifted to G (of which B is the natural mediant) as a natural cadential preparation for C. When the movement pauses on the C triad the ear now feels that the bass should shift to C, instead of which F is again restated as the pedal. The presence of the fixed pedal instead of a naturally moving bass actually makes tonality the more confused. The overall effect is tonally disorientating, fitting the indicated *pp sempre, misterioso*.

A final aspect of mysterious effect should be mentioned. After the initial setting of an atmosphere of unreality in bars 1-16 of the *Prolog* with drifting chords that cross diatonic boundaries, bars 17-30 (Example 7) comprise the first statement and working-out of the panpipe-motif, which is then developed later in such passages as that of Example 5. In these sequences the panpipe-motif is seen as following the Debussy *L'après-midi* paradigm, being in form one of the long-note-plus-flourish motifs that will be noticed below as ubiquitous throughout the repertory of this study, and always representing ecstasy.

Example 10:

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, starting at measure 33, features a treble clef with a complex melodic line and a bass line with a steady accompaniment. The instruction 'poco f, quasi non legato' is written below the first staff, and 'meno' is written below the second staff. The second system, starting at measure 35, also has a treble clef and a more rhythmic bass line. It includes the instruction 'sosten.' at the beginning, 'dim.' below the first staff, and 'a tempo' and 'cresc. poco a poco' below the second staff.

Novák: Pan, Prolog 33-36

While this arabesque is proceeding it is doing so over a bass of limited movement that descends chromatically but in hesitant steps (17- 24) to a pedal on D (25-28), in steps to a pedal on e (33-35) and then ascends by

wholetones to a B^b pedal (36-40): There is little, if any, normal harmonic progression. The passage as a whole shows strangeness, therefore, in its dynamics of harmonic movement, with a tendency towards the sort of existential relationship between the harmonies of each bar noticed in the Debussy works. Each bar considered by itself seems fairly orthodox diatonics, but its relationship to its neighbours is not conventional.

This is also to be seen in the *Largo* that precedes it (Example 4), especially where from bar 13 the F tonic becomes F supertonic as the harmony apparently changes to E^b. The effect of this is to puzzle the ear: on the one hand it is hearing units of fairly familiar material, but on the other it is less sure of their connexions, so that there is a feeling that the music is moving through familiar musical landscape in a strange manner, just as one moves in dreams. Such blending of the familiar and the strange is ambiguous, and is analogous with Art Nouveau's blurring of the boundaries between reality and fantasy. This ambiguity of connexion runs through the entire *Pan* suite from the unrelated fifths of the *Prolog*'s third bar to the unrelated alternations of the closing page of the final movement.

The fundamental rhythm of the piece is set by the adaptation of the horn-theme in the main motif appearing in bars 42-49, which is minim-crotchet, minim-crotchet (with emphasis on the minim), and thus a regular triple-beat figure which is rhythmically the reverse of (asymmetrical to) the horn-motif (crotchet-minim, crotchet-minim, with the emphasis on the crotchets) as it is presented at the beginning of the *Prolog* and the fourth piece (*Les - Forest*). Novák's plan seems to be that the original dynamic⁴⁵ asymmetry of the motif (wrenching the accent away from the first and fourth beats of six) becomes disguised within the specific imagery of each piece. In this piece three notes from the horn-motif are reversed and unreversed to make six notes that form a rocking, sea-like figure whose rhythm is also reversed into a symmetrical form to help establish

the rocking effect. There are patches of dynamically asymmetrical rhythm (bars 243, 248-249, 254-259) that form contrasting patterns to those of normal rhythm of this length.

A movement of this scope (270 bars, mainly of 6/4) has imagery that ranges over the extent of the sea's moods, beginning with rising and falling figures that cover the keyboard (bars 1-37), that subside with hints of the horn-motif (38-41) and also introduce the main motif derived from it (42-80). There are many varieties of figure suggesting the changeable moods of the sea - rushing broken chords (bars 93-97, 110-123), stepwise ascending *capriccioso* [sic] sequences over chords (88-92), a rocking pentatonic figure in both hands based on the main theme (98-109, a scherzando figure with acciaccatura and semiquaver-quaver movements (125-6), appoggiatura ornamentation of the main theme (178-179, 254-260) and even simple chordal movement (142, 170-173, 182, 184. There are relatively few passages where there are identical figures in succeeding bars, so that above all the restless variety and unpredictability of the sea's moods is suggested. But all this imagery is surface: underneath is the symbol - the unifying factor of the constantly repeated rhythmic foundation of the main theme and its melodic line that reappears everywhere throughout the variety of figures, always with its echo of the horn-motif (particularly in bars like 130 and 140, 147 and 162, 149 and 155 where it momentarily appears in something like its original form). This examination of variety of figure shows, perhaps surprisingly, the dominance of the single main motif, which, through its ubiquitous reappearance amidst the great variety of figures, takes on something of that single-minded obsessive character already noticed as an Art Nouveau characteristic in literature and pictures.

Forest similarly begins and ends with mystery - with the full Pan-theme statement (as at the beginning of the *Prolog*), a modified version of it at the end, and a *sussurando* passage (bars 106-115) in which thirds are

one minute major and the next minor, creating an eeriness of effect. Bitonality is more pronounced in this movement, so much so that it may well symbolize the dual nature of Art Nouveau woodland - beauty but implied menace (from the spirit-world whose domain it really is, into which humans venture at their peril - the common thread of fairy-tale). As soon as the horn-motif passage finishes, an echo of its rising melody in C is heard over a bass B^b pedal (bar 19), to be followed by the same sequence in which the right-hand chords are based on C# (bar 21), leading to the more severe clashes of minor sevenths and minor seconds at the beginning of the *con sentimento* passage (bars 24-25). Passages like bars 70-74, with unmodulated harmonizations of the principal motif that jump tonalities with successive notes of the motif (B^b - f - B^b), also emphasize with their strangeness the essential mystery of the forest, as the beauty of the major chords momentarily darken into minor and brighten again almost as if nothing has happened, as if an Arthur Rackham tree becomes a gnome-like being with one glance and is a tree again with the next - a common Art Nouveau ambiguity_.

Zena (Woman) shows its mystery and duality together from the beginning, for after the *agitato, impetuoso* bars 1-7 there is a long pause succeeded by the mildest of themes, *Andante soave*, based on a transformation of the horn-motif.

Example 11:

The image shows a musical score for Example 11, consisting of two systems of music. The first system is titled "Andante soave" and features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff begins with a forte dynamic (ff) and a "secco" marking, followed by a mezzo-piano (mp) section. The bass staff has a similar dynamic progression. The second system is titled "Tempo I" and also features treble and bass staves. It begins with a "rit." (ritardando) marking, followed by a mezzo-forte (mf) section, and ends with a forte (f) section. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Novák: Pan, Zena 9-13

But under the sustained last note of this theme (F#) there are bass

descending consecutive fifths and stepwise-motion middle harmonization moving to $^9_{7b}$ chords that descend in parallel with the bass: these are a hint of mystery and power under the seemingly innocuous initial melody: This short passage sums up Art Nouveau woman - disarmingly innocent but deeply sensual and powerful. The long sequence in triplets from bar 66, growing into *Quasi una Tarantella* (84) has all the suggestions of the chase - Pan after his teasing, elusive nymphs. The *strepitoso* whole-tone downwards run of bars 127-29 is suddenly quietened by a strange passage introducing a final transformational development of the horn-motif that prefigures, by its building through *ostinato* and accumulation, the way the movement and the whole work is later to rise to its climax:

Example 12:

The musical score for Example 12 consists of three systems of piano music. The first system begins at measure 128, marked *poco sosten.* and *a tempo*. It features a melodic line in the right hand and a more active bass line. The second system starts at measure 133, marked *cresc.* and *piu f*, showing a more intense and rhythmic passage. The third system begins at measure 137, marked *veloce*, and includes an 8-measure rest in the right hand, indicating a section of rapid, repeated notes in the left hand.

Novák: Pan, Zena 130-138

This theme and its gradual augmentation has more than a passing resemblance to the Johann Strauss waltz that provided the final theme of Ravel's *La valse* of 1919-20: perhaps Novák is making the same sorts of allusion to the waltz, woman and *Wienerstraum* as is Ravel, for in each case woman and fantasy is central. It is significant that there are sequences in waltz-time as the movement nears its end (260-67, 268-83, 340-361).

Duality in the forms of bitonality and ambiguous major-minor tonality has already been noticed. The essential duality of this whole work lies in the contrast between the freedom of figuration and the almost monothematic melodic motifs (all deriving from the horn-motif or the panpipe-motif, and thus being tightly related), the former perhaps suggesting the variety of nature and the latter showing that it is all Pan's domain.

The underlying rhythmic unity throughout most of the whole work, seen in the triplet-rhythms that comprise at least four-fifths of it, has been noticed above. The exception is the second movement, *Hory* (Mountains), where the initial horn-call sequence, the imitative sequences (bars 34-69, 76-91) and the final sections (bars 157-215) are in duple time, although even these sequences have much triplet-figuration lightening the main duple rhythms. The tension between duple and triple rhythms is one of the features of this movement, added to by the use of dotted folk-like rhythms in bars 25-33 and 181-184, as well as the dotted hunting ones of the horn-call sequences.

As a whole, however, this long work is remarkable for its mainly using triple rhythms - so much so that they may well signify nature's sensuality, seen in the traditional pastoral rhythms (the *pastorale* is traditionally in triple time) and in the sinuousness of line and movement that are expressed in these triplet motifs and figurations (duple rhythms in a descriptive work like this are going to tend to set a more plain, straightforward mood, as their use in parts of *Mountains* may help denote their solidity). There are many other indicators of sensuousness, notably the turned figures following the long notes of the panpipe motif (bars 17, 61-63) and the curving of the horn-motif itself (bars 3-4) from both of which each movement derives its main motifs, both melodic and figural (Mountains bars 8-9, 25-26, 139-140; Sea bars 38-39, 42-43, 88, 98, 110-111, 125-126, 127; Forest bars 18-19, 24-27, 30-31, 50-51; Woman bars 1,

9-13, 56-57, 66, 84-85, 130, 240). Karel Srom particularly singles out the two Strauss-waltz passages in *Woman* (bars 130-139 and bars 169-178)⁴⁶ where there are pauses in the tarantella chase, as "among the most passionately sensuous in the whole of musical literature" - an extreme claim, perhaps, but nonetheless indicative of the powerfully evocative character of Novák's writing.

Florent Schmitt: *Et Pan, au fond des blés lunaires, s'accouda* (Mirages /1)

The piano original (written 1919-20, published 1921) of this piece has the epigraph *Et Pan, au fond des blés lunaires, s'accouda*, ("and Pan leant down in the bed of moonlit wheat" - after losing the nymph Syrinx) - the first line from *Tristesse de Pan* by Paul Fort (1872-1960); the orchestral version (written 1923, published 1925) has the complete poem as epigraph, and is titled *Tristesse de Pan* (which can therefore be used as a shorter title for the piano piece). As poet and theatrical figure Paul Fort was associated with leading Symbolist figures like Paul Verlaine, Jean Moréas and other Symbolist poets in Paris from 1890 through the Théâtre d'Art; his *vers libre* draws on their base of imagery and setting, as in this poem:

Tristesse de Pan

...*Et Pan, au fond des blés lunaires, s'accouda.*

Alors, d'un bois voison, le rossignol chanta vers cette pleine lune si belle qui, sur les trilles montants de sa petite voix, se soutient mieux, semble en repos - mieux qu'une fleur sur un jet d'eau.

Pan s'étant tu, le laissant faire, inattentif à son roseau et triste, accoudé sur la terre, il soupesait, d'un doigt tremblant, tout son collier de lunes mortes.

Songeait-il aux dieux mortes? Il soupire longtemps. Songeait-il aux travaux que refaisait sa flûte: aux fleuves, à la brise, aux forêts, à l'aurore, à toute l'oeuvre des dieux morts? Révait-il aux Enfers étients par leur chute? Songeait-il é son âme, é sa flûte de flamme, lui, le dieu vivant?

Et soudain, vers la terre, Pan jeta, pour toujours, le cri suprême de l'amour!

The repetitions (*Songeait-il...?*), echoes (*Révait-il...?*), alliterations

(*soutient, semble; flûte, fleuves, forêts; flûte de flamme*),

transformations (*pleine lune, lunes mortes*) and strange images (*son collier de lunes mortes*) or juxtaposition of disparate ones (*les trilles montants...une fleur sur un jet d'eau*) are characteristic of the verse that is chosen by composers in Art Nouveau mood, as will be seen throughout this First (1A) Order series of chapters (6-10). Its manneristic style, for all its *vers libre*, is that of Florent Schmitt's music.

The focus of Schmitt's work is the *tristesse de Pan* - his grieving over the nymph, now lost to him, and over his lost powers as god to seduce whom he would: there are overtones of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* in the melancholia of gods who have lost their invincibility ("Songeait-il aux dieux morts?...son collier de lunes mortes...a toute l'oeuvre des dieux morts"). There are two other layers of reference, however.

Firstly, the piece is one of the two *Mirages* Op.70, which Raymond Berthier translates as *Delusions*⁴⁷, with the original of the poem in his mind; he might have used "illusions", but neither this nor "mirages" would carry connotations of Pan's feeding his melancholy with the delusion that the pipe's voice is her voice, or, alternatively, that her voice *is* in the pipes and mocks him with the delusion of his divine invincibility over the objects of his passion. Pan cannot know if amongst the reeds he has cut for his pipe one is actually *Syrinx* - whether the pipes' voice is her voice or merely that of the wind across the reeds. Whatever it is, the pipes' song is half-mocking and half sad - an ambiguity recalling that of *Pierrot* "très gai, très triste". (Compare

*And never was piping so sad,
And never was piping so gay*

from *The Host of the Air* by William Butler Yeats in his early Art Nouveau style⁴⁸: all three are typical examples of Art Nouveau ambiguity.)


The pipes' sound has therefore complex and poignant associations: the memory of her voice, beautiful and now hauntingly mocking; the sound of the wind, nature's own voice that sings of freedom; and the echoes of

his once-carefree and seductive abandonment to the delights of the love-chase.

Secondly, Schmitt dedicates the piece *à la mémoire de Claude Debussy*, and on the cover of the Durand edition has *écrit pour le tombeau de Claude Debussy*; this explains its having as its title the first line of Fort's poem - "And Pan leant down in the bed of moonlit wheat": Debussy, the Pan of his age, is lying down in death (the conceit of Debussy as Pan being of course Schmitt's, not Fort's). As a piece in the *tombeau* tradition of French composers of the time⁴⁹, therefore, it contains echoes of Debussy's musical idiom, so that the Syrinx-echoes are Debussy-echoes. There are references to Debussy's *L'après-midi*: its horn and panpipe-motifs and their treatment discussed below, its wavering motif of bar 18 (Debussy bar 25), the dirge-motif in its two forms: 14 (Debussy 17) and 23-24 (Debussy 38, 41-44).

Schmitt's work is in the mould of the nineteenth-century funeral march, but with horn-motif (2-3, 5-6) and panpipe-motif (7-10) to indicate its setting in the world of spirits. The horn-motif at its first appearance is in consecutive doubled thirds, which at its second become complex chromatic discords of unearthly effect, based on the near-parallel movement of second-inversion triads and altered triads set a minor seventh above major thirds:

Example 13:



Schmitt: Tristesse de Pan 5-6

The funereal dotted rhythm of the opening dominates the piece, although modified into triplet-form in the mid-section (bars 14-58). That the piece's fundamental nature is mysterious rather than just one of

funereal grandeur is reinforced in its main harmonic feature - exploitation of tritone chords and their inversions, particularly in parallel sequences, beginning with those overlaid upon the descending chromatic thirds of the horn-call of bars 5-6, carried on as accompaniment to the first panpipe motif immediately following, and with especially mysterious effect when following the parallel movement of the main-beat chords in 10 the second of these becomes transformed at the key-change and is suspended unresolved as in 11, where the right hand's VII⁶₄ sits over the left's V⁷_{5b}:

Example 14:

Schmitt: Tristesse de Pan 7-11

There is the feeling that there are three tonal bases - the pedal and the two hands over it. The disorientation resulting from this ambiguity of tonal horizon borders on the sensuous, and develops more definitely in this direction in the mid-section (bars 14-58), both in the simply rising and falling melodic motif first seen in bars 23-24 and in the intermediary bars beginning with bar 22. The plain dirge-melody (bars 47-58) has a passionate intensity added to it by double-octave appoggiaturas recalling the panpipe ornament. The appoggiaturas in both hands in bars 71-74 echo this feeling, which is continued in the melodic fragments of the last section. The last four bars see the piece's tritonic harmonies drift away

into a sensuous melancholy, ending with an unresolved dominant flattened ninth (V9b642) on a low bass V+I.

The underlying rhythm is a dotted one, sharply defined at the beginning and end, but in the smoother triplets in the long mid-section the insistence of rhythm becomes more subtle and subliminal in its effect. In the passages of bars 17-21 and 43-46 this rhythm is seen in alternating chords without any melodic figure to obscure its importance, and it is still dominant as an ostinato in bars 47-58. In the outer sections it is, despite cadenza bars (11-13, 59), again ostinato in its effect.

There is much use of dual effects like those of the contrary-motion progressions of bars 23-24 and 29-30, the opposed chordal blocks of the alternating bars (again in contrary motion in bars 18-19, and most notably the opposed appoggiaturas of bars 71-74. All through the piece, however, runs the tension between the quasi-ostinato rhythm and the sensuousness of harmony and melody, seen fully developed in the sustained increasing passion of bars 50-58. While this is on one level death/fate (the dotted rhythm) as against the sensuousness of life, on a deeper, more symbolic level it is the way of nature itself that necessarily involves both passion and death.

The panpipe motif first appearing in bars 7-10 is distinguished from other composers' panpipe motifs by its excess of floridity and ornament, seen in the appoggiaturas of the sequences beginning at bars 47 and 71, where a simple melody is decorated in a complex manner, analogous to the emphasis on patterned effect in visual Art Nouveau, and following the emphasis on the principle of excess or asymmetry in Art Nouveau. The many runs, beginning with those in the second bar and culminating in the cadenzas, and cast in strange pitch-sets that have elements of wholetones (C-G[#] although on an A-minor foundation in bars 2-5, for instance) have echoes of the "natural" sets used by Novák and Debussy for their pan-pipe imagery. The tritone is of course drawn from the wholetone set, which

means that the strange, sensuous chords of the outer sections and the opposed ones of the middle section mentioned above can be seen as formed from the panpipe set, representing the sounding or echo of several of the pipe-reeds at once; Fort's poem actually refers to the effect of the wind through the reeds as being echoes of Syrinx' voice (before Pan cuts his pipe from them).

Ornament in the form of trills, appoggiaturas, broken chords and sweeping runs is featured throughout. While this might seem inappropriate in a threnody, it is nevertheless appropriate when the subject is Debussy characterized as Pan, for the ornament is seen as part of the lightness and mystery of the fanciful world of spirits, whose funeral dances and song, strange to our ears, nonetheless echo Debussy's Syrinx-pipe. The metaphor is completed with Syrinx' song disappearing into the reeds as Pan lies down for the last time:

Example 15:

87

90

Schmitt: Tristesse de Pan 81-92

Paul Dukas: *La plainte, au loin, du faune...*

This 1921 work is inscribed *Pièce écrite pour le "Tombeau de Claude Debussy"*, and again the conceit of Debussy as Pan is used: a lament, afar, of a faun for his beloved Pan. As with Schmitt, there are references to Debussy's *L'après-midi* to link it to its faun-topos: panpipe and horn-motifs, the bar 2 left-hand motif echoing Debussy's 17-18, the actual quotations from Debussy's panpipe-motif beginning at bar 15 and ending the piece. The music is strained, discordant and unresolved, as with grief

that will not be consoled: the main strands of motif, figuration and bass appear to move remotely from each other, so that tonality is uncertain (the bass falling semitonally in 15-16, transforming VII^{6b}_{3b} into #VI^{6#}) and there are many clashes (A+B^b in 15-16, the right and left-hand chords of C+D^b in 18, for instance), producing a strange effect.

Example 16:

Dukas: La plainte, au loin, du faune... 15-20

In this example, bars 16-17 show the panpipe-motif (now beginning to echo that of *L'après-midi*) at first in a precarious A (minor) relationship to the inner strand and the bass - precarious because both the inner strand and the bass are moving semitonally (thus resonating from the emotive semitonal fall of the original panpipe-motif's initial appoggiatura - see the quotation below). Then, after the quasi-modulatory progressions of bar 17 the bass drops to a C that clashes with the F[#]/B^b finish of the previous sequence and also with the D^b of the new arabesque figure; the ending of this new sequence on the second and third beats of bar 20 leaves all this contrapuntal existentialism (in the sense suggested above for Debussy's non-functional progressions) harmonically unresolved. These apparently disparate strands are, however, throughout the work held together by quietly insistent ostinato rhythms: there is a constant sense

of movement, although very restrained (*Assez lent*), but without progress, as will be explained below.

The work begins its panpipe-motif in bars 3-4 as an elaborated turn around three descending semitones; like the others, it begins (after an *appoggiatura*) with a sustained note before breaking into its turn:

Example 17:

Dukas: *La plainte, au loin, du faune...* 4-6

A brief horn-motif ends this figure in bars 5-6, and plays an important part in the mid-section (25-37). The main funereal element is the ostinato \underline{G} that is heard solo from the beginning, and that in various transformations quietly but insistently dominates nearly everything else. Consecutive sixths weave around this with a similar ostinato effect, their slow chromaticism producing a chorus-like dirge.

The work is filled with repetitions: the panpipe motifs in the opening sequences are immediately repeated (in a manner reminiscent of Debussy's method); there is ostinato of the repeated \underline{G} almost like that of $\underline{B^b}$ in Ravel's *Le gibet*, and later of more elaborate figures derived from the panpipe-motif and the bass ninths and tenths; whole sequences are repeated at different pitches (for example 2-5 and 7-10; 12, 13, 14). More importantly, there is much repetition of motif but little development, so that most of the work is simply derived from the materials of the first few bars, until at bar 28 an actual quotation from *L'après-midi d'un faune* appears, and it can now be seen that *La plainte's* panpipe-

motif is more than a glancing reference to it, and that *L'après-midi*, *Syrinx* and other Debussy pieces based on panpipe-motifs have been implied from the outset.

The final bars from 37-49 see quasi-development in the form of doubling of the movement of accompanimental figuration, but triple pianissimo, so that the effect is of a very quiet ostinato. The result of so many kinds of repetition and ostinato is a work that moves insistently but does not progress, as if time is suspended.

A parallel effect is produced by the consistent use of pedalpoints: there is virtually no linear progression of harmonic movement (the single exception being bars 27-33, where the *L'après-midi* motif is introduced). While a pedalpoint is in force a whole harmonic dimension is absent - that of the normal movement from tonic through mediant, subdominant, dominant or other relation towards an eventual cadence. It as if we are listening to an impassioned apostrophe from a threnody, without tense or action, and it is analogous to the flat canvases of Art Nouveau pictures where attitude replaces action.

The works on the theme of Pan: conclusions

The four works discussed in this section are highly significant examples of musical Art Nouveau, *L'après-midi* (1895) being as important to the piano repertory as its orchestral version is to its repertory; the musical work, setting the 1865 Mallarmé poem that is the paradigm of the Symbolists' early maturity, thus becomes a paradigm of musical symbolism, and in its mannerism it becomes a paradigm of musical Art Nouveau. Vitezslav Novák's *Pan* of 1910 takes this central symbol of both Symbolism and Art Nouveau and sets it in the work that is the major achievement of musical Art Nouveau in the keyboard repertory. As its period of influence is closing, and the mannered fantasy of musical Art Nouveau is beginning to be transformed into that of Art Deco, Florent Schmitt and Paul Dukas return to the same legend to express their feelings over the death of the

Pan who has led and dominated it.

End-notes

- 1 The terms can both be used of Pan, although the second, from the Latin *faunus* (the Roman equivalent of Pan) more properly denotes Pan and his subordinate deities, standardized in Classical literature as goat-like; thus Mallarmé's *faune*. (Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition 1991, V, 770)
- 2 For Pan as Art Nouveau *topos* see primary sources such as the eponymous journal, Berlin 1895-1900; Aubrey Beardsley's *Caricature of James McNeill Whistler*, 1893 (Schmutzler, R.: op. cit., 118), *Pan and the Wood-Nymphs*, *Satyr carrying a woman*, *Dancing to Pan's Pipes*, *Design for an en tête*, *The Satyr-coiffeur and the Lady*, (Harris, B.S.: op. cit., 160, 180, 187, 194, 195) *inter alia*; John Duncan's illustration for "The Evergreen", the Pan cover of 1895 by Franz von Stuck (Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 73, 127); E.M. Forster's short stories *The Curate's Friend* and *The Road from Colonnus*; the short stories of Saki (H.H. Munro); the sunrise episode in Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*.
- 3 Harris, B.S.: op. cit., 67, 68, 91, 160, 180, 182, 187, 194, 195.
- 4 Idem, 187.
- 5 Hermand, J.: *Lyrik des Jugendstils*, 17-18.
- 6 Grahame, K.: *The Wind in the Willows*; E.M. Forster and Saki - short stories.
- 7 See Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 73, 80, 127, 162, 278; Lorenz, O.: op. cit., 118-19, 138-39.
- 8 Some of the formal aspects of this piece and its motifs are discussed in Nattiez, J.-J.: *Fondaments d'un sémiologie de la musique*, (Paris, Union Générale d'Éditions 1975), and in Mahlert, U.: Die "göttliche Arabeske" zu Debussys "Syrinx", *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* XLIII (1986), 181-200.
- 9 See the preface to the facsimile reprint of the particelle of the definitive draft score (on four to five staves) from which Debussy transcribed both the orchestral and two-piano versions: Robert Owen Lehman Foundation, Washington 1963. The scoring details are in the New Grove listing (Orchestral) vol. 5 p. 311.
- 10 The poem is given in full before the later orchestral version (published 1925 by Durand but given the same opus number 70/1). See the brief comment by Yves Hucher in *L'oeuvre de Florent Schmitt*, previously cited, page lix. [For Paul Fort as Art Nouveau-Symbolist figure see Francis Brunel and Lionel Richard in Cassou, J.: op. cit., 137, 253, 261-2 and Thorlby, A.: op. cit., 277.]
- 11 With an asterisked footnote to the final bars in the original edition (Durand 1921), as the pan-flute motif at the beginning of *L'après-midi* is quoted.
- 12 Schmitt: *à la mémoire de Claude Debussy*; Dukas: *Pièce écrite pour le "Tombeau de Claude Debussy"*. See also Albert Roussel's *L'accueil des muses (in memoriam Debussy)* of 1920 (unfortunately not procurable for this study).
- 13 Hepokoski, J.A.: *Formulaic Openings in Debussy* (Nineteenth Century Music VIII/1 [summer 1984], 45).
- 14 See Raffman, R.: *Scalar control*, College Music symposium XV (Spring 1975), 24-51.
- 15 Hepokoski, J.A.: loc. cit.
- 16 This sort of pipe/horn is seen in the well-known Art Nouveau painting *The Spirit of the Plains* by the Australian Sidney Long. It is typical of shepherd's pipe representations in looking like an oboe with a more belled end.
- 17 See David Headlam's comments on the significance of the dual tonal

- centres C# and E in Headlam, D.: *Comment: on Crotty "Symbolist influence in Debussy's "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun", In Theory Only VI/4 (May 1982), 9-11.*
- 18 For example, the overview of discussion on this in Storb, I.: *Untersuchungen zur Auflösung der funktionalen Harmonik in den Klavierwerken von Claude Debussy, Musikforschung XXII/4 (Oct-Dec 1969), 500-01.*
- 19 Mallarmé, S.: *L'après-midi d'un faune*, 2-5.
- 20 Translation from Wenk, A.: op. cit., 307.
- 21 Borman, L.D.: "Prelude to the afternoon of a faun" and "Jeux": *Debussy's summer rites, Nineteenth-Century Music III/5 (March 1981), 225-38.*
- 22 Böhmer, H.: *Alchemie der Töne. Die Mallarmé-Vertonungen von Debussy und Ravel, Musica XXII/2 (March-April 1968), 83-85; Schmidt-Garre, H.: Mallarmé-Debussy. Parallelen zwischen Dichtung und Musik, Musik Unterricht LVIII/5 (May 1967), 157-67; Crotty, J.E.: *Symbolist Influences in Debussy's "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun", In Theory Only VI/2 (Feb. 1982), 17-30; Headlam, D.: op. cit., 9-11.**
- 23 Hirsbrunner, T.: *Debussys "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune" und seine 'sinnlichen Hilfsmittel', Muzik-Konzept 36 (1984), 31-42: the remarks on the roles of instruments in the orchestral version (pp 37-42) can with some caution be applied to the motifs they state, and thus to these motifs in the piano version, particularly as the two pianos engage in dialogue.*
- 24 Borman, L.D.: op. cit.; Allende-Blin, J.: *Claude Debussy: Scharnier zweier Jahrhunderte, Musik-Konzepte 1/2 (1981), 53-56, 64; Harris, S.: Chord-Forms Based on the Whole-Tone Scale in Early Twentieth Century Music, Music Review XLI/1 (Feb 1980), 36-57.*
- 25 But see Ringgold, J.R.: *The linearity of Debussy's music and its correspondence with the Symbolist aesthetic: developments before 1908, (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California, 1972.*
- 26 Gulke, P.: *Musik aus dem Bannkreis einer literarischen Ästhetik: Debussys "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune", Jahrbuch Peters: Aufsätze zur Musik I, ed. Eberhard Klemm (Leipzig, Peters 1979), 103-46.*
- 27 That in bar 45 is wrongly printed in the score copied but given correctly in the corresponding bar 47.
- 28 Novák, V.: *Pan, Op. 43, (Státní Hudební Vydavatelství, Prague 1963), vi.*
- 29 Simpson, A., in *New Grove*, vol.13, 434.
- 30 Hofstätter, H.: op. cit., 80.
- 31 Idem, 126.
- 32 The Lilien and other works can be found in Lorenz, O.: op. cit., 138-39, 65, 73, 80, 92, 134-35; the Toulouse-Lautrec works in Sutton, D.: *The Complete Paintings of Toulouse-Lautrec, (New York, Abrams 1969), plates xxxii, xxxv, li, lii and pages 122-23.*
- 33 Novák's use of ornament needs to be seen as much within the context of Czech as of Western tradition: see Lebl, W.: *Ornament v liske hudba na prelomn století [ornament in Czech music at the turn of the century], Hudebni Veda 26 (1989), 163-68.*
- 34 A similar motif is found at the beginning of Charles Griffes' *The White Peacock (Roman Sketches/1, 1915-16)*, which shows that Pan is understood as part of the essential background to nature in Art Nouveau.
- 35 Tennyson, A.: *The Princess, IV.*
- 36 There is a perfect horn-motif repeated four times in the opening bars of Louis Vierne's *5^{me} Symphonie (1925)* for organ. Although Vierne's other music contains many Art Nouveau titles it is impossible to tell how far he was conscious of the likeness of this motif to that of Florent Schmitt's *Pan* in 1920.
- 37 The only study of the work as such appears to be that of Paia, F.: *Novákuv Pan, Hudebni Rozhledy xxiv (1971), 78, apart from the brief*

- general comments in Schnierer, M.: *K inovaci novákovskeho tematu* (The chief innovations of Novák), *Hudebni Rozhledy* 42/8 (1989), 393-95. There is no paper on the work in either the 1971 symposium *Ze symposia o zivotea dile Vitezslav Nováka* [From the symposium on Novák's life and work], *Hudebni veda* viii (1971), or the 1972 Festschrift: *Vitezslav Novák. Studie a vzpomínky k 100 vyocí narození* [studies on the 100th anniversary of his birth], ed. Padrta, K. & Stedron, B., Ceske Budojovice muzeum, 1972]. See also Janáček, K.: *Vitezslav Novák v proměnách casu* [V.N. from the perspective of time], *Hudebni Rozhledy* xxiii/12 (1970), 555-64.
- 38 Charles Griffes' *The White Peacock (Roman Sketches/1, 1915-16)*, has a motif beginning in thirds that seems to fit into the pattern of horn-motifs of these works.
- 39 Hepokoski, J.A.: op. cit., 45.
- 40 Wolff, H.C.: *Melodische Urform und Gestaltvariation bei Debussy*, *Deutsches Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* (1967), 95-105, especially 97-98.
- 41 The significance of their being quoted together is not clear (the passage echoes *Mountains* 185ff and *Forest* 19 *et passim* - versions of the horn-theme). There may be some light on this and the question of the conflicting orders of the movements and their quotations in the *Prolog* amongst Novák's papers and manuscripts. It would be interesting to see how far the final form of the work matched that of its initial plans and sketches. The work as a whole deserves more attention than it has so far received, since it is a major achievement of inspiration and compositional craftsmanship that is now little known outside Czechoslovakia, especially in its piano version.
- 42 An interesting association is that the dolphin is a feature of piano-case design from the eighteen-seventies to about 1895, being carved on the legs of uprights and (more rarely) on the legs or keyboard-cheeks of grands. The upright pianos of Richard Lipp & Sohn of Stuttgart and those of Julius Feurich of Leipzig use this as a stock feature in this period.
- 43 For instance, the cover for *La Plume/Zodiac, 1896* (Bridges, A.: op. cit., 81).
- 44 Srom, K.: notes to Universal Edition, (Prague 1963), vi.
- 45 Using Karl Riemann's term (*Musikalische Dynamik und Agogic, 1884*) for accentual as opposed to quantitative variation from literal interpretation of musical text.
- 46 C.f. the Wild Wood in Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, as Mole is losing his way at night, and the trees in Edward Okun's *Chimera* or Ernst Kreidolf's *Die schlafenden Bäume* that look like menacing faces (Hofstätter, H.: op. cit., 271, 199).
- 46 But Srom does not notice the Strauss waltz connexion. See his notes, vi.
- 47 Novák, V.: op. cit., vi. (Note that the previous line identifying these passages is mis-translated in the English version: it should read "The parts of the tarantella from the points where is a change from 12/8 to common time must be counted...").
- 47 For other evaluations of Novák see Schmier, : *Vitezslav Novák: the chief Novákian innovations*, *Hudebni rozhledy* 42/8 (1989), 373-75; Janáček, K.: op. cit.,, 555-64; there is also a Festschrift: Padrta, K. and Stedron, B. (eds.): *Vitezslav Novák. Studies and remembrances for the hundredth anniversary of his birth,,* Ceske Budejovice: Jihoceské muzeum, 1972. An attempt is made to put Novák into the Czech context by Jiránek, J.: *Czech music for piano between 1890 and 1945*, *Hudebni veda* 2 (1967), 277-89, who devotes a few pages to Novák and his "Impressionist style".
- 47 Hucher, Y.: *L'oeuvre de Florent Schmitt* (Durand, Paris 1960), LIX, gives 1923. However, the Durand score of the orchestral version is dated for copyright as 1925. The orchestral version is a slight revision or

recomposition of the piano score.

47 Hucher, Y.: op. cit., LIX.

48 That known as Celtic Twilight, his own expression, and lasting until just after 1900.

49 It is, while not strictly speaking a genre, at least a type that could well be examined as possible Third-Order repertory, for its typically Art Nouveau evocation of the spirit of the mourned composer. See Chapter 21.

WORKS BASED ON ART NOUVEAU/SYMBOLIST VERSE

Mannered verse and music

It is possible to differentiate between Art Nouveau and Symbolist verse - there is some Symbolist verse without the mannerisms of Art Nouveau verse, just as there is Symbolist painting like that of Odilon Redon, Puvis de Chavannes and other. Only mannered Symbolist or Art Nouveau verse has been considered here¹.

There are three works where there is a specific Art Nouveau/Symbolist base - Alexander Zemlinsky's *Fantasien über Gedichte von Richard Dehmel*, Alexander Skryabin's *Sonate 5* of 1907, based around a stanza from his own *Le poème de l'exstase*², itself a primary work of symbolism, and Debussy's *Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir* (*Préludes I/4*), which is drawn directly from the first stanza of Charles Baudelaire's *Harmonie du soir* (*Fleurs du mal* 1857), one of the key works, with *Correspondances*, of the whole Symbolist movement³. The position of Richard Dehmel in the Symbolist milieu and his connexions with Art Nouveau artists is well established; Skryabin from about 1904 became one of Symbolism's chief - and last - figures; and Baudelaire can be said to be the movement's foundation⁴.

Alexander Zemlinsky: *Fantasien über Gedichte von Richard Dehmel* (1900)

Three of the five stage-works of Zemlinsky's Viennese years (to 1911) appear to be based on Art Nouveau subjects⁵ (*Sarema* after R. von Gottschall's *Die Rose von Kaukasus*; *Das gläserne Herz* after Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Der Triumph der Zeit*; *Der Traumgöрге* to libretto by L. Feld) and two of his Prague works are based on works of Oscar Wilde (*Eine florentinische Tragédie* and *Der Zwerg*, after *The Birthday of the Infanta*), although his compositional style had undergone important changes by this time⁶. Zemlinsky's interest in Art Nouveau thus seems clear, and others have noticed his interest in the fantastic generally⁷. The *Fantasien* are four short pieces based on lyrics from a recognized Jugendstil figure, a

lyric poet friendly with Alfred Mombert and Detlev von Liliencron (whom Zemlinsky also set in opp.2, 5, 8 and the unpublished 1904 *Schmetterling*) and thus part of the Munich circle that formed around Otto Julius Bierbaum (also set in op.10), the founder of the Jugendstil magazines *Pan* and *Die Insel*. The young Zemlinsky's reception of Dehmel as a member of *Jung-Wien* is outlined by Horst Weber: Zemlinsky saw him "als ekstatischer Herold einer neuen Zeit...`Nietzsche philosophus, Dehmel poeta'"⁸. It is clear from the intricately detailed settings of these poems, especially those of the second and third, with the lushness of the part-writing that will be discussed below, that Zemlinsky was anxious to do his prophet justice.

The *Fantasien* complement Zemlinsky's song-settings of other Dehmel poems (op.7 and the unpublished 1907 settings of *Ansturm* and *Auf See*). Dehmel's verse at the time was, as will be argued below, itself affected by Art Nouveau mannerisms and the Symbolist movement, and was set in songs by Richard Strauss, Clemens von Franckenstein, Karol Szymanowski, Arnold Bax and Arnold Schoenberg. A poem from Dehmel's 1896 collection *Weib und Welt* is placed as an epigraph before each piece, and the overall title *Fantasien* is consonant with the general theme of dream that pervades the whole of Art Nouveau.

The pieces bear the four poems' titles: *Stimme des Abends*, *Waldseligkeit*, *Liebe* and *Käferlied*, and at first glance these titles might not appear very different from those of any of the sets of characteristic pieces appearing at the time. The poems themselves, however, evoke not just woodland scenes but the spirit behind them, personified in the first poem as the feminine power (*Ihr Schweigen*), that in the *Weib und Welt* series is seen in woman but is not merely human: woman is half mystery - Nature's force that can only be sensed in the complete stillness of dewfall (*Stimme des Abends*, stanza 1). It is as if she is a creature of Pan rather than of mortals, and thus can enchant man and embody hidden menace beneath her seductiveness; the passion and mystery of Novák's *Zena*

(Woman) accords with this view. In the second poem her power is courted in the silence and solitariness:

*Da bin ich ganz allein,
Da bin ich ganz mein eigen
Ganz nur Dein.*

while the repetition of *Da bin ich ganz* and of *ganz* again in the last line, and the assonances in *allein*, *mein*, *eigen* and *Dein* are typical Art Nouveau mannerisms that have something of the effect of repeating a spell, as discussed in Appendix C on literary Art Nouveau. In the third poem there are metaphysical conceits in which spatial dimensions are eliminated through her (Nature's) power (an effect that will be shown paralleled in the music), as the barriers between poet and woman actually join them, and his soul she sees through was also her soul: the important motif of the intertwining of nature seen in much visual Art Nouveau is reflected here. This is no ordinary love poem, but a mystical one. The last poem is built around onomatopoeia echoing the cockchafer's sounds, but these and the insect's features are signs of deeper mysteries, echoing the mysteries of nature: its feelers are forked (a sign of the dark side of nature) and its song-vibrations, too fast to count, are an indication that nature cannot be measured, nor its impulses resisted (the buzzing onomatopoeia of the verse and the music's trills and runs, which in this piece can be justly termed onomatopoeic, seem deliberately sensual).

The topics of Zemlinsky's *Fantasien* seem diverse, but the subject is the poet's love-conceits, reflected in the music's preciosity of chromatic effect, especially those from from the second piece, of which an example is quoted below, but also particularly noticeable in III 20-24. In the second-piece example the fourth quavers of bar 4 are a semitonal passing between the I and V (implied) chords, while in the next bar the parallel chromatic minor thirds go further to combine a sharpened V with a I^{3b} to produce the exotic I^{7s#3b}, not resolved until the second quaver of bar 5.

The love-conceits are seen in the interlocking of the ambiguity

(wave)-motif that seems common through the four pieces:

Example 18:

Zemlinsky: *Dehmel Fantasien*, wave-motifs

In the first piece the bass continues its strange-sounding wave-motion to bar 18; in the second, the movement is seen in the parallel thirds of the inner voices; in the third, bass and inner voice parallel in tenths; but in the fourth, it is seen in the treble, so that it has risen through the voices in the four pieces, which may be symbolic. The fourth piece, however, has many passages of semi-trilled sixths that echo the wave-movement of the opening. Such motion is gently disorientating in the manner of waving lines of hair or tendrils in Art Nouveau painting, and there seems in the set at least a simple analogy between the curves of these figures and those of Art Nouveau - both are sensually affective.

Example 19:

Zemlinsky: *Dehmel Fantasien*: transformational harmonies

A third element unifying the pieces is their use of transitional harmonies that seem to transform the feelings into a strange realm of

sensual langour. In the first piece there is a diminished-seventh chord on the third beat of bar 3 that transforms into a different position but remains harmonically similar before resolving. In the next bar the transition is more complex, with $\underline{D^b}$ on the last beat contradicting the \underline{D} -natural of the third beat. The example from the third piece is even more complex, and seems to transform normal tonality as its bass passes through the chromatic steps of an octave. Beginning in bar 18 at the subdominant of \underline{D} it rises gradually to the tonic (21), but has gradually become \underline{D} minor instead of major. As the bass begins to fall back by semitones to $\underline{B^b}$, its pause on $\underline{C^\sharp}$ on the fourth semiquaver of bar 21, forming an augmented triad with added sixth, indicates that a modulation to \underline{F} is intended via \underline{C} , \underline{F} being the natural major of \underline{D} minor. When \underline{C} is reached in 22 the process seems certain, and the momentary rise to $\underline{D^b}$ in 23 seems merely to delay the resolution. But when resolution arrives in the first chord of 25 it comes as a sudden shift to \underline{D} - this time \underline{D} major. It has been the melody, not the bass, that determines this fall to the original key. Thus the pivotal chord on $\underline{D^b}$ in 21 can be seen from two viewpoints - as $\sharp VII$ from \underline{D} , or $\sharp V$ from the projected \underline{F} that never arrives. Tonal orientation throughout the whole process has been made ambiguous in a manner that is typically Art Nouveau.

Arnold Schoenberg also set Dehmel in five songs that include *Erwartung* (opus 2/1, 1899 - the *Liederheft*, which is significant in being dedicated to Zemlinsky); both *Erwartung* and the first of the *Fantasien* are discussed as examples of Jugendstil by Reinhold Brinkmann, who examines the relationships and similarities between them. He discusses the first of the *Fantasien*'s Jugendstil character and states "that it is here if anywhere in the early works of the Viennese circle" that there is a case to be argued for the "clear classification" possibility of these works as Jugendstil. He feels that the first of the *Fantasien* at least shows "a significant affinity with Jugendstil" and even in his generally sceptical

if sympathetic view of the whole problem of considering Art Nouveau as a historical period (which latter he, very properly, rejects on methodological grounds) he is nonetheless prepared to acknowledge the Jugendstil status of some pieces like this. The particular conclusions he comes to are similar to those of Horst Weber on *Die gläserne Herz*, who also shares his general view on rejecting Art Nouveau as a historical category while admitting it as a particular influence on some music of the time⁹.

Zemlinsky's choosing the genre of piano-fantasy rather than that of the song (particularly as he was well experienced with the latter genre) is significant. The most obvious difference between the genres is that in the former melody and accompaniment can be fused and their roles confused in a way not possible with the latter. To use Horst Weber's terms, drawn from painting, *Figur* and *Grund* lose their distinctnesses and merge into one¹⁰. In painting there is normally a distinction between figure and background, but in Klimt, Mucha, Behrens and others the "background" motifs of decoration become one with the "figure", which itself, in the limited-depth canvas of Art Nouveau, loses its primacy¹¹. In the *Fantasien*, as in the text, this happens: just as Dehmel's beloved becomes one with trees and misty landscape, so the various strands of musical texture, so mixed and interchangeable that they cannot be termed voices, seem to merge. This is most noticeable in I/1-2, 3-4, 9-17, 26; II/35-40; IV/23ff and is achieved *par excellence* in III, where the repeated rocking figure passes from hand to hand. It is significant that the third work is the poem where the conceit of mystical union with the beloved is most clearly expressed (*und Du in mir gesellt*) and the merging of musical strands most complete.

There is much in the *Fantasien* that is easily recognizable as having patterned character: the ascending chains of imitative figures in I/bars 1-2, 5-6, 22-23, 30-33, the chains of chromatic thirds in II/3-5, 7-8, 14-

15, 64-68, the contrary motions of the right- and left-hand sixths in III/1-14, 34-44), the chains of runs and thirds in IV/23-26, 31-34, 62-67). All these are suggestive of the intertwining concept already noted in the verse. There are other Art Nouveau indicators: firstly, the arpeggios in I/3, 4, and 7 with the echoes of this in bars 15, 17, 28 and 29 and the upward runs in II/43, 45, 47, all occurring with suddenness in slow-moving passages, are suggestive of ecstasy, paralleling the sharp change of curve of the whip-shape that Art Nouveau stylized from natural forms. Secondly, the slowing of cadences while harmonies are deliberately resolved in I/20 and 32-33, II/15, 22-23, 54-55 and 78-89, III/32-33, 45-46 and 54-55, suggests the movement towards silence explicit in the first two poems and implied in the third - these silences indicating the essential mystery behind nature and love-obsession. Thirdly, there are many passages where major-minor modality is deliberately veiled (II 64-65: [$F^{\#}$ major $IV^4_{\#3}$ - $bIII^7$ - III^7 - IV^7_3 - IV^7_{3b} -I]; III 1-4: [D major I - III^6_4 - I^{3b} -V] and similarly 10-11, 36-38, 43-44; such veiling parallels the merging of reality and dream in the poems. Again ambiguity is seen to be a procedural principle.

The deliberative resolution of cadence and its allied effect, the gradual transformation of harmony over suspended and independently-moving parts of chordal structures (I/3, 4, II/10, 24-26, 27-28, 51-55) are reminiscent of the transformational effect of the *Tristan*-chord sequence in the opening bars of the Prelude to Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. The effect is one of transformation rather than modulation of harmony, which exactly parallels that of Dehmel's conceit where Nature can be felt through the silence (I), through solitariness (II), turn barriers and distance into union (III), or reveal that his soul is hers. The use of Wagnerian effects for Art Nouveau purposes¹² is cognate to composers' using non-period verse for their music, which is discussed later in this study (although there is a case for considering Wagner's mannerism, mimesis and

Stilkunst as precursors of Art Nouveau¹³).

Figures of repetition and imitation in the verse like the assonance and onomatopoeia noted above, as well as alliteration (III: *deine Seele: still versanken/Im Strom des Schauens zwischen uns die Schranken*) and simple repetitions, with or without play on alternate meanings (II *ganz*, IV *Zähle, zählen*), are all constantly echoed in the music, which derives much of its character from this mannerism: I/1+2, 3+4, 5+6, 7 (beats 1-2+3-4), 8+9, 10+12+14, et sequ.; II/1+2, 3+4, 5+6, 7+8; III/the imitation throughout between hands, particularly 47-53; IV/3+4, 7+8, 23-4+25-6, et sequ. Dehmel's lover is unconscious of time, with many repetitions of phrase in the present continuous and future continuous tenses (for example, II/stanza 2; I/stanzas 2 and 3); both text and music use repetitions to imply a state where time is suspended in a dream of beauty. Horst Weber notices the same conjunctions of textual and musical device - repetitions and the suspension of time - in Zemlinsky's *Der gläserne Herz*¹⁴.

In these ways Zemlinsky's music can be seen as allegories of the text, to use Horst Weber's sense of "allegory"¹⁵, and in particular, "ornament becomes allegory". Professor Weber carefully distinguishes on the one hand between the critical practice he deprecates of establishing direct links between imagery and music, which can lead to unsustainable suppositions like those of Hans Hollander¹⁶, and on the other hand the method he advocates of isolating the essential elements of both text/picture and music and making comparisons between these essentials - at a distance from both text and music, so to speak. Thus while there is obvious cockchafer buzzing-imagery in the fourth *Fantasie* (the sort of musical imagery that is usually labelled impressionist even though it may be deeply symbolic), the important Art Nouveau principle is that both text and music are about a third thing - mystery, an essential principle of Art Nouveau and Symbolism, and about the affective uses of patterned

mannerism, essential and peculiar in the period to Art Nouveau. The *Fantasiën* can thus be seen to be works of intricate device and subtlety of symbol, like those of Dehmel, Klimt and other members of the Vienna Secession.

Alexander Skryabin: Sonate 5

This work, based on a stanza from his own poem, *Le Poème de l'extase*¹⁷ (itself a primary work of Russian Symbolism¹⁸), is a continuous-movement work based on nine main motifs (see Example 20 below) that are alternated, developed and combined in complex ways¹⁹. It is possible to link these motifs with the imagery of Skryabin's four-line stanza:

*I summon you to life, secret strivings!
You who have been drowned in the dark depths
Of the creative spirit, you timorous
embryos of life, it is to you that I bring daring.*²⁰

The Russian original features the mannerisms of Art Nouveau verse, like the consonance of *zhizni prizivayu* and *tvorjashchego..bojazlivie*, and the alliterations of *bas skritie stremlenja, zarolishï.. derznovenie..prinoshck*, and *zhizni zaroliskï*.

Its content features three elements: a summoning to life, secret strivings latent in the creative spirit, and daring. The daring must refer to Skryabin's vital realization, (that caused the poem, Sonata 5 and the orchestral *Le poème de l'exstase* to be written), that in a sense if he dared he could be the creator of everything, that "universal art was a function of his own personality"²¹. He could now bring history to its fulfilment by practising his creative art. The strivings need this daring to become actualized: this is a typically Symbolist scenario of opposing forces that must be mystically united²². Skryabin's symbolist ideas, as expounded by his brother-in-law Boris de Schloezer²³, show some superficial debt to Indian but more to the mainstream of Russian Symbolism²⁴, and in particular those from whom his own circle drew its ideas - Vajaceslav Ivanov, Konstantin Bal'mont, Valerij Brjusov, Andrej Belyj, Alexandr Blok, Vladimir Solov'ev. These were mixed with his own preference for European

rather than Russian mystical and philosophical literature²⁵, so that elements of Western dualism were central to his mystical system, particularly a version of Hegelian dialectic²⁶. In his *Mysterium*, for instance, discussed with Boris de Schloezer, was to arise the great synthesis resulting from the final opposition of life-forces that is already part of the theme of this earlier poem, and in particular the stanza serving as epigraph to this sonata.

The central idea of Symbolism, like Art Nouveau, is dream or mystical experience, which is inevitably opposed by knowledge (the ordinary world of experience), and this fundamental dichotomy is expressed through all its imagery and attempts to harmonize the irrational and the rational. Skryabin's fifth sonata shows this in two ways - through motifs and structure, including harmonic structure²⁷.

Example 20: SKRYABIN: SONATA 5

Skryabin: Sonate 5, motifs

The first motif rises in arpeggios and acciaccaturas from the low bass to highest treble in the first twelve bars; it begins and ends the work. This seems to represent the summoning²⁸, its surging upwards from the depths showing the way, as it were, for the creative spirit to become active and follow it upwards to the light. The second motif, announced in bars 13-16, is until the last page somewhat vacillating throughout the

work, and thus seems the latent powers of the creative spirit. The key term *Languido* will be seen elsewhere through late Skryabin to denote a sensuous state of vague, passive longing that needs energizing by the dramatic force of the summons. The alternation of bass between tonal centres, here over the interval of a tritone, is another key marker of the *languido/languide* works (*Poème languide* op.52/3, *Danse languide* op.49/4), and seeming to indicate indecisiveness. The main (third, bars 19-20) motif is a rising one like the first, but more gentle: it seems to be the secret strivings that are to respond to the summons. Variant, more dramatic fragments of these, or counters to them, make up the remaining motifs: M_5 and M_6 are respectively mysterious and sensuous, while M_4 , M_7 , M_8 and M_9 , being more forceful, show the struggle upwards towards the light as the creative spirit dares to be born, as it were²⁹. The symbol of light is crucial to Skryabin as to most mystics, and with the other imagery of this stanza is seen at greater length in the text for the *Acte préalable*³⁰.

The music, therefore, like the imagery of the stanza, is essentially based on oppositions. The union of the two types of motif, passive and active, at the work's end ensures that the second motif has become transformed into something fully dramatic and triumphant. The motif M_5 (*misterioso*) seems directly indicative of the supernatural nature of the transformation process. The winding nature of M_6 , which in late Skryabin as elsewhere in Art Nouveau, is sensual, shows the essential eroticism of his mysticism; the *Acte préalable* and *Mysterium* were to to be orgiastic³¹.

(Winding motifs are the third important motif-type occurring throughout the keyboard repertory, together with panpipe and horn-motifs. The "winding" is an undulation around a centre, or along the centre of a curve of movement. It is essentially akin to the motion and sensuousness of arabesque at least as it finds expression in Western music (the violin solo in the first movement of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, for instance), and its most clear expression in Skryabin is in *Masque* op.63/1,

which will be discussed in Chapter 12.)

The motif-fragments that make up the sonata are contrasted in pairs or sets, and the work proceeds in many sections that often contrast greatly with each other³²; each section is always based on different motifs from those of the sections on either side. The most notable opposition of these sections occur between bars 281-288 and bars 357-366 where two-bar units alternate with ones based on different motifs, but these are merely compressed expressions of the main sectional alternations of the work.

It is in such alternations of types that the work shows the essential similarity of symbolist and Art Nouveau method. Whereas in a conventional dramatic work oppositions are in conflict with each other, and in a narrative are in an adversarial relationship, in a symbolist milieu both are necessary and are to be seen as being in balance. Neither is complete without the other, as is seen in Good+Evil, Male+Female, Yin+Yang or Rose+Croix polarities typical of various symbolisms. The opposites must harmonize, and they do this in Skryabin's method by interweaving - classic Art Nouveau method as well as symbolist method. Boris de Schloezer explains that Skryabin saw the Active+Passive principle of his symbolism as Male+Female³³, which is borne out by the rubrics accompanying the motifs: *impetuoso con stravaganza* versus *languido*, and their counterparts throughout the work. Here too is seen the importance of eroticism and ecstasy in his mysticism, again linking with Art Nouveau's essential sensuality.

These oppositions are *per necessitatem* part of the same aspects of his mystical system³⁴ in which apparent oppositions like the passive and active principles already referred to in the epigraph³⁵, although of apparently opposite elements of water and air, are reconciled through the dialectic of the creative act³⁶. It is therefore logical to argue that such opposing principles, represented in Sonata 5 by different sequences devoted to motif-symbols, are different aspects of the same mood rather

than normal dramatic contrasts, which can be seen in the way the *languido* motif of bars 13-20 is transformed into the *estatico* bars 433-440. This transformational method consists in all motifs' moving towards the same ending; to a mystic like Skryabin all things inhere, for all reality has the same dimension. The epigraph's "secret strivings ...drowned in the the dark depths of the creative spirit" refer to an inchoate state, where time and space are absent, and are represented by the ostinato of trill and tremolando in the extreme bass of bars 1-8; the ascending or soaring flourish motif is part of this dimensionless state, seen in bars 3, 5 and 7ff, and as it is heard at the very end of the work in bars 451-55 there is the sense that although transformation has occurred this has not taken place in normal time and space.

The sequential method of this sonata is to alternate and interweave several motif-sequences, so that each is repeated many times and gradually transformed in an interactive process. The motif-sequence of bars 13-24 contains two fragments, the syncopated rocking one of bar 13 and the more melodic one of bars 19-20 that is partly syncopated. The *languido* motif of bars 13-20 undergoes a transformation at the end of the following *accarezzevole* [in a caressing manner] section that is hardly noticed, bars 42-45 just seeming, as they are, a natural extension of what has gone before. When in bar 47 the *presto* commences there is such a change of pace and manner and such abundance of figuration that its connexion through bar 45 to the original *languido* motif is disguised. This sort of musical contrast parallels that between passive and active principles. The triplet figure that develops from this (bar 98ff) is its inversion and thus is a transformation of the early part of the *languido* motif, just as the *imperioso* "call" of bars 96-97, together with the *quasi-trombe* bar 114, is a transformed version of its latter part. This latter part is seen in a further version in the *meno vivo* motif of bars 120-22, with the *quasi trombe* strand hidden immediately under it in bars 128-29 and related

passages; the *quasi-trombe* strand takes on another form still in the wavering quavers of bars 199ff that then are gradually revealed by their stronger movements in bar 219ff. The process of concealment, transformation and revelation continues throughout the sonata until the final triumphant statement of the whole *languido* motif, now transformed into a fanfare, in the *estatico* climax of bars 433-440.

Before proceeding further with this sonata it is necessary to outline the basis from which statements about Skryabin's harmonic method will be made. Since Leonid Sabaniev's 1912 analysis of *Prometheus* in 1912³⁷ in terms of the "mystic chord" many attempts have been made to explain Skryabin's later compositional method, notably those of Varvara Dernova, based on two dominant ninths a tritone apart and the replacement of dominant-tonic resolution by tritone root progressions (written in 1940 but not published until 1968)³⁸. There have also been George Perle's "pre-serialist" and "set-theory" hypothesis (1972)³⁹ and Gottfried Eberle's hypothesis that claims to identify many different types of mode (1978)⁴⁰. The most coherent and convincing explanation that has so far appeared has been set out by Jay Reise in his 1983 short study in *Nineteenth Century Music*⁴¹, and for convenience it is this analysis that has been followed in this study, although there has as yet been little time for Dr Reise's work to be universally recognized and adopted⁴².

Jay Reise's analysis may be briefly stated thus: he traces Skryabin's growing preoccupation from early to mid-period works⁴³ with the French sixth, together with some less important sonorities like the diminished seventh and its "floating fifth" (either sharpened or diminished), particularly the augmented triad. From the French sixth the "mystic chord" is later derived, for its first four notes (C, F#, Bb, E), when rearranged by placing the C after Bb, make V^7_{5b} , an enharmonic version of the French sixth. These four notes are common to both the whole-tone and octatonic scales; the remaining two upper notes of the mystic chord

(A, E) being originally gained by his adding the ninth to the French sixth (in the *Poème languide* Op.52/3 of 1907) to gain the first, and using the principle of proceeding by fourths from that to obtain the second (which is also the one remaining pitch absent from Leonid Sabaneiev's "overtones of the so-called harmonic scale of sounds"⁴⁴). The mystic chord and the French sixth are thus connected, but are not directly responsible for generating elements of Skryabin's later pitch-sets. The four notes of the French sixth are common to both the wholetone and octatonic scales; "combining two French sixths a minor third apart will produce an octatonic scale, and combining two of them a major second apart will yield all the pitches of a whole-tone scale"⁴⁵. These two scales are symmetrical, and of limited transposition, to use Messiaen's later term; in the later works Skryabin frequently moves his tonal base from one of the two wholetone transpositions to the other, or through octatonic transpositions, a process linked to his moving his bass notes through augmented triadic intervals or diminished seventh intervals in the earlier pieces. Finally, Skryabin treats notes extraneous to his wholetone and octatonic scales as chromatic, resolving them by semitones (sometimes at the octave) into whichever scale is being employed at the moment, although in the later pieces this can sometimes be delayed, producing tensions not resolved until final cadences. Skryabin's later composition is thus not atonal nor serial, but "chromatically modal"⁴⁶.

Dr Reise's explanation of the development and perfection of Skryabin's harmonic method is the simplest that has yet appeared, and thus according to Ockham's Razor alone is, other things being equal, to be preferred to the more complicated earlier ones.

Applying Reise's analysis to the sonata shows immediately that the opening sequence (1-11) is based on a wholetone pitch set on D#, to which the trilled E is a chromatic discord needing resolution. Although this discord and its "plagal" form on A in the successive right-hand runs in

each half-bar from 7-11 are each resolved at the octave, in the process the left hand has been affected by both E and the plagal A so that its tritone is alternately corrupted with perfect fifths.

The conflict between wholetone and foreign elements is symbolically important, and could represent that between "obscure depths" and "proud spirit"; alternately, the proper and plagal forms of the discord may be opposite-hand echoes of the proud spirit's calling to the depths.

In the *languido* sequence following, an opposition of ninths and French sixths is established at once (bars 13-14) and echoed throughout (15-16, 25-28, with the intervening bars resting on French sixths: each ninth is being resolved into the French sixth. This is to use the *Tristan* method of resolving one discord into another as cloud dissolves into cloud, so that for ears used to diatonic harmony this is a strange sonic landscape without familiar dimensions, where there is motion but no progress; "harmonic movement is more apparent than real", as Jim Samson pointed out in 1974⁴⁷.

The interval between the ninths and subsequent sixths in this second sequence is an augmented fourth or tritone, the interval that divides the scale in halves, and in this sequence it is as if the A# is the tonic of the dominant E, remembering, however, that the E was the emphasized discord of the opening sequence. The *Presto* following retains the F# key-signature but remains poised on its orthodox dominant (C#) until bar 68; even here the right-hand figure suggests that it is based on B, so that the tonic F# is still only its dominant, as it were.

Further ambiguity follows with the French sixth chord-sequence from bar 98, whose progressions in bars 102, 106, 110 and 112 echo those of the piece's opening clashes. The slower section from bar 120 returns to chords of the ninth in conjunction with an inner strand of one of the symmetrical pitch-sets less used by Skryabin - the ordinary chromatic scale. These are heard against some statements of the mystic chord

(beginning at bar 122), whose widely spread notes are rolled upwards in a further echo of the calling of the stanza's first line.

In such ways harmonic oppositions, intermixings and ambiguities continue throughout the work, reflecting the symbolic oppositions and tensions of the verse. Yet there is no conventional resolution of the harmonic tensions anywhere in the work, not even in a final cadence, which is unusual for Skryabin at this date: clearly this work is a beginning, not an ending, as the verse implies, foreshadowing the process that was to culminate much later in the *Mysterium*. The continual suspension of any conventional resolution throughout the work produces a feeling of being suspended in space without any horizons.

Pedalpoints further the feeling of being without normal perspectival guidelines, as in bars 47-58, 68-80, 329-339 or the double pedalpoints based on the tritone, like bars 1-8 and 157-160, or the many on that interval alternated, like bars 13-29, 120-127 and 166-182. As with Zemlinsky's *Fantasien*, the effect is analogous to the limited dimensionality of Art Nouveau's flat canvases and its dream world.

This effect is further strengthened by the many repetitions that tend to remove the idea of any progress through time; the whole work begins and ends with virtually identical passages based on the first motif (9-12, 451-456), the only difference being that at the end the motif rises through the whole compass of the keyboard. There are other minor repetitions like bars 13-15+16-17, 19-21+23-25 and 32-25+36-39 that show Skryabin's fundamental method of progressing to be similar to Zemlinsky's, but even more exaggerated, for he transforms normal notions of progression into the opposing of sections based on units of contrasting motifs⁴⁸.

Allied to this repetitiveness is Skryabin's tendency to incorporate melodic motif into the figuration as quickly as possible: for instance, the *Languido* motif of 13-20 is repeated in full or in part eight times in the immediately following bars 21-40, and since the *Presto* motif is

derived from it gradually in the *Accarezzevole* bars 24-46, it is already familiar before its full presentation as figuration in the *Presto* section, where it is repeated in virtually every bar from 47-93. The dual structural principles of repetition and opposition have a further effect - that of a continual stressing and building of emotional intensity in successive waves of contrasting figuration, although similar nature⁴⁹; the rhythmic alternation of these waves is thus powerfully sensual.

Sensuality is also seen when the chromatic pitch-set is used in combination with the bareness of wide chords and melodic fragments (bars 120-139 and parallel passages later in the work, in particular 381-400). The emotional intensity inherent in such chromaticism is intensified by the drama that comes from the opposition of the steadily descending inner line to the soaring melodic one.

Sensuality is also seen in the important sequences based on flourish or cadenza-like figures, from the *Con stravaganza* opening bars 1-12 to their reappearance in 157-165, with the *leggierissimo volando-Presto giocoso* 247-262 and the final *impetuoso* soaring appoggiaturas and acciaccaturas of 451-455. The exaggerations of flourish and repetition in all these sequences, together with the use of forceful directions, is very much in keeping with Art Nouveau's tendency towards extremity of effect.

The device of arabesque or patterned repetition is here also taken to an extreme, and is complemented by Skryabin's complexities of rhythmic texture, seen in the use of fragments of triplets, tetruplets or pentuplets proceeding against each other, with wide arpeggiated chords, suspensions and syncopations adding to the rhythmic ambiguity, as seen in virtually every sequence, but especially 48-58, 68-79, 200-218 and 329-339. Even where Skryabin has the various voices moving over the same rhythmic base there is complexity of relationship: again this is true throughout the sonata, but particularly in 120-139 and 381-400.

The "soaring" nature of the first and third motifs (their rising

upwards over the interval of a major seventh) is simply enough based on the imagery in the epigraphical stanza, but the interval itself may also be a representation of the fire-symbol that he saw as the transforming element in his symbolism, containing within it the essences of creative force and ecstasy⁵⁰ that are central both to epigraph and sonata⁵¹.

Summary

The work as a whole has thus on the one hand motifs and figures in the music fairly directly linked to the symbolism of the text, and on the other is constructed on principles that parallel those of Art Nouveau. Seeing the work on these two levels shows an essential difference between Symbolism and Art Nouveau in music. There are, of course, dimensions to the sonata that are specifically symbolistic - its features of structure⁵² and methodology as an eschatological prophecy⁵³, which it is outside the scope of this study to detail further; these have been addressed by Michael Schmidt amongst others⁵⁴.

Claude Debussy: *Les sons et la parfums tournent dans l'air du soir* (*Préludes I/4*)

In this work Debussy is both attempting to suggest a langorous sensuality like that of the poem and the esoteric union with nature that Symbolism invested in the image of *l'air du soir* - until 1857 a conventionally picturesque subject for painting and verse. The epigraph is based on a line from the first stanza of Charles Baudelaire's *Harmonie du soir*; the poem is about a mood of outward repletteness in the sensations of sunset, flower-scents and and a languid waltz, mixed with an inner melancholy from memories of times past - there is harmony of exquisite evening sensations and memories, or the evening's harmony gives rise to the memories. The recalling of memories through sensations involves the Proustian suspension/transformation of time noted in an earlier chapter, and there are long pedalpoints to suggest this (bars 3-14, 47-54, plus what is in effect an inverted one on D[#]+C[#] in bars 16-24). There is also

the confusion of perspectives noted in *Les fées* through the chromatic varying of accompanimental chords like those in bars 3-4 (diminished triads with flattened sixths over A major pedal: IV-III-^bVI-V-IV-[#]IV-^bVI), and the same pedal and chord IV-[#]IV-^bVI-V in 26, as well as near-parallel chords (⁵₃ or ⁵_{3b}) moving though minor thirds in bars 34-36 (A^b pedal: VII/II\VII\[#]V\III/[#]V/VII\[#]V\III/[#]I/III/[#]V/I [using oblique lines to indicate vertical direction] and 40 in A major: ^b6₄ chords I\^bVI\V\^bIII\I\^bVI.)

As important as memories in the text are sensations, which some of Debussy's indications refer to: *harmonieux et souple, tranquille et flotant, comme une lointaine sonnerie de cors, encore plus lointain et plus retenu*. The last two are specifically about quasi-horn calls in the final bars, and encourage the player to experiment with the tonal effects and variety of attack that can be produced with repeated notes on strings at least partially undamped on the modern piano. Debussy's Bechstein⁵⁵, with the Steinway the most advanced piano marque of its day, was certainly capable of sonorities and subtleties, both loud and soft, not available to earlier composers. In particular, it had a treble which was of an almost cloying sweetness, enough to make even slight melodies sound beautiful, and a deep bass whose soft as well as loud effects were of great character. Thus Debussy's exploitation of simple fragments of melody, and effects at the extremes of the compass. The last bars of the piece have the lowest A sounded *pianissimo* without its octave: after much recourse to the A above the lowest during the rest of the piece, this final bass is very effective as marking the close.

A passage that shows great variety of quieter pianistic effects that further the dreaminess of the Baudelaire poem is that of the return to an A tonality after the A^b mid-section. A waving series of parallel ⁵₃ chords introduces the added-sixth broken chord that marks the change:

Example 21:

Debussy: *Les sons et les parfums tournent*, 37-42

After the harp-like effect of the broken chord the return of the opening figure (*Serrez*) is once again a melodic fragment that suggests more than it states, because of its pause while the parallel detached chords veil the $\underline{C\#}$ melodic crotchet, and also echo those of bars 3-5 and 18-23. The exact repetition of this does not further the progress of the recall of the opening figure, but allows the detached parallel chords to develop by drifting downwards in a series of alternations that is Debussy's method of approaching $\underline{C\#}$ as the basis of the *tranquille et flotant* fragment. To sound a melody in four simultaneous octaves *pianissimo* in a legato passage means that the sustaining pedal must blur the inner semiquavers - again part of the dreaminess being produced. Delicate use of this pedal, and perhaps the left one as well, is essential throughout this passage if the languorous mood is not to be broken, even with the staccato chords.

General reference to the poem does not seem to be Debussy's primary intention, however, for he does not quote its title but its third line, the important elements of which are swirling sensations and evening air. Swirling is of course one of the most important Art Nouveau motif-techniques, which is reflected in the winding shape of the main motif,

seen in two forms in bars 1-2. This motif, or its echo in bar 3, occurs throughout the piece, and its curving is complemented by those of the quaver motifs in bars 9-12, 15-23, the movement of parallel chords in bars 34-36, and the movement of semiquavers in bars 41-44.

The other element of the title is evening air, which to an Art Nouveau sensibility suggests mood and associations - in this case langour mixed with memories.

The mood of the piece is partly set by its slow tempo (*modéré*), and partly by special compositional and pianistic effects. Firstly, mystery is suggested in the sustained chords (held by hand or pedal) through which other chords move, as in bars 9-15, 27 and 47-54. The Bechstein at that time did not offer either the sostenuto pedal for selective sustaining of chords or a pedal controlling the bass dampers only⁵⁶, so that where a note or chord must according to the text be sustained while other music is moving, the ordinary sustaining pedal must remain depressed (or according to modern theory partially depressed - half-pedalled), affecting all the damped strings. This means that all strings are freed or half-freed to allow sympathetic vibration with the overtones and resultant tones of the strings struck. The resulting complexities of sonic texture in the essentially sensuous method of performance that the Art Nouveau repertoire demands, parallels the layers of connotative sensuousness and meaning in Baudelaire's verse, and its simultaneous feelings of evening sensations and dream-memories. Art Nouveau artistry always plays on multiple meanings, and rests on the idealist position that beyond simple perceptions there are complex mysteries, suggested, amongst other things, by the complex patterning of natural lines and curves in its pictures.

Secondly, there is the progressive evocation of mood (and the suspension of time while memories are recalled) by the use of repetition of the main melodic motif, found in all its three forms in the first three bars. This recurs so often, but without any effective development, that

any sense of linear progress is negated while the attention is constantly drawn back to this motif. Allied to this is the ostinato effect of bars 15-23, which, as its attendant chordal figure keeps repeating itself, prevents any sense of time passing. But there is a deeper effect still of such repetitions - its affective character, building towards the mood of repleteness and langour that Baudelaire's poem evokes; the repetitions are echoes of those in the poem itself, which is structured around repetition of whole lines, (for each stanza after the first repeats as its first and third lines the second and fourth of the previous stanza). The many repetitions of the motif announced in the first two bars occur in different forms, but are always immediately recognizable.

The piece also shows structural repetition, for it consists of a series of oppositions between motifs - that falling to a bass A, and that rising to B^b or F[#], both seen in the first two bars. In what is a contrast to many other Debussy preludes, the dominant character of this piece is its maintenance of a firm root despite its chromatic excursions; the falling figures to the bass A (or its related C[#] in bars 41-44) control the piece throughout and are thus the centralizing factor that begins, dominates and ends the piece (as horn call, employing the characteristic altered triadic form and broken rhythm noticed in the Pan works).

Claude Debussy: *Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut* (Images II/2)

This is the third Debussy piano work (besides *Les sons* and *La terrasse des audiences au clair de lune*) that is based on a verse-line of typically Symbolist-Art Nouveau composition in its imagery and rhythmically affective character (with the assonance of *-scend* and *temple*, *lune* and *fut*, and alliteration of *l*). The imagery of ruined temple and moonlight are more than romantic evocation or impressionist picturesque: for the Art Nouveau sensibility a temple is an important icon of pre-scientific celebration of the links between the seen and the unseen, the

raison d'être of all religion and cult. That the temple is now ruined signifies that it is of some past civilization in a country exotic to Europe, and therefore full of mystery.

There is, however, no particular modality in the work's motifs, although there is a suggestion of Eastern pentatonics in the lower motif of bar 14 that is not carried through, and Robert Schmitz finds "Aeolian mode, then Hypodorian and Myxolydian"⁵⁷. The setting therefore is vague, like that of the verse, and the suggestions of choral chanting in the motifs of bars 14-15, or of *organum* in the sequences of parallel chords like those in bars 7-9 (major and minor 6_4 chords over E-minor: #III\II\VII/I/III/IV/#VI\V) are doubtless also deliberately vague.

The two types of parallel movement in the piece are contrasted, in that the second type (7-9 *et passim*) always occurs over pedalpoints, while the first type (1-5 *et passim*) is without any bass reference whatever. Since even the second type is only tenuously and ambiguously related to its pedalpoints, the parallel movements of both are disorientating, as in a dream or painting where the dimensional boundaries are unclear - typical Art Nouveau practice.

There is an important duality or opposition throughout the piece between rapid and slow motions, seen on the one hand in the many pauses of about a minim's length in the parallel sequences and the quicker movements of the three motifs in bars 14-15 (upper and lower) and 31-34. The piece begins with soft parallel dissonances (bars 1-5) whose rhythmic pattern begins with a pause of almost two minims' length that is seen again as this whole pattern is closely imitated from the second beat of bar 3 to bar 5; this pause is echoed later in bars 12, 17-18, 34, 36-37, and bar 50 as well as in the many minims that suspend motion while other motifs begin their quicker movements (for example 25-30). Even the pedalpoints in bars 6, 7 and 9 are of quick movement, in contrast to the slow parallel chords above them. In a piece that has so much movement in quavers and triplets,

as well as appoggiaturas, and in the first sequences mentioned follows the three-and-a-half beat pause with semiquavers, the slowness of the minims is important. All this contrasting of motions is not simply the slow passing of time contrasted with the activity of the rituals that were once performed in the temple, which would support a merely picturesque interpretation of the epigraph's imagery: time is not passing at all, not even slowly, for over pedalpoints normal boundaries and horizons are lost, as in dream. The initial dissonances of the piece also suggest discontinuity, because they rob the hearer of normal tonal perspective.

Imitation of Eastern sounds also alters tonal perspective:

Example 22:

Debussy: *Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut*, 30-32

The example is interesting from a number of aspects. Firstly, the complexity of rhythms between the bar 30 figures (bar 30 being an identical repetition of bar 29) suggests the sound of the gamelan bands that Debussy heard at the Paris Exhibitions of 1889 and 1899; this sound and texture will be noticed in other Debussy works in this study. The main effect of this sound is its pleasant monotony of rhythm and the complexity of effect of many different sources of tuned and semi-tuned percussion sounds⁵⁸. Secondly, in this bar the black-note pentatonic

nature of the upmost line and that of the lower voice on the right-hand stave suggests the East. The upper melody of the left-hand stave is also pentatonic, but here centred on B (23232, counting the intervals as multiples of semitones); so that the harmonic effect of the combination of two different pentatonic centres is part of the complexity. Thirdly are the parallel or near-parallel movements of bars 31 and 32. In both bars there are patterns created from the employment of intervals varying from the major seventh to the major second, with an effect of increasing tension as the concords of the first half of 31 become the discords of the second half and develop into the major seconds of 32 and the alternating ones created by the coincidence of the melodic line and the C^x. It is clear from these bars that in contrast to the rest of the piece Debussy is intent on allowing a small-scale pattern to form and transform; elsewhere the patterning is that of parallel chordal movement rather than contrapuntal design.

The counterpointed melodic motifs of bars 12-15 that appear in fragments later in the piece are perhaps the only relatively clear imagery in the piece - of temple-chanting, with their suggestions of modal and pentatonic scales. But they are confused by being heard together, and then dissolve into a passage derivable from the piece's opening motif. The piece has many such ambiguities - the juxtaposition of voices moving in crotchets, quavers and triplets in 29-30, with their different attacks (arpeggiated, staccato, marcato), the confusion of 12_8 and 6_4 time in 33-34, the syncopations of 18-19, the simultaneous duples and triples of 14-15 and 41. Thus ambiguities abound, as in Art Nouveau dream states.

The work is also ambiguous in its suggestions of vaguely sensuous states of feeling, for the effects of the various techniques discussed above are thus analyzable. The appoggiaturas of the lower motif of 12-15, for instance, have since become clichés of popular music in suggesting the East, but their use here in 1908 is more original and effective, (which

effectiveness helps account for their subsequent ubiquity). The dissonances of the piece's opening figure (5_4 parallel chords doubled at the octave) are at their soft level and with their blurred tonality quite mysterious in effect. The subtle use of repetition (the first two chords of the piece, the pre-echo of the first two chords of 7-9 in 6; the counterpointed motifs of 12-15; the immediate repetition of 20 in 21, and of these at a higher pitch in 23-24; these effects are all echoed later in the work. Above all, melodic motifs are merely repeated throughout the piece rather than developed; only the figuration shows any tendency towards development. Repetition like this is primarily suggestive of the suspension of time, but is also affective. The extreme subtleties of soft effects like those of the last fifteen bars (*pp lontan; più p; pp faites vibrer*; and the double-octave appoggiatura on the last note *ppp*) are, above all things, sensuous effect.

This is increased by the complex texture of interweaving strands of which the piece is composed: there is an effect of multiple voices, producing a sense of veiled, ambiguous sensuousness, particularly where the strands move through each other, as in 13-19 and 32-35, or drift through octaves (3-4, 10-11). The thick textures of chords (up to ten notes simultaneously) and their vague movement (only the rhythms of the opening motif and that of bar 13 giving subtle unity to the slow motion) maintain a dreaminess of mood that parallels the strangeness of passages where the voices or chordal strands are widely separated. This last device is partly achieved by the effect of having pedalpoints in the very low extremes of the bass while the other parts move high above. Parallel chords like the chromatically-moving ones of the opening bars, those moving in minor thirds like the *en animant* sequence (25-31), and those moving through wholetones in the closing bars (39-45) are strange in effect - part of the piece's overall mystery and emphasis on sensation.

- 1 There is a general account of the relationship between Symbolism and music in Epperson, G.: *The Musical Symbol: A Study of the Philosophic Theory of Music*, (Ames, Iowa University Press 1967), chapter 8, particularly 196-200; Hertz, D.: *The Tuning of the Word: the Musico-Literary Poetics of the Symbolist Movement*, (Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press 1987).
- 2 The piano work is not to be confused with the orchestral *Le poème de l'extase*, Op. 54 of 1905-08, although both are based on the same text. The whole poem appears as epigraph to the orchestral work, with a stanza from page 11 alone as epigraph to the piano work. See Brown, M.: *Skriabin and Russian "Mystic" Symbolism* (Nineteenth Century Music 1979), 43 for mention of the poem in the context of Skryabin's other literary works.
- 3 The position of Baudelaire and these poems is typically summarized by Pierre Brunel in Cassou, J.: op. cit., 171-74.
- 4 "All works on Symbolism, or practically all, devote a first chapter to him" - Cassou, J.: op. cit., 171.
- 5 Weber, H.: *Jugendstil und Musik in der Oper der Jahrhundertwende*, Musikforschung xxvii (1974), 171.
- 6 Weber, H.: *Alexander Zemlinsky, Österreichische Komponisten des 20 Jahrhunderts xxiii*, (Wien, Elisabeth Lafite 1977); idem: *Alexander Zemlinsky in Wien 1871-1911*, Musikforschung xxviii (1971), 77; Mahler, A.: *Alexander Zemlinsky's Prager Jahre*, Hudebni Veda ix (1972), 237.
- 7 Adorno, T.W.: *"Zemlinsky", Quasi una fantasia: musikalische Schriften ii* (Frankfort 1963), 155ff; Weber, H.: *Jugendstil und Musik in der Oper der Jahrhundertwende*, Musikforschung xxvii (1974), 171-74; Floros, C.: *Das esoterische Programm der Lyrischen Suite von Alban Berg; eine semantische Analyse*, Hamburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft i (1974), 10ff.
- 8 Weber, H.: *Alexander Zemlinsky*, 76.
- 9 Weber, H.: *"Figur und Grund"*, 181, 185.
- 10 Ibid, 183.
- 11 Ibid, 183, 185.
- 12 C.f. ibid, 184.
- 13 Dahlhaus, C.: *Musik und Jugendstil*, 80-87.
- 14 Weber, H.: *"Figur und Grund"*, 184.
- 15 Ibid, 184-5.
- 16 Hollander, H.: op. cit., particularly the "objektiv Kriterien" (p.8) of 44-46 and later pages.
- 17 Upon which the eponymous orchestral work (Op. 54, 1905-08) is also based. The piano work is Op. 53, 1907.
- 18 Self-published in 1906: see Schmidt, M.: *Komposition als Symbol. Überlegungen zu Skrjabins Fünfter Klaviersonate op. 53*, Musik-Konzept 36 (1984), 44-52; originally written in Russian, not French: see Bowers, F.: op. cit., 109, and for an English translation of the whole poem 131-35; a German version by Christoph von Gleich appears in von Gleich, C.C.: *Die sinfonischen Werke von Alexander Skrjabin*, (Bilthoven, Creighton 1963), 113ff.
- 19 But see also the listing of motifs from the sonata in Schmidt, M.: op. cit., 45-48, where eight are delineated.
- 20 Complete Sonatas (New York, Dover 1988; reprint of Muzyka edition of 1964), 89. The English translation is faithful to the Russian original (also given). The English and French versions given by the MCA Music edition of the complete sonatas, 1949, ed. Harold Shelby, 86, differ from this, with "timorous embryos" being rendered "sketchy outlines", and "secret yearnings" as "mysterious forces". The MCA English follows the French, and the Muzyka English the Russian. It seems clear that the reason the French differs from the Russian, as revealed in the

- divergences of the two English translations of them, is that the French translation of the Russian original seeks to produce idiomatic, literary French rather than a close transliteration. The inaccuracies this can lead to are patent. For this study "strivings" has been preferred to "yearnings" for *stremlenja*, as being closer in meaning and preserving the alliteration of the original, even if in less elegant English. (Faubion Bowers, op. cit., 134, renders it "longings", but otherwise is close to the Muzyka version.)
- 21 de Schloezer, B.: *Scriabin, Artist and Mystic*, transl. Slonimsky, N. from 1923 original, (Oxford, Oxford University Press 1987), 85.
 - 22 For recent discussion of Skryabin and Symbolism see Krzimoskaja, E.: *Skrjabin i russkij simvolizm*, Sovetskaja M2 (Feb. 1985), 82-86; Hoffmann-Erbrecht, L.: *Alexander Skrjabin und der Russische Symbolismus*, Music des Ostens VI (1971), 185-96; Mathew, R.E.: *Scriabin and Russian Symbolism*, Comparative Literature XXXI/1 (Winter 1987), 1-23; Eberlein, D.: *Russische Musikanschauung um 1900 von 9 russischen Komponisten*, (Regensburg, Gustav Bosse 1978); Baker, J.M.: op. cit.; Brown, M.: op. cit..
 - 23 de Schloezer, B.: op. cit., 191-290.
 - 24 Ibid, 69-70.
 - 25 Eberlein, D.: op. cit., 83.
 - 26 Idem, 84.
 - 27 Cassou, J.: op. cit., 7.
 - 27 But see the discussion over conflicting views on the interpretation of this sonata vis-a-vis its epigraph in Schmidt, M.: op. cit., 44, for instance those of Hanns Steger: *Der Weg der Klaviersonate bei Alexander Skrjabin*, (München, Grafeling 1979), 49ff who sees it as Expressionist, and Christoph von Gleich (op. cit, 118) who questions the connexions between music and poem. The whole question of the relationships between verbal elements and musical symbols in Skryabin has yet to be systematically addressed, but should not begin with the assumption that they are in a narrative setting.
 - 28 The comments of Michael Schmidt on this motif and those following are useful, although because of the difficulties in assigning musical imagery with symbols, different opinions can be equally valid - see Schmidt, M.: op. cit., 45ff.
 - 29 These tentative ascriptions of the various motifs should be compared with those Skryabin identified for his orchestral *Le poème del'exstase*; see de Schloezer, B.: op. cit., 81.
 - 30 de Schloezer, B.: op. cit., 300.
 - 31 Ibid, 17, 177.
 - 32 Stressed by Dietrich Mast, particularly that between gentle and forceful pairs: Mast, D.: *Struktur und Form bei Alexander N. Skrjabin*, in *Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft 1* (München-Gräfelfing, Wollenweber 1981).
 - 33 de Schloezer, B.: op. cit., 221-25.
 - 34 Brown, M.: op. cit., 43.
 - 35 Epigraph to Sonata 5, MCA edition, 1949.
 - 36 Eberlein, D.: op. cit., 84, 103.
 - 37 Sabaneiev, L.: *Prometheus von Skrjabin*, *Der Blaue Reiter*, (Munich, 1912); (Reprinted as "*Skriabin's Prometheus*", *The Blaue Reiter Almanac*, New Documentary Edition, ed. Klaus Lankeit, (New York, 1974).
 - 38 Dernova, B.: *Garmonia Skriabina*, (Leningrad, 1968); Guenther, J.: *Varvara Dernova's Garmonia Skryabina: a translation and a critical commentary*, Catholic University of America, 1979.
 - 39 Perle, G.: *Serial Composition and Atonality*, (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1972).
 - 40 Eberle, G.: *Zwischen Tonalität und Atonalität: Studien zur Harmonik Alexander Skrjabins*, (Munich 1978).
 - 41 Reise, J.: *Late Skriabin: Some Principles Behind the Style*, Nineteenth

- Century Music (1983), 220-231. See, however, Chapman, A.: *A Theory of Harmonic Structures for Non-Tonal Music* (Diss. Yale University, 1978), which emphasizes the importance of intervallic sets and structures.
- 42 For instance, the subsequently-published Baker, J.M.: op. cit., (1986).
- 43 The boundaries used by Reise for the mid-period are from the Fourth Sonata (1903) to the *Album Leaf* Op. 58, (1910): Idem, 221.
- 44 Idem, loc.cit.
- 45 Idem, 228.
- 46 Idem, 227.
- 47 Samson, J.: *Scriabin: The Evolution of a Method*, Soundings 4 (1974), 65.
- 48 Samson, J.: op.cit., particularly 70-71.
- 49 Bowers, F.: op. cit., 177-8, quoting V. Bobrovsky's Theory of Musical Dramaturgy.
- 50 See discussion of this point in Baker, J.M.: op. cit., vii; Reise, J.: op. cit., 220-221; and the attempts to link Skryabin's harmony with his mysticism like Brown, M.: op. cit., 42-51.
- 51 Schmidt, M.: op. cit., 51 (footnote 17).
- 52 See Brinkmann, R.: *Kette und Kreis. Hinweise zum Formdenken Skrjabins*, in Holleritsch, O. (ed.): *Alexander Skrjabin. Studien zur Wirkungsforschung* 13 (Graz, Universal 1986), 66-74.
- 53 Kelkel, M.: *Esoterik und formale Gestaltung in Skrjabins Spätwerken*, in Holleritsch, O.: op. cit., 22-49.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Good, E.M.: op. cit., 216.
- 56 From my own knowledge of Bechsteins of this era, derived from close study of many examples.
- 57 Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 112.
- 58 See Rösing, H.: *Debussy und der indonische Gamelan. Eine vergleichende Klangfarben-Analyse*, Hi-Fi Stereophonie VII/2 (Feb 1968), 127-34, for an analysis of actual recordings of gamelan music with the key sonograph.

CHAPTER 9

WORKS BASED ON OTHER MANNERED VERSE

There are some works based on verse whose affective stylization, fantasy, exoticism or symbolism is treated by the composers of this study as if it were of the Art Nouveau period. In this respect it is significant that some of the most central musical works of Art Nouveau are set to texts by Edgar Allan Poe, who died in 1849, but was popularized through Charles Baudelaire's influence. For instance, there are Josef Holbrooke: *The Raven*, *Ulalume*, *The Masque of the Red Death*, *The Bells*; Rakhmaninov: *The Bells*; Debussy: *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Devil in the Belfry* (neither completed)¹; Charles Griffes: *Vale of Dreams*, *Night Winds*. The wide range of literary sources and Art Nouveau subjects of one composer alone - Granville Bantock² - are illuminating in this respect: *The Pearl of Iran* (Bantock), *Eugene Aram* (Bulwer Lytton and Thomas Hood), *Lalla Rookh* (Thomas Moore), *Ballet of the Pots*, *Omar Khayyam* (Khayyam/Fitzgerald), *The Great God Pan* (Robert Browning), *The Pierrot of the Minute* (Ernest Dowson), *"The Cortège"*, *a Harlequinade* (H.R.Barber), *Salomé* (Oscar Wilde), *Fairy Gold* (Alwin Langdon Coburn), *Rameses II* (Bantock), *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* (James Elroy Flecker), *Choral Suite from the Chinese* (transl. Cranmer Byng), *Suite from Cathay* (Ezra Pound), *Snake Dance* (Egyptian), *Veil Dance*, *Dagger Dance* (Persian) - all from his early writing before 1920; the range of subjects is typically Art Nouveau, (and of course he also wrote in this period much that was of more conventional inspiration, as well as works flowing from the Celtic Revival). Bantock was clearly a composer whose creations were powerfully influenced by the literature of the fantastic and the exotic, and who reached outside his period for sources that harmonized with Art Nouveau. (However, the only pieces of Bantock available for this study - *A Marionette Show*, 1920 and *Arabian Nights*, 1920, although of undoubted Art Nouveau subject-matter, hardly stray outside the norms of character-pieces suitable for student use. That Art Nouveau had a wider range than that of

the musical *avant-garde* cannot be doubted, but outside this field it tended to be absorbed into the prevailing idiom as an extra source for stereotyped quotation.)

Much Symbolist poetry, perhaps the single most important source of inspiration for Art Nouveau composition, and which may be considered to flow from Charles Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal* of 1857, was written before 1880; the close links between Symbolism and Art Nouveau in music mean that the earlier Symbolist poets have been easily included with those contemporary with the composers. Baudelaire became fascinated by Edgar Allan Poe after 1851 and eventually translated all his works, so that the affective nature of Poe's repetitive and sound-centred verse had an important influence on Symbolism.

The two works to be discussed under this heading, both major ones in the repertory, are Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit*, based on three poems of the Gothic Revival by Aloysius Bertrand³ (1807-41), and Rakhmaninov's *Fantasia-tableaux I* for two pianos, based on romantic verse by Mikhail Yur'evich Lermontov (1814-41), Lord Byron (1788-1824), Fyodor Tiutchev (1803-73) and mystical verse by Alexei Stepanovich Khomiakov (1804-60).

The whole question of the attribution of Art Nouveau status to composers' use of such non-period verse has been raised by Frits Noske in his concern for the proper discussion of musical Art Nouveau⁴, his specific objection being that Leconte de Lisle's *La fille aux cheveux de lin*, used as an epigraphical title by Debussy in his *Préludes I/8*, is not only outside the period but is written by a Parnassian poet, whose ideals and poetic milieu are different from, although partly related to, Art Nouveau (see discussion of this connexion in Appendix A). It seems unhelpful, however, to allow this as a general objection, for the important thing is the way the verse is regarded and treated by the composer, however unhistorical this may be. Just as Art Nouveau painters found much of their inspiration outside the period - for instance in

Classical themes or Rococo motifs, so too did composers. That this was general Art Nouveau practice can be seen in the inspiration that painters found in literature from before their period, for instance, various artists' settings of folk-tales, of Hans Andersen and the brothers Grimm, of Greek, Eastern and mediaeval mythology, or, for just one artist - Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations of Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, of Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, Dante's *Francesca da Rimini*, Molière, Wagner's *Die Götterdämmerung*, *Tannhäuser*, various Greek tales, Jeanne d'Arc, Biblical subjects, Mallarmé's *L'après-midi d'un faune*, Verdi's *Falstaff*, besides the many illustrations of contemporary writers that he drew⁵. It was also common practice for composers to use such writers for their own purposes as, for instance, Debussy's settings of William Morris, Verlaine and Mallarmé in songs from *La Demoiselle élue* onwards, and his *Chansons de Bilitis* based on verse of his friend Pierre Louÿs that was supposed to be a translation of works written in ancient times. These are works written in the period that have been chosen by scholars like Kurt von Fischer, Theo Hirsbrunner and Arthur Wenk⁶ to illustrate musical Art Nouveau, so that the consensus is to allow that non-period verse could inspire Art Nouveau composition.

Maurice Ravel: *Gaspard de la nuit*

The three pieces that comprise this work are based on three of the prose poems by Aloysius Bertrand - *Ondine*, *Le gibet* and *Scarbo*, published as *Gaspard de la nuit* in 1842, the year after his death, by his friend Sainte-Beuve. They were described as *Fantasies à la manière de Rembrandt et de Callot*⁷, in whose works the emphasis on atmosphere through suggestion and shadow is most marked. Like the roughly contemporary Gothic fantasies of Edgar Allan Poe and the morbid dreams of Charles Baudelaire (whose *Le spleen de Paris* they influenced⁸), they form part of the inspiration for Decadence and Art Nouveau: it is significant that they were republished in *Mercure de France* in 1895 as verse relevant to the Art

Nouveau milieu⁹. Ravel admitted that Poe was very much in his mind as he composed the second movement - *Le gibet* - and in particular Poe's *The Raven*, with its repetitive "nevermore" that is like the ceaseless tolling of the ostinato pedalpoint¹⁰. He would also have known Paul Verlaine's *Nevermore* (from the *Melancholia* set in *Poèmes Saturniens*). Burnett James also speculates that Tennyson's *Rizpah*, with a half-crazed mother coming nightly to her hanged son's corpse, may have helped inspire Ravel, but offers no evidence¹¹; Tennyson's frequent use of mannerist device is, however, close to that of Art Nouveau (thus, partly, the importance of Tennyson to the Pre-Raphaelites)¹².

The overall title presumably refers to dreams and nightmares, because the *Gaspard* personification ("Gaspard" is slang for "rat"¹³) is by extension in this context a creature or spirit of the night and nightmare, and provocatively decadent like Baudelaire's *Les lesbiennes*¹⁴ or *Les fleurs du mal*. Rats also symbolize death, perhaps because of their association with plague. Burnett James goes further, seeing Gaspard as *Monsieur* himself: "Bertrand ... claimed the text of the poems had been handed to him one night by a stranger, 'Gaspard de la Nuit' - i.e. the Devil in person"¹⁵. And since Gaspard was one of the Three Wise Men or Magi, further possibilities of connotation are offered. Art Nouveau composers typically favour ambiguous titles, as will be shown throughout this study.

The three poems chosen by Ravel are respectively fantastic, ghastly and bizarre, with many symbolistic references¹⁶. They are also mannered, despite their prose-form, featuring repetition on several levels (of phoneme, word, phrase, internal structure, inter-poem resonances), besides rhythmic and elliptical devices that are deliberately affective¹⁷, echoing those of folk-ballads or nursery-rhymes: these "prose-poems" are really dramatic apostrophes to be voiced in a theatrical manner¹⁸.

Ondine

Undine was originally the name for the class of water-nymphs in the

cabbalistic system of Paracelsus; they possessed no soul but could acquire one by ensnaring a mortal and bearing a child to him. They are thus enticing creatures like mermaids and sirens, and Ondine's essential amorality is shown in her capriciousness - sulkiness, spitefulness, tears and laughter by turns in Bertrand's last stanza. Bertrand would almost certainly have gained some inspiration from Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's popular *Undine* of 1811 and its transformation into an opera by E.T.A.Hoffmann in 1813 (with libretto by Fouqué). Just after Bertrand's death it was again set by Albert Lortzing (1843), and closer to Ravel's time Dvorák's *Russalka* was produced in Prague in 1901, but it continued to be a subject for verse during all these years¹⁹. It is a central *topos* in Jugendstil, with the idea of the depths of water containing mystery, as can be seen in Heinrich Vogeler's *The Fisher and his Soul* of 1914, Fritz Endell's *The Wave* of 1900-1902, Gustav Klimt's *Fish Blood* of 1898, and an Alfred Roller illustration to a poem by Ernst Schur in *Ver Sacrum* no.20 of 1900²⁰.

Ondine is as beautiful and evanescent as the wave-spray she inhabits, but seeks to ensnare the mortal to his doom. This duality of beauty and evil is at the heart of the Art Nouveau conception of woman, which Ravel shows quite directly in the dual nature of the main melodic motif (bars 3-6) - the Ondine-theme. Firstly, it is ambiguous in modality as it is variously presented throughout the piece, being neither major nor minor, and hence mysterious and undefinable. Secondly, the manner in which the theme is presented is ambiguous, since for the first fifty bars all is simplicity and softness, yet suddenly gives way to the fortissimo surges of passion like those in bars 67-70 and 89. These passages are based on the descending scale-fragment derived from the closing notes of the melodic motif, and first elaborated from bar 53: these show that the Ondine-theme contains within it the seeds of a much deeper emotion than its early innocence might suggest.

The bitonality of *Ondine* furthers the implications of duality: from the third bar the left hand appears to be based in \underline{G}^\sharp (although finishing the long motif-statement in \underline{D}^\sharp) while the right is in \underline{C}^\sharp , where the movement finally rests in its last bar. Much of this bitonality is, like this, at an interval of a fourth, producing a strange effect, not only from the simultaneous use of two planes of pitch-set, but also from different tonalities - major, minor, modal or artificial pitch-set²¹. (The simplest example is that of the two final bars, where the right hand employs a symmetrical octatonic set on \underline{G}^\sharp while the left employs the \underline{C}^\sharp triad). The strangeness is analogous to the dream-states of Art Nouveau literature, where reality and fantasy can be superimposed.

If this piece were simple tone-painting without title, the accompanimental figures and even the melodic motifs might suggest the changing faces of the sea: the dual or complex nature of the music would still be obvious; with the title there can be little doubt that it is the nereid that is complex, and the sea's changeability a reflection of this. As corroborative details may be added the subtle ambiguities of rhythm in the accompanimental figure developed in the first sixteen bars, the complete blurring of any regularity of measure introduced by the frequent changes of time-signature (forty-three in the ninety-two bars), as well as the unbarred cadenzas beginning at bars 73 and 89, cross-rhythms between the hands (bars 53, 56, 76-79) and some uneven groups of notes in the accompanimental figuring in bars 18 and 20-24. The obvious sea-imagery (waves surging, spray, ripples, breakers) of the accompanimental figures, therefore, is subordinate to and illustrative of the Ondine-theme and its implications, as developed in the epigraphic poem.

A most important aspect of the piece is the accompanimental figuring, which often actually overwhelms the nominal melodic interest (melody is buried within figuration in bars 18, 20, 38, 40-41, 53-55, 67-69 and 71-85 and is overshadowed by the glissandi in 23 and 58-63) and at

the end dispenses with it (bars 90-92). Even when it is apparently subservient, as in bars 1-17, its subtlety of shimmering effect (caused by variations of rhythm and pitch) tends to fascinate more than the apparently simple melodic matter it accompanies, but in this shimmering it hints at the deceptive nature of the Ondine-motif. As noticed earlier in discussion of Novák's *Pan*, the temporary eclipses and re-emergences of melodic motif suggest the spirit of Ondine as immanent in the spray even if invisible.

The figuration throughout the movement is formed from the most soft and delicate filigree of trilled chords, broken chords, glissandi, acciaccaturas, runs and arpeggios that very sparingly expands into loud cadenza-like passages (at moments during 56-70, and in the extended bar 89). The movement can thus be said to be built on soft flourish, like the silver and white of the Amalienburg: Art Nouveau drew some of its inspiration from the Rococo. The importance of flourish here, however, is that there is no orthodox harmonic or formal development that it can add to: it itself is the main interest, like the page upon page of fantastic hyperbole that is the substance of Art Nouveau literature like Huysman's *A rebours*, Wilde's *Salomé*, Arno Holz' *Phantasmus* or Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson*.

The relationship of accompanimental figuration to melody is subtle. The tremolando figuration that begins the piece, for example, is related to but not formed from the melodic motif it accompanies: the figuration is formed around a major triad alternated with flattened sixth while the melody begins with a minor triad that is varied with a fourth. The bitonality of the two strands serves to emphasize the importance of the figuration in its own right rather than as mere accompaniment.

There are few, if any, direct analogies between the arts, but accompanimental figuration and pictorial arabesque of line-motifs in Art Nouveau are perhaps as close to each other as anything else, each

proceeding from the principle of repetition for affective purposes, and each by this effect suggesting the limitation of ordinary dimensionality, especially that of time, as in dream. The stylization of the figuration in Ondine is seen in the complex, asymmetrical pattern it forms:

Example 23:

Ravel: *Ondine* 1-2

The complete unit is that indicated by the brackets in [horizontal] line B, formed of the two unmatched parts shown in line A, so that the alternating G# and A notes that occur on each quaver beat help set the figure's ambiguous nature. This ambiguity is lessened by the fact that the G# as dominant is heard on each crotchet, but the bracketed lines D and E add a rhythmic ambiguity to counter this, for the absence of any emphases or phrasing other than that which covers the whole line mean that the passage can be played without especial emphasis, leaving open the effect of the asymmetrical double chords marked in line D, as well as the possibility of hearing the figures as triplets (indicated by the unevenly spaced brackets of line E). When in bar 5 the pattern changes there are more doubled chords, now heard symmetrically as obverse and reverse forms:

Example 24:

Ravel: *Ondine* 5-6

In bar 15 there is a new stylization of the same major triad with flattened sixth:

Example 25:

Ravel: *Ondine* 15-16

Other variations begin in bar 24 and in the downwards-moving figures of bar 58. Against all these chordal figures are placed ones based on arpeggios that all, like the chordal figures, have an element like the flattened sixth or fourth mentioned at the beginning to vary their triadic fabric. The figuration is throughout at least as important as the melody, which is repeated many times rather than developed, and only varied by the simple descending fragments of bars 67-68 that are seen in the treble of bar 73 to be stylizations of that fragment of the main melodic motif.

Stylization is also seen in the way melodic motif is developed in an arabesque manner. The *Ondine* melody, being an unusually long one for the repertory, provides a clear view of this process:

Example 26:

Ravel: *Ondine*, melodic motif 3-14

The melody is very repetitive, the chief factor in this being its asymmetrical, rocking wave-rhythm, with the rhythm of the last three quavers of bar 3 dominating until the end. Two units - **A** and **B** as bracketed in the example - and their subsidiary fragments comprise the majority of the melody. The **A**-fragment begins with a pause on a weak

beat, like that of a feminine-ending in a line of verse, and the effect is equally disarming. That there are longer pauses on the downbeat in the fourth and sixth bars creates ambiguity of effect.

As a whole the melody is both seen and felt (when heard) to be composed of repetitive fragments, both melodic and rhythmic. Art Nouveau's basic method of building textures is by the interweaving and patterning of discrete fragments into a complex whole, and the method is here seen as plainly as in pictures. In music the method is essentially opposite to that of conventional linear development where a longer melodic unit is broken into fragments that receive an ascending, dramatically-based treatment. Art Nouveau's "development" both of motif and texture is augmentational and repetitively static, not fragmenting and linearly dramatic.

The melodic movement of the first two notes moves down a major third from D[#] and at the end again moves downwards through a major third in bars 12 and 13 to close on D[#]. The harmonic pattern is to step down from the D[#] centre of bars 3-5 to that of B[#] in bars 6-8, to E[#] in bars 9-10, to C[#] in 11-12 and returning to D[#] in 13-14. The patterning of this can be seen as follows, using large letters for the major and small for minor:

Analysis 5:				
centre & mode	D [#]	B [#]	E [#]	C [#]
interval		5	4	5
direction of modulation		↓	↑	↓ ↑
Ravel: Ondine, melodic motif				

It will be apparent that major and minor modes form a pattern, and that the intervals (calculated from D[#] but using the elements of the C[#] key signature) follow this symmetry, as does that of the direction of modulation to each new centre. Arabesque patterning is therefore seen in the repetitive symmetries of the parts of this *mélodie*.

The repetitiveness of the whole twelve-bar structure is obvious to both ear and eye, with bars 4, 6, 9 and 10 echoing 3, and with 13 echoing 12. Each of its repetitions through the piece tends to show

slight modifications to fit it to the different accompanying contexts (for example, bars 17, 23 and 27 in the first repetition); the effect of this is to show different aspects of the motif, but throughout the movement the ear feels that it is basically the same *mélodie* that is being repeated. There is thus repetition of the whole motif to match that of its parts. Such balancing of inequalities, or asymmetry, is again an Art Nouveau character: where in orthodox aesthetics the aim is for a symmetry of design, in Art Nouveau the emphasis is on a repetitiveness of unit, whether melodic or figural, that achieves an asymmetry that fascinates the senses rather than conforms to orthodox canons of proportion. (Roy Howat's work on Golden Section proportion in Debussy and others supports this, since it shows, if true, that some composers deliberately set themselves towards asymmetry).²²

A different type of asymmetry can be noticed. The movement's extreme quietness for all but a few bars mean that its continual emphasis on the interval of a ninth in chordal structures on the first beat of bars (17, 18, 21, 24-26 [left hand], 27, 29, 30 *et passim*) is piquant and delicate in effect. But in the few loud moments noticed earlier the effect is extreme: the emphasized ninths of the fortissimo bars 67-72 and the bitonal arpeggios of the final cadenza are amongst the most discordant effects in the Art Nouveau keyboard repertory. Since they echo the repetitive soft discordances based on the ninth the idea of Ondine's immanence is again suggested, but more importantly the few extreme loud discords (of which the ninth is merely the most prominent) suggest the essential wildness and non-humanness of this water-sprite.

The rocking-motions of the first melodic motif and its figuration, discussed earlier, show sensuality in their affective repetition of rhythmic pattern, and such patterns of figuration dominate the movement, setting up a texture of complex and intricately woven movement of line that furthers this basic sensuality. There are two elements that contrast

with this - the apparent simplicity of the melodic motif (it could be argued that there is a second, but it is only a scrap of descending scale derived from the first, hinted at in 53 and 56, and fully in 67-70) and the bareness of the recitative of 85-88. The contrast of texture in this latter case could not be greater - from profusion of figuration to a single line of slow melody. Since it is the closing bars of the melodic motif that comprise the recitative there is a strong suggestion of the apparent innocence of this Art Nouveau maiden-sprite on the one hand, immediately followed by a statement of her capricious anger in the *rapide et brillant* cadenza on the other. The movement's textures, therefore, suggest sensuality both behind Ondine's "innocence" and her caprice.

Ondine's form shows another parallel with Art Nouveau generally - its obsessiveness, treating one theme beyond the normal canons of proportion to produce an effect of surfeit, another aspect of sensuality. While there is frequent variation of figurative texture there is none of melody, even though the movement is of some length (ninety-one bars of slow tempo, mostly $\frac{4}{4}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$) and complexity. At a superficial glance it is something like a theme and variations - a form that might be considered for its Art Nouveau possibilities in such Third Order works as the sets by Alban Berg and Fauré). A closer examination reveals that it is more complex than this, that it is in fact a form that in the period is peculiar to Art Nouveau, where the motif is obsessively repeated over a variety of interweaving contexts that bring out different aspects of its nature. In a theme and variations form the motif is itself transformed along with the contexts of the different variations; in the Art Nouveau narcissistic model the motif is repeated largely unchanged through a series of transformed contexts. Ravel's *Bolero* is the extreme of the type in the era, but *Ondine* and *Le gibet* in their different ways are of the same genre.

Most of the movement takes place over pedalpoints, from the opening

chordal figurations that constitute an inverted pedal of separate tonality from the melody, to the climactic $\underline{E^b}$ pedal of the cadenza in the extended bar 89 and the final arpeggios over $\underline{C^\#}$. In addition to these the pattern of most of the remaining bars is for each to tend to set a bass note that is held for the whole bar. Such a concentrated use of pedals limits normal harmonic development, as has already been noticed, so that the movement's harmonic dimensions are foreshortened, as Art Nouveau paintings forego depth. Paradoxically, however, it is the comparative absence of harmonic excursions, resolutions and modulations that allows the endless subtleties of figuration and repetition, together with strange devices like bitonalities and stress on major and minor ninths, to have their effects magnified.

Le gibet

Bertrand's *Le gibet* is again ambiguous and full of mysterious suggestion, at least until the sixth stanza where the chilling sound that has been variously considered as wind, the sigh of a dead soul, a cricket, a fly, a cockchafer (vide Dehmel's poem discussed above), or a spider, is at last identified as the knell for a hanged corpse at the walls of a city over the horizon. In the context of the unwholesome and phobic imagery of dead souls, insects and the spider the passage *aux murs d'une ville sous l'horizon* can only suggest an imaginary city of nightmare or fears, past the horizon of reality, and it is the ghastliness of this mystery that is played upon in the music.

This is an entire piece of fifty-two very slow bars constructed around a single, unchanging pedalpoint, reminiscent of a dirge's constant returning to one note, by which the hearer is forced to keep returning to its theme of the inevitability of mortality. *Le gibet's* unceasing ostinato tolling on $\underline{B^b}$ is a pedal around which the whole piece revolves, an extreme example of the importance of this device in keyboard Art Nouveau, almost as hypnotic but, because of its shifting emphases of

intonation, more subliminal in its effect than the insistent rhythmic ostinato of Ravel's even more repetitive *Bolero*. Ravel avoids total monotony and predictability by subtly varying the soft attack of the consecutive B^b octaves, but the cumulative force of this quiet note-pair (never more than *piano*) binds the whole movement to its limited plane of tonality. The deliberate simplicity and monotony of the ostinato has complex ramifications, first setting the one pitch-basis in the centre of the keyboard, around or through which every other strand must move, secondly providing a pulse whose slow rhythmic pattern, based on quavers, can merge and reappear among the quaver movement of the other strands, and thirdly its being pitched as the dominant to the E^b strand of parallel chords that begin and end the movement. This last effect - bitonality, with one tonal basis fixed while the other moves around a series of half-related temporary bases - is a striking parallel with Art Nouveau's mixing of dream and real worlds. To complicate things further, subsidiary pedals are introduced on notes that increasingly become remote from that of the ostinato: E^b in 17-19, A^b in 20-21, G in 23-24, C[#] in 26-27 and the long C in 34-39. It is as if from the fixed fact of one's eventual death one moves increasingly towards surreal imaginings of the mysterious planes of after-death experience, with the unpleasant associations of crawling and buzzing insects and spiders suggested in the accompanying poem to chill the heart. Through all this the unceasing pulse and tone of the ostinato induces a tendency towards a mesmeric state where one is more responsive to suggestion and association.

There are other forms of repetition that complement that of the ostinato. The main motif-fragment of five notes (bars 3-4/first beat) is immediately repeated, setting a general pattern for its later transformations and derivations. Since all these are obviously connected to this motif the movement is centred entirely around it and the ostinato, so that the ear never leaves either, not even during the brief melodic

phase of 28-34, because it so closely relates to the original motif-fragment. All this repetition - motion without progress - is that of the timeless state of dream or nightmare.

The continual use of parallel chords throughout the movement is, at the levels of quietness throughout (*sourdine* durant toute la pièce), mysterious in effect. At the beginning the parallels are in fifths and major ninths, with minor thirds entering in bar 10, to be followed by full chords (based around 7^b). With interweaving strands of more complex chromatic discords from bar 20, all at *ppp* level, the parallel chords of each strand enhance the initial mystery, and do so only because the sound level is so quiet; at louder levels the effect would be harsh, where here it makes for uneasiness. This is particularly so in the final descent towards the concluding restatement of the opening figures, a descent that does not end in full harmonic resolution, leaving the ending as bare as the beginning.

Example 27:

The musical score for Example 27 consists of two systems. The first system, labeled '43', spans from bar 43 to bar 46. It features a complex texture with multiple strands of music, including parallel chords and chromatic discords. Dynamics include *ppp*, *mp*, and *p*. The second system, labeled '46', spans from bar 46 to bar 48. It continues the complex texture with similar parallel chords and chromatic discords. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*. The score is in 3/4 time and features a variety of rhythmic values and articulations.

Ravel: *Le gibet*, 43-48

Perhaps the most chilling moment of the whole movement is the first beat of bar 47, a French sixth on the leading-note whose third note D is taken out of its position and sounded above the other notes before it falls to

the tonic as part of the series of melodic note-pairs beginning in 45.

In this movement there is a reversal of what is normally to be understood as melodic and accompanimental elements, for except in the brief melodic solo passage of bars 28-34 all the melodic element moves in parallel or quasi-parallel chords, while the ostinato accompaniment remains throughout as a bare octave. Except for the many bitonalities between the two elements, therefore, all harmonic interest is in the "melodic" element. Yet as in *Ondine* it is the accompanimental factor that dominates, but where in *Ondine* the melodic motifs are deceptively simple, here in *Le gibet* it is the accompanimental one that, being an apparently simple pedalpoint, grows from the plainest of devices into a powerful constant that controls and constrains all the excursions of the other musical strands. Often it runs counter to the pitch-basis of the melodic element, as in bar 29, where, as Theo Hirsbrunner points out²³, a mode of limited transposition is set up, based on A as against the ostinato's B^b. No sooner is A established than it is contradicted by B^b, so that it is seen not only as a tonality in its own right but as a leading-note to the dominant tonality of the ostinato. Although both melodic and accompanimental elements are based on ostinato repetitions and have their own obsessive qualities, it is the unchanging, simple and often apparently obscured B^b ostinato that dominates the whole.

Repetition predisposes the hearer towards the suggestibility of a mesmeric or hypnotic state, as in poetic narrative or the casting of spells, but where this becomes obsessive a sensual rhythm or pattern of notes is established. Together with the unearthly suggestions of crawling and buzzing insects and spiders, howling cold night wind and the corpse reddening the setting sun there is created a morbid sensuality paralleling that of *A rebours*, *Salomé* and Aubrey Beardsley's more macabre drawings.

Scarbo

Scarbo is a fanciful dwarf-like creature who "has grown up between the moon and me" with a buzzing laugh and dances "pirouetting...like the distaff on a spindle" from nowhere, only to fade like the transparent blue of a candle-flame and vanish. *Scarbo* is a dwarf-creature out of nightmares (as hinted in the extract from E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Contes nocturnes* that prefaces the poem in Ravel's epigraph)²⁴. The grotesquerie of his being and antics is different from the seductiveness of *Ondine*, but like her, there is an overtone of mystery and concealed menace behind the facade of show - in this case of fantastical jest. These twin themes of grotesquerie and mysterious menace are reflected in the different types of duality seen in the music.

The most obvious of these is the sharp contrasting of the murmuring undertones of the different accompanimental figures and the bursts of frenetic activity that punctuate them. The piece is full of surprises, of sudden stops and starts, jumps between pianissimo and fortissimo, and rushes up and down the keyboard. Each section of the introduction (bars 1-31) is followed by a complete pause as a contrast to the restless activity of repeated notes or accelerating rush upwards that precedes it: there is a sense of tension exploding into the final rush up the keyboard before the piece proper begins. This tension between the extremes of pausing and sudden rushes continues throughout much of the piece, and together with the discords (seconds, especially bars 447-475, strange chords and juxtapositions in the sequence beginning at bar 121, the violent discords of the final climax from 555-578) and emphasis on the angularity of fourths and fifths is clearly jesting - but jesting that is more tinged with the cruel or supernatural than with mere humour. The use of octatonic sets for such passages as 121ff and 429 naturally provides a foundation of non-diatonic sounds that adds to the strangeness of effect.

The slower, *ppp* passage from bars 429 to 446 is, like the

introductory section already mentioned (bars 1-31), mood-evoking, and is the one part of the movement where the frenetic, sudden jesting subsides temporarily. The accompanimental figure initiated at bar 429 is highly chromatic and develops into the complex discordant trills of bars 444 and 438. This chromatic passage is full of mystery and contrasts with the starker discords of the *fortissimo* surge before it (bars 353-377) and the consecutive seconds following. The final bars, closing the piece after the *fortissimo* of bars 562 to 582, is also mood-evoking, with broken diminished chords over an F^\sharp pedal moving into a vanishing series of *ppp* trills over a B pedal, and ending with an unfinished arpeggio that creates a sense of fantasy or dream; the mystery, therefore, is both behind the grotesquerie and in the short mood-evoking sections where this temporarily subsides.

Pedalpoints are an integral part of the structure of this movement, from the very quiet tremolo of bars 2-14 to the simple low B of bars 614-626, and take many forms - chordal trills, single trills, elaborated trills (477-507), repeated arpeggios over the same bass note, implied pedals (94-119, 228-234), inverted pedals, double pedals, often clashing (121-167), pedals delineated only with grace-notes (256-62, 263-67), and those with simple running figures only (429ff). These devices veil with flourish the limited dimensionality of the piece, for it tends to jump from one tonic to another, as it were, instead of modulating: wherever the music happens to be sounding is the tonic centre for that moment, however brief - another instance in the repertoire of harmonic character that is more existential than relational. However, there is no atonality implied by this, for in the first two pages of the movement proper (32-109), a section that is in this respect typical of the whole, the various pedal-tonics jump about within the confines of a modal half-octave: $G^\sharp, B, C^\sharp, D^\sharp$. With the double pedals from bar 121 this pattern is upset because the pedals are unrelated - a semitone apart in bars 121-155 and a major third

in 156-157 - but in general there can be said to be a quasi-modal basis that embraces most of the other pedals. Despite all the variety of pedals and pedal-figurations this modal base can be sensed by the ear, but it is experienced as a sonic landscape without normal depth, as it were - the world of dream.

The ambiguity of tonality that the modal base produces is a typical Art Nouveau effect. The pedalpoint at the beginning of the soft mid-section (bar 429) is made vague and wavering by the filigree chromatic movement around its mediant (like that in Debussy's *Pour remercier la pluie au matin* [*Six épigraphes antiques*/6] - see Chapter 16): it is not clear whether the modality is major or minor, and with the complex trills and chromatic major thirds following, and the sweep of movement to the F# at the beginning of bar 440, not even the melodic motif can hold tonality together convincingly. Later in this mid-section a waving progression of chromatically-moving parallel broken chords (with the right-hand element combining to make in effect a series of ${}^9_8{}^5_3$ parallels) produces, at its *ppp* beginning (bar 447), an eerie effect because of its blurring of tonality; the chromatic waving of the melodic major seconds seems to oppose the D pedalpoint, leaving it suspended by itself in sonic dimensionlessness. Here the pedalpoint seems to emphasize relativity, not definiteness, of tonal bearings in this ambiguous sonic world.

Just as *Ondine* is constructed around extravagant flourish and *Le gibet* around unceasing ostinato so this movement is based on the principle of excess - of a driving figurational motion that hardly ever relaxes, even in the one contrasting section of 429-475 where there are whispering effects that like *Ondine* are at the limits of quietness. Extremes like this reflect the basic asymmetry of Art Nouveau's aesthetic, where normal canons of proportion are transformed by the maximizing of sensuality through stylization of affective device. And a final indication of this is seen in Ravel's expressed wish²⁵ to write a work that would outdo in

virtuosity Balakirev's *Islamey* - itself an extravagant intention and thus very much in the spirit of Art Nouveau.

Sergei Rakhmaninov: *Fantasia-tableaux 1* for two pianos op.5

"Tableaux" is ambiguous, meaning on the one hand "picture" (or scene, painting, description and the like) and on the other "tableau" or stylized representation. It is relevant here to look at Rakhmaninov's other works for clues. His titles fall into four groups: firstly, abstract titles (*Prélude, Étude, Sonate*); secondly, titles and terms specifically national (*Knyaz' Rostislav* (Prince Rostislav), *Aleko*); thirdly, early characteristic-piece titles (opp.3,10 & 11); and fourthly, others. Considering the last group alone, there are the orchestral works *The Rock* (1893, after Chekhov's *On the Road* and/or Lermontov's *The Crag*²⁶) *Kolokola* (The Bells) (1910, after Poe), *Ostrov myortvikh* (The Isle of the Dead) (1907, after Arnold Böcklin's painting²⁷), the planned *Monna Vanna* after Maeterlinck, plus the evidence of his many songs, which include settings of Konstantin Bal'mont, the translator of *The Bells* and an important Symbolist, as well as other Symbolists like Dimitriy Merezhkovski, Valery Bryusov, Fyodor Sologub and Alexander Blok: amongst these orchestral and song works there is much Art Nouveau inspiration. The evidence of the early characteristic pieces is that most of them are titles more compatible with Art Nouveau than with impressionism:

1892 Op.3: *Elegie, Prélude, Mélodie, Polichinelle, Sérénade*

1894 Op.10: *Nocturne, Valse, Barcarolle, Mélodie, Humoreske, Romance, Mazurka*

1894 Op.11: *Barcarolle, Scherzo, Russian Song, Valse, Romance, "Slava"*

These titles do not contain any scene-painting opportunities like those in contemporary characteristic pieces about woodlands, mountains or streams. As it is, at least two of them (the two barcarolles, with *Polichinelle* another possibility) show definite musical Art Nouveau features, as will be argued in later chapters. *Polichinelle*, as Punch from the puppetry of

the *balagany* or booth-theatre at fairs, is arguably well within the Art Nouveau sphere, and barcarolles even more so if they are more than conventional character-pieces in musical style. From this surveying of Rakhmaninov's titles it may well be thought more probable that *tableau* means "tableau - a symbolic show or scene" than "picture or painting", with its more impressionist associations. Against this is the general view held by his biographers (without offering supporting evidence) that Rakhmaninov generally had a picture in mind as initial inspiration for a work (while not using it as detailed programme), although concealing this from others²⁸. This quest for programme or picture, one of the preoccupations of the day encouraged by critics, but obviously abhorred by Rakhmaninov, remains strong still.

The poetic quotations heading each of the *Fantasie -tableaux* are from Mikhail Lermontov, Lord Byron, Fyodor Tiutchev and Aleksei Khomiakov. Lermontov and Byron are Romantic-era poets, Tiutchev a nationalist from a later generation, and Khomiakov a leading Christian Symbolist with an ecstatic mystical approach: in Russia around the mid-nineteenth century he was a leading figure in a movement that rivalled the non-Christian Symbolists led by Vladimir Soloviev, so that his poem definitely suggests a Symbolist interpretation. (Dorothee Eberlein argues that Rakhmaninov was alive to and influenced by Symbolism, which he acquired through his contact with the Beljaev circle.²⁹) All the quotations are typical of Art Nouveau composers' practice of using the works of poets of an earlier age for their own purposes.

The first piece, *Barkarolla* (Barcarolle), rests on an extract from Lermontov, which is a typical invocation of the gondola and barcarolle in the evening, but it contains, besides imagery of water and movement (oars, sliding, flying) a hint at the complexity behind the serenade - that it is both melancholy and cheerful, seen in the thought that passion is sad in that it can never be the same again, and happy in that its bliss could

never be the same twice:

Cool evening waves
 scarcely murmur beneath oars of gondola...

 Once more the song! Again the guitar sounds!

 Far away now sad, now gay
 Sounds out the familiar barcarolle:
 "Gondola over water slides
 And time over love flies;
 But like waves
 Passion can never again be renewed!"

Rakhmaninov takes it almost as an invocation of the *Insel* - an escape from cares into a dream twilight world; there is also an escape from experiential time into that of *Tristan und Isolde's* "ew'ge Nacht" .

While the dotted rhythms of the melodic motifs show imagery like rocking-motion of waves and gondola, the most notable feature of the music is the ceaseless repetition in the accompanimental figuration that is found in both piano parts, beyond what would be needed for an impressionistic sketch - which would suggest rather than overwhelm with repetition of detail. There are whole pages devoted to repetition of the first two accompanimental figures (Piano I, bars 1 and 38), there is the six-note contrary-motion triplet-figure in both pianos that is carried on without a break from bar 68-75, and throughout the two hundred and fifty-one bars every accompanimental motif is repeated at least once each time it appears. Emphasis on accompanimental figuration is in itself a mannerist feature, and so much repetition in this figuration is the closest possible musical counterpart of visual repetition and patterning of curved line in Art Nouveau, seen in such pictures as those Alphonse Mucha's maidens or Peter Behrens' *Der Kuss* where the complex swirls of clothing, leaves, flowers, vines or hair assume at least as much importance as the subjects themselves: patterning of incidental background overtakes composition of figure. In both painting and music the repetition is deliberately affective, going beyond normal canons of proportion, and being more much tightly stylized and controlled than the

excesses of later nineteenth century decorative work, seen from the 1851 Great Exhibition onwards.

The whole question of the place of repetition in these keyboard works of Rakhmaninov has been misunderstood because it has not been seen as Art Nouveau figuration. For instance, Rimsky-Korsakov suggested modification of the last piece, in which repetition is the most developed³⁰; Geoffrey Norris, an important biographer, shows his puzzlement: "Rakhmaninov relies far too heavily on repetition of the same melody [movement 1]"; "the bell-like figuration does occur throughout the piece [movement 4] with wearying monotony". Judgements like these are valid only from the standpoint of musical works of conventionally balanced design, and miss the essential point of Art Nouveau's emphasis on extreme effect for its own sake. Rakhmaninov's repetition is deliberately affective, giving the music a hypnotic quality that is appropriate to the dreaming nature of the poems, and achieving the same result as all the mesmerizing detail of a Mucha poster or a Beardsley drawing. This patterned repetition has the subliminal effect of inducing a meditative or dreaming state of consciousness in the hearer, and since Art Nouveau is heavily symbolical the unconscious is made receptive to its suggestions.

Example 28:

176

179

Rakhmaninov: Barkarolla, 176-79

As an example a single line cannot give adequate illustration of the intensity and variety of repetitive figure in this first piece, but bars 176-79 can show some aspects. Piano 2 begins the main melodic motif with its octaves after the third beat of 178, and it will be seen that even the melody is deliberately monotonous, returning as it does to $\underline{B^b}$ in this first phrase. Meanwhile Piano 1 maintains its filigree of semiquavers that are patterned so as to suggest hemiola in a ambiguous manner typical of Art Nouveau. This is actually one of the simpler of the several accompanimental figures of the movement, but by its almost incessant rapid movement it tends to dominate the slow melodic line and reverse the usual roles of melody and accompaniment - another aspect of asymmetry of effect.

The second piece, *I noch, I lyubov* (*La nuit... l'amour*), is prefaced by a translation of Byron:

*It is the hour when from the boughs
The nightingale's high note is heard;
It is the hour when lover's vows
Seem sweet in every whispered word;
And gentle winds, and waters near,
Make music to the lovely ear.³¹*

and this continues the dream-atmosphere of the barcarolle. Art Nouveau takes these Romantic evocations and exaggerates them to create a mood as if the lovers in the wood are entranced, as is seen by the almost ceaseless repetition of the accompanimental arpeggio figure, as well as that of the \underline{C} in Piano II in bars 19-20, continuing with other nightingale-call notes to bar 36, that with the arpeggios suggests the evocation of a spell:

Example 29:

Rakhmaninov: *I noch, I liubov*, 88-89

The two triplet figures of the accompaniment (the arpeggio-figure of Piano

2, and the triplet-figures on a duplet basis of Piano 1) are present throughout almost the whole piece, and as well as the nightingale-notes illustrated here, the melody itself features much repetition (for example bars 19-30, 33-35, 56 ff). The rhythmic complications of the duple and triple rhythms in the illustration above mean that the total effect is more subtle than the plainness of the harmonies might suggest.

Rakhmaninov's harmonic resources are not in this early set as wide as they become later in the second and third concertos, but he greatly emphasizes the mild but important discords he does employ, like the sharpened fifth of the arpeggios shown above, or the $V^{6b}_{3\#}$ chord in the minor key of the first piece.

Byron's verse is mildly affective, but Rakhmaninov has magnified this factor into Art Nouveau evocation of mysterious mood: the normal repetition of a Romantic poem - "It is the hour when", "**And** gentle winds, **and** waters near" - in Art Nouveau becomes a device for exploitation to the point of ostinato both in melody and accompanying figuration. The same effect will be noticed later in John Ireland's *The Island Spell*, whose repetition of accompanimental figure is as obsessive as Rakhmaninov's. Both composers are clearly aiming for an extreme of mesmeric effect, as will be shown.

Other features of the music are the beginning in broken chords over the pedal $F^\#$, setting a mood of dreaming from the outset, and the use of repeated notes in the climax at bars 42-51, carrying through to the melodic line something of the affectiveness of the accompaniment. The fact that the nightingale-call notes hover around C and $F^\#$ means that they act as inverted pedals, arresting normal harmonic progression and paralleling the limited dimensionality of the lovers' dream world.

The verse of the third piece, *Slezi (Tears)*, by Tiutchev, is definitely affective rather than cogent:

*Human tears, O human tears!
Flowing out early and late again and again,*

*Flowing unknown, flowing invisible,
Inexhaustible, undrainable, -
Flowing as glistening streaming rain,
In unfeeling autumn, again and again through
night after night...³²*

Tiutchev's verse is obviously repetitive, as is grief itself, and contains many sibilants that help produce an onomatopoeic effect (*slezi, lyudskiya, letes, bezvistniya, nezremiya, elyutsya, strooe, dozhdeviya, osen*) - an effect important to much Art Nouveau verse, as seen, for instance, in Rilke and Hopkins. Particularly noticeable is the effect of partial consonance in the only two words of line four - *nistoshchemiya, nischelmiya*. All these techniques help create an effect of continuous flow of the tears, of their constantly welling repetition: it is the very exaggeration of technique of this sort of verse (like that of Poe that Rakhmaninov set in *The Bells*³³) that caused him to write the highly repetitive music that mirrored it. Tiutchev repeats *lyudskija* (human) in the first line, begins the second, third and fifth lines with *letes* (flowing), and repeats it in the third: this is repetition and alliteration that is emotive rather than rational in effect. The piece rests on its indefinite constructions - adjectival ("inexhaustible, undrainable", "glistening streaming rain"), participial ("flowing out", "flowing unknown, flowing invisible"), prepositional ("again and again, night after night", "In unfeeling [literally "deaf"] autumn") and exclamations (line 1); these and the frequent use of stopping (in the middle of lines 1,3,4,6 and at the end of each line) suggest timelessness and continuously renewed motion, (as is supported by what is known of the poem's origins_).

All this is reflected in the music's repetition (it begins with eleven immediate repetitions of the opening motif and ends with six of the penultimate one; in between, every single figure is stated repeatedly to the point of ostinato, even bass minims being constantly repeated as in bars 20-22). But it is repetition of the downwards-moving initial motif of four quavers that dominates this piece, for scarcely a bar is without

it or its close variant (bar 18, accented in Piano II), even though it is often accompanied by streams of triplet-figuration. Most of this repetition is of the actual original notes of $\underline{B^b}$ \underline{A} , \underline{G} , $\underline{E^b}$, so that when a change is made there is a distinct change in aspect, even though the overall mood is the same.

Example 30:

Rakhmaninov: *Letes*, 24

Here the ostinato is unchanged except for its pitch, and its having been put into a different harmonic context - one based on the dominant, but with alternations to the flattened supertonic. The accents over the Piano 1 semiquavers indicate that they are to be as evenly accented as possible, so that the Piano 2 syncopated ostinato, being rhythmically offset, can throw into doubt the actual beat as defined by the bass. This is only one of the many subtle variations that are constantly occurring. While the ostinato (which is in effect an embellished pedalpoint) defines the flat plane of the piece's musical realm, there is over this surface a perpetual arabesque that undergoes gradual transformations and is as important as the ostinato in causing a hypnotic effect.

In passing it can be noted that the suite as a whole becomes less melodic and more accompanimental-figurative as it progresses. The ostinato in this piece is the only melody, and its only variation its gradual downwards steps through the scale-notes to form a quasi-melodic sequence.

The connexion between this piece and the sound of bells should be mentioned. According to Sergei Bertensson and Jay Leyda "Tears was

inspired by the bells of St Sofiya's Cathedral, Novgorod, which the composer had heard as a young boy with Grandmother Butakova: in his own words 'Four silvery sweeping notes, veiled in an ever-changing accompaniment woven around them'"³⁴. Although the Rakhmaninov words do not actually mention bells the statement is presumably to be connected with the St Sofiya experience, so that the important Art Nouveau symbols of water and bells³⁵ would be thus connected.

The fourth piece - *Svetlie prazdnek (Paques)* - is prefaced by a quotation from Khomiakov's *Svetlie prazdnek (Holy Festival, that is, Easter)*:

*And strong pealing descending to earth,
And with airy weight (clarity) humming in ears,
Melodious silvery thunder
Announcing the message of solemn celebration...³⁶*

Words like *zvon* (pealing), *gchdya* (humming), *serebrjanie* (silvery) and *gromi* (thunder) are onomatopoeic, and the repeated x/x or x/xx rhythmic units (*E moshnii zvon, promchalsja, nadzemleja, E vozdyhe, ves gchdja*) together with the feminine line-endings (*nadzemleyu, zatrepetaly, gromi, torzhestva*) suggest the pulsing and echoing of the bells' pealing. Again the feeling of timelessness is accentuated by the lack of definite constructions.

These features are reflected in the music. To begin with, this piece is far more repetitive than even the other three pieces, with the opening motif or very close variants being repeated incessantly throughout the piece to within four bars of the close, while the accompanying figuration is merely chordal, so that there is in effect no melodic line or normal development, but just the sort of repetition heard when a change of bells is being rung through.

In the example below the ostinato-unit is indicated by the brackets, with the typical harmonic ostinato accompanying it being seen in the left hand of Piano 1 and the rhythmically unvaried chords of Piano 2.

Example 31:

The musical score for Example 31 consists of two systems of piano music. The first system begins at measure 5 and the second at measure 17. The music is written for piano and violin. The piano part features a dense, repetitive accompaniment with a Phrygian mode, while the violin part has a more melodic line. The score includes various musical notations such as clefs, key signatures, and dynamic markings.

Rakhmaninov: *Svetlie prazdnik*, 15

In fairness it should be noted that there is a constantly changing pattern of repetitions throughout the piece in the piano that does not have the main ostinato, but the notes of the ostinato change little and its rhythmic obsessiveness not at all.

Nor does the ostinato progress through diatonic steps to form a quasi-melodic line as in the third piece; its monotony is deliberately and disturbingly affective. Of all the pieces this is therefore the most obsessively hypnotic, particularly as for all its length it is very loud (*ff*, *sfz*, *fff*). It is also very limited in harmonic variation, with pedalpoint effects throughout in addition to that of the ostinato - sometimes alternating ones (bars 11 *ff*), and for much of the time based on the supertonic, which produces a continuously unsettled effect, partly through its quasi-modality (Phrygian), and partly coming as it does after three diatonic pieces.

Throughout the suite two features sharply differentiate this music from that of the mainstream. First there is the marked attenuation of the role of melody, with the "accompaniment" being the centre of attention. *Barkarolla* preserves something like a simple melody and accompaniment relationship, but even here the richness of figuration in

the accompaniment tends to take precedence, particularly from bar 62. The other three pieces in the suite are virtually completely based on figuration, with melodic line in the second consisting only of stylized bird-calls blended into the figuration, except for the episode of bars 37-51 where there is a two-bar fragment of quasi-melodic line repeated but not completed. The third and fourth replace melodic motif completely with half-bar ostinatos - clear examples of the general Art Nouveau tendency to extremes.

Secondly and most importantly there is the overall effect of the obsessive repetition. The suite is in effect a series of figurational patternings, of intricate complexity and elaboration, so repeated and echoed that it is sensual effect that is uppermost. Ostinato here produces a mesmeric effect that heightens sensuality, the nearest comparison in the repertory being Liszt's *Csárdás obstiné*. Above all, the music is extreme in its methods and effects, and although harmonically not as coloured as later Rakhmaninov is a singular instance of asymmetrical aesthetic design, whose roots can be discerned in the affective nature of the texts to which it is set. The suite's concentration on stylized patterning reflects that of much visual Art Nouveau, including that of the Russians Ivan Yakovlevich Bilibin, Léon Bakst, Carl Fabergé, Natalia Goncharovna, and architects using repetitive patterned decoration like Feodor Shektel.

End-notes

- ¹ Lockspeiser, E.: op. cit., I/Appendix D, II/8.
- ² Here and later where titles of music that could not be examined for this study are mentioned, only the evidence of the titles is being adduced, for there is with some composers like Bantock, for instance, the possibility as to whether the music itself might not more probably be considered mere character-pieces or other conventional music that would not qualify for inclusion as *avant-garde*. Whether character-pieces or not, however, such titles certainly indicate the permeation of Art Nouveau imagery through the general repertory of the period.
- ³ Born Louis Jacques Napoléon Bertrand.
- ⁴ Notwithstanding Frits Noske's objection that the Leconte de Lisle poem itself is not of the Art Nouveau period (Noske, F.: op. cit., 12): it is argued below that the use Debussy makes of it is of Art Nouveau character.

- ⁵ All listed in Harris, B.S.: op. cit., 201-212.
- ⁶ In the McCredie symposium, *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13 (1984).
- ⁷ Thorlby, A.: op. cit., 111.
- ⁸ Thorlby, A.: loc. cit.
- ⁹ Lichtenthäler, F.: *Studie zum "Gaspard de la Nuit"*, *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* XXII/6 (June 1967), 325.
- ¹⁰ James, B.: op. cit., 61; see also Schoffman, N.: *Pedal-Points, Old and New*, *Journal of Musical research* IV/3-4 (1983), 369-87.
- ¹¹ Idem: loc. cit.
- ¹² Hilton, T.: op. cit., 54, 60, 65, 161, 176. For the whole question of Ravel's sources of inspiration see Nectoux, J.-M.: *Notes pour une esthétique de Maurice Ravel*, *Revue Musicale Suisse-Romande* 5 (Winter 1976). 150-57; Hirsbrunner, T.: *Maurice Ravel; sein Leben, sein Werk* (Laaber, Laaber 1989); Piavano, R.: *Rievocazioni arcaicizzanti nella produzione pianisti a di Ravel*, *Rassegna musical curci* 43/2 (1990), 15-23.
- ¹³ Mansion, J.E.: *Harrap's New Standard French and English Dictionary*, (London, Harrap 1972), Vol. I, G.8, has three denotations: 1. Jasper; 2. a cunning fellow, artful dodger; 3. rat.
- ¹⁴ Baudelaire's projected title for *Les fleurs du mal* (Richardson, J.: *Introduction to Baudelaire. Selected Poems*, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin 1975), 12.
- ¹⁵ James, B.: op. cit., 61; see also Stuckenschmidt, H.H.: *Ravel. Variations sur l'homme et l'oeuvre*, transl. Landy, P. from 1966 German, (Paris: Lattés, 1981); Hirsbrunner, T.: op. cit.; Perlemuter, V. and Jourdan-Morhange, H.: *Ravel d'après Ravel: les oeuvres pour piano, les deux concertos*, (Lausanne, Editions du Cervin 1970); Gutiérrez, M.P.: *La estética musical de Ravel*, (Madrid, Alpuerto 1987).
- ¹⁶ Lichtenthäler, F.: op. cit., 326.
- ¹⁷ Lichtenthäler, F.: loc. cit.
- ¹⁸ Note Theo Hirsbrunner's suggesting the analogy with Hermann Danuser's *musikalischen Prosa: "Gaspard de la Nuit" von Maurice Ravel*, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* XLIV/4 (1987), 270.
- ¹⁹ Idem, 272.
- ²⁰ Hofstätter H.H.: op. cit., 158, 184, 213, 230.
- ²¹ Some aspects of the pitch-sets used in the three Gaspard works are discussed by Theo Hirsbrunner: op. cit., 275-76; see also Russom, P.W.: *A Theory of Pitch Organisation for the early works of Maurice Ravel*, (Yale University diss., 1985), using set theory and Schenkerian analysis. For general discussion of octatonic sets in Ravel see Kabisch, T.: *Oktatonic, Tonalität und Form in der Musik Maurice Ravel*, *Musiktheorie* 5/2 (1990), 117-36.
- ²² E.g. Ravel and Fauré: see Howat, R.: op. cit., 191-193.
- ²³ Hirsbrunner, T.: op. cit., 278-9.
- ²⁴ The Durand edition, (Paris 1957), 22.
- ²⁵ Hirsbrunner, T.: *Russisches Erbe in Paris*, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 150 (June 1989), 11; James, B.: op. cit., 60.
- ²⁶ Norris, G.: *Rachmaninov*, (London, Dent 1976), 76-77.
- ²⁷ Spiessens, G.: op. cit., 74-80, which discusses the earliest compositions based on pictures.
- ²⁸ Ba'lmont, K.D.: *Budem kak solntse [Let us be as the Sun]: A book of Symbols*, (1903).
- ²⁸ Cassou, J.: op. cit., 164-165.
- ²⁸ Baker, E.A. (ed.): *Cassell's French Dictionary* (Cassell and Co., London, Sixteenth edition, 1941), 531; *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, II 2229.
- ²⁸ E.g., Culshaw, J.: *Rachmaninov*, (London, Dennis Dobson 1949, 116; Norris, G.: op. cit., 88; Martyn, B.: *Rakhmaninov: Composer, Pianist, Conductor*, (Aldershot, Scholar Press, 1990), 75.
- ²⁹ *ibid*, 165; Thorlby, A. (ed.): op. cit., 427.
- ²⁹ Eberlein, D.: op. cit.

- 30 My translation, revised by Lili Seja; the aim of these translations has been the closest possible transliteration, not good English style.
- 30 Wagner, R.: *Tristan und Isolde* II, 2.
- 30 Rieseemann, O.: *Rachmaninoff's Recollections*, (New York, Arno 1979; originally 1934), 100-101; Bertensson, S. and Leyda, J.: *Sergei Rachmaninoff. A Lifetime in Music*, (New York, New York University Press 1956/1972), 61.
- 31 Norris, G.: op. cit., 85, 88.
- 31 Quoted in Norris, G.: *Rakhmaninov*, (Dent & Sons, London 1976), 83.
- 32 See note 133.
- 33 C.f. Webb, K.E.: op. cit., 106; Belmore, H.W.: *Rilke's Craftsmanship: An Analysis of his Poetic Style*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell 1954), 44-46.
- 33 Martyn, B.: op. cit., 75.
- 34 See Gregg, R.A.: *Fedor Tiutchev: the Evolution of a Poet*, (Columbia University Press, New York and London 1965), 27, where Gregg notes that the poem originated in Tiutchev's watching raindrops endlessly trickling down his coach window.
- 34 Bertensson, S. and Leyda, J.: op. cit., quoted in Martyn, B.: op. cit., 75.
- 35 Largely from the influence of the onomatopoeic Edgar Allan Poe poem *The Bells*; note the tolling effect of the ostinato B^b in Ravel's *Le gibet*, for instance, or the twelve bell-notes in Abel Decaux' *Clair de lune 1: Minuit passe* of 1900, or Debussy's *La cathédrale engloutie*. The leading example, however, is Rakhmaninov's *The Bells*, specifically set to Poe.
- 36 See note 133.

CHAPTER 10

WORKS BASED ON CONCEPTS OF PATTERNING

The titles *Metopy* (Szymanowski) and *Ogives* (Satie) are ones deriving from architectural patterning, the first referring to the metopes or regular spacings between triglyphs in Doric entablature friezes, and the second to the diagonal groins or ribs that cross to produce the patterning of Gothic vaulting. Thus the terms connote stylization and patterned repetition - concepts essential to Art Nouveau, and illustrated in the repetition fundamental to both sets of works. But they are also titles with typical Art Nouveau ambiguity of reference.

Karol Szymanowski: *Metopy* (*Wyspa siren, Kalipso, Nauzykaa*)

Besides the architectural denotation of "metopes" there is also an important specific association for Szymanowski's *Metopy* - that of woman, and in particular the women or woman-creatures encountered by Odysseus on his homeward voyage, who are pictured on the ancient bas-reliefs at Selinus in Sicily, visited by Szymanowski in 1910. Thus metopes for him refer more specifically to the Selinus bas-reliefs, but these are part of the decorations of the Selinus temples, and as such an important part of their symmetry, inspiring both the overall and the individual subjects. The title for the set of three pieces, therefore, may be considered to have a dual reference, connected by the Art Nouveau notion of woman's perfections and symmetries of outward form that entrance men with their beauty.

Alastair Wightman points out other cultural influences at the time - his reading of Greek drama via the works of Tadeusz Zielinski, a translation of Aeschylus and a work on Mediterranean archeology that followed his trip to North Africa in 1914; there is also the legacy of his acquaintance with the works of the Persian poet Hafiz that he had set in 1911. In particular Wightman states "*Metopes* were inspired directly by memories of the bas-reliefs at Selinus, described by Szymanowski's cousin Iwaszkiewicz in his *Book of Sicily* as 'golden sandstone poems about woman ... that speak

simultaneously of the sufferings, triumphs and poverty of mankind, and of his love'¹.

A general source of inspiration not noticed by Alistair Wightman is that of the important Art Nouveau figure of Stanislaw Wyspianski, artist, craftsman, poet and playwright, whose language in both poetry and plays featured word-patterning like that of Arno Holz. His plays, especially his earlier ones, were permeated with Greek mythology², and this was blended with his Polish nationalistic aesthetic that was expressed in his art and in the journal *Zycie* that he co-edited with Stanislaw Przybyszewski. The Graecophilism and emphasis on patterning in art, both pure and commercial³, of Wyspianski influenced Polish Art Nouveau profoundly, and must be considered in evaluating Szymanowski's choice of subject for these pieces⁴.

Wyspa syren (Isle of Sirens), the first piece of the Metopy set, is based around repetition and development of the downwards arpeggio of bar 1 and the rocking one of bar 3; *Kalipso* (Calypso), the second, centres around the shimmering octave-and-fourth figure over first-inversion chords of bar 2 and the upwards-rushing figure of the first bar; *Nauzykaa* (Nausicaa) the third, is based around the actual and implied repetition of the first-bar rhythm and the asymmetries of the interpolated 3/4 and 5/8 measures.

In general it is the pronounced exploitation of flourishes of all sorts that is the feature most illustrative of the overall title, and the brief discussion of the set in this chapter will concentrate on this aspect.

Virtually all possible aspects of patterned flourish are to be found in the set. Slow acciaccatura and arpeggio, the initial germ of the first piece, are immediately stylized into a pattern - a downwards arpeggio, five arpeggios that sweep down then up, and an upwards final one (bars 1-6); surrounding each there is a semiquaver as grace-note, the first four downwards, the second four upwards:

Example 32:

Szymanowski: *Wyspa syren*, 1-6

This can be represented diagrammatically as follows:

Analysis 6:

↓ ↓↑ ↓↑ ↓↑ ↓↑ ↓↑ ↑ (arpeggios)
 v v v v ^ ^ ^ ^ (acciaccaturas)
 1 3 4 5 6 (bars)

Szymanowski: *Wyspa syren*, 1-6

This symmetry of construction is continued in the rest of the long passage of flourish that precedes the statement of the main melodic motif beginning in bar 13:

Analysis 7:

 ↑ ↓↑ v↑ ↑ ↓ ↓↑ ↓↑ ↓
 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

Szymanowski: *Metopy/1*, 7-12

The missing downwards arpeggio in bar 9 is replaced by repeated acciaccaturas (downwards). This sort of patterning is symmetrical, as is 68-71, whereas other sequences like those of 10-13 and the cadenza (60) have an asymmetrical form, but symmetry or asymmetry as such are less important than the stylization of flourish-devices into figurational units that become the main substance of the piece and like the repetition of sensuous lines become of at least equal importance with melodic motif.

This is seen in the second piece (*Kalipso*) where stylized flourish like the broken chordal figurations of bars 2-11, the tremolando of 12-13, the upwards arpeggios of 1-2 and the downwards ones of 30 are used to form whole sequences thereafter that become part of the principal fabric of the piece. The *expressivo* motif-fragment of bar 1 becomes not only the main melodic motif (from 12 onwards) but transforms itself into repetitive figuration in 37-40, 45-46 and 77-80. The trill-figure that appears first as a panpipe-motif form in 41 (long note followed by flourish) transforms into the 46-47 sequence and the many sequences relying on trills thereafter. Yet even before this the panpipe-motif form, that begins sensuously and breaks into abandon, is seen in the modification of the main motif that can only be a musical description of Calypso's enticements:

Example 33:

Szymanowski: *Kalipso*, 37-38

The indications *cantando*, *p dolcissimo affettuoso*, *rubato* are typical of Szymanowski's rather mannered score (another feature typical of much Art Nouveau composition as a late-cycle phenomenon), and emphasize the sensuousness of the melodic curves over the delicate discords of the accompanimental texture. In the latter half of the second bar the melody briefly falls in cadenza, but when the passage is repeated and intensified in the following two bars the cadenza is doubled: here the motif is patterned, and is followed by the appearance of the long-note-plus-trill mentioned above. The importance of this panpipe-form motif throughout the Art Nouveau repertory is seen in its always indicating sensuousness of feeling breaking into expression of emotion.

The third piece (*Nauzykaa*) is based for much of its length on the



rhythmic ostinato announced in the first bar, which is transformed into related rhythmic patterns as the time-signatures vary. Other patterning like those based more on figure (29, 42, 62, 67) give rise to sequences in which they are patterned into repetitive symmetries and asymmetries: the whole of the piece is thus seen to be a series of such sequences right to the cadenza (81), which is itself another such passage.

Example 34:

Szymanowski: *Nauzykaa*, cadenza patterns

The selection of figures that are formed into patterns by repetition shows that the pattering is obvious to the eye as well as the ear, but the full cadenza passage lasting from bars 64 to 87 would need to be quoted for the whole picture to be seen.

The nature of this piece follows that of *Nausicaa* herself, who is young and capricious, and therefore is lively where Calypso is more measured and calm. Thus the piece becomes first dominated by the broken rhythm of the first bar, and finally by the filigree⁵ and drama of the cadenza.

Stanislau Oledzki has drawn attention to related types of stylization in Szymanowski's piano music - sound fields of varying densities, ranges and shapes - but without attempting to link these to factors like Art

Nouveau⁶. Jim Samson discusses the question of a theoretical system behind his compositional method itself⁷, but feels that the stylizations are empirical, not deriving from a systematic base. He and others (N. Kotlev, Gerd Sannemüller, Eduard Volinskij⁸) have therefore turned to Szymanowski's alleged impressionism in an attempt to explain the predominance of figuration based on patterned flourish in these pieces, but as will be argued later the impressionist analysis, besides being of doubtful validity when the pieces are seen as being about Art Nouveau woman, cannot really provide a theoretical basis for pieces essentially consisting of patterns of figurational embellishment as their main principle.

This brief glance at the *Metopy* set of pieces has focussed only on this one aspect of patterned flourish, just as one's first sight of the Selinus temple-reliefs would be of the blocks of repetitive decoration that the reliefs as a group comprise. Their other aspect - that of Art Nouveau woman - will show the patterning as sensual rhythm that underlies the character of each type.

First it is necessary to consider the subject of Art Nouveau woman. Art Nouveau takes over the conflicting images of Pre-Raphaelite woman as pure maiden or fallen Magdalen⁹ and combines them with the Symbolist image of her as evil seductress¹⁰ to produce its own image of woman using innocence as a ploy for seduction. This sophistication of innocence is, in Art Nouveau representation, natural to woman rather than consciously contrived by her: it is the way of nature for man to fall under the spell of woman, and for woman herself to be driven by nature to captivate man. In her is seen nature's seasonal rhythms and irresistible forces, as she is in Alphonse Mucha's *The Seasons* series of pictures_. While she is mostly portrayed surrounded by natural forms like flowers or woodland, she still reveals her essential being in the drawing room, for her hair and clothes fall in the swirling forms of wild nature, and her smile is sensual.

Calypso is a nymph who, like Ondine, personifies the depths of the

sea and thus has supernatural powers to rescue drowning sailors (while Ondine, conversely, lures them into the water) but cannot help making them the captives of her charms, especially through her song. She keeps Odysseus on the island of Ogygia for seven years before at last she takes pity on him and he is able to break away. Nausicaa is a mortal whose beauty and agility of body and mind cause princes to fall in love with her, although she refuses all. Odysseus escapes Calypso but Nausicaa escapes him, so that he can never forget her. The two characters are very different: Nausicaa in *The Odyssey* VI-VIII is young, high-spirited, with an agile mind and an essentially virginal charm, playing at seduction as a game in which she is not to be caught, whereas Calypso in I,v entraps men with real, not avoided, sensuality and makes them captive to all her feminine arts; her "innocence" is pretended, designed to catch men, not keep them at bay. All these women live to entice men, so that they are at once fascinating and fatal.

Szymanowski's *Kalipso* shows sensuality from the outset in the bitonality of bars 3-11, 15-24, where the right hand keeps to the sharps and the left to the naturals. Thereafter there is still much bitonality even when the hands are not so separated, as in the *meno* passages of bars 31-2 and 48-51 and the cadenzas of bars 73 and 75. But it is in the alternation of contrasting sequences that the piece's dual complexities of patterning can be seen most clearly. The simple melodic motif of bars 12-13, (the "innocence"-motif) derived from that on the second stave of bars 1-2 and repeated five times later, is contrasted with all the other sequences' complexities: firstly the parallel chord progressions of the bitonal sequences 15-24 and 61-67, whose clashing from their being based only a semitone apart is mollified into a veiled menace by the right hand's broken chords; secondly the very soft but sudden explosion of arpeggios and trills of the sequences in bars 1-2, 13-15, 58, 60, 73 and 75 that reveal hidden force; and thirdly the rhythmically complex and bitonal sequences

where two motifs move in contrary motions and different rhythms, the upper having echoes of the innocence-motif and the lower of the first-bar version - but inverted, so reversing its nature. Although as the piece progresses the innocence-motif sequences become overlaid with the complexities of the others and becomes increasingly affected by it (bars 68-72) there is heard the clearest contrast between innocence and sophistication. The chromatic nature of the innocence-motif marks it as emotively sensuous, as those of the others sound more directly sensual, like the hovering between semitones of the lower voice in the third contrasting sequence and the simultaneous semitones of the first.

Nauzykaa also shows a clear duality from the beginning, with the left-hand F# ostinato setting a basis for the scherzando elements of the piece while the right sings (*cantabile*) a more mellifluous and slower-moving theme (bars 2-5); this theme, however, (basically a dance-motif, - the "dancing-innocence" motif - illustrating the virginal playfulness of *Nausicaa*) is almost immediately influenced by the ostinato (bars 6-7) and is succeeded by the first of the scherzando melodic motifs in bar 9, reappearing briefly in bars 12-15 and 17. The two sides of *Nausicaa*'s nature - her natural beauty and charm on the one hand and her incorrigibly teasing playfulness on the other - may be seen in these passages as being so inextricably mixed that she will never be serious or faithful to any lover. The piece shows this even more clearly in the passages that begin with contrary-motion motifs that mirror each other's motion but comprise the separate facets of her personality, as in bars 23-28, where the left-hand mirror of the right's slow sensuality is increasingly overlaid with the scherzando-ostinato figure until the *dolcissimo espressivo* of the right itself gives way to *cadenza* (bar 27) and can only give out mirror-echoes of the sensuality in bars 28 and 29. The pattern of that sequence is reversed in the following one of bars 29-33 where the hands exchange roles, again beginning in contrary-motion mirror-motifs with the right hand showing

scherzando influence from the start, until by bar 34 even the left joins the scherzando grazioso. In the developmental passage that follows (from bar 42) fragmentary echoes of sensuality are heard but they have become turned into scherzo and mock the earlier *cantabile*, *cantando* and *dolcissimo espressivo* entries. All this is a graphic musical study of Nausicaa's virginal playfulness, her irresponsible seductiveness whose effects on Odysseus and other *inamorata* she mocks. The structure of the development-sequence supports this, for after the passage just mentioned (42-49) there is a quieter sequence that seems more reflective once more (50-57) but soon develops towards the long *allegramente* climax (62-80) of cadenza figures, ending in a bitonal downwards sweep and forceful statement (bar 88) of the main Kalipso innocence-motif (Kalipso bar 12). This reminder of what in *Kalipso* is a gentle chromatic beauty is here dramatically stated, and can be seen either as Odysseus remembering with pain the real love he has left on Ogygia or his realizing that the tormentingly innocent wilfulness of Nausicaa is ultimately not so different from the artfully sensuous innocence of Calypso: both are vain dreams. Immediately following is an echo of the initial dancing-innocence motif that gradually fades away to *PPP*.

The three pieces thus can be seen from two aspects - as patterning¹¹ and as studies in portrayal of sensuality, just as can the bas-reliefs at Selinus. Such duality of purpose and nature is typically Art Nouveau; the patterning can be seen just by looking at the score, or heard as figuration, but that the music is no mere intellectual exercise in textures is also clear from the winding chromaticism of the softer passages and the sudden passionate movements of the more forceful ones. Finally, there is the evidence of the many directions that urge emotional expression: *cantabile e affetuoso*, *dolente poco meno*, *con passione*, *agitato e tempestuoso*, *molto espressivo*, *cantando dolcissimo affettuoso*, *ansioso*, and always *espressivo*. In these dual aspects of pattern and sensual beauty the

Metopy are like the pictures of Gustav Klimt, Alphonse Mucha and Szymanowski's compatriots Stanislaw Debicki and Edward Okun.¹²

Erik Satie: *Ogives* (1-4)

Alan Gillmor describes the period of Satie's life from which the *Ogives* arose as one of "neo-mediaeval obsession"¹³, perhaps influenced by Viollet-le-Duc, that was to lead to his brief association with the extreme conservative-Catholicism and Rosicrucianism of Péladan¹⁴ and after his break with Péladan¹⁵ to the formation of his own "Église Métropolitaine d'Art de Jésus Conducteur"¹⁶. The title *Ogives* has mystical connotations as well as architectural denotation, since ogives are the physical markers of groins (the intersections of different curved planes of vaults - each section of a simple Gothic vault being formed from four three-dimensional ogivic arches, whose planes intersect at the groins and are marked by the ogivic keystones) and thus symbolize the juxtapositions of different planes of reality or perception. Furthermore, ogives are of the curved and pointed shape of hands at prayer, and intersect at the top of vaults to form a cross. Thus as a concept ogives are rich in symbolic possibilities, but it is their patterning that is of significance for Art Nouveau as well, as has been indicated at the beginning of this section. Concepts like the juxtaposition of planes, intersection of crosses, the nature-imitating curves of ogives, and their being formed into patterns over the length of a Gothic vault, are all consonant with Art Nouveau stylization, and the ambiguities as to mode and internal structure of the pieces are cognate with its esoterism.

The question as to how much weight can be given to Satie's titles needs addressing. Since many of the later titles are whimsical, it may be thought that *Ogives* is no more than fanciful as a title. In general this is too simple an explanation for any of his stranger titles, for most of these can be argued to carry at least some important signification: *Pièces froides* (1897), for instance, appeared as the first signal that he had

changed compositional direction from 1897¹⁷, for his music from that point abandoned the lyricism of the *Sarabandes*, *Gymnopédies* and *Gnossiennes* of the eighties and the mysticism of the Rosicrucian period of the early nineties to become more "cold", contrapuntal and ironic, exactly justifying its title; he thought it important enough to restate in the 1906-10 *Nouvelle pièces froides*. The apparently bizarre titles from 1897 onwards (Attila Csampai and Dietmar Holland regard Satie's titles as part of his "Maske exgenetrischen Humors tarnten"¹⁸) can together be seen more simply as anti-sentimental, with key words like "froides", "véritable", "désagréable", "agaceries" and "dégoûté" conveying irritation (*Trois véritable préludes flasques*, *Aperçus désagréable*, *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme en bois*, *Les trois valse du précieux dégoûté*), "flasques", "vieux", "peccadilles" and "enfantines". (*Vieux sequins et vieilles cuirasses*, *Peccadilles importunes*, *Enfantines*, *Ménus propos enfantines*, *Enfantillages pittoresques* from the period after 1912 when his publishers courted him¹⁹) can be seen as quasi-apologies for his bowing slightly towards popular taste. Titles like *Trois pièces en forme de poir*, *Descriptions automatiques*, *Embryons desséchés* and *Sonatine bureaucratique* are clearly ironic, while *Chapitres tournés en tous sens* and *Heures séculaires et instantanées* are statements that accord with iconoclastic and upsetting movements like Cubism (with which Satie's *Parade* was associated by him), Dadaism and Marinetti's Futurism. All this is simply to look at the evidence of some of the titles, of course: any firm attempt to classify Satie's works must be based on wider considerations, such as that undertaken in Robert Orledge's recent work *Satie the Composer*, in which he delineates eleven groupings of compositions that take into account all the relevant factors, not just the titles²⁰.

Connected with this is the question of how far Satie and his music can be seen as pertaining to the period(s) he lived through; Theo Hirsbrunner feels that he cannot be identified with any consistent

aesthetic or period²¹. He can be seen as a poet-taster who was attracted by many new movements in their infancy, but felt he had to move to something newer when they threatened to become popular, since he could on no account allow himself to be associated with the generality. Such a philosophy of course derives straight from Aestheticism's exclusivity and suited Satie's shyness and secretiveness; Alan Gillmor sees him in this light as a paradigmatic avant-gardist in the terms of Renato Poggioli's *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1968)²².

The *Ogives* are four short pieces of similar form like the four ribs that meet to make an ogival (pointed arch) intersection in Gothic vaulting, for each piece is in four repetitive sections that alternate in dynamics and harmonic treatment. The musical structure can be seen as ogivic, its repetitive patterning being analogous to the rows of right and left ribs of a vault, with the two halves of each line like right and left-hand asymmetries, and the different treatments of each of the four lines perhaps suggesting greater and lesser lines of ribbing. Within these units there are smaller ones, for each "right" and "left" half-line has itself a right and a left half, so that the four asymmetrical parts of each line echo the greater asymmetries of the pieces' four-line structure. This macro-structure is based first on dynamics, with alternately soft and loud lines, and on texture, for the first line is monophonic, the second and fourth identical lines in doubled four-note chords, and the third in non-doubled simple harmony. Andras Wilhelm traces Satie's debt to Louis Niedermayer's harmonizations of Gregorian chant, and discusses its ramifications for other works of the Rosicrucian period²³, and Patrick Gowers has discussed the pieces in the context of the other *Rose+Croix* music²⁴.

Alan Gillmor sees echoes of actual mediaeval sounds in the antiphonal effects and modality of the set of pieces²⁵, and points out their ambiguities of mode and tonal centre, as well as briefly glancing at their asymmetries of structure. He also suggests that the pieces have

"chronometric form", this being "musical form as a function of time or duration, in direct opposition to traditional ... dynamism and progressive linearity"²⁶. Robert Orledge gives further reasons for supporting the relevance of chronometric form, but more importantly discusses the minute variations that occur between corresponding chords in the second, third and fourth lines, which he feels are akin to the Islamic or Middle-Eastern theory that an earthly artist, being necessarily imperfect, must deliberately introduce small flaws in his work in acknowledgment of the gap between earthly and heavenly perfections²⁷. This is a theory that will be referred to more than once in this study (especially with regard to Skryabin), and awaits more research into documents of the period to see how far it was a general belief amongst Art Nouveau or at least Symbolist creators. In this case, it certainly sits with the vaguely Eastern inclinations of Péladan and his circle.

Analysis 8:

The image displays a musical score for Erik Satie's 'Ogives 1-4'. It is divided into four sections, labeled I, II, III, and IV. Each section consists of a piano (p) and bass staff. Section I is marked 'Très lent' and includes fingerings (3, 3, 2, 2, 3, 3, 2, 2, 4) and dynamics (p). Section II is also marked 'Très lent' and includes fingerings (6, 3, 6, 4, 4, 4, 6, 3, 4) and dynamics (p). Section III is marked 'Très lent' and includes fingerings (4, 2, 4, 4, 2, 4, 4, 4, 8) and dynamics (p). Section IV is marked 'Très lent' and includes fingerings (4, 4, 4, 8, 4, 4, 4, 6) and dynamics (p). The score is attributed to ERIK SATIE.

Satie: Ogives 1-4

It is probable that there is no one particular key leading towards a simple understanding of the set's structure. The whole has no bar-lines,

which besides being appropriate for its plainsong character²⁸ allows further patternings of the rhythmic structure to be seen.

Some of the possible groupings of phrases and rhythmic units are indicated by the brackets and beat-counts. It will be noticed that each chant is divisible into two unequal sections, and that there are some possible symmetries and asymmetries that suggest themselves. There may also be some numerological key to these groupings, although it is outside the scope of this dissertation to investigate musical Symbolism as such; if found, however, it may also have to do with the architectural concept of ogives as comprising a four-part structure. Satie may have anticipated some of Debussy and Ravel's later experiments that Roy Howat has discussed at length²⁹.

End-notes

- 1 Wightman, A.: notes to the complete Szymanowski edition, xviii.
- 2 Meleager, *Ulysses' Return, Achilles, Anathema, The Judges, The Acropolis, November Night*.
- 3 Hofstätter, H.H.: 262.
- 4 *The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia*, V, 753-54; Csato, E.: *The Polish Theatre*, (Warsaw, Polonia 1963).
- 5 See the remarks on ornamentation in Szymanowski in Stegemann, M.: *Immanenz und Transzendenz: Chopin, Skrjabin, Szymanowski und die pianistische Ornamentik*, *Musik-Konzept* 45 (1983), 80-108.
- 6 Oledzki, S.: *Karol Szymanowski's Piano Textures*, *Muzyka* XVIII/3 (1973), 51-78.
- 7 Samson, J.: *The Use of Analytical Models in the Analysis of Szymanowski's Harmonic Language*, in Bristiger, M. et al.: *Karol Szymanowski in seiner Zeit*, (München, Fisk 1984; originally in *Muzyka* XXXVIII/2 (1983), 27-36).
- 8 Samson, J.: *The Music of Szymanowski*, (London, Kahn and Averill 1980), chapter 8; Kotlev, N.: *Impressionistic features in Karol Szymanowski's style*, in Orlov, Henrik, et al.: *Problems in Musicology II*, (Moscow, Sovetskij Kompositor 1975); Sannemüller, G.: *Zur Frage des Stils bei Karol Szymanowski*, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* CXIII/2 (1972), 1136-38; Volynskij, E.: *Karol Szymanowski*, (Leningrad, *Muzyka* 1974).
- 9 Marsh, J.: *Pre-Raphaelite Women. Images of Femininity*, (Harmony Books, New York 1987), 77-78.
- 10 Jullian, P.: op. cit., 101-13.
- 11 Jiri Mucha in Bridges, A. (ed.): *Alphonse Mucha. The Complete Graphic Works*, (London, Academy Editions 1980), 146-47.
- 11 Zofia Helman's intervallic analysis of Szymanowski is also relevant to patterning - Helman, Z.: *Intervallic structuralism and twentieth-century compositional techniques*, *Muzyka* XX/2 (1975), 33-36.
- 12 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 268-271.
- 13 Gillmor, A.: *Erik Satie*, (London, Macmillan 1988), 34.
- 14 Op de Coul, P.: *Satie und Péladan. Ein Beitrag zur Biographie des jungen*

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- Erik Satie*, (Berlin, Kongress-Bericht 1974), 195-207; Péladan's connexion with the main Rosicrucian movement was apparently irregular and may not even have existed: see Lyle, C.: *Erik Satie and Rosicrucianism*, Music Review XLIII/3-4 (August-November 1981), 240, and Wilkins, N.: *The Writings of Erik Satie*, (London, Eulenberg 1980), 176.
- 15 August 1892 - in Orledge, R.: *Satie the Composer*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1990), xxii. He first met Péladan in Spring, 1890, and was official composer to Péladan's sect by May 1891 (ibid, xxi).
- 16 1893-95 period - ibid, loc. cit.
- 17 Alfred Cortot's tripartite division (1886-95 mysticism, 1897-1915 mystification, 1916-1925 *musique d'ameublement*) in *La Revue Musicale* of 1936 seems now too simple: Myers, R.: *Erik Satie*, (London, Dennis Dobson 1948), 67.
- 18 Csampai, A. and Holland, D.: *Der Skandal Satie*, Musik Konzepte 11 (1980), 67.
- 19 Although Theo Hirsbrunner argues that even so he was relatively unknown by his contemporaries both before and after the Great War: Hirsbrunner, T.: *Erik Satie und das Musikleben seiner Zeit*, Bund 88 (April 1972), 2ff.
- 20 See discussion in New Grove, and in preface by Maurice Rogers to his collection of Satie piano works for J.B.Cramer edition of 1975.
- 20 Orledge, R.: op. cit., 3-4.
- 21 Hirsbrunner, T.: *Erik Saties revolutionäre Tendenzen*, Neue Zeitschrift für Musik IV/1 (1978) 19-21.
- 22 Gillmor, A.: *Erik Satie and the Concept of the Avant Garde*, Musical Quarterly LXIX/1 (Winter 1983), 104-119.
- 23 Wilhelm, A.: *Erik Satie's Gregorian paraphrases*, Studies in Musicology XXV/1-4 (1983), 229-37.
- 24 Gowers, P.: *Satie's Rose+Croix Music (1891-1895)*, Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association 92 (1965-66), 1-25.
- 25 Gillmor, A.: *Erik Satie*, 34-35.
- 26 Ibid, 36.
- 27 Orledge, R.: op. cit., 144-45.
- 28 For the general question of neo-modal feeling in works of the period see Dickinson, P.: *The Neo-Modal Style*, Music Review XXXIII/2 (May 1972), 108-21.
- 29 Howat, R.: op. cit.

CHAPTER 11

FIRST ORDER KEYBOARD ART NOUVEAU B
WORKS WITH TITLES ON ART NOUVEAU THEMES

The greater part of first-order keyboard Art Nouveau simply bears titles showing that it derives its inspiration from the imagery and themes of Art Nouveau, (which also encompass its inheritance from Symbolism, Decadence, Pre-Raphaelitism and Aestheticism).

Before the evidence of works bearing these titles is examined, an attempt will be made to summarize the imagery and themes of Art Nouveau so that the remaining works in the first-order repertory may for convenience be grouped under theme-headings.

Art Nouveau imagery, symbols and themes

As a visual phenomenon Art Nouveau is primarily concerned with stylization of line and composition, building on the one hand with the curved lines of the natural world rather than the artificially decorative curves of later nineteenth-century art and craft (or, in the later Glasgow School, stylized into straight lines) and on the other with the flattened dimensionality of mediaeval art. Its imagery, settings and themes concern the dream-fantastic, and in particular explore the mysteries at the edges of human experience - our perceptions of nature, the world, time, motion, beauty, evil, death and the unknown.

But Art Nouveau tends to derive its ideas and thus its imagery from elsewhere. Symbolism and Decadence infuse music, literature and visual art, but primarily through their ideas and associated imagery rather than through any styles or stylizations of their own. Since they are concept-centred, it is possible to identify their leading ideas and imagery and see how these help form some of Art Nouveau's.

Edward Lucie-Smith, in discussing Richard Dadd's paintings, emphasizes the allegorical importance to Symbolism of "the existence of another and very different universe, existing parallel with the everyday one"¹ - in other words, of the idealist position that reality lies beyond

appearances. In this view nature and the observable cosmos are merely appearances, but the seer's eye may perceive in them signs of the reality beyond. Important symbolist images like flowers of evil, woman as ambivalent *femme fleur*², Pierrot amidst *fêtes galantes*, Pierrot and moonlight, primal nature, death and spiritualism are largely taken over by Art Nouveau, but the central theme throughout all symbolism is that of dream, which becomes an essential focus of Art Nouveau as well. While Pierrot is perhaps the single most important personification of symbolist writers, especially the later French ones, signifying melancholy in the midst of fete, and love by moonlight that turns towards madness, as a concept he does not cover all symbolism's domain as does that of dream.

Important themes and images of Decadence are monsters, witches, eroticism, surfeit, the grotesque, evil, death, and the fantastic visions of dream, nightmare and the world beyond death. Philippe Julian chooses as the key image of Decadence the Chimera - "mystical, erotic, legendary, macabre"³, (*Chimera* was also the title of a Polish contemporary publication⁴). While in Greek myth the chimera-monster killed by Bellopheron had the head of a lion, the body of a goat and the tail of a serpent, in other myth and *fin-de-siècle* art it was of transformable appearance - half woman and half bird or serpent, like Frantisek Kupka's *The Conqueror Worm* or the candle-sconces on pianos of the period⁵. As a symbol the chimera represents Decadence's vision of the two sides of woman's nature - beauty and evil: all is transformable, so that evil is the reverse face of beauty's obverse, and needs to be embraced as much as beauty.

Symbolism and Decadence are ideas-centred rather than style-centred (for they embrace a variety of styles), and Aestheticism is both ideas-centred and style-centred: all three therefore influence Art Nouveau to different extents in both ideas and style. From Pre-Raphaelitism Art Nouveau takes over some of its simplicity of graphic representation,

particularly of the detail of flora, which it uses as the basis of its stylized line, but most importantly it takes over its notion of woman as possessing a dual nature, as innocent maiden and seductive siren - slightly different in emphasis from that of Decadence. Where in Decadence woman is often frankly portrayed as witch or monster (sphinx, chimera, bird of prey), in Pre-Raphaelite pictures and poetry woman is more of an innocent who is unable to control the enchanting powers of her own beauty⁶. Other important images that are adopted into Art Nouveau's sphere are those from mediaeval legend and romance, nature as innocence, and twining hair that ensnares, while those of nobility, suffering, religion and moral earnestness are excluded.

Aestheticism helps shape Art Nouveau's basic philosophy, for its principal contribution is its emphasis on style as an end in itself, leading to Art Nouveau's stylization of line and forms. It has one central symbol - that of the dandy, with whom many of its notable figures can be associated - Marcel Proust, Claude Debussy (especially as seen by Theo Hirsbrunner⁷), Maurice Ravel, Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley, Robert de Montesquiou, perhaps even Erik Satie with his many suits, and Pierrot himself⁸. In essence the dandy as the personification of the perfect artwork - intricate, ingenious, finely crafted, subtle, with many layers of meaning and experience - is taken over by Art Nouveau and seen in its detail of stylization and patterning of line.

Summarizing Art Nouveau imagery, symbols and themes

Art Nouveau images all have to do with aspects of Nature, where man is always overshadowed, petty or made ridiculous by the vaguely menacing Other Realm (the supposed realm of unknown powers and dimensions outside the rational and the empirical that nonetheless impinges crucially upon it). He may be surrounded, dwarfed or enveloped by plants, or be made ridiculous by his artificial attempts to ignore Nature's mysteries.

These images fall into four categories:

1. **flora**: flowers, leaves, twining plants and their various parts (especially the lily, iris, rose, convolvulus and poppy, with vines and briars).
2. **fauna** of myth and elegance (notably maidens and their hair, swans, peacocks, cranes, butterflies, fish, crustaceans, cats)
3. **the exotic**: the flora, fauna and arts of strange and remote societies - the East, the ancient and the mediaeval.
4. **the mythical-supernatural**: nereids, naiads, dryads, fairies, gnomes, witches, dragons, enchantment, spells, death and spirits.

The principle in all this representation is transformation of appearance, so that to see an Art Nouveau chair or maiden is to see nature's forms and mysteries. Thus natural or accepted forms are transformed by exaggeration and stylization of line, so that both the subject-matter and its treatment are artistically distorted, and what is seen is fantastic or dream-like⁹. Pan, therefore, as the central personification of animist myth, is also that of Art Nouveau: his form, spirit and powers are to be glimpsed behind natural forms, and his sensuality felt in the pulsations of repetitive line.

Settings

Corresponding with these images and subjects are exotic and exaggerated settings rich in symbolism:

dream, time and memory

die Insel: water - streams, sea, pools, even tears

mediaeval enchantment: castles, forests, spells

legend: Daphne, Yseult, Mélisande, Guinevere, Sheherezade

the theatre: *le haute monde* and the comedy of manners (*The Rape of the Lock*, dandies and fops, coquettes, dancers, masks, clowns, Pierrot and *clair de lune*, poseurs, caricatures, grotesques)

sensual suggestion: sultriness, temptation, seduction

dream, fantasy and Arcadia

youth, the landscape and the seasons

the East: Japan, China, Persia

Classical mythology

the dance - movement generally: from slow swan-like progression to sensual abandon, movement being that of nature everywhere immanent, whose incessantly curling shapes reflect its sensual rhythms.

All this richness of imagery and settings needs to be simplified for the purposes of this study into twenty main themes, with the hundred-odd pieces to be discussed therefore being conveniently grouped according to

theme. These themes can themselves be grouped under six general headings:

Transformations

Dream ideal, unreal, strange
 Time non-earthly, dream, suspended
 Masks performances, false appearances

Symmetries

Resonances repetitions, mirrors, inversions, versions
 Dance pattern, ritual, seasonal & cosmic rhythms
 Mystical the Symbolist universe of strange Order

The Four elements

Fire Symbolist divine force, ecstasy
 Water flowing, deep, mysterious, cradle of life
 Air supernatural beings in their element
 Nature earth, flora, fauna; mysterious powers

Escape

Myth Classical, Mediaeval, Symbolist, legend
 Exotic Far East, Middle East, strange, special
 Insel Arcadian, dream-refuge, enchanted

Eros

Love erotic, enchanted, ecstatic, Dionysian
 Woman beguiling innocent or siren: entrancing
 Clair de lune the melancholy Pierrot - love and dreams

Extremes

Pierrot the crazy Pierrot - grotesque to tormented
 Grotesque contrasts, exaggerations, the bizarre
 Evil the occult, the decadent, the macabre
 Death morbid transformation to spirit-world

Transformation - the connecting principle

All categories are connected by the overriding Art Nouveau concept of the ambiguous or transformable nature of things - that reality and dream are two sides of the same truth, that the real nature of a maiden's beauty, of the passing of time and even of death itself may be hidden by their appearances. This is seen in the intangible and mutable natures of fire, water, air and nature (earth), in the transforming processes of time, the seasons and death, and in the mysterious nature of moods, maidens, love, the exotic and night. It is distorted in echoes, the grotesque and in the decadent.

All this transformation of imagery, settings and themes may be summed up as studies in unreality or dream, using natural forms metamorphosed in a stylized fashion and rhythmically intertwined to make a whole based on

patterns of curving line (or the asymmetrical straighter ones of the Glasgow School). The key points here are three: **the dream-fantastic** and **stylized patterning**, in which everything undergoes **transformation**.

Single pieces and sets

Listed and discussed in this section are single pieces like Skryabin's *Masque* or collections like Szymanowski's *Maski*. The individual pieces of collections, where they have their own titles, are discussed under the set-headings, but may also be briefly mentioned elsewhere. One set has been split - Ravel's *Miroirs* - and its pieces considered under different headings. One piece only has been considered from Josef Suk's *Zivotem a snem* [things lived and dreamt] because it is the only one of the ten pieces for which an Art Nouveau provenance is certain, although some of the others could be considered if more were known about them.

The Themes

TRANSFORMATIONS

DREAM	<i>En rêve</i> - Nocturne 1885-6 <i>Réverie</i> Op.49/3 1905	Liszt Skryabin
TIME	<i>Valse oubliée</i> 1 1881 <i>Valse oubliée</i> 2 1882 <i>Valse oubliée</i> 3 1882 <i>Valse oubliée</i> 4 1885 ¹⁰ <i>Po zarostlem chodnicku</i> [On overgrown path] 1901: 1. <i>Nase vecery</i> (Our evenings) 2. <i>Listek odvanuty</i> (Fallen leaf) 3. <i>Pojdte s námi!</i> (Come with us) 4. <i>Frydecká panna Maria</i> (Madonna of Frydek) 5. <i>Stebetaly jak lastovicky</i> (they chattered like swallows) 6. <i>Nelze domluvit!</i> (Words fail) 7. <i>Dobrou noc!</i> (Goodnight) 8. <i>Task neskonale áske</i> (Unutterable anguish) 9. <i>V pláci</i> (In tears) 10. <i>Sycek neodletel!</i> (The screech-owl still flies) 1908: 1,2 plus paralipomena 3,4,5 (all untitled)	Liszt Liszt Liszt Liszt Janáček

APPEARANCES

<i>Suite Bergamasque</i> 1890/1905	Debussy
1. <i>Prélude</i>	
2. <i>Menuet</i>	
3. <i>Clair de lune</i>	
4. <i>Passepied</i>	
<i>Masques</i> 1904	Debussy
<i>Masque Op.63/1</i> 1911	Skryabin
<i>Maski</i> 1916	Szymanowski
1. <i>Szecherezada</i>	
2. <i>Blazen Tantris</i>	
3. <i>Serenada Don Juana</i>	
<i>Enigme Op.52/2</i> 1906	Skryabin
<i>Mirages Op.70</i> 1920	Schmitt
1. <i>Tristesse de Pan</i>	
2. <i>La tragique chevauchée</i>	

SYMMETRIES

RESONANCES	<i>Cloches à travers les feuilles</i> (<i>Images II/1</i>) 1907	Debussy
	<i>L'oiseaux tristes (Miroirs/2)</i> 1905	Ravel
	<i>La vallée des cloches (Miroirs/5)</i> 1905	Ravel
DANCE	<i>Csardas obstiné</i> 1884	Liszt
	<i>Gymnopédies 1,2,3</i> 1888	Satie
	<i>Gnossiennes 1,2,3</i> 1890	Satie
	4 (1891), 5 (1889), 6 (1897)	Satie
	<i>Danseuses de Delphes (Préludes I)</i> 1910	Debussy
	<i>Danse languide Op.51/4</i> 1906	Skryabin
MYSTICAL	<i>Danses Gothiques</i> (1893)	Satie
	<i>Prélude de la porte héroïque du ciel</i> 1894	Satie
	<i>Cants mágics</i> 1919	Mompou
	Skryabin - The late sonatas as mystical works:	
	Sonata 6 1911-12	
	Sonata 7 (<i>Messe blanc</i>) 1911	
	Sonata 8 1912-13	
	Sonata 9 (<i>Messe noir</i>) 1913	
	Sonata 10 1912-13	

FOUR ELEMENTS

FIRE	<i>Vers la flamme Op.72</i> 1914	Skryabin
	<i>Flammes sombres Op.73/2</i> 1914	Skryabin
WATER	<i>Une barque sur l'Océan (Miroirs/3)</i> 1905	Ravel
	<i>Poissons d'or (Images II/3)</i> 1907	Debussy
	<i>The Fountains of the Acqua Paola</i> (<i>Roman Sketches/3</i>) 1915-16	Griffes
	<i>Le poisson d'or</i> 1919	Berners
AIR	<i>Poème ailé Op.51/3</i> (1906)	Skryabin
	<i>La danse de Puck (Préludes I/11)</i> 1910	Debussy
	<i>The Dew Fairy (The Hour-Glass/3)</i> 1920	Bridge
NATURE	<i>Polka for the swan and the peacock</i> (<i>Zivotem a snem/2</i>) [things lived & dreamt] 1909	Suk

<i>Paysages et Marines/7-12</i>	1915	Koechlin
7	<i>Soir d'angoisses</i>	
8	<i>La chanson des pommiers en fleurs</i>	
9	<i>Paysage d'octobre</i>	
10	<i>Chant de pêcheurs</i>	
11	<i>Dans le grand champs</i>	
12	<i>Poème Virgilien</i>	
<i>The White Peacock (Roman Sketches/1)</i>	1915-16	Griffes

THE DISTANT DREAM

MYTH	<i>Six épigraphes antiques</i> , 1914	Debussy
	1. <i>Pour invoquer Pan, dieu du vent</i>	
	2. <i>Pour un tombeau sans nom</i>	
	3. <i>Pour que la nuit soit propice</i>	
	4. <i>Pour la danse aux crotales</i>	
	5. <i>Pour l'Égyptienne</i>	
	6. <i>Pour remercier la pluie au matin</i>	
EXOTIC	<i>Pagodes (Estampes/1)</i> 1903	Debussy
	<i>Alborada del gracioso (Miroirs/4)</i> 1905	Ravel
INSEL	<i>L'isle joyeux</i> 1904	Debussy
	<i>The Island Spell (Decorations/1)</i> 1915	Ireland
	<i>The Princess's Rose-Garden</i> 1915	Bax

EROS

LOVE	<i>Danse languide Op. 51/4</i> 1906	Skryabin
	<i>Poème languide Op. 52/3</i> 1906	Skryabin
	<i>Désir Op. 57/1</i> 1907	Skryabin
	<i>Caresse dansée Op. 57/2</i> 1907	Skryabin
	<i>Le jardin parfumé</i> 1923	Sorabji
WOMAN	<i>La fille aux cheveux de lin (Préludes I/8)</i> 1910	Debussy
	<i>Ondine (Préludes II/8)</i> 1912-13	Debussy
	<i>The Maiden with the Daffodil</i> 1915	Bax

CLAIR DE LUNE

<i>Clair de lune (Suite bergamasque/3)</i>	1890-1905	Debussy
<i>La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune</i>		
(<i>Préludes II/7</i>),	1912-13	Debussy

EXTREMES

PIERROT	<i>Trois mouvements de pétrouchka</i> 1921	Stravinsky
GROTESQUE	<i>Sérénade grotesque</i> 1893	Ravel
	<i>Étrangeté Op. 63/2</i> 1911	Skryabin
EVIL	<i>Méphisto valse 2</i> 1880-81	Liszt
	<i>Méphisto valse 3</i> 1883	Liszt
	<i>Méphisto valse 4</i> 1885	Liszt
	<i>Méphisto Polka</i> 1883	Liszt
	<i>Csárdás macabre</i> 1881-82	Liszt
	<i>Unstern!</i> 1880	Liszt
	<i>Poème satanique Op. 36</i> 1903	Skryabin

DEATH <i>Nuages gris</i> 1881	Liszt
<i>Die Trauer-Gondel 1,2</i> 1882	Liszt
<i>Richard Wagner - Venezia</i> 1883	Liszt
<i>Canope (Préludes II/10)</i> 1912-13	Debussy
<i>Guirlandes Op.7/1</i> 1914	Skryabin

End-notes

- 1 Lucie-Smith, E.: op. cit., 36.
- 2 Jean Cassou's term: op. cit., 47.
- 3 Julian, P.: op. cit.: terms from the Contents-page; also the discussion on pp 16-23.
- 4 Masini, L-V.: op. cit., 402.
- 5 For instance those by Richard Lipp & Sohn of Stuttgart on their Princess and large (Queen) uprights.
- 6 For a fuller picture of the various woman-images and symbols in Pre-Raphaelite painting see Marsh, J.: op. cit.
- 7 Hirsbrunner, T.: *Debussy und seine Zeit*, 45.
- 8 Idem, loc. cit.
- 9 Masini, L-V.: op. cit., 38-9; Hofstätter, H.: op. cit., 9-11.
- 10 This date is given in Searle, H.: op. cit., 166, but questioned in *New Grove* 7, 61.



CHAPTER 12
TRANSFORMATIONS

The fantastic realm that Art Nouveau pictures and literature evoke is that of the fairy-tale and the flat canvas, outside normal time and three-dimensional reality, where the powers and spirits normally hidden as symbols in nature can be perceived. In this timeless realm even movement is different, for there is no progression, only gesture and repetition, and figures may be hidden under masks or appear as symbols.

DREAM	<i>En rêve - Nocturne</i> 1885-6 <i>Réverie</i> Op.49/3, 1905	Liszt Skryabin
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Concept

Dreams are of the very essence of Art Nouveau, where they are perceptions of the Other Realm, so providing visions, fantasies and sensations beyond normal experience. There is a two-fold interest - the material of the dream, and its effect on the dreamer. Symbolism tends to concentrate on the first, Decadence on the second. The composer of Art Nouveau music must create both through strangeness of harmony and sequence.

Art Nouveau creates moods that are extreme and strange, ranging over the fantastic, the vivid and the macabre. These are of a different world from ordinary moods or dreams, and quite different from the vague dreaminess of character-pieces.

Liszt: *En rêve, nocturne*

This work from Liszt's last years (1885-86) has three elements of strangeness. First there is its modal feeling, for the whole piece is based on an F# pedalpoint but bears the key-signature of B, so that it is technically Mixolydian, yet feels as if it is really based around the dominant that always looks towards, but never moves towards, resolution on the tonic B. (If it did, then its melodic simplicity would justify the description of *bel canto* that Norbert Nagler gives it¹. James Baker remarks that its "tonality is severely attenuated by the pedal" so that its "traditional tonic bass" is no more than hypothetically implicit².)

Secondly there is the comparatively long sequence in which 7_6b chords are maintained in a left-hand ostinato that is repeated without resolution (9-14), and then the long chain of near-identical progressions descending to the pedal $\underline{F\#}$ (35-42), producing the feeling of descent through space without boundaries to a point that is nowhere, for the pedal's pitch, as noted above, seems itself incomplete as a resting-place.

Thirdly, while a cadence is hinted at towards the end of each half, the first ends inconclusively with eight bars of quasi-recitative and the second with an ambiguity of chordal progression, still on the $\underline{F\#}$, that after drifting in irregular, slow time through different chords and inversions comes to rest on an indefinite 6_4 chord, again leaving the impression of something unfinished - of a dream state where time is suspended:

Example 35:

Liszt: En rêve - nocturne, 39-47

This final chord is actually the second inversion of a 5_3 chord on \underline{B} , the tonality towards which the ear accustomed to diatonics has been wanting the piece to resolve since the beginning; at the end, therefore, the piece is no less tonally ambiguous than anywhere else. (Jim Samson writes of Liszt's "avoidance of a conventional cadential structure" in the late works"³ and Peter Rumenhöller discusses varieties of *verfremdete Kadenz*⁴ but perhaps it might be more accurate to describe this as experimentation in cadence, typical of Art Nouveau's desire to explore the effects of new techniques).

Thus there is a strangeness of feeling maintained throughout although the harmonic materials are in themselves of little novelty: it is their context - the unbroken pedal - that makes them strange by providing an ambiguous dimensionality. After two pages of analysis James Baker sums up

the work's fundamental ambiguity as "the relegation of elements of fundamental structure to the status of implicitness" (and in particular its tonality⁵: the only reason Liszt can have had for this was consciously to suggest ambiguity.

The piece has a discontinuity between its sections and sub-sections: it begins on the second beat of a common-time bar with minim-crotchet-minim, so that the pulse is not grasped at once (and it is loosened in the quasi-recitative and the ending). There is a tailing-off of melody-and-accompaniment after bar 12 into quasi-recitative that slows to a long breve⁶. The whole piece virtually begins again from that point, as if the whole sequence were being replayed in the dream in a slightly variant form, but still incomplete.

Still further strangeness is seen in *En rêve*'s ending in a series of trills and unresolved chords, an ending that shows incompleteness from a conventional structural point of view. The whole question of Liszt's open endings in his late works has received attention from several scholars, with Leonard Ott's general comments on Liszt's use of different chord-positions in final cadences⁷ being of interest here⁸. Liszt's approach to the ending is by way of three ascending inverted pedals held by trills on B, C#, D that echo the two descending semitonal groups of three notes ending the first half of the piece. Those note-groups are solo, but the inverted pedals are harmonized, or rather, the implied pedals under them are:

Analysis 9:

	inverted pedals----- ³											
RH	B	C#	D	³ E#	⁴ ₃	F#	⁸ ₃	⁹ ₃	⁶ ₃	⁶ ₃	⁶ ₄	
LH	G# ⁶ ₃	⁶ ₂	F# ⁷ ₅	⁷ ₆ ^b ₃	D	² _#	A#	⁴ _b	F#	^{6b} ₃	⁶ ₃	⁶ ₄

Liszt: *En rêve*, 35-47

The hands move through separate tonal centres, and gradually come together, but via a succession of unresolved chords under the inverted pedals. When the pedals finish (at the vertical line) the hands are combined in a

diminished chord which then transforms as the left hand drops towards $\underline{F\#}$. The hands are actually together in the penultimate chord, but on an unsatisfying 6_3 harmony over $\underline{F\#}$, and then move, still together to the 6_3 . This is of course the second inversion of the major triad on \underline{B} , which foundation it ambiguously implies, but it is not actually heard. Thus the actual $\underline{F\#}$ left-hand bass seems like a tonic in the way that hand has gradually fallen towards it, but its harmonies suggest that it is only the dominant of \underline{B} , as mentioned earlier. Furthermore, the ascending three notes of the pedals are ambiguously related, since they can be seen, like the rest of the piece, from the dual viewpoints of \underline{B} or $\underline{F\#}$.

The indefiniteness of the ending more than any other factor gives the piece real strangeness of mood that parallels the Art Nouveau concept of endless dream. It is an ending that does not end, but is suspended in space, like the rest of the music. Peter Rumenhöller uses the expression "cadence alienation"⁹: the full close is approached indirectly and somewhat tortuously and then averted, so that there is no firm tonal horizon.

Skryabin: Réverie op.49/3

This short piece of 1905 does not appear to be based on symmetrical pitch-sets like Skryabin's later music, but it is nonetheless quite strange in sound, being based on chords of the ninth that are transformed rather than resolved:

Example 36:

Con finezza. *al. m. d. ss.*

p *poco* *poco*

C IV-V Db II-V-I C V → I.

Skryabin: Réverie op.49/3, 1-4

The ${}^9_{7b}$ chords on the first beats of 1-3 "resolve" into dominant sevenths on the second beats, the second of these getting as far as its tonic $\underline{D^b}$ at the beginning of bar 3, but only as another ninth that goes through a third resolutive process, and falling to the original tonic \underline{C} at bar 4 (bar:1 \underline{C}

IV-V, 2 \underline{D}^b II-V-I, 3-4 \underline{C} V-I). This method of transformational resolution immediately makes the second beat of bars 1 and 2 the beginning of a new potentially resolutive sequence rather than a step along the one begun with the discord of the previous beat. The likeness to dream is apt - endings become beginnings, and a short process of quasi-modulation sees the tonal centre where it begins: apparent linear progression turns out to be stasis.

Skryabin's method of eventually resolving these sequences via bVI - bII -V-I (bars 3-4, 7-8, 15-16, 23-24) rests on two movements of dominant_tonic at the interval of a tritone; this is reinforced by the tritones in the French sixths of the two brief middle sequences (bars 9-10 and 11-12). There is thus an opposition of diatonic and tritonic tonality throughout the piece that is further dream-like ambiguity.

The Skryabin *Rêverie* also appears at first to have begun like a conventionally-structured piece based on four-bar units, until a closer look reveals that the piece consists of exact repetitions of only two sequences, the second a variant of the first, whose melodic line and harmonic exploration is restless and continuous:

Analysis 10:

bars	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-20	21-24
sequence	A	A	B+B	A	B+B	A
pitch	I	V	bVI - bV	I	bVI - bV	I

Skryabin: *Rêverie* op.49/3

The sequences B are those based on French sixths and bear a whole-tone relation to each other and the piece's tonic \underline{C} , thus contrasting with the orthodox dominant of the second sequence. Although the piece emphasizes normal tonic-dominant relationships the B sequences at dissonant intervals interrupt normal progression. Although each sequence seems to flow harmonically towards its cadence it is only doing so through a series of similar chords (9_7_6 - 9_7_5 in the A sequences and 9_7 - 9_7_6 in the B sequences), so that there are many similar steps that are like those of the descending sequence of bars 29-34 of the Liszt piece. The cadences in bars

4, 8 and 16 are like half-closes because the melody does not come to rest on the tonic and the inner parts are moving towards the next modulation. Even when the final close comes there is still the effect of an unanswered question despite the melody's winding towards the tonic in the last two bars. On this wider harmonic horizon there is also little linear progress - just a dream-like replaying of sequence in suspended time.

Summary

Both pieces therefore have characters that suggest the strangeness and remote non-dimensionality of a dream world, rather than the more everyday state of day-dreaming as in character-pieces. Both are strongly patterned with repetitive sequences of the same materials, repetition that goes beyond a conventional aesthetic to that of Art Nouveau's asymmetry - taking effects to an extreme for affective purposes.

TIME	<i>Valse oubliée 1</i> , 1881	Liszt
	<i>Valse oubliée 2</i> , 1882	Liszt
	<i>Valse oubliée 3</i> , 1882	Liszt
	<i>Valse oubliée 4</i> , 1885 ¹⁰	Liszt
	<i>Po zarostlem chodnicku</i>	
	[On overgrown path]	Janáček
	Cycle I: 1. <i>Nase vecery</i> (Our evenings)	
	2. <i>Listek odvanuty</i> (Fallen leaf)	
	3. <i>Pojdte s námi!</i> (Come with us)	
	4. <i>Frydecká panna Maria</i> (Madonna of Frydek)	
	5. <i>Stebetaly jak lastovicky</i> (they chattered like swallows)	
	6. <i>Nelze domluvit!</i> (Words fail)	
	7. <i>Dobrou noc!</i> (Goodnight)	
	8. <i>Task neskonale áske</i> (Unutterable anguish)	
	9. <i>V pláči</i> (In tears)	
	10. <i>Sýcek neodletel!</i> (The screech-owl still flies)	
	Cycle 2: 1,2 plus paralipomena 3,4,5 (all untitled) ¹¹	

Concept

Time in Art Nouveau is that of dream, being suspended while memory recalls and repeats sequences. Art Nouveau settings in *Insel*, *Arcadia*, *Classical*, *mediaeval*, *exotic lands*, *dream landscapes* or the fairytale "once upon a time" are essentially timeless. Youth does not think of time, and

in dance the movements are circular and endless like dream, or the cycling of the seasons.

While the simple concept of memories is a common one in every period of music, that for Art Nouveau is more complex, going beyond the perceptions of time as a linear process (Bergson's *time durée*) towards an appreciation of *time espace*, where time's motion seems frozen and its extent limitless. Time is thus transformed, as is seen in Alain-Fournier's *Le grande Meaulnes* (where Meaulnes' time at the *Domain* seems outside normal time, an experience that for him later seems to have been timeless, and which he seeks to repeat) and particularly in the opening pages of Marcel Proust's *Du côté de chez Swann* where Proust describes the child's experience of time's being suspended as he passes in and out of sleep. The impressionist account of time is to emphasize the opposite - that of capturing the ephemera of linear time by painting rapidly and recording its progress, as with Monet's haystacks and water-lilies, which is more easily suggested by the popular characteristic-piece title *Souvenir*, a title never found in Art Nouveau. Art Nouveau captures not the memory so much as the remembering, for it is the suspension of time while a former experience is repeatedly relived that is emphasized.

Liszt: Valses oubliées 1-4

The title *Valse oubliée* is ambiguous, since it can suggest half-recalled memories either of music or dance itself. For Liszt there appear to have been memories of earlier compositions and possibly the circumstances that gave rise to them. This seems as ambiguous as Art Nouveau time itself, and the term *oubliée* occurs elsewhere in the general Art Nouveau repertory. For instance, Liszt's *Romance oubliée* of 1880 echoes his *Romance* of 1848, that itself echoes his song *On pourquoi donc* of 1844. There are also Debussy's *Ariettes oubliées* of 1903 that are a republication of the 1888 Verlaine-setting *Ariettes, paysages belges et aquarelles*.

In the *Valses oubliées* here are echoes from some of the earlier waltzes. For instance, No.2: the motif beginning at bar 101 is very close to that of *Valse mélancolique* (1839 version) beginning at bar 17; this is also the (modified) rhythm of the opening (bar 5ff) of *Grande valse di bravoura* (1835-6 version) and of bars 152ff, and the rising motif of the *Valse mélancolique* bar 71ff is basically that of No.2's bar 101ff; No.3: bars 49ff resemble those of *Valse mélancolique* (1851 version) p.3 bar 2, and bars 125ff resemble p.4 (all). There is some limited discussion of this by Leslie Howard, Humphrey Searle and others .

The *Valses oubliées* of 1881, 1882, 1882 and 1885 feature the four peculiarities that seem to relate directly to the experience of time and remembering that Proust expounds - their building from fragments of motif to fuller statements, the exaggerated repetition associated with this, their incessant motion, and their indefinite beginnings and endings. Overriding all this is the crucial use of resonance and pedal-point, the devices together suggesting the suspension of *time durée* and of the normal boundaries of consciousness while experience is relived.

Each waltz is constructed around fragments of motif that grow into the main figures; this process takes the place of normal development. Waltz III, for instance, begins with three notes, the third, fourth and fifth of the minor scale (forming the intervals 2-2, counting in semitones) upon the \underline{D}^b basis of the opening key-signature. These transform into the same three elements of the major scale (1-2), and later into 2-1. They grow into M_1 (below), and are heard against a variety of transforming textures against which they themselves undergo transformations. During this process there are unprepared shifts of tonal base and key signature. Development is replaced by resonances, with each resonance likely to be slightly different from its original.

The dual motifs from which each waltz is constructed can be seen as follows¹²:

Example 37

The image displays a musical score for Liszt's 'Valse oubliées 1-4'. It is organized into four numbered sections, each containing two staves. Section 1 shows motifs M₁ and M₂. Section 2 shows motifs M₁ and M₂, with the M₂ staff marked 'sva' and 'p'. Section 3 shows motifs M₁ and M₂. Section 4 shows motifs M₁ and M₂, with the M₂ staff marked 'p' and '8'. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#).

Liszt: Valses oubliées 1-4, motifs

Liszt's method is to repeat rather than develop the motifs, either at new pitches or over a different texture that transforms them. As an example of the first method, the M_2 motif of the third waltz can be seen in three positions, with some slight variation in the third. As to the second method, the fourth waltz's M_2 is announced *fortissimo* but heard later *piano* with a more fluid accompanimental texture, when it is more melancholy. This contrasting of manner is found for all the M_2 motifs and transforms them completely, that of the first waltz being especially poignant over an extended broken chord with the seventh, and gradually transforming in semitonal steps above the $F^\#$ pedalpoint until the broken chord has formed itself into an unresolved $^{11}7_6$:

Example 38:

Liszt: Valse oubliée 1, 188-93

The waltzes gradually build towards the two main climaxes where their second motifs are stated fully, but then die away as indefinitely as they begin, ending in the unresolved chordal progressions characteristic of Liszt's last works. The first ends with an echo of M_1 in single notes, the last of which is on the dominant, not the tonic. The second actually ends with a 5_3 chord, but at the top of the keyboard, and since no bass, nor any note below middle C, has been heard for over a page, it still sounds unfinished. The third ends with the three-note rising diatonic fragment with which it began (although a minor third lower), and the fourth with rippled chords high in the compass (not unlike those of the second) that undergo transformations until they finish with the right hand $^{12}9_7$, over the left hand 5_2 , something like the ending of the second, but unresolved.

But it is Liszt's use of repetitive, non-linear structure over pedalpoints that confirms these waltzes as dream sequences in a timeless realm. There is so much use of pedal-points, real and implied, that the pieces might almost be said to be built entirely around them. For instance, every bar of the first waltz occurs over pedals:

Analysis 10a:

[F = figure; M = motif]

1-15	16-33	34-49	50-65	66-73	74-89	90-107
G	C#	D#	C#	E	E	C#
V	V	V	V	V	III	V
+--F ₁ --+	+---M ₁ ---+	+-----F ₂ -----+			+--M ₂ --+	+--M ₁ --+
108-122	123-144	[145-160]			161-193	194-210
G	D	C#			F#	C#
V	V	V			I	V

Liszt: *Valse oubliée 1*, structure

The dashed lines with barred sections above and below show the essentially repetitive nature of the structure. The overall form is AA' (with the second line of the analysis being A'), but the remarkable feature of all the pedalpoints is that none is a tonic pedal except the penultimate one. The waltz begins, after the brief 1-15 falling chord-sequences over the G dominant seventh, in C#, and ends there in the coda, which is a single line echoing the M₁ melody and winding around the dominant pedal. All the non-tonic pedals mean that the harmony never resolves, for not even over the single tonic pedal of the penultimate section is there anything like a 5_3 chord. The music revolves without resolution around a series of points in the musical continuum that have no linear connection, so that there is no progression through time. The ending is unresolved, leaving time open, as it were, and the last note is the dominant. The echoes of M₁ in the coda are mirrored between the hands, and since it follows the hauntingly poignant *amoroso* sequence of bars 161-193 (another very soft modern-piano effect where despite the complexity of their movement the hands must remain very smooth and quiet). Even the silence after the coda dies away seems full of echoes, as in dreams.

The repetitive nature of the structure of the other waltzes is similar, as can be seen in the third waltz, even though the analysis cannot show the how micro-structure of each section is composed from repetitions at several levels:

Analysis 10b:

1-110	111-26	127-57	158-66	167-84			
E ^b	E\A ^b	E\A ^b	E ^b	E			
+-F ₁ -+	+-M ₁ -+	+-M ₁ -+	+-F ₁ -+	+-F ₁ -+	+-M ₂ -+	+-F ₁ -+	+-F ₁ -+
185-40	241-56	257-87	288-03		304-21	322-44	345-69
E ^b	E\A ^b	E\A ^b	E ^b		A ^b -G [#]	E	E ^b

Liszt: *Valse oubliée 3*, structure

In this waltz there is mirroring of the first four units of structure, with a bridge of 167-84 leading to the repetitions. The chorale-like M₂ section is like the *amoroso* section of the first waltz in its series of transformations over a pedalpoint, but the coda ends with a series of rippled chords that ascends to a more definite ending that is theoretically a resolution to the only ⁵₃ cadence of the set. This ending sounds incomplete, however, not only because it ascends to the extreme treble, no bass having been heard for over a page, but also because it consists of five chords that merely ascend through inversions of the major triad rather than approach it from the dominant or other scale-degree.

The nature of the transformations that take place over pedalpoints can be illustrated by examples taken from the penultimate sections of the first three waltzes.

Analysis 10c:

Valse 1/161-95: $7_{5_4} - b7_{5_3} - 7_{5_4} - b7_{5_3} - 7_{b6_4} - 6_4 \div 7_{6_4}$ on F[#]

Valse 2/304-21: $\begin{matrix} 5_3 & - & \#9_7 & 5_{\#} & - & 7_5 \\ A^b & & A^b & & & G^{\#} \end{matrix}$

Valse 3/305-14: $\begin{matrix} 5_3 & - & 5_{3^b} & - & 5_{3^b} \\ D^b & & C^b & & B^b \end{matrix}$

Liszt: *Valses oubliées 1-3*, transformations

In the first waltz there is a series of chords articulated as accompanimental arpeggios that transform in step with the melody. The first pair is echoed in the second pair, and then slight modifications, one note at a time, evolve into the final chord that echoes up and down the keyboard without resolution. In the second waltz the enharmonic change helps signify the changing of dimension that is occurring as chord

dissolves into chord. In the third, the melody and inverted pedal change from major to minor (mirroring the change at the beginning of the work) while the bass falls through the three notes of one version of the first motif-fragment.

Such analyses illustrate only the harmonic nature of transformations; those of texture are even more varied, subtle and gradual, and need a chapter to themselves. The impression is gained that Liszt is exploring the permutational possibilities of his fragments, and on this level the waltzes are interesting as studies in composition. But in the light of their set-title they are the memory's replaying of half-recalled echoes, trying them in different forms in the attempt to find the real moment in past time that they point towards. But in *time espace* all versions of time past are equal, and equally shadowy.

The method of all four waltzes may be summed up thus:

1. are in nearly mirrored sequences built from repetitions
 2. are virtually entirely over pedalpoints
 3. continually transform harmonically over these pedals
 4. shift rather than modulate into unrelated keys
 5. have no cadences or resolution at all (except end of II)
 6. are built from fragments of motif into full statements
- their only "development".

At Liszt's age memories circle and repeat in a Proustian manner. That he associates the waltz with memories of love is seen in the quieter echoings of the penultimate sections - *amoroso, con intimo sentimento, un poco espressivo*¹³. At the distance of so many years the memories mix in a timeless plane of resonances, repeating and replaying with increasing poignancy, even though they may be indistinct. At the end they die away, but are still echoing and circling as they do so.

To sum up: in a dream or Proustian recalling of the past, events may be relived and varied repeatedly until a whole picture is recalled or

refashioned, or one may dwell on a particular fragment of this memory to savour again and again its poignancy. During this process normal consciousness is suspended as one is lost in daydreaming and a former time-sequence is endlessly regained and savoured. The pedalpoints suggest consciousness suspended in a state of dream, while the repetitions suggest the replaying of time-sequences for the reliving of real or imagined experience.

Janáček: *Po zarostlem chodnicku* [On an Overgrown Path]

In Moravian folk-tradition an overgrown path is the recalling of sad memories, with the path becoming more overgrown as the years pass and the recalling becomes more difficult¹⁴. For Janáček to remember the daughter he loved is to recall feelings and in so doing to seek to repeat time. When the memory flashes upon something half-forgotten or previously forgotten, normal time is eclipsed while the moment is relived and then perhaps repeated again and again. The experience is that described by Marcel Proust in the contemporary *A la recherche du temps perdu*, at the end of the Overture, where suddenly, recalled by the taste and smell of the madeleine soaked in lime-flower tea, he remembers and feels former happiness, repeatedly living again the pleasures of that lost time. For him the memories were sweet, but for Janáček sad: he several times explained that the *Po zarostlem chodnicku* pieces were painful recallings of half-lost memories of his only daughter and her death. Nonetheless, these are not retellings of events but the reliving of feelings¹⁵.

The first set of Janáček pieces *Po zarostlem chodnicku I* (1901) have titles linked with memories, at least some of which are associated with the childhood and early death of Janáček's daughter Olga¹⁶; the second set justifiably bears the same general title because the first two pieces were composed together with the first set and the last three in 1908 as an intended second cycle, but none of the second set has an individual title. The common set-title makes it clear that all are based on the recalling of

memories. The fact that all the titles were given after composition may upset those who see them as programme-pieces (Jaroslav Seda, Hans Hollander, Jaroslav Vogel) but is of no consequence otherwise. Their function is to draw attention to some imagery like chattering voices, owl-shrieks and chanting that has peculiar associations for Janáček. This imagery is more like the world of Edgar Allan Poe, Aloysius Bertrand or Albert Giraud rather than that of impressionist or folk-nature imagery. It indicates the bent of Janáček's imagination and inner world, which is consonant with that of Art Nouveau, as can be seen in other works like *The Makropoulos Affair*, *From the House of the Dead* and the two Broucka fantasies. Seen in this light the imagery of these pieces' titles is that of memory coloured by time and the imagination of an Art Nouveau sensibility. Janáček shows himself almost a *Pierrot tourmenté* in the starkness of many sequences and the abruptness of his transitions.

The grief over his daughter's death was so intense that it lent especial feeling to the recalling and reliving of happy as well as sad moments, and the music indicates similar processes of memory and consciousness to those in Liszt's pieces, although the Janáček works are not identical in method. Like Josef Suk's contemporaneous symphony *Asrael* (1904-06), these works contain an eschatological element - the reviewing of former experiences in the terms of the death that was to follow, which is typically Art Nouveau in its treating of *time espace* rather than *time durée*.

This aspect of Janáček has hardly received much attention in the critical literature to date, at least with respect to his piano compositions, although his setting of *The Makropoulos Affair* embraces a similar view of memories and death. On the one hand there have been studies of folk-elements (Josef Cerník, Zdenek Mišurek, Ljudija Majlingova)¹⁷ and impressionism (Hans Hollander, Milos Stédron, Jan Racek)¹⁸, both of which are naturally linked to realism and see Janáček as

basically a realist composer (Ljudmila Poljakova, Hans Hollander¹⁹). This is a viewpoint that is now beginning to be questioned²⁰.

A second approach has been the identification of *Sprachmelodie* (Peter Gulke, Bohumír Stédron²¹) and of laughing and crying-imagery (Otakar Nováček²²), which shows Janáček as creating a music of what Lèvi-Strauss was later to term deep (basic, natural) structures, fashioned into something like *Affekte*. But these *Affekte* are natural, not artificial.

A third view sees him as so unique that he cannot be categorized at all, nor linked with contemporary movements or theory - perhaps not even fully to his own (Jaroslav Jiránek, Rudolf Pecman, Jakob Kraus²³). Against the background of these somewhat opposed viewpoints there have been some alternative analyses that have drawn attention to specific features of his music - the use of the circle of fifths in setting up and resolving key-polarities and key-relational polarities (Nors Josephson²⁴), morphological relationships of motifs (Zdenek Sádecký²⁵), folk-modal elements²⁶, literary influences (Theodora Stráková, Artur Závodský²⁷). It is clear from these alternative approaches that Janáček is a composer with many strands of complexity, and the following discussion of the two cycles of *On an Overgrown Path* will attempt to elucidate his use of Art Nouveau methodology that firstly shows a Proustian-type treatment of time similar to Liszt's, and secondly throws a different perspective on the context of the titles' imagery of overgrown path, fallen leaf, good night, tears and owl-screeches.

Each of the fifteen pieces is based on the opposition of a pair of motifs. These motifs are treated in separate, unconnected sequences. It is possible that the second motif in each piece has to do with death, and this will be discussed later. The dual motifs are mostly fragmentary and relatively undeveloped (the exception is the second motif of I/4 - the chanting-motif); where development does occur it is usually simple repetition over changing harmonies (for example, I/5 bars 39-57). Thus the

pieces constantly repeat fragmentary sequences rather than develop them, as if memories from *time durée* linger in *time espace*.

Michael Beckerman sees Janáček's repetition as part of an atomistic building of structure according to the principles of Johann Friedrich Herbart's philosophy²⁸, with concepts of layering²⁹ and overlapping³⁰ strands of motions and rhythms that form a "mosaic"³¹: the inference of Art Nouveau method is obvious, although not made because not looked for by Beckerman. (It also seems to align somewhat with the approach of Peter Gulke.) Herbart's system of aesthetics, being based on an atomism of sensations, was essentially positivistic, so that Janáček's standpoint, based on Herbart, the Herbartian Josef Durdík and later, Wilhelm Wundt, is treated as that of realism, which accords with his researches into folk-music. It is furthered by the Zola-like corollary of "commitment": it is the artist's duty to participate in the improvement of society³² - a doctrine far removed from Aestheticism's stand on the amorality of art, derived from its sole artistic imperative - to produce perfect works of art. But Beckerman shows that Janáček was never satisfied with mere positivism - his term "sheen of beauty" and his discovery of Wilhelm Wundt's psychology led him eventually to "reject the sterile hoax of [mere] aesthetics". While he was then able to retain Herbartian method, grafting it to Wundt's, as a system its function was simply to explain afterwards what he first created: "I know that one does not compose by the science of aesthetics. I view composition as a psychological process"³³.

It would be misleading, therefore, to judge Janáček as simply a realist on the basis of his interest in formalism and positivistic explanation, because there are more sides to his inspiration. Firstly, while a work like the sonata 1.10.1905, for instance, appears to be a classic illustration of realist composition, being composed in memory of a particular tragic event, its music does not appear to be differently conceived or structured from that of the piano cycles, which, as is argued

in this study, seem to follow Liszt's repetition of memory in Bergsonian time space. Secondly, the mosaic and layering practice of Janáček are essentially those of Art Nouveau; he felt this to be a truly natural method.

Other studies of Janáček's structural method mention repetition, but not as a central principle: Nors Josephson notes his individuality in this as in other matters; Jaroslav Jiranek correctly describes his form as "plastic" but attributes this to Janáček's desire to blend folk-modal, suite and vocal-melodic elements of his invention into a keyboard style; and Christopher Salocks mentions the concepts of "germ cell" and "montage" of analysts like Dietmar Ströbel and Milos Stédron³⁴. All this commentary points towards, but does not specify, Art Nouveau method.

Coupled with motivic repetition is the pronounced use of repetition of sequence and its associated figuration in all the pieces, particularly in the mid or alternate-sections that are based on the second motifs. For instance, I/1 (the first piece in the first series), has unbroken repetition of the accompanimental figure in bar 48 from bars 54-69 and 95-125, besides the ten repetitions of the first sequence (bars 1-11) that occur throughout the piece; the repetitions are only prevented from becoming limiting in effect by the alternations of sequence. Thus as in other pieces, these fifteen show exaggerated repetition rather than development, furthering the suggestion of the repeated replaying of episodes in time.

Like the *Valses oubliées*, the incessant motion of these pieces is within their sequences, and since the sequences tend to be short, the effect is of motion always interrupted and resumed. The second set tends to end its sequences indefinitely (II/1 bar 28, 2 bars 39, 47-8, 75-6, 3 bars 31, 68) and even uses pauses. But motion is firmly set either by the peculiar rhythms of the motifs or their accompanying figures, so that when it is interrupted and resumed the interruption is noticed as a hiatus.

Although the *Valses oubliées* have indefinite beginnings and endings, there are no indefinite beginnings in Janáček's fifteen pieces, and only some have a mildly indefinite ending (I/1,9,10, II/5). In most pieces there is a petering-out of the musical movement as the end is approached that seems to indicate an indefinite ending, but then a small cadence is attached or the bass falls to the tonic. But if the beginnings and endings are relatively definite, the musical flow between is not, for there are indefinite endings to many sequences and a lack of developmental flow either within or between them. The music seems static and repetitive, suggesting that Janáček is recalling feelings at least as much as episodes. If the sequences flowed into one another, then, in the absence of indefinite beginnings and endings, linear time might be suggested, but the broken sequences tend to indicate broken time.

The fifteen pieces are not like the *Valses* in being almost entirely constructed around pedal-points as such, but they mix pedals and related devices to produce a harmonic foundation that is almost as limited; this is of course partly owing to their being to some extent folk-based³⁵, with modal elements being identified by such studies as those of Zofia Helman³⁶. The bass of each sequence makes only occasional movements from its initial position, as for instance in the first sequence of I/1 (bars 1-25) where only seven bars move from the tonic C^\sharp . Thus there are extended periods where the bass is frozen (I/2 bars 1-8, 22-28; I/4 - all the second-motif sections; I/10 - all the first-motif sections; II/4 bars 94-99, 100-105, 106-120(-135 implied), 136-154). When the bass does move it tends in most pieces to be very limited: in I/3 most of the piece is over tonic, mediant and dominant, and there is a drone-like effect in I/4 and I/7 that suggests the instruments that are associated with the folk-like tunes used. The drones as pedalpoints give much folk music the limited character that is part of its charm, and in a deeper sense suggest the limited dimensionality of the re-experiencing of Proust's *temps perdu* (which, once "lost", exists

only in Bergson's *time espace*).

There is one feature of most of the pieces that resembles Liszt's *En rêve* - the truncated second part of many sequences. *En rêve*'s bars 1-9 and 21-28 comprise the same two four-bar units that make up the first half of a sixteen-bar sequence, but the second two four-bar units are not completed, as if the dream-sequence has no definite ending. This structural peculiarity is seen clearly illustrated in Janáček's I/2: bars 1-4 are followed by 5-7 instead of a four-bar balance to the first bars; bars 10-13 are followed by only two bars (14-15), and when bars 10-13 are repeated in 18-21 there is no balancing part following, but only the figure of bar 22 repeated over a \underline{G}^b pedal for seven bars, breaking into a trill, just as the second parts of the *En rêve* sequences break into quasi-recitative and trills over pedals. The effect is easily noticeable in the structure of the first motifs of I/7, I 9, II/1 and the second motif of I/10. The key to this use of incomplete second parts to sequences may be found in the dual and antipathetic nature of their symbolism, which will now be examined.

This duality seems to be between the innocence of childhood and the interrupting finality of death. A child's world is relatively timeless, with a sunny afternoon or a wet day seeming to last forever; this *Insel-*world is shattered by the fixity of death. Not only are the pieces constructed around an opposing pair of motifs, with sequences based on the second always being shorter, but the sequences tend to clash with or interrupt each other. All the pieces have this dual nature, even I/5, where the second motif (bar 17, right hand), developed directly from the first, is repeated with it but clashes by being in 5/8 to the first motif's 4/8. This clashing effect produced by the simultaneous sounding of the two motifs is merely the most pronounced example of the essentially opposing nature of the motifs in each piece. In some pieces the second motifs are derived from the first, as in I/2, 3, 5, 9, II/2, III[that is, the


"paralipomena"]/2, 3, but in all these cases they are given contrasting treatment, and their sequences alternate with those of the first motif or appear simultaneously for part of the piece but in opposition. Thus the dichotomy throughout the series seems to be between the timeless (because she is always remembered as a girl) innocence of his daughter Olga (suggested in the folk-like first motifs) and the intervention of death as being fixed in time (or between timelessness and its opposition by linear time, which entails death).

It is interesting to contrast the Art Nouveau treatment of this symbol with conventional linear-time treatment. Charles-Valentin Alkan's *Chant d'amour - Chant de mort*, from *Douze études* Op.55 develops his *Amor* (sic, Latin) themes for eight pages, until on the eighth page they fade away into pauses, followed by *Mors*, the last page: the slow and incomplete sequences before the pauses clearly signify the last moments of life followed by the silence of death, and the *Mors* page of funereal drama ends in an incomplete cadence - a first-inversion chord. This is a fairly typical way of showing how death intervenes in linear time; contrast its treatment in Janáček's *1.X.1905/Smrt* (The Death), where there is no suggestion of linear sequence, but an almost incessant, highly affective repetition of motif-fragment/figuration that specifically eliminates any sense of linear time. (This work therefore suggests inclusion in the third-order Art Nouveau repertory.) In the pieces being discussed here Janáček's way is oppose two motifs alternately or simultaneously, just as memory or dream does it.

A brief examination of some representative examples can illustrate the points made hitherto and sum up Janček's aims as far as they can be seen in his compositional method. The pieces fall into two types - those with a single motif that is modified in its alternative sections (the second type of section tending to be darker in mood), and those with two or more very different motifs.

Perhaps the simplest example of the first type is the ninth, *V placi* [in tears], which has two dimensions - the grief over Olga's death, and the remembering of this. The motif is announced thus:

Example 39:



Janáček: *V placi*, 1-5

Janáček's double layer of barring refers to his free method of indicating a time-signature (seen under "Larghetto": a minim as the unit of reckoning). In this case each note after a bar-line, full or half, is to be accented, and the crotchet rest at the beginning is rhythmically important. The motif, however, is irregular in its ending at the end of a bar instead of at the beginning of one, especially as it begins on an upbeat. This is a common feature of the fifteen pieces that serves as a foil to the use of rhythmic and motivic ostinato. The first piece, for instance, announces its first melody over a quaver ostinato but presents this as irregular phrases: 5,6, 5,3,3,3, 5,3,3,3 (bars 1-39), and the second piece begins its phrases 4,2,1,2 (bars 1-9). *V placi*'s phrases are, in minim-units, 4,4,3,3,4,3. While such unevennesses are possibly folk-like they certainly also parallel the way the memory recalls things imperfectly at first.

The Mixolydian mode (the major diatonic scale with flattened seventh) is suggested by the use of the \underline{D} pedalpoint, for until the last line of the first page's four there is no $\underline{C\#}$. But the modality is ambiguous, for the pedalpoint can be regarded as the dominant of \underline{G} , as the key-signature (one sharp) indicates, and this is how the ear accustomed to diatonics perceives it on one level. Yet there is no resting on G either in the bass or in treble at the cadences, so that modality seems intended.

Modality, ambiguous or not, is seen in many of the pieces, and may be partly folk-influenced or derived, but seems to be more a product of

Janáček's search for new sounds. The best example of this is the treatment of the mainly black-note melody in the eighth piece, which is accompanied by a white-note ostinato, but ends on a white note (B). That it is not B-major is indicated by the variations that appear in its second half; its composition is therefore to do with its sound rather than any fixed modal system.

The pedalpoint lasts for the entire statement of the motif, when it shifts without preparation to the unrelated A^b (possibly intended as the tritone from D), where it remains before moving in diatonic steps to D^b at the end of this second section of only fourteen bars:

Example 40:

Janáček: *V placi*, 23-31

The shift in tonal centre and the modification of the first form of the motif (previous example) completely changes its character. The E natural and the A^{bb} suggest chromatic modification of the (Mixolydian) mode that is itself suggested by the A^b pedalpoint with the five-flat key signature, rather than a different (folk) mode, but the effect is to shift the tension of the piece to a different pitch from that of the first section. The effect of the *una corda* pedal specified should also be noticed: the whole second section is darker and sadder. On the older type of piano the *una corda* mechanism tends to change the tonal character more radically than on the modern piano, so that the effect is significant.

The structure of the piece is ABABA, without any development whatsoever except for the transformation of the initial motif in the B sections. Thus the piece is composed primarily of simple ostinati that

have both rhythmic and melodic repetition. In all pieces the ostinato effect is mesmeric, the most striking examples perhaps being that of the fifth and seventh. This repetition is like that of weeping, and of memory's fixing on poignant episodes or fragments, reliving them and their emotion obsessively. In this way the pieces are as affective in their repetition as other Art Nouveau: cognition ceases while emotion holds sway.

The first piece of the second set is untitled, and it is, with the second, one of those suppressed from the publication of the first set. Its motifs are:

Example 41:

Janáček: *Po zarostlem chodnicku* 2/1, 1-3, 15-16, 29-33

The first motif is of Janáček's characteristically asymmetrical rhythm, and forms a phrase that is also asymmetrical, and all the more striking as a result. It is repeated, and then heard against different basses, a minor third and then a fourth higher. Then, as it sounds against a pedalpoint on the dominant - which the other basses have been leading towards, a melodic fragment appears above it that becomes transformed later into the third motif. The importance of the first motif is its nature: it is more of an accompanimental figure than melodic motif, and such figures are often more important in the two sets than melody itself - another Art Nouveau characteristic, and part of its emphasis on asymmetry of patterning.

The second motif is obviously related to the first, being rhythmically similar, and can be seen in the tenor as canon, a device that has a *stretto* effect and increases the feeling of obsessive repetition.

This is increased when the first motif returns in single lines to act as a bridge to the mid-section, where the third motif appears.

This motif, prefigured over the first, as has been seen, begins like an aria, but its melodic line is soon twisted out of conventional shape, as can be seen in bar 32, and in its second phrase, which is similar to the first but begins on G^\sharp over a bass on B . Its third and fourth phrases are modifications of the first two, and similarly situated harmonically. After the strangeness of this section the whole of the first is repeated, with the same bridge of single-notes of M_1 joining it. These joinings are unprepared, an important feature of all the fifteen pieces: it is as if the sound shifts suddenly to a different plane, as if memory shifts through time.

A final word is necessary concerning Janáček's use of recognisable imagery in the pieces. The third, *Pojďte s námi!* [come with us], is obviously imagery of a folk-dance; the fourth, *Frydecka Panna Maria* [the Madonna of Frydeck], has chorale-like passages alternating throughout with the innocence-theme; and in later pieces there is clear musical imagery of birds flying (5) and a barn-owl screeching (10), as their titles indicate. The mere presence of such musical imagery does not make the pieces tone-poems, for their structures are repetitive, not narrative; their motifs and figures obsessively repeated over pedalpoints; and everywhere an emphasis on asymmetrical rhythms and chromatically shaped and modified melodic lines. The musical imagery is used not to portray scenery but to build patterned musical structures. This exactly parallels visual Art Nouveau's use of natural forms for its purposes of patterning.

Summary

Time as experience and concept is clearly expressible in musical terms, and in Art Nouveau means the exploration of experience or dream in Bergson's *time espace*. The excessive (in terms of normal canons of symmetry) repetition of musical motif, fragment or figure suggests the

endlessness of imagined or relived time, with pedalpoints suggesting the limited dimensionality of the timeless experience or dream.

APPEARANCES

<i>Suite Bergamasque</i> , 1890/1905	Debussy
1. <i>Prélude</i>	
2. <i>Menuet</i>	
3. <i>Clair de lune</i>	
4. <i>Passepied</i>	
<i>Masques</i> 1904	Debussy
<i>Masque</i> Op.63/1, 1911	Skryabin
<i>Maski</i> , 1916	Szymanowski
1. <i>Szecherezada</i>	
2. <i>Blazen Tantris</i>	
3. <i>Serenada Don Juana</i>	
<i>Enigme</i> Op.52/2, 1906	Skryabin
<i>Mirages</i> Op.70, 1920	Schmitt
2. <i>La tragique chevauchée</i>	

Concept

These set-names have to do with the difference between the way things seem and the way they are, an essential preoccupation of Art Nouveau. In Art Nouveau all appearance hides the shadowy world of the supernatural, but hints at its nature in the lines of its appearances. Not only are Art Nouveau figures concerned to hint at the powers of the unseen natural-mysterious world behind the seen, but at the sordid realities of human nature behind the masks we wear. (Similar terms in the repertory of the period - *Images*, *Estampes*, *Ombres*, *Reflets* and *Miroirs* - that are commonly thought to be impressionist also need to re-examined in the light of Art Nouveau, for each is ambiguous: besides its simple denotation *Images* and *Ombres* suggest versions, *Estampes* suggests resonances, *Reflets* and *Miroirs* the inverted or reversed image of reality.

Three composers use the term *masque*, which can denote two different forms of stereotyped and transparent subterfuge based around the wearing of masks: firstly a festivity where the identities of the masked revellers are supposedly hidden (the ballroom or street-fiesta masquerade), or secondly the theatre of the masked stock characters Arlequin, Pierrot, Columbine, Zerlina, Pantalón, Scaramouche and many others,³⁷ ultimately deriving from

the *commedia del'arte*'s contrasts of pathos and grotesquerie that touch much Art Nouveau, and that particularly infuse the satirical drawings of Aubrey Beardsley³⁸ and the other artists whose works feature masks - Henri Toulouse-Lautrec³⁹, Josef Auchtaller⁴⁰ and others. Most important of all is the place of the pantomime in French theatre, and the extensive repertory of poetry it creates⁴¹.

Debussy: Suite bergamasque

The uncertain derivation of *bergamasque* is discussed by Robert Schmitz⁴², and can lie in the dance, tapestry or the region of Bergamo in Italy, but has come to be associated with the Harlequin tradition of stock clowns in theatre and puppetry developed from the *commedia dell'arte* who all are allegorical vehicles for satirical comment on human society and its deceptions. Schmitz probably correctly feels that for Debussy the context of both words *masques* and *bergamasque* is to be found in Verlaine:

...que vont charmant masques et bergamasques

Jouant du luth et dansant et quasi

Tristes sous leurs déguisements fantasques⁴³

and the direction *Très vif et fantasque* for *Masques* agrees with this. Another important term in the quotation is *dansant*: the five pieces of *Masques* and *Suite bergamasque* should be seen as dances in the Harlequin tradition (including *Clair de lune* that features Pierrot's sad love), the implications of which will be discussed below.

In both types of masque appearances belie reality, with revellers in the first adopting the appearances of stereotyped or even fancy-dress characters and in the second the players presenting satirical actions through stereotyped characters. Associated with each are activities like dance, spectacle and various ritualized actions), but both involve excitement (the first the implication of flirtation outside normal social custom, the second that of the theatre) and some contrasting seriousness or pathos.

While the formal masked ball or masquerade and the *commedia dell'arte* were originally connected (and both themselves connected with the earlier formal staged masque), it is clear that to Debussy the term *masques* denotes the pantomime, which was elevated to the status of a serious art form by the extensive literature it inspired. There is a crucial function in all three types of performance for the mask itself: to conceal and reveal - symbolically to conceal the everyday person, so that the allegorical character represented may be revealed. Again the Art Nouveau sensibility's fascination with ambiguity is evident.

The wearing of masks by masqueraders or Harlequin characters is always symbolic of their "hiding" their real natures or inner thoughts. Thus Pierrot appears as clown but is really a melancholy lover; the dual dimensions of his character are much played upon and are transparent to the audience. Night-time is often an important auxiliary to the wearing of masks, where moonlight or torches connote concealment, transformation and fantasy, as opposed to the reality of daylight, and moonlight is important in the Pierrot theme for it is at night that he is alone and reveals his love for Columbine. Moonlight is a stock setting for love even in the most sophisticated theatre, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, where the lovers' world only exists by night.

The *Suite bergamasque* (composed circa 1880, revised 1903) is not innovatory in composition like the piano works that follow *D'un cahier d'esquisses* (1903). But for its time of composition it, with Debussy's other early works, is in the avant-garde of French music that is following the lead of Chabrier away from the heavy seriousness of late romanticism towards the rediscovery of a characteristically light French idiom that can employ modal, dissonant (for the time) and repetitive effects to achieve a new sound. (Arthur Hoérée and particularly Werner Keil analyze the innovations in the early works⁴⁴; while discussion of modality in Debussy usually concentrates on the later works, as, for example, that of Raymond

R. Park and Roy Howat⁴⁵, but Richard Parks⁴⁶ illustrates the pattern of modality in some of the earlier works in his examination of *Deux arabesques*/1.)

The suite is in effect four dance-movements, with the second and fourth receiving dance-names, but all being dances (dance as stylized action representing the stylized stage-actions of the bergamasque). All four show various sequences of the traditional Pierrot/Arlequin/Columbine story that is set in an imaginary quasi-children's world with the stock sequences of rivalry for the love of the fickle Columbine. The *Prélude* sets this scene, being full of festive-theatre imagery like the drum-and-cymbal crashes of bars 1 and 7, the trumpets of bars 11-14, the tumbling acrobatics of the motif in bar 20 that is much used throughout the piece, and the marching basses of bars 44-51. This is the theatre of Pierrot and the other masked characters, with the bar 20-motif possibly even representing the dual clowning and pathos of Pierrot.

The *Menuet* seems one danced by clowns, and it is perhaps possible to see this in the slow drolleries of the parallel thirds of bars 3-5, the chromatics of bars 16-17, the staccati of 18-21 and the octave sweeps of bars 50-56. There is a moment of seriousness in the key-change section in bars 82-96 that contrasts with the buffoonery before and after it, for the simple downwards scale-motif of bars 82-83 that is mildly sad is developed into something more passionate by bar 95; this is perhaps the melancholy behind the mask, whose expression is still couched in the idiom of clowning gesture.

Clair de lune continues this mild melancholy in its main melodic motif (bars 1-2, expounded in bars 3-9), together with the falling-scale motif of bars 15-18 and bars 41-42, echoing and developing the moment of passion in the *Menuet*. It is important to see *Clair de lune* in the context of bergamasque as being about the sadness of a clown, so that the pathetic clown-gestures of the first three notes of the piece (and their development

in bar 9), the extravagance of appeal in the repetitions of bars 15-26, the importance of the acciaccatura in bar 18, the semiquaver accompanimental motifs of bars 49-50, and the pathetic appeal of the quaver-crotchet melodic leaps in bars 37-40 are mock-pathos, not impressionistic moonlight scene-painting (to assume which, as is still popularly done, is to ignore its context, set firmly by the overall set-title).

To complete the four dance-movements the *Passepied* returns to the activity of the *Prélude*, but this time in a minor key over an ostinato bass, so that the simple clowning-imagery is tinged with the pathos of the middle movements as the *Prélude* was not. This is shown in echoes like those of bars 70-78 that clearly refer to the third movement's pathetic leaps referred to above (bars 37-40), the repetitive fuller chords of bars 48-51 and the following sequences to bar 62 that echo the third movement's 15-24, and the arpeggio-figure of bars 96-99 that reverses the movement of the appeal-figure of the third movement's bars 51-58. There are thus links between the movements of the suite that argue against taking any one out of its context. The whole suite is essentially and simply Art Nouveau.

Debussy: *Masques*

Masques of 1904⁴⁷ is a single piece that may have been planned as part of a larger *Suite bergamasque* of three pieces (the other two being *L'isle joyeuse* and perhaps *D'un cahier d'esquisses*)⁴⁸. The four pieces that were eventually published under the *Suite bergamasque* title in 1905 - *Prélude*, *Menuet*, *Clair de lune*, *Passepied* - date from around 1890. At that date the *Passepied* was titled *Pavane* and modelled to some extent on Fauré's; the title was retained even in the Fromont first proofs (1905)⁴⁹. Robert Orledge notes that Debussy made substantial cuts just before publication, comprising twenty-five bars from the *Menuet* and in particular two bars from the *Prélude* that show "striking similarities with the figure first heard in bar 18 of Fauré's *Clair de lune* (1887), although he left in the subsequent bars 32 and especially 33-4 (cf. *Clair de lune* bars 51-

52) "50.

Debussy's *Masques* of 1904 is set in the same pantomime realm as *Suite bergamasque*, beginning with rapid (*très vif et fantasque*) staccato alternations of melodic notes and accompanimental bare fifths that recall the imagery of drum-rolls and slapstick of *Suite bergamasque*'s *Prélude*.

Example 42:

Très vif et fantasque ($\text{♩} = 104$)

pp détaché et rythmé

Debussy: *Masques*, 1-4

The detached bare fifths immediately invite comparison with those at the beginning of *Menuet* from *Suite bergamasque*, and the rhythmic patterning with some use of bare fifths is echoed in Ravel's *Alborada del gracioso* and Szymanowski's *Blazen Tantris*. All are clown-pieces, so that it is possible to identify the device as Art Nouveau musical imagery symbolizing the artificial, almost mechanical, nature of clowning where the spontaneity is in fact professional routine - typical Art Nouveau appearance belying its reality.

Since the piece's general character seems to fit well with those of *Suite bergamasque* it becomes even more probable that *masques* was here adopted as a variant of *bergamasque* by Debussy because the two words appear together in the *Fêtes galantes* of Verlaine quoted earlier; the naming of his projected ballet *Masques et bergamasques* of 1909 supports this view.

The accompanimental figures are syncopated through much of the piece and emphasized both by their staccato treatment and periodic accenting of the first beat of bars as contrast. This syncopation is perhaps a representation of the surprise and tricks of *bergamasque*, reinforced by the clashing of consecutive fifths in bars like 15-16 and 19-21, 8_7b chords in bars like 52-55, 5_2 chords in bars like 64-79, and alternations of seconds at the octave as in bars 80-109.

The vividness of this writing is contrasted with episodes of quieter action (bars 148-244, 333-381) where there are touches of an angular lyricism (cast in octaves in the tenor) that may suggest the grotesquerie of clown-pathos. The piece is structured ABABA+coda, with the coda being in effect a third B-section. These are the quieter ones, and since the pace does not relent the transition is marked by changes to remote keys: a C# a G^b G-C a (the quieter sections are double-underlined, and lower-case letters denote the minor). In the G^b section there are three points where four-bar units briefly interrupt the general rhythmic ostinato of the whole work: with sustaining pedal held down the hands move towards each other in three-against-two rhythm on black notes only. The effect is of momentary confusion and hiatus. At the end of the work a different four-bar figure occurs over sixteen bars, but still very soft and sustained; this is followed by a final, *ppp* echo of the work's main motif for four bars more. The hiatus-units, however, show that a different face is concealed behind the mask of incessant rhythmical figures that dominate all the rest of the work; a different sound-realm is glimpsed for some rare moments.

Apart from these few moments, (twenty-one bars in nearly four hundred), the basic four-bar rhythmic ostinato of the rest of the piece is obsessive. Its repetitiveness is excessive and hypnotic, and must be puzzling if approached from outside the Art Nouveau context, which perhaps accounts for its rarely being heard, like some other works in the repertory (Rakhmaninov's *Fantasie-tableaux* suite, Schmitt's *La traçique chevauchée*, for instance). The almost unremitting and unchanging rhythmic ostinato is without the variation that Stravinsky gives his *Pétrouchka*, and without the dramatic ending of Ravel's *Bolero*, so that the hypnotic effect is powerful.

Not only is the primary four-bar unit a rhythmic entity - it also forms a series of pedalpoints, and often an inverted as well as bass one. The chief variety of the piece is that of ostinato/pedalpoint figure, but

each change feels the same because of the driving rhythmic unit. Many of these pedals extend over several four-bar units, so that harmonic progress is arrested, and the antics of the masquers are seen as gestures rather than a linear series of actions.

It is a remarkable work in its energy and intensity. Once its obsessiveness is appreciated as being deliberately affective Art Nouveau, its character can be understood as well as felt.

Skryabin: *Masque* op.63/1

This short work (one page, four sections) is one of *Deux poèmes* Op.63, the other being *Étrangeté*; both refer to something mysterious. Used in such a context *Masque* may simply imply concealment without any particular festive or theatrical association; in this sense it is just as essentially an Art Nouveau concept as festive masquerade or Harlequin comedy. Although it is marked *Allegretto* 6_8 it is quite different in mood from Debussy's *Masques*, and its title in the singular seems to denote the properties of the mask itself rather than a group of masked performers. The key to the mystery lies in the nature of the main motif itself.

Example 43:

Skryabin: *Masque*, 1-5

It can be seen as a sensuous winding-motif of the type seen throughout the keyboard repertory. Its direction *Avec une douceur cachée* [with a concealed sweetness] implies that its sweetness is a mask for its artifice. This artifice is expressed in the serpentine arabesque that gradually ascends to B in bar 5, over three D crotchets foreign to the octatonic pitch-set employed (set O^1 , beginning on C), whose falling resolution to the set (shown by the circles and arrows) produces an emotional effect: such a repeated falling motion is affective in most contexts (cf. the

falling appoggiaturas in bar 4 of the violin solo of *Erbarme dich* from Bach's *St Matthew Passion*).

But as the winding-motif approaches its final note B it slows after its mid-course *accelerando* and becomes even more *énigmatique*, because B is outside the O^1 pitch set, and since it does not follow Skryabin's normal practice with notes accidental to the set in use (resolution by semitonal movement, even if delayed) it must be of another set. What is happening is that the O^1 set is gradually transforming into what is either the O^3 set (the octatonic set beginning from D) or a wholetone set (based on C). The enigma is to decide which. Appearances at this point are ambiguous, but the music is certainly beguilingly sweet.

The example above constitutes the first "quarter" of the piece. After a modified repetition of this the winding motion suddenly freezes in a series of three chords in which the hands move apart over the steps of a diminished minor triad marked *bizarre*. The chords themselves are formed from tritones, which seem to be in at least some of these pieces an evil symbol, recalling the mediaeval prohibition *Mi contra Fa est Diabolus in musica*⁵¹. The left hand spans a tritone based on G/D^b while the right, a major tenth above on B spans B/F/B. This chordal sequence is repeated twice, alternating with more winding arabesque, before the final section of the piece returns to the material of the first. The piece ends with the same strange-sounding transformation of pitch-sets as in bars 4-5.

Skryabin: *Enigme* op.52/2

An enigma is a riddle or puzzle - something whose meaning is hidden. In this work the title may have to do with the nature of the mystic forces he believed in, but such Symbolist denotation does not negate their Art Nouveau connotation of the deceits of appearance, for Art Nouveau absorbs Symbolism's emphasis on the dichotomy between appearance and reality. Skryabin's indications for M_1 are *Etrange, capricieusement* and for M_2 *Voluptueux, charmé*. The nature of M_1 is clear enough from the description

before the music is heard confirming it, but that of M_2 only becomes intelligible once it is seen in the context of similar second motifs in sonatas 6-10 (to be examined in Chapter 14). In the sonatas the terms *Voluptueux/voluptueuse*, *charmé* are seen to symbolize the arts of a seducer/seductress-witch figure, and are associated with evil devices like the tritone as *diabolus*, and processes that reverse normal procedures, like saying words backwards to cast spells. While this is symbolist superstition, it is also Art Nouveau imagery, in the work a strange, capricious spirit or force appears with or as a voluptuous charming one. The first looks fearful, the second disarming, but both are riddles.

Example 44:

Skryabin: Enigme, 1-6, 24-28

The run and little skip that the left hand makes in M_1 is typical musical imagery of spirits (compare Debussy's *La danse de Puck* and *Les fées sont d'esquises danseuses*, or the beginning of Josef Suk's *Swan and Peacock Polka* for instance). It is followed by the sharp rhythm of the *pp* chords and a *léger* descent via an indirect route of arabesque that **falls** through the tritones $\underline{A^b} \backslash \underline{D} \backslash \underline{A^b}$ - the symbolism of spells or evil is thus indicated. M_2 begins over an arpeggiated dominant seventh and finishes on a bass that rises a tritone from D^b/G . The two motifs are thus linked through falling and rising tritones. In bar 28 the beginning of alternating arpeggiated figures in each hand can be seen in the example - and these are a tritone apart. The work does not employ symmetrical pitch-sets, but exploits the contrasts between perfect and imperfect intervals in a basically diatonic context.

In bars 18-20 (part of the work's second section, where the M_1

sequence is repeated and modified a major third higher), the bass rises through a diminished seventh, and in bars 21-23 it rises through the first two steps of this to make a diminished minor triad. Both chords are imperfect, symbolically countering with their "evil", as they reveal themselves, the perfect interval (major third) at which M₁ is being repeated. The emphasis given in this analysis of the symbolism of perfect and imperfect intervals may, for this one work, seem far-fetched, but when the work is seen against the context of the late sonatas, and in the light of Skryabin's intense interest in theosophy and symbolism at this time, it will become clear that he is not writing absolute music.

M₂ is repeated a tone higher in its second sequence (30ff) but over the same D^b chord (7^b), which this time rises to A - the interval of a minor sixth, foreign to the D^b diatonic tonality of the key-signature. On this A the bass forms a pedal (33-38), and then falls a tritone to F^b. From here there are two interesting further falls - a major and minor third (to B and A^b), over which the alternating arpeggios set a tritone apart noticed earlier interplay. The bass minor third counters the perfect major third, and the work ends with a falling VIII\V^b\I - again not just tritones but falling tritones.

Whatever the precise symbolistic significance of the rising and falling of intervals, from the point of Art Nouveau it is their feel or effect that is significant. As imperfect intervals and chords in the context of the strange sounds of the work (for instance the diminished chords of 5 and the chromatic, winding nature of M₂) they feel odd to the listener. M₂ is of course an example of the winding, sensuous motif-type found throughout the Art Nouveau repertory, and its indications *Voluptueux*, *charmé* is typical Art Nouveau sensuality.

Szymanowski: Maski

Szymanowski's *Maski* comprise three very different pieces - *Szecherezade*, *Blazen Tantris*, *Serenada Don Juana* - in which the performer

is spinning a web of make-belief through dance (all seem to be based on varieties of dance-rhythm). In the first, Szecherezada must invent tales for a thousand and one nights to save her life. (As with Szymanowski's *Metopy*, the poems of Hafiz and the Mediterranean travels may be seen as part of the background atmosphere to this piece). In the second, *Tantris* is based on the mad clown in Ernst Hardt's *Tantris der Narr*, whose antics look merely clownish but are manic; the character is based on the reference to *Tantris* as an anagrammatic version of "Tristan" in the Tristan legend that follows Tristan's initial deceiving of Isolde by assuming that name. Hardt's drama features an actual devil-mask that symbolizes the deceit that Tristan as *Tantris* originally practised on Isolde, and constantly opposes reality and fantasy in the manner of early Hofmannsthal. In the third, Don Giovanni serenades Elvira's maid (II,1) disguised in Leporello's clothes (masks, disguises and appearances being part of the opera's whole purpose). In all three there are actual masks - Szecherezada's veil, the devil-mask, and masks worn by Don Giovanni (I,1) and the avenging trio of Anna, Ottavio and Elvira (I,4); more important, however, are the deceptions each practises, the metaphorical masks used. In *Serenada Don Juana*, however, there is an important further play on appearances: the Don seems not the vigorous mediaeval villain of Mozart's opera but the Art Nouveau parody of him, in which all his sophistications are becoming, as he ages, risible instead of powerful, so that he is like the impotent old masked satyrs of Aubrey Beardsley's drawings.

Szecherezada

Transformation of motif or its treatment is the basis of all three pieces, and is distinct from normal compositional repetition with variation, or development by extension, augmentation, or contrasting treatment. *Szecherezada*'s first *pianissimo*, *dolcissimo* melodic motif (bars 3-6, right hand) undergoes development in passages like bars 17-22 (bass - inversion) and 180-192 (extension) but actual transformation in bars 115-

122 (*sempre crescendo e accelerando - con passione*), 210-225 (*vivace agitato*) and 255-285 (*poco sostenuto, molto agitato e drammatico*), only to return to its original *dolcissimo* form in the final bars 295-312.

Transformation is furthered by a loosening of tonality - a feature of most of Szymanowski's post-1913 composition noted by Alistair Wightman and others⁵². It can be seen from the whole-tone first chord (bar 3) and the left-hand chords of bars 21-22, bitonal passages like bar 18, alternating unrelated tonalities in the left-hand motif of bar 19 that seem influenced by Stravinsky's C/F# alternations in *Pétrouchka*, all of which are mixed with chromatic variation. The effect is thus one of tonal deception and mystery as the music passes through or alternates between recognisable tonalities and the atonality of the tritone and chromatics⁵³.

Mystery is also emphasized in directions (*fantastico* - bar 193, *misterioso* - bar 88) and seen in the *pianissimo* ostinato A of bars 1-11 and E of bars 17-19; it is particularly noticeable in the low passage in bars 71-82 and the following *misterioso* passage of bars 87-100 that features repetition and chromatic alternation of rapid *pianissimo* bass notes as ostinato-figures.

Another important characteristic of the work - its duality of method - reveals another aspect of the set-title *Masks*. Throughout the thousand and one nights Sheherazade is maintaining a skilful and desperate deception of Schariar, and in the work this can be seen reflected in the use of independent sequences, often bitonal, where the hands present different motifs simultaneously, or different aspects of the same one. From bars 3-10 the right hand presents the first melodic motif based on a dropping semitone and rising third while the left presents a complementary motif, using these same intervals, that is in effect a commentary developed from the one being played above:

Example 45:

Szymanowski: *Szecherezada*, 1-10

Until bar 9 both hands are restricted to downwards semitonal movements or upwards movements of a third, so that the two motifs being announced are closely linked, despite their slightly different moods. It is quite possible to define these moods in non-subjective terms: the right hand's dropping semitones (cf. Skryabin's *Masque*) and upwards thirds are clearly directly emotive, achieving an appeal that is restrained rather than passionate because so quiet. At the same time the left hand, moving in crotchets and being chordal, lacks the rhythmic variety and initial unisonal emphasis of the right and is inevitably more restricted in the mood it is able to develop: it is less forthright - more introspective. These are two faces, the obverse and the reverse, two appearances of the same motif. This principle continues in bars 12-16, where the right hand preludes on broken chords while the left turns these into more rapid arpeggiated chords and trills, emphasizing a more urgent side of the general sequence.

From bars 17-20 the roles are reversed, with the right hand now being urgent and more single-minded in its rapid repetition of one note: here the interchange of hand-roles (and thus of appearances) disorientates the listener, the legerdemain reflecting the *coup* Szecherezade is carrying through.

Further disorientation is derived from the use of different tonalities in either hand, often emphasized by contrary movement, as is again seen in bars 3-11, where the right-hand figure is moves around an implied A[#] tonal base (on which it comes to rest in bar 11) while the left moves in opposite directions and around the A pedal that sounds throughout. Since this whole passage is repeated and extended at the end of the work, with the two pedals a semitone apart sounding quietly through to the end, there can be no doubt that Szymanowski wished to emphasize the essential duality of the work, relecting the conflict between the face Szecherazade has to present to Schariar and her secret intention to escape his cruelty. This duality and interchangeability of appearances continues into bars 29-67, 123-141, 160-167, 178-192, 195-202 and 255-312 (the end of the piece).

There is also a more subtle ambiguity - despite her wish to escape she is binding herself to him more each night with each successive tale, and perhaps the piece's rhythmic subtleties may reflect this, for instance in the syncopations and suspensions of the melodic motif of bars 171ff and 210-225.

But the constant interplay of voices conveys this ambiguity even more. In the analysis below two passages are simplified so that the relative movement of two voices (amongst the texture of other voices and the complexities of rhythmic interactions) can be seen. In each case the lower voice is almost an ostinato under the arabesque of the upper (the upper part considerably simplified in the first analysis).

Analysis 11:

The image shows two staves of handwritten musical notation. The top staff is labeled '3-11' and contains a melodic line with numerous sharps and accidentals, including a 'bis' marking above the staff. The bottom staff is labeled '57-61' and contains a more rhythmic, ostinato-like line with many flats and accidentals, including a 'trill' marking below the staff. The notation is dense and complex, reflecting the 'winding chromaticism' mentioned in the text.

Szymanowski: *Szecherazada* 3-11, 57-61

The emotive effect of the winding chromaticism has been noticed earlier,

and its combination with the narrow compass of the quasi-ostinato below reinforces this.

It will be seen that the two voices bear only a tenuous tonal relationship, especially as in the first case both voices are heard over an A pedal, and in the second over an E^b pedal. The effect is of voices of independent but broadly co-ordinating tonality. Alistair Wightman has noticed bitonality as a technical effect without realizing its wider implications for duality of presentation of mood, and hence its importance as a characteristic Art Nouveau ambiguity. Most studies of Szymanowski's middle-period works comment on their bitonality⁵⁴, with Stanislaw Oledzki even pointing to tritonal passages⁵⁵, and Jim Samson in a more general sense talking of their "pantonality"⁵⁶, but none notices this as an essential Art Nouveau character (ambiguity) either in the music or the literary models on which the middle-period music is based. Peter Andraschke, however, in his recent (1985) study of the Bethge settings notes both the literary and musical evidence of Art Nouveau.⁵⁷

Everything in the work seems to point to effect - transformation, mystery, juxtaposition of tonalities, arabesque against motif, but above all the jumble of sensuous sounds that result from the complex and constantly changing textures and figures, seemingly combined without reference to clashes of harmony and rhythm. Szymanowski's approach seems to be empirical, with the emphasis on sensuous effect. The score is crowded with instructions to the player that concern manner - there is scarcely a single line without some detailed word-indication (*ansioso, perdendosi, slentando, marcato, tenuto, allargando, piu mosso, rallentato, espressivo, sostenuto, dolce e tranquillo, scherzando, poco agitato, secco, subito, cantando, stringendo* - often with further adverbial modification) to modify normal musical indications of tempo or manner. In this sense the score itself can be seen as mannered, but as a whole the directions reflect the overall emphasis on sensuousness of the whole work.

Blazen Tantris

The title denotes two different sorts of deception - the clown's stock pretences that cause laughter, and his covering his insanity with this, so that his comic frenzies contain a manic, even evil, element.

There may just possibly be a further complexity, for the melodic motif in bar 30 may refer to Isolde's "*Der "Tantris" mit sorgender List sich nannte*" (*Tristan und Isolde* I,3), and the extension of the "manic" motif (bars 24-25, whose naming will be justified below) in bars 26-27 and 36-37 is very reminiscent of the *Leitmotiv* showing Tristan bewitched by love for Isolde:

Example 46:

Szymanowski: *Blazen Tantris*, 24-27, 30

All this may be to argue too closely, for there are other references - to Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps*, for instance, in the same bar 30 motif and the recurrent motif announced in bars 24-25 - simply showing unconscious influence.

Transformation is again implied in the title and seen in the music. It applies more to fragments than to whole motifs or sequences, especially to the important melodic jump of a fifth, seen in the "manic" motif (announced in bars 24-25) as bold and startling by the detailed accents and performance indications placed under each note in this *capriccioso* e

scherzando passage, yet *espressivo* in bar 30, and bold again in bar 36 - different appearances of the same melodic element. Wilhem Kloppenberg and Jan Blonski have both drawn attention to what they respectively term ecstasy and Dionysian characters in this music, with Blonski tracing this to Greek models and finding evidences of it in Szymanowski's writings⁵⁸. Jim Samson has similarly used the term Dionysian⁵⁹, and Teresa Chylinska makes the connection with Szymanowski's *Król Roger* and its mystical union of bodily and divine love⁶⁰. The use, therefore, of a term like "manic" for a motif's character would seem to accord with Szymanowski's own intentions to portray extremes in this music, and with the general tone of Hardt's drama (which seems to have elements of travesty).

The first of the clowning motifs (bars 3-4) is seen, simplified of its octave leaps, in the Tristan-like motif already mentioned (bar 30), where it is transformed into an expressive form: each contains the leap of a fifth followed by a descending scale of four notes, startling and acrobatic in its first form, emotive in its second. Yet another form of this motivic germ is found in the important motif announced in bars 40-41 (*dolcissimo espressivo*), which follows the shape of the bar 30 melody while lessening the leap to a fourth and the downwards scale to three notes, and sounding as a real echo of bar 30 and hence possibly of Isolde's lament. (There is still another dimension to this motif, for it is an inversion of the second bar of the "manic" motif (bars 24-25).) Thus this melodic shape is presented in at least three forms - *capriccioso*, *espressivo*, *dolcissimo* - very different in manner, but to the ear very like in shape.

A third example of transformation is the first melodic motif of the piece, announced in bar 20 (*dolce marcato dolente - espressivo*) but seen later as *vivace* in the passage from bar 54 to bar 58 where each note is preceded by an *acciaccatura* at the ninth or tenth, and the bizarre effect heightened by the left hand's parallel figure with *acciaccaturas* at the sixth; the motif reappears in still another manner - *pianissimo*, *molto*

vivace e agitato - from bars 73-81 with the dramatic effect of broken chords for the first two quavers and an emphasized staccato chord for the third. All these are clear examples of transformation, as distinct from development, of motif or sequence.

The nature of Tantris' deception - in the Wagner drama of Isolde, and in Hardt's drama of everyone, including himself - is seen in the veiling or deliberate confusion of tonality, which is a marked feature of the work. The opening bars having the right hand based on D while the left is based on C#; by bar 5 the hands have reversed their tonal bases, and remain opposed until bar 20. When the principal motif is announced from bar 24, the right hand is confined to the sharps and the left to the naturals. From bar 34 there is an intermediate tonal passage over a B pedal (bars 28-32) that in bar 33 resolves momentarily to Bb, when the whole pattern is repeated in bars 34-40. This sort of alternation between simple and complex tonalities is carried through the whole work, with pedals used to emphasize tonal passages (bars 44-46, 59-61 [A^b], 73-76, 86-88, and contrast with sharps/naturals deployment of the hands (bars 82-85), and atonal passages like bars 13-15 and 54-58. To add to the tonal complexity there are sequences with conflicting double pedals in bars 46, 51, 100, 107 and 108. All these devices produce a constantly shifting sense of tonality and powerfully reinforce the title's implications of deceptive appearances.

The work proceeds by opposing sequences that produce a confusion of mood-types, as can be seen from bars 1-46 alone: *buffo e capriccioso*, *espressivo*, *dolente*, *avvivando*, *scherzando*, *dolce*, *subito scherzando*, *dolce*, *espressivo*, *avvivando*, *dolce* - the pattern is continued throughout the piece. There are also deliberate indications signifying quiet mystery - *misterioso*, *morendo*, *perdendosi* - that are used in passages of dual tonality (bars 47-48, 53, 101-108).

The quicker sequences - the *buffo e capriccioso* passages - feature gymnastic figurations whose broken and rapid motions suggest clowning and

acrobatics (bars 1-19, 82-85, 103). These are associated with the first melodic motif of bar 20 that is always accompanied by acrobatic figuration (bars 20-23, 64-68, 73-81). As has been remarked earlier, there are bare fifths (circus fiddles?) and ostinato rhythms that seem to represent the pantomime, like those of Debussy's *Masques* and Ravel's *Alborada del gracioso* - the latter being in spirit and subject very like this work, for both are a study of the grotesqueness of exaggerated clowning. The *capriccioso e scherzando* passages are based on the "manic" motif (bars 24-25) whose suddenness, dissonance and violence (always accompanied by *acciaccatura*, and always accented, sometimes *staccato*, sometimes *sforzando*), marks it out as being more than the clowning-imagery it might appear if its manner were not so startling. This is the element of insanity that Tantris seeks to hide under his clowning, and that this is so is symbolically to be seen in bars 77, 79-81 and 87-89 where the left hand interrupts development of the clowning motif with the sudden first three notes of the manic motif, showing the madness underlying the laughter, and illustrating Tantris' schizophrenic nature. Here the mask falls for a moment, and even Tantris' crazy artifices cannot conceal his true nature - not even from himself. Throughout its length, the work shows a fundamental opposition throughout between the sharp rhythm of the manic motif and the other more sensuous ones, with hints of the manic-motif rhythm punctuating the most sensuous passages - bars 51-53, 100-108 - and bold statements of it alternating with them elsewhere.

Serenada Don Juana

Don Juan conceals his true nature as rake under the pretence of sincerity. As in the other two pieces the most important way this is reflected in the music is in its transformation of motif-treatment, like that of the prelude-motif of bars 2-5 and 22-25 (*dolce arpeggiando*) to *vivace scherzando, deciso, marcatissimo* in bars 81-88, completely changing its nature. There is also a change in the treatment of the second motif,

the first part of the serenade proper, from bars 6-21 (*piano, quasi recitando, espressivo dolce amoroso*) to bars 26-41, where the melody is in octaves (*mezzo-forte, espressivo, with two changes in manner (avvivando)* and an increase in passion to *fortissimo, ma dolce*. The serenade-melody *quasi recitando* is in a free but not irregular rhythm and shows typical sensuous chromatic winding of shape:

Example 47: Poco meno quasi recitando $\text{♩} = 144$

Szymanowski: *Serenada Don Juana*, 6-21

The sequence in bars 53-72 is a study in transformability: the melodic motif from bars 53-55 is announced *forte, sostenuto, appassionato*, in bar 56 *subito pianissimo dolcissimo*, in bar 57 *avvivando, crescendo molto*, in bar 58 *subito forte con passione* and *subito sforzando*, in bar 60 *capriccioso*, in bar 61 *subito meno mosso, dolce afflitto*, in bar 62 *espressivo, rubato*: this is Don Juan exploiting the whole emotional gamut, so that the simple serenade itself becomes a device of the greatest sophistication.

Transformation or duality is seen in the bitonality of the great opening cadenza, where in the rapid runs after the prolonged first trill the left hand sweeps the sharps while the right sweeps the naturals, and at its end the left reiterates its pedal of D^{\flat} while the right varies a figure based on C . In the serenade-sequences that follow the hands commence a

dual tonality until bar 11 and resume it in bars like 22-25, 42-43 and many others, particularly over the long left-hand pedal of bars 61-67 and its following bars 68-75. As in the other pieces of the set, the hands sometimes cross tonalities simultaneously, further confusing tonal horizons, together with pedal-like basses that denote a third tonality (bars 89-102).

The contrast between the free rhythm of the serenade, as opposed to the regularity of the strumming-figure (2-5) that precedes it, tends to veil the simple dual tonal centres of each.

Analysis 12:							
bars		2	6	22	26	42	53
strumming		D ^b		D ^b		D ^b	
accompaniment	B		B		B		
serenade		A ^b		A ^b		E ^b	
accompaniment			G ^b		G ^b		A ^b
Szymanowski: <i>Serenada Don Juana</i> , strumming and song-motifs							

Both the strumming and the song maintain a simple relationship with each other, and in their related D^b and A^b centres can be seen to cohere. But each has the same tenuous relationship with its accompanimental figure, which is of a different tonality set a tone below. Only at the third appearance of the serenade is harmony between serenade and accompaniment reached, as if until this point Don Juan is no more master of himself than Tantris der Narr: the further Tantris drives his deception the more his schizoid nature is revealed, while the further Don Juan pursues his, the less his deception shows.

The principle of deception or mask is shown in the sophisticated serenader's devices that seek to sweep the *inamorata* off her feet, indicated from the outset by the six lines of improvisatory cadenza that begin with *fantastico tremolo lungo* and features rushes alternated with long trills as pedal-points, finishing with left-hand rapid repetitions of D^b inside the right-hand tritone figure based on C: the effect is of tonal mystery through the semitonal clash and the indefiniteness of the tritone.

This is furthered by the continuing bitonality of the hands in bars 2-5 and particularly by the broken time and freely chromatic (using $\underline{C^b}$ and \underline{C} , $\underline{D^b}$ and \underline{D} , $\underline{A^b}$ and \underline{A} as if equal parts of some exotic scale) tonality of the first serenade motif proper from bar 6. This chromatic freedom is emphasized throughout the piece where the hands are often working together in the same nominal tonality: the second part of the serenade-melody (bars 53ff) where the melody is sounded in octaves forte, sostenuto, appassionato has the same free chromaticism of both melody and accompaniment, in which the unexpected melodic intervals and accompanimental chords throughout are either strange in themselves (bars 53 and 58, left hand; bar 55 right hand, as well as the insistence on $\underline{G^b}$ and $\underline{B^b}$ towards the end of the sequence in bars 58-64) or in combination, since they are imperfectly related. This sequence is obviously passionate, but the passion is unsettling and almost weird: the mysteries of love are becoming jumbled and antipathetic.

As Don Juan switches restlessly from one serenader's device to another the continuity and coherence of the various effects is weakened. Throughout the whole of the serenade itself (bars 6-118) there is tension between passionate intention and its broken realization, as if Don Juana's passion, although expressed with every sophistication of his long experience, is now becoming ridiculous, so that he is seen as a feeble old lecher. Nonetheless, the undoubted intention of the opening and closing cadenzas (bars 1 and 125-143) is to dazzle with display of virtuosity and create confusion with effects ranging from *ppp* to *sfff*.

Underlying the Don Juan story is its final irony, that in the end Juan's compulsion to entrap women entraps himself. It is possible that this is intended to be symbolically realized in the underlying rhythmical duality of the piece. *Serenada* is rhythmically the most complex of the three pieces, especially in the serenade proper, where multiplicity of rhythmic units provide great complexity and ambiguity: these units vary between $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{4}{8}$, $\frac{5}{8}$ and $\frac{3}{8}$ in bars 2-21 where the serenade is first heard and

there are passages where different strands contradict each other rhythmically - 68-72, 89-97. On the one hand this represents the opposition of sincerity and deception, but on the other hand it may possibly indicate that Juan's purpose is no longer sure, that he is becoming as confused as his victims. In this way the piece, in typical Art Nouveau fashion, seems gesture rather than action.

Schmitt: *Mirages/2 - La tragique chevauchée*

In choosing the set-title *Mirages* Florent Schmitt⁶¹ specifically denotes the delusions or mirages of appearance. The first work - *Tristesse de Pan* has already been discussed: when Pan blows on his reed-pipes he cannot tell whether it is his melancholy song that is heard or echoes of the mocking, seductive laughter of Syrinx, who is amongst the reeds from which the pipes were made.

The second work, *La tragique chevauchée* [the tragic ride] is inspired by Byron's *The Giaour*⁶², in which Leila, a Turkish slave has loved a Giaour or infidel. When her master hears of it he has her flung into the sea, whereupon her lover embarks on a furious, deadly ride to avenge her death in terrible manner. He succeeds, but is cursed and suffers hallucinations. He thinks he sees the slain Leila in her shroud but can only embrace the air, for the furious ride that has led him to avenge her death has also doomed him to suffering and death.

The death-rider is a figure in European folklore, from masked knights (for the word "chevauchée" as "tourney" has mediaeval origins⁶³) to the legend of a damned rider, condemned to ride furiously forever and cast a curse on those he encounters by night; the horse is supposed to be heard as an omen, and the rider may be the devil or Death. This is partly connected with the *Erlkönig* story in which the father is fleeing Death. The orchestral tone-poem by Sibelius, *Night-ride and Sunrise* Op.55, is another possible model.

La tragique chevauchée is a work completely dominated by its

obsessiveness of rhythm, which is based on imagery of galloping. In this respect it is perhaps the most extreme work in the repertory, with only Liszt's *Csárdás obstiné* and Ravel's *Le gibet* approaching it for sheer intensity of ostinato effect. The semiquaver-quaver rhythm is present throughout almost the entire three hundred and thirty bars, and although the figuration ranges over the keyboard in a variety of forms, the rhythm drives relentlessly.

The galloping rhythmic figure is always in the harshest harmonies from the very first chords, where the right hand's 7_{5b} precedes the left's 7_{5b} at the minor tenth below, the tritonic element in both chords and the trisemitonic interval between them setting the developmental basis of most of the piece.

Yet the work, although dominated by the ostinato rhythm, is quite complex and ambiguous in character. It is frequently difficult to be sure of tonality, for instance. Despite the implied pedal of A^b for the first thirty bars, and similar ones elsewhere in the piece, (as well as real pedals like those of bars 78-84) there is a strong feeling of tonal ambiguity as the progressions tend to follow trisemitonic rather than any scalar or modulatory movement. It is like the nightmare of being suspended in time as the trisemitonic ostinato urges escape and yet makes escape impossible because movement seems trapped within its rising and falling minor thirds. The only pause in the piece's ostinato rhythm occurs in bars 310-321, where the melody moves slowly in wholetone steps within the tritone over chords that mostly move in minor thirds, so that even here the same two ambiguous intervals still control movement. Perhaps the most important feature of the dissonances is their being so emphatically expressed through this insistent rhythm, with even the softest passages like the opening bars being punctuated by loud 7^b_{5b} chords.

For the first hundred bars the harsh galloping motif dominates completely and is seen to represent the headlong ride to avenge Leila's

death. But at the end of bar 94, almost unnoticed, the second motif begins in an eastern-sounding pitch-set that is an octatonic scale with the minor third of many folk-scales (based on $\underline{E}b$: 1212 1312, counting in semitonal intervals). The harshness of the galloping figure is such that the character of this melodic motif appearing with it is subdued - a sad and strange feeling that reflects the sadness of Leila's death and the later tragedy of the giaour that his vengeance has achieved nothing. For the greater part of the poem it is his anger that overshadows all else; only gradually is the full tragedy of what he has done revealed, and the pathos of Leila's death transformed into the realization of his doom. From bar 223 the melodic motif begins to develop through repetition into something more importunate and definite, and in bars 240-267 causes the galloping figure to become more urgent and forceful until it collapses in the anticlimactic bars 290-303. From this point almost to the end the melodic motif is the focus of attention, and reveals itself finally in its fully transformed state as a simplified series of wholetone phrases (310ff) of a more settled but eerie character - the giaour's own death.

Summary

The illusory nature of appearance in these works has been symbolized by transformation of motif and its treatment, or use of bitonal or other dual effects, suggesting the shifting nature of appearances. Through all the works there are ambiguities and strangeness of effect, often excessive by conventional standards, that are typical of Art Nouveau.

End-notes

- 1 Nagler N.: *Die verspätete Zunkunftsmusik*, Musik-Konzepte 12 (1980), 29-30.
- 2 Baker, J.M.: *The Limits of Tonality in the Late Music of Franz Liszt*, Journal of Music Theory 34/2 (Fall 1990), 148-9.
- 3 Samson, J.: *Music in Transition*, (New York and London, Dent 1977), 17.
- 4 Rumenhöller, P.: *Die verfremdete Kadenz zur Harmonik*, Zeitschrift für Musiktheorie IX/1 (1978), 4-16.
- 5 Idem, 149.
- 6 See Arnold, B.: *Recitative in Liszt's solo piano music*, Journal of the American Liszt Society 24 (1988), 3-22.

- 7 Ott, L.: *Closing Passages and Cadences in the Late Piano Music of Liszt*, *Journal of the American Liszt Society* V (June 1979), 64-74.
- 8 Alan Walker's comments on song-cadences are also relevant; Walker, A.: *Franz Liszt: the Man and his Music*, (New York, Taplinger 1970), 242-44.
- 9 Rumenh oller, P.: *Zur Harmonik in Franz Liszts Liedern*, *Musica XXXVII/3* (1983), 232-38. Rumenh oller points out that the term *verfremdete Kadenz* derives from an article in *Zeitschrift f ur Musiktheorie* 1978/1, 4.
- 10 This date is given in Searle, H.: op. cit., 166, but questioned in *New Grove* 7, 61.
- 11 The details of composition and publication of the two cycles of *Po zarostlem chodnicku* are not clearly set out in the preface or notes to the complete edition of Jan acek's works - *Sourbon  kritick  vyd ni del Leose Jan acka*, (Praha, Supraphon 1978). But by reconciling this information with that of the critical notes and details by Jan Racek (1942) and Frantisek Sch afer (1947) from the preface to the Hudebni Matice 1947 edition, and from the unattributed preface to a Russian post-1942 edition of the two cycles, the facts seem to be as follows:
- 1901-02: 7 pieces composed; 5 only published in *Slovansk  melodie V & VI* of 1901 and 1902. Vol.V (1901) contained nos 1,3 & 7 from the eventual first set; Vol.VI (1902) contained nos 4 & 6. The remaining two were not published until 1942, when they were made the first two pieces of the second cycle (see below, 1942).
- 1908/(i): 5 more pieces composed (2,5,8,9,10) and added to those 5 of 1901-02 already published; the whole given individual titles and published as Cycle I (A.Pisa of Brno, 1911; Hudebni matice, Prague 1925).
- 1908/(ii): 3 more pieces composed without individual titles, but only the first published then (in the newspaper *Lidov  noviny* in Brno, 1911). The other two were not published until, in 1942, they appeared with the first as the paralipomena (below).
- 1942: Cycle 2 published by Hudebni matice, comprising firstly the 2 pieces from 1901-02 not published then, and secondly the 3 pieces from 1908/(ii), which latter seem wrongly to have been listed as paralipomena (addenda) when in fact they constituted the second cycle proper, as far as it was composed. Thus the 2 unpublished pieces from 1901-02 are the real addenda, but the order and numbering of the complete Supraphon edition has been retained here to save further confusion.
- The statement of Hans Hollander [*L os Jan acek. His Life and Work*, transl. Hamburger, P. (London, John Calder 1963), 195] that 1,2,4,7,9 were originally written for harmonium is not consistent with the statement in the Supraphon Collected Edition [page 4] that the 1901-02 volumes were harmonium music, which would make 1,3,4,6,7 the harmonium pieces. The nature of the keyboard writing is briefly discussed in the Supraphon edition [4, 120ff].
- 12 Howard, L.: notes to his recording *Hyperion CDA 66201*; Searle, H.: op. cit., 114.
- 12 The score for the fourth waltz has not been available for this study, so that the motifs have had to be transcribed from CD - Leslie Howard's *Hyperion CDA 66201*, and thus may contain errors of form.
- 13 See note 14: precise details of the fourth waltz are unavailable.
- 14 Horsbrugh, I.: *L os Jan acek: a Field That Prospered*, (London, David & Charles, New York, Charles Scribner, 1981), 94.
- 15 Proust, M.: *A la recherche du temps perdu, I*, (transl. Scott Moncrieff, C.K., Chatto & Windus, London 1976), 57-62.
- 15 The former stereotyping of Jan acek as impressionist-portrayer of nature and folk-events has been dismissed more recently (see Kundera, M.: *Jan acek*, transl. Huston, S., *Cross-Currents XXXIII* (1983), 380 (note), and needs to be replaced with an appreciation of him as a figure

- concerned with introspection and feelings, as suggested by Michael Beckerman: *Janáček and the Herbartians*, *Musical Quarterly* XXII/3 (1983), 388-407, not romantic or impressionist ones like those suggested by the titles of the 1970 symposium edited by Karl-Heinz Wörner: *Die Musik in der Geistesgeschichte. Studien de Situation de Jahre um 1910* (Bonn, Bouvier 1970): *Natur, Liebe und Tod bei Janáček; Die Natur-Impressionismus in Janáček's Musik*; or Milos Stédron: *Janáček - Verism and Impressionism*, *Casopis Moravského Musea* LIII-LIV (1968-69), 125-54.
- 16 Sourboné kritické vydání del Leose Janáčka, 4.
 - 17 Cerník, J.: *Vztak lense Janáčka k lidové písni* [The indebtedness of Janáček to folk music], *Casopis slezského musea, série B, vehey historické* XVIII/1 (1969), 46-52; Misurec, Z.: *Cinnost Lese Janáčka jako organizatora narodopisné práce* [the activities of Les Janáček as organizer of ethnographic activities], *Cesky lid* LXV/4 (1978), 221-29; Majlingova, L.: *Fortepiannoe tvorcestvo Leosa Janáčka* (the piano works of Leos Janáček), Moscow Conservatory 1979.
 - 18 Hollander, H.: *Der Natur-Impressionismus in Janáček's Musik*, in *Colloquium Les Janáček et musica Europaea* ed. Rudolf Pecman (Brno 1970), also published in *Schweizerische Musikzeit* 2 (Mar-Apr 1969), 61-64; Stédron, M.: op. cit.; Racek, J.: *Janáčekuv impressionismus*, *Opus Musica* X/5-6 (1978), 161-65.
 - 19 Poljukova, L.: *Leos Janáček and realistic art in the 20th century*, *Colloquium Leos Janáček ac tempora nostra*, Brno 1978, ed. Pecman, R., (Brno, Janáčkova společnost, 1983); Gulke, P.: *Protokolle des schöpferischen Prozessen. Zur Musik von Leos Janáček*, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* CXXXIV/7,8 (1973), 407-12; Hollander, H.: op. cit.
 - 20 Kundera, M.: op. cit., 380.
 - 21 Gulke, P.: op. cit., 407-12; Stedron, B.: *Zur Janáček's Sprachmelodien*, Bericht über der internationalen musikwissenschaftliche Kongress, Leipzig 1966, (Kassel, Bärenreiter 1970), 339-47.
 - 22 Nováček, O.: *Leos Janáček on laughing and crying*, *Colloquium Les Janáček ac tempora nostra* ed. Rudolf Pecman (Brno 1978).
 - 23 Jiránek, J.: *Janáček's Klavierkompositionem vom Standpunkt ihres dramatischen Charakters. Versuch einer semantischen Analyse*, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* XXXIX/3 (1982), 179-97; *Ibid: Janáčkova estetika*, *Estetika* XV/4 (1970), 193-207; Pecman, R.: *The disjunction between Janáček's aesthetic outlook and his music*, *Opus Musica* X/5-6 (1978), 175-78; Kraus, J.: *Leos Janáček - Aussenseiter der neuen Musik*, Bericht über den internationalen musikwissenschaftlichen Kongress, ed. Carl Dahlhaus, Bonn 1970, (Kassel, Bärenreiter 1971), 458-60.
 - 24 Josephson, N.S.: *Conflicting polarities and their resolution in the music of Leos Janáček*, *Casopis Moravského Musea* LXV (1980), 141-48.
 - 25 Sádecký, Z.: *Thematic relationships in Janáček's piano works*, *Hedebni Veda* VI/1 (1969), 26-36.
 - 26 Helman, Z.: *Zur modalität in Schaffen Szymanowskis und Janáček's*, in *Colloquium Les Janáček et musica Europaea* ed. Rudolf Pecman (Brno 1970).
 - 27 Stráková, T.: *Janáček and literature*, *Music and Literature Symposium, Frydek-Místku 1980*, ed. Pecman, R., (Frydek-Místku, Okresní vlastivedné muzeum 1983); Závodský, A.: *Literary inspirations for the music of Janáček*, *Colloquium Leos Janáček ac tempora nostra*, Brno 1978, ed. Pecman, R., (Brno, Janáčkova společnost, 1983).
 - 28 Beckerman, M.: op. cit., 388-407.
 - 29 Idem, 403-04.
 - 30 Idem, 404-06.
 - 31 Idem, 402-03.
 - 32 Idem, 395.
 - 33 Idem, 400.

- 34 Josephson, N.: *Formale Strukturen in de Musik Leos Janáček's*, Casopis Moravského Musea LIX (1974), 103-18; Jiranek, J.: *Dramatické rysy Janáčková klavírnicko stylu* [The dramatic character of Janáček's keyboard style], *Opus Musica*/5-6 (1978), 139-48; Salocks, C.S.: *Form and interpretation in Leos Janáček's "Po zarostlem chodnicku"*, Stanford University 1980.
- 35 See note 19.
- 36 Helman, Z.: op. cit.
- 37 Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 48.
- 38 Harris, B.S.: op. cit., 54, 58-9, 70, 72-3, 76, 89, 127, 156-7, 165.
- 39 Sutton, D.: op. cit., plates LIII, LXIII.
- 40 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 215.
- 41 Storey: *Pierrots on the Stage of Desire. Nineteenth-Century French Literary Artists and the Comic Pantomime*, (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press 1985).
- 42 Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 47-48.
- 43 Verlaine, P.: *Fêtes galantes*.
- 44 Hoérée, A.: *Debussy, musicien novateur*, Bulletin de la classe des beaux-arts LXIV/1-2 (1982), 30-41; Keil, W.: *Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung des frühen Klavierstils von Debussy und Ravel*, Neue musikgeschichtliche Forschungen 12 (Wiesbaden, Breitkopf und Härtel 1982).
- 45 Park, R.R.: op. cit.; Howat, R.: *Modes and Semitones in Debussy's Préludes and Elsewhere*, *Studies in Music* 22 (1988), 81-104.
- 46 Parks, R.S.: *The Music of Claude Debussy*, (New Haven, Yale University Press 1989), 5-10.
- 47 Probably composed much earlier - c.1890, with the rest of the Suite Bergamasque; see Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 93.
- 48 Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 93; Howat, R.: *Debussy, "Masques", "L'isle joyeuse" and a lost Sarabande*, *Musicology Australia* X (1987), 16.
- 49 Orledge, R.: op. cit., 23.
- 50 Idem, 21, note 4.
- 51 Quoted as epigraph for Sorabji, K.S.: op. cit., 12, and associated with the Devil's fiddle with its detuned strings..
- 52 Szymanowski Complete Edition, xvii; Samson, J.: *The Music of Szymanowski*, 81; Sannemüller, G.: op. cit., 1136-38.
- 53 For the general question of modality in Szymanowski see Samson, J.: *Szymanowski's Tonality*, *Studi Musica* V (1974), 291-312; Helman, Z.: *Zur modalität in Schaffen Szymanowskis und Janáček's*, in Würner, K.-H.: *Die Mosaik in der Geistesgeschichte. Studien der Situation de Jahre um 1900* (Bonn, Bouvier 1970). There is also a related study of Podhalean modes in the Mazurka op. 50/3: McNamee, A.K.: *Bitonality, Mode and Interval in the Music of Karol Szymanowski*, *Journal of Music Theory* XXIX/1 (Spring 1985), 61-84.
- 54 Sannemüller, G.: loc. cit.
- 54 McNamee, A.K.: op. cit.; Samson, J.: *The Music of Szymanowski*, 94; Helman, Z.: *Intervallic structural techniques in twentieth-century composition*, *Muzyka* XX/2 (1975), 43-44; Chylinska, T.: *New Grove entry on Szymanowski* (vol.18), 503.
- 55 Oledzki, S.: *Some problems in the piano compositions of Karol Szymanowski*, *Muzyka* XVIII/3 (1973), 60.
- 56 Samson, J.: *Szymanowski and Tonality*, *Studi Musical* V (1976), 291-312.
- 57 Andraschke, P.: *Szymanowskis Bethge-Vertonungen*, in *Karol Szymanowski in seiner Zeit*, ed. Bristiger, M. et.al., (München, Finke 1984), 85-100.
- 58 Kloppenberg, W.C.M.: *Exstase de enige permanente factor in Szymanowski's musiek*, *Mens Melodie* XXXVII (1982), 530-38; Blonski, J.: *Szymanowski und die Literatur*, in Bristiger, M.: op. cit.
- 59 Samson, J.: *The Music of Szymanowski*, 81.
- 60 Chylinska, T.: op. cit., 501.
- 61 There is little critical literature listed in the standard references on

Schmitt; since New Grove's three entries (mainly concerned with biography) there is Rife, J.A.: *A Study of the Early 20th Century Compositional Style of Florent Schmitt, based on an Examination of "Psaume xlvii" and "La tragedie de Salomé"*, Diss.

- 62 Yves Hucher: *L'oeuvre de Florent Schmitt*, transl. Berthier, R., (Paris, Durand 1960), lix: Hucher mentions Byron but does not specify which work; the attribution to *The Giaour* is mine, as it seems to be the work Schmitt has in mind - the mysterious, unnamed giaour's [= stranger, non-Muslim] furious riding on his mission of vengeance, and his mental torments afterwards.
- 63 Larousse: *Grand Dictionnaire Universel de XIX Siècle*, 4/1, 57.

CHAPTER 13

SYMMETRIES

RESONANCES	<i>Cloches à travers les feuilles</i>		
	(<i>Images II/1</i>)	1907	Debussy
	<i>L'oiseaux tristes (Miroirs/2)</i>	1905	Ravel
	<i>La vallée des cloches (Miroirs/5)</i>	1905	Ravel

Concept

Repetition leading to patterning of line and figure is an essential part of Art Nouveau's method, and has a deeper significance in that such patterning suggests the Platonic Order that is implied in the philosophic foundations of idealist movements like Art Nouveau. Thus visible or aural patterns are echoes of invisible or inaudible Forms, so that repeated bird-calls and bell-sounds have cosmic overtones. This aspect of repetition is seen in the use of natural forms from flora and fauna as borders or decorative compositional motifs for drawings, and in musical composition as repetitive device based on the aural imagery of birds, bells, cathedrals, castle vaults or grottoes (*Pelléas et Mélisande III,2*), waterfalls, fountains and other echoing sounds.

The important Art Nouveau icon of bells is seen in the inspiration that Edgar Allen Poe's *The Bells*, *Ulalame* and other repetitive poems provided for composers like Rakhmaninov and Josef Holbrooke. For Gerard Manley Hopkins the concept of echoing is an important illustration of "inscape", found in bells, birds, wells and in nature generally.

*As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name¹*

Edvard Munch's *The Scream* is the clearest visual illustration of the concept of echo, but repetition is found in the patterning essential to all visual Art Nouveau, whether in the dresses of Klimt's erotic beauties, the borders to Mucha's posters or in the vine and swirl motifs of architecture and its decoration.

Woodland reverberates sound in a complex, stereophonic fashion, which Debussy's *Cloches à travers les feuilles* emulates, and Ravel's *La vallée*

des cloches is about the similarly stereophonic effect of bell-sounds reverberating from hill-sides. *L'oiseaux tristes*, like *La vallée*, must first be seen as part of Ravel's *Miroirs*, so that the concept of echoing (mirroring) is cognate to that of the bell-pieces; secondly, it is about sad sounds ("L'oiseaux" being metonymic), which adds a dimension not seen in the other titles. Roy Howat points out further dimensions of resonance in *L'oiseaux tristes* - Golden Section and other symmetries, as well as a later Debussyan echo of it in his *Reflets dans l'eau*.²

These repetition pieces are so characteristic of Art Nouveau method that it has been thought justifiable to consider them in isolation from their sets (*Images II*, *Miroirs*), although the significance of their set-titles has not been forgotten here. Both set-titles are typical Art Nouveau examples of ambiguity: *Images* meaning simply "pictures, representations" but more subtly "visions, imaginings, symbolic representations", and *Miroirs* simply "representations/reflections" but also "reversals (with connotations of Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-glass*), series of images (the hall of mirrors effect, with its distortions), symbolically viewing". All therefore deal with repetitions, whose strange sounds are far from conventional bell or bird character-pieces, being members of the same fantastic realm as on the one hand Ravel's macabre *Le gibet* or on the other Rakhmaninov's Dionysian *Svetlie Prazdnek*.

These are not pieces often heard in concert programmes because they are quite undramatic, and without linear progression. As examples of patterning, however, their repetitiveness and inner resonances have a static and mesmeric effect that is unconsciously absorbed rather than actively listened to.

Debussy: *Cloches à travers les feuilles*

This work is based on four main melodic motifs (bars 2, 9-10, 14-19, 24-30), each of which is to a greater or lesser degree overshadowed by its accompanimental figuration, just as the initial sounds of pealing bells

tend to be lost in the confused jumble of their continuing to vibrate after sounding, and in the reverberations of all this across woodland. This figuration is highly repetitive and based around the melodic motifs' pitch-sets, so that each figuration is a general reflection of its motif's sounds. These figurations move in smaller note-values than their motifs, suggesting the complexity of reverberations as against the simplicity of the original bell-sounds.

Example 48:

Debussy: *Cloches à travers les feuilles*, 4, 10

The fourth figure (bars 25-30, 31-39) and the reprise of the first (bars 40-41) have cross-rhythms suggesting two or three peals of bells, and this is virtually the only "development" of the piece, which otherwise is just a series of repetitions with slight variations in ornamentation.

Counting the repetition of figuration shows why the piece shows a mesmeric effect: there are twenty-eight consecutive repetitions of the five-note figure that begins in bar 13, and up to twenty at a time of the figure beginning in bar 24. The wholetone nature of all of these, as well as of the melodic motifs themselves, increases the effect by causing some tonal disorientation.

The use of wholetones for bell-sounds is interesting, for European bells are not pitched thus, but Debussy may well have had Eastern sounds in mind like those of the gamelans he heard in the 1889 and 1899 expositions. Some weight is added to this conjecture through the fact that the third piece of the set (*Poissons d'or*) is about Japanese goldfish, and that the second may originally have been intended to be titled *Et la lune descend sur le temple de Bouddha*³. If this is so then the obvious comparison is

with *Pagodes*: both are Debussy's "purest" keyboard pieces in terms of pitch-sets, with minimal departures from their whole-tone+modal and pentatonic sets respectively; both use repetition as their basic method; and both rely on extensive use of pedalpoints.

Although *Cloches à travers les feuilles* is well-ordered in a structural sense (although without orthodox development, for it is structured around repetitions of sequence and section, with characteristic immediate repetition of one-bar or two-bar patterns), Debussy's aim would seem to be the effect of a confusion of sounds, which is itself disorientating, and furthered by the use of whole-tone (outer sections), modal (13-23, 24-39) and diatonic (9-12) pitch-sets. From bar 3 there is patterning of four simultaneous strands, and when in *24ff* some of the strands consist of chords, a very complex mixture of sounds results. There is also the suggestion that the primary sounds (strike notes) of bells are not often well tuned with each other, with their hum notes (nominally an octave lower), or with their overtones.

But it is the patterning on more than one level that characterizes the work as Art Nouveau. Melody is confined to repeated fragments, so that accompanimental figuration becomes the centre of interest, and this is governed by the constant kaleidoscopic transformation of one pattern into another as the various strands of figure interweave with or replace one another. If the interweaving of strands is plotted for a short sequence of the work two things become clear. Firstly, strands overlap and combine so that no two combinations are identical (contrast the passages of identical repetitions of Janáček or Satie), but the overlapping (and maintenance of rhythm) ensures that continuity of sound is sensed. Secondly, the variety of strands is profuse: many are variants of former ones and thus provide echoes on another level from those of the patterns themselves.

Analysis 13:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	bars
-----								<u>G</u> repetitions, middle stave
-----								WT ₁ quavers, middle stave
	-----							<u>A</u> on bottom stave
	-----		-----					WT ₂ melody on top stave
	-----	-----						WT ₃ triplet semiquavers, top stave
		-----						WT ₄ quavers, major seconds, bottom s.
		--						WT ₅ broken rhythm, top stave
		--						WT ₆ appoggiaturas, top stave
		--						WT ₇ mid-stave figure
			-----					WT ₈ quavers, bottom stave

Debussy: *Cloches à travers les feuilles*, 1-8

What cannot be shown is how the various strands echo each other. Reference to Example 48, however, shows that in bar 4 the upper and lower quaver figures are mirrors of each other, while the semiquaver figure imitates the motion of the lower quaver figure, but at its faster pace covers an octave while the slower figure covers three notes. Similar echoes of contemporaneous and earlier figures abound through the work.

After bar 8 the diagram would have to extend even farther downwards as more fragments of figuration are added. Another aspect of patterning can be seen simply by looking at the score to see the overall patterning, when the work is perceived as a series of sequences dominated by certain combinations of motifs, but with overlaps and echoes.

Ravel: *La vallée des cloches*

This work has much repetitive figuration, shown in that beginning in bar 3, supported by the ostinato G[#] in this section (to bar 11) and its reprise (bars 49-52). One other passage (bars 24-29) has repetitive figuration, but for much of the piece the repetitive device is that of bass pedals under slow chords loosely based on peal-patterns. The chief effect of the piece is its deliberate confusion of overlapping sustained chords and figures (in effect broken chords), not unlike the myriad repetitive squares on a Klimt-eroteuse's sweeping dress.

Example 49:

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system, labeled '4', consists of a treble staff with a complex, rhythmic ostinato figure and a bass staff with inverted pedal notes. The instruction 'p un peu marqué' is written below the bass staff. The second system, labeled '6', also features a treble staff with the same ostinato figure and a bass staff with inverted pedal notes. The instruction 'mf' is written above the treble staff, and 'p' is written below the bass staff.

Ravel: *La vallée des cloches*, 5-6

These two bars show the initial ostinato-figure with inverted pedal-notes on \underline{G}^\sharp and tenor echoes of the treble figure. The complex regularity of this figure is typical of Ravel and, in its asymmetrical effect, of Art Nouveau. The intrusion of the foreign \underline{G} -natural in 6 will be discussed below. It sets with the \underline{E}^\sharp on the middle stave of 6 a chord of the seventh that undermines the \underline{C}^\sharp minor tonality that has been established by the treble ostinato. Here two different tonalities overlap.

Parallel with the overlapping sounds are the cross-rhythms: every bar except the last two has the basic asymmetry of syncopated quavers that comprise the piece's fundamental rhythmic ostinato. Against this are other asymmetries, notably that of the unaccented semiquavers of the first section (arranged in fours but with the crotchet beats coinciding with each six) and the quavers against offset and incomplete triplets in bars 24-28.

While there is constant slow motion from the interplay of figures against the ostinato of syncopated quavers, the only real movement is of the harmonic foundation, seen in the pedalpoints that drift slowly from one centre to another.

Analysis 14:

bars	1	6	12-13	15	16	20	23	24	26	31	32	34	37	40
bass	C [#]			C	B ^b		G ^b	F		D ^b				
	V	V ^b	IV\III\II\	I	VII		V			III\II/V				

bars	41						50
bass	C [#]						G [#]
			\VII/I/V/VI\II/III\II\I\				

Ravel: La vallée des cloches

From the beginning the C[#] minor tonality seems ambiguous because the pedalpoint is on V without any reference to the tonic except the key-signature. The first actual bass notes are G-natural in 6-10, making a ^bV^{7b} chord that contradicts the V⁶₄ harmonies established since the beginning by the ostinato bell-figuration. These figures cease from 11-19, when the syncopated figures commence, but in the interim there has been an unmodulated shift to C instead of the expected C[#] at 16 - another ambiguity that further tends to disorientate tonal horizons like the G in bar 6. Similar shifts occur in 26 and 34, but perhaps the most ambiguous is that to G[#] in 50, for by this time the opening bell-figuration has resumed at the same pitch. Its I⁶₄ harmonies should confirm the G[#] as tonic but are contradicted by the nature of the pedalpoint chord, which is I⁷₄, iterated with each pause in the ostinato, and ending the piece *solus*.

The whole effect of the piece is thus a combination of tonal ambiguity and patterned, mesmeric repetition. There is no sense of drama at any point - just a slowly-changing series of sounds.

Ravel: L'oiseaux tristes

Like *La vallée des cloches*, this piece is from *Miroirs*: mirrors imply repetitions that show different aspects of the same thing. This piece shows the patternings produced when bird-songs and stylizations derived from them interact in different ways that colour each other differently. The first motif (bars 1-3) is based partly on the same bell-motif as *Le gibet* (where it is also sad) and this motif recurs throughout the piece in different pitches and against different backgrounds as a

quasi-ostinato device. The third motif (bar 4, bass stave) is an ostinato-like accompanying figure that is matched by those in bars 7, 13 and 15; all are stylized patternings against which simple imagery of bird-songs is heard. This imagery is stylized through simplification and repetition, much like that of Rakhmaninov's *I noch...I lyubov* (Night...love, from *Études-tableaux I*), where the bird-calls become one with the accompanimental ostinato. The repetition of these figures against sporadic bird-song motifs forms the "development" of the piece, although there is some development proper in the unmeasured bars 15, where the figure progresses in parallel chords through a pentatonic framework, and 24, which is a *ppp* cadenza-like figure. These sections apart, the piece consists more of repetitions than development.

Roy Howat has drawn attention to two layers of this piece's structure, dynamic and formal, that are of arch-form, are based on the Golden Section, and are overlapping and interlocking⁴. Thus the piece has structural resonances that mirror the sonic ones, which gives a yet deeper significance to this piece as *miroir*.

The other term that is important is "*tristes*". In *Miroirs* the moods that Ravel creates are strange ones even though only one of the subjects is (*Alborada del gracioso*). Here the sadness is almost funereal, with the repeated bass figure of 5-6 being an echo of that at the beginning of Liszt's *La lugubre gondola I*, forming a broken minor chord of the thirteenth low in the compass, with the same rhythm and pauses as Liszt's. The bare fifths in the bass from 7-10 are accompanied by an upper figure that rocks back and forth like a gondola, and produces alternate discords and minor concords:

Example 50:

Ravel: *Oiseaux tristes*, 6-7

Thus a funeral gondola is associated with bird-song, and since the song stylized in 8 and 9 is not that of a water-bird, the association is one of dream or imagination, not impressionism. Throughout the piece it is the ostinato accompanimental figures that set the doleful mood, colouring the various elements of bird-song. There is little need for the indication *sombre* in the last line.

The slow syncopations that can be seen in the example above are one of the piece's basic ambiguities; while regular, they seem to check any sense of regularity of motion. In bars 13-14 Ravel establishes a typically asymmetrical rhythmic pattern for the four crotchet beats.

Analysis 15:

#C ⁶ _{5b}	#D ⁷ _{6b}	#C ⁶ _{5b}	#D ⁷ _{6b}	#C ⁶ _{5b}	#D ⁷ _{6b}	#C ⁶ _{5b}	#D ⁷ _{6b}	#C ⁶ _{5b}	#D ⁷ _{6b}	#C ⁶ _{5b}	#D ⁷ _{6b}
+-----+			+-----+			+-----+			+-----+		
3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2

Ravel: *Oiseaux tristes*, 13

Each crotchet-unit is divided into quaver-triplets that are further subdivided into alternating semiquaver-triplets and duplets, creating something like a complex hemiola effect: 323 232 323 232. Each 3 (semiquaver triplet) forms a diminished seventh chord on C[#], while each duplet forms a minor seventh chord on D[#], so that the C[#] tonality of the lower of the quaver alternations is made less certain by that of the D[#], and both by their unresolving discords. Above this, bird-calls enter syncopated at the true semiquaver, so that rhythm becomes as ambiguous as

the harmony.

Summary

All three pieces feature repetition of figure and prolongation of sounds by the sustaining pedal that seem excessive by conventional standards. The aim in all three is that of the construction of patterning in sound rather than that of normal linear composition; while there is much in all three pieces to engage the intellect, as this brief examination has sought to show, their primary characteristic is mesmeric repetition.

DANCE	<i>Csárdás obstiné</i> , 1884	Liszt
	<i>Gymnopédies 1,2,3</i> 1888	Satie
	<i>Gnossiennes 1,2,3</i> , 1890	Satie
	4 (1891), 5 (1889), 6 (1897)	Satie
	<i>Danse languide</i> Op.51/4, 1906	Skryabin
	<i>Danseuses de Delphes</i> (<i>Préludes I</i>), 1910	Debussy

Concept

Dance, in its widest sense of movement that is ritualized, is a concept central to Art Nouveau⁵, and one that it links closely to that of time, with artists like Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Ludwig von Zumbusch and Aubrey Beardsley representing motion frozen in mid-flight so that the acrobats, dancers and dandies are representative of attitudes rather than of real movement, as if they are posing, not moving. The symbolic significance of dance as ritual of nature is important: dance is, after all, a stylization of movement into gestures and attitudes, as Art Nouveau is a stylization of themes and visual phenomena, and it is in these gestures and attitudes that animate beings (fauna) recall the natural shapes and forms of flora, and acknowledge the gods of nature.

Art Nouveau preoccupation with movement is very different from Impressionism like Degas' paintings of dancers, or Monet and Renoir's ripples on water: the Impressionists are concerned with capturing the moment in time while Art Nouveau stands outside time to concentrate on the abstractions of movement and gesture. Movement as such is not a leading

Impressionist preoccupation, as it tends to confine itself to relatively static subjects like landscapes and still-lives, whereas with Art Nouveau, all movement becomes stylized movement, from wind-blown hair and wind as an elemental force to dancing and the gestures of mannered society, and all are part of its central theme of sinuous, moving line. Movement is the flow of line, from the curving lines of Edvard Munch's *The Scream* and Vincent Van Gogh's sunflower pictures to the many studies of female figures abandoning themselves to the ecstasy of dance⁶.

Liszt: Csárdás obstiné

Unlike other Hungarian forms that Liszt employs, the *Csárdás* is not one of striking dramatic contrasts. His other two works in this genre, *Csárdás macabre* (1881-82) and *Csárdás allegro* (1884) are similar in this respect, and the second of these is discussed in Chapter 18. In *Csárdás obstiné* the adjective, in its sense of "persistent", seems to refer to *ostinato*, but there also is the inescapable overtone of its primary French meaning "obstinate".

This work dates from 1884, and is remarkable for its insistent, unrelenting pulse and its asymmetrical harmonic relationship between melody and accompaniment, where the melody is based in B while the accompaniment seems to be in search of this root, beginning with V_7^b and running through VII, bVII , I_5^b , VII, VI from bars 17-73 before returning to V_7^b . (Alan Walker draws attention to the clashes of major and minor thirds this produces, seen in the first entry of the first motif in bar 17.⁷) The variety necessary to counter the unceasingly driving pulse of the work comes in fact from the variation of the bass, for with a fixed eight-bar melody and pulse there is little other resource. But the whole purpose of the work is its narrow, intense focus on its main motif, giving it a very strongly hypnotic character.

The initial part of the first motif is based on a descending tetrachord (A-G-F#-E) of Hungarian type; Liszt often used such abbreviated

melodic pitch-sets, as Norbert Nagler notes in his study of Liszt's "futuristic" pieces⁸. The second half of the melody is in a complementary tetrachord beginning two notes below. The motif finishes on $\underline{F^\sharp}$, so that this is understood by the diatonic-trained ear as the tonal centre - but at the same time perceives it as the mediant in a \underline{D} scale, which creates an apparent ambiguity of tonality.

The rhythm of the introductory sixteen bars is syncopated, but accents in bars like 21 and 29 contradict this pattern once the melodic motif begins, only to have the syncopations re-emphasized in the episode beginning at bar 89 (and presumably in that beginning at bar 195); these syncopated passages by their contrasts actually emphasize the non-syncopated main sections, and so help to highlight the piece's distinctive rhythmic pattern set up in the first melodic section (bars 17-24).

Development, apart from the syncopated intermezzi and broken chords in bars 161-2 and 165-6, is limited to variations in root bass and different ways of presenting the same melodic motif (in octaves, chords, quavers and major mode). The plan of the work shows how little of it is not concerned with the main motif:

Analysis 16:

bar-units	2	6	2	2	2	1+4	2	2 ⁺	2	5	6	6+1
motifs	R	A	A ¹	A ²	B	A	A ¹	C	A	B	A ³	A ²
		+-----+				+----+			++		+-----+	

[R = recitative; A,B,C, = motifs. A bar-unit = 8 bars of 2_4]

Liszt: *Csárdás obstiné*, structure

The letters applied in this analysis to motifs and variants show the approximate picture only, for there are more subtle variations than such a diagram can show. Since the recitative-introduction is closely related to A there are only nine bar-units out of forty-three that are not concerned with the main motif, but because the alternative motif-sections are strategically placed there is some relief from it. But not from the basic pulse, for there is no *rallentando* or pause except for the crotchet rests

in five bars only in the group of 223-234.

Liszt has made a popular dance-form of the time, that by its nature has a distinctive rhythm and limited developmental character, into one obsessively driving in mood, like Ravel's *Bolero*; hence the *obstiné* of the title, reinforced by the folk-bareness of the piece rather than any ballroom conventionalities like cadences to the tonic. The piece is thus excessive and uncompromising in its aesthetic of balance, as seen from a conventional viewpoint, but as such it is a striking example of musical Art Nouveau.

Satie: *Gymnopédies* 1-3

Gymnopédies are literally gymnastic steps, or dancing of youths (at the annual festival for the heroes of Thyrea; the term is found in Contamine de Latour's verse, and there is a possible connexion with Flaubert's *Salammbó*). With their slow tempi, simple texture and repetitiveness they are almost certainly also suggesting ritual dancing, or if not, then architecture as frozen motion (to alter Friedrich von Schelling⁹). This is not historicist re-creation of moments in ancient times like the works of Lord Leighton and his fellow-academicians, but the capturing of the essence of dance itself, derived from frozen attitudes of Greek dancers on frieze and urn.

The first three pieces, composed together (although the second did not appear in print until later¹⁰) and perhaps formally speaking three different aspects of the same idea¹¹, are based on a simple but distinctive rhythmic unit of very slow crotchet-minim that only pauses at the two major cadences of the first dance, not at all in the second, and only in the last two bars of the third. Thus there is the same ostinato based on the simplest, distinctively slow rhythmic pattern that provides a foundation for the mesmeric effect of each piece. On this foundation is built the modal melody and accompaniment of each piece (Phrygian, Mixolydian, Dorian), giving an exotic flavour that enhances the strangeness of effect.

The strangeness comes from the simple chords that at first appear as units in a diatonic system of harmony, but are not provided with a logical diatonic bass until the final closes. This is similar in effect to *Csárdás obstiné*, where, because of the folk-mode used, the melody's harmonic roots do not appear to align in a simple way with the bass. In the first two *Gymnopédies* the accompanimental chords seem to imply a root on the tonic while the bass root is VI and V; in the third the bass has a tonic root (A) but the accompaniment seems to move atonally. These modal effects are finally contradicted in the final close, which end in the diatonic major. The harmonic effect is thus one of disorientation, which added to the ostinato rhythm creates an unreal, dream-like mood.

Development is limited to the composition of balancing melodic units to complement the initial eight-bar ones, so that a four-section song of roughly thirty-two bars is created, which is repeated verbatim except for the final close's moving to the diatonic major. Robert Orledge discusses two ways in which the structure of the first is mirrored in that of the second, with the two originally being planned as a mirrored pair¹², and the third as completing the set like the third *Sarabande*.

Satie escapes the four-bar phrases of *mélodie*-form to some extent, but at least takes its four-bar unit as a starting-point, for the first and second pieces begin with such phrases (the first phrase of I being 4+4). His main device for freeing himself from it is to avoid the normal diatonic cadence in bar 4 of a phrase by running on into more bars, as can be seen in the first part of III. He also joins phrases - all pieces run their E and F sections together to make a continuous final line. The irregular phrase-lengths thus created make the pieces asymmetrical *mélodies* rather than musical prose¹³.

There are no obvious parallels between their structures, but clear evidence of hidden ones that are partly symbolist numerology and partly Art Nouveau asymmetry:

Analysis 17:

	A	B	C	D	E-F	A'	B'	C'	D'	E'-F'
I	8	9	5	5	8	8	9	5	5	8
	+----22----+			+-13-+ GS		+----22----+			+-13-+ GS	
II	4	4+2	5	6+2	10+2	4	4+2	12+4		
	+--10--+		+-----25-----+			+--8--+		+---16--+		
III	9	7	4	3 +3	5	5+2	6	7+5		
	+----16--+		+--10--+ GS		+----18--+		+-12-+ (GS)			

["+ bars = rests. Totals = italics. 4-bar intros. omitted¹⁴]

Satie: *Gymnopédies*, structure

The evidence for Golden Section proportion, noticed elsewhere in Satie by Allan Gillmor¹⁵, appears somewhat equivocal, but this may be intentional. If the full picture is looked at in the analysis above it seems that I and III divide similarly and show GS proportion, with II being based on arithmetical proportion. There is, however, an error of 1 bar in the last section of III, which should be 11 (using the Fibonacci series that rounds off GS [Golden Section] ratios to the nearest whole number). Since the "error" could easily have been avoided by foreshortening the four bars after the melody ceases (in bar 55) to three (cf. the foreshortened ending to *Gnossienne I* or the extra bar at the end of *Gymnopédie I*), the "error" seems deliberate - the symbolic inclusion of an intentional flaw to signify the imperfection of the art-work's mortal creator¹⁶. The C'-F' sections of II demand an opposite division, for their melody runs on so that no division into C,D,E,F is possible as for the other two pieces. But the resulting totals suggest arithmetical rather than GS division. While in general this study does not pursue the identification of symbolic device like GS, it is relevant here to Art Nouveau as another form of asymmetry - perhaps the perfect asymmetry.

The three pieces' melodies echo each other, especially the second and third, for the third begins as a quasi-inversion of the second, and both these share sequences of note-measures with passages of the first. The second and third pieces also invert sections of melody to make mirror-

images; those from II may serve as an example, with the variants shown below:

Analysis 18:

Satie: *Gymnopédie 2*, mirror-variants

There are other, more developmental-type variations in the reprise-sections E-F; those in the others are mentioned in the monographs of Allan Gillmor and Robert Orledge¹⁷.

The three pieces heard together have a synergistic effect whose mood is distinctively dreamlike and suggestive of slow dancing, especially with the rocking bass movement that seems to indicate symmetrical movement (to one side and then the other), important in ritualized traditional dance, where it symbolically represents an essentially polarized cosmos. Their strange, remote mood is a product of their modal nature and slow ostinato-like accompaniments.

Satie: *Gnossiennes 1-6*

Allan Gillmor discusses the various theories as to the origin of the title, but all theories agree on its exoticism¹⁸; it is perhaps safe to accept the summary statement of Maurice Rogers that the most likely explanation is that the title reflects the interest inspired at the time by excavations at Knossos palace in Crete, publicized at the Paris Exhibition of 1889, and that the pieces have some gamelan-sound inspiration.

Gnossiennes 1-3

The first three pieces form a set, being composed together and published in 1890. They have simple rhythmic units again based on crotchets and minims, but in duple time. The slow rocking ostinato of bass and accompanimental chords is similar in its effect to those of the

Gymnopédies, but the melodies have Eastern effects. Firstly, they move faster, using quavers, and tend to finish their phrases on the penultimate beat or half-beat of the rhythmic unit, tying this note to the first beat of the final unit in the phrase. Secondly, the first features the sort of acciaccaturas and the second features the turns that can be associated with (Eastern) arabesque - at least in Western evocations of it (as in Debussy's *Pour l'égyptienne*, for instance). Thirdly, all have leaps of thirds that also are part of Western evocation of the East (*Pour l'égyptienne* 6, 8, 10, 11...) that suggests exotic scales or instruments (notably the *Postulez en vous-même* passage in the first, the *Plus intimement* in the second and the *Manissez-vous de clairvoyance* in the third), and the third piece couples this with a leap of an augmented fourth.

The scales used are synthetic (that is, neither purely diatonic nor modal) and varied within the same piece, so that they have a character that goes beyond the Classical modes into quasi-Eastern arabesque scales. (Some writers, however, have seen them as modal, without offering supporting evidence¹⁹.)

Each phrase is immediately repeated, and there is a reprise of the first (with repeat); in between these, the development is limited to the composition of two additional phrases that balance the first so that there is no more development in this sense than in the *Gymnopédies*, except that the phrases are longer and more complex. The overall effect of ostinato rhythmic units, exotic melodies and simple chordal accompaniments is just as dreaming and mesmeric, but with the extra complexities and different flavour of quasi-arabesque melodic character. The rocking basses, repetitiveness and slow pace again suggest the symmetrical gestures of ritualized dancing.

Evidence of proportionate division must rely on note-values alone (semibreves), because bar-lines are abandoned. Nonetheless, phrase-lengths are readily discernible, and there is some interesting evidence that may

indicate some symmetries across the set:

Analysis 19:

I	A A A A B B A'A' B B	A A B B A'A' B B	
	4 5 4 5 4 4 6 6 4 4	4 4 4 4 6 6 4 3	
	(GS) +--18--+ +----28-----+	+-----35-----+	
II	A A B B' C C B B' A''		
	4 4 2 4 3 5 2 3 6	<u>35</u> : <u>22</u> = GS	
	+-----22-----+ +-11-+		
III	A A B A'A' B'B'B' B'' A A		
	4 3 8 4 3 7 9 4 3 4 5		
	+----22----+ +-20-+ +-12-+ GS		

Satie: *Gnossiennes* 1-3, structure

Golden Section proportions begin and end the set, with the first two sections of I and the last two of III; there is an error of 1 in the first pair, for 18 should be 17. Since Satie could easily have foreshortened either the first or second A-phrases by omitting the second F beat (that before *très luisant*, as he does at the end of the piece) the question again arises as to whether he deliberately included a flaw. There is an arithmetical symmetry of 22-11-22 in II and the first section of III, and the two underlined numbers 35 (I) and 22 (II) are in Golden Section ratio. Since the set was composed and published as such it seems that Satie embodied in it not only mystical/symbolist numerology but also the Art Nouveau idea of suspending normal dimensionality to form an Ideal conception of beauty, all of whose triple dimensionality can only be seen complete by the gods. It is in such a context that the deliberate inclusion of a flaw is necessary to signify that this creation is necessarily less than the perfection possible to the gods.

Gnossiennes 4-6

The second three are disparate entities, composed at different times (1891, 1889, 1897) and do not seem to comprise a set, the second having bar-lines, for instance. They echo the vaguely Eastern character of the earlier *Gnossiennes* with the arabesque of the first two and the un-diatonic nature of bass progressions in the third. All break new ground: the

earliest (the second) with the exaggerated floridity of its arabesque; the first with its arpeggiated accompaniment and melodic sequences ending short of their expected rhythmic length; and the third with the unusual bass progressions just mentioned that tend to parallel melodic movement. This following of melody creates a naive, primitive-sounding effect (and it is composed in the same year as the first set of *Pièces froides*, sharing some of their austerity). It can easily be seen, for instance, in the first four crotchet beats of line 1 and the progression from the second beat of line 2. There is a similar effect in the introduction to Gabriel Pierné's *Cydalise et chèvre-pied*, particularly at its final cadences.

All three retain the duple time of the first set, basing their motion on slow quavers rather than minims and crotchets, and it is this unvarying slow pulse of plain accompaniment that is the most affective factor of each and makes them recognisable as *Gnossiennes*. The melodic sequences employ intervals of fourths and thirds that hint at exotic modes and pentatonics featuring intervals greater than the tone, as well as grace-notes that again are part of traditional arabesque. These devices may be seen from the first few bars of each piece, and in particular the florid figure based on the turn in IV/lines 3 and 4.

All three are based around the same types of repetition as those of the other early dance-sets - immediate repetition of phrase, and fairly straightforward repetition of section, but with just enough variation of occasional detail to provide that sense of the unexpected that is typical of Satie. These variations are most easily seen in IV/line 5, where a lone F follows the two florid phrases of lines 4 and 5, and is also seen in the three other anti-melismatic devices (lone note-pairs with acciaccaturas) that punctuate the flow of the second page at unexpected points. The element of the unexpected in V is provided by the unpredictability of the arabesque's sudden runs and pauses, and the consequent unevenness of its

chronometric progression. The issue of chronometric concepts of form in Satie has been raised by Allan Gillmor in respect of the *Ogives*²⁰: here the focus is on the microstructure of the crotchet-unit. There is a great contrast between the absolutely unvarying quaver-motion of the accompaniment and the sudden accelerations and decelerations of the arabesque. In VI the unpredictability lies in the accompaniment's tendency towards predictability - its tending to follow the line of the melody instead of countering it with the contrary motions of normal diatonic bass foundation.

Examples of the strangeness and deliberate monotony of sound produced by the limited nature of the bass lines are instructive.

Analysis 20:

1	5	10	15	20	25	30																								
D	D	C	C	D	C	B	<u>C</u>	<u>B</u>	D	D	E	D	D	E	D	<u>D</u>	<u>F#</u>	D	C	<u>B</u>	<u>D</u>	D	E	D	E	D	D	<u>D</u>	<u>F#</u>	E

Satie: *Gnossienne 4*, basses

In IV there are thirty-three bass arpeggios of unvarying form and strict quaver movement, but only five occasions (underlined) where the movement between foundation-notes is not by step. The whole range of the bass is only a fifth, from V-II (B/F#), with the piece beginning in D Dorian and ending in E Phrygian). The bass ranges over only two notes for the first eight arpeggios, and it is not until the fourteenth that the range increases to four, and the twentieth before it ventures as far as the fifth, which it approaches only once more. The bass of V is much more varied, but even so does not range outside its nine diatonic notes (B-C), nor feature anything but simple triads, their inversions, and root-position major sevenths. It can be seen that Satie is intentionally simplifying his compositional palette to rid himself of all chromatic aberration, perhaps to give an earthly imitation of the harmony of the spheres based on the simplicity of harmonies constructed only from Pythagorean ratios.

The two crucial factors of obvious repetition and unpredictability

combine to create a strange effect that is characteristic of Art Nouveau but not often so simply achieved: on the one hand the senses are lulled by the obvious repetition, and on the other disorientated by unprepared modulations or shifts of tonality, so that a synergistic multiplication of effect is achieved. At the slow pace of a *Gnossienne* any repetition is an almost timeless replaying of sequence, and together with the feeling of being outside normal dimensions of tonality the effect is very like that of a slow-motion dream whose sequences seem similar, but still fresh, to the imagination. In these pieces dance appears as timeless stylization of *mélodie*.

Skryabin: *Danse languide* Op. 51/4

This piece from 1906 has a distinctive, asymmetrically rhythmic unit based on semiquaver-minim, with a semiquaver-crotchet at its half-way point within it whose rhythm echoes it; the pattern is clearly seen from the last note of bar 1 to the first three of bar 2. There is a contrasting ambiguity or tension, here between the suddenness of the semiquaver and the languor of the minim, and this contrast is mirrored in the echoing figure that sounds while the minim is being held. These resonating rhythms fuse into a minim-unit that hardly varies through the piece (it is merely multiplied in the third section), so that there is a slow, insistent pulse that, like those of all the other dances in this section, is somewhat mesmeric and thus sensual; sensuality in this dance is that of indolence rather than desire.

Languor is further suggested by the shape of the melody itself, which has a generally falling line, from the downwards intervals from semiquaver to minim, and the way the minim-line moves downwards in the phrases in bars 3-4 and 17-18. Even though there are upward curves in bars 5, 6-8 and 19 that are more typical of Skryabin in their tendency towards soaring, they seem not to defeat the more gloomy downwards ones, and in the short developmental section (bars 10-13) each upwards-movement from the

semiquaver is followed by a fall from the dotted quaver, so that there is continual tension between the two motions. There is also the use of balancing units like those of bars 1-3, 5-7 and 13-15 where the minims alternate between \underline{F} and $\underline{F^\#}$, mirrored by the two parts of the developmental section (mid-bar 9 to mid-bar 11, mid-bar 11 to mid-bar 13), possibly suggesting gestures alternately right then left. The insistence of the basic rhythmic unit, the repetition of mirror-phrases and downwards-curves all produce some intensity of effect and tension that is characteristic of Art Nouveau practice.

Part of the piece's strangeness is in its alternating between discords without any resolutions until the end of each four-bar section.

Example 51:

Skryabin: *Danse languide*, 1-5

Conventional analyses of the alternations in the first, second and fourth sections show them to be ${}^bVI_5^7$ and ${}^bII_5^7$ - that is, between sevenths with flattened and sharpened fifths, but using symmetrical pitch-set analysis the alternations are shown to be simply those between wholetone sets a semitone apart, with resolution into the diatonic set at the ends of the sections via ${}^bII-V-I$. (In the first of these cadences - bar 5 - the pitch-set can also be seen as octatonic, but in view of the other cadences and the third section it is best regarded as diatonic, as marked.)

The third section uses diatonic alternations (6^b3^b against 7) in addition to the diatonic cadences to the other sections, so that Skryabin is setting up a second tension - wholetones versus diatonics - to that between the two wholetone sets. The symbolic importance of this for *Danse*

languide is perhaps the inability to will or resolve alternative *theses* into a *synthesis*, for none of the four diatonic cadences resolves the treble line into the tonic, so that tensions are weakened but not removed.

The overall importance of the choice of pitch-sets and the wavering between them can partly be seen from the general notion of *langueur* in Skryabin's mysticism, as unsatisfied sensuous longings that are the state of the [passive/feminine] soul before being energized by the [active/masculine] free spirit into ecstasy and mystical transformation - they are the "secret strivings drowned in the dark depths of the creative spirit" of the Fifth Sonata, there represented by the *Languido* motifs of bars 13ff. In this *Danse* they move listlessly, first between the opposite poles of WT^2 and WT^1 , unable to find fulfilment, although it is only in symmetrical sets that such fulfilment can be musically enacted (as will be shown in the following chapter on the late sonatas). But they lack the divine free spirit, the *ailé* spark, as represented in the Fifth Sonata by the initial figure (and see also the *Poème ailé* discussion in Chapter 15). That such fulfilment is not achieved is evidenced symbolically by the fall to diatonic cadences: diatonic pitch-sets, being non-symmetrical in their arrangement of semitonal and tonal intervals, cannot achieve the music of perfection, which alone can harmonize opposites. These, like the ancient modes, give conventional harmonic progression, like that of the third, diatonic section of this piece (a series of $IV^{6b}_{3b}-V^5_3$ resolutions), but not the perfect, endless, uncadenced motion of ecstasy that can only be enacted with symmetrical sets when the divine fire transforms the languid spirit.

Debussy: *Danseuses de Delphes*

This dance is based on a simple crotchet-movement that is as slow-paced as Satie's and only varied by some sequences syncopated at the quaver or in simple quavers; as a rhythmic unit, however, its steady pulse is everywhere present or implied and is almost as insistent as those of Liszt and Satie. (Siegfried Mauser has recently demonstrated that there are

formal links between this work and Satie's first *Gymnopédie*, which can be simply felt in the syncopated quaver accompanimental rhythm, but are present in other more subtle ways²¹.)

There are quasi-Eastern leaps of thirds in the melody (bars 11-14) that are seen as a full sequence in bars 21-24, and these with the many passages of quasi-parallel chords give the work the exoticism denoted by the title. Chordal phrases are in effect the second motif of the piece, whose plainness and steady rhythm contrasts with the chromaticism and dotted-rhythm of the melodic motif: from bar 6 the second motif-strand is always in syncopation with the first (apart from the repeating of 4-5 in 9-10).

There is much more development of accompanimental harmonies and overall texture than in the Satie pieces, but little development of motif itself apart from textural variations like the changing of the melodic motif from single notes to octaves (6) or to bare 8_7_2 chords (16) so that development is more apparent than real.

Throughout the piece there is an interplay between the melodic and chordal motifs that suggests that between solo dancers and chorus, seen in the more elaborate movements of the melodic motif as against the plainer ones of the chordal motif, and the middle section (bars 11-16) where the two strands intersect, like lines of dancers crossing through each other. The importance of this contrasted movement is not so much its suggesting imagery of ancient dancers as its creating the patterning produced by repetition and interplay - dance is stylized movement, or patterning.

Patterning is also revealed in the piece's structure, with doubled bar-lines delineating four sections (1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-31), and the long pause between 20 and 21 a sub-section, with other sub-sections in section IV being 22-25, 26-27 (reprise of 1-2) and as coda 27-31, which means section IV is composed of the atomistic units 1+4+4+2+5:

SYMMETRIES



analysis 21:

sections:	I	II	III	>	IV	<	
bars:	5	5	5	1	4	6	5

Debussy: *Danseuses de Delphes*

The double bar-lines before and after bar 16 indicate that it is a subsection of its own, which reflects its being exactly half-way between the first and last bars. Either side are fifteen bars, in symmetrical groups on the left, and asymmetrical ones on the right - whichever way the atomistic units of the right-hand side are grouped the result is asymmetrical (not non-symmetrical, for they can be seen as 10+5 [proportional ratio 2:1] or 4+11 [numbers on the summational scale beginning with 3,4 that are separated by 7 - the seventh bar counted from each end of the group is the beginning of an atomistic unit, and is at the Golden Section ratio from its ends; there is thus obverse-reverse symmetry]:

Analysis 22:

17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
>		4		<	>				11					<
>					11					<	>		4	<

Debussy: *Danseuses de Delphes*

When bar 16 is counted as part of section IV then it the whole section shows an internal symmetry of 5+6+5 that is a reversal of the piece's overall symmetry -15+1+15. Whether all this is regarded as numerology or as architectural structure is unimportant, for both are instances of Art Nouveau asymmetry. Their symbolic importance in compositions of the period by Debussy and Ravel is argued by Roy Howat²².

A different type of analysis shows the ways in which the two motif-strands, announced together at the outset, interplay. The motion and rhythmical interplay is obvious from the analysis, which merely summarizes what has already been explained. The different roles that the motif-strands take need a little more explication: in section I the first motif is of chromatic nature and given out in single notes against the chordal

ones of the second motif; from section II the first motif is always given in octaves.

Analysis 23:

	<u>motion</u>	<u>rhythm</u>	<u>motif 1</u>	<u>motif 2</u>
I	contrary	parallel	chrom/single	modal/chordal
II	contrary	syncopated	chrom/octaves	modal/chordal
III	intersecting	syncopated	mixed/octaves	mixed/chordal
IV	parallel	syncopated	modal/octaves	chrom/chordal

Debussy: *Danseuses de Delphes*

It will be noticed that the motifs interchange tonal and textural roles, so that by the end their whole relationship has been transformed; in this sense the piece is a series of transformations, which, over the modal/Eastern flavour of the tonality and the quietly affective pulse, tends to make the listener dream: as has been seen throughout the repertoire, loosened or strange tonality disorients, repetition without linear development suggests timelessness, and affective pulse mesmerizes. The piece, therefore, is about dream or imagined dance.

Summary

All the pieces illustrating this theme of dance are pieces that are unusually rhythmically insistent, with a sensuality resulting from the mesmeric effect of constantly repeated rhythm. As the rhythms of line in Art Nouveau drawings tend to fascinate the eye with their repetitions and paterings so those of the ear in music like this fascinate the other senses. Thus these Art Nouveau dances are essentially affective, adding sensuousness to the tonal disorientation of their modal and other non-diatonic sounds.

It has also been possible to show significant patterning of their stylized or ritualized movement and repetition on the one hand, and of their design on the other, corresponding to patterns of line and structure in Art Nouveau drawings.

MYSTICAL	<i>Danses Gothiques</i> 1893	Satie
	<i>Prélude de la porte héroïque du ciel</i>	
	1894	Satie
	<i>Cants mágics</i> 1919	Mompou

[The sonatas 6-10 of Alexander Skryabin that also fall under this heading have been given a special chapter of their own following this, that includes justification for considering them all, when only the Seventh and Ninth bear specific titles.]

Concept

Since all Art Nouveau is fundamentally Idealist the general notion of mysticism - claiming knowledge of a meta-world and its impinging on the real world - is implied to a greater or lesser extent in its pictures, writings and music²³. Such a world is always considered to be based on an system of perfect Order, symbols of which can be perceived by the discerning few in the natural world. This is strongly reflected in Art Nouveau's emphasis on mystery, ambiguity, asymmetry, stylization, repetitive rhythms, interweaving, patterning and limited dimensionality that have already been identified as some of its eleven essential principles. The first two factors concern the impinging of the Other World - the unseen forces behind nature - on the "real" or visible world. The last - limited dimensionality - is Art Nouveau's representation of the Other World's being beyond normal space-time, and the others are Art Nouveau's expression of aspects of its order. The music of Erik Satie, Federico Mompou and Alexander Skryabin on mystical subjects tends to express these with Art Nouveau manneristic method.

Particular mysticisms like those of Skryabin, the Theosophists or Péladan (whose aims were "to ruin realism, reform Latin taste, and create a school of idealist art"²⁴), often found expression in Art Nouveau art, even if it were just a Beardsley or Montesquiou posing as practitioners of the dark arts as part of their Decadent ambience. This distinction has, in the main, been observed by Edward Lucie-Smith and by the authors of Jean Cassou's study of Symbolism²⁵. Throughout this study care has been taken to take full account of the ways Symbolism impinges on Art Nouveau, and of

the cases where the two can be distinguished in music.

Satie: *Danses Gothiques*

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 10, the Satie mystical works seem to be a result of his association with the Sâr Josephin Péladan and his *Salon de Rose+Croix* between 1890 and 1892²⁶ (he was specifically appointed composer to Péladan's group by May 1891, composing some pieces for them²⁷) until 1892, although it is likely that he was interested in the mystical and the occult from at least 1885²⁸. These two pieces may have been composed for Satie's own mystical church (grandly named *Église Métropolitaine d'art de Jésus Conducteur*) that he founded following his break with Péladan in 1892, although the *Danses Gothiques* mention the Benedictine order in their dedication²⁹. The *Danses* seem like incidental music for a litany in a religious ceremony, while the *Prélude* is based on a *drama ésoterique* by Jules Bois³⁰.

Satie's own particular mysticism probably involved the occult and perhaps may even have had elements of theosophy. Discussion of these works will therefore point out certain obvious references to Symbolism but will mainly concentrate on their use of Art Nouveau method and expression of its aesthetic. Alan Gillmor and Robert Orledge agree that Golden Section, probably suggested to him by Debussy³¹, is important in some works of this period (*Trois sonneries de la Rose+Croix*, for example), and that in particular the number 3 is mystically significant, as can be seen in Satie's composing works in groups of three (*Sarabandes, Gymnopédies, Gnossiennes, Sonneries*)³². The *Danses* and *Prélude*, however, are not such sets, but have their own internal structural systems that are based on other principles.

The *Danses* are quite unlike the sarabandes and the three Greek-titled trios, being incidental music not unlike improvisations on plainsong. While it is not impossible to imagine solemn dancing to the music, there is no regular rhythm for dancers to follow, so that any dancing would have to

be symbolic gesture or ritual rather than ordered movement. "*Danses*" may therefore mean only a vaguely mediaeval form, or be a deliberately mystifying term, ambiguity being of the essence of Art Nouveau. There is a two-page initial section followed by eight shorter sections, each prefaced by a penitential heading concerned with particular sins to lament or saints to supplicate.

Patrick Gowers has shown that the music of the *Rose+Croix* period can be seen as being formed from compositional "cells", and he terms this method "punctuation form"³³. The method of analysis adopted here is cognate, but not identical, being based on slightly larger units and a slightly different viewpoint that the piece itself seems to suggest. In this way the analysis approaches the music from the opposite direction to that of Patrick Gowers and Robert Orledge: they seek to show how the music came to be formed from its cells, whereas this study looks at the resultant music to discover what units it has formed itself into. There is yet another approach - that of considering the work as a series of time-units, as suggested by Wolfgang Hufschmidt³⁴.

Since all the music is barless and irregular in form, it is necessary to look at its cadences to see its structure, when it is found to consist of shorter or longer phrases that come to some sort of close. There is some repetition of phrase, but not enough to suggest a conventional structure, but from recent discoveries with respect to numerology in the *Sonneries de la Rose+Croix* and the *Prélude de la Porte héroïque du ciel*³⁵ it is likely that some Golden Section or other planned system will be ascertainable, and although for most discussion in this study proportionate system as such is not the main issue, it may be noticed that the method adopted of dividing the music into phrases ending in cadential closes has the interesting result that when the first real repetition begins (A in the sixth line) there are, in this first long section of the work, fifteen phrases before and eight after - Golden

Section according to Fibonacci numbers. Thus what seems on the face of it to be a free-form work seems to have some initial evidence of a hidden order.

Example 52:

The musical score for Example 52 consists of five systems of piano music, each with a treble and bass staff. The units are labeled as follows:

- System 1:** Unit D (part), J, K.
- System 2:** Unit E, A, B.
- System 3:** Unit D, F, L.
- System 4:** Unit M, Z.
- System 5:** Unit O.

The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quavers, crotchets, and dotted quavers, often with accents or slurs. Some units have specific fingering or articulation markings.

More interesting from the point of view of Art Nouveau is the repetition of the unit of two quavers and a crotchet, often followed by a bass note or an extended quaver motion; in C and F this is varied by having the quavers dotted. The basic unit is complete in itself as a whole phrase (B, D [line 5]) and is the only one that forms cadences finishing on 5_3 chords. The other cadences are incomplete, ending indefinitely, which tends to justify such descriptions as that of Leonard B. Meyer's "non-goal oriented music"³⁶. Repetition at intervals and in multiples of this rhythmic unit tends to produce a feeling of timelessness that is augmented by the indefinite cadences. (The mystical realm of perfect Order is of

course timeless).

Très lent

Satie: *Danses Gothiques*, pages 1-2.

While in each of the nine sections of the complete work a basic tonality is established (and reinforced by the single bass notes) the harmonies that unfold above this are very strange and seemingly disordered, or at least unordered, and seem to anticipate the Dadaists' deliberate meaninglessness by a generation. The very first chord is a VI_3^b discord that prepares for a resolution to V^5 on G which instead becomes V_3^b . This sets a pattern of "resolution" into discord that becomes the standard method of procedure, so that except for the few completed cadences the harmonic movement is always anticipating but rarely achieving resolution. There is thus a sense of indefiniteness that again heightens timelessness.

It is important to note that the harmonies for this work (like those of the *Sarabandes*) are as complex as those of the Greek dances are plain, yet both are termed *danses*. The suggestion made about the Greek dances that Pythagorean whole-number ratios may be symbolized in the simplicity of their harmonies obviously does not apply here, where the emphasis is firmly on mystery.

Phrase **H** simply repeats the same b_3 chord, although in an ABA

rhythmic unit; it reappears verbatim in section 2 and in BAB rhythmic form in Section 9 to end the whole cycle. Phrases I, K and M are sequences of unharmonized octaves like plainchant whose type reappears in sections 3 and 8 and are followed, except for K, by cadences like Amens, so that they are perhaps to be understood as leads and responses, but their appearance in the order of phrases seems irregular. They do, however, supply antiphonal imagery of mystery to the *Danses* that with its plainness supplements that of the strange harmonic movement.

The whole nine sections consist of the contradictions between irrational (harmonically speaking) and indefinite, timeless sequences on the one hand with definite, if unorthodox, cadences on the other (for instance, the VI^{5b}_{3b}/I_{3b} of C or the $III^6_{3b}\backslash I_{3b}$ of G). This is music of a mysterious realm perhaps only intelligible through an esoteric system. It seems clear that the strangeness is deliberate, and that the Art Nouveau characters of indefiniteness and timelessness are means to that end.

Satie: Prélude de la porte héroïque du ciel

This work of 1894 is dedicated to himself, with facetious directions:

Example 53:

The musical score for Example 53 is presented in five systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The score is annotated with various phrasing labels (A through Z) and performance directions. The first system is marked "[♩.66]" and "Calmement et profondément doux". The second system includes the direction "Suprastitueusement". The third system includes "Avec différence". The fourth system includes "Très sincèrement silencieux". The score consists of a series of rhythmic patterns and chords, with some sections marked with phrasing slurs and dynamic markings like *p*.

His celestial vision, ambiguously satirical, is Art Nouveau Arcadianism mixed with mystical-romantic heroism, whether written for Péladan or his own "church".

Example 53:

Satie: Prélude
de la porte héroïque du ciel

The simplest way to divide the work into phrases is to use real or apparent movements to cadences as demarcations. Example 53 shows the way the piece is composed of twenty-three motif-phrases, ten of which are repeated or slightly modified (A, B, D, E, G, H, J, M, R, O). The motifs A, B, H are double ones, having two closes. There is a coda after Rideau (= curtain), indicated by the only barlines in the piece, and even these are dotted lines. It is difficult to perceive the structure without barlines, and the forty-four cadences are irregularly placed, as can be seen in the example. There may be a numerological key to the work's proportions, and Alan Gillmor points out its arch structure³⁷. William Austin analyzes the work from the point of view of time, particularly *time espace*, which suggests yet another layer of meaning³⁸. His comments on the placing of rubrics are relevant to the paragraph below: he notes that the rubrics occur in mid-

phrase, and this may be to draw attention to matters of proportion, for the Golden Section markers (see below) fall in phrases governed by rubrics.

There is some evidence of a multi-level structure. If the full closes to 5_3 , major or minor, that occur at the end of motif-phrases are counted, then there are 21 to Rideau. At the Golden Section from 21, which is 13 (R), there is a close to the work's home key, D. If the whole work is considered (23 closes), then the Golden Section marker of 14 (J) is the only occasion in the work where the home key is emphasized by a D in the lowest octave. If the forty-four motif-phrases are considered, then the Golden Section phrase is M (27:44), which is the work's climax (ironically indicated *Eviter toute exultation sacrilège* [avoiding all sacrilegious exultation]; if the phrases to Rideau are considered then the Golden Section phrase in J (25:40), which is indicated *En une timide pieté*. But J is the Golden Section phrase for the **whole** work when considering full closes, as mentioned earlier in this paragraph: thus by Golden Section the two dimensions of the work come together.

What is more important is to notice that there is much Art Nouveau (that is, excessive and patterned) repetition of motif and fragment. To begin with, forty-four cadences in a short piece of two pages (just over two hundred crotchet beats) is excessive, as is the repetition of ten motifs in a piece that is not simple binary; one of them (B) is repeated five times, and may thus be a structural marker of symbolic significance, because it gives the piece a seven-fold division plus coda. Most of the motif-sections are constructed from the three-note melodic fragment seen at its simplest in B at the end of the first line, so that besides the ten actual occurrences of this there are many echoes of it in varied forms throughout the piece. The only contrasts to the working-out of this fragment are the simple crotchet movements of motif-sections D and M, the single-note basses at intervals and the octave passages at the end. The piece is thus dominated by the three-note figure that in its simplest form

moves to a 5_3 cadence, so that much of the piece is spent expecting similar 5_3 cadences but getting instead the various types of imperfect ones that end many motif-sections. The only simple repetition in the whole piece is a reversal of the opening sequences **AABB** into **BBAA** just before *Rideau*; all the other repetition is structural patterning.

It is possible that Satie is suggesting a mystical state beyond ordinary dimensions by his dispensing with bar-lines and normal structure, but it is more likely that this is suggested by the non-progressing harmony, seen especially in the parallel or near-parallel progressions like those of **A**, the incomplete cadences (for instance **C**, **E**, **F**) and the general non-resolution of discords except at the twenty-three full closes numbered in the example.

Mystery is also shown in the non-progressing nature of the harmonic progressions like the consecutive chords of sections **G'-Q** and the surprising transformation from the key **F** to **D** at *Rideau*:

$\underline{\text{F}}: \text{I} \setminus \text{II}^{6b}_{3b} \setminus \text{I} \setminus ^{6b}_{3b} \setminus \text{bVII}^6_3 \setminus \text{bVI}^{6b}_3 / \underline{\text{D}}^5_3.$
--

Finally, cadences are often quite unorthodox - for instance the $\text{bIII}^5_{3b} \setminus \text{II}^6_{3b} \setminus \text{I}$ cadence of **J**, or the $\text{III}^7 \setminus \text{I}$ of **B**.

Mompou: *Cants mágics*

Federico Mompou was a native of Barcelona, the city of Antoni Gaudi's architectural expressions of Art Nouveau, and of ancient Moorish traditions, which can be easily seen in Gaudi's work³⁹, and it is also possible that gypsy, theosophist or other exotic elements are implied in the overall title of the works to be studied here. But perhaps the most important element is that of his beliefs on primitivism or *recomençament*, which seem to embrace basic, archetypal instinctual elements of music as well as very simple means in composing and notating it⁴⁰. This is similar to Satie's aims of simplicity, particularly as seen in the Greek dances. It is this aspect of his *recomençament* doctrine that leads to the placing of this work in this chapter rather than in the later one containing the theme

of evil, for although much in the music is menacing its basic focus seems to be on the incantation of spirits and powers through hypnotic repetitions and strange sounds. In this respect it is like Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps* and Ravel's *Bolero*, and all the works in which composers evoke the mysteries of the ancient or exotic worlds (see chapter 15).

Central to Mompou's use of minimal means and popular tunes (in some works) seems to be the Art Nouveau idea of the mysterious powers in nature that unsophisticated societies and their cultures are closer to; by stripping his music of all possible accretions its natural, elemental essence remains. Thus popular or simple traditions can contain hidden folk-memories, as expounded in the comparative mythology of Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, and as Carl Jung argued in his concept of archetypes in the collective unconscious. Mompou's music may be considered more as a series of sketches than developed compositions, but their basic concept is certainly relevant to this study for the musical ideas it suggests.

The *Cants* consist of five short pieces in unbarred staves and free form, and represent his recommencement style in contradistinction to the more conventional *Impresiones intimas* of 1911-14. They are perhaps to be regarded as sketches, but their austerity of form and uncompromising rhythmic expression is also reminiscent of Satie, whom Mompou, clearly a member of the musical avant-garde in his Parisian years 1911-14 and 1921-40, would have known.

The five pieces have no individual titles, although at the head of each are the indications, respectively, *Energic*, *Obscur*, *Profond-lent*, *Misteriós* and *Calma*, which at least show the initial and therefore characterizing mood of each piece. There are similar directions to indicate sectional changes, and italicized Spanish terms that seem to be like the French ones of Skryabin in indicating meaning as much as manner. In the context of the bareness of the score these directions take on much

importance.

The first piece is of ABA form (marked with the numerals 1,2,3) with *Energic* sections composed of two chords only - I^5 (without a third) and $V^{9}_{6_4}$ arranged in a crotchet-minim rhythm, with the first chord forming a pedalpoint that lasts throughout the piece. Ties extending from each chord but not joining to the next would seem to indicate that the sustaining pedal is to be heavily used. These sections surround a *Lent* that consists of slight elaborations of the basic material: (E- minor) III-IV-III-I (twice) V-V-V-I, V- \sharp VI-V-I (twice). All the tonic chords are $^{12}_5$ as at their first appearance, and all the others in the mid-section $^{10}_{6_4\sharp}$ in strict parallel, with only a few connecting quavers in the treble to break the strictness of rhythm. There is a four-note *recitat* preceding the mid-section, but it is only E E G G, and a slow arpeggiated chord composed of the notes of the chords of the outer sections.

The bareness and simplicity of the writing is extreme, so that nothing distracts from the repetitiveness of both rhythm and harmony. Since it is not children's music (the chord-stretches and movement across the keyboard are too difficult) it is deliberate naivety, reminiscent of Gauguin's South-Sea paintings that are often considered Art Nouveau because of their use of outlining and curves, and because of their nature-centred ethos. Mompou is of course evoking the simple rhythms and limited-gamut chants of what he supposes to be "primitive" music, as hinted at in the final section of Debussy's *L'isle joyeux*, where he seems to be doing the same thing, although with more elaborate means.

The second piece consists of variations on a three-bar phrase (bars are used for the stave on which this motif appears), largely consisting of additions and in the first instance an actual harmonization. The phrase is characterized *obscur* when it appears alone at first, then *clar* when harmonized. From the third line a treble ostinato appears above it and remains for the rest of the piece except the reprise of the harmonized

line. The section of the piece headed "cant." is the first moment in the suite to this point where there seems to be some development:

Example 54:

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. The first system consists of three staves (treble, middle, and bass clefs). The top staff has a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The middle staff has a melodic line with a section marked 'cant.' and a dynamic marking 'p'. The bottom staff has a bass line with sustained notes. The second system continues the same three-staff structure with similar rhythmic and melodic patterns.

Mompou: *Cants mágics 2*, lines 5-6

The sudden shifting via parallel 2_4 chord from \underline{B}^b to \underline{A} is ambiguous: the \underline{A} appears at first to be a temporary pause on the leading-note before a returning to \underline{B}^b , but when this does not eventuate, and is replaced by the unrelated bass statement on \underline{B} , the \underline{A} chord is now seen as its diminished minor triad with flattened seventh. This ambiguity follows that of the $\underline{G-D}$ bass statement just before the \underline{B}^b chord of the example, and also follows the unresolved harmonies of the second and last lines where the initial motif is harmonized: (\underline{B} minor) $II^{b2}_4-V^{10}_7-I^5-II^7_{42b}-I^7_{42b}$. (The piece ends, however, on the bare fifth-plus-octave - the first three steps of this chain.)

The third piece begins chromatically so that its major-minor tonality is ambiguous: (over an \underline{E}^b pedal) $V-^bVI-V-VI$. A contrary-motion melodic fragment in parallel minor thirds is then added, repeated and augmented until it becomes a series of parallel descending broken chords:

Example 55:

The image shows a musical score for piano accompaniment. It features a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a bass line. The melodic line consists of a series of descending broken chords. The bass line has a steady accompaniment. The score includes the instruction 'una mica d'aire' in the bass staff. Below the score, there are four pairs of notes, each consisting of a flat note and a natural note, representing the harmonic structure discussed in the text.

Mompou: *Cants mágics 3*

Example 56:

Mompou: *Cants mágics* 3, line 6

By this time the melodic fragment has itself transformed into a descending pattern, but its characteristic rhythm has not changed, for rhythmic ostinati are present throughout every moment of the suite. The simultaneous broken chords are at first of independent tonality, but come together in the sub-mediante seventh chord that is unresolved. The piece ends with the ambiguous parallel thirds, melody and pedal forming an unresolved 6_4 chord. The directions for the piece are *Profond-lent; sota el peu de la son* [with the heaviness of sleep]; and *una mica d'aire* [a little more airy/lighter], so that the drowsiness of mesmeric effect is intended - a characteristically Art Nouveau mood.

The fourth piece is in contrasting episodes: *Misteriós; viu, sens ordre* [lively, free-rhythm]; *dolorés; tranquil trist; en l'aire; viu; dolorés*. Although the second direction is in effect that of rubato there is only a slight relaxing of the ostinato, because a definite and unmistakable rhythmic pattern is repeated:

Example 57:

Mompou: *Cants mágics* 4, lines 2-3

This rhythmic pattern is related to that of the other sections. The *viv* section fragment is repeated three times, and echoed in a fourth by the left-hand figure during the brief *dolorés* section. This is the most repetitive of all the pieces: the monotony is deliberate and highly affective. The final ascending broken chord of the piece consists of the first nine notes of the left-hand figure in the *viv* example above, so that there is once more an unresolved ending.

The fifth piece is the most Satie-like (*Sarabandes* and *Gymnopédies*) in its slow, sustained movement and subtlety of harmonies. It is like the first in being ABA in form, although with double bar-lines rather than numerals to support the indications. It runs *Calma; Inquiet; Calma;* with *profond* and *perdentse* towards the conclusion, which is again unresolved, with a 9_6_4 chord on the dominant over the \underline{F} pedal. This is the implied and stated but often obscured pedal throughout the A-sections, as chords of the seventh move in parallel with the melody, but at the strange interval of an augmented fourth below it, thus constantly contradicting the pedal: as the melody moves through the major triad on F the chords move through one on B.

The *inquiet* section takes place over a pedal that is ostinato, yet the relationships between melody, harmonies and pedal are ambiguous:

Example 58:

The musical score for Example 58 consists of two systems of piano music. The first system is in 6/8 time, with a treble clef and a bass clef. The second system is also in 6/8 time, with a treble clef and a bass clef. The music features a complex harmonic structure with a pedal point in the bass and a melody in the treble.

Mompou: *Cants mágics* 5, lines 4-5

The right-hand (crotchet) component of the first two chords points to an $\underline{A^b}$ as its base, with which it would form a chord of the seventh, but that of the left hand is more related to the pedal $\underline{D^b}$, with which it would form a

${}^9_5_3 - {}^8_5_3$ movement if it were fully spelt out. But at no point in the sequence is there a full resolution, the nearest being that of the chord after the melodic A, which forms a diminished seventh with added sharpened fifth on D^b, and this chord and melodic note is simply repeated to end the section (and is thus unresolved).

The suite as a whole is marked by hypnotic repetition, ostinato rhythms and pedalpoints, all these, and their exaggerated employment, being characteristic of musical Art Nouveau, suggesting respectively sensuality and limited dimensionality. The extreme simplicity of means (although with some subtlety of harmonies), and the prominence of accompanimental figuration over melody (because of the brevity and repetition of all the melodic fragments), is again Art Nouveau - extremity of effect.

While the superficial intention is to echo the rhythms and simplicity of primitive chant, as the name implies, this is not done in any narrative sense, because at no stage in the suite is there any satisfactory harmonic resolution that would suggest linearity of progression (the nearest approach being the use of bare fifths to end a phrase). Nor is there any attempt to weave musical imagery into a normal structure as in impressionistic composition. The pieces are therefore reflections from the sophisticated point of view of Art Nouveau on the nature of primitive magic chant, as Mompou imagines it.

Summary

The two Satie works show strangeness in their general mode of procedure and hidden symbolism in their structures, but have other important Art Nouveau characters - non-conventionality, excessive repetition both of phrase and of the two-quaver+crotchet rhythm. The first title suggests mediaeval ritual of deep symbolic import and the second dream-transformation: their music is appropriately timeless and indefinite because its linear movement is apparently irrational in normal harmonic terms, although possibly explicable in symbolic ones. From an Art Nouveau

viewpoint the repetition of the basic two quaver+crotchet unit becomes somewhat mesmeric and its effect subliminal, like all ritual.

The Mompou work is like Satie's in being affectedly, even excessively simple, and in this it comes close to Dadaism, and is liable to the same criticism of triviality. Its subject is serious enough, however, so that the work may be seen as an attempt to evoke or explore the nature of primitive music, whose intention is, like Art Nouveau, primarily affective. Like the Satie works, and like all the works in this chapter, patterning and asymmetries are evident and crucial to its purpose.

End-notes

- 1 Hopkins, G.M.: *As kingfishers catch fire*, 2-4
- 2 Howat, R.: *Towards Some New Concepts of Form*, Music and Letters LVIII/3 (July 1977), 290-91.
- 3 Orledge, R.: op. cit., 23.
- 4 Howat, R.: op. cit., 290-91.
- 5 Cf. Jost Hermand's theme *Tanz und Taumel* in his *Lyrik des Jugendstils*, 5-13; Hamann, R. & Hermand, J.: *Stilkunst um 1900*, 264ff. Ludwig Finscher (op. cit., 169-70) points out the dual associations of youth and ritual in dance.
- 6 M.E. Curray: *La Fiesta*; Jules Chéret: *Loie Fuller*; Julius Klinger: *La Joéla*; Maurice Biais: *Saharet*; John Hassall: *The Shop Girl*; Higby: *Poster for Outing*, January 1897; (Lorenz, O.: op. cit.).
- 7 Walker, A.: op. cit., 359.
- 8 Nagler, N.: op. cit., 27.
- 9 Schelling, F. von: *Philosophie der Kunst*.
- 10 Orledge, R.: op. cit., 168.
- 11 Ibid, 142.
- 12 Loc. cit.
- 13 The pieces appear to be in the same category as the Mahler melody analyzed in Dahlhaus, C.: *Schoenberg and the New Music*, transl. Puffett, D. & Clayton, A., (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1987), 106. See also the general comments of Hermann Danuser on Dahlhaus' chapter in Danuser, H.: *Musikalische Prosa*, (Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie II), 19.
- 14 The introduction to II was added later, so that it seems reasonable to omit it from calculations in all pieces. The endings, however, are integral to each work. See *ibid*, 142.
- 15 Gillmor, A.: op. cit., 87-89 - *Sonneries*.
- 16 As in Islamic artistic tradition, for instance. Robert Orledge's evidence of Satie's allowing "tiny (and easily remediable) flaws to stand in his large-scale mirrors" in other works seems to be similar. See Orledge, R.: op. cit., 169.
- 17 Gillmor, A., Orledge, R.: *op. cit.*
- 18 Gillmor, op. cit., 46.
- 19 Templier, P.D.: *Erik Satie*, (transl. French, E.L. & D.S.), (M.I.T. Press, Cambridge Mass., & London, 1969), 76: "Lydian scales and oriental charm"; Mellers, W.H.: "modal character" (Grove 5, VII, 417).

- 20 Gillmor, A.: op. cit., 36.
- 21 Mauser, S.: *Satie und Debussy*, *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 44 (Oct-Nov 1989), 525-34, particularly the diagrams.
- 22 Howat, R.: opp. cit.
- 23 Particularly the Pythagorean notion of music of the soul - see a typical exposition of this in Goolwin, J.: *The Golden Chain of Orpheus: a Survey of Musical Esoterism in the West*, *Temenos* 4 (1983), 7-26.
- 24 Gillmor, A.: op. cit., 77.
- 25 Lucie-Smith, E.: op. cit., 44, 102, 124, 133-8, 162-8, 194-5; Cassou, J. (ed.): op. cit. The other authors are Georges Pillement (visual art), Pierre Brunel (literary), Francis Claudon (musical), Lionel Richard (the era).
- 26 Patrick Gower in *New Grove* (16, 516) and Robert Orledge (op. cit., xxi-xxii) have their association beginning in 1890 and ending in 1892. Wilkins, N.: *The Writings of Erik Satie*, (London, Eulenberg 1980), 176, gives 1891 as the date of first association and 1890 as the "official musician" appointment. Orledge gives a definite date for their break (14 August 1892), and states that *Danses Gothiques* was composed after this as a relief from his affair with Suzanne Valadon (xxii). It is therefore possible that the later-published *Prélude* was for his own, not Péladan's "church".
- 27 Loc. cit. The compositions are *Les fils d'étoiles*, (1891), *Sonneries de la Rose+Croix* (1891), *Fête donnée par des Chevaliers de Normands*, (1892).
- 28 Gillmor, A.: op. cit., 86.
- 29 "*Danses Gothiques*. Nouvaine pour le plus grand calme et la forte tranquillité de mon Ame. *Cultifiement et coadunatation choristiques*. A la Transcendante, Solenelle, et Représentative Exstase de Saint Benoit Préparatoire et Méthodique du Très Puissant Ordre des Bénédictins. Le 21 mars de 1893 à Paris le Soleil étant sur la Terre.
- 30 Rogers, M.: preface to the Cramer edition of selected piano compositions, 1975.
- 31 The whole question of the mutual influences between Satie and Debussy is still being uncovered: see Mauser, S.: op. cit., 525-34.
- 32 Gillmor, A.: op. cit., 87-98; Orledge, R.: 157-8, 168-69.
- 33 Gowers, P.: op. cit., 18. The idea of cells appears to come from *Contamine de Latour*, and is furthered by Robert Orledge (op. cit., 185-191).
- 34 Hufschmidt, W.: *Musik als Wiederholung. Anmerkungen zur Periodischen Musik. Reflexion über Musik heute*, (Mainz, Schott 1981), 148-68, links Ravel, Satie and Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* concepts of time.
- 35 Orledge, R.: op. cit., 167-184.
- 36 Meyer, L.B.: *Music, the Arts and Ideas: Patterns and Predictions in Twentieth-Century Culture*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1967, 72).
- 37 Gillmor, A.: op. cit., 102.
- 38 Austin, W.W.: *The Rhythms of Satie and "Oriental Timelessness"*, *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13 (1984), 101-02.
- 39 Masini, L-V.: op. cit., 127-30.
- 40 Salter, L. in *New Grove* 12, 476.

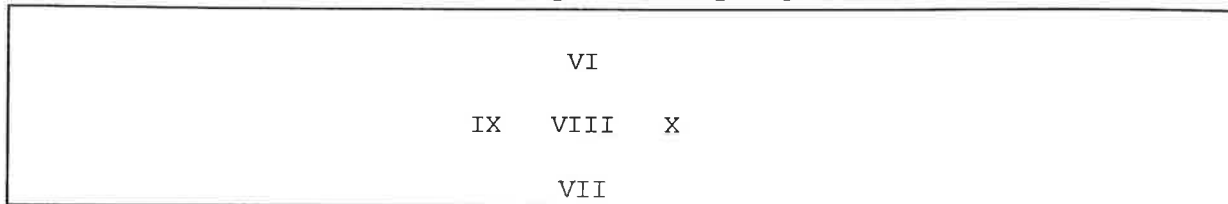
SKRYABIN - THE LATE SONATAS AS MYSTICAL WORKS

Sonata 6	1911-12
Sonata 7 (<i>Messe blanc</i>)	1911
Sonata 8	1912-13
Sonata 9 (<i>Messe noir</i>)	1913
Sonata 10	1912-13

The sonata as such is not normally to be regarded in the terms of this study as first-order repertory, unless it has an Art Nouveau title or Symbolist programme with Art Nouveau connexions, as has already been seen with Skryabin's Fifth. What will be argued in this chapter is that the sonatas VI-X are the one large-canvas work, and that all are primarily mystical, not just the Seventh (*Messe blanc*) and the Ninth (nicknamed *Messe noir*, apparently with Skryabin's acquiescence¹). It will be argued that the five sonatas should be seen as five aspects of the same subject - an exposition of part of Skryabin's mystical plans that were to have culminated in the projected *Mysterium*. The central theme is that of the opposition of benign and evil ecstasies², and it will be argued that this is to be seen in the nature and deployment of the symmetrical pitch-sets used in the sonatas, and in the meanings of the French-language rubrics throughout the works. Only by reconciling pitch-set analysis with the semiological evidence, as has been discussed above for the Fifth Sonata, can the full importance of the sonatas as a five-part whole be understood. It then follows that this dual approach is also vital to the fuller understanding of the shorter pieces written in the last period of Skryabin's life, some of which are discussed in other chapters of this study.

Skryabin's commitment to Symbolism was total: it directed his life and guided all his composition, at least after about 1905. The five sonatas (6-10) were composed closely together (1911-13) and, as will be argued, composed as a unit, with sonatas VI, VII, IX and X being at the four points of the compass, as it were, and VIII in the middle; the viewpoint

or relative position of each is symbolically significant.



The satanical natures of VI and IX are opposed to the purifying nature of VII and X; in the middle is the "*tragique*" state of the unliberated soul that feels the pull of these contradictory forces and must endeavour to find a reconciliation.

All that has been understood about the sonatas hitherto is that they were regarded as mystical by the composer, who saw the Sixth and the Ninth as satanic while the Seventh was purifying and holy³. He refused to play the Sixth in public from his superstitious feeling that it was demonic and corrupt, and said of the Ninth that playing it was "practising sorcery"⁴. He himself nicknamed the Seventh "White Mass", and his fellow-mystic and friend Alexei Podgajetsky named the Ninth "Black Mass", apparently without objection from Skryabin⁵. As yet there has been no convincing explanation in musical terms of how Skryabin justified his according to these sonatas a mystical or superstitious status, but using Jay Reise's analysis of his harmonic method (employed earlier for discussion of the Fifth Sonata), and a semiological analysis of the French-language rubrics from the viewpoint of Art Nouveau, a simple differentiation between them appears that shows how the composer saw them as mystical.

As a general rule Skryabin reserves Italian-language directions for tempo and broad indication of manner, as far as this can be judged from the printed editions available⁶; there are occasional exceptions that do not present any serious challenge to this generalization, like *Languido* in the Fifth (bar 13) or *en peu plus lent* in the Sixth (bar 230), which are reversals of the normal procedure. But almost all the French rubrics (usually appearing in italics) are to do with manner, not tempo, and must seem rather fanciful to players: *en un vertige* (7, 287), *legendaire* (9,

1), *avec une langueur naissante* (9, 35), *tout devient charme et douceur* (VI, 242), for instance. They contain terminology vital to Skryabin's mysticism, however, like "langueur" [passive/feminine erotic longing, in Skryabin's symbolism] and "charme" [spell] whose nature only becomes clear when they are examined in the general context of Art Nouveau imagery. Furthermore, the tenor of these expressions is always reflected in the nature of the particular motif, figure and pitch-set employed, as will become clear below. Once it is seen that these French rubrics, only explicable from an Art Nouveau viewpoint, are a code of symbols explaining the meaning of the musical passages to which they are applied, then Skryabin's intentions in these five late sonatas, and their belonging together as a group, can begin to be appreciated.

That this semiological evidence has been unnoticed until now is not surprising, for until the pieces are looked at, as in this repertory study, from the point of view of Art Nouveau, the appropriate questions are not asked that can uncover their meaning. Outside this context these French-language signs seem merely fanciful; within it they are seen as familiar Art Nouveau imagery - for instance of the pretended innocence of the seductress, or of Dionysian orgy, or of flames rising to transform matter. Their part in the overall picture of the sonatas can therefore begin to be assessed in a systematic context.

The discoveries made about these sonatas and other works in this study that follow from looking at them from this fresh viewpoint, are a sufficient justification for such study, over and above questions of whether and how far Art Nouveau may be said to impinge on music and music history.

Sonatas VI-X as a set

These may first be considered for their internal evidences of mystical system, and in particular for the ways in which the Sixth and Ninth are evil (as their nicknames and musical directions indicate) as

opposed to the purifying properties of the Seventh and Tenth. It needs to be remembered that, to Skryabin, to perform these works was not merely to portray or symbolize his mystical beliefs, but to enact mystical ritual⁷. Thus there is, to him, power in the very nature of the composition and its constituents, as will be argued through the chapter.

Each sonata is formed around two main motifs and a number of subsidiary fragments that will be termed "figures" because of their role in forming the textural figuration. These will be numbered with subscripts: the motifs will be designated M_1 and M_2 , and the figures F_1 , F_2 , F_3 and so on. Variants or derivatives of a figure are shown as F_{1a} , F_{1b} . To avoid confusion with bar-numbers in analyses and examples the sonatas will be referred to with Roman numerals rather than with Arabic digits.

The tonal nature of each M_1 and M_2 pair, together with that of their surrounding figural contexts, is the key to Skryabin's intentions. All the motifs are formed from octatonic sets (sets that proceed in semitone-tone alternations, thus taking eight notes to cover the octave's twelve semitones). There are only two transpositions possible for the octatonic set before it begins to repeat, and these begin respectively one and two semitones higher than the prime set. For convenience, the three will be designated using superscripts: O^1 , O^2 and O^3 . If a set is reversed, its alternations become tone-semitone; such sets are here termed "left-handed", and will be designated LO^1 , LO^2 and LO^3 .

It is clear from the table below that there is a pattern in the way the pitch-sets are deployed, and that the five sonatas, composed closely together (1911-13), form a group in which Skryabin is exploiting various possibilities of the octatonic pitch-set, (although not this pitch-set exclusively, for there are uses of other symmetrical sets such as tetratonic and hexatonic, as will appear.)

Analysis 24:

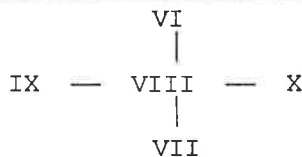
[M = motif; O = octatonic set; LO = left-handed octatonic set]

sonata	motifs	bar	pitch-set	key-note
VI	M ₁	11-14	[LO ²	<u>F</u>
	M ₂	39-45	[LO ²	<u>A^b</u>
VII	M ₁	1-3	O ¹	<u>A</u> → O ³ on <u>F</u>
	M ₂	29-35	O ³	<u>G[#]</u>
VIII	M ₁	4-5	[O ¹	[<u>A</u>
	M ₂	26-29	[O ¹	[<u>A</u>
IX	M ₁	7-8	O ¹	<u>G^b</u>
	M ₂	35-41	LO ²	<u>B</u>
X	M ₁	1-2	[O ³	<u>A^b</u>
	M ₂	9-12	[O ³	<u>F</u>

Skryabin: Sonatas 6,7,8,9 - motivic pitch-sets

It is also clear that the arrangement of sonatas is ordered.

1. The even-numbered sonatas (VI, VIII, X) use identical pitch-sets for their motif-pairs.
2. The pitch-sets of the odd-numbered sonatas (VII, IX) are symmetrically arranged, for the **normal** octatonic sets are nearest the middle while the **unusual** sets (the transforming one of the Seventh and the left-handed octatonic of the Eighth) are farther away.
3. The Eighth, in the centre, is the only sonata to use two identical pitch-sets and in the same key (= inversion). Since the other four sonatas' details are arranged symmetrically around VIII, it seems to occupy a special central position, as if the others directly relate to it:



4. The key-pairs of the outer sonatas (VI, X) are symmetrical, and those of the even-numbered sonatas (VII, IX) are a tone apart:

$$\begin{array}{c}
 +-----+ \\
 \underline{A} + \underline{G\#} : \underline{G\flat} + \underline{B} \\
 +-----+
 \end{array}$$

Thus Skryabin seems to have worked to a plan for the whole sonata-set, of which these details are part. These features of structural design

represent only one dimension of the plan, the other being the symbolic relationship of each part to the whole. It will be possible to elucidate some elements of this through examination of the five sonatas' French-language rubrics, heavy with familiar Art Nouveau images, and on the other in the motifs and figures themselves - their ascending or descending natures, their textures and their forms.

Symmetrical pitch-sets in the late sonatas

Of the symmetrical pitch-sets the chromatic set is the most perfect, for it has no transpositions but twelve possible inversions - one for each semitone. It is possible to see this set in the Tenth, although this is more correctly to be seen as a chromatically free use of octatonic sets. Other symmetrical sets, from whole-tone to hexatonic, are more sparingly employed, and generally only for figures. (These sets will shortly be discussed). But it is the octatonic set that forms the general basis of most of the late works, as Jay Reise has suggested, and it is the key to the analysis not only of the harmony of the late sonatas but also their symbolism.

Example 59:

Octatonic pitch-sets

The octatonic set consists of four semitone-tone alternations that produce a strange-sounding scale and harmony. Each set can be begun on its first, third, fifth or seventh note and retain its semitone-tone order

of alternations. Thus the O^1 set can be based on C, D[#], F[#], A, and repetitions of sequences at these minor-third intervals take the place of modulation. But when the alternations begin tone-semitone, commencing on the left hand, as it were, the whole character of the scale is changed, for the order is tone-semitone, and the scale sounds different - in the root position (beginning on C[#]), the first four notes are now identical with the diatonic minor. The inversions of the left-handed set are E, G, B^b. Left-handed sets are of crucial symbolic importance in the Sixth and Ninth sonatas, as will be explained, while their ambiguous tonality is an Art Nouveau dimension that complements their symbolic meaning. Another Art Nouveau dimension is that of transformation - one symmetrical set into another, or a left-handed into a right-handed set. Still another is the sudden shifting into another inversion without modulation, or parallel progressions that advance through inversions - both are disorientating, tending to be mesmerically affective because of their repetition, and to induce a sense of timelessness through parallel progressions.

Other features of the octatonic scale are important in the late sonatas. As can be seen in the foregoing example, each group of semitone makes a minor third, two of these make the tritone and four the octave. The tritone can become in effect the dominant, but its position in Skryabin's harmonic language is not simple: at least some of the time it appears to be an evil sign, recalling the mediaeval prohibition noticed in Chapter 8.

The octatonic scale has only two transpositions, each being a semitone above the preceding, and each transposition has three inversions (at minor thirds). Skryabin often mixes the transpositions, and in certain special cases the right or left-handedness, but these are for specific symbolic purposes.

Finally, the octatonic set is a nice compromise between the restrictiveness of the more limited symmetrical pitch-sets like the whole-

tone and hexatonic sets on the one hand, and the limitless freedom of the chromatic set on the other⁸. It has the familiar major and minor triads available on its first note, together with their inversions, as well as French sixths and diminished sevenths. But it also has the tritone interval - available from every note, moreover. And its scale or note-succession sounds very strange, giving rise to unusual chordal possibilities. Pitch-class set analysis could be used to identify which of these Skryabin favours most, but some will become obvious in the course of discussion.

The purpose of symmetrical sets in the late sonatas

Like all symbolists Skryabin constructs philosophical-cosmological systems based on ordered relationships - systems that show the inherent Order in his hypothesized cosmos. Clearly, symmetrical pitch-sets can symbolize such Order in a way that the traditional non-symmetrical sets of diatonic and modal composition can not. In composition from about 1905 he increasingly employs the symmetrical pitch-sets, and when he reverts to diatonics, as already seen in parts of *Danse languide* (Chapter 13) it is to indicate a state of imperfection - human, not cosmic..

The symmetrical sets comprise octatonic, hexatonic, pentatonic, tetratonic, whole-tone and chromatic varieties, whose perfection lies in their intervallic symmetries, for all proceed regularly:

Analysis 25:	[COUNTING IN SEMITONAL INTERVALS]		
Chromatic	111111	111111	
Whole-tone	22222		
Tritonic	444		or 138
Tetratonic	3333		or 2424 or 1515
Pentatonic	23232		
Hexatonic	13 13 13		or 123 123 or 141 141
Octatonic	12 12 12 12		
[Sets may be summarily indicated by their first letters: WT,P, H,O, but in the text will first be identified in full]			
Symmetrical pitch-sets			

The essential principle of these pitch-sets, apart from their intervallic symmetries, is that those using more than one interval proceed from the

smaller to the greater. This corresponds with a vital principle of Skryabin's symbolism - that of "efflorescence", or "harmonious expansion and diversification of the psyche"⁹, in which it is essential to proceed from the smaller to the greater if cosmic harmoniousness is to be sought. If any of these octatonic sets begins on its last note as a left-handed set, instead of its first as a normal, right-handed set, this principle is reversed. Disorder is produced - that is, reversed Order, just as black magic is supposedly created by saying or spelling sacred things backwards, like the Mass.

Jay Reise feels that Skryabin arrived at the octatonic set through his earlier fascination with the French sixth and diminished seventh, both of which are contained within the octatonic set. (It may incidentally be noticed that the French sixth, being two major thirds a tone apart, is asymmetrical - 424, while the diminished seventh, as three minor thirds, is symmetrical - 333). Along the way to the octatonic set Skryabin constructed the mystic chord (whose relation to the two chords above and the octatonic set is explained by Dr Reise¹⁰), but he gradually left this behind. This chord figures less in the later works as the symmetrical sets begin to overshadow it, for while the French sixth, diminished seventh, mystic chord and symmetrical sets are closely related, as Dr Reise explains, Skryabin concentrates increasingly in his later work on the horizontal focus of pitch-sets rather than on the vertical one of chords and their harmonic content, (Reise's account is purely historical and harmonic, not symbolistic¹¹). It is the clue of the French-language directions that reveals Skryabin's view of right and left-handed pitch-sets, as will be shown.

Skryabin's method is typically symbolist: he employs both normal and "left-handed" (the term is Skryabin's¹²) octatonic sets to show opposites in his cosmological system, like active and passive principles. Skryabin's working principle in constructing his symbolistic universe was

to proceed via "efflorescence" ["from the greatest delicacy (refinement), via active efficacy (flight) to the greatest grandiosity"¹³], so that the normal octatonic set, proceeding from the smaller interval to the larger, accords with this principle, while the left-handed one contradicts it. The other pitch-sets used in the late sonatas follow this principle of *dexter* rather than *sinister*, only differing when Skryabin wishes to exemplify evil and perversity.

Analysis 24 above shows that the Sixth and the Ninth Sonatas employ left-handed sets, which explains why Skryabin regarded these two sonatas as being left-handed (evil) in principle as opposed to the right-handed (beneficent) ones¹⁴. The fact that the Ninth has only one of its sets left-handed explains why Skryabin was able to play it in public when he dreaded and refused to play the Sixth, both of whose sets are left-handed. The Ninth begins right-handedly or positively, and later detailed analysis will show how the purifying powers of this set overcome the evil of the M_2 set that enters as a challenge, as it were, in bar 5.

Identification of the nature of octatonic sets

The key to deciding the left or right-handedness of octatonic sets must rest on accurate identification of the key-note of the motivic sequences. In the outer sonatas (all except VIII) this is the first or last emphasized note of the motif itself. In VIII it is the evidence of the bass that is crucial, for symbolic as well as pitch-set reasons. There can be deliberate veiling of tonality, which will be discussed as the sonatas are examined individually, so that in all sonatas the relationship of melody and bass at the beginning and ending of motifs must be considered.

The significance of the single-movement form

The set of five sonatas can be regarded as one set of five movements, all with some approximation to normal first-movement sonata form: each has dual motifs in an expository section and "develops" them

(mostly by repeating motifs against changing figurations), but not all sonatas return to them - the Sixth, for example, transforms its original motifs into a third which eliminates any recapitulation. But the excursiveness and breadth of the three-movement form is out of place in Skryabin's plan, for he requires concentration on a single purpose - the nature of transformation, as will become clear below. The comparative diffuseness of conventional three-movement form serves essentially to provide dramatic contrast rather than concentration, despite occasional exceptions to this in the wider sonata repertory. Skryabin uses opposed motif-pairs, but they are ritually, not dramatically opposed. In a merely dramatic situation the oppositions contend until one is supreme; in mystical systems harmonization of all oppositional factors is necessary to provide a balanced, ordered unity. Harmonization replaces antagonism of opposites.

All the sonatas can be regarded as eschatological, for they deal with the preliminaries that are to precede the *Acte préalable* and *Mysterium* being planned by Skryabin as his final compositional projects. In particular, the nature of divine ecstasy and the paths by which it is to be achieved have to be explored. The so-called "one-movement" form serves to focus attention on this one problem from the five different viewpoints to be explained in turn.

To begin with, Skryabin feels it necessary to deal with the problem of evil as it impacts on Symbolism. The Sixth Sonata therefore literally invokes black magic in order to harmonize it with the white of the Seventh.

The Sixth Sonata

Set identification

In the pitch-set analysis that will commence the discussion of each sonata, the actual octatonic set and transposition employed is taken as being self-evident from a brief examination of the music. But there will

be justification of decisions made as to left or right-handedness of the set used for a motif, because of the relationship of this factor to the Art Nouveau character of the rubrics.

Example 60:

Skryabin: Sonate 6, 1-16

M_1 (LO^2 on \underline{F}): \underline{F} is the first note, of crotchet length and on a principal beat, and thus emphasized. In the sonatas the evidence of the melody itself is normally to be given the most weight, for its "accompaniment" or "bass" does not bear the same relationship to it as in conventional diatonics, being a disparate strand in an existential texture of strands. At best such basses may be seen as bearing a contrapuntal, not homophonic, relationship to melodic motif. The melody actually ends as part of the chord in bar 16, as shown by the partial bracket added above the score: the quaver $\underline{B}^{\underline{D}}$ at the end of 14 either moves to \underline{B} or \underline{F} , and in either case it reinforces the ascription of left-handedness, for in O^2 both notes are followed by tonal intervals. The evidence of the "bass" is contradictory, as will often be found in the sonatas; it suggests $\underline{D}^{\underline{D}}$, which would make the set right-handed, but this would negate the unmistakable establishment

of the LO^2 set in the figure from bar 1 to 20, and it is this figure that also follows the M_1 entry. \underline{F} and LO_2 therefore form the simplest hypothesis.

Example 61:

Skryabin: Sonata 6, 39-45

M_2 (LO^2 on $\underline{A^b}$): The melodic line begins on $\underline{D^b}$, rises to pause on $\underline{B^b}$, but ends on $\underline{A^b}$ (the emphasized note of bar 45). The "bass" begins on $\underline{A^b}$ and finishes on $\underline{B^b}$; $\underline{A^b}$ and $\underline{B^b}$ are the common factors. It seems as if the melodic motif changes its nature as it proceeds, beginning with $\underline{D^b}$ and $\underline{B^b}$ that would indicate a right-handed set, and this view is seen to be justified by the gradual transformation of the motif as the work progresses, as reflected in the evidence of the rubrics to be shown below. M_2 shows itself to be thoroughly evil, associated with spells and allurements/entrapment, and spawning the evil figures F_4 and F_6 ; thus the interpretation of its veiling and then gradually revealing its true nature is the logical explanation, with its final key-note, $\underline{A^b}$, being its true one.

General discussion

(Since this is the first sonata of the set or cycle, the following discussion is more expansive than that afforded the others, and will include some more comments on the matter of key-note.)

The harmonization of Order and Disorder is the goal of Symbolist systems, and here the two initial motifs that set the nature of the Sixth Sonata, being based upon LO^2 (left-handed) sets, show Disorder. The opening bars 1-10 in the example above are an introductory sequence based

on a figure whose key-note D is unmistakable, and every note in these bars except the C (marked with a cross) of bars 4 and 6 (immediately corrected/ cancelled by the B following) is drawn from the O^2 set. But the bass D is the second, not the first, step of O^2 so that the pitch-set is actually LO^2 , proceeding tone-semitone from D to D through the octave. Not only does this sequence sound evil and have menacing directions (*mystérieux, concentré*), it **is** evil, for like the black-magic Mass it is composed according to a backwards-reading principle, expressed here as a *sinister* or left-handed set.

This introduction consists of two figural elements F_1 and F_2 (bars 1 and 9), the first of which, in its F_{1a} form of bar 3 (*étrange, ailé* [strange, winged]) is of great importance throughout the work. *Ailé* throughout the sonatas seems to be sensuous flutterings as distinct from sensuous longings (*stremlenja*). *Ailé* figures are always sudden or fluttering rushes, and since the term can appear in the course of another motif or figure it is also an interpretative instruction. Appearing here in a left-handed set it is the mirror [= reversal] of the benign *ailé*, but in other contexts (for example, *Poème ailé* op. 51/3, Chapter 15) its benign side is seen. In his symbolism where every principle has its opposed expressions, Skryabin is pursuing an idea not dissimilar to the concepts of matter and anti-matter used by modern theoretical physicists.

When M_1 appears in 11 it begins by dwelling on F (the first inversion-centre of F) and ends, after the quaver pause in 14, by falling to B in 15. In the meantime the bass begins on A^b (the tritone from D, making a second inversion from the M_1 D). But by bar 12 the bass falls a fifth and stays there until 15: this **seems** to transform, Art Nouveau-fashion, the tonality into that of a right-handed O^2 set, as if the innocuously sweet melody is masquerading as being in a benign (normal) set. There is also the suggestion of a "diatonic" fifth-interval A^b\D^b. The deliberate ambiguity results from its melodic centre (F) and initial

bass (A^b) really being at odds with this "false" bass D^b - false because it is seen at the beginning of bar 15 to be a prolonged chromatic aberration, suggesting A^b\D^b instead of the octatonic tritone that makes A^b\D the real intervallic relationship) that resolves into D in bar 16 (as is its G^b in 15 that resolves into G). At the same time the melody is weaving through some chromatic sensuality - the crossed notes in 12-13 that are not parts of the LO² set and therefore must be resolved into it by semitonal movement.

Here an important and familiar symbolistic device is evident - the nature of the tritone, the traditional *diabolus in musica* remarked earlier, and to be seen later in the *macabre* works of Chapter 18. Skryabin does not, however, see the tritone as being necessarily evil, but as being so depending on its context. In a normal, right-handed octatonic set the fifth, familiar as the dominant in diatonic pitch-sets, is available as an interval from its first note. That is, for O² the intervallic fifth A^b is the sixth note from the first, D^b, and can be used as the "dominant", for the F is also available to form a major triad. But in a left-handed O² set beginning on D no intervallic fifth is available - only the A^b that forms the tritone.

Analysis 26:

	fifth
	+-----+
right-handed	D ^b D E F G A ^b B ^b B
semitonal intervals	1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2
left-handed	D E F G A ^b B ^b B D ^b
	+-----+
	tritone

[The left-handed set reverses the interval-order from 1-2 to 2-1. This also happens if the set is played backwards (descending)]

Octatonic set 2: fifth & tritone

In this context the tritone is not benign, and is equivalent to the mediaeval *diabolus*. Thus the essence of M₁ as it is announced here its being based on a tritonic foundation.

The directions associated with M₁ throughout the work are revealing: *avec chaleur contenue* (continuing ardour), *souffle mystérieux* (strange

breath or sigh) and *onde caressante* (caressing wave). This last provides the only context that can explain them all - that of Art Nouveau's Sirentopos, importuning and sighing love. As will be seen in the other sonatas it is often the last term used in the work to refer to a motif that reveals the mystery of the previous ones: Symbolism always features riddles and hidden keys. In this case the caressing wave can only be the element of a feminine sea-creature like a Siren. But a much more important process than depiction is taking place: here the left-handed set (Symbolist method) together with the siren-imagery and chromatic sensuality (Art Nouveau characters) are uniting to cast a spell - literally, for to Skryabin to play these left-handed sequences is to practise black magic¹⁵ and **create** evil.

Example 61:

39 M_2 (LO^2 a^b) *le rêve prend forme (clair, doux, pur)*

45 LO^2 b^b

Skryabin: Sonata 6, 39-45

From bar 39 the first rising fragment of M_1 is transformed into M_2 . The motif is drawn from O^2 but first based on A^b which makes the set LO^2 , and this is reinforced by the movement of the bass to B . Yet the issue is veiled by the first long melodic note D^b and the movement of the bass to B^b in 45, both of which suggest a right-handed basis. But A^b appears as a miniature pedalpoint in 43-44 and 45-46, and the last **emphasized** note of the melody is A^b (beginning bar 45); thus A^b is reinforced as the key-note, and the set is therefore left-handed. Although the motif is sometimes presented ambiguously as right-handed as the work unfolds (for example, 68ff, 73ff), it is normally left-handed (for example 47, 57, 66, 131, 133, 148, 150, and particularly its climactic entries at 178 and 182). M_2 ,

then, is essentially left-handed but often presented ambiguously, its typical form being that it begins LO and appears by its cadence to be transformed into O.

The key to this puzzle is again to be found in the French-language rubrics, and particularly the later ones accompanying M_2 . It is first to be seen as an innocent and pure dream - *le rêve prend forme (clarté, douceur, pureté)* [the dream takes shape - transparency, sweetness, purity]; in the context of the later directions it is clear that "rêve" here means illusion or fantastic dream. These later directions are *de plus en plus entraînement, avec enchantement* [increasing allurement, with enchantment], *charmes* [spells or endearments - classic Art Nouveau ambiguity], *tout devient charme et douceur* [all become spell/charm and sweetness]: this is imagery of sorcery and deception, which explains the M_2 ambiguity of appearance.

This is reinforced when M_2 breeds the important rushing scale-figure of bar 82 (F_4). This figure always appears right-handed but is from the first accompanied by the direction - *avec entraînement* [with allurement], so that by its nature it must conceal. Some actually take the form of melodic motifs extending over two or three bars, but the purpose of figures in all sonatas is different from that of motifs: the figures provide atmosphere and background, or the creating of tension and excitement, while the motifs gradually reveal their natures against these backgrounds.

The most important of these figures is F_6 , appearing at bar 103 and showing its full extent in bars 107-113. This figure is a derivative of both M_1 (its initial rising notes) and M_2 , and can be seen as something like a Hegelian synthesis of the two. It takes the form of a simple ascending LO¹ scale, although in a rhythmically complex arrangement, and with a bass that always contradicts the melody's left-handedness.

Example 62:

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, starting at measure 106, features complex rhythmic patterns with markings for '5' and '6'. The second system, starting at measure 111, is marked with the French text 'l'épouvante surgit' above the staff. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Skryabin: *Sonate 6*, 107-111

But the scale always begins with a tone-interval, so that it is always left-handed. Its role is clear from its directions: *l'épouvante surgit* [terror rises], *épanouissement de forces mystérieuses* [unfolding/blooming of mysterious forces], and finally, leading to the climax, *l'épouvante surgit, elle se mêle à la danse délirante* [terror rises, she mingles/insinuates herself into the dance of delirium]. The sorcery of M_2 has now led to a terrible dance which she [elle - woman or sorceress] - joins; again the last French directions of the work reveal where it has been heading since the beginning - into a witches' dance, the ecstasy of evil. At the outset the ambiguities of allurements and seductiveness have promised dreams of purity and sweetness, but all ends in nightmare.

Aspects of transformation

Some aspects of transformation of motif have already been noticed, and will now be looked at in more detail, using the information illustrated in Example 61 above. M_2 first appears in bars 39-45; it is formed from the little ascending fragment of M_1 from \underline{D}^b to \underline{B}^b in bars 13-14, and since it comes from a left-handed set it is basically "evil". This is how it shows itself until bar 66, when after a false start it reappears in the guise of O^1 on \underline{A} , \underline{D}^\sharp , \underline{F}^\sharp and then transforms itself into the *avec entraînement* running figure (F_4) of bars 81-87.

Example 63

Skryabin: *Sonate 6*, M1, M2, F4

F_4 continues the same O^1 set through to an A tonic bass, which means that the O^1 basses have travelled through minor thirds - every other step of the octatonic pitch-set. But the O^1 disguise is revealed elliptically with Art Nouveau subtlety, for the F_4 figure is a virtual intervallic mirror-image (inverted and reversed) of part of F_{1a} (bracketed in bars 3-4, Example 60), with the F_{1a} major thirds transformed to the F_4 minor thirds; F_{1a} proceeds 4242 (counting in semitonal intervals) and F_4 1323. Thus the path through M_2 and F_4 has led back to F_{1a} (*étrange, ailé*) through a mirror symmetry that is of Art Nouveau form and symbolist significance.

M_2 reappears in yet another set - LO^3 - from bar 131, and, to complete the circle of mystification, F_{1a} appears fleetingly over an LO^1 half-speed appearance of F_4 in the short bridge of bars 123-24 to show original and mirror together, and in 135 F_{1a} is described as *appel mystérieux* to add to its bar 3 description of *étrange, ailé*.

Example 64:

The image shows a musical score for Example 64, consisting of two staves: a piano part on the left and a cello part on the right. The piano part features dense, multi-measure rests and complex rhythmic patterns. The cello part includes melodic lines with various ornaments and dynamics. Performance instructions are scattered throughout: 'avec trouble' above the piano staff, 'p' (piano) below the piano staff, 'con sord.' (con sordina) below the cello staff, 'ritard.' (ritardando) above the cello staff, and 'lento' (lento) below the cello staff. The score is enclosed in a rectangular box.

Skryabin: *Sonate 6*, 123-24

Structure and texture

The work proceeds in sequences, often of only a few bars but tending to increase in length and complexity as the climax approaches. Each sequence is based on a motif or figure, and the work's increasing complexity as it nears climax results from motifs/figures appearing in counterpoint, as well as from thickening of texture (as in the previous example). It is usual to see the whole work in terms of normal sonata form, but as a symbolist work its structure is more significant as a series of motif and figure-based episodes interweaving with the typical complexity of Art Nouveau line. Such interweaving, together with repetition of sequence at symmetrical intervals (seconds, thirds, tritones - the natural intervals of the octatonic set) takes the place of normal development of motifs (by themselves or in dramatic opposition) seen in orthodox sonatas. This focus on interweaving is a key factor in the work's Art Nouveau character of motion without progression in a realm without normal spatial or temporal dimensions. Although there is physical interweaving of the various strands of motif, as in Example 64, there are other dimensions of interweaving, firstly in the way F_4 is a mirror of F_{1a} , and secondly in the way left-handed and right-handed octatonic sets interact and are transformed.

Art Nouveau aspects

The foregoing discussion of the sonata has sought to establish that it is a series of transformations, with sequences based upon motifs and figures succeeding each other, changing their sets or moving their tonic basses in kaleidoscopic fashion. The effect closely parallels that denoted in the rubrics - of a sorceress constantly transforming herself into one appearance after another in a series of mirages that show her as being confusingly malevolent, seductive, capricious, charming, spell-making and so on. At the end, however, all the confusion ceases in the unmistakable evil of the left-handed-set coda (LO^2 on \underline{G} , bars 362-83, Example 65 below) whose descending movement to the stark $^{12}9^b_{5b}$ chords reverses the movement of all the ascending M_1 -derived motifs and figures throughout the work. Yet even here there is just a fleeting trace of spell in the brief F_{4a} -figure and trill that lightly touches the final chords - and, ambiguously, after all the left-handed influences throughout the whole work, leaves them as an O^2 set on \underline{G} .

Example 65:



Scriabin: Sonata 6, 374-83

Only from the dual viewpoints of Symbolism and Art Nouveau is it possible to see why Scriabin held this work in such dread: the Symbolist view of its pitch-set basis explains its left-handedness¹⁶, while the Art Nouveau notion of sorceress-seductress posing as being without guile explains the otherwise pleasing sensuality of M_1 and its derivatives. Scriabin, who was himself strongly sensual, and valued sensuality's releasing powers as part of Symbolist ritual to set the soul free, felt that to play the sonata was to enact the evil embodied in the left-handed sets. While it is easy to see the blackness of dramatic passages ("its streak of horror breaks out where he writes *l'épouvante surgit* (surge of

terror) and there is a desperate release of power at the climax") it is not easy to see the evil in other passages like those on M_1 and M_2 where writers and players may think they are finding "hints...also of joy". As final commentary on the sonata Skryabin's own characterization of it was "nightmarish, murky, unclean, mischievous" - which accords precisely with the analysis afforded by the viewpoints of Symbolism and Art Nouveau.

The Seventh Sonata

Set identification

M_1 (O^1 on A → O^3 on F): In the light of the transforming **appearance** of the Sixth's M_2 it is not difficult to understand the transforming **nature** of M_1 here. A is the initial note of the first pairs, and also the highest note of the accompanying chords. But the emphasized notes are the second ones D^b and E, which might indicate left-handedness. The puzzle is solved when the chord at the beginning of bar 3 proves to be of O^3 composition: the melodic F surmounting it is the longest and most forceful of the motif's six notes and is decisive in confirming its essential right-handedness, so that the repeated A of the first part is its right-handed fellow.

Example 66:

Skryabin: Sonata 7, 1-4

M_2 (O^3 on G[#]): The movement of the initial A to the "foreign" A[#] (marked with a cross in the example below and not corrected until the A of bar 32) seems to negate its force and validity as key-note somewhat. This is reinforced by the long-uncorrected and contradictory A[#], which appears to

be thus to emphasize the uncertainty of the initial A. As the motif progresses it builds an elaborate preparation for its climactic final note G[#], which is thus the most important note in the motif.

Example 67:

Skryabin: Sonate 7, 29-35

General discussion

This sonata has no LO sets for its motifs and figures, and uses positive imagery in its directions. From the beginning, however, there is a puzzle as to the tonality of the M_1 motif and its harmonic basis. It appears diatonic, and if it is to be taken as such¹⁷ then the significance of Skryabin's employing a diatonic set for M_1 must lie in its being the tonality inevitably associated with militaristic flourish and trumpet calls - as can be seen in the rhythm and intervals of M_1 and in its later rubrics: *impérieux*, *menaçant* and *foudroyant* [crushing, terrible] - and its derivative F_1 [17: *avec une sombre majesté*].

Example 66:

Skryabin: Sonata 7, 1-4

Closer study, however, reveals that the harmonies that comprise the flourishes of M_1 are not diatonic, and that until the motif-sequence moves into its cadential chords at the end of bar 2 and the beginning of bar 3 it is formed simply from O^1 , but transforming or modulating to O^3 in the cadence. Skryabin is therefore not likely to be referring to earthly warfare or heroism in either condemnatory or commendatory senses, but to something like the transformational experience of the millenarian idea of the Last Trumpet heralding the end of history; his *Mysterium* was to play such a role. M_1 is repeated at the tone from bar 5 and partly repeated at the minor third from bar 8, but in this second repetition its bass is only at a tone, so that in effect there has been a modulatory transformation to confirm its basically transformational nature.

The subtitle "White Mass" given to the work by Skryabin himself¹⁸ can in the light of this nature now be seen to be justified. The Christian Mass is essentially the rite of Transubstantiation of matter into spirit, and Skryabin's symbolist beliefs after 1905 are directed towards a quasi-millenarist outcome when soul would become free spirit through a ritual of divine ecstasy. The Seventh Sonata, like the Sixth, is experience and ritual, not description, and in this case it is purifying after the ordeal of the Sixth, and through the white magic of its invocation M_1 , is a totally different summons to the soul from that of the black-magic insinuating sensuality of the Sixth's M_1 .

Example 67:

Skryabin: *Sonate 7*, 29-35

M_2 is, in contrast to M_1 , a motif of winding and relatively indefinite sensuality, but its most important comparison is with the Sixth's M_2 : it is less direct in its ascent and so more controlled in its excitement of sensuality. M_2 is announced in 29 as being *avec une céleste volupté* [with celestial voluptuousness/ sensuality], rising to *avec une volupté radieuse* [radiant voluptuousness], *extatique, en un vertige* [in a state of dizziness], *avec une joie débordante* [joy overflowing] and finally *en délire* [in ecstatic delirium].

Sensuality throughout the Art Nouveau repertory is closely associated with chromaticism, and this is still true in the exotic soundscape of the symmetrical sets. In sensual passages chromaticism can be so important that notes foreign or "chromatic" (in the sense given by Jay Reise¹⁹) to the set may be used as accidentals, and their resolution often delayed or left in abeyance. M_2 is constructed from an O^3 set on G^\sharp but is avowedly sensual (*volupté*), showing its chromatic character in its using a foreign A^\sharp as its second note; such sensual motifs in Skryabin (*Désir, Caresse dansée*) always feature chromatic effects from notes within or accidental to the set. This A^\sharp is probably to be seen as non-resolving despite the "chromatic" context²⁰ (although technically it is resolved by the A in 32) because the prominent A in the bass stave of the following bar re-establishes the O^3 context, against which the foreign note is seen as a dissonance.

A traditional sonata would tend to oppose the two very different motifs to each other in an essentially dramatic or antagonistic manner, but Skryabin is concerned to show their compatibility.

Example 68:

Skryabin: *Sonate 7*, 60-62

M_1 and M_2 are both accompanied by repetitive downwards jumps of sevenths, so that even while the winding melody of M_2 is unfolding the urgency of the M_1 bass sevenths is being echoed. The F_4 fragment of bar 39 is formed from an upwards leap that echoes those of M_1 and a descending pentuplet whose motion and minor thirds echo those of M_2 . The sharpness and urgency of the M_1 component is reinforced in the acciaccaturas of bars 43-45, and the softness of M_2 in the legato of the pentuplets, but gradually the two come together in the *étincelant* (sparkling) F_5 figure of bars 73-74.

Example 69:

Skryabin: *Sonate 7*, 73-74

As F_4 becomes faster from bar 60 Skryabin applies the direction *ailé* - a release of feelings on the way to an ecstatic state; the soul begins to float or fly in air. As in *Poème ailé* op. 51/3 there is a balancing of ascending and descending components; this balance in the directional elements of motif and figuration is a continuance of that of M_1 , whose upwards leaps (4,7,4 in semitonal intervals) are counterbalanced by the bass downwards ones (10,6,10), the symmetries being obvious.

Analysis 27:

Skryabin: *Sonate 7*, M_1 & M_2

M_2 has its corresponding balance, but inverted, beginning (after a single semitonal rise) as descent of 9, rising back through that 9 and continuing through the steps of a major seventh (4,3,3) to its climactic final note; thus its balance counters that of M_1 throughout the piece. In the final

climax of the work (315ff) the figuration again emphasizes balance, with the static repetitions of the transformed M_1 becoming a descending series of alternations, then leaping by octaves, rather than gradually ascending, to the top of the keyboard; finally there is an upwards rush of broken chords and trills, but ending *pianissimo e smorzando*.

The whole work is a series of episodes each of which is devoted to a motif or particular combination (like the counterpointing of $M_2 \times F_4$ in 38-59); these episodes quickly succeed each other. Where a motif or melodic figure is first heard in these episodes its bass is always stationary - it is from the first associated with the motion without progression of pedalpoint, and there is a complete absence of the proceeding by normal modulation. Thus each motif and figure seems to belong to the strange realm where normal harmonic dimensions seem limited.

As the work progresses there is variation of pedalpoint by repetition over intervals mainly limited to the tritone and the extended ${}^7_6{}_{3b}$ of the *étincelant/fulgurant* sequences (bell imagery, again an association with the Mass), but the principle of repetition of sequence at such intervals replaces linear harmonic development in a normal sense. The longest episode in the work is that from *ondoyant* (207-237) but it does not move more than momentarily from its F^\sharp/G^b bass, and when it does it is no more than an alternation to its b7 "leading note". It is therefore possible to see the piece as a series of pedals - a series of planes in the strange dimensionality of a dream cosmos.

As with the other sonatas the imagery of the directions can only be understood in respect of its context - that of the five-fold set's complete symbolic picture. It might be thought from the evidence of the imagery alone that M_1 and M_2 and their derivations are essentially oppositional, the one with its *menaçant* and *mystérieusement* as evil and the other with its *très pur* and *céleste* as good; alternatively the M_2 *ondoyant*, *enduleux*, *insinuant* could be seen as imagery of serpentine

cunning - of the seductress of the Sixth Sonata. But the overall description "White Mass" and the position of the sonata in the set, as shown earlier in Analysis 24, sees the proper context within which all terms are to be interpreted, and shows these latter terms to be the sensuality of a positive kind, that can justify *très pur, avec douceur* as well as *céleste*: it was, after all, a dithyramb of orgiasts as in the ancient Greek Mysteries that was to be a part of the final release of the free spirit in the *Mysterium*²¹.

The Eighth Sonata

Set identification

M₁ (O¹ on A): The simplest set-choice is O¹, except for the foreign final note B (bar 5) that is specifically indicated by Skryabin and echoes that at the high point of the melody. But this choice means that there is no melodic note within the set that carries more weight than any other, and therefore no key-note. (This is possibly symbolic, indicating the passivity and inchoate nature of the unliberated soul, as will be explained.) If the only other possibility - O³ - is considered, then there are two uncanceled foreign D[#]s. The evidence of the melody seeming inconclusive, the tonality of its context must be considered, and this is clearly A. It is so clearly A, like its M₂ counterpart, that in this exceptional case Skryabin is making it quite obvious that only the context can give key-note definition to the motif, since it itself lacks any.

Example 70:

Skryabin: Sonata 8, 1-6

M₂ (O¹ on A): Similar arguments apply here. The simplest set is O¹ but its emphasized note (F) is foreign to the set - like the emphasized B of M₁. Its final note B^b, however, is in the set. If the only other possibility

- O^3 - is construed then the final B^b is foreign, although it is cancelled to A in the immediate repeat. Against such ambiguous evidence that of the tonal context provided by the left hand figures is again an unambiguous A .

It is possible to construe both motifs as being in whole-tone sets, the first WT^2 (the set using C^\sharp) and the second WT^1 (the set using C). This seems, however, a less simple explanation in the context of the other sonatas and surrounding figures. The only conclusion that can be drawn from all this is that ambiguity of tonality, is deliberate.

Example 71:

Skryabin: sonata 8, 26-32

General discussion

This sonata is at the centre of the set of five, and symmetrically placed as being like the Sixth and Tenth - composed from identical pitch-sets (O^1). However, it is different from all the others in two vital respects - its absence of climax despite its being the longest, and its almost complete absence of French-language rubrics of the type so freely used in the other four sonatas of the set.

There are two exceptions, (of which the second occurs in the last line and will be considered later). The first is the more puzzling; it is the term *Tragique* that occurs at the head of the three developmental episodes of M_1 in 89, 187 and 385. The key to this term must lie in Skryabin's describing the sonata as "the most tragic episode of my creative work", together with his terming its harmony as being "drawn from Nature, as if it had existed before, like the bells in the Seventh Sonata ... bridges between harmony and geometry, life visible and life unseen"²².

His mystical feeling that its harmony comes from some pre-existent realm thereby implies its divine nature (in the terms of his symbolism). In this context "tragique" can only apply to the opposite of such perfection - the mortal, contingent world, which it is his task in the *Mysterium* to transform. And since the term is only used with reference to M_1 's developmentary episodes it is the imperfect application of M_1 that is referred to, rather than M_1 itself.

The reference is probably to the pre-*Mysterium* world of imperfections that has not yet experienced transformation through ecstasy: it is entirely characteristic of Skryabin's mystical obsessiveness at this time, and in a wider sense of typical Aestheticist esoterism, that he should feel that all humanity except his inner circle was in darkness until the final rituals of the *Mysterium* should free it. To write about the pre-*Mysterium* world was to write about tragedy. The sonata, then, is focused on this world, not on the cosmic one, but is to be seen firstly as a philosophical rather than a narrative or descriptive overview of life, and secondly as implying an eschatological viewpoint.

If the Eighth Sonata is about action in the sense of *Tragique* argued above then its two principal motifs will reflect this. The only way they can do this within the dialectic form of a sonata is for each to symbolize an opposite but equally necessary principle. These can be *tragique* and some opposing, more positive principle, or opposite features of tragedy itself, like passive and active sides of action; this is an important duality in Skryabin's symbolism, as has been seen in the epigraphical stanza to his Fifth. Since M_1 is announced *Lento* and M_2 *Allegro agitato* it is possible that M_1 symbolizes inaction and M_2 action. As in the *langueur* works there may be much "striving" or motion but no effective action.

It is, of course, highly likely that there is a more complex set of symbols than these that are to be associated with the work, or Skryabin would simply be repeating material already embodied in the Fifth. Faubion

Bowers mentions Boris Assafiev's opinion that the Eighth is about "the physical world and the laws of energy: light, darkness; heat and cold; the rhythms of night, waves of the ocean, its pulsations, its sighs, the feelings of fire and air"²³, but does not mention his authority for this - whether it comes from Skryabin or elsewhere. It does, however, accord with the non-dramatic nature of the music and its contrast of principles: Assafiev is talking about universals, not specifics like humanity or its emotions.

The O^1 sets of both the principal motifs are used with some freedom, with many passages in the second suggesting the wholetone set on A; this is the symmetrical set closest to O^1). The simplest example is the announcing of M_2 in 26-29, whose notes proceed up the wholetone scale of E^b-F-G-A before they finish on G^b-B^b, which shows that it is really an O^1 set (the foreign F notes are corrected on the G^b). These freedoms may reflect the essential imperfection of the earthly state. For instance, all the repetitions of B (foreign to the O^1 set) in the chords introducing the first statement of M_1

Example 70:

Skryabin: Sonata 8, 1-6

are emphasized by being on important beats, and the final ones (measure 1/beat 1) are not simply resolved; further, they are then followed by a chord (m6/b1) based on the tritone E^b of the tonic bass A that is equally foreign and completely unresolved. Tritones in right-handed sets obviously will have a lesser, possibly even opposite, significance to those in the left-handed sets of the Sixth sonata. They will at the worst only signify imperfection rather than evil. Yet these and the "foreign" B seem deliberately emphasized.

The answer may possibly lie in the Eastern tradition seen particularly in Islamic art, which Skryabin (and Satie, as suggested earlier) was interested in²⁴, of a craftsman or artist's deliberately fashioning a flaw into an otherwise perfect artefact to avoid the presumption of mortal arrogance - that perfection can be obtained by a human. But it is also possible that they may simply refer to the imperfection of the normal human condition without any transforming "daring" (sonata 5), *ailé*, flame or other symbolistic transforming element. In either light the flaws do not only represent the greater freedoms Skryabin was beginning to take with his harmonies based on the symmetrical scales, but they have symbolic importance as representing the element of *tragique*; this must be the only conclusion to be drawn from their being emphasized by being on principal beats of the bar and at cadence-endings where resolution by semitonal step back into the pitch-set cannot be achieved within the phrase.

This deliberate imperfection can also be seen in the first statement of M_2 (26-29), where the foreign notes F in the motif are emphatic (beats 1 and 4 of a 6/8 measure) and the motif ends in an anticlimactic but emphatic chord again employing the tritonic E^b .

Example 71:

Example 71: Musical score for Skryabin's Sonata 8, measures 26-32. The score is in 6/8 time. Measure 26 is labeled M_2 ($a' a$) and includes the instruction *poco cresc.* Measure 29 shows a tritone chord with a downward arrow and a $\frac{4}{4}$ time signature.

Skryabin: Sonata 8, 26-32

This tritone is also an important part of the figuration that accompanies the statement of the motif, and suggests that M_2 may not represent perfection against M_1 's imperfection, but that both represent different aspects of imperfection.

The whole question of chromatic or foreign notes to the symmetrical

set in use needs caution, however, for they may simply be Skryabin's growing mastery of his treatment of sets, resulting in a greater freedom of use. Where the foreign note seems easily avoidable, however, or is actually stressed, as in this case, there is stronger ground for assuming that it may be symbolically significant.

An unusual symmetrical set is used in F_5 , the chains of descending note-pairs in bars 29-30 of the example above that become an important feature of the sonata. The set is a hexatonic one of 141 141 on \underline{F} , so that its composition is (ascending) as follows:

F	G ^b	B ^b	B	C	E	(F)
1	4	1	1	4	1	

It is used with foreign notes \underline{D}^b that immediately correct to \underline{C} in Skryabin's normal manner for symmetrical sets. The descending chains of paired notes in the right hand are formed as indicated in Example 71 by the x/y and y/x symbols: the upper voice of the first half becomes the lower voice of the second (slightly modified), and the lower voice of the first half becomes the upper of the second. But this modification is the use of \underline{E}^b just once, in the second note of the upper voice's first half (arrowed in the example). There seems no special reason why this note should have been preferred to the \underline{D}^b that is used elsewhere in the chain at this point in the sequence. Furthermore, it is an error that is not correctable into the set by semitonal movement - the normal practice. Thus it is doubly emphasized, and again must be symbolically significant.

The answer in this case seems to lie in its being the same note, \underline{E}^b , that is an integral part of the tritone noticed earlier in this example. In the tritone it is a member of the O^1 set, but at the tritonic interval from its foundation \underline{A} ; its intrusion into the hexatonic set again shows how much it is emphasized in the whole passage 26-32 (and following). Perhaps the two sets exchange notes, because the \underline{D}^b foreign to the H (hexatonic) set of the chains of descending notes is a member of the O^1 set of M_2 , and the \underline{F} intruder into M_2 noticed above as being so emphasized

is a member of the H set.

There is a significant difference between the textures of the two motivic treatments, that of M_1 being throughout the work complex and contrapuntal with its derivative and associated fragments, while that of M_2 is relatively straightforward and simple, at least until the *Meno vivo* episode of 175-185, when it becomes associated with flourish-figures.

Example 72

Skryabin: *Sonate 7*, 17-20,

The complex texture of the first passage necessitates four staves, showing M_2 in the O^1 pitch-set in quasi-canon, F_1 above it in a whole-tone set (WT^1 , based on \underline{C}), with \underline{D}^\sharp foreign to it and corrected on the following \underline{D} . The bass figure is in the O^1 set, while the F_2 figure is also O^1 , but with a more complicated, but not unusual²⁵, correction of its foreign \underline{B} in the \underline{B}^\flat at the octave three notes later. The nature of the F_2 progression is significant, for its intervals are 4433 and the final acciaccatura is 66, or the double tritone. In the light of the Sixth sonata the reversed order of the intervals (greater to smaller - 44 to 33) and the added double tritone appear as evil or at least decidedly imperfect signs, and

since F_2 appears from the first with M_1 , it helps explain the *Tragique* indication that later appears with both.

The second part of the example shows the increasing complexity of treatment of M_2 later in the work, as if its early simplicity of mood is more profound. M_2 itself is now actually in a wholetone set where at its announcement it ambiguously merely appeared to be, and is accompanied by F_5 in a hexatonic set. The flourishes that punctuate its later movement come from the F_{6a} figure in the O^2 set. Thus the treatment of M_2 here is, while not contrapuntal like that of M_1 above, is more complex in texture than its earlier entries. The motif is heard more and more urgently as the work proceeds, but also quieter and quieter: at its climax just before the end it is *Pianissimo e prestissimo*.

Just four bars from the ending come the only French-language rubrics that have a connection with the other sonatas: over a slow, quiet echo of a fragment of M_1 the words *doux, languissant* appear:

Example 73:

Skryabin: *Sonate 8*, 496-500

Languissant is yet another term in the *languueur* family (*Languido*, *languide*, *languueur*) that Skryabin seems to use for sensuous longings. Here the ascending nature of the wholetone figure is overset by the descending *languissant* figure, so that the final chord is an unresolved discord, of which the left hand portion is in the O^1 set of M_1 and the right hand in the hexatonic set of the earlier F_5 figure. The mixed nature of this ending reflects the complexity of this long single-movement sonata, but it also must connote some confusion and uncertainty, for all the *languueur* terms denote unfulfilled sensuous longings - a state of imperfection.

The position of this sonata in the centre of the five is still difficult to define. With the evidence of the ending it is clear that M_1 is partially associated with the *languueur* concept first noticed in M_1 of the Fifth sonata. This and its slow, complex nature makes it the less active, indecisive motif of the two. But even the faster and more direct nature of M_2 and its passages fail to provide the sonata with the ecstatic impetus of the *ailé* moments of the Fifth and Seventh, or their evil *entrainement*, *surger* counterparts of the Sixth. Thus the sonata represents potential rather than actual fulfilment or action; this could well be the reason Skryabin described it as his most tragic work.

Its position in the centre of the set seems to be that of humanity surrounded by benign and evil cosmic forces, represented in the other four sonatas. This sonata may show humanity by itself, without the energizing free spirit, and the others may show it interacting with opposite principles of various sorts, in which spirits and forces of benign and evil kinds seek to realize its potential. Humanity must harmonize all these forces in order to find eventual destiny and fulfilment. The whole set is therefore a model of the problem and its solution.

The Ninth Sonata

Example 75:

F_1 (Lo^2 on b) Moderato quasi andante
legendaire

F_2 (Lo^2 on d^+)

O^1 on c

poco cresco.

M_1 (O^1 on g^+)
mysterieusement murmuré

F_3

Skryabin: *Sonate 9*, 8-11

Set identification

M₁ (O¹ on G^b): The emphasized note is the G^b that is repeated four times at the beginning and sustained at the end while the whole is echoed above (the echo is not a continuation, but a separate voice-strand).

M₂ (LO² on A^b): B is the emphasized note in all the triplet-fragments, and is the final sustained note.

Example 74:

M₂ LO² (B)
avec une langueur naissante

38

43

Skryabin: Sonate 9, 35-42

General discussion

This is the other sonata besides the Sixth that was regarded as left-handed by Skryabin.²⁶ But although he regarded playing this work as "practising sorcery" he did not refuse to play this work in public as he did the Sixth. As pointed out earlier, its initial difference from the Sixth is that only M₂ is announced in a left-handed octatonic set, and the French-language rubrics accompanying various episodes based on this motif are appropriately evil. Its first appearance in 34 seems innocent - *avec une langueur naissante* [with an increasing languor], and its second even more so - *pur, limpide*, but its third is uncompromising - *avec une douceur de plus en plus caressante et empoisonnée* [with a sweetness more and more caressing and corrupted/ poisoned]. It is clear, that as in the Sixth, the motif represents innocence of appearance gradually revealing itself as evil - for there can be no doubt about the meaning or force of *empoisonnée*. In this negative context the term *langueur* can now be seen to fit with the use of the term by the *poètes maudits* like Verlaine:

*Les sanglots longs
Des violons*

De l'automne,
 Blessent mon coeur
 D'une langueur
 Monotone²⁷

Rubrics like these in the left-handed set motifs are usually ignored in the commentaries or considered eccentric, but when considered from the viewpoint of Art Nouveau they are seen immediately as combining to form the familiar stereotype of the seducer/seductress or sorcerer/sorceress.

At 179 the motif is transformed as *Alla marcia* into M_{2a} and since it is unmistakably over a \underline{G} bass it now appears in right-handed form. This transformed motif can be seen as the recapitulation of M_2 , its Ur-motiv:

Example 74:

38 $M_2 LO^2 (B)$
avec une langueur naissante

43

120 *Alla marcia* (d = d) $M_{2a} (O^2 an e)$
f pesante

184 *Più vivo*
accol.

Skryabin: Sonata 9, 39-41; 180-83.

M_2 consists of two elements - the initial repetitions of $\underline{B^b}-\underline{C^b}-\underline{B^b}$ and the sensual, winding second half. The first becomes through repetition almost an ostinato figure, together with M_1 , as the work proceeds, while the second is used for interweaving with the secondary figures that comprise much of the work's developmental interest. Its most important development, as mentioned above, is its transformation into the *Alla marcia* M_{2a} . Here the first element at last progresses beyond semitonal

repetition into progression up the octatonic scale, and the second becomes a trumpet-like call over the interval of a fourth, but the most striking feature of the transformation is that the pitch-set is now right-handed (O^2 on G), so that M_2 has at last become compatible with M_1 , and the whole sonata can end positively.

Skryabin's preoccupation with the symbolic importance of ordered symmetries and asymmetries is clearly evident throughout the work. The opening bars that announce M_1 and its associated figures emphasize the importance of the numbers 3 and 6, although not exclusively, for other factors of twelve are employed:

Example 75:

Skryabin: Sonata 9, 1-10

F_1 is formed from the constituents of the second transposition of the octatonic scale (O^2) and is right-handed because of its emphasis of B and G as minims in bars 2 and 4. Its upper notes traverse the interval of three semitones, the lower ones six, and the figure ascends through intervals of the diminished seventh, the natural inversions of an octatonic scale. This device replaces the modulation normal in diatonic contexts, and as elsewhere in the Art Nouveau repertory it suggests motion without progression. F_2 is a left-handed octatonic (LO^2), being based on its final D in bar 7, and the two figures come together in the third-beat

O¹ chord: in a significant instance of Art Nouveau ambiguity this figural sequence has begun chromatically (the A is accidental to LO² but corrected by the G# following) as a left-handed pitch-set LO² but has ended in the firm chord of bar 7 as the right-handed O¹, which introduces the O¹ set of M₁. The whole character of M₁ is thus veiled by the uncertainty over the right or left-handedness of this crucial introductory figure F₁ that is such an important feature of the work. F₁ is as important throughout the work as M₁, and ends everything in the last-line coda that recalls the whole work's essential ambiguity. The uncertainty of the F₁-M₁ sequence is echoed in the ambiguity of *mysterieusement murmuré* and the later *sombre mysterieux* that accompany it, whose symbolic meaning is not clear, but seems to indicate a force.

The rhythmic structure of F₂ emphasizes its rising through the steps of the octatonic scale, and while its pauses are on notes that are followed by tones, it begins each skip semitonally. The first feature suggests that the set is left-handed; the second that it is right-handed. The ambiguity is perhaps settled by its firm finishing on D, which indicates left-handedness.

M₁, beginning with the minor-third interval, itself rises through this interval in bars 8 and 9, while its F₃ bass figure alternates in tritones (two semitone+tone units) at two centres again a minor third apart.

Example 76:

The musical score for Example 76 consists of two systems of piano music. The first system, labeled with measure numbers 21 and 24, shows a right-hand part with a chromatic sequence of notes and a left-hand part with a bass figure. The second system, labeled with measure numbers 24 and 27, continues the chromatic sequence in the right hand and the bass figure in the left hand. Dynamics include *mp*, *cresc.*, *f*, *p*, and *sf*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingerings.

When F_4 appears as a development of M_1 in bar 23 a new symmetry is introduced - that of the 1441 semitonal intervals of the broken chord preceding the trills; this figure rises through tritones. Such symmetrical fragments are often found as figural elements in the sonatas, and their symmetries are probably symbolically as significant as those of the symmetrical pitch-sets.

Other sets than the full octatonic can be seen: even the minor-third intervals at which repetitions tend to occur can be seen as a tetratonic set (3333). For instance, in the example below the chords that span the lower two staves (indicated by vertical brackets), and are broken in the latter three bars, can be construed as moving through a tetratonic set $E-G-B^b-D^b$ that is not written as such:

Example 77:

Skryabin: *Sonate 9*, 55-58

At the same time the chords themselves can be construed as comprising tetratonic sets 2424, and the accompanimental figure in the top staff of 55-57 is formed from the hexatonic sets 141 141.

Analysis 28:

Tetratonic and Hexatonic sets

In the overall context of symmetrical sets the hexatonic set chords in

Example 77 cannot be construed any other way. The tetratonic sets are themselves members of octatonic sets, however, but it may well be that Skryabin intends them to be seen as tetratonic rather than partial octatonic. Their symmetries come from their own composition independently of octatonics, and may have individual symbolistic significance for Skryabin. From an Art Nouveau viewpoint they are ambiguous, like so much else in the sonatas.

An interesting differentiation can be made between Symbolism and Art Nouveau in relation to the last point: symbolist systems of cosmology are concerned with Order and the clear polarization of opposite principles; ambiguity, where it appears is thus incidental to the system as such. In Art Nouveau ambiguity is systematic, for everything not merely appears to be but is veiled and transformable, without certainties - time, motion, dream, Insel, maiden, death.

The Tenth Sonata

Example 78:

Example 78: Musical score for Skryabin's Sonata 10, measures 1-12. The score is in F major (F1) and 3/4 time. It features a piano introduction with "très doux et pur" and a subsequent section with "avec une ardeur profonde et soignée" and "cristallin". The score includes dynamic markings like "pp" and "poco rit.", and tempo markings like "Moderato".

Skryabin: Sonate 10, 1-12

Set identification

M_1 (O^3 on A^b): O^3 is the simplest set, and after ambiguous emphasis of B^b foreign to the set and G^b within it, the melody finally falls to A^b and

sustains this. It is this second part of the motif that features so extensively throughout the work.

M₂ (O³ on F): F and G^b are the notes that occur the most (the initial F^b does not recur), but the F seems the more important note through all the chromatic windings. It is possible to see both motifs as being from the chromatic set, but as with the whole-tone hypothesis for the Eighth the general context of the work makes this less likely.

General discussion

Skryabin is known to have said that this work is about light, and that its climax (bars 212-23) "is blinding light as if the sun has come close. Here is the suffocation one feels in the moment of ecstasy ... There too is a kind of asphyxiation from radiance ... winged flight ... light". The references to wings (*ailé*) are associated with trills, which are "palpitation ... trembling ... the vibration in the atmosphere", which Bowers explains as 'a source of light'. It is easy to see flame imagery throughout the work and many, perhaps all, of the French-language rubrics are to be understood in this context, so that the whole work is thus to be seen as complementary to Prometheus (bringer of fire to humanity) and *Vers la flamme* [through the flame (to transformation)].

The French rubrics fall fairly clearly into two groups that form around the two principal motifs. M₁ is presented as *très doux et pur, cristallin* and at the very end of the work *Avec une douce langueur de plus en plus éteinte* [with sweet languor, more and more flickering out], but at this point it is also associated with fragments of M₂.

The M₂ group has to do with waxing and waning sensuality (*avec une ardeur profonde et voilée* [deep and veiled/hidden ardour/longing], *avec ravissement et tendresse* [rapture and tenderness], *avec une douce ivresse* [sweet intoxication], *avec une joie subite* [sudden joy], *avec une volupté douloureuse* [luxurious melancholy], *avec une douce langueur de plus et plus éteinte* [sweet languor more and more flickering out], *en c'eteignant*

peu a peu [extinguishing little by little]). Key terms like *voilée*, *ravissement*, *ivresse*, *volupté* and *languueur* show sensuality, and these perhaps represent the potential for ecstasy where the M_2 group are its actuality, taking ecstasy to its farthest experiences of flying into flame and light (*avec émotion*, *inquiet* [agitated], *lumineux vibrant* [light-giving trembling], *avec élan lumineux vibrant*, *fremissant* [quivering], *ailé* [winged/flying], *avec élan* [start/rush/transport], *avec une joyeuse exaltation*, *puissant radieux* [almost overpowering radiance], *haletant* [scorching]. The connexions between fluttering, flying and light are clearly made, and with the imagery of "flickering out" in the M_1 group explain the emphasis on rapid semitonal and chromatic alternations leading to trills and acciaccaturas in the work.

The polarities of potential and actual ecstasy impinge upon the neutral state of the opening sequence (*très doux et pur*) which is also the closing sequence (bars 358-64), so that the work is arch-structured, with the climactic *Puissant, radieux* episode occurring at 212-23 (close to the Golden Section division of 224).

Example 78:

Skryabin: Sonata 10, 1-11

But the work is not simply bipolar, for its main compositional feature is the intermixing and transformation of the many figures that form part of,

or are announced with, M_1 and M_2 from the beginning. These announcements foreshadow the essentially contrapuntal nature of the work's motifs and figures, seen in the example above.

Set identification

M_1 (O^3 on A^b): The melodic line lasts three bars only, finishing on a sustained A^b . The first part of the melody seems to follow the diminished chord on E^b suggested by the two bass notes, which would make the set LO^3 , but the long A^b is clearly the most emphasized note. The bass should perhaps be regarded as O^1 . The whole picture is at first ambiguous.

M_2 (O^3 on E^b): The first long melodic note is F , and this note reappears more than any other as the rather chromatic line weaves around it. It is this note that is the centre of all the M_2 exposition that extends to 28, and ends the whole sequence with tied minims. The bass again provides only ambiguous clues; it is definitely in the O^3 set.

An interpretation of key resting on the basses would necessitate two LO sets, which in the context of Skryabin's statements and rubrics considered above is unlikely.

It is possible to see the motifs as being in chromatic sets, but Okham's Razor would prefer octatonics as the simpler explanation, which the motifs, figures and their settings support. The piece seems to be composed with a chromatic use of octatonic sets. So much chromaticism implies sensuousness.

Discussion

The most important feature of M_1 is its ending (labelled M_{1b}) that is the *cristallin* fragment already seen in the third stave of 11, and which is constantly repeated throughout the work in different contexts. The highly chromatic M_2 has a repetition in the last two half-beats of 11 that rises later in the work from semiquaver agitations (123ff) to trilled vibrations (144ff). The trills that are such a feature of the work, presumably representing the rays of light that Skryabin mentioned, begin

with the *lumineux vibrant* F_2 fragment of 32-38:

Example 79:

Skryabin: *Sonate 10*, 32-42

The bass of this figure forms the interval of a fifth, not common in the sonatas perhaps because not symmetrical, but available in octatonic sets.

The important *Allegro*-figure F_3 is derived from M_2 , and is even more chromatic, although only two notes (\underline{E} , $\underline{C^\#}$) foreign to its O^3 set are employed in its whole first line, for a chromatic sequence is easily accomplished within octatonic sets. The bass F_4 figure is interesting in its partly following the use of fifths already noticed with F_2 , and for its changing sets for its ascent; the latter is not unusual in the sonatas, of course. F_3 itself is opposite in general motion to M_2 and accompanied by a inner figure whose major thirds have already been seen in M_1 .

Skryabin develops the interplay of motifs and figures in a most complex manner through the alternations of typically short sections: the motif-passages are used contrapuntally, with a filigree-like texture of trills, acciaccaturas and runs (developed from F_2) overlaying this, and then taking its pace as the fire flares highest in the *Puissant, radieux* section from 212. Here two-handed chordal trills high in the treble rise to the climactic bar 221.

As the flames begin to fade into sporadic flickerings it is possible

to see some of the intricate interweaving of motifs and figures that make the work essentially Art Nouveau in its texture as well as its rubric-imagery:

Example 80:

Skryabin: *Sonate 10*, 292-95

Under the F_3 *allegro* figure two strands of M_{1b} intertwine, and then a reversed, dying echo of the acciaccatura and trill figure F_2 reappears with its characteristic bass.

Example 80a:

Skryabin: *Sonate 10*, 346-364

The sonata, and the whole set of sonatas, ends with similar interweaving of fragments of M_1 , M_2 and F_3 , and a simple restatement of the

opening bars (above). At the end M_1 appears a minor third lower than its first entry, and thus falling to \underline{F} , where the first motif of the Sixth sonata begins, the cycle is complete.

Conclusions: the five sonata set

On the brief examination of the available circumstantial and textual evidence above, some tentative statements may be essayed about the set.

1. It seems to have been planned as a set or cycle that elaborates and adds to the musical and mystical concepts of the Fifth sonata, and looks ahead to the projected *Acte préalable* and *Mysterium*.
2. It employs symmetrical pitch-sets for symbolic as well as compositional reasons, of which the octatonic sets, as being the most flexible, form the general basis. They are used for the main motifs and many figures, while the more limited symmetrical pitch-sets, and symmetrical fragments that do not form complete octave-sets, are used for other figures.
3. Questions of tonal centre apply to motifs and figures first, with the general harmonic context being formed from their essentially contrapuntal interaction in an overall octatonic framework.
4. The outer sonatas can be seen as representing the four points of a mystical compass around the Eighth. The Sixth is about the reverse side of love and ecstasy, the Seventh the obverse, benign or even purifying side, and their relationship is probably paralleled by that of the Ninth and Tenth. The Tenth is about the transformation of love and ecstasy by fire and/or light, while the Ninth is a reverse face of this. In the middle is the Eighth, whose sensuousness as seen in the winding-motif M_1 is not leavened by any divine, transforming fire, and so is *tragique*: this seems to represent the state of humanity without divine fire.
5. On the further evidence of motif-sets and their key-notes presented in the table at the beginning of this chapter it is probable that there are symbolic connexions between the Sixth, Eighth and Tenth, and between the Seventh and Ninth.

6. The nickname *White Mass* is a justifiable metaphor for the Seventh sonata, but *Black Mass* might more appropriately be applied to the Sixth than the Ninth.

7. The French-language rubrics should be approached from an Art Nouveau viewpoint, which seems essential to the eventual elucidation of their symbolic significance.

8. The M_1 and M_2 motifs seem to be contrasted as active and passive aspects respectively of the themes of each sonata.

8. A more intensive study of the cycle itself is now needed, and this needs to be done in the context of Skryabin's mystical beliefs and other composition of the last period. The general octatonic basis of the cycle seems beyond doubt, but the nature and role of particularities like left-handed and right-handed octatonic sets, other symmetrical sets and fragments, and the interweaving of these strands and their sequences needs to be seen in the wider context mentioned, so that the hypotheses suggested in the present study can be revised or modified.

Art Nouveau imagery and method in the sonatas

The image of sorceress-seductress, of sombre and strange mysteries, of fire, ecstasy and dream have been noted, and are common to Symbolism, Art Nouveau and Decadence in the period. The image of light is more peculiar to Skryabin's symbolism, however.

It is natural for a composer of the period with a knowledge of French Symbolist verse to use some of its imagery, like that of Verlaine's *langueur* quoted above, to help construct his symbolist cosmology and to let some of this be reflected in his music. The French-language imagery is clearly identifiable as that of Art Nouveau, with the exception noted above, and as such is an essential part of the key to understanding the sonatas.

Skryabin's single-movement sonata form established in the Fifth Sonata becomes in the last five a series of short episodes with closely

interlinked motifs and figures that undergo kaleidoscopic combinations and transformations, the whole effect being that of an Art Nouveau picture where figure and line interweave in profusion. This profusion tends towards ornament - particularly trills, acciaccaturas and runs - whose figures, appearing and reappearing with both principal motifs of each work, tend to become the centre of interest. They are thus examples of the Art Nouveau principle of asymmetry - the taking of effects to extreme lengths.

Other Art Nouveau principles are easily noticed: sensuality is an essential part of the music and is always expressed by chromatic or winding line with tension in its syncopated rhythms; repetition of motif at different positions in the tetratonic symmetrical set of minor thirds replaces development along normal lines of reharmonization or modulation - in effect this is the device of parallel progression that is part of music's strangeness to the ear of 1911-13 (and is still so); the strangeness of sound of the octatonic pitch-set; and finally the limited dimensionality of this special harmonic environment that has repetition of sequence and circularity of structure rather than linear progression.

The individual character of these sonatas has been thus described by Hugh Macdonald: "Skryabin was now [c.1905] on the threshold of a style in which a sense of time had been attenuated almost out of existence...[into] tritonal harmony that had no sense of forward progression. The music can hang timelessly in the air. Form is thus greatly weakened, for the idea of one bar succeeding another or of one chord succeeding another has less meaning. Instead of the dynamic, functional flow of traditional music, Skryabin explores the possibility of musical stasis, equivalent to an imaginary paradise of the senses beyond time." While the notions of the tritone dominating harmony and form being "weakened" may be challenged (Macdonald was writing in 1978) he expresses the concept and feeling of *Insel* clearly. His general feeling about the works, even though he lacked

the two essential keys to their meaning of the pitch-sets and the Art Nouveau milieu, is consistent with the interpretation of this study.

Tonality

Sergei Koussevitsky, Leonid Sabaniev and Peter Jurgenson contributed to the early designation of tonalities for the late sonatas, and Skryabin consented to their suggestions, but perhaps more for reasons connected with his colour chart²⁸. The following table records this information along with the evidence of the pitch-sets' initial tonic basses or tonal centres:

Analysis 29:

	M ₁	M ₂	centres	Final cadence	Publishers' "keys"
6	<u>f</u>	<u>a^b</u>		<u>g</u>	<u>g</u>
7	<u>e>f</u>	<u>g[#]</u>		<u>d[#]</u>	<u>f[#]</u>
8	<u>a</u>	<u>a</u>		<u>a</u>	<u>a</u>
9	<u>g^b</u>	<u>b^b</u>		<u>a</u>	<u>g</u>
10	<u>e^b</u>	<u>a^b</u>		<u>c</u>	<u>f</u>

[Small letters denote minor keys]

Skryabin: Tonality of sonatas 6-10

Only the Eighth shows concordance of conclusions. The Dernova system provides even more confusion, suggesting the dual tonalities (Departure and Derived dominants) G and D^b for the Sixth, with C and F[#] for the Seventh, for instance. Since the analysis based upon Jay Reise's method in this study has shown that within episodes tonality jumps over intervals deriving from the octatonic pitch-sets, with apparent tonality seeming not to be fixed, it is little wonder that there has been disagreement over it. Scholarship before Reise has been divided as to whether the late works are atonal, with writers like Clemens-Christoph von Gleich, Detlef Gojowy and Jim Samson supporting a Schoenberg-like serial analysis, and others like Carl Dahlhaus and Lothar Hofmann-Erbrecht using the concept of *Klangzentrum* or loose tonal centre. Still others reject *Klangzentrum* while not going as far as atonality, like Siegfried Mauser, and Daniel Sitomirskij. It is perhaps more helpful to consider the pitch-set and

key-notes of **individual** motifs and figures, and to begin to understand these as having symbolic as well as harmonic significance, as this study suggests.

The sonatas seem to represent a more elaborate exposition of Skryabin's mystical and musical ideas first presented in the Fifth sonata, and point to the projected *Acte préalable* and *Mysterium*. As a set or cycle of sonatas it is probably the most substantial work associated with Art Nouveau in any field.

End-notes

- ¹Bowers, F.: op. cit., 180-181; Macdonald, H.: op. cit., 60.
- ² Eros is a vital part of the *Mysterium*, and thus also of this set, which is to some extent a preparation for it. See de Schloezer, B.: op. cit., 17.
- ³ Macdonald, H.: op. cit., 60.
- ⁴ Bowers, F.: op. cit., 181.
- ⁵ See note 1.
- ⁶ Dover reprint, 1988, of the Russian 1964 editions by Muzyka; MCA edition, 1949, New York.
- ⁷ de Schloezer, B.: op. cit., 99, 234, 248.
- ⁸ He does not appear to have followed the Second Vienna School into this chromatic libertarianism, probably because as a pitch-set it is not emphatically and **necessarily** ordered like the other symmetrical sets, order being the essence of symbolistic systems.
- ⁹ Ibid, 246. See also the key dictum expressing the same concept in Bowers, F.: op. cit., 177-78.
- ¹⁰ Reise, J.: op. cit., 223, 225-26.
- ¹¹ Ibid, 227-28.
- ¹² Bowers, F.: op. cit., 181; Skryabin used the term to describe the Sixth and Ninth sonatas; by extension it is used in this study to apply to octatonic sets based on the reversed order of tone-semitone.
- ¹³ Ibid, 177-78.
- ¹⁴ Ibid, 181; Macdonald, H.: op. cit., 60.
- ¹⁵ Bowers, F.: loc. cit.; de Schloezer, B.: op. cit., 248.
- ¹⁶ See Note 8 above.
- ¹⁷ Jay Reise himself implies this - see Reise, J.: op. cit., 231.
- ¹⁸ Macdonald, H.: programme notes to Ashkenazy recordings, 7.
- ¹⁹ Reise, J.: op. cit., 223.
- ²⁰ Ibid, 225, 231.
- ²¹ Brown, M.: op. cit., 50.
- ²² Macdonald, H.: op. cit., 7.
- ²³ Bowers, F.: op. cit., 179.
- ²⁴ Vogel, V.: *Alexander Scriabine - "eine unbewältigte Vergangenheit"*, Österreichische Musikzeitschrift XXVI/12 (Dec. 1971) 706-087 - Vogel particularly links the Eastern principle of passivity with the Western one of activity as being behind the dualism of the late sonatas. Kelkel, M.: *Alexander Scriabine, sa vie, l'ésotérisme et la langage musical dans son oeuvre*, (Paris, Champion 1978). Manfred Kelkel traces these ideas to theosophy and Hinduism and to certain German philosophers. See also idem: *Esoterik und formale Gestaltung in Skryabins Spätwerken*, in Kolleritsch, O.: *Alexander Skryabin. Studien*

- zur Werkungsforchung 13, (Graz, Universal 1980), 22-49.
- 25 See Reise, J.: op. cit., 222.
- 26 Bowers, F.: op. cit., 181.
- 27 Verlaine, P.: *Chanson d'automne*, stanza 1.
- 28 Ibid., 57.

SONATAS VI-X: MOTIF-PAIRS

6 *M₁*

M₂


7 *M₁*

M₂


8 *M₁*

M₂


9 *M₁*

M₂


10 *M₁*

M₂


CHAPTER 15

THE FOUR ELEMENTS

The next four Art Nouveau themes tend to be seen by Art Nouveau as the Symbolists see them - as the four mediaeval elements, having in common the basic natural rhythms of swirling flames, waves, breezes and the curves of flora and fauna - of fire, water, air and earth. These rhythms are reflected in the swirling lines of visual Art Nouveau, in the rhetoric and conceit of literary Art Nouveau, and in the flourish and sensuousness of musical Art Nouveau. Art Nouveau sees the four elements as being the mediums in which being and all beings exist, both natural and supernatural. Thus any natural phenomenon has its visible and invisible aspects, both connected by the fundamental rhythms of the natural world.

FIRE	<i>Vers la flamme</i>	Op.72, 1914	Skryabin
	<i>Flammes sombres</i>	Op.73/2, 1914	Skryabin

Concept

Fire tends to be seen in Art Nouveau as one of the Four Elements, in that its flames undulate like breezes or spirits (air), waves (water) and vines (earth): the same natural rhythms of sinuous line pervade all four elements. The same swirling shapes are seen in pictures like Edward Okun's cover for the journal *Chimera*, Warsaw 1902, where the spirit (chimera) resembles a flame rising from the urn; they are seen in the waves from which the nereid rises in Fritz Endell's *The Wave*, in the lovers' entwining hair in Peter Behrens' *Der Kuss*, in Salomé's veils in Markus Behmer's illustration for Insel-Verlag, and in the long leaves surrounding the thistles in Arthur Mackmurdo's title-page for *Wren's City Churches*¹. For Aubrey Beardsley the swirls of flame can be neutral, like those of the candle in his 1894-5 *Design*, or evil like the flaming hair of the fantastic accompanying *The Belly Dancer*², while the flame motif in much Art Nouveau architecture like that of Louis Sullivan and Victor Horta is partly a conscious revival of mediaeval flamboyant tracery, which sees fire as a

heaven-seeking element³. Thus fire can symbolize a range of meanings in visual Art Nouveau.

For Alexander Skryabin in the two works to be discussed, fire is seen in a symbolistic sense adapted from its mediaeval one as heaven-seeking and transforming, in which phoenix-like the soul is transformed in the great orgiastic *Mysterium* (the complete, final *Gesamtkunstwerk*-synthesis or Dionysian celebration of the arts, whose "temple" will consist of fiery pillars of incense, and in which the soul will return to its primaeval state of ecstatic, beatific sensation and knowledge⁴. Such ritual of fire seems to involve death of the individual and transformation into "collective joy"⁵ in the common creative act of the Mystery.

The emphasis in both works is different from that of the leaping and dying flames of the Tenth Sonata. What is important here is flame as transformation experience - the phoenix-like process of death and transfiguration. This last is of course also expressed in two key orchestral works of the Art Nouveau repertoire - Richard Strauss' *Tod und Verklärung* of 1889 and Arnold Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* of 1917. For Skryabin's *Vers la flamme* the emphasis seems to be on *Vers* rather than *flamme*, and in *Flammes sombres* on *sombres*. There is a basically mimetic element to the shape of the motifs in each work - an upwards followed by a downwards movement, but the linear movements of the works show steadiness rather than flickering.

The two works *Vers la flamme* & *Flammes sombres* compared

The idea of flame as transformation is partially embodied in the ascent from low to high register as *Vers la flamme* progresses towards its final episode and *fortissimo* ending with repeated high chords. It is first perceived as solemn and even death-like, as is clear from the gloomy opening pages and as it is in *Flammes sombre*, which is linked as a dance with *Guirlandes* [wreaths] in op.73. The two op.73 pieces are now known to have been intended as part of the *Mysterium* and therefore ritualistic in

conception⁶, and like *Vers la flamme* contrast with the ecstasy of fire in the Tenth Sonata. In both the fire works being considered in this section, however, there are passages of more ecstatic contrast, *Flammes sombre* having a mid-section ending *Prestissimo* and *Vers la flamme* gradually rising to a tremendous climax over its last five pages.

The primary developmental method of both pieces is repetition of sequences, gradually rising in pitch towards a climax, each climax preparing for the next.

Skryabin: *Flammes sombres*

Analysis 30:

<u>SECTION A</u>		<i>Dolente</i>				
rhythm		quad.	tripl.	tripl.	tripl.	
bars		6	5	5	6	
<u>SECTION B</u>		<i>Presto</i>				
rhythm		tripl.	quad.	tumult.	désord.	prest ^{mo} ritard.
bars		4	4	4	4	4 5
<u>SECTION C</u>		<i>Dolente</i>			<i>Presto accel. prest^{mo}</i>	
rhythm		quad.	tripl.	tripl.	quad.	quad. quad.
bars		4	4	4	4	4 5
<u>CODA</u>		<i>Lento</i>				
bars		4				

Skryabin: *Flammes sombres*

The analysis gives an idea of the gradual deceleration of the two *Dolente* segments and the acceleration of the *Presto* segments (*accelerando*, *tumultueux*, *désordonné*, *prestissimo*). This is partly mirrored in the rhythms of the bass figures, which correspondingly move in triplets or quadruplets. In Section A the melodic windings of the first two phrases reach G, the second two A. The mid-section (*Presto*) breaks the pattern by having a right-hand ostinato that is almost entirely on F# while the left-hand figures alternate between leaps of third, sixth and octave intervals: the ostinato is like a sustained climax that lasts the whole section, gradually gathering pace until bar 43, when it begins to slow before returning to the *Dolente*. The reprise of the *Presto* again moves against an ostinato, but this time on D, and this is echoed through the coda to the

final chord (which will be illustrated later). Ostinatos like these are in effect embellished pedalpoints, and against such pedals there can be no harmonic movement, so that the universe in which this dance is taking place is one of limited dimensionality, without depth, with the dancers moving over a flat surface in a dream state. Within almost every phrase the bass seems only able to move through the steps of a $b7$ chord (that is, in the minor thirds that are fundamental to octatonic sets, being a semitone+tone interval) as if it is chained to a $b7$; as an example the bass in the first phrase of the work moves only through $\underline{F} / \underline{A^b} / \underline{B} / \underline{D}$. In the *Presto* segments the curve of its motion is always like that of bars 32-27, and can be represented diagrammatically thus $*_*^*$ as it moves through three parts of the $b7$ chord $\underline{D^\#} \setminus \underline{B^\#} / \underline{D^\#} / \underline{F^\#}$. This pattern complements the ostinato with its affective repetition.

Part of the complexity of the work comes from its cross-rhythms between the hands; from the first bar there are different time-signatures for each hand, with the basis of three beats against four made even more complex by an initial semiquaver rest in the left. But the greater complexity results from the pitch-sets being different in each hand in the *Dolente* segments. In bars 1-7 the right hand moves in an octatonic set O^1 while the left is in O^2 , and from bar 8 the sets change to O^2 and O^3 respectively before reverting to the original pairing in bar 9. (Each octatonic set comprises two diminished seventh chords a semitone apart, and any two octatonic sets share one of these chords, giving a common pool of four notes in bitonal harmonies. Tri-tonal harmonies are also possible, although there is no note common to all three sets.) The principal effect of this bitonality is that of increased harmonic complexity, mirroring the rhythmic separateness of the hands in the *Dolente* segments; in the *Presto* segments the hands share the same set but still move in cross-rhythms. However, the hands' moving in different tonal and rhythmic patterns is reminiscent of the textures of Debussy's *Danseuses de Delphes*, where the

lines of music cross and recross like lines of dancers; this work is also a dance, of course.

Skryabin: Vers la flamme

This work begins with alternations of chords in the right hand that suggests imagery of flickering, over long pedalpoints.

Example 81:

Allegro moderato.
pp ombre
con sord.

Skryabin: Vers la flamme 1-6

In the first part of the piece (bars 1-78) these pedals rise through diminished sevenths and octatonic scales:

Analysis 31:

Analysis 31: Musical score with annotations showing chord progressions and scale runs. Annotations include O², O³, H¹, H³, P⁵, and P². Includes 'ALTERNATE TO 97' and 'ALTERNATE TO 110' markings.

Skryabin: Vers la flamme 1-78

There are sudden switches between octatonic sets that echo the chordal alternations on a different level, signifying the transformations that lie through the flame. From bar 79 a third level is added - tremolando chords in the middle of the texture, and finally, from bar 100, a fourth - reiterations of the same chord of superimposed fourths (7^b_4). These two additions unite to produce an ostinato ascending to the highest C^\sharp in bar 126 and intensifying the tension as it remains unchanged until the last bar (140) of the piece, where the flame rises to its maximum and finishes with an ascending series covering six octaves, which, while it is formed from O^2 , is also seen to constitute parts of the natural harmonic series:

Example 82:

1
2 3 5 6 8 10 15 19 21
HARMONIC SERIES

Skryabin: *Vers la flamme*, 132-140

Octatonic sets are the basis of the work, but not the only symmetrical sets employed. The tremolando figures are made from hexatonic sets (both 131 131 (not all these figurational sets need cover the octave) and 141 141, interspersed with some octatonic and chromatic sets, and the repetitions in the highest treble seen in the example above are all formed from symmetrical pentatonic sets (23232)⁷. The figures employed are these, with the sets from which they are derived shown below:

Analysis 32

78 79 83 86 88 89 93 98 99 102 114
 O¹ O² C O² h⁶ O³ h² h² O³ C C

O² h⁴ P⁵ P² P⁵ P¹ P²

120 128 104 110 114 120 128

H¹ H² H³ H⁴ Hexatonic

h¹ h² h³ h⁴ h⁵ h⁶ hexatonic

P¹ P² P³ P⁴ P⁵ Pentatonic

Skryabin: *Vers la flamme*, tremolando and ostinato sets

This use of symmetrical sets and the reference at the end to the natural series is symbolic of the perfection of purpose that the work is designed to serve in the *Mysterium*. As in the late sonatas Skryabin is not merely creating beauty but intending to perform ritual.

The general similarity between the ostinato that ends this work and that of *Flammes sombres* suggests that it may represent the insistence and irreversibility of final conflagration. Again the differences from the rising and falling of candlelight/flame imagery in the Tenth Sonata are worth remarking. It is also important to notice that the patterning of repetitive sequences like these in the two works is based on simple repetition of figure beyond that of conventional pieces. With the introduction of the ostinatos Skryabin carries the repetition of figure to extreme, and deliberately aims for emotional effect.

Motifs

The nature of the motifs may now be examined for their mimetic qualities. *Vers la flamme* begins with two quaver-dotted minim movements that soon break into quavers in bar 4, and this asymmetry of rhythm, which suggests a low flickering, is repeated in the bars to 12; its counterparts

are the series of dotted and tied minims that follow to bar 27, which because of their almost unbroken sustention may suggest glowing embers against which the alternations move.

A second motif, in curving form like the second motifs of the late sonatas begins at 28, and its characteristic semitonal fall, repeated twice before 1st curving begins, is present throughout most of the work from that point. This semitonal fall is opposite to the semitonal rise of the first motif, and both can be seen as flickering imagery. Both motifs are "right-handed" octatonic, so that the flame-imagery is a positive symbol.

If in this piece Skryabin is signifying the rite of the Mysterium then the symbolism of this series accords with the idea of final union with the cosmos and its perfection, but it has been the ultimate rising of flames that has achieved it. The title's "towards the flame" may merely suggest, however, its hypnotic fascination and symbolic potential, in which case still the flame as natural force or element is signified. In either case it is the repetition of asymmetrical figure that is important throughout the piece.

As in the late sonatas the octatonic sets and French-language indications are crucial. The work begins in O^2 based on E, but by bar 24 has become more complex, for the hands split into different sets - O^1 in the right and O^3 in the left. This is an interesting aspect of Skryabin's octatonic technique that opens many more harmonic possibilities, of which the striking dissonance of the bar 20 chord is an obvious example (in terms of conventional harmony, a b_3 chord on B is followed by a long-held ${}^9_{7b}{}^{5b}_3$ on B^b, but what is really happening is modulation from one octatonic set to another as well as a splitting of sets between the hands. The D in the first chord of bar 24 is foreign to the O^1 set in the upper stave but belongs to the lower-stave O^3 set: Skryabin allows himself this extra flexibility elsewhere in the work, as for instance in bar 28, where an F[#] is borrowed from the lower stave by the upper.

Example 83:

Skryabin: *Vers la flamme*, 19-24

The sudden changing from one octatonic set to another in the example above (20 and 24) is very noticeable and is exactly the same process as sudden unmodulated change in a diatonic composition. But there is a different form of change that can also be seen: between 20 and 23 the chords of the O^2 set appear to be moving gradually towards some sort of resolution, which appears, however, as a double set-change on the first beat of 24. Since this "resolution" has not been achieved within the set O^2 itself the process is analogous to the *Tristan* effect where a discordant sequence is resolved with another discord. Proper resolution in normal terms is possible within an octatonic set because each set contains major and minor triads on its tonic, as well as more exotic semi-resolutional possibilities like the 6_3 chord on the tonic, the diminished triad and the diminished seventh. For this work Skryabin has chosen to transform one set into another instead of using processes of resolution, and the title makes it obvious why he should choose this: for him it is essential that the intentions expressed in his title are not merely seen in the musical imagery of flame but embodied in the harmonic basis of his music. If he were content merely with flame-imagery he would be writing tone-painting music; as it is, he is writing Art Nouveau-Symbolist music, with his purpose expressed in the harmonic and textural patterning (Art Nouveau), in their French rubrics to be discussed immediately below (Art Nouveau/Symbolist imagery) and in the exclusive use of symmetrical sets (whose significance is primarily symbolistic, although their symmetry may

also be seen as Art Nouveau).

The other key in this work is that of the French expressions, which as in the sonatas are grouped in accordance with the motifs and figures they explain. The long introductory figure is *sombre*; the main motif (bar 42) is *avec une émotion naissante*, then *avec une joie voilée, de plus en plus animé* and at bar 68 *avec une joie de plus en plus tumultueuse*. At bar 83, now more than an octave higher, it is *Éclatant, lumineux* [dazzling, luminous] and remains so until the end - a world away from the *sombre* and awakening feelings of the beginning.

Flammes sombres from the outset has sets split between the hands (RH O¹, LH O²), and the hands are also rhythmically independent, so that flames (plural) are thereby expressed as independently intermixing.

These two figure-patterns must from the main indication *Avec une grâce dolente* be interpreted as ones of mourning. While in the *Mysterium* flames signify the transformation to ultimate ecstasy they also signify the death of the body and the passing through a transformational experience that is sad as well as leading to ecstasy; it is after all the companion to *Guirlandes*. If it were a conventional descriptive piece then imagery of a funeral procession, or of vigil-candles in chapel or lying-in chamber would be assumed, but here the *presto* passages must suggest a more fantastic image of ritual dancing leading to ecstasy, or a symbolist interpretation of phoenix-like reincarnation. Thus as in *Vers la flamme* the French terms indicate rising intensity from the sad gracefulness of the beginning, through *avec accablement* [with extreme dejection] to a sudden *Presto très dansant* with *tumultueux* and *désordonné* [disordered/ extravagant]. All these are examples of Art Nouveau (mannerist) immoderation. The sudden shift between the slow and fast dances is emphasized by the replaying of the slow and fast sections in modified form before the piece ends in a brief *lento*. These last three bars begin with the hands divided between O¹ and O³, but with the last chord the right hand symbolically joins the left

in O^3 . This chord is actually composed of the same notes that begin the piece in bar 1, but where in 1 the sets are O^1 and O^2 now both are O^3 : transformation has taken place.

Example 84:



Skryabin: *Flammes sombres*, 1 + 83

Conclusions

Both pieces thus are not only about transformation but exemplify it musically; again the symbolic evidence of pitch-sets and the Art Nouveau evidence of the French imagery are seen to provide the keys to an understanding of this. The flame imagery of both pieces is different from that of the Tenth Sonata, but both show this in the rocking nature of their motifs, and show the general nature of fire by their ascending and intensifying momentums. Both use symmetrical pitch-sets for symbolic purposes that also have Art Nouveau implications.

WATER	<i>Une barque sur l'Océan</i> (<i>Miroirs</i> /3)	1905	Ravel
	<i>Poissons d'or</i> (<i>Images II</i> /3)	1907	Debussy
	<i>The Fountains of the Acqua Paola</i>		
	(<i>Roman Sketches</i> /3)	1915-16	Griffes
	<i>Le poisson d'or</i>	1919	Berners

Concept

Water is an image of movement and repetition, and like fire is a fluid, moving, transformable image and one of the mediaeval Four Elements, whose flowing is reflected in the sinuous line of visual Art Nouveau, as well as in pictures of swans or boats floating along idealized streams. In Art Nouveau iconography it is also the element of nereids like the Sirens, Ondine and The Lady of the Lake; the sea is dark and mysterious, with strange fauna, sunken treasure, sea-gods and their storms, and the waves whose rhythms reflect those of nature⁸.

In passing it may be noted that some of the pieces discussed under other headings are also water-pieces. Vitezslav Novák's *More* (Sea) from his suite *Pan* shows the ocean as part of Pan's realm, so that its invisible aspect is being as much emphasized as its visible, and shows that behind water, waves, storms and spray is the power and caprice of Pan. The provenance of Rakhmaninov's *Barkarolla* and *Letes* [Tears] is also that of the poetic image of water as seen in an Art Nouveau milieu. The verses that head the pieces are both based on the movement of water - of the gondola's rocking motion and the falling of tears - and also on the general human condition - water as a setting for love, and tears as part of life. Janáček's *V pláči* (In tears) is the ninth of his *Po zarostlem chodnicku* (On an Overgrown Path) set and follows his comments on the eighth as also being about weeping (for the death of his daughter)⁹. It is reasonable to assume from Janáček's words that both pieces have tears/water-motifs: "Perhaps you will sense weeping in the number before last" - referring to the eighth piece, and thus also to the ninth¹⁰. It can thus be seen that water is a key image for Art Nouveau, and will be recognized again in the discussion on the theme of *Insel*.

Ravel's *Une barque sur l'Océan*

This is one of the set of *Miroirs* or images transformed by reflection. The choice of "barque", and "Une barque sur l'Océan" connotes the historic past, of tales of sailing-ships with exotic cargoes on romantic seas ("l'Océan" refers to the Atlantic) - not the simple sails on calm waters of the typical Impressionist Renoir or Monet painting¹¹. The image is that of a ship of other times, elegant but frail against the forces of the sea and its gods. The set-title *Miroirs* is important as an Art Nouveau concept of seeing not the object but its representative poetic image (in the general, not just the visual sense): this is not a particular barque but the type of all such vessels, and the repetitive, mesmeric nature of the music immediately puts out of question that it is any

ordinary descriptive or narrative piece.

The work aims from the outset at dream and mystery of effect by its indication *Très enveloppé de pédales* [very muffled by pedals] - a typically Art Nouveau extreme effect. Ravel may be implying use of all three pedals, for he would have known of them from the French Boisselot pianos and Steinways¹². *Très enveloppé des pédales* therefore implies not only the cloudiness of effect from a generous use of the sustaining right pedal, and also the selective resonance of harmonics from the free use of the centre pedal, but the silkiness added to both of these by the equally free use of the action-shifting left pedal. There are special effects to be had from such use of the left with the other pedals, for the more ethereal tone that it produces is multiplied by the use of the other two pedals. There are only three specific pedal markings, two of which are concerned with sustaining sweeping *ppp* arpeggios (bars 118, 125) and could refer to either the right or centre pedals, and *2 pedale* (bar 75) which always seems to mean *secondo pedale* in Ravel and refers to the action-shifting left pedal for so-called *una corda* effects. The player, therefore, is to maintain a confused effect throughout, varying this in colour but always allowing the sweeping figures and repetitions to resonate with each other.

The dominant figure-type of the piece is the wide-ranging arpeggio or broken chord which can be dramatic (bars 38-44, 68-75, 103-106, 111-116) in its sweeps over the whole keyboard and its rises and falls in volume from *ppp* to *fff*, but is mostly soft, as in the opening bars 1-28. The principal element of mystery in the different figures formed from this type is harmonic, from broken chords of 9_7_5 under the complementary accompanimental twin-note figure moving in fifths, fourths and seconds based on 7_5_2 (bars 1-10, 14-20) to the delicately clashing seconds of bars 50-54, 63-68 and 99-103, and major arpeggios over a minor melody in bars 90-93. The independently-moving harmonies of each hand in bars 29-37 are typical of the clashes produced through quasi-bitonal effects:

Analysis 33:

[All over B^b pedal]

Ravel: *Une barque sur l'Océan*, 29-37

In the cadenza of bars 103-106 the right hand begins with parallel broken chords while the left moves in successive chord-inversions, and the arpeggios of bars 117-118 and 124-125 appear tenuously related to their nominal pedal-foundations. These harmonic effects produce strangeness, particularly since many occur at the softest of levels and are to be *très enveloppé de pédales*. Mystery of effect is also gained by the hidden nature of the first melodic fragments that appear from bars 4-20 as if arising from the elements of the long broken chords.

The ambiguous nature of the piece's multiple rhythms is set in the double indication of 6/8 2/4, which denotes from the outset a basic asymmetry in the opening accompanimental figure.

Example 85: *D'un rythme souple — Très enveloppé de pédales.*

Ravel: *Une barque sur l'Océan*, 1

The right hand's asymmetrical figure of two quavers and three triplets begins in rhythm with the first twelve of the left hand's demi-semiquaver

triplets but clashes rhythmically with the second twelve, since these are arranged in groupings of three as against the four that would fit the right-hand figure. This has the effect of waves beginning evenly but breaking into complexities. Rhythmically the whole piece is a complete contrast to the regularity of Novák's, for there is constant change of rhythm-pattern, many cross-rhythms between the hands, many bars like 13, 26-27 and 37-45 where the figuration is broken into uneven units, and finally many interpolated bars or sections of 27, 97 and 117-18. There is, therefore, both asymmetry and irregularity.

The many varieties of figuration suggest variety in sea-moods from soft to forceful, from sweeping to gentle rocking, with the changeableness of these moods emphasized by the frequent changes of section. Underlying all these is the asymmetrical rocking-figure that is constantly returned to.

Debussy: *Poissons d'or*

The inspiration for this piece has been traced to a Japanese lacquer owned by Debussy¹³. The wide popularity of this piece and its easily recognizable imagery of water movements and sounds has perhaps obscured its exotic subject. Water is an important element in many, if not most, Japanese paintings, with willows and ripples on flat-dimensioned paintings that mostly suggest the simple beauty of peacefulness in an *Insel*-type idealized landscape. While as a piece of musical *Japonaiserie-simulé* the piece perhaps could be included below under Exotic, the music seems largely to be centred around the idea of a fish in water rather than of an exotic golden carp as the subject in a Japanese picture.

The *pp aussi léger que possible* at the beginning is typical of the new effects possible on the modern piano that are exploited in the Art Nouveau repertory. The chromatically offset accompanimental figurations and the generally quiet tone of much of the piece, together with the cognate figurations and motif of bars 58-72 (also *pp*) produce a mysterious

effect. The complex, asymmetrical rhythms of water-movement underlying the sudden darts and turns of the goldfish further this, for these deeper rhythms echo those of nature. (Michel Imberty raises a deeper aspect of the rhythms of water in Debussy¹⁴ - their timelessness and avoidance of death in a Freudian sense; it may be possible to see this in the repetitious, timeless movements of the figurations established at the beginning of the piece.)

For the hearer a definite rhythmical pattern is perhaps first understood with the movement of the first melodic motif in the fourth bar, which provides the key to the complexity of the underlying figuration that has been only ambiguously perceived since the first.

Example 86:

Debussy: *Poissons d'or*. 8-13

But the ambiguity shifts to the melodic line itself in bars 12-13 and 16-17, where the second and third-beat figure (right hand) becomes the first

and second-beat one, as if a beat has been missed. This is further heightened by its following the duplet and triplet-figures of bars 8 and 9. Other ambiguities occur to throw doubt on what is otherwise a strongly marked pattern: the suspension across bars 38-39; the *sans rigueur* passages of bars 46-47, 51-54 that are the more marked by their having the *au mouvement* bars 48-50 between them; the *rubato* passage of bars 78-79 and 81-83, again with the au mouvement bar between; and the long cadenza of bar 94 with its suggested subdivisions into four-beat, six-beat and three-beat units after the whole piece has been in three; and finally the subtle confusion of the tied C# in the final bars 95-97.

Asymmetry is found within motifs themselves, as for instance in the first melodic motif of bars 3-8 that begins at the very end of the first beat with an accented semiquaver introducing a note that sounds for almost three whole beats; the motif's whole progress alternates between short notes and runs of longer ones in a manner that is to be followed throughout the piece (bars 30-31, 32-33, 34-56 and 80-83). Some of this asymmetry leads to imagery of the fish's sudden movements through the water (bars 3, 18-21 and parallel passages), of cascades or deep dives (bars 46-47, 51-53), of rapidly beating fins (initial accompanimental figure), or of splashes (31-32, 35-38 and parallel passages). This is a most graphic piece of keyboard writing, but not merely descriptive in a simple sense, for the subtleties show Art Nouveau characters of asymmetry and mystery.

Griffes: *The Fountains of the Acqua Paola*

The *Roman Sketches* are similarly inspired by what to a European of the era of Henry James is exotic - the Old World. All the subjects treated in the four pieces of the set are thus seen as strange because they carry the atmosphere of the ancient city, and *The Fountain of the Acqua Paola* sees the city as it often strikes the visitor - as a city of fountains, somehow partaking of a vaguely Eastern character in the extravagance of so many intricately sculpted and complex sprays. Griffes often added his

poetic epigraphs after composition, but was very much influenced by literary ideas and atmosphere in composition¹⁵. For this piece he chose his epigraphical poem from *Sospiri di Roma* by the minor poet William Sharp:

*Shimmering lights,
As though the Aurora's
Wild polar fires
Flashed in thy happy bubbles,
Died in thy foam.*

Griffes himself never visited Rome, but it is immediately obvious that in choosing an epigraph quite foreign to the ambience of Rome he is not interested in writing a tone-picture. It is the idea of the interplay of spray and bubbles and their echoing the lights of polar skies that fires the poetic imagination in a manner reminiscent of Edgar Allan Poe (two of whose works Griffes set in op.5). The Art Nouveau-like imagery of extremes (*the Aurora's wild polar fires, flashed...died*), is hardly the stuff of impressionistic description, which might be thought to be suggested by the term "sketches" from the set-title¹⁶. In the context of Griffes' other composition it is clear that he is essentially interested in the fantastic and the exotic, with such titles as *Vale of Dreams*, *Night Winds* (both from Edgar Allan Poe), *The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan* (Coleridge), *Phantoms*; he also set W.B.Yeats, Oscar Wilde, Japanese and Indian stories and texts.

The work begins with an even more marked asymmetry of rhythmic figure than Debussy's:

Example 87:

Allegro moderato (♩ = 104-108)



Griffes: *The Fountain of the Acqua Paola*, 1-2

The five units of three semiquavers in each bar, offset from the beginning of the bar and from the pulses of the melodic quavers, produce a characteristically Art Nouveau effect of ambiguous rhythm seen already in Ravel's *Une barque*, and earlier in Liszt, Novák and Skryabin - the

deliberate setting-up of cross-rhythmic patternings to produce a complex asymmetry of effect. The effect is not peculiar to Art Nouveau, of course, nor found throughout it: it is preceded, for instance, by Brahms' love of the interplay of cross-rhythms (the Paganini Variations II/7). But where it is used in pieces like this against crucial Art Nouveau imagery it takes on special reference to the underlying rhythms of nature, because it is cognate to the decorative patterning of visual Art Nouveau whose rhythms and lines intertwine in the complexities of nature-based artifice.

Throughout the piece rhythmic ambiguity is featured in a variety of ways. From bar 13 melody and accompaniment reverse their rhythmic roles, with the melody, now in the upper line, being a complex mixture of triplets, duplets and dotted rhythms while the accompanimental figure is quite regular. From bar 17 triplets are seen against quadruplets, but offset from the principal beat and mixed with octuplets, also off the beat. Triple and duple figures cross or succeed each other throughout the piece, and as in Ravel's *Une barque* there are frequent changes of time-signature, including $\frac{7}{4}$ bars, that give an asymmetrical effect to the succession of principal beats themselves. Thus at the larger level of the succession of bar-rhythms and at the smaller one of beats within the bar, there is constant and subtle shifting of rhythmic pattern.

At bar 29 another very complex rhythmic ambiguity is established:

Example 88:



Griffes: *The Fountain of the Acqua Paola*, 29-30

Over the quadruplets of the left hand there are combined duplets and triplets so arranged that the melody proceeds asymmetrically to the other figures and to the bar-beats. The effect complements the harmonic dissonances resulting from the chromatic movement of the upper parts

against the lower. The patterning established in these two bars continues, with the uppermost part taking on a melodic as well as a patterning role - a typically Art Nouveau effect.

There is subtle suggestion of dream or mystery in the changes of tonality that result from changes of pitch-sets. From 14-17 the melodic line keeps to a narrow few notes that produce the effect of an exotic mode:

Example 89:

Griffes: *The Fountain of the Acqua Paola*, 14-15

The effect is only momentary, but strange against the diatonic basis already established. A similar effect is created by the movement of the uppermost part in Example 88. From bar 44 the melody is decidedly Eastern in character, emphasizing the interval of a minor third. These delicate touches, and the subtleties of rhythmic asymmetry, are like the soft figures and clear lines of his compatriot Will Bradley's woodcuts and posters¹⁷.

Berners: *Le poisson d'or*

Lord Berners (Gerald Tyrwhitt-Wilson), himself a dandy (in the sense that Theo Hirsbrunner in *Debussy und seine Zeit*, 1981, has characterized Debussy and other similar figures of the period like Wilde, Laforgue, Montesquiou and Ravel), has deliberately used a title associated with Debussy, but altered it to the singular: *Le poisson d'or*. The verse (his own) he places as epigraph is mannered:

Morne et solitaire, le poisson d'or

tournoie dans son bol de cristal.

*Il rêve une petite compagne, belle et brillante
comme une pièce de vingt francs...*

*Mais, hélas! Quelque imbecile malavisé lui jette
une miette de pain.*

L'image disparaît dans l'eau trouble.

*Le poisson d'or avale sans joie la miette de
pain*

*et continue à tourner, morne et solitaire,
dans son bol de cristal.*

Mournful and solitary, the fish of gold
is turning in its bowl of crystal

He dreams of a petite companion, beautiful and
brilliant

like a twenty-franc piece...

But alas! Some imbecile ill-advised casts to him
a morsel of bread.

The image disappears in the troubled water.

The fish of gold gulps without joy the morsel
of bread

and continues turning about, mournful and solitary,
in his bowl of crystal.

Berners writes in a mock-simple style, with Baudelaire-like repetition of the first two lines in the last two, and plain imagery, without adjectives except for the "Morne et solitaire", "belle et brillante" and the anticlimactic, ironic "comme une pièce de vingt francs" and "imbecile malavisé" expressions. It is the posed utterance of the dandy who has seen everything and can no longer be moved, but its plainness of style is that of Oscar Wilde's *Salomé* - direct, understated yet rhythmically and sonorously affective. Thus internal rhymes like "Morne et", "tournoie", "dans son bol", "brillante comme", "imbecile malavisé lui", and alliteration of "belle et brillante". The sound of such verse is as important as its meaning, and is similar to that of Osbert and Edith Sitwell, his contemporaries, as used in their collaboration with William Walton to produce *Façade*.

Le poisson d'or is modelled more on Ravel's *Jeux d'eau* than on Debussy's *Poissons d'or*, and in its patterned, slow rhythm that is for long periods unbroken, is deliberately mesmeric, like the piece's epigraphical verse. Its initial figure, *Lento melanconico, doux et liquide* ("liquide" is possibly Satie-like irony), is based on discords at the octave like

those of Ravel's major sevenths and minor ninths at the beginning of *Jeux d'eau*.

Example 90:

Lento melanconico.

Berners: *Le poisson d'or*, 1-2

The pattern: $I_{5b}^{8b-9b} \setminus VII_6^{9-10} \setminus \#III_{4b}^{6-7} / III_{5b}^{8b-9b}$ (with oblique lines representing direction) is repeated a tone lower in bar 2 to form an AB two-bar unit that is deployed thus:

Analysis 34:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7-9	10	11
I	\ VII	/ I	\ VII	/ I	/ \#II	/ \#III	\ \#II	\ \#I
							VIIped.	-----

Berners: *Le poisson d'or*, 1-10

After two bars of bridge and a silent bar, a second pattern is established:

Example 91:

Tempo primo.

Berners: *Le poisson d'or*, 15

Again there are discordances at the octave, as well as the contiguous $G-G^\#$ clash in the first quaver beat, and the augmented fifth in the second.

This one-bar unit is deployed in a deliberately monotonous manner: 15-18 on I (C) and 19-24 on III, but with some slight variations that seem to anticipate the methods of John Adams, Philip Glass and their minimalist/mesmeric music later in the century (also highly mannered).

While this is simple imagery of the goldfish endlessly circling his bowl there is a clear affective aim directed at listener and player.

From bar 25 the pattern is disturbed, and remains so for most of the rest of piece, so that while the imagery of "l'eau trouble" is there, it is unlikely that simple linear narrative is being attempted by Berners. The only monotonous patterning like those already described is left to the last

few bars (75-80), with the intervening bars 25-74 merely being patternings of different, more complicated sorts. For instance, after two bars (25-26) modelled on 9-11, bars 26-27 introduce a modified form of F_1 (the bar 1 figure) that is to form the main material until bar 74, and immediately 26-27 is replicated at the fourth, although over a different bass, in 28-29; 29-30 are also replicated in 31-32. Similar short sequences are repeated as the work progresses, so that 36-38 match 39-41; 42-44 are one-bar matchings, as are 45 and 50, 46-49, and so on in an series of changing patterns until the cadenza of 65-74, which is itself patterned with a series of wedge-shaped figures not unlike the subject of J.S.Bach's organ "Wedge" fugue BWV 548. All this patterning is as clear to the eye as to the ear, with the staves of the score itself, as often in the Art Nouveau keyboard repertory, tending to be not unlike a series of friezes in an Art Nouveau design.

Allied with this figural and harmonic patterning is that of rhythm, and this aspect is perhaps the most powerful of the factors inducing mesmerism of effect. The dominant rhythm is that of F_1 - in effect an appoggiatura on each quaver beat, and through its unevenness all the more striking in effect as a characteristic rhythm permeating the senses, and reinforcing the repetitious effects of the figural and harmonic patterning.

Some other pieces in the repertory feature figuration for long periods with little or no melody (Liszt's *Valses oubliées* and *csárdás* pieces, Florent Schmitt's *La tragique chevauchée*, much of Janáček's *Overgrown Path* and *In the Mists* pieces, and John Ireland's *The Island Spell*), and much of the rest of the repertory subordinates melody to accompaniment or absorbs melody into it. This piece is remarkable for having no melodic line as such whatsoever: it is all figuration and decoration, and as such represents an extreme of Art Nouveau practice. The Art Nouveau aesthetic, of course, embraces such asymmetry; from the deliberate reference of the title and the mannered verse epigraph, to the

music itself, the whole conception of this piece is extreme¹⁸.

Summary

The four pieces establish an atmosphere of dream and mystery, using complex and asymmetrical rhythms superimposed on various water-imagery figures. Asymmetry of rhythm is supplemented by mesmeric repetition of regular figures. There are complexities of cross-rhythms, as well as constant changes of figuration and the tendency to excessive repetition - all being ways of conveying the essential changeability and mystery of the concept of water as it is seen in Art Nouveau.

One important feature of all four pieces needs to be mentioned - their repetition of patterned sequences. In each case, although there is frequent variety in the actual components of the repeating accompanimental figures, their repetitious nature itself is constant throughout, subject only to a few pauses before resuming its background motion. The movement of water in a fountain is a perfect Art Nouveau subject, for although its activity is perpetual and its variety of spray and ripple infinite, there is no progress. Motion without progress is timeless, so that what is being experienced is not sensations of fish, a barque or a fountain but the nature of water as such - as an element of nature.

AIR	<i>Poème ailé</i>	Skryabin
	<i>La danse de Puck (Préludes I/11)</i> 1910	
	<i>The Dew Fairy (The Hour-Glass/3)</i> 1920	Debussy
		Bridge

Concept

The Art Nouveau concept of air as one of the Four Elements centres around the nature of movement in it - free, swirling, soaring. Hair, leaves and waves are moved by the winds into the sinuous shapes characteristic of Art Nouveau painting, and the spirit-creatures whose natural element is air fly free of constraints of all dimensions, including time. For Skryabin ecstasy is of this element - free and floating, with *ailé* a frequent indication in the late sonatas.

Skryabin: Poème ailé

The title (literally: "winged poem"; metaphorically "floating, soaring" - as in dreams) is enigmatic, without any accompanying notes or musical indications to guide interpretation, but in his mystical system the freed spirit as it dematerializes moves like a bird¹⁹ through air, its natural element²⁰.

This *poème* consists almost solely of repetitions and gradual development of the four-note figure announced at the outset that is based on the unsatisfying, diatonically speaking, "resolution" of a seventh to a ninth, setting up a chain of such movements that appear to be awaiting real resolution in an orthodox cadence - which never arrives until the end. The piece can of course be seen to be in octatonic sets - and to be an early instance of the employment of different sets in each hand, (with the melody only being O^3 , the right thumb playing notes from the left-hand O^1 set)²¹.

Example 92:

Skryabin: *Poème ailé*, 1-5

Until then, as in a dream, the dancer never touches ground. Thus "ground" is completed cadence and "air" the realm without such dimensions - that of incomplete or arrested harmonic development. The musical conceit matches that of the mind when one flies in a dream, and the Art Nouveau principle of limited dimensionality is seen to be suggested in the suspension of harmonic progression.

The example shows the whole of the first phrase and the beginning of the second in bar 5, where the hands change sets. This is necessary because Skryabin wishes to shift the whole sequence up a fourth. Other

technical points shown in the example are the foreign notes: those marked with a cross resolve at the semitone to the immediately following note in their strands, and the G^\sharp as shown by the arrow. Both are normal methods that Jay Reise has described²².

The rhythmical peculiarity of the piece derives from two elements - tempo and asymmetry. From a knowledge of the sonatas it can be seen that the piece should be played fast, since "ailé" represents flutterings (of desire or ecstasy) as of wings. The most notable indications are those affecting the tempo, with a *ritardando* beginning from the second note of the piece, an *a tempo* in bar 2 and *accelerando* in bar 3, so that an unevenness of tempo to some extent offsets the absolute regularity of repetition of the four-note figure. The rhythmical asymmetry of this motif, together with its fifty-nine repetitions of the initial figure in just thirty-three bars, produces a powerfully mesmeric effect: this is music of effect, not scene-painting.

Debussy: *La danse de Puck*

As the insubstantial and invisible element, air in Art Nouveau iconography is the domain of supernatural forces like fairies and wind-gods. Puck is frivolous, interfering and ubiquitous but above all supernatural; his dancing therefore implies some sort of spell-making leading to mischief. Debussy is drawing on a long literary tradition about Puck, from Scandinavian legends to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; as an Art Nouveau artist he would perhaps be more concerned with the Puck of legend whose pranks almost, but not quite, border on the malicious, rather than with the slightly tamer Robin Goodfellow of Shakespeare and Mendelssohn; this point has been noticed by Robert Schmitz, but not by other commentators like Roy Howat or Raymond Park²³. Howat does point out, however, that there was an Arthur Rackham illustrated edition of Shakespeare's play published in 1908 that Debussy might well have had in mind; if this connexion could be established then this piece would be as

impeccable in Art Nouveau status as *Les fées son exquis danseuses*, which is undoubtedly based on a Rackham illustration. There is an illustration from Rackham's 1908 work in Hans Hofstätter's *Art Nouveau* that clearly shows the darker side of Puck, who is seen in silhouette dancing amongst brambles whose thorns echo his sharp and stinging jests²⁴. Rackham produced another illustrated edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the Spencer Collection in the New York Public Library in 1928 that shows Puck as a gentler figure than that of the 1908 illustrations²⁵, but in general his Edwardian-period drawings of spirit-creatures, flora and fauna tend to show the darker side of nature, with evil faces lurking in trees or waves, and men looking like goblins with ambiguous appearances - half humorous but half menacing²⁶. This ambiguity is typically Art Nouveau, present all through the 1908 illustrations but missing from the later ones.

Debussy's *danse* is symmetrically planned, like a typical dance, but with this difference, that its horn-calls, noticed throughout this repertory as evocations of mystery and distance, are the signal-markers of those divisions.

Analysis 35:

1-5	6	7-11	12-17	18-29	30-40	
runs	H-C	arpeggios	trills	skips	ostinato	
A		B	C	D	E	
	41	42-52	53-63	64-68		
	H-C	alternations	trills	ostinato		
		A	B	C		
	69	70-76	77-86	87-90	91-94	95-96
	H-C	runs	chains	trills	H-C	runs
		A	B	C	D	E

Debussy: *La danse de Puck*, dance-structure

H-C = horn-calls. Until 91-94 the horn-calls are single bars, not sequences, so that the overall pattern without these is 5-3-5. In their role as division-markers, the four occurrences of horn-call signify a five-fold overall division, because at each end of the piece is a short sequence of runs - the prologue and epilogue, as it were. In Shakespeare's play the

epilogue is spoken by Puck. Each of the three overall sections (the three lines of the analysis) has a trills-sequence as its centre, so that arch-form, but without dramatic rise and fall, is indicated.

The first motif (bars 1-5), which is the main dance theme, is in Dorian mode (based on F and presented as a full scale in the upwards runs of bars 3 and 5).


Example 93:

Debussy: *La danse de Puck*: 1-6

These runs are asymmetrically placed with respect to their positions in the sequence, which accentuates the way they interrupt the flow of the dance - the first begins halfway through the bar and the second at the beginning. The horn-call is asymmetrically centred a tritone away from the F basis of the Dorian motif, which has alternated between F and C. This call follows the rhythmical asymmetry of the rapid runs by appearing halfway through the bar. This ambiguity as to the downbeat continues throughout the piece.

The piece features many alternations and parallels, particularly the parallel progressions of bars 8-11 and 32-40. In the latter first-inversion major triads move below an ostinato of major seconds that hold an inverted pedalpoint. But the pedalpoint, and the echoes of horn-calls following the two bars of melodic fragment, are based on E^b, while the fragment is centred a semitone above on E. The combined effect is one of tonal disorientation. The horn-calls are in all other cases unrelated harmonically to their contexts (just like the horn-calls in Novák's *Hory* [Mountains] in his *Pan* suite, both thus suggesting the Other Realm origins of these calls).

THE FOUR ELEMENTS



The unpredictability of Puck as spirit is seen in the frequent and sudden changes of figure, with acciaccatura, staccato or the skipping two-note phrasing, seen from the first bar, initiating most changes, so that they begin with suddenness. Allied to this is the emphasis on rhythmic freedom and variety: for instance, the first motif's containing three rhythmic elements - the skipping two-note dotted figure, triplets and rapid eight-note runs. The way the horn-call fragment is at odds with its tonal context is matched by its contrasting with the prevailing rhythmic contexts within which it appears in bars 6-7, 41 and 43. Throughout the piece there is a fundamental contrast between rhythmic and arrhythmic elements - between the regularity of the dance rhythms and the unpredictable skips, acciaccaturas, runs and arpeggios of Puck's nature as capricious spirit. Caprice is the essence of the Art Nouveau spirit - its nature is, like its substance, of air: light, changeable, not to be grasped. The two chief elements in this are firstly the attack resulting from the two-note dotted rhythmic unit announced in the first bar, with the acciaccatura and staccato emphases of main beats, and on the other the contrasting asymmetrical emphases of other beats of the horn-calls. Thus against the decisive establishing of a regularity of rhythmic emphasis (dancing imagery) against the irregularities of the panpipe and horn-call intrusions, is pronounced enough to suggest that it may reflect Puck's being able as a figure of air to free himself not only from normal constraints of movement but also from those of time.

Bridge: The Dew Fairy

In English children's folklore the dew-fairy is one who decorates the woodland and field with dew on cold evenings - a softer figure than Jack Frost on freezing mornings. The piece is part of a collection titled *The Hour-Glass*, both titles suggesting the realm of imagination rather than that of simple painting of natural scenes²⁷. The fairy in English tradition is mostly harmless to people of good nature, unlike the more

menacing figures of trolls, goblins and banshees in other cultures. The Dew Fairy is above all a creature of fantasy as well as beauty, for she transforms nature each evening into a special realm that only those with "second sight" can observe, as imagined in Art Nouveau fantasy like the illustrations of Einar Nerman, Reginald Knowles, Arthur Rackham²⁸ and Walter Crane²⁹.

Frank Bridge's filigree composition is a very different piece from the two previous that have suggested flying and freedom, for its melodic line and figurations are based around repetition. The melody tends to proceed only by step or to hover on the same notes while the harmonies underneath it are undergoing subtle transformations. The effect is gently obsessive and suggests a timeless realm of actions without progress, very much like the replaying of sequences that happens in dreams.

Example 94:

Bridge: The Dew Fairy, 11-17

For bars 11-15 the melody is in effect a series of inverted pedalpoints, with the roles being reversed in 16-17, where it is the bass that is fixed. There are longer pedals in the bars devoted to cadenza figures of arpeggio, trill and filigree (17-18, 20-23, 33-36, 51-54), for all these are elaborations proceeding from a prolonged note.

For the first few bars of the melody Bridge follows the pattern of harmonization over steadily descending bass semitones in the manner that

with Frederick Delius became associated with fantasy (for instance, in *The Serenade* from *Hassan* 11-24 and parallel passages) and appears elsewhere in *Bridge* (*Rosemary* 1-7 *et passim*)³⁰. Bridge's harmony shows little other progression, for apart from the pedals of 15-17, 32, 39-42 and the cadenza bars, he employs a series of parallel progressions - those of the 6_5_3 chord (9-12) and of simple V-I parallels in 13-14. This lack of progression reinforces the sense of timelessness noticed above.

To counterbalance this limited bass movement there is constant and subtle variety of the accompanimental filigree. Part of its subtlety depends on the way it is divided between the hands (3-5-3) and overlaps, with the right hand repeating its 9_5_1 broken chord in reverse at the end of each figure. There are major and minor second clashes between the hands (often between the thumbs) within the interlocking figures that echo that of the right hand's 9_1 . There is thus a complexity and delicate dissonance throughout that takes the harmony and figuration beyond the conventional³¹. In particular, it is the delicacy of the mild dissonance, both harmonic and rhythmic, in the figuration that is appropriate for the delicacy of fairies, at least as they are seen in English folklore:

Example 95:

Bridge, *The Dew Fairy*, 22-24

The light filigree of the figuration and the cadenza-passages is of course imagery of the airy realm that fairies are supposed to inhabit, and the parallel chords of 22-24 are horn-motif fragments appearing momentarily under the extended trills of panpipe-motif arabesque

Summary

The first two pieces show a contrast or tension between regularity and irregularity of rhythm that is further reflected in their tonal adventurousness: this would seem to emphasize the concept of freedom of movement natural to spirits, whether supernatural or ecstatic. The Bridge piece is instead an extended arabesque of gossamer-like delicacy in keeping with the English concept of fairy; like the others, however, it suggests mystery, as well as timelessness that comes through repetition of sequence-unit and a feeling of limited dimensionality from pedalpoints. Its mesmeric repetition is also found in the Skryabin piece, and since obsessive repetition would seem to convey nothing if considered as simple tone-painting of air or the airy realm, it is clearly an Art Nouveau character that invokes mystery rather than paints sound-pictures.

NATURE	<i>Zivotem a snem/2</i>	
	(<i>Swan and Peacock Polka</i>) 1909	Suk
	<i>Paysages et Marines/7-12</i> 1915	Koechlin
	7 <i>Soir d'angoises</i>	
	8 <i>Le chanson des pommiers en fleurs</i>	
	9 <i>Paysage d'octobre</i>	
	10 <i>Chant de pêcheurs</i>	
	11 <i>Dans de grand champs</i>	
	12 <i>Poème Virgilien</i>	
	<i>The White Peacock</i>	
	(<i>Roman Sketches/1</i>) 1915-16	Griffes

Concept

Nature, the domain of Pan, is earth, the fourth element, whose forms of twining vines, curling feathers, folded landscape and turning wave show the same sinuous rhythms as are found in the other three elements. It is also the element of humans, which Art Nouveau sees as being only a part of nature. Humans' sophistications often make them seem like strangers when they venture near nature, with many pictures like those of the British and Munich painters tending to show humans dwarfed by plants and land-forms. This emphasizes humans' being surrounded by the mysterious forces of nature, in contrast to the realist-industrial view of humans' domination of the world. The clearest exposition of this view is to be found in the short stories of E.M.Forster and Saki (H.H.Munro), where Pan and other

supernatural or natural (animal) entities constantly impinge on human affairs, with humans ignoring these powers at their peril.

Wild creatures, on the other hand, are of nature, with animals' movements and birds' folded plumage reflecting the rhythms of the winds and waters and curves of foliage. The two birds that above all symbolize Art Nouveau are the swan and the peacock: the peacock is exotic and extravagantly beautiful, while the swan is proud and elegant.

Suk: *The Swan and Peacock Polka*

Josef Suk composed incidental music for Julius Zeyer's *Märchendrama*, named after its idealized heroes *Radúz a Mahulena*, and adapted its polka music for the Game of the Swan and Peacock as the second part of his *Zivotem a snem* [things lived and dreamt] of 1900. John Tyrrell states that Zeyer's fairy tale was the single most important literary influence on Suk, particularly its idealization of the young lovers, in whom Suk saw himself and his wife Otilie Dvorák (the composer's daughter)³². Zeyer, of French-German and Jewish ancestry, was fascinated by Bohemian folklore and culture but German-educated and a friend of Joris-Karl Huysmans, so that he was caught up in the *avant-garde* currents of the European literary scene in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Czech critic K. Brusak sums up his works as "neo-romantic, mystical visions, narrated in surprisingly fresh and rhythmical language, such as only a writer unburdened by the Czech peasant tradition and trained in a foreign cultural environment could achieve"³³. The *Märchendrama* and *Insel-oper* are similar manifestations of Art Nouveau but directed at different audiences, and the interaction of Swan and the Peacock sits as well with Siegfried Wagner's *Schwarzschanenreich* or even Friedrich Klose's cantata *Der Sonne-Geist*, as with Oscar Wilde's fairy stories.

Josef Suk's adaptation of the polka-music from his incidental music to Zeyer's *Radúz a Mahulena* as the second piece of his *Zivotem a snem* begins with just such curling forms, with a single line of figuration in

arabesque before the main motif begins:

Example 96:

Allegro vivo

Suk: *Swan and peacock polka*, 1-6

The initial arabesque rehearses three elements important throughout the piece: firstly the pause and arpeggio, secondly the uneven (asymmetrical) triplet movement, and thirdly the principle of proceeding by diminution or augmentation of intervals, seen in the bracketed figures where a fourth is diminished by a semitone at each end to a minor third. In the second line parallel major thirds at the semitone alternate with the melodic intervals of a tone, so that minor and major tonalities are juxtaposed to create some uncertainty of tonal dimension, which suggests the mysterious dimensions of the fairy world. At the end of 4 and the beginning of 5 the augmented fifths are in the terms of this study horn-call motifs, and continue the major-minor ambiguity.

Ambiguity is also seen in the changes in tonal centre. In the example above, A^b minor is clearly established to the beginning of bar 3, but there is a sudden shift from the second note of that bar that suggests a new G centre until the fall to E ends by establishing an A centre in bar 4. Only at the end of 4 is there a return to A^b via the augmented fifth on E^b . Even at the end of bar 7 the A^b on the last beat seems to confirm this despite the ambiguities of the *leggiero* skips, but there are more such skips before the harmony rests on the dominant E^b from bar 8. As the piece progresses the pattern of harmonic movement becomes clearer: there are returns to the key-signature basis of A^b minor or its dominant at 16

and 40, but not for long until 50 (this last remaining until the end in 54). In between there are shifts rather than modulations to mostly unrelated centres, the pattern for the whole piece being as follows:

Analysis 36:

1-3 4 5-6
A^b A A^b

+-----+

7-8 12-14 16-17 18-22 24-28 29-32 33-36 37-39 40-42 45-48 50
E^b F[#] A^b E G B^b C F[#] E^b A A^b

+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+

50 51-52 53-54
A^b D^b A^b

+-----+

Suk: *Swan and Peacock Polka*, tonal centres

Between the end-sections there is a symmetrical occurrence of tonalities foreign to the basic one of A^b. so that Suk maintains his A^b key-signature throughout although much time is spent away from it. The first short section (1-6) prefigures the tonal-centre excursions that are to be made in the rest of the piece, and bars 50-54 confirm the home tonality as the piece ends. But even here the plagal cadence D^b-A^b is not wholly simple, for the two D^b chords preceding the final D^b are preceded by shorter ones on G^b and G - just enough to keep a feeling of tonal ambiguity to the very end.

Parallel progressions add to this, as can be seen from bars 17-22, in which progressions of major thirds move in whole-tones. Although it is clear that there is an E tonality around which these progressions move, their doing so in whole-tone parallels tends temporarily to negate the strength of this centre. In bars 43-44 the left hand proceeds chromatically in parallel major thirds over an echo of the bars 2-3 solo, and thus makes the transition from E^b to A, which cannot be seen as any sort of modulation, but a direct shifting of key. Such ambiguity and uncertainty of tonal horizon reinforces the listener's feeling that the music is set in a strange world where normal dimensions are absent.

The movement towards the piece's climax (which incidentally begins at the Golden Mean distance from the ends) illustrates some of the features noticed at the beginning.

Example 97:

Suk: *Swan and peacock polka*, 33-58

After the imitations in the right hand in 33-34, the figure that constitutes the imitations becomes two voices that begin divergent progressions before the energy thus diffused becomes concentrated in the forte chord at the beginning of 37 before the unwinding of tension begins in the following bar. This begun with the three IV-I pairs of 37-38 that are also divergent, and descend through three octaves.

This triple movement echoes those of the imitations and the divergences of 33-36, and is an example of the sort of patterning on the smaller scale that matches that of the broad tonal picture made clear in the analysis above. Such patterning is bound together with the near-ostinato rhythmic figure of quaver-semiquaver established in bar 2 and never absent for a single bar, despite brief pauses, until the extended trill of 46-47 that with bar 48 is a short cadenza before the close. Patterning, interweaving and ambiguity of tonal centre thus set the piece fairly in an Art Nouveau view of nature.

Koechlin: *Paysages et marines*

The *Paysages* comprise twelve short pieces whose unconventional form and strange character rather belie the apparently bland set-title of land

and sea-scapes, showing that Koechlin is approaching nature as a realm that is essentially mysterious. The set therefore is to be seen in the context of his other early works on Art Nouveau themes like *La forêt païenne* [The Pagan Forest] (1911), *Nuit de Walpurgis classique* (1901-07, after Verlaine) and *Suite javanaise* (1910). Elise Kuhl Kirk has established the case for the Art Nouveau affinities of Koechlin, both from his music and his prolific writings³⁴, so that it is necessary to look beyond conventional tone-painting of natural scenes to understand these pieces.

The twelve pieces of the set need first to be seen as a group:

1. *Sur la falaise* [on the cliff]
2. *Matin calme* [morning calm]
3. *Promenade vers la mer* [excursion on the water]
4. *La chant du chevrier* [song of the goatherd]
5. *Soir d'été (d'après la lithographie d'Henri Riviere³⁵)* [summer evening]
6. *Ceux qui s'en vont pêcher au large dans la nuit*
[those who choose to fish in the breadth of the night]
7. *Soir d'angoisses* [evening of anguish]
8. *La chanson des pommiers en fleurs* [the song of apple blossom]
9. *Paysage d'octobre* [October landscape]
10. *Chant de pêcheurs* [song of the fishermen]
11. *Dans le grands champs* [in the wide fields]
12. *Poème Virgilien* [Virgilian poem]

The last title gives the clue to the whole - the model that Koechlin seems to have in mind is that of Virgil's *Georgics*, extended to include sea as well as land, and to a lesser extent the *Eclogues* (4,5,7)³⁶. Thus there are goatherds, fishermen, apiarists (8) and farmers (11), recalling Virgil's paean on the delights of sowing and gathering intermixed with accounts of all the animist deities whose care extends over the production of food and wine - especially Bacchus, with Pan always in the background. The setting is Classical, not modern impressionist-pastoral, so that all the overtones of summer and autumn in verse from Theocritus to Virgil and Horace are implied. All this is also supported by the initial title of *Pastorales et marines* that Koechlin chose for the set, a detail noticed by Robert Orledge that can now be seen to be of real importance, since it

confirms the reference of the final title to the whole - to the Virgilian version of the Classical pastoral.³⁷ Koechlin himself felt that the suite "would make an ideal score for a film simply entitled Nature", and this too helps justify its being considered here under this general heading.

The one individual title that may not seem to sit with the others is *Soir d'angoisses*, but the evening lament of the exiled Melibeus for his beloved country seat in the first Eclogue is a standard part of the expression of the love of rural life in Classical literature.

Elise Kuhl Klerk connects these pieces to Apollinaire's "cult of the supple line found within Art Nouveau ... ambiguous, fluid poetry ... whose lack of punctuation resembled Koechlin's barless music". The general subject of the unusual use of bar-lines and Koechlin's notion of the line or phrase has received discussion in the studies of Mark Calvocoressi, Robert Orledge and T.H.McGuire on his piano music.

Another set of musical Georgics was composed by Deodat de Séverac in 1901: *Le chant de la terre: poème géorgique: Prologue, Le labour, Lessemailles, Intermezzo, Conte à la veillée, La grêle, Les moissons, Epilogue: Le jour des noces*; the Virgilian and Art Nouveau provenance of its titles is an interesting comparison with Koechlin's (although the music has not been available for comparison).

Only the second book (nos 7-12) of the Koechlin *Paysages et marines* could be obtained for this study, but it can perhaps give some idea of the whole. Each piece is based around a simple folk-like melody in modal or quasi-modal style, which reflects the Virgilian character of the whole as idealized land and seascape in an Insel-like dream.

The first piece, *Soir d'angoisses*, could be a direct reference to the cry from exile of Melibeus to Tityrus about his country scene, now dim and rose-tinted in memory, of the first Eclogue, or to the unhappy love of Corydon for Alexis in the second. There are folk-like touches in the repetitions of notes within the phrases and of phrases themselves

(particularly that of the final cadence, the fragment from which most of the melody is drawn), and in the irregularity of phrase lengths. The most repetitive figure is that of the consecutive descending fifths of the bass that adds a dirge-like character to the whole. Folk-like simplicity is, however, not in itself the stuff of Art Nouveau, and in this piece the accompaniment surrounds the melody with such lushness of commentary, as it were, that it tends to rival the melody for interest - a typical Art Nouveau feature. To begin with, so many notes are crowded into the accompanimental chords that most of them have to be played as complex appoggiaturas, so that the simple rhythm of the melody is often obscured. Robert Orledge, noticing this, feels that the music in these pieces "tends to dissolve into a harmonious haze". The accompanying texture has passing notes, suspensions and discords that further distract interest from the simplicity of the melody, the discords of the last line particularly. Thus the simple line of folk-tune is surrounded (the tune passes through the accompaniment) and tends to lose itself in the complexity of these surroundings - just as in Art Nouveau pictures featuring humans amongst nature the trees and even flowers dwarf and seem to overgrow them. Professor Orledge again comments on the nature of Koechlin's melodic line as "long sinuous melodic lines, which at times recall Art Nouveau arabesque", but it may be the line merging with figuration to become repetitive interweaving ornament that he has in mind.

La chanson des pommiers en fleurs is of Hybla bees in the Georgics, overflowing with nectar from blossom and flowers. Bee-like activity is suggested by the steady quavers of the melody and the equally steady crotchet-rhythm of the accompanimental repeated chords. But it is motion without progression, for the melody at first consists of the same phrase repeated, and the accompanying 5_4 chords hover on the same note throughout each phrase. Suggestions of timelessness are strengthened by the uneven phrase-lengths (7, 4, 6, 6, 3, 4, 6 crotchet-units on page 3 alone [bar-lines are

only used for the main phrase-divisions of the piece, so that reference must be to lines or pages]). From the beginning of page 4 the progress of the melody is arrested by a series of repetitions, leading to the ascending series of discords that seems to fade into nothing (*ppp*) high in the compass. These discords are simply enough based on the 5_4 pattern established from the beginning, but those of the right hand ascend through a mostly tonal sequence that is a semitone offset from the chromatically-based left:

Example 98:

Koechlin: *La chanson des pommiers en fleurs*, line 7

Again the accompanimental textures have overtaken and temporarily eclipsed the melody, and temporality is suspended.

Paysage d'Octobre is a late autumn landscape, which in the context of the Georgics is the that of the latter part of Book 1, with bare trees and gathering skies. The piece begins with a slow melody that in the second line again becomes absorbed into a slowly ascending and descending series of accompanimental chords, interrupting the resumption of the melody proper until the fifth line of eight. But even here there is an echo of the ascending series in the whole-tone scale that rises over the end of the line. The last three lines see the melody almost completely lost in the accompanimental texture, even though they tend to be focused on different tonalities.

Example 99:

The image shows a musical score for Example 99, consisting of two systems of piano music. The first system has three staves (treble, bass, and a lower bass staff). The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a *pp* dynamic marking. The second staff has a bass clef. The third staff has a lower bass clef. The first system includes markings for *cresc.* and *très expressif*. The second system also has three staves with similar clefs and dynamics. It includes markings for *m.f.*, *m.d.*, and *p*.

Koechlin: *Paysage d'Octobre*, lines 6-7

Chant de pêcheurs has its very repetitive hornpipe-like melody constructed against an ostinato accompaniment whose pace gradually increases until the final slowing cadences. Since the melody switches from treble to bass, and gradually transforms itself into a whole-tone form by the bottom of page 8, the effect is of a series of variations on the same simple melodic fragment. The piece thus seems timeless and dimensionless, without beginning or ending, with its melody a form of ostinato. Once again in the Art Nouveau repertory the principle of excessive repetition is seen, and also the principle of repeating melody unchanged over a series of different contexts until it almost becomes ostinato - *plus ça change, plus ça même change*.

Dans le grands champs has a melody simply composed of a series of descending three quavers beginning before the beat, and is thus shepherd's pipe imagery, particularly as for most of the piece it takes place over a drone bass of fifths. For once most of the interest is in the melody, although it breaks into figuration in the second and third pages and loses its identity in the texture. The drone is not entirely subordinate, however, for it is mostly dissonantly situated in respect of the melodic centre of tonality, and becomes increasingly so as the piece progresses, finishing a seventh away at the end of the second page. Koechlin experiments with some consecutive twelfths and nineteenthths near the end of the piece that, being components of the natural harmonic series, add a

piquant tone-colour, and contrast with the final melodic statements.

Poème virgilien has panpipe-motif flourishes in its melody that indicate the pastoral settings of the Eclogues, and an epigraph over the last two lines of the music that comprises the last line of the first Eclogue:

Majoresque cedunt altis de montibus umbrae

[and growing finally fall high from the hills the shadows]. This is a line full of implications: Melibeous has sighed and wept over the pastoral sights he will never again see - his fields, his flocks, his Tityrus playing his pipe to Amaryllis: "my songs are sung" - he is near death, so that when Tityrus offers him rest on green leaves for the night it may be to die that he lies down. The shadows that finally fall are those of death. The piece is therefore a dirge, with drone basses for much of the time, especially at the end. Its harmonies are strange because melody and accompaniment seem to be based over different tonal centres from the very first notes:

Example 100:

The musical score for Example 100 consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked "Très calme (adagio)" and "pp". The melody is in apparent G-tonality, and the bass is in apparent C. The second system is marked "apparent E tonality" and "Bass anticipating resolution to A via B but falls to G#". The melody is in apparent E-tonality, and the bass is in apparent G#.

Koechlin: *Poème virgilien*, lines 1-2

and because parallel progressions like those of the sixth to eighth lines confuse tonality, despite the melody's pausing to become an inverted pedal. Rhythmically the piece is ambiguous from the first line, as the melody changes its pace or has fragments of unequal length. This furthers its sense of timelessness in accordance with its Classical pastoral setting,

and prepares for the slow ending.

Example 101:

Koechlin: *Poème virgilien*, lines 6-8

Griffes: *The White Peacock*

Charles Griffes composed this piece in 1915 and later orchestrated it; it is the first of the *Roman Sketches*. All four pieces in the set have epigraphs chosen by Griffes from the verse of William Sharp, whose poems are full of the exaggerated imagery and fantastic imagination of the Art Nouveau sensibility. Griffes was very much influenced by artistic and literary works, and took much trouble to find the right verse as his epigraphs³⁸; in this case he found a minor poet whose imagery and repetition echoes the early William Butler Yeats. (Sharp published some early poetry under the pseudonym Fiona Macleod, thus indicating Celtic proclivities³⁹.) One of the key icons of Art Nouveau illustration is the peacock, symbolic of excess in its magnificent spread of feathers and of the dandy in its manner. Donna Anderson mentions that Griffes was fascinated by a white peacock he saw in Berlin in 1903⁴⁰, and as a student there from 1903-07 had opportunities to see the peacock used in Jugendstil illustration as an icon of exotic luxury.

Here where the sunlight
 Floodeth the garden,
 Where the pomegranate
 Reareth its glory
 Of gorgeous blossom;
 Where the oleanders
 Dream through the noontides;

Where the heat lies
 Pale blue in the hollows,

 Here where the dream-flowers,
 The cream-white poppies,
 Silently waver,

 Here as the breath, as the soul of this beauty
 Moveth in silence, and dreamlike, and slowly,
 White as a snowdrift in mountain valleys
 When softly upon it the gold light lingers:

 Moves the white peacock, as tho' through the
 noontide
 A dream of the moonlight were real for a moment.
 Dim on the beautiful fan that he spreadeth,

 Dim on the cream-white are blue adumbrations,

 Pale, pale as the breath of blue smoke in far
 woodlands,
 Here, as the breath, as the soul of this beauty,
 Moves the White Peacock.

William Sharp⁴¹

The poem is timeless, set in the continuous present tense, and with clause piled upon clause modifying "here" so that the main clauses about the peacock's moving are almost lost in the lushness of circumstantial description. This description seems to overflow with the same sort of excess found in Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Verlaine, Swinburne, Dowson and Symons - the exotic-sounding imagery of pomegranates, oleanders, dream-flowers, cream-white poppies, gold light, blue adumbrations; it uses the rich metaphorical types of Art Nouveau - synaesthesia (sunlight floodeth, the pomegranate reareth its glory, heat lies pale blue), conceit (as tho' through the noontide a dream of the moonlight were real for a moment, the soul of this beauty); and it features typical Art Nouveau repetition (here, where, dim, pale, the soul of this beauty, moves the white peacock). The poem is thus full of mannerism, especially of its poetic "-eth" endings,

and is itself as exotic and rarefied as the white peacock in the garden of a great house of the period.

The music is delicately sensual from the outset, with its indication *languidamente e molto rubato* (like Skryabin using *languide* as a sensual term) and its *una corda* effects of broken chords and slow figures that all come to rest in half closes. (Even the two in bars 10 and 12 that actually finish on the tonic E do so with chords of the seventh as if A is really the tonic). The soft descending chromatic arabesques of bar 3 have a repeated broken rhythm that perhaps suggests the cascade of tail feathers and certainly recalls the sensuality of the opening falling phrase of Debussy's *L'après-midi*. In bars 5-6 a pentatonic scale's vaguely exotic sound (32223) is traced upwards very softly to another half-close. The pattern of broken chords alternating with broken-rhythm repetitions of chordal figures continues for the whole leisurely introduction of eighteen bars, and the effect is thus timeless (the pauses on half-closes without any resolutions) and lazily sensual (the slow broken rhythms with diminished and added-sixth chords).

From the entry of the winding subject in 19 ambiguity is also the principle of rhythmic progression. The subject begins in the gently irregular metre of 5/4 and alternates this with 3/2 bars so that the pulse is unpredictable; although much of the rest of the piece keeps to 3/2 there are frequent instances of phrases beginning on unaccented beats (28-34, 36, 38, 47-48).

When the main subject appears in 19 it begins over the dominant B, and after some extensive modulation the piece settles from 28 into A despite the four-sharp key signature. But here the harmonies are diminished sevenths over what is in effect a long pedalpoint from 28-38, with the prepared-for close to D never arriving. (There are many such pedals, all serving to prolong an expected close to the tonic that never arrives: 1-4, 7-8, 10-12, 16-21, 41-43, 47-48 *et passim*). Instead there is

a sudden jump to a ${}^7_6b_{3b}$ chord on D^\sharp ; the pattern of treating each new tonic bass as if it were a dominant carries through to the end. Thus ambiguity of tonal reference lasts throughout the piece which, while it is couched in diatonic form, tends to avoid normal harmonic progress towards cadential finalities. The ending is the most ambiguous sequence of all:

Example 102



Griffes: *The White Peacock*, 63-67

Here the bass falls through a broken chord that is unrelated to the B tonality, established by the pedals since bar 58, and ceases, without finishing any definably cadential sequence, on F^\sharp . Although the whole piece has been simply structured in ABA form, all feeling of linear progression has been absent as time is suspended - which accords with the continuous present of the poem.

Griffes is, in all this avoidance of normal tonic feeling, transforming rather than modulating his harmonic movements. Where Debussy exploits unrelated jumps from one tonal base to another, Griffes remains in the indefinite realm of dominant sevenths, each constantly leading towards a tonic resolution but transforming each "resolution" into another dominant seventh, so that a sense of tonic certainty or finality is never reached.

Example 103:

The image shows a musical score for Example 103, consisting of two systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The music features a complex harmonic structure with a broken chord in the bass. Dynamic markings 'p' and 'cresc.' are present.

Griffes: *The White Peacock*, 39-43

The music therefore remains perpetually in a state of dream, changing from one seventh to another - motion without progression, transformation without finality.

Summary

The three composers' works have looked at entirely different aspects of nature - those of Koechlin looking back to the Classical notion of the Golden Age and that of Griffes and Suk to the peacock and swan as symbol of opulence and elegance in nature. The common factor is a view of stylized, exotic nature rather than of pastoral realism. The composers have made use of unconventional harmonic styles that have set an atmosphere of mystery and the exotic. The sensuality of Suk and Griffes is created by chromaticism and the exotic sound of harmonies that dwell on augmented triads, diminished sevenths and major-minor ambiguities, while Koechlin relies on the complex textures that like visual Art Nouveau ornament surround and engulf his simple folk-like themes. In Griffes and Koechlin melody is frequently lost in texture or flourish, while in Suk flourish is melody. Finally, whereas Griffes' white peacock is the ultimate status-symbol of the estate park of 1900, embodying sophistication and luxury, and the swan and peacock of Suk's polka are Art Nouveau icons of extreme elegance (here satirized), Koechlin's Arcadia is composed of goatherds playing simple ditties on oaten pipes - but whose simple sounds belie the sadnesses of life as well as the mysteries of nature that surround them. All three composers employ pedalpoints and transformational effects to suggest the limited dimensionality and shifting scenes of dreams, with indefinite progressions and cadences to add the feeling of timelessness. Thus the different approaches show the same mystery and dream in their views of nature.

End-notes

¹ Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 270, 185, 157, 139, 61 respectively.

² Masini, L-V.: op. cit., 39, 42.

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- 3 Ibid, 53, 98-105.
- 4 Brown, M.: op. cit., 48-50.
- 5 Ibid, 48.
- 6 Baker, J.M.: op. cit., ix.
- 7 This analysis differs from the opinion of Jay Reise that the ending is governed by considerations of triadic harmony (Reise, J.: op. cit., 231).
- 8 See the analysis of different types of sea-music from this and other periods in Tuczynski, J.: *Musical Elements in the Romantic vision of the Sea*, in Krassowski, J.: *Marine Character in Music IV - Prace specjalne 36* (Gdansk, Akademia Muzyczna 1985)
- 9 Vogel, J.: op. cit., 201.
- 10 Ibid, loc.cit.
- 11 Harris, N.: op. cit., 131-34, 160, 166-68.
- 12 In addition to his Érard grand Ravel appears to have possessed another grand, which may have been a Bösendorfer or possibly a Steinway. See the illustrations in James, B.: op. cit., 93, 107 and 106.
- 13 Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 113.
- 14 Imberty, M.: *Wasser und Tod: zwei Urmotive in de Musik von Claude Debussy*, Music Psychology n.2 (1985), 41-61.
- 15 Anderson, D.K.: op. cit., 209.
- 16 This misconception is common: Donna Anderson's book (above) and her article in New Grove 7/728; David A. Reed's notes to the Aldo Mancinelli recording of the piano works (Music Heritage Society L.P. record MHS 3695), quoting Christopher Palmer: *Impressionism in Music*, (London, Hutchinson 1973); Earl, H.: *Impressionism in the arts and its influence on selected works by Charles Martin Loeffler and Charles Tomlinson Griffes*, (University of Cincinnati 1976). See also the 1943 biography by Edward Maisel: *Charles T. Griffes: the Life of an American Composer*, (reissued New York, Da Capo 1972); Boda, D.: *The Music of Charles T. Griffes* (diss. Florida State University 1962; Pratt, M.K.: *The Complete Piano Works of Charles T. Griffes* (diss. Boston University 1975); Clarke, G.E.: *Charles Tomlinson Griffes, Essays on American Music* (Westport, Connecticut 1977).
- 17 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 78-79; Lorenz, O.: op. cit., #14/15, 16, 22/23, 30/31.
- 18 For general literature on Berners see Dickinson, P.: *Lord Berners: 1883-1950. A British Avant-Gardist at the time of World War I*, Musical Times CXXIV/1689 (Nov. 1983), 669-72; Soltos, K.: *Lord Berners: a Survey of his Ballets and an Annotated Bibliography of his Life and Works*, Diss. Kent State University 1980.
- 19 See Schibli, S.: *Skrjabins Flug: su einer zentralen Figur in Alexander Skrjabins Leben und Werk*, Musik-Konzepte 32/33 (1983), 69-88.
- 20 Bowers, F.: op. cit., 180.
- 21 It cannot be assumed that while Skryabin is still using key-signatures and final 5_3 chords he is not yet basing his works primarily on symmetrical scales. Major and minor triads are available in octatonic sets, using the first note as foundation. Key-signatures are absent from op. 56/2 (1907) onwards and final 5_3 chords from op. 57/1 (1907).
- 22 Reise, J.: op. cit., 222.
- 23 Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 158-9; *Oeuvres complètes de Claude Debussy*, ed. Howat, R., I, 5, xiii; Park, R.R.: op. cit., 361-5.
- 24 Hofstätter, H.: op. cit., 89.
- 25 Rackham, A.: *Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream*, (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, New York 1928).
- 26 Gettings, F: op. cit.: 1908 illustrations - 42, 49, 85, 119, 122, 124; also illustrations from *Peter Pan* (1906) - 43, *Rip Van Winkle* (1905), *Undine* (1909) - especially plates 102 and 105.
- 27 Like the other titles, that suggest mood rather than picture: *Dusk*,

-
- Midnight Tide.*
- 28 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 118, 88, 89-91 respectively.
- 29 Warren, G.: op. cit., 13.
- 30 Galant, J.A.: *The Solo Piano Works of Frank Bridge.*
- 31 Payne, A.: *Frank Bridge: Radical and Conservative*, (London, Thomas 1984).
- 32 Tyrrell, J., entry in *New Grove* 18, 352.
- 33 Brusak, K.: entry in *Penguin Companion to Literature* 2 (1969), 838.
- 34 Kirk, E.K.: *Art Nouveau and the melodic style of Charles Koechlin*,
Miscellanea Musica 13 (1884), 117-123.
- 35 Possibly from the *Paysages bretons* of 1890-04.
- 36 There is also a possible connexion with Verlaine's *Ariettes, paysages belges et aquarelles* of 1880 [set by Debussy as *Ariettes oubliées* 1893] - itself with some Georgic overtones.
- 37 Orledge, R.: op. cit., 125.
- 38 *Ibid*, 126.
- 38 Anderson, D.K.: op. cit., 228, 249.
- 39 *Ibid*, 539, Note 77.
- 40 *Ibid*, 269.
- 41 The complete poem is given as epigraph to the orchestral score - Schirmer 1917 and 1945.

THE DISTANT DREAM

Settings in ancient or mediaeval times, or the exotic Near East and Far East, can be seen as escapist, to use the contemporary Freudian term, but have an Arcadian element that is probably stronger, which is seen fully developed in the *Insel-topos*, a dream of an idealized poetic existence.

The music that draws its inspiration from the strange and the Arcadian dream is expressed in three main themes - Classical myth, exotic legend from the East, and the Insel-dream.

MYTH	<i>Six épigraphes antiques</i> , 1914	Debussy
	1. <i>Pour invoquer Pan, dieu du vent</i>	
	2. <i>Pour un tombeau sans nom</i>	
	3. <i>Pour que la nuit soit propice</i>	
	4. <i>Pour la danse aux crotales</i>	
	5. <i>Pour l'Égyptienne</i>	
	6. <i>Pour remercier la pluie au matin</i>	

Concept

Art Nouveau's use of subjects from Western Europe's heritage of Classical and mediaeval myths, legends and superstitions is part of its reaction to the scientific positivism and naturalism of its day, by returning to its pre-scientific past. The mythical subjects illustrated by the music in this section are Mediterranean and are all set well in the imagined past. This is the West's familiar tradition from which have come concepts important to Art Nouveau like beauty, love, transformation and an animistic view of nature, represented in personifications like those of the ancient Greek pantheon of gods, themselves influenced by Egyptian and Cretan traditions.

Debussy's *Six épigraphes antiques* (1914) [*épigraphes* here in the sense of inscriptions - those supposedly in ancient Greek on the walls of Bilitis' tomb¹) were developed from his incidental instrumental music to a performance of twelve poems from *Les Chansons de Bilitis* (Pierre Louÿs) in 1901². While the six titles derive from the poems³ and the first two are

partly related to the first and third *Chansons de Bilitis* songs composed in 1897, Jean-Michel Nectoux argues that they are sufficiently mysterious in themselves to inspire imaginative composition⁴. In any case, they are recompositions of original material that go well beyond the originals in scope; Theo Hirsbrunner, Robert Orledge and Karl Lenski have discussed the relationship of the two compositional sets⁵. The overall title carries on the original conceit that the poems were of ancient origin, "discovered" by Pierre Louÿs, and so of ancient mythical provenance⁶. By 1914 the Bilitis hoax⁷ was long over, but Debussy could still find the idea and his original music evocative, which makes the important point that to Art Nouveau, myth is not so much valuable in itself for what it contains as for what it inspires; the Art Nouveau practitioner is a poet, not a historian. The idea of another youthful Sappho sighing with love and inscribing her poems on the wall of a tomb is the very stuff of Art Nouveau fantasy.

All six pieces sound strange because of their pitch-sets (modal, pentatonic or synthetic) and have other features deliberately introduced by Debussy (such as strange harmonies, parallel progressions, mesmeric repetition, particular forms of arabesque) to further their moods of mystery. The most obvious feature of the music is that Debussy has been above all concerned with achieving a mood of exotic languor throughout the whole suite, exactly copying that of Louÿs' poems⁸.

Pour invoquer Pan

The title is an indication of the centrality of Pan to Art Nouveau ideas of myth, as "dieu du vent d'été", of all that is fecund, languorous and Arcadian. Debussy uses a combination of pentatonic (23232) mode for the first motif and Dorian mode for the accompanying material, which is in G with one flat) to give the tonality of the piece an appropriately Greek⁹ and therefore vaguely Arcadian character. The flute is thus with its simple scale suggested as the rustic reed pipe of Greek legend, and until

bar 8 proceeds only by consecutive notes, as a reed pipe would be played. From that point it drops temporarily into the Dorian mode like the accompanimental figures. Throughout the piece there is an emphasis on simplicity of style, with parallel progressions (Piano I: bars 17-22, 31-33) and repetitive rocking figures (Piano I: bars 8-11, 24-25, 27-29; Piano II: bars 4-5, 22-23, 31-33) that combine to make a strange static effect where no progression is taking place.

The initial pentatonic motif (bars 1-3) is a panpipe-motif like those discussed earlier in the Pan works: it begins with a long-held note before breaking into flourish; so also do the initial motifs of II and V. As a motif-type it possibly echoes the principle of singers holding a note completely steadily for a while before breaking it into flourishes or allowing vibrato or tremolo. In such practice is the possible origin or model of the panpipe-motif; the steady sound builds tension that is released in the sensuous arabesque that follows.

Quite strong sensuality is conveyed by the curving of the pentatonic motif, by its repetitions in its downwards second half, and by its somewhat vague rhythm that at the slow pace indicated results in a languorousness of feeling. The panpipe motif sets the pattern for the decorative figures that dominate the piece from bar 10 to the end, 36, and even for the simple figurations of 24-29 and 31-32 that are also gamelan-like in sound. The music thus embodies the arabesque principle in its motif and figure shapes, and in particular their repetitive patterning:

Example 104:

Debussy: *Pour invoquer Pan*, 24-25

There is also patterning of harmony that reflects that of motif.

The notes of the initial motif (M_1), which is a symmetrical pentatonic set 2-3-2-3-2, are G, A, C, D, F, and these are the only notes throughout the piece on which foundational chords are constructed, so that the harmonic foundation is as limited as the melody. The five chordal sequences (the fourth being only one chord) are:

Analysis 37: V-IV I-IV-I VII-II-V-I-III IV IV-I
 b b 9₇ b b b b b

Debussy: *Pour invoquer Pan*, bass chordal sequences

The chords are simple 5_3 or $^5_{3b}$ apart from the single ninth, so that the harmony of these sequences is very bland in the context of the Dorian modality. In addition, the dominant function is clearly usurped by the subdominant C in these sequences, and this remains true for all rest of the piece (except the D-G alternations of 24-25 illustrated above which, however, are arguably I-IV alternations on a temporary D modulation).

These limitations are offset by the figure also seen in the same illustration on the lower stave of Piano 1, a figure that moves in stepwise fashion, and is first seen as a simple counter-movement to M_1 :

Example 105:

Debussy: *Pour invoquer Pan*, 4-10

This Dorian step-figure, particularly when it moves in parallels as in bars 8-9, provides the necessary harmonic complexity to contrast with the blandness of the chords noted above, and also with the limited nature of the pentatonic M_1 and its derivative arpeggio-figure seen in bar 10 above.

While in itself it moves simply through its Dorian pitch-set, this movement is often in parallel, as in bars 8-9 above, so that its exoticism of sound to diatonic ears is emphasized. More importantly, such parallels reinforce the feeling of limited dimensionality already suggested by the limited range of the pentatonic pitch-set for M_1 .

Pour un tombeau sans nom

The mood is sad and chilling, as a nymph leads the poet into a wild spot where there is a statue, with an inscription, "between hollow cup and serpent", that the man had not died but been beloved of the nymph's mother, who had carried him away: the poet shivers. Again a solo melody begins the piece, with a whole-tone motif (bars 1-2) that moves through non-consecutive steps to provide major-third leaps in its scale. The effect is therefore of another strange-sounding primitive flute. M_1 is developed with arabesque and mixed with chromatic figures and harmonies throughout the piece, notably those of bars 13-15:

Analysis 38:

		<i>chromatic progression</i>
Piano 1	bV^7 1st inv.	$V^7 - bVII^7 - I$
Piano 2	IV^2 (chord)	$bVI - I - bVI$ (single notes)
bars	13-15	16----- (repeated in 17)

Debussy: *Pour un tombeau sans nom*, 13-17

There is a clash in 13-15 because the nominal root of the Piano 1 diminished sevenths lies in the semitone between the Piano 2 major seconds, giving an $A+B$ clash with A^b+B^b at the octave, and this is partly echoed in the chromatic parallel progressions of 16-17 as the upper note of the Piano 2 seconds moves with the Piano sevenths. All this takes place over the reiterated D pedal, so that there is a combined effect of limited dimensionality (from the pedalpoint) and tonal disorientation (from the chromatic parallel progressions). The two produce an eerie effect corresponding to the poem's imagery of tomb, statue, hollow cup and serpent. This is furthered by parallel chromatic movement of major thirds in 25-27, doubled at the octave in the low bass and moving around an E^b

root that is a semitone offset from the whole-tone melody's D.

The descending bass motif of bar 3 is repeated or modified throughout the Piano II part, and in bars 22-25 its tremolando reflects the shivering of the poet. A final touch is the indefinite, tonally ambiguous ending (bars 33-34) that reflects the poem's "Je ne dis pas mon nom...".

Example 106:

Debussy: *Pour une tombe sans nom*, 32-35.

The initial chord of bar 32 produced by both pianos replicates the dissonance of bar 13 noticed above, and implies an \underline{E}^b root clashing with the naturals of Piano 2, for the rest of the Piano 1 part is based around this note. While Piano 2 in these last bars can be heard to be a continuation of the D tonality of the rest of the piece, its major seconds are again ambiguous in that they span the Piano 1 \underline{E}^b . This tonal ambiguity in fact runs through the entire piece, for while the first four bars establish the whole-tone set on D in both pianos, the second entry of the melodic arabesque seems to be centred around \underline{A}^b . It soon becomes clear, however, that \underline{A}^b as the tritone in the pure whole-tone section (1-12) is treated as its "dominant". In the rest of the piece the feeling of whole-tone tonality is partly maintained, although with some notes foreign to its set in accompanimental textures, as well as the use of ordinary subdominant and dominant alternations and combinations. This tonal ambiguity can be seen when the whole picture is considered, showing the tensions between the pianos and that sometimes produced by the two in combined middle-range textures:

Analysis G:										
bar	1-4	5-6	7-12	13-15	16-18	19-21	22-24	25-27	28-32	33-35
P1	<u>D</u>		<u>A^b</u>	<u>D</u>	(<u>A^b</u>)	<u>C</u>		<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>A</u>
						(<u>E^b</u>)	<u>C</u>		(<u>E^b</u>)	(<u>E^b</u>)
P2		<u>D</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>G F</u>	<u>E^b</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>D</u>
		+---	WT	----	+	-----	chromatic	-----	+	-----

Debussy: *Pour un tombeau sans nom*

The first line refers to the bar-groups; the third to harmonies produced by a combination of the pianos; the last to the actual pitch-sets employed; and the intervening lines to the two pianos. The tonal centres of the Piano 2 line could more accurately be expressed as I, IV and so on, for even its E^b section (25-27) should perhaps be regarded as chords emanating from the minor triad on the flattened supertonic. But using letters rather than Roman numerals makes the tonal-centre differences clearer. The uncertainty of tonal-centre through the whole piece that all the contradictory instances produce is perhaps symbolic of the uneasy juxtaposition of the poet in the living world and the spirit of the unknown person in the world of the dead whose tomb the poet is contemplating.

Pour que la nuit soit propice

The title indicates an invocation to the powers of night and the melancholy of forlorn love, as the poet plaintively seeks his beloved. The first melodic motif is in wholetones that can also be seen as deriving from Lydian mode (Piano I: bars 2, 4 in F without B^b, and related passages in bars 9 in D^b, 17 in C, and 25 in D^b); the scales of bars 27-28 are Lydian, based on D^b. Strangeness is also achieved in the bitonality of bars 1-4, in the multiple layers of repetition (for instance, in the contrary-motion alto and bass figures of Piano II in bars 6-7, carried on with Piano I in bars 8-10, together with the tenor figure rocking on two notes; the repeated pedal-point octaves of bars 1-4, 17-21 over parallel chords and other limited-note repetitions; and notably the insistent right-hand motif in Piano I in bars 21-23 over the repeated Piano II figure. Theo Hirsbrunner notices that there is a complex rhythmic

ostinato in bars 6-11 (Piano II) that suggests Javanese gamelan music¹⁰, and this recalls the similar bars 24-25 of *Pour invoquer Pan* noticed earlier.

Again there is an indefinite ending to match the poem's unanswered complaint: "dis-moi, où est allée ma maitresse?" Perhaps the strangest effect of all is that of the first beat of bar 21, echoed in bars 22 and 23: the effect is as chilling as that of the French sixth on the leading note in bar 47 of Ravel's *Le Gibet*.

Example 107:

Debussy: *Pour que la nuit soit propice*, 21-23.

In bar 21 the Piano 1 chord is a minor seventh over the Piano 2 D^b , but the upper stave of Piano 2 has three melodic notes unrelated harmonically to this, being centred around E . This can be seen in the first chord of 22, that despite its enharmonic spelling, is a 5_3 on E , and as such based on a minor third from the bass D^b that contradicts the major third F of Piano 1 (lower stave). Above these the bird-call is centred around B^b and A^b , so that it is tenuously related to the D^b bass, although it too contradicts with its B^b the C^b of the chord of the seventh on D^b . When the middle texture (the upper stave of Piano 2) shifts downwards a tone in bar 22, the effect is lessened because of the coincidence of A^b in bird-call and bass, but the Piano 1 chord now clashes with the G of the middle

texture. These effects can be seen as symbolizing the discord represented by the forlorn lover's complaint.

Pour la danseuse aux crotales

"Crotales" refers to the little rattling or jingling castanet or cymbal-like devices that were worn on the fingers of the dancing priestesses of Cybele, goddess of the earth, in Phrygia (Asia Minor); again an invocation of fertility and ritual is implied. The piece is in Dorian mode (the white-note scale on D) with some pentatonic passages (the black-note runs from 33-41), and is strongly oriented towards sensuality, particularly in the Eastern-sounding acciaccaturas and winding arabesques of M_1 as it appears between the two pianos in 2-10. An element of mystery comes from the downwards chromatic succession of Piano II chords (right-hand, based on $b^7_6_3$ and $\#^9_7b_3$) in bars 29-32, a simple device but highly effective against the plain Dorian-mode background of most of the piece.

The basic rhythmic unit that runs almost right through the piece is based upon beats 2 and 5 of a six-beat two-bar unit, that is set up by the initial accompanimental figure and dominates the piece (except for some blurring of this in bars 33-41). While not insistent, it is quietly irregular and suggestive of Eastern sensual dance. The winding, sinuous melody also suggests dance, and its punctuations by sudden scalar runs and pauses are the castanets/finger-cymbal flourishes that add a sharpness of contrast to the flowing gestures of the dance.

As in the other pieces there is little development, its variation consisting mainly of immediate repetitions of phrase based on the two sorts of figure - winding and sudden. Bars 33-41 appear to be a development-section but are really repetitions of earlier material based on the second motif under an ostinato that is pentatonic in nature; ostinato continues for some of the brief final section (42-61), where in bars 52-55 both figures are seen to be somewhat repetitive and mesmeric.

Example 108:

51 / au Mouvement
sempre pp e leggeriss.

54 En serrant
p

pp la m. d. un peu en dehois

En serrant
p

cresc. gliss.

cresc.

Debussy: *Pour la danseuse aux crotales*, 52-55.*Pour l'égyptienne*

The title, but not the music, derives from the eighth poem in Louÿs' 1901 reading, *Les courtisanes égyptiennes*, which has typically lush and fantastic Art Nouveau imagery of "silent chambers, without angles or corners, such that the successive couches of blue limestone make round the capitals and curve the base of the walls" - all this curving and luxury is the setting for erotic love, with which Europeans associate sultry Egypt from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* through to *The Arabian Nights*.

The music appears to have been freshly composed for this set in a synthetic tone-set (214 212), which is a modification of the Dorian mode, making the 4-interval out of the Dorian's 2-2; this can be seen in the arabesque nominally based on \underline{E}^b in bars 5-12, that suggests an ancient flute whose arbitrarily spaced holes give a strange-sounding scale. From bar 13 an additional minor third is introduced, and the bass figure in bars 27-36 is largely pentatonic. The ${}^7_6{}_{3b}$ chord in bars 3-14 forms a discordant pedal-point over which the arabesque weaves its *librement expressif* melody, and towards which it moves in the chromatic cadenza of bars 16-17, until it finishes in a *pianissimo* enlargement of the chord in bar 18: the whole effect is deliberately atmospheric. Parallel chords in

Piano I (bars 19-20, 21-22) and its repetitions in bars 31-38 add to the overall strangeness. Possibly these, together with the indefinite ending (on the same ${}^7_6{}_{3b}$ chordal base), are imagery corresponding to the poem's curving walls and lines of couches. A complementary touch is the syncopated rhythm of bars 1-26 and the more complex dance-rhythm of bars 27-34¹¹.

Pour remercier la pluie au matin

This is again a sad love-song, with the morning rain alone able to provide the setting for the poet's lonely grief. As in the poem chosen for Rakhmaninov's *Letes* there is an association between rain and tears. The piece has a pentatonic melody in bars 5-10 (the black-note scale) and an artificial tone-set in bars 11-14 based on a modified whole-tone set (melody in octaves and fifths, broken chromatically from whole-tones in bars 13-14). This blurring of tonality is supported by the ostinato rain-figure, *doux et monotone*, based on what is in effect an alternation of major and minor thirds in bars 1-20 and 29-54, and minor thirds alternating at major third intervals in bars 21-28, against which the whole-tone runs of bars 27-28, the chromatic chords of bars 38-40 and the pentatonic figures of bars 47-50 give an indistinct, floating tonality. A final ambiguity is the Lydian motif of bars 55-58 (the \underline{G} scale with \underline{F} natural).

Some general features of the set

All six pieces use a mixture of tone-sets, which shows that what is being attempted is not historicist purity but Art Nouveau eclecticism.

Analysis 39:

	M_1	Accompanying figures
1	Pentatonic 23232	Dorian 2122212
2	WT-based 222422	chromatic
3	Lydian 2221221	Lydian-based
4	Dorian	Dorian-based, chromatic + set 322112
5	synthetic 214212 + 12113211	Dorian-based
6	pentatonic 22323	chromatic

Debussy: *Six épigraphes antiques*, pitch-sets.

The sets are numbered in semitonal intervals. Those described as "based" are more freely used, with foreign notes where necessary, but still with the character of each set to some extent retained. It will be seen that the only symmetrical set is the first - one that Skryabin sometimes employs. Debussy has used some non-mediaeval modal sets that he has heard of or made up himself, featuring minor thirds and sometimes the appearance at least of sets whose principal note is in the middle of its range - the plagal mode effect. There are no diatonic tonalities at all, but some examples of chromatic discords like those in IV/29-32.

Repetition is an important feature of each piece, with the gamelan-like sequences already noticed in I/24-25 and III/6-11; the arpeggios in I/10-11 *et passim*; the dotted-rhythm figure over an ostinato bass of II/7-10, and the chromatic parallel chords of 16-17; the opening octave-figure of III/1-4 and the ostinato \underline{B} of 12-20; the $\underline{A^b}$ figure of IV/29-32 and the pentatonic runs of 33-41; the ostinato $\underline{B^b}$ that runs through most of V and its two-bar rhythmic pattern of 27-34; and finally the ostinato rain-imagery figure of VI/1-54. Repetition like this produces a mesmeric effect that is as sensual as the strangenesses of the exotic pitch-sets, both reflecting the Western *topos* of the sensuality of Eastern culture.

The other aspects of this *topos* as it is expressed in music are those of melodic devices like arabesque, acciaccatura and the featuring of intervals of major or minor thirds in melody, and complex rhythmic dance or quasi-dance patterns. Works by the Russians Mily Balakirev (*Islamey*), Modeste Mussourgsky (*Salammbô*) and Rimsky-Korsakov (*Shahrazad*) helped establish conventions by which Eastern idiom, real or imaginary, was recognized in Western music, conventions analogous to that of Janissary music in such works as Mozart's *Das Entführung aus Serail*.

Summary

A feeling of mystery and the exotic arises from the non-diatonic tone-sets employed in each piece, from the rustic/pastoral melodies of the

panpipe motifs, and the additional device of arabesque for the Egyptian and Cretan settings. Theo Hirsbrunner instances passages from II (28-30) and V (43-50) as exemplifying the principles of Eastern arabesque¹²: there can be no doubt as to the oriental character Debussy is trying to suggest through his exploitation of flourish.

Strangeness of atmosphere is further created from the mesmeric effect of repetition noticed throughout the set, and from the exotic-sounding dance rhythms. Underlying all the pieces is a persistence of pulse, mostly slow, that reinforces the sensuality of the winding and arabesqued melodic motifs. The emphasis throughout is on the setting up of patterns of melodic fragment and rhythm whose repetition and mesmeric sensuality exemplifies Art Nouveau.

EXOTIC	<i>Pagodes (Estampes/1)</i> 1903	Debussy
	<i>Alborada del gracioso (Miroirs/4)</i> 1905	Ravel

Concept

Whereas the ancient and mediaeval cultures of the Mediterranean - at least those absorbed by the Roman empire and the mediaeval church - are seen by Western Europeans as their direct cultural heritage, those of other areas, particularly the Middle East and the Far East, are seen as exotic. The same applies to religions and philosophies from outside the Judaeo-Christian-Roman inheritance, which are seized upon by Art Nouveau and Symbolism as demonstrations of the richness and diversity of irrationalist culture, for which the exotic is seen as an important source of symbols and ideas. Japonaiserie and Chinoiserie are of course very influential in Art Nouveau painting and decoration, but it is the legend and the idea of exotic setting that is found in *The Arabian Nights*, in stories of Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Prester John and the like that inspires the Art Nouveau imagination. These perhaps begin with Félicien David's *Le désert*¹³ and include Hans Bethge's *Die Chinesische Flöte*, Oscar Wilde's *Salomé* and Richard Strauss' opera set to it, Clemens von

Franckenstein's *Li-Tai-Pe* and *Rahab*, and the verse-melodrama *Hassan* of 1922 by James Elroy Flecker, for which Frederick Delius wrote incidental music. The keyboard repertory includes *Szecherezada* from Szymanowski's *Maski*, and *Le jardin parfumé* by Sorabji, two important works discussed elsewhere in this study. The Sorabji work is based on the eponymous Arabian treatise on erotology from the tenth century, that after the 1876 translation of Sir Richard Burton became almost as central to Western ideas of Middle-Eastern culture as *The Arabian Nights*. Both literary works emphasize sensuality and mystery, which are central to the *topos* of Eastern culture, and the Parsi-Spanish-Sicilian parentage of Sorabji can be seen as giving his work some authority as to knowledge of Eastern idioms.

An important source of the exotic much closer to French composers was Spain, with Georges Bizet (*Carmen*), Debussy, Ravel and others drawn to its traditions of dance and national musical style that has intermixed with Moorish culture. Although Spain is just across the Pyrenees from France, and although Albeniz, De Falla and Granados authentically represent its traditions in Spain and Paris, the fascination for its ambience and legends as something exotic to the rest of Europe remain strong. When a Spanish composer writes a dance it is a nationalist creation, and when Debussy writes *Iberia*, or Ravel *Rapsodie d'espagnole*, he copies this national style, but when Ravel writes *Alborada del gracioso* he creates a fantastic character in an exotic setting, just as he does with *Shéhérezade* or *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée*.

Debussy: *Pagodes*

This work is usually thought to have resulted from his hearing the gamelan orchestra in the Paris exhibitions of 1889 and 1900¹⁴, but its inclusion under *Estampes* (prints) suggests that Samuel Bing's L'Art Nouveau gallery, opened in 1895¹⁵ with its collection of Far-Eastern art¹⁶, may have provided an actual visual source. (The multiple repetitions are

such an important part of this experiment in sustained pentatonics that they may have been intended to echo the multiple roof-layers of pagodas.) Japanese and Chinese art was influential for Art Nouveau not only because of its exotic imagery but also its stylization of subject and setting. The set-title *Estampes* also suggests repetition, since prints from woodcut or screen are made in multiples, and Art Nouveau pictures abound in resonances, reflections and distortions of image.

Pagodes has melodic motifs based on pentatonic modes with centres on G# (bars 3-14), A# (bars 15-18), B (bars 19-21) and F# (bars 20-21, left hand)¹⁷. These are harmonized diatonically in the signature keys of B (major) and G# (minor), with chromatic freedom in bars 25-28 and 65-68. There is also a motif in bars 33-36 and 46-53 that seems to be based on D# and formed on a variant of the pentatonic pitch-set 23322. Thus Eastern character is sustained by the use of pentatonic elements in all melodic and all right-hand accompanimental motifs, and this supplies much of the exotic flavour or mystery of the piece¹⁸. The indications ensure the rest: *délicatement et presque sans nuances*, together with the haze of sounds produced by very long periods with both pedals held down¹⁹ (bars 11-14, 27-31; bars 1-10 perhaps also); since this unaccented and sustained sound is *piano* or *pianissimo* there is a distinctly mysterious quality about these passages and that of bars 80-99. (Mention has already been made of the special tones to be gained by the simultaneous use of right and left pedals.)

The emphasis on repetitions or echoes of motif-fragments at the octave in bars 4, 6, 8, 10, 42, 54, 56, 58, 60, 81 and 83 may well be imagery of the multiple layers of roof that are always associated with pagodas, as may also be the two-octave arpeggiated figures of the last section (bars 80-99).

But a much more important feature of the repetition is its mesmeric effect. In a passage like that of bars 7-10 the two bars 7-8 are repeated

in 9-10, the three-note pentatonic curve and rhythm of the figure in the upper part is echoed constantly and has been doing so since bar 3, and the tenor figure winds up and down through the same four notes without ceasing. This whole passage is constructed around repetitions and echoes that began in bar 3 and continue to bar 14, where over an ostinato another pattern of repetitions is set up.

Example 109:

Debussy: *Pagodes*, 7-11

Chon Weng-Chun notes that Debussy perceives gamelan music to be multi-layered in structure and rhythm. "A gamelan composition is based on the principle that a nuclear theme is to be played simultaneously with several layers of elaborations on the theme in different registers and at different paces ... similarly, the sonority that is largely the admixture of a number of melodic, rhythmic and registral variants of a single linear movement, is a prominent character of the Debussy orchestra".²⁰ It is also seems true for the piano writing here, as it is for the orchestral music in *Le martyr de Saint-Sébastien* that Helmut Rösing has demonstrated from the analysis of sonograph recordings to be very like actual gamelan music.²¹

The combination of repetition and multi-layering of motif and figuration is the basic procedure for all the sections of the piece; there are constant changes of sequence, but only to re-establish the existing repetitions and resonances or to change to others, so that despite all the variety of sequence the repetitions continue. As mentioned before, many

of these take the form of ostinato, and of two types. The first moves about like the inner figure in octaves in the example above; similar figures are those of 23-26, 27-30 and particularly the arpeggiated one that dominates the last section of the piece right to the end (from 77-98). The second type is that keeping to two or three notes and forming an inverted or inner pedal, like the left-hand chords in 3-8, the slow trills in 14-22 and 65-77, and the syncopated major seconds at the beginning of the piece, in 31-26 and in 45-56.

This is the gamelan effect of continuous repetition with gradual changes, so that the sound has as much mesmeric or subliminal effect as conscious effect. The music is truly timeless, for there is, besides all this repetition, no melodic line that dominates the piece: there are several melodic fragments that appear, disappear and reappear but do not lead anywhere - they are merely parts of the overall figuration. Thus the piece may be termed pattern-music²² as distinct from the normal Western melody-led music, with its interest in the combination of its sounds and rhythms, rather than in the leading of the hearer through a definite melodic path to an eventual goal. Debussy therefore is not merely recreating an exotic idiom but delving into its spiritual base of *nirvana* - set in *time espace*.

Almost in passing, amongst all the emphasis on repetitions, ostinatos and pedals, the melodic fragments can be noticed as being sensuous, particularly the first, which winds up and down sinuously: it is the marked flexibility and sensuality of this first motif that attracts the attention before the powerful mesmeric effects begin to be felt. Other motifs like those of 15-18, 27-28, 33-36 are simple and direct, but perhaps no less sensuous in the context of so much trance-inducing repetition.

Finally, the use of pedalpoints should be noticed: almost the whole piece is over pedals or inverted pedals, some extending for considerable


length at the slow pace (1-10, 23-32, 54-60). Together with the exotic-sounding pitch-sets the effect is of strangeness and a limited dimensionality (from the limitation of harmonic progress over pedals) that is typically Art Nouveau.

Ravel: *Alborada del gracioso*

The title [dawn song of the jester] seems to signify a setting in the Spanish court of former times, a court whose severity and formality is perhaps an ideal setting for a jester to shine against. The jester, the "all-licensed fool"²³ sees it as his business to satirize by buffoonery and wit the over-serious and the foolish at court. He brings the burlesque of the pantomime to court, and mocks pretension with absurdity. The music is from the *Miroirs* set, and a clown is in this way a mirror showing the inverted image of sophistication. Finally, clowning is coarse and energetic, a complete foil for the gravity of courtiers, and both factors are reflected in the music.

The work's pitch-sets and rhythms are Spanish in character²⁴, and its melodic motifs prominent enough when they are sounding, but underneath is always a rhythmic ostinato so dominant that as in *Pagodes*, the melodic motifs seem like an extension of, or expression of, the rhythmic figures. The best example is the first, seen in the left hand of bars 1-2:

Example 110: *Assez vif.* ♩ = 92.



mf sec les arpèges très serrés

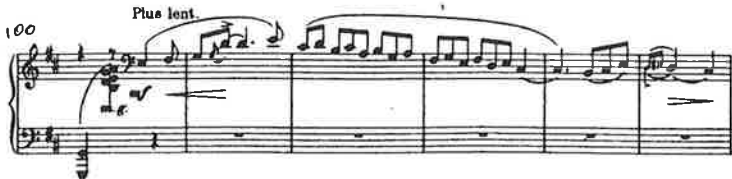
Ravel: *Alborada del gracioso*, 1-2

The syncopations in the right hand are of course equally important in setting the rhythmic pattern of $\frac{3}{4}$ in contradistinction to the actual $\frac{6}{8}$ signature. Other examples of motifs that seem to be more rhythmic than melodic in character are those at 31 and 134, but even the slow-section motif (70-73) has a very strong rhythmic component, seen in its six

consecutive repetitions of F[#].

Some of the most important figures in the piece are almost purely rhythmic, notably the rapid triplet tremolos on single notes from bar 43, the syncopated chords from 106-133 and the alternations of the last few bars. Yet the slow section finishes with a most expressive and ornate arabesque that is a striking contrast to the shortness of all the other melodic phrases in the piece:

Example 111:



Ravel: *Alborada del gracioso*, 100-105

This arabesque perhaps shows why Spanish music and dance was always seen as exotic by its neighbouring France, since it shows the legacy of the Moors. In this connexion it is interesting to note that the second of Florent Schmitt's *Ombres* [shadows] is *Mauresque*.

In a work so dominated by rhythm most of these rhythms are ostinato-like, and many are established in connexion with pedals, like the rapid triplet-tremolos and syncopated chords mentioned above. As in actual guitar-playing many of these ostinatos are established and then implied while brief excursions into other figures or motifs are made, like the fifths in bars 9-11 that are continued in 14-15. While the tremolos are the most obvious of the ostinatos those of the syncopated chords listed above also form pedals. There are also ordinary pedals formed in the bass, like the B^b that lasts from 12-35 and the A of 208-216. Thus as in *Pagodes* there is a sense of limited dimensionality from arrested harmonic development and of timelessness from so much repetition.

The work is composed from the most fragmentary of motivic and figural elements and yet is of absorbing interest throughout, because as in *Pagodes* there is constant variety of sequence that maintains freshness

despite the ostinato and repetition. It is remarkable that two works with such similar principles of mesmeric construction can have such opposite effects, the one dreaming and the other giddy. The difference is in the predominance of the rhythm over all else in *Alborada*: the piano version allows this to be so much crisper in articulation than the orchestral one.

Summary

As just mentioned, both works are singular in their principles of construction and powerful in mesmeric effect of their respective types. They clearly exemplify the great attraction of the exotic to Art Nouveau - its effect on the sensibility, not its historic or regional folk interest, or even its tonal or rhythmic colours as they appeal to the collector. Neither Debussy nor Ravel was a collector of authentic folk or exotic material like Dvorak, Vítězslav Novák, Bartók, Kodaly or Cecil Sharp, but without going to the sources they felt an empathy for them that produced music more striking than that produced by using or copying original material, as for instance the *Exoticon* pieces of Novák that do not aspire to be *tours des sensibilités* like these.

INSEL	<i>L'isle joyeux</i> 1904	Debussy
	<i>The Island Spell (Decorations/1)</i> 1915	Ireland
	<i>The Princess's Rose-Garden</i> 1915	Bax

Concept

Die Insel was the title of the Jugendstil magazine in Berlin 1881-1901 and Leipzig 1902²⁵ that emphasized the escapist fantasies that Art Nouveau inherited from the Arcadian tradition. On an island-Avalon the poet-seer-hedonist could live the ideal life of beauty, in the suspended time of dream and fantasy, amid nature and the spirits; it was part of the rejection of the modern industrial world and its utilitarian values. It is the setting for much Jugendstil opera and theatre, as has already been pointed out²⁶, with its themes of the suspension of time, the fantastic impinging on the real, and poetic justice rather than dramatic resolution of plot.

Debussy: L'isle joyeux

The title may have some of its initial inspiration in the Watteau version of *L'embarquement pour Cythère* in the Louvre²⁷, which was originally described by the gallery as "une feste galante"²⁸, which thus associates its general theme with that of Debussy's settings of Verlaine's *Fêtes galantes* - "the poetic pleasures of love...far-off chimeras and lost paradises"²⁹. Other literary appreciations of it that Debussy may have been aware of include De Banville, who described its mood as "l'infinie tristesse", while the brothers Goncourt talked of its "tristesse musicale"³⁰. All this is very much in the spirit of *die Insel*; Schmitz, however, feels that Debussy goes beyond vague Arcadianism to a mood of Bacchanalian ritual³¹, which is a more directly sensual part of the *Insel* dream. Alan Walker traces its musical inspiration to Debussy's possibly hearing Liszt's playing of *Les jeux d'eaux à la villa d'Esté* in Rome in 1884³².

L'isle joyeuse has an indefinite beginning, with long soft trills and cascades of arpeggios based on chromatically descending $5^{\#}_3$ chords that are seen in the descending scale of the third bar to be part of the whole-tone set. The first melodic passage (bars 9-14) continues this set with slight variations in bars 12-13, but despite the emphasis on $C^{\#}$ from the outset, the root of the set, there is the customary feeling of a loss of tonal perspective that comes with the use of the whole-tone set³³. This is reinforced by the thirds that drift arrhythmically in the third bar, and by the juxtaposition of the A root from bar 7 with a continuation of the $C^{\#}$ trilled pedalpoint. Thus from the outset there is a confusion of tonality that corresponds with an entrance, metaphorically speaking, into a dream world where dimensions and horizons are vague.

This confusion of tonality, resulting not only from the use of the whole-tone set but from the simultaneous use of different roots in the same set, continues throughout the piece: in the bar 21-22 motif in a whole-tone

set based on F as against that of the rocking accompanimental figure based on A; in bars 148-157 the left hand is based on A^b while the accompaniment is based on C; bars 166-181 repeats and develops the F against A passage; the long crescendo near the end has B^b against G; and the climax from bar 220-251 features a series of such oppositions, beginning with E against A. The effect of all these is actually heightened by the interspersed passages of more diatonic tonality, and by the contradictions between the pedalpoints that reinforce the accompanimental roots and the differently-rooted melodic motifs.

Pedalpoints, real or implied, dominate the piece: bars 1-9 C[#], 7(overlapping)-33 A, 52-58 C[#], 67-97 A, 141-157 C, 160-181 A, 220-236 A, 245-255 A, with many shorter pedals of three or four bars, often overlapping or opposed. There is, therefore, very little of the normal modulatory development seen in conventional works, and none of the Wagner-*Tristan* or Franck-*Symphonie* continual modulatory movement. Debussy's main method of variation is the parallel shifting of a sequence like those of bars 238-9 and 243-4 in the climax-passage. Normal development involving modulation and cadentiary resolution is analogous to the progression of a narrative through time, but in this work linear time is suspended, just as in the *Insel* concept experiential time is replaced by spatial time - the time of dreams where action is suspended or even replayed in parallel episodes. These may correspond to parallel figures like those of bars 14, 99-103, 186-199 and 200-208, and to the simple repetitions at the octave that are seen from the outset and are one of the piece's main effects (for example, bars 1-2/4-5, 15-16, 25, 27, 52-54); simple repetitions at the same pitch are still more numerous.

The whole-tone figures and motifs of all the piece before the crescendo and climax (bars 186-end) are soft and sinuous, and thus basically sensual in the Art Nouveau manner: each bar of the opening cadenza (1-6) is whiplash in form, beginning with sustained trilling on a

single note and breaking up after the beginning of the third or fourth beat into arpeggios or runs. This is of course the panpipe-motif of long-note-plus-flourish that has been noticed in so much of the repertory, and seems to denote sensuality. From bar 7 the mirror-image of this is seen with an emphatic beginning tailing off into sustained trilling.

Example 112:

Debussy: *L'isle joyeuse*, 5-9

From bar 9 the left hand continues its echo of the whiplash mirror-form while the right begins a figure that likewise begins with a sharp rhythm (acciaccaturas and dotted semiquavers) but ends the bar in sinuous triplets. These triplets become the chief accompanimental motif from bars 19-51 against the gently rocking motif beginning in bar 21, and until bar 51 the piece is almost entirely *pp* or *p*. This section features the whole-tone overlappings and pedalpoints instanced earlier, the combined effect of which, with the sinuous motifs, produces langorous sensuality of mood. The middle section, whose whole-tone motif is that announced from bar 67 - in a gently rising and falling motion that is subtly arrhythmical

Example 113:

Debussy: *L'isle joyeuse*, 67-72

- is marked *ondoyant et expressif, molto rubato*, and is again mainly soft.

The drifting of this motif over the slow pentuplets of the left hand (bars 67-98) is dreamily sensual. The indefiniteness of the wholetones is complemented by the irregularity of the pentuplets (their having no simple rhythmic mid-point like figures based on duplets or triplets) and of the melodic motif itself. The gentle rhythmic ambiguity of this episode comes after those of 21-24 and 36-51 and, with later sequences of these, helps maintain the dreamy indefiniteness of the whole piece up to bar 186, where the movement towards the climactic final section begins.

After the reprise of some of the soft first section (145-181), the strict rhythms of the crescendo and climax are very contrasting, now producing a strongly insistent sensuality of effect from the *ostinato* repetitions, particularly of the tenor motif announced in bar 220. The piece therefore shows the full extent of Art Nouveau sensuality, from an indefinite langour to insistent desire.

It is possible to see in the rocking motifs the movement of waves or sea, and in the final section ritual or even sexual imagery, but throughout the piece the *Insel* mood of fantasy seems more important than any specific imagery.

John Ireland: *The Island Spell*

The work, written in 1912, was published as part of *Decorations* in 1915, whose other two pieces are *Moonglades* and *Scarlet Ceremonies*, both titles also suggesting the supernatural rather than the more impressionistic tone-painting of *London Pieces* or *The Towing Path*, and showing that it is not necessarily accurate to typecast a composer as being of one persuasion or the other. The set-title *Decorations* is pre-eminently Art Nouveau, denoting its luxuriance of line interweaving into patterns, and carrying also the connotation that all the supernatural milieu of spirits, fairies, goblins and the like is in a sense decorative of nature, adding the life and colour of imagination to its outward appearance.

The Island Spell is based on three lines from Arthur Symons:

*I would wash the dust of the world in a soft green flood;
Here, between sea and sea, in the fairy wood,
I have found a delicate, wave-green solitude...*

This is a perfect evocation of *Natur-Insel* from a poet who was part of the Aestheticist milieu, contributing to *The Yellow Book* and becoming editor of *The Savoy*, friend of Oscar Wilde, Ernest Dowson, W.B. Yeats and knowing most of its other key figures. The piece was written in the island of Jersey that Ireland visited annually in this period, and is part of the general inspiration he drew from the writings of Arthur Machen on magic and the evocation of pagan culture and ritual.³⁴

The music seems to concentrate on the words "wash...in a soft green flood" because there is a direction to hold the right pedal down for longer periods than normal, producing a haze of sounds from the accompanimental figure and the melody that together are drawn from the harmonic series on the piano's bottom $\underline{D^b}$. (There is no direction, however, concerning the centre pedal that could intensify this effect by its sustaining this note throughout much of the piece. It is the harmonic series that is the main determinant of the pitch-sets he uses in the piece, although there are five and six-note sets (not symmetrical pentatonic or hexatonic sets) employed that are drawn from this series. The "chime" melody in the opening section uses only the five-note set $\underline{A^b}-\underline{B^b}-\underline{C}-\underline{D^b}-\underline{F}$ while the ostinato accompanimental figure is diatonic; from 47 the accompaniment rests on $\underline{A^b}-\underline{B^b}-\underline{D^b}-\underline{E^b}-\underline{F}$ with similar restricted figures for most of the rest of the piece. Such restriction makes repetition inevitable, and above all else it is a study in excessive repetition, being in its intensity quite unlike any impressionistic character-piece.

For almost all the piece the accompanimental ostinato is unceasing and dominant, so that with heavy and adventurous use of the sustaining pedal (for instance, from bars 47-61 over a single pedalpoint without rest) the emphasis is on effect. The melodic line is in effect delivered

in minims and is itself so limited in range and so repetitious that it merely adds to the haze of sustained notes and sympathetic vibrations. Such repetition is affective to the point of hypnosis, which is the "island spell" of the title, with the constant arpeggios of the accompaniment presumably representing the sea sounds in an onomatopoeic manner. There is a climax section that is as repetitive as anything in Rakhmaninov's *Études-tableaux* and reminiscent of Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps*:

Example 114:

Ireland: *The Island Spell*, 75-78

Most of the piece takes place over pedalpoints, and apart from the single movement (not a prepared modulation) to \underline{C} at 71 and back at 91 the harmony merely transforms slowly from one $\underline{D^b}$ chord or derivative to another. The piece is thus a series of sonic states rather than a linear entity: it is timeless, of limited dimensionality and primarily affective or sensuous in intention. At the very end the melodic line tails off into an unfinished whole-tone sequence and some scraps of soft flourish that avoid any definite ending; the dream fades but has no ending.

Arnold Bax: *The Princess's Rose-Garden*

The work is subtitled *Nocturne* but in the manuscript *Berceuse*, and was one of the three works written in fifteen days of 1915 under the inspiration of Harriet Cohen³⁵. The first subtitle (*Berceuse*) helps give the context for the main title of a dream-vision, although apart from the establishment of an accompanimental quasi-ostinato at the beginning, the piece is unlike the two important berceuses of Chopin and Liszt; these maintain the ostinato and repeat the melodic sequence several times with elaboration, whereas Bax's piece is in ternary form, and does not maintain

the ostinato. Presumably this is the reason the subtitle was changed on publication to *Nocturne*, in which the form tends to be ternary and the accompanimental figure freer to develop and change.

There is another aspect to the piece, however - its similarities to Chopin's *Barcarolle*. Besides sharing a similarly-proportioned ternary structure (26-30-28 Bax; 34-49-42 Chopin) and key (F#) and rhythm (9/6 to Chopin's 12/8), Bax's piece employs a very similar left-hand figure in bars 15-25 to that of Chopin's first section; it begins its mid-section in A minor (Chopin A major) and allows some modulation in this section, like Chopin; however, Bax's reprise (third section) is soft, as in the berceuse or nocturne idiom, where Chopin's is loud. Bax's piece has a long-breathed and phrased melody introduced by the same leisurely establishment of its complex rhythm before the melody commences; its melodic phrases are similarly punctuated by pauses; and it proceeds by elaboration of texture in succeeding repetitions of the long melody, rather than by simple elaboration of the melody itself as in the berceuses of Chopin and Liszt.

The title itself sees "Tania" (the manuscript dedication, referring to Harriet Cohen³⁶) as princess in a dream paradise, with the barcarolle connotations suggesting this as a garden approached by water; those of the *Berceuse* and *Nocturne* subtitles add the atmosphere of night and dreams. There may be reference to legend, but the images of princess and rose-garden are familiar to Pre-Raphaelite and Art Nouveau iconography and literature³⁷.

In contrast to the previous two, this is a work of apparently fairly orthodox structure and method, but heavily layered with figural and textural elaborations, so much so that Bax has added a comment that it is necessary to keep the accompaniment from being more prominent than the melodic line. Nonetheless, it is difficult to downplay the interest of the texture as against the melody; perhaps it is permissible to see them both as equals, even if to do this the melody has to be accentuated just

to be equal. Both wind about each other constantly, particularly when figures echoing the melody compete with it as in bars 30 and 36-41, so that the likeness is easily seen to Art Nouveau drawings like Aubrey Beardsley's in which figures set in nature are surrounded and overshadowed by the twining plants around them. The sinuosity of line, together with its chromaticism (to be considered below) gives the piece a sensuality of mood, although an indefinite sort of sensuality, as will be shown.

This intertwining results from the elaborate nature of the melodic line and its figural resonances: between them they set up patterns of arabesque that constantly vary throughout the piece, mostly taking this role alternately but sometimes together:

Example 115:



Bax: *The Princess's Rose-Garden*, 40-41

The melodic line, itself ornate, is throughout the piece so interwoven with accompanimental figures that texture is complex and constantly varying. Even where a regular accompanimental figure is established for a time, as in bars 61-64 and 65-67, it keeps changing its harmonic ground, so that fluidity of texture becomes fluidity of colour: all is indefinite and constantly undergoing transformation.

Paradoxically, however, pedalpoint is a frequent device (1-7, 15-18, 27-32, 36-39, 51-56, 69-78) but is even more extensive if the long passages where there may be bass movement but no modulation are considered: for instance, from 1-18 there is only temporary shifting of the bass in 8-14 before the $F^{\#}$ is resumed, and this tonal bass has been implied all the while. There is thus a limiting of dimensionality that suggests that of the Insel setting of the title, yet not the sort of limitation that narrows to obsessive ostinato, for above these pedals

everything is fluid.

While the pitch-sets are nominally diatonic there are subtle chromatic touches that provide ambiguity as to tonality. For instance, the second two bars of the main melody seem to be repeating the first two but in fact have a flattened third, which seems to follow logically from the flattened sixth and seventh in the second bar. The melody has thus changed its tonality from major to minor at the flattened sixth and seventh, but this is contradicted by the A^\sharp at the end (bar 8) and then reconfirmed by the flattened third in bar 9. When the melody is looked at in full its tonality is seen to waver in other places:

Example 116:

(a) This piece must be played as simply as the elaborateness of its detail will allow. No harmonic points should be made and the accompaniment figures generally should be kept wholly subservient to the melodic line.

Bax: *The Princess's Rose Garden*, 7-15

Immediately following the flattened A in bar 9 the descending figure contradicts its minor tonality because it is from the major set. The bar 11 set is that of G^\sharp (minor) but bar 12 major as resolution to F^\sharp (major) is prepared. At the beginning of 13 the resolution is avoided by being transformed into a chord of the ninth that prepares for the eventual real resolution via the dominant on the last beat of bar 14, but the major tonality of 13 is again clouded, although not contradicted, by the chromatic A of 14. Thus both tonality and normal harmonic progression are

ambiguous, giving the melody an uncertainty of definition and harmonic foundation that teases the sensibility accustomed to diatonics. All this gives a sense of unreality to the sound-picture, as if normal dimensionalities are clouded in its dream-world.

Summary

The concept of *Insel* is one of the most powerful and central of Art Nouveau fantasies, being the utopian dream of the artist in an age of positivistic certainties and industrial materialism. The three pieces examined are about dream-states in vaguely dimensioned island paradises where one can float in a timeless wash of sensuousness and where beauty is supreme. The Debussy and Ireland works achieve a sense of timelessness through static harmonies over long pedalpoints, while Bax uses the quite different method of fluid, unresolving harmonies that never seem to settle, and being without conventional contours and cadences seem to dissolve endlessly from one shade into another. But in each work the overall feeling of being suspended in dream is strongly suggested, and repetition rather than evolution of melody and accompanimental figure carried to the sensuous excess so characteristic of Art Nouveau.

End-notes

- 1 Wenk, A.: op. cit., 176-78.
- 2 Hirsbrunner, T.: *Claude Debussy und Pierre Louÿs. Zu den "Six épigraphes antiques" von Debussy*, Musikforschung XXXI/4 (1978), 431-32 lists the twelve poems, which can be seen in full in the 1971 Jobert edition.
- 3 Nectoux, J-M.: op. cit., 2.
- 4 Loc. cit.
- 5 Orledge, R.: *Debussy's Piano Music. some second thoughts and sources of inspiration*, Musical Times Jan. 1981, 21; Lenski, K.: *Bilitis: eine bemahe vergessene Liebe von Claude Debussy*, Vester Festschrift, ed. De Reede, R., (Amsterdam, Broekmans en Van Poppel, 1984), 107-14.
- 6 Decarnes, L.: *Le poème en prose*, (Seghers, Paris 1984), 126.
- 7 Hirsbrunner, T.: op. cit., 429-30.
- 8 Ibid., 126-132.
- 9 Whether justifiably so or not, the Greek names of the modes seems to have been associated with Classical times and/or the pastoral setting.
- 10 Hirsbrunner, T.: op. cit., 439.
- 11 Aspects of cross-rhythms in Debussy et al. are discussed in Suter, L-M.: *La polyrythmie dans la musique de la première moitié du vingtième siècle*, Diss. Université de Berne, 1980.
- 12 Ibid., 440-41.
- 13 Gnadenwitz, P.: *Musikalische Orient-romantik Betrachtungen zu einem*

- west-östlichen Thema, *Neue-Zürcher Zeitschrift* 165 (July 1977), 41ff.
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- 15 Masini, L-V.: op. cit., 9.
- 16 Jullien, P., in *Collection Génies et Réalités: Debussy*, (Hachette, Paris 1972),
- 17 Ibid, 84: Robert Schmitz' description of these motifs seems unclear.
- 18 Brailloiu, C.: *Opera I*, transl. Comisiel, E., (Bucarest, Union of Composers 1968), # *Pentatonisme chez Debussy*.
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- 20 Wen-Chung, Chon: *Asian Concepts and Twentieth-Century Composers*, *Musical Quarterly* LVII/2 (April 1971), 212. The comment is made in contradistinction to Holst and Cyril Scott's "superficial exoticism" (213).
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- 22 The study of repetitions in Koslov, V.: *The role of some special kinds of repetitions in Debussy's music*, *Ukrainshoi muzykovadenie* IX, (Kiev, Muzyчна Ukraina 1974) may be relevant here.
- 23 Shakespeare, W.: *King Lear*, I(4), 199.
- 24 Smirnov, V.: *Maurice Ravel and his Creative Output*, (Leningrad, Muzyka 1981) studies folk elements in Ravel.
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- 26 McCredie, A.D.: op. cit., 226-231.
- 27 Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 94.
- 28 Camesasca, E.: *The Complete Paintings of Watteau*, (Abrams, New York 1968), 116-117.
- 29 Ibid, 13, quoting Charles De Tolnay in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 1955.
- 30 Ibid, 116.
- 31 Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 94.
- 32 Walker, A.: op. cit., 351.
- 33 See the discussion on the use of whole-tone elements in Harris, S.: *Chord-Forms based on the Whole-Tone Scale in Early Twentieth-Century Music*, *Music Review* XLI/1 (Feb. 1980), 36-57.
- 34 There is an analysis of Ireland's piano works by Donald W. Rankin: *The Solo Piano Works of John Ireland* (Diss. Boston University 1970); there are also the two more general articles by Ottaway, H.: *The Piano Music of John Ireland*, *M.M.R.* lxxxiv (1954), 258, and *Ireland's Shorter Piano Pieces*, *Tempo* 59 (1959), 3.
- 35 Foreman, L: *Bax: A Composer and his Times*, 450. The other two pieces are *To a Maiden with a Daffodil* and *The Old Vodka Shop*.
- 36 Idem, loc. cit.
- 37 Other general works dealing with the background to Bax's compositional inspiration are Scott-Sutherland, C.: *Arnold Bax*, (London, Dent 1973); Pire, P.J.: *More Than a Brazen Romantic*, *Music and Musicians* xiv (1971), 32ff; Foreman, R.L.E.: *The Musical Development of Arnold Bax*, *Music and Letters* iii (1971), 59ff.

CHAPTER 17

EROS

This term conveys only part of the general concepts of Love, Woman and *Clair de lune* in Art Nouveau, but it is their most important link, for all three are seen in Art Nouveau as being primarily sensual.

LOVE	<i>Danse languide</i> Op. 51/4	1906	Skryabin
	<i>Poème languide</i> Op. 52/3	1906	Skryabin
	<i>Désir</i> Op.57/1	1907	Skryabin
	<i>Caresse dansée</i> Op.57/2	1907	Skryabin
	<i>Le jardin parfumé</i>	1923	Sorabji

Concept

The Art Nouveau concept of love is heavily sensual and overpowering - the darker aspect of passion that is hinted at in some later Pre-Raphaelite painting like Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Paolo and Francesca* and Ford Madox Brown's *Romeo and Juliet*¹. The artists and writers who portray this most fully, like Paul Verlaine and Gustav Klimt, produce works tinged with the decadence, which is Art Nouveau's more cynical respelling of the Romantic theme of love-and-death.

Faubion Bowers notes that for Skryabin langour could have a specifically sexual connotation, and that the Op. 52/3 *Poème languide* is such a piece². Love for Skryabin is part of the fulfilment of mystical ecstasy in which all the senses fully flower³; his notion of it as something entirely overpowering and transforming is essentially Art Nouveau, and also stems from his association with Tatyana Schloezer and her encouragement of his mystical ideas.

There is, of course, a character-piece genre during the Art Nouveau period seen in such pieces as Edvard Grieg's *Erotik* Op. 43/5 and Saint-Saens' *Valse langoureuse* Op. 120 but these are conventionally formed pieces whose passion is not intended to rise beyond the polite usage of the character-piece; the Art Nouveau pieces considered here all embody extremity of effect, indicated in Skryabin's case by their titles' *languide*, *caresse*, *désir*, and in Sorabji's by the exotic and erotic connotations of *Le jardin parfumé*.

Skryabin: *Danse languide*

Op. 51/4 has a minim-based melodic motif that is highly chromatic and repetitive because it rocks back and forth between opposites, represented tonally by the two positions of the whole-tone set - WT¹ on C and WT² on C#.

Example 117:

Skryabin: *Danse languide* Op.51/4, 1-5

Following Jay Reise's analysis, the two notes chromatic to the set in use are ringed; each is resolved into the WT¹ set on the following beat. At the end of each phrase the tonality falls back to the diatonic set (Dt), and the third quarter of the piece (bars 9-13) remains in diatonics.

This piece raises the question of the symbolic importance of pitch-sets in this transition-phase before embracing the symmetrical pitch-sets in the late sonatas. Skryabin is very close to abandonment of diatonic cadences and key signatures, the last of which appear in 1907, as previously pointed out, but in this piece it appears that the diatonic set is symbolic of a state of imperfection to which the soul without spirit continually falls back. Likewise, the whole-tone set, with its symmetrical nature, represents a path to the Ideal Realm, which the soul recognizes, but which without the free spirit it cannot fully climb. There is also a quality of sensuousness about the whole-tone set that derives from its upsetting the hearer's sense of normal diatonic tonal horizons: WT¹, the set beginning on C, for instance, takes the hearer from white-note to black-note consecutive groups of notes, from C-major to G^b-major and back to C. This disorientation of tonal centre is reflected in the alternations

between pitch-sets throughout the piece, and helps establish its character as sensuous dance.

Analysis 40:

bar	1	2	3	4	5			
melody	F	G ^b	F	G ^b	C	B	A [#]	D
key	+ E ^b	- A ^b	- E ^b	+ A ^b	- G	-	-	
chords	I ^{7^b}	<u>I^{5[#]}</u>	<u>I^{7^b}</u>	V ⁹ ₇	I			
sets	WT ²	WT ¹	WT ²	WT ¹		Dt	

Skryabin: *Danse languide*, 1-5

The piece is of four phrases, the first three of four bars each and the last stretched with coda-repetitions to bring the total to nineteen. The first phrase analyzed above shows the melody separately so that its interaction with the chordal harmonic texture can be appreciated. The harmonies shown are given normal diatonic analysis even though they are from whole-tone sets WT² and WT¹ (on C[#] and C respectively) until bar 5. The melody is seen to alternate indecisively between semitones before moving towards the same G tonality as that of the chordal texture. Technically the melody is always from the same pitch-set as that of the harmony, but the hearer accustomed to diatonics feels that the two elements are out of step until the cadence of 4-5. More importantly, there is no resolution of discords until the cadence - just alternation of the ^{7^b}_{5[#]} chords until resolution is commenced with the diminished seventh of bar 3.

The second phrase is similar to the first, but modulates to D (diatonic set). The harmony remains in the diatonic set throughout the third phrase, where its harmony is based on alternations of first-inversion major triads and diminished sevenths and finishes on D. The last phrase is similar to the first, but its fourth bar replaces the first phrase's move towards G tonality with a jump to D^b instead of D in preparation for a V-I cadence. Thus any move towards cadential resolution seems suspended, and there is a silence of a whole bar before the bar 3-4 cadence is replicated to end the piece. The transition (between the D^b before the silence and the A^b after it) is accomplished by hearing the A^b firstly as the dominant

of $\underline{D^b}$, but secondly as transforming itself through its WT^1 context into a diatonic one, as a flattened supertonic approach to the V-I final cadence.

The accompaniment's virtually unbroken dotted rhythm has a hypnotic effect, and the melody has a veiled quality from being in the middle of the harmonic texture. The alternation of the accompanimental root over intervals of a fifth in the first section (bars 1-9) in this piece is not a dominant-tonic one but a constant shifting of the tonal horizon from one whole-tone set to the other, of a fixation on the same point despite different viewpoints, as it were. The restlessness of the alternations between these extremes is one of unease; this continues beyond the end of the piece by the final melody note's ending on the \underline{D} instead of the tonal root \underline{G} .

Finally, the slow dotted rhythms that are unvarying throughout can be seen to be affectively sensual; the piece is a dance and, as such, central to love. Its listless, always soft alternations present a melancholy aspect of love despite the major tonality of the cadences.

Skryabin: *Poème languide*

This piece, from the later opus 52/3 of the same year (1906) that includes *Poème ailé*, has a very different method, with an ambiguous rhythm, shown in the many suspensions in the right hand and the irregular downwards broken chords of the left. These left-hand figures accompany an upwards questioning motion of both an upper melodic motif and an inner motif-fragment, and with their slow deliberative movement cloud any feeling of harmonic resolution they might otherwise provide for the melody. This resolution is in any case imperfect, as can be seen in the example below, where in bars 1-3 French sixths dissolve into diminished sevenths over a falling tritone interval, all three elements being features of the octatonic pitch-set. (Resolution to a 5_3 chord does not occur until the last bar.)

Example 118:

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system is marked 'O¹ Pas vite.' and 'p'. It features a treble and bass staff with various notes and rests. Arrows point from notes in the treble staff to notes in the bass staff, indicating resolutions. The second system is marked 'poco rit.' and 'p'. It continues the musical piece with similar notation and resolutions. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/8.

Skryabin: *Poème languide* Op.52/3, 1-5

In the gradual movement from the first chord into the second the two melodic motifs, upper and inner, are observable in tandem, the upper following the inner by a quaver. The inner part (F#-G-D) and the upper remain in this close but separated relationship until bar 9, when they unite at the octave to move towards the piece's only full cadence in bar 13. In bar 5 a tenor voice echoes the movement of the two upper-stave voices, but in variant form, descending through semitones before rising to A#; this voice also appears in 7, 9 and 11. The contrapuntal deployment of these voices, together with the slow unfolding of the bass "resolutions" (for example the first beats of 2, 3 and 4), helps give the piece its sensuous feeling that fits its title *Poème languide*; even the 5_3 final chord, spread in semiquaver arpeggio over the full compass, is langorous.

The notes foreign to the O^1 set are ringed in the example above, with arrowed lines showing their eventual resolution into the set by semitonal movement, even at the octave, as Jay Reise points out⁴. There are brief transpositions to the O^3 set in bars 7-9 and for the final chord in 13, and there is a very noticeable C# in 7-9 that is unresolved until the O^1 set is resumed. During the piece many of these notes accidental to their set are as much emphasized as the two first in the example, the upper D because it is first sounded alone and then repeated three times before resolving to the D# of bar 3, and the inner G# because it is sustained before resolving and then the process repeated in bar 3. So many emphasized accidentals

need special comment.

The stressed accidentals must be seen in the whole context of the symbolic importance of the pitch-sets employed. In the terms of Skryabin's mysticism as expounded by Boris de Schloezer, the erotic element as seen in Skryabin's music is the longing for divine ecstasy⁵, and this is in the context of the late sonatas already discussed the connotation of "languide" in this piece. In this *Poème* and the op.51/4 *Danse languide*, symmetrical pitch-sets (whole-tone and octatonic) are to be seen as the path to perfection, but one that cannot successfully be traversed except by the spirit freed from earthly limitations. These seem to be represented by the notes foreign to the symmetrical sets employed. In both the *Danse* and the *Poème* the notes that are chromatic to the set are melodic and in most cases occur on strong beats, so that they are thereby emphasized. Their importance must therefore have to do with the inevitable imperfections inherent in the unliberated soul. Such notes are prolonged quite a long time or repeated before resolving, like the B in bar 3 and the D below it in the example above - as if the spirit cannot easily shake off earthly limitations. Even more importantly, the cadence falls in the treble to a foreign note - G#, so that it is just as imperfect in the symbolic sense as a diatonic cadence. The ascending tendency of the phrases' melodic lines seems to be symbolic of sensuous desire; this motion is of course common to many of the mid-period pieces, but while imperfections as seen in the notes foreign to the set are emphasized as much as they are in this piece the desire and ecstasy will be Dionysian rather than divine, leading to disintegration rather than transfiguration of the spirit⁶.

The harmonies of the piece, resulting from its octatonic sets, with the important notes foreign to them, alternate over pairs of tonal centres like those of the Op.51 *Danse languide*, and, as in that piece, melodic line is to be found in an inner part, just possibly signifying that erotic longings come from deep within the body. Both pieces alternate between

unresolving centres, and since octatonic rather than whole-tone sets are used in the *Poème*, there is a greater variety possible - tritone, fifth, sixth and third, over which discord "resolves" into discord (even though Boris de Schloezer claims that Skryabin did not know *Tristan und Isolde* or *Parsifal*, where this is fundamental harmonic methodology⁷):

Analysis 41:

+.....A.....+				+.....B.....+				+.....C.....+				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
F#				G				F#				A
C-F#				C-F#				D-G				G-F#
b7 7				b7 7				b7 7				b7 7
4				4				6 4				6
b3				b3				3				3
→-----O ¹ -----				←-----O ³ -----				←-----O ¹ -----				
								←-----O ³				

Line 1: shows the three four-bar phrases
 Line 2: bars
 Line 3: keys to which modulation occurs (n diatonic terms)
 Lines 4-7: the harmonic analysis of discord resolving into discord
 Line 5: the octatonic sets employed

Skryabin: *Poème languide*, op.52/3

The analysis of chords is only that perceived by the diatonic-accustomed ear. Since the work is constructed from octatonic sets, however, normal harmonic analysis - particularly the modulations described - represents only one dimension of the full harmonic picture. Despite appearances, because there is no resolution of discord there is really no achievement of modulation, but instead a restless shifting from one insubstantiality to another. Thus the effect is like that of *Tristan* - endless movement in a timeless continuum.

The slow unfolding movement of the left-hand arpeggiated chords is tantalizing, especially in its avoidance of co-ordination with the completion of the right-hand figure on each high note. There is thus a slow unsatisfied sensuality about the piece that well fits the title's connotations.

It should also be noticed that this is a *Poème* where Op. 51 is a *Danse*, allowing the freedoms of rhythm and ambiguities of movement that would not justify the latter title but perfectly suit the former.

The sound of the octatonic set is of a strange harmonic realm where normal dimensions are absent - this sort of mystery of feeling has been remarked before in the sonatas. At the slow pace (*pas vite*) the upwards-striving melodic phrases against the drawn-out arpeggiated chords are easily seen as languid. The sensuality lies in the chromatic movement of the parts, whether between the adjacent semitones within the set or resolving into it from a foreign semitone.

Skryabin: *Désir*

The two Op.57 pieces have explicitly sensual titles (*Désir, Caresse dansée*) and are linked harmonically by their centering around the French sixth and highly chromatic melodic motifs; they are both also very quiet, ensuring that the chromatic movement is sensual rather than dramatic. Although there is no stated tempo the second piece of the set has the terms *Leger onduleux, lassé* and *lento* within it, and tends to carry on the same sort of dreamy sensuality as the earlier pieces. The first has a more positive title - *Désir* - and a more positive melodic tendency in the impulsive ascending lines that keep surging upwards. Thus although short (fourteen bars) it is faster and more urgent, without being as fast as *Poème ailé*.

Both are composed using the O¹ pitch-set, but with many notes foreign to it: the chromaticism that results is the most important sensual element in the pieces. It is very obvious from the beginning that there is much chromatic winding of line and indefiniteness of harmony, suggesting an ambiguous, veiled sensuality through their sinuous motion of Art Nouveau line and fluidity of harmony.

Désir is unusual in structure, comprising the first two four-bar phrases only of the normal AA'BA 16-bar form for Skryabin's small pieces, despite its fourteen bars' length. The other six bars are taken up with repetitions even though the initial four-bar unit is itself built on repetition:

Example 119:

The musical score consists of four systems of piano music. The first system is marked with a dynamic of *pp* and includes a *poco cresc.* marking. It features a four-bar phrase labeled 'A' with sub-phrases 'X', 'Y', and 'Z' indicated by brackets above the staff. The second system continues the piece with similar phrasing. The third system also includes a *poco cresc.* marking and shows the phrase 'A'' with sub-phrases 'X', 'Y', and 'Z'. The fourth system concludes with a series of figures based on the Z-segment's treble line, marked with 'Z' above the staff.

Skryabin: *Désir* Op. 57/1

The two four-bar phrases A and A' are shown, together with their micro-structure which consists of the three elements X, Y Z. X is repeated at the beginning of A and A', but it is Z that seems to cycle even more repetitively, especially in the last line, which finishes with a series of figures based on the Z-segment's treble line.

The final cadence is a mixture of diatonics (the bass V^7-I) and octatonics (the treble tritonic chords moving $D^{\sharp}-A$, which interval is the octatonic equivalent of the dominant-tonic of the diatonic set). The middle-voices remain on their octatonic chords without resolution. It is possible to see a symbolic explanation for this in the human-imperfection nature of the diatonic set as against the symmetrical perfection of the octatonic: the soul wishes to attain to ideal ecstasy via the perfection of symmetry but lacking the free spirit falls back to diatonic imperfections (the unequal division of the octave at the dominant).

The repetitions thus may have symbolic importance, but from the Art Nouveau viewpoint that is the focus of this study they are affective

repetition embodying sensuality in a piece that carries repetitions to an extreme, and ends in as indefinite a manner as it began, without satisfactory resolution - without desire being fulfilled. Such excessive repetition is Art Nouveau mannerism, producing the deliberately affective mesmerism appropriate to the sensual mood of the piece.

At the beginning of each A-phrase the melody drops a minor third to the C[#] before rising chromatically; it resumes at the tritone interval (D[#]-A) and its chromatic rising is interrupted by another minor third, which is also seen in the second part of bar 4 (right hand). In bar 4 the left-hand downwards chromatic movement contrast with that of the right, echoing the left-hand F[#]-F drop in bar 1. This movement perhaps suggest the restlessness of desire, and the addition of upwards and downwards minor thirds to the chromatic melodic movement reinforces this, for it is a narrow, confined interval that conflicts with the more emotionally releasing (because wider) tritone interval.

Using orthodox diatonic analysis it is possible to see the piece as a series of discords being resolved into further discords: for instance, the opening ${}^7_{5b}$ chord is merely "resolved" into another chord of the seventh, whose upwards-winding, incomplete chromatic line. Again, the final complex chord of the A-phrase at the beginning of bar 4 contains as many unresolved elements as that of the final cadence, and in addition tails off into the indefinite middle-voice semitones. Thus the *Désir* is unfulfilled anywhere in the piece, unless the partially octatonic final cadence is to be seen as partial fulfilment.

Skryabin: Caresse dansée

This, the companion piece, is by contrast a structure of AA'BA, except that the B-section really consists of four units, so that the complete picture is A A' B B' B" B" A, each unit being of eight short bars; there is a two-bar final cadence. As with *Désir* there is repetition and echoing of phrase within each unit, so that the piece is more a series

of resonances of chromatic fragments rather than a linear flow of *mélodie*.

Caresse dansée begins with the same $^7_{5b}$ (French sixth) chord as in *Désir*, resolving unsatisfactorily into a chord of the ninth that also peters out into an indefinite chromatic line. It features pronounced chromatic characters and repetitions that would tend to have a similar emotional effect, were it not for the relatively large upward leaps of fifths and sixths that are such a contrast with the downwards chromaticism of the melodic and accompanimental figures. These leaps produce an emotional nuance of excitement not felt in the narrower minor thirds of *Désir*, but are tantalizingly followed immediately by falls of a fifth and downwards chromatic broken motions that reverse the feeling. .

Example 120:

Skryabin: *Caresse dansée*, Op.57/2, 1-8

The middle section, however, (bars 17-48), is based on upwards tritone and major third leaps that are not cancelled by corresponding downwards movements, nor allowed to soar towards more directly sensual heights, for each pair of upwards leaps is mounted from a foundation that gradually descends with the falling bass tritones.

Repetition is again emphatic, with the simple upwards leap and more hesitant chromatic accompanying figures forming the basis of every bar. Yet there are two relatively definite diatonic cadences - in bars 16 (the end of the A' section) and at the end of the piece. Neither of these is quite final, for the first involves an appoggiatura that delays the treble's falling to the tonic (from which it immediately moves on again), and at the end of the piece the treble rises to the fifth. All the B-unit

cadences are unresolved, so that this piece seems to be about desire that is only partially fulfilled.

Both pieces seem to be set in a sensual realm where, because tonality is constantly shifting, there are no solid boundaries of space or time - just perpetually questing desire.

Sorabji: *Le jardin parfumé*

Kaikhosru Sorabji's subject is drawn from an Arabian book with this title by Cheik Nefzaoui, written in the tenth century in Tunis. It is set out in twenty-one chapters, each dealing with some aspect of love-making, with such scholarship as is available to the writer. Many chapters have tales illustrating the points he wishes to make, and the last of these tales may be referred to in the music, as will be discussed below. In the West the title has come to signify all the opulent and exotic sensuality associated with the East, and hinted at in the luxuriant abandon of the pictures of such Art Nouveau figures as Aubrey Beardsley and Gustav Klimt.

Sorabji's music is, with its extravagant arabesque, chromaticism and constantly transforming textures, a complex example of Art Nouveau sensuality. It is a major work of thirty-three pages⁸ of interwoven strands without any conventional cadences but with nine unequal divisions marked by general pauses, including an introduction and coda. The whole work of eighty-four extended bars is to be played very softly, and since it is very chromatic throughout, the effect is of a most delicate sensuality. All three pedals of the piano are used and specified, so that a Steinway grand is inferred (like Sorabji's own), and the initial direction is *enveloppé d'une langueur chaude et voluptueuse* [enveloped with warm languor and voluptuousness] - exactly the sort of effects that can be associated with the modern piano.

The first question to be considered in such a long and apparently diffuse work is whether Sorabji employs compositional method that is symbolic. Although until very recently there has been no considerable body

of critical study on the work⁹ there are some *prima facie* indications that its structure may have some specific connexions with the book's structure, and that there are some symbolic references in the music to its themes. The book as published by Burton in 1886 has twenty-one chapters that include various tales, some in verse¹⁰. Since numbers like seven and three are important in some of the tales (for instance in the main tale in the last chapter, where there are seven princesses, three wooers, and three nights spent in gaining access to the princess Zohra) it is possible that Sorabji has woven some numerological keys into the work. For instance, there are seven divisions by pauses between the introduction and coda (bars 7, 9, 16, 31, 57, 73, 77), and there are generally three layers of harmonic and textural base present at any time. More importantly, perhaps, the chapters naturally fall into five main sections plus introduction and conclusion, making seven divisions (1-4 on traits of character, 5-7 on love-making, 8-10 on physiology, 11-13 on etiquette and behaviour, 14-20 on maladies). Eighty-four is of course divisible by seven and three, but exact counting of motival or figural entries is made difficult by their transformations and fragmentations; however, in such a long and dense composition in the context of the mediaeval Arabic scholarship of the book it is not unlikely that some more detailed parallels of compositional system and symbolism will be discoverable.

A further point of importance is the frequent use of black-note/white-note opposition in the disposition of the hands and adjacent note-groups, which may be symbolic of the male-female polarities around which the book is based. For instance, the opening barcarolle-like bass figure (to be discussed below) and some of its later transformations like those in bars 32 and 68) falls into four note-groups that alternate between black and white keys, the chords at the beginnings of bars 5, 7, 20 alternate similarly, and the final glissando (84) is simultaneously on black (right hand) and white (left hand) keys.

Caution is necessary here, however, for it may well be that Sorabji is fundamentally opposed to such structural device as being too mechanical a way of denoting symbolism. His article on Organic and Inorganic Form in *Mi Contra Fa*¹¹ pours scorn on much formal analysis as such, particularly that of the textbooks and academies of the day. The gist of the article is that he regards form as organic, growing out of the nature of each individual work, and unique to it. Formal analysis as such cannot uncover a work's beauty or secrets, he argues, and comparative formal analysis is misleading. Thus the truth about this work may lie anywhere between symbolic form and completely free form like that of some fantasies, and this discussion will merely attempt to describe the evidence of the work's sequences and textural strands as they present themselves to the player and listener.

As will become clear, *Le jardin parfumé* sums up much Art Nouveau music. It begins with a most elaborate panpipe motif of long-note-plus-flourish and in the second bar announces the first version of an arabesque motif that in various transformations and elaborations is to be the main melodic material of the whole work. (Michael Habermann's view of the work is essentially that it develops from motifs and figures like this that are announced early in it; this may be generally true, but some exceptions will be noted later).

The arabesque-motif (M_1) shown below appears in the lower voice of the upper stave (which is an octave above the middle stave). It falls into five segments, all of which are important later. Segment A begins with a long note and then falls downwards in chromatic thirds (in this case major thirds), and it is this element that is immediately recognisable on each reappearance, despite its transformations. Segment B elongates the shape of A without following its precise notes and leads to the whiplash tail of C. D is an expanding series of intervals that give rise to much later accompanimental figuration, and D a disconnected but sharp whiplash tail.

Example 121:

Sorabji: *Le jardin parfumé, 2*

The whole motif never appears the same way twice, but its various transformations are always recognisable as beginning with some version of the A segment and usually as finishing with a whiplash. There are inversions, augmentations and other versions of M_1 but it remains in essence the same despite all the subtle differences of its appearances. Nonetheless, the play between its form and its essence represents an extreme of Art Nouveau ambiguity.

The dotted-rhythm nature of this arabesque-motif is of course that of another key Art Nouveau motif - the horn-motif, so that subtle resonances of other works of the fantastic repertoire are often suggested. For instance, there is an echo of the beginning of *L'après-midi* in bar 19 (last section, top stave, p.11), while arabesque-motifs from Rimsky-Korsakov's *Shahrazade* and its stereotype in similar works are referred to constantly as M_1 reappears in its various forms, and particularly in the brief panpipe motif of bar 13.

An M_2 countermotif (bar 14, middle stave) plays a lesser role in the work, but its immediately following alternate M_3 (bar 15, top stave) is a development from the rocking figure seen above M_1 in Example 101, and as such is important throughout the piece. Two diatonic (non-chromatic) figures - the only such in the work - appear in bars 41 and 42 and are influential in simplifying much of the figuration until the coda (bar 79), although it is not clear what this may signify. In addition to all these

are the many chromatic figures (trills, runs, arpeggios, alternating chords, elaborated inverted pedalpoints, turns) whose function is to interweave with melodic and other figural lines.

There are other figures recognisable from the Art Nouveau repertory: the first notes heard in the work are those of a quasi-barcarolle bass sequence that reappears before later entrances of the panpipe-motif and M_1 (the book has no reference to barcarolle, although there are many prose and verse serenades; but the piece is a Nocturne, and many if not most barcarolles are associated with night). Secondly, there are many pedalpoints quietly emphasized by a bass note or chord being announced solo before the elahoration typical of Art Nouveau pedalpoint begins above it; thirdly, there are many varieties of soft flourish and filigree that constantly interweave with motif and other figure.

Part of the harmonic basis of the work - its polytonal and transformational nature - is announced with the quasi-barcarolle sequence at the outset:

Example 122:

Libre: Modéré: enveloppé d'une langueur chaude et voluptueuse

Jamais plus fort que pp du commencement jusqu'à la fin

PIANO

Sorabji: *Le jardin parfumé*, 1

The first and third group of notes belong to the same B^b tonality while the second group and the chord belong to another on C . The long trilled note and flourish of the panpipe-motif belong to a third tonality on A , and its flourish features intervals of major and minor thirds typical of Eastern arabesque¹² and suggesting exotic pitch-sets.

The pitch-sets used for the work are apparently arbitrary for the

most part, and feature intervals of thirds. For instance, while the pitch-set of the panpipe-motif flourish has one major third, in semitones it comprises 1311 2211; it achieves other minor thirds by omitting notes. That of the barcarolle-bass is 121 1214. Whether authentically Arabic or not they sound Eastern, but key to Sorabji's harmonic method in this work would seem to lie in the field of juxtaposed tonalities rather than in that of exotic pitch-sets.

The effect of such juxtaposition is ambiguity of tonality - characteristic Art Nouveau method. In Example 122 the three tonalities of B^b, C and A have been noted, and in Example 121 the initial chords alone have three (D, B, C[#]), M₁ is based on A and its counterpointed rocking figure on C[#], with the barcarolle bass's B^b and C. Polytonality on this scale suggests the ornate interweaving of geometric motifs typical of Arabic art, which in Art Nouveau becomes the interweaving of plant-form motifs. Ambiguity is built into every tale in *The Perfumed Garden*, for each is about a challenge presented to a would-be lover that he surmounts through concealing his strategy and using an indirect approach. The heroines of the tales are likewise ambiguous in that they give contradictory signals to their wooers.

Almost every figure and motif is chromatic (the only exceptions being the plain diatonic figures that appear at bars 41 and 42 (bass) and are developed in 43-44 to mark a temporary but significant break in the work; even here, however, polytonal opposition of figures continues. These figures do not appear to be foreshadowed at the beginning of the work, nor to be entirely derivable from other figures, which makes them exceptions to Michael Habermann's general thesis mentioned above. The plainness of this sequence is in such contrast to every other part of the work that it must have symbolic significance, although it is not clear what this might be. There is, however, no doubt about its affective nature, since it is mesmerically repetitive, rising to and falling from a four-voice

alternation:

Example 123:

Sorabji: *Le jardin parfumé*, 41

The effect is of a confusion of very faint chanting without pitch but with an unbroken rhythm. Surrounding this mid-work calm of unvarying motion and figure is the profusion of constantly transforming motif and figure, where is a sense of dream with nothing tangible or constantly perceivable. As an example various manifestations of M_1 can be considered. Immediately it has been announced it begins to be elaborated at the end of the same bar with octave leaps between the intervals of descending thirds. As the work proceeds it is elaborated and reduced in various ways, but mainly appears to change because it is seen in so many different contexts - accompanied by a rocking figure, by simple pedalpoint, by alternating chords, by short arpeggiated figures. For most of its important appearances, however, it is accompanied by the barcarolle-bass figure, although this itself can be so elaborated as to be difficult to recognize (for instance, bars 19 p.11 and 32 p.16).

Remembering the principle mentioned above that no two appearances of any motif are identical anywhere in the work, the original can now be compared with some of its transformations. Sorabji appears deliberately to be setting himself to write outside standard formal method: if he were to use identical repetitions of motif or section then there might appear to be an invitation to see the work as a standard form with familiar sections, when in fact its form is organic, fluid and unique.

Example 124:

Sorabji: *Le jardin parfumé*, 2, 5, 25, 28-29, 69, 81

The basic transformational method is chromatic and rhythmical elaboration, but augmentation is also used, as can be seen in the quaver-rhythm examples of 25 and 28-29 and 69. In these latter cases it is questionable if a new motif altogether has not been created, but the basic elements of the prime appearance are still there - long note, rocking fall, whiplash ending. Transformations of figure are much more radical than those of M_1 , so that no sequence in the work is quite like any other, and all is a series of dream-states, *enveloppé d'une langueur chaude et voluptueuse*.

Such an extreme use of transformation of elements, together with the building of the whole work over unrelated pedalpoints, so that all sense of normal dimensionality is lost, gives an overall effect of a sensual haze that changes kaleidoscopically and fascinates with perpetual novelty. Through this haze the more familiar forms of motif and figure are

recognisable, but always indefinable as to precise form, like sensual images in dream.

Summary

Sensuality is primarily achieved in the works considered above through chromaticism, with a languorous pulse contributing to this in the Skryabin pieces. While there is a definite quaver-based pulse behind the Sorabji work that the composer takes particular care to maintain, it tends to be subordinate to and become lost in the very complex filigree, and this itself has much rhythmic dissonance that clouds the regularity of quaver groups. Nonetheless, the quietly steady pulse is a factor that adds intensity to the winding chromaticism of each work. It is perhaps necessary to remember that this chromaticism is extreme, as much so as late Franck, early Schoenberg or Louis Vierne, and that this is the reason for its being so sensual.

WOMAN	<i>La fille aux cheveux de lin (Préludes I/8)</i>	1910	Debussy
	<i>Ondine (Préludes II/8)</i>	1912-13	Debussy
	<i>The Maiden with the Daffodil</i>	1915	Bax

Concept and nomenclature

Art Nouveau takes over the conflicting images of Pre-Raphaelite woman as pure maiden or fallen Magdalen¹³ and combines them with the Symbolist image of her as evil seductress¹⁴ to produce its own image of woman using innocence as a ploy for seduction. This sophistication or affecting of innocence is, in Art Nouveau representation, natural to woman rather than consciously contrived by her: it is the way of nature for man to fall under the spell of woman, and for woman herself to be driven by nature to captivate man. In her is seen nature's seasonal rhythms and irresistible forces, as she is in Alphonse Mucha's *The Seasons* series of pictures¹⁵. While she is mostly portrayed surrounded by natural forms like flowers or woodland, she still reveals her essential being in the drawing room, for her hair and clothes fall in the swirling forms of wild nature, and her smile is sensual.

Debussy: *La fille aux cheveux de lin*

The identity of this now famous *fille* can become confused with Impressionist paintings of blonde girls, innocent in their fresh beauty, like those of Auguste Renoir¹⁶. The subject of woman is just as important to Impressionism as to Art Nouveau, the former illustrating innocence (when it features girls, at least, for its women are of all types) while Art Nouveau tends to feature sophistication. This piece, however, carries a reference to poetry, not painting - to the eponymous poem by Leconte de Lisle, in which the sound and sight of a girl singing in the lucerne flowers makes him forsake hare and red partridge for the dream of the purple of her lips. She, however, is an enigma, possibly cruel and teasing, possibly warm and loving, with the poet wishing her lips to remain silent while her eyes speak, so that he can remain in his sweet illusion of her as an ethereal vision of innocence. Yet at the same time he knows her to be a "fair, cruel maid" (to use Feste's words in *Twelfth Night*); this is the classic dilemma of infatuation:

*Ne dis pas non, fille cruelle!!
Ne dis pas oui!!! J'entendrai mieux
Le long regard de tes grands yeux
Et ta lèvre rose, O ma belle!!*

Her nature, therefore, is more like that of a sophisticated Courtly Love maiden than an innocent, more like that of an Art Nouveau temptress than an Impressionist *ingénue*.¹⁷ Hans Hollander feels that *Mélisande* is a sister of this girl, for both have mystery, youthful beauty, fair hair, and neither seems able to prevent herself bewitching her lover¹⁸. Frits Noske objects to this sort of linking on three grounds: de Lisle is writing about a Scottish girl, he is a Parnassian "whose aesthetic principles have nothing to do with Art Nouveau or Symbolism", and he lived before the period of Art Nouveau¹⁹. The last point is not one that is generally to be considered conclusive, for there is almost as much Art Nouveau music set to poets outside the period as within it, beginning with Edgar Allen Poe and Charles Baudelaire: Rakhmaninov's *The Bells*, for instance, one of the key

Art Nouveau works, is set to Poe, and painters like Aubrey Beardsley illustrated Classical, mediaeval, Romantic and contemporary writers; all this has been discussed earlier. The first point is thus also doubtful, for it is immaterial whether she is a Scottish or French maiden as long as she is beautiful and beguiling. The second point is more arguable, but Appendix A on the origins of Art Nouveau discusses links between the Parnassians and Art Nouveau, so that De Lisle is not perhaps as far from Art Nouveau as he may appear on chronometric grounds. But even if linkage is not agreed a composer may set whom he pleases as Art Nouveau. (Frits Noske's real and justifiable objection, perhaps, although not directly stated, is to the manner in which Hans Hollander arrives at his conclusion that Debussy's *La fille* is Art Nouveau, for it lacks detailed musical reference. It is not that Noske's objections are unanswerable, but that they are not addressed by Hollander.)

From the beginning *La fille* is seen as a series of oppositions - firstly of quasi-pentatonic recitatives that are normally harmonized, and secondly of diatonic passages composed of pedalpoints and parallel progressions. This duality has been remarked elsewhere²⁰, and is reflected in motivic shape, rhythm, tone-set and harmonic treatment. The divisions are indicated in the accompanying example, with plain and broken lines:

Exemple 125:

Très calme et doucement expressif (♩=66)

p sans rigueur

dim. *p*

Cédez Mouvt

piu p *p*

(très peu)

p

Un peu animé

p *mf*

pp *p*

Cédez Mouvt (sans lourdeur)

pp

Cédez Au mouvt très doux

pp

Murmuré et en retenant peu à peu

pp

perdondost

Debussy: La fille aux cheveux de lin

It will be noticed that the broken-line passages marked A begin tentatively as embryonic addenda to the plain-line ones, but are developed later in the piece, even overlapping the plain-line passage in bars 27-30 and becoming the coda. The A passages are over pedalpoints; the B passages are parallel progressions: these are techniques used in Art Nouveau composition to indicate limited dimensionality and mystery, and here contrast with the use of the relatively straightforward quasi-modal harmonization of the plain-line passages:

Analysis 42:									
bar 5	6		8		9				10
D ^b			E ^b E ^b						G ^b
I VI II	IV I VI I		^b II ⁴ ₂ III ⁴ ₂		^b II ⁴ ₂ I ^{7b} _{4b}		VII ^{7b}		I
Debussy: <i>La fille aux cheveux de lin</i> , 5-10									

These modulatory passages thus suggest real time and space (the significance of which will be explained below).

Firstly, the recitatives have a right-hand melodic line of rocking motion that except for the first two bars has a bare accompaniment almost entirely of minims and crotchets, and at the end (bars 28-31) of dotted minims, whereas in the opposed passages all movement is in semiquavers. The recitatives feature two motifs, the rocking one of the first two bars and the rising one of bars 12-13 (that is based on the same rocking rhythm but has a rising shape) is extended into the statements of bars 17 and 18, whose rhythm is still that of the rocking motif. The recitative passages may have had their origin in Debussy's early *mélodie* set to the same poem: James Briscoe notes that the wordless arabesque in the early work (1882-84) is in the same key, is quasi-pentatonic and that there are many passages in the *mélodie* very like the later work, so that Debussy was not only referring to de Lisle but to himself. In particular, the recitative passages in *La fille* recall the vocalized arabesque of the *mélodie*, where it clearly expresses the girl's affectation of artless beauty²¹.

Secondly, the opposed A passages feature an answering motif (first

fully seen in bars 10-11) whose rhythm echoes that of the rocking motif; the B passages feature the mesmeric figure of bar 14 whose melodic rhythm reverses that of the rocking motif.

It is noticeable that the rocking motifs have a normally moving bass and harmonization while the mesmeric ones occur over fixed pedals: the first suggest the ordinary human side of the girl's nature - an innocent girl in ordinary time who happens to be beautiful; the second is her essentially timeless feminine nature that drives her to entrap lovers. Thus the mesmeric motif contradicts the rocking one: the simple nature and simple presentation of the rocking motifs suggest innocence while the contradiction and greater complexity of statement of the mesmeric motifs suggest the opposite - the beguiling arts of sophistication.

It should be noted that these opposites are expressed by the one voice, so that one runs into the other often without any break, as 10-11 form a natural bridge between 9 and 12, and as 14 fits into the flow of the overall 12-18 passage although it clearly says something else. These opposites are parts of the same personality, the contradictory parts of her feminine nature, as de Lisle and Art Nouveau see woman.

The piece does not use the chromatic harmonies that in many other works suggest sensuality, but concentrates on the contrast between the suggestions of exoticism in the quasi-pentatonic melody of the innocence motifs (mostly on the sharps), and the smoothness of the simple G^b diatonic tonality expressed in the sinuous scale-motifs (10-11) and parallel movements (14). The slight exoticism and rocking motions of the innocence motifs are gently sensual and in bars 17-18 seductively beautiful; the reverse-rhythm parallel (14, 33-34) and scalar progressions of the experience motifs are sinuous, smooth and timeless.

Debussy: Ondine

Ondine is a mermaid who lures men to the deeps with her with promises and importunate pleas of apparent sincerity, but reveals her capricious

nature later. The subject has been seen treated above by Ravel; Debussy's piece is later and the particular source, if any, for the title is not stated. She is, of course, a paradigm for Art Nouveau woman²², with enticingly innocent but fatal attractions, and most importantly, she is a wild creature. As such she embodies the mystery of nature and of love that has an irrational, almost irresistible power over otherwise rational man. There is a deeper sense to the concept of Ondine - it is easy for one gazing long at the waves to be mesmerized by their rhythms, to imagine a nymph in the tumbling foam and feel that the sea is animate and thus personified. Finally, Ondine is a metaphor for drowning from the times when only men were sailors and fishers, and some followed her beneath the waves forever.

Debussy's music shows her as playful water-creature from the outset, with *scherzando* sinuous figures (bar 4 right hand, bar 11) preceding the main innocence-motif of bars 16-17 and its subsidiary of bars 20-21, whose simple duplet repetitions are frankly emotive.

The second section from bar 32 introduces a more equivocal element - the B-natural bass ostinato that is taken up by the treble before a brief reprise of the innocence-motif; this constantly emphasized discord is ominous in sound compared to all the previous harmonic sweetness. This simple contrasting of concord and discord is the key to the duality of the piece, and, as will be shown, is emphasized by Debussy.

From the outset in the example below there is just a taste of Ondine's less charming side in the B^b components of the chords over the C[#] pedal in bar 1, because these make an uncomfortable minor second with the A that is removed in bar 2 - the smile is less edged, as it were. Bars 2 and 3 are relatively more gentle, although the chromatic nature of the harmonies is still sensuous. Some sharpness appears in the major sevenths of the bar 4 figures, but bar 5 repeats the bar 3 concords. Bars 6 and 7 are again sharp, but 8 and 9 soft. The clash of major seconds in 10 is

just a little more edged, tantalizingly paused for a moment, ambiguously delicate, with the minor second removed from the major seconds by a quaver.

Example 126:

Debussy: *Ondine*, 1-12

Now follow the *scintillant* appoggiaturas whose minor ninths and seconds reintroduce the sharpness of attack. Significantly, the three notes immediately following are to be played *doux*, not *scintillant*: here Debussy is clearly indicating contrast, and with this direction it is beyond doubt that from the beginning there has been a concealed duality between the mellifluous figures of bars 1-3 and 5 and the sharper ones of 4, 6 and 7. From 11 to 14 the *scintillant* and *doux* figures alternate, and this pattern of alternations continues through the piece, so that it is possible to see soft and sharp figures in opposition right to the very last bar where, as in bar 10, a question mark is left in the air between the F^\sharp and the D chords.

The main motif appears in 16-17 as the most innocent quasi-modal

progression possible - a simple progression by repeated steps up and down the scale, in octaves, over a bland pedal. Possibly the repeated inner A pedal is significant as a slightly ominous ostinato but the gentle concords of 18-25 (*à l'aise, léger, [comfortably, lightly]*) are disarming, as is the following *p expressif*. The *scintillant* and *doux* figures return, however, to cloud the ending in ambiguity.

With the first part of the mid-section (32-43) there is an ostinato of both figure and motif that introduces a discordant B into the E^b tonality and emphasizes its foreignness to the plain parallel harmonies:

Analysis 43:

bar	32-34	35	36	37	38	39	40
	E ^b -----+-----+-----+-----+-----+E ^b -----+-----+						
	I	I VII ⁷	I	I #II	I II ⁴ III #IV V #IV III II I VII ⁶ VI ⁷	V	

Debussy: *Ondine*, 32-40

Most of these chords are simple 5_3 moving in parallel, but until bar 38 all this takes place over an E^b+B pedal, clashing with the otherwise bland harmonies; in 39-40 the pedal is E^b only. The same phenomenon is repeated in the second part (44-53) where the G component of the ostinato clashes with its otherwise dominant seventh harmonies on F[#].

The ostinato itself in both sections sets up a pulse that is mesmeric, which helps to make the sudden jumps in tonality in 49-53 confusing: tonality is not contradicted as in the oppositions of the first third of the piece but the tonal centre appears to be shifting about, so that any firm sense of tonal perspective is being more and more confused:

Analysis 44:

	44-46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53
	F [#] -----+-----+-----+E ^b ---+---C---E ^b ---+---C---A---+---F [#] ---E ^b ---+---A							
	I ⁷ ----	V ⁶	I ⁷	I ⁷	I ⁷ I ⁷	I ⁷ I ⁷	I ⁷ I ⁷	I ²

Debussy: *Ondine*, 44-53

Again parallel harmonies are seen to disorientate sense of tonal centre, creating an atmosphere of mystery in which the essential mystery of *Ondine* as wild creature is being revealed, although still enticingly, for the

harmonies are gentle even if the ostinato \underline{G} , and its corresponding notes in each shift of tonic bass are slightly discordant.

As the final section commences in 54 the ostinato becomes more and more dominant and menacing because of its low register and inexorable chromatic movement $I-b^{\flat}V-I-b^{\flat}V-I-VIII-XV$. What was earlier a pleasant motif-fragment is now because of its pitch and its context less so.

Example 127:

Debussy: *Ondine*, 56-57

The tension thus built up suddenly dissipates on the return of *scintillant* and *doux* figures in 62 and fades almost away in the coda (65-74) - except for the bitonal ambiguities between $\underline{F^{\sharp}}$ and \underline{D} mentioned earlier.

Finally, the means by which sensuality is achieved can be briefly noted. The innocence-motif's step-repetitions are sensuously affecting, and the straightforward ascent and descent of the Lydian scale has a non-diatonic freshness and simplicity that suits its theme. The bridging bars 10, 30-31 and 42-43, particularly the two last cases, have a chromatic wavering at their slower pace that is sensual. It is in the second mid-section, where the ostinato figures jump from one tonic bass to another, that the seemingly merely sensuous melody in consecutive thirds is seen to be positively sensual and mesmeric over its ostinato: the directions are for a slight *rubato*, *murmurando* and *doucement marqué* - sweetness so emphasized that it becomes too much and is seen as sensuality after so much repetition and ostinato.

Arnold Bax: *The Maiden and the Daffodil*²³

The composition was inspired by Harriet Cohen's wearing a daffodil to

a tea-party²⁴; at that time she was still a student at the Royal Academy of Music. Bax was fascinated by her beauty and talent and continued to write music dedicated to her in later years. The title has obvious overtones of Pre-Raphaelite and Art Nouveau in its use of "maiden" - of youthful feminine charms disturbing and teasing masculine sensibilities. The image of a maiden is one of innocence, and that of a daffodil is of beauty in Spring, but the power of nature works through both to captivate men's senses. There is obvious imagery of lightness and skittishness of the maiden in the music, but behind it the same captivating power over men that *La fille* and *Ondine* have.

Arnold Bax subtitles his *The Maiden and the Daffodil*²⁵ an Idyll, and directs that it be "fresh and innocent", with the innocence-motif (bars 3-4) as "playful", with its immediate elaboration (4-9) "playful and capricious" and "bright", so that its credentials as a study of innocence are well established, but with "capricious" suggesting the other side of the maiden's nature.

The innocence-motif is Lydian in character (the major scale with the fourth note raised, as first presented in 1-4) with the consequent A# and C# in 2 and 3 adding a delicately sensuous touch to the motif, preparing the hearer for the more sensual chromatic elements later.

Like Debussy, Bax uses interspersed sections of a more chromatic nature to contrast with the innocence-motif ones, and these always feature a chromatic clouding of major-tonality freshness with elements of minor tonality that conflict with simultaneous major ones. In bars 12-15 there is a *ppp* echo of 4-9 but with a discordant A^b in the alto voice, and a chromatic fall in the tenor voice of G-F#-F that contrasts with the diatonic movement of the similar sequence in bar 5. In 26-32 C alternates with and contradicts C# many times: it is not that bars of minor tonality conflict with minor ones, but that the two effects are heard in such close alternation that they are virtually together. At the same time, the

melodic line becomes winding for the first time (suggesting a touch of sensuality) where until now it has always been proceeding by interval-leaps (suggesting youthful unselfconsciousness). The effect is seen at its greatest when the material of bars 26-32 is reworked in 52-58:

Example 128:

The image shows a musical score for piano accompaniment, divided into two systems. The first system, labeled '53', contains three measures of music. The second system, labeled '56', contains four measures. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. Dynamics include piano (p), pianissimo (pp), and pianississimo (ppp). Performance markings include accents, 'dim.' (diminuendo), 'ril. un poco' (ritardando a little), and 'a tempo'. There are also some asterisks and a '4' marking at the end of the second system.

Bax: *The Maiden with the Daffodil*, 53-58

The opposition of \underline{B} and $\underline{B^b/A^\sharp}$ in 53-54 is continuous, but especially harsh at the two arrowed places. In the emphasized second-beat chord of 56 the treble \underline{F} is strange after the repeated $\underline{F^\sharp}$ of 55, as are the alto-voice clashes at the minor ninth with the tenor trills. At the same time the chromatic falling of each of the inner voices of the ensuing eleven beats is most marked. The suspensions and long trills of this sequence are most noticeable after the marked skipping rhythms of the innocence-motif sections, and the complexity of the counterpoint likewise contrasts with all the earlier simple textures.

The mid-section has a more subtle undermining of the piece's apparent portrayal of innocence in its smooth but irregular accompanimental figures that vary from triplets to quadruplets without their first beat, to a long series of pentuplets. These are heard against a simple ostinato in crotchets whose evenness accentuates the wavering nature of the figures above it, and whose very nature as ostinato is mildly mesmeric, and thus has more than a suggestion of a spell being cast.

Summary

The duality of these pieces is structural, each alternating about

opposing polarities so that the total effect is one of ambiguity, matching that of the characters on whom the music is based. Debussy uses modal scales in both pieces to suggest innocence, but like Bax's Lydian modality there is a light sensuousness hinted at in this, leading towards the more sinuous or chromatic effects that suggest seductive sensuality. These latter are subtly introduced and partly disguised as bridges, as if it is when *La fille and Ondine* are resting from their postures of innocence, or Bax's *Tania* a little more pensive, that their true natures can be seen. The most developed piece, *Ondine*, has ostinato and rhythmic pulse, also shown briefly in the mid-section of *The Maiden* that suggests the deeper rhythms of nature that show *Ondine* and her sisters to be essentially wild creatures.

CLAIR DE LUNE

<i>Clair de lune (Suite bergamasque/3)</i>	1890-1905	Debussy
<i>La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune</i> (<i>Préludes II/7</i>), 1912-13		Debussy

Concept

The expression *clair de lune* has become associated with the poets' Pierrot - the infatuation of the melancholy Pierrot for Colombine, symbolic of his being in love with an idealization of woman rather than with the real one who is far less than that - who is in fact a fickle deceiver both of him and of herself. She, secure in the consciousness that whatever she does he will not cease to love her, is able to act vainly and cruelly; he, meanwhile, continues to love his dream that grows more fantastic as he recoils from the realities of her perfidies. Such a love ennobles him and creates an unreal beauty of its own that is the essence of most love-poetry through the ages - that poetry idolatrous of the ideal woman, who can only exist in dream.

Pierrot, as in the character originally created on stage by Jean-Paul Deburau²⁶, was essentially a *saltimbanque* character translated to the pantomime *funambulesque* arena as an acrobatic and slapstick buffoon. Although his act was based on grotesquerie²⁷, there were moments of wry

despair that showed that he was a natural philosopher about the vicissitudes of life and love. This sort of Pierrot, the apparently feckless and burlesque Deburau persona, became gradually transformed by generations of scenario-writers and poets through the nineteenth century (including Théodore de Banville, Gustave Flaubert, Edmond de Goncourt, Joris-Karl Huysmans, Paul Verlaine, Paul Marguerite and Stéphane Mallarmé) into the sad clown of the *funambules* theatre, a character perhaps deriving more from Antoine Watteau's *Gilles* than from Deburau's Pierrot²⁸. This melancholy Pierrot is moonstruck over the fickle Colombine, who always rejects his gaucheries for the sophistications of Harlequin. In moonlight he expresses his sorrows alone, and thus becomes the *clair de lune mélancolique* of Art Nouveau literature. This aspect is also seen in the folk-tune *Au clair de la lune* where Pierrot is associated with melancholy:

*Ma chandelle est morte
Je n'ai plus de feu*

and continues "je suis dans mon lit". Debussy used the first line of the folk-song as an epigraph for his early *mélodie* "Pierrot"²⁹, in which it features in the accompaniment, and is also seen in parts of *La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune* (for example in the rhythm of the opening phrase). He also set Verlaine's poem twice, in 1882-84 and 1892³⁰, and finally returned to the *clair de lune* theme in 1915, sub-titling his sonata for cello and piano *Pierrot fâché avec la lune* [Pierrot in conflict with the moon].

Theo Hirsbrunner uses the Pierrot-metaphor to characterize the Jules Laforgue-Claude Debussy aesthetic of making life imitate art; here he focuses not so much on the simple melancholy of Pierrot in love as on its deeper debt to the Aesthetic Movement in transforming the stage Pierrot into a projection of the poetic attitude to life³¹. It is perhaps too facile to suggest that the early piano setting of *Clair de lune* to be studied here is the stage Pierrot and the later *La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune* the poetic Pierrot; both have the deeper layer of

significance that Professor Hirsbrunner identifies, as well as the simpler one of the traditional Pierrot.

It is Pierrot's essential ambiguity of character - "très triste, très gai"³² - that appeals to the Art Nouveau creative mind, as he shows melancholy in the midst of fête, or is "presiding over festivity without partaking", in Théodore de Banville's words³³. The audience, however, knows his secret - his moonstruck and hopeless love for Colombine, and his expression of this in poignant mime by moonlight when he can dream alone that Colombine is the angel he loves (rather than the coquette for whom he suffers). This *clair de lune* aspect of Pierrot is in its fantastic and timeless setting essentially Art Nouveau: in the unreal, timeless world of moonlight he can be a hero and love a dream.

Debussy: Clair de lune

As the third piece in his *Suite Bergamasque* this piece has already been considered under Masks, together with the other pieces in the set. Therefore certain aspects only, not covered before, will be referred briefly here by way of comparison with the other work in this chapter - *La terrasse*. The earlier work seems to be echoed in the later, so that it is necessary to notice some aspects of its design before the later work can be better appreciated.

Clair de lune has become a piano piece that is played outside the context of the other three of the set and in the popular mind has become an impressionist rendering of moonlight³⁴, and was even claimed to be a *Promenade sentimentale* by the publisher E. Fromont in an advance notice of 1904³⁵. (The Fromont question and that of the origins of the whole Suite bergamasque set is fully discussed by Roy Howat, who sets out their relation to Debussy's two Verlaine cycles and an original *Suite Bergamasque* set that was to have included *Masques* and *L'isle joyeuse*, around a second sarabande that was possibly *Cahiers d'esquise*³⁶.)

Although an early piece (composed around 1890), *Clair de lune* shares

with *La terrasse* certain features essential to *clair de lune* as Art Nouveau topos expressed in music. Firstly, it is proportionately structured³⁷, a device highly appropriate to a piece whose title concerns lunar influence and thus connotes astrological symbolism. Its seven sections show some distinct contrasts of tonality, some oppositions of chord-types, and a significant interaction of the roles of the hands:

Analysis 45:

bars	1-14	15-26	27-36	37-42	43-50	57-65	66-72
set	Mix	Mix	Mix/chr	diaton	Mix	Mix	Mix
4/5ths					L		
3rds	R		R	R		R	R
2nds	L	<u>LR</u>		L	R		
triads			L			L	L

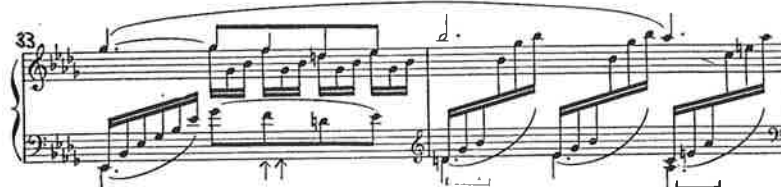
Debussy: *Clair de lune*

The piece falls into three broad divisions 1-26, 27-50, 57-72 according to treatment of its two main themes (the middle is reserved for M_2 , and the outer ones for M_1), and seven smaller sections as shown, denoted by marked changes of texture. Mixolydian modalities (the major scale with flattened seventh, pitched in D^b) are used exclusively for the melodic line in the outer divisions devoted to M_1 , while M_2 goes through transformations - chromaticized Mixolydian, diatonic (major)³⁸, Mixolydian. The most important feature of the chord-types is the opposition of those with the intervals of a second, either at the top of the chord or at the bottom (as in the first and third inversions respectively of dominant sevenths), and those based on thirds. Other elements are firstly, the single section where fourths and fifths are used in broken-chord figures in the left hand, and secondly, left-hand triadic arpeggio-figures.

The modal tonality (for the melodic line) of the outer divisions gives an effect of remoteness and unfamiliarity that supports the *clair de lune* setting of moonlight and melancholy infatuation. The use of more familiar tonality in the middle division coincides with the more urgent (*poco mosso, En animant*) smaller sections, with the 43-50 section returning

to modality under the appropriate direction *Calmato*. The two more agitated sections are also those where the hands are for the first time in opposition (as distinct from being merely complementary though separate in the first section), and specifically the only times where chords of thirds and seconds directly oppose each other. This is evident from the analysis in the diatonic section, but less so in the chromatic one, for it happens accidentally, as a result of the oppositional movement of the hands (for the first time, as has been pointed out), but is very obvious to the ear:

Example 129:



Debussy: *Clair de lune*, 33-34

At the arrowed notes is a clash that is followed by the two bracketed broken chords (#4 and #5 from A^b respectively). These two bars break the mildness of the section hitherto and lead to the emphatic seconds of the *En animant* diatonic section. In the context of the piece's title the contrast between mellifluous passages based on thirds and harsher ones with seconds seems to suggest the difference between Pierrot's infatuation for Colombine and her coquettishness towards him - to the dream of perfect love and the reality of its imperfections. In the 43-50 section the thirds are all at the tops of their chords where in the diatonic section they are at the bottoms, so that the discordance is a little lessened, and disappears after bar 46. In the final two sections there are none of these seconds (those within the bars 55 and 57 chords are relatively innocuous added sixths), so that the element of reality that they represent fades away into the dream-perfections of chords with thirds.

The initial two sections of the piece set the debate, as it were, with the melody mostly in thirds (concord: the dream) while the left alternates thirds and seconds (discord: the reality). In the second

section both hands emphasize by their parallel movement the many seconds in their chords. Thus Debussy realizes in tonal, chordal and textural effects in this early piece the essential duality of Pierrot's infatuation in the *clair de lune* theme.

Debussy: *La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune*

The source of the poetic title has been the subject of speculation, but the recent *Oeuvres complètes de Claude Debussy I/5* (Howat and Helffer) opts for that of René Puaux' 1912 article containing the passage "la salle de la victoire, la salle du plaisir, le jardin des sultanes, la terrasse des audiences au [sic] clair de lune"³⁹. Robert Schmitz also mentions Pierre Loti's *L'Inde sous les anglais* that has "terrasses pour tenir conseil au [sic] clair de lune"⁴⁰, and it is possible that Debussy has this in mind as well; ambiguity of connotation is central to Debussy and to Art Nouveau. It is also interesting to note that Charles Koechlin repeated the idea in his 1916-19 *Les Heures Persanes/8: Clair de lune sur la terrasses*, which like Loti omits the idea of *audiences*, whether of the Delhi Durbar or the *Funambules*. None of these employs Debussy's preposition "du", however, and while this is acknowledged by Robert Schmitz it is not satisfactorily explained.

The importance usually attached to the Puaux and Loti quotations has been that they provide a focus for seeing the piece as being essentially descriptive and hence impressionistic, ignoring the richness of Debussy's complex references. Even so, both are subjects of dream and exaggeration.

However, there are also musical references. The first of these is to the folk-tune *Au clair de la lune* (whose first four notes are those of the opening four semiquavers that are later developed in bars 7 and 25-27). The second reference is to his own song *Clair de lune* from *Fêtes galantes I/2* (1891-1903) set to Verlaine's eponymous poem (the left hand figure in the first bar of the song's accompaniment is echoed in the rhythm and the first four notes of the right-hand figure in bar 20 that continues to 24

and features elsewhere, especially in bar 39, just before the end of the piece; the accompaniment to the words *Au calme clair de lune, triste et beau*, occurring as it does in the middle of long-note octaves, is even closer to this).

In the light of these references it seems clear that the terraced or tiered watchers of moonlight are the audiences watching Pierrot invoking Columbine by moonlight, and that quotations from René Puaux and Pierre Loti are less important than the obvious associations of the *clair de lune* connexions with his earlier work. The following examination of the work, especially the comparison with Debussy's earlier *Clair de lune*, will elaborate this hypothesis.

In *La terrasse* mystery is established at the outset and maintained by the moving of melodic or harmonic sequences through held chords (1-2, 5), and by the interruption of chord-sequences or sustaining by the sounding of a similar chord in an unrelated position and in a different octave bars (304, 10-11, 25-27). The descending chromatic filigree passages (1-2, 5-6, 47-48), the dominance of chromatic effects throughout the piece (notably in bars 13-19 and 25-27, but also as supporting harmonies in 21-23), broken chords (12, 32, 33, 42, 43), whole-tone effects (1 - the upper thirds, 2, 5, 36 - the FGB motif) all further this sense of strangeness. Perhaps it is achieved most of all through the chordal effects that the work features, especially over the many pedalpoints already mentioned, and even alone (31, 39, 41). As these chords move through tonalities and modalities, sometimes anchored by pedalpoints, sometimes floating alone, there is an effect of disorientation that is enhanced by their strange harmonies. This continues through to the very end with the bell-like effects of the last bars that are transformational, since so different from anything preceding.

Allen Forte's analysis⁴¹ shows, amongst other things, that the work contains many harmonic innovations significant in later music, but at the same time uses at one point a pitch-class group identical to that of the

Tristan chord to show that it also looks backwards, consciously or unconsciously (Forte has no doubt it is the former). The place in question is bar 12, and the figure the ascending arpeggio of ${}^7b_5b_{3b}$ form that transforms the bass F as V of B^b of the preceding bar (with its V⁷ chords) into the III (E[#]) of the new section⁴². If Professor Forte is correct in asserting the quotation to be a conscious one, then it is symbolic, for like the *Tristan* chord this arpeggio has a harmonically transformative function in a piece connoting the transforming powers of moonlight.

Professor Forte also draws attention to its use of octatonic sets⁴³ (also seen in *Les fées* and *Ondine*), as for instance in the descending scale of the first two bars, that appears as an eight-note series of 1113 1113 counting downwards from A^b. Such use of new sonorities is more than just a poet-taster's fascination with novelty, but represents part of the exploration of intervallic symmetries and asymmetries that at the time fascinated many composers in this study, and are now receiving critical attention like that of Richard Parks⁴⁴, with Roy Howat's different approach confirming this opinion⁴⁵.

There are many strands of interest in this piece, partly represented by the three staves needed to notate it. There are the strands of descending octatonics, the pedalpoints, the acciaccaturas, the arpeggios and the parallel sequences - the piece is rich in textural variety. But the most important thing about it is something that only the *clair de lune* theme suggests and explains, and it concerns the varieties of chord that seem to vary between alternation, opposition and conjunction with one another. Allen Forte has singled out two for particular mention (above) but there are two more that are far more common; since chords and chordal movement are by far the most numerous components of the various textural strands in the piece, their interaction controls its destiny.

The octatonic scale of the first two bars (and 5-6) emphasizes two notes by repetition - G and F (arrowed):

Example 130:

Debussy: *La terrasse*, 1-4

These notes are the upper notes of the chord suspended below, and are again echoed in the tenor-voice octaves of bars 2 (and 5) which are also members of the octatonic set. All the fifteen chords of the next three bars (first inversions of b^7) are surmounted by two notes forming this same interval of a major second, a form that is not seen again in the rest of the piece until near the end in bars 37-38, and, importantly, by the interaction of the inversion of chords and the C^\sharp octaves at the end of bars 40 and 41. The same interval, however, plays an important role at the foot of chords (making third-inversion b^7 s) from bar 10 (last chord) onwards, where they contrast with the chord-sequences devoid of any seconds (triadic), established in bar 7 and thereafter. This inverted form is symbolically significant in a way that will become clear later.

The tension between chords with seconds (10-11 below) and those without (7-9) is linked to the distribution of voices between the hands, for between 4 and 27, and 32-45 (the end) no chord with seconds appears in the right hand (top stave) while they continually occur in the left (middle and lowest staves), often in conjunction with each other (13-19, 37-38). There are two important places where the roles change: at 21-27, where the left hand also eschews chords with seconds, and 28-32, where both hands use them.

Example 131:

Debussy: *La terrasse*, 7-11

A summary of the dispositions of elements between the hands makes this clear:

Analysis 46:

bars	1	3	5	7	10	13	16	20	25	28	32	37	39	42	44
types	a	b	a'	c	d	c	e	c	c'	b	b'	d	c	f	g
3rds	LR			<u>LR</u>	L	LR	L	LR	<u>LR</u>			R	LR	L	
2nds	LR	LR	L		R				<u>LR</u>	LR	L				
8ves	L		L			R				LR		R		R	
O-set	R		R									R			
5ths														<u>LR</u>	
Accia						L									L

Debussy: *La terrasse*, texture & chord types

The first two lines of Analysis 46 show that the forty-five bars of the piece fall into three sections - nine, twenty-seven and nine bars - and that the fifteen sub-sections are of seven types **a - g**. The next two lines show the sections devoted to chords without seconds (3rds) and with (2nds), their deployment between the hands being indicated as L or R; in the twenty-seven middle-section bars all the 2nds are at the foot of their chords, and at the top in the outer sections. Double underlines represent parallel motion of the hands. The four last lines show the other principal textural devices of bare octaves, octatonic runs, the 43-43 consecutive fourths and fifths, and the two instances of acciaccaturas.

While the real complexities of relative hand-motions and textural types elude this analysis somewhat (they would need a graph of several dimensions), the opposition between chords with and without seconds is plain. The high point of the piece, the *c* and *e* bar-types between 13 and 27, has no chords with seconds at all, contrasting with the *a*, *b* and *d* types flanking them. Brackets delineate two groupings: the top ones show the symmetries of chord-oppositions within 7-37 that are central to the piece, including the reversal of type *d*; the bottom bracket shows a sub-grouping that runs across those above - the bars without any chords of seconds.

There are three other pieces in the Preludes (all Book II) where the hands play opposite roles (*Brouillards*, *Les fées*, *Feux d'artifice*), and Roy Howat has discussed the significance of these in his Modes and Semitones article. The chord-divisions and hand-deployments in *La terrasse*, although not discussed by Dr Howat, obviously have crucial importance, as the analysis shows, and only the title as referring to the *clair de lune* theme affords an explanation. "The watchers of the moonlight" are the people in the audience who, like Pierrot, find perfect love only in dreams, for infatuation is only a dream of love, not of a real person. The chords without seconds, being more concordant (perfect) than those with, represent perfect love, which can only be dreamt under the magic influence of the moon (transmitted in the O-set runs). Before this, attempts to achieve it, as in bar 1, fail - the thirds turn to seconds; after it, (bars 7-9) the dream is more sustained, and the hands move in parallel where in 3-5 their expostulation to the moon has them moving in a variety of ways. In the middle of piece there is a series of states expressive of the oppositions of the two kinds of love, with the high point being that of bars 13-27, from which there is a sudden drop to imperfection - which the discords of the acciaccaturas prefigure (they only appear once more - in the penultimate bar as inevitable mockeries of the dream). The whole mid-

section from 10 to 36 is *Pierrot tourmenté* - one moment ecstatic, the next despairing. For a moment at the end, before the dream fades away, there is a glimpse of an even more perfect love - of the harmony of the spheres seen in the endlessly cycling parallel fourths and fifths.

While this may seem overly fanciful, it is no more so than the many *clair de lune* scenarios invented by writers for the *Funambules*. On the one hand the piece is obviously a study in chord and hand-oppositions, and fits into the sorts of patterns that Roy Howat has traced in the Preludes in his Modes and Semitones article, but on the other the title impels an imaginative reading. Consideration of the more detailed textural picture of the piece does not diminish such an explanation. When the chords with intervals of seconds at their tops are suddenly replaced by ones with seconds at the bottom, (bar 10, referred to earlier) the significance of the inversion is that it follows the first statement of chords with thirds since the first bar, and in this sequence (7-9) both hands have united, as they did with the opposite chords in 3-4. Symbolically, this is the first time in the piece when the imperfections of real love are seen against the greater perfections of that under the moon. The octatonic scales are of a different tonal realm from that of the chromaticized diatonics before them or the pentatonically moving sevenths after, and in any general interpretation must symbolize dream or the influence of moonlight. The parallel chords of 7-9 following are again quite different, being triads moving over a Mixolydian tetrachord (D-E-F#-G or 2-2-1, the first part of the mode). Again, their different tonal realm and triadic nature sets them apart. When these reappear in 25-28 they are at the extremes of the keyboard and pianissimo, accentuating their mystery of effect, with only the middle-ground acciaccaturas with triads to complicate it. Elsewhere the *d* and *e* types have modified triadics (without the thirds) and because the hands are not in parallel, but often actually in contrary motion, the imperfections of intervals of the second occur accidentally (for example in

bar 23).

The complexities of non-parallel motions of the hands in the mid-section 10-36, and the oppositions of diatonic and chromatic motions of melodic line are totally absent from the final section 37-45. In the bars 42-43 that Debussy added later⁴⁶ an even more perfect harmony of fifths is glimpsed:

Example 132:

Debussy: *La terrasse*, 39-45

This passage is approached by a resolution of the tension between seconds and thirds in bars 39-41, where the $\underline{C^\sharp}$ is an inverted pedal on the dominant, with which the parallel 6_4 chords of the middle stave, incorporating intervals of thirds, at first form a V^7 and then a more complicated V^7 with b6 and b2 , in each of which the $\underline{C^\sharp}$ is an interval of a second from the \underline{B} component of the chords. The 6_4 parallel chords that follow are still heard against the memory of the inverted pedal, and when this sounds again in 41 it is once more seen as the dominant of $\underline{F^\sharp}$, to which the middle-stave chords finally resolve via the flattened supertonic, with another second formed between $\underline{C^\sharp}$ and \underline{D} , while the \underline{D} is also a third from \underline{B} . In 42-43 the parallels are in perfect fifths, leaving behind the tensions between seconds and thirds of the preceding bars. The momentary minor ninths (44) of the original ending remain, as well as the thirds in the final chords, as if Debussy's original intention was to show

an imperfectly-reconciled ending to the piece; both echo the bars leading to 42-43 (the ninths echoing the G of the last chord of 41). His purpose in introducing the two bars without thirds is not solely explainable in terms of proportional structure as revealed in Analysis 46⁴⁷, because of the totally different harmonic nature of the alteration: only symbolism of the Ideal Realm can explain this - a symbolism that is apposite to the piece's Golden Section proportion. In the light of the oppositional chord-strand suggested here as a semiological key to the piece's meaning, the altered ending is an obvious solution that must have struck Debussy as being more suitable than that of the original ending where the two opposites come to an uneasy truce. Thus in a Ptolemaic sense the heavenly perfection of fifths superpose the earthly discordant seconds and sensuous thirds. As a final indicator that the Ideal Realm and Perfect Concord is suggested by these two bars, it may be noticed that they are formed from endlessly cycling sequences: the harmony of the spheres is infinite, not bound into time by cadences.

Comparisons

There are certain important similarities of a more general nature about *Clair de lune* and *La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune* that can be noticed briefly as giving more general support to the hypothesis that the two pieces have common methodology. Firstly, both pieces have chains of descending arabesque near their beginnings and endings (bars 2-8 and 52-58; 1-2, 5-6 and 37-38 respectively); each is slow, very soft, winding (taking steps upwards as well as downwards), and strange-sounding (caused by the consecutive paired thirds and subsequent train of inversions in the first piece, and the chromatic character of the second). The descending nature of the movement establishes a melancholy feeling from the outset, and the strangeness helps set a mood of fantasy.

Both pieces have significant use of pedalpoint (1-9, 15-18, 43-46, 51-53; 2-6, 8-12, 16-18, 28-30, 41-45) that creates a limited

dimensionality typical of Art Nouveau. Both emphasize repetitions from their very first notes - the minor thirds at the octave in the first piece, and the four C# chords in the first bar of the second. The subsequent winding arabesques in each piece are composed of repeated patterns of notes, and the Debussyan characteristic immediate repetition of new phrases that in his later pieces is his chief unifying device is found already in the first piece. For instance, it can be seen at the *tempo rubato*, at the *un poco mosso* and at the *calmato* signs. In the second piece it is part of the essential structure (for instance, in the patterning of the arabesque, in the two halves of bar 3, and bars 1-2 as a whole mirrored in bars 5-6; bars 10 and 11, 16-17 and 18-19).

The combined effect of all these limiting and repetitious devices (slowness, softness, strangeness, arabesque, pedalpoints, and the checking of progress with repetitions) is to produce an atmosphere of unreality that is concordant with the whole concept of and setting for *clair de lune* - the Funambules that was the Theatre of the Absurd of the Paris of its day, the moonlight setting with its suggestions of fantasy, Pierrot's loving a dream rather than the real, fickle Colombine, and the nature of mime itself.

Finally, both pieces have evidence of proportional structure, with similar symbolic implications, and it is interesting that both an early and a late piece on the same *topos* should employ this technique; it is clearly an important subject for Debussy, especially when considered in the light of his two song-settings of it. Moonlight and the melancholy-Pierrot scenario must have been linked in some way with the mystico-symbolist world-view that centred around Bailly's bookshop and his *habitués* of the early eighteen-nineties, and the simplest explanation is of course that of supposed lunar influence on personality as asserted by astrology, and in particular the association of moon and the melancholy humours that goes back at least to mediaeval times.

Summary

Although twenty-odd years separate the pieces, they show evidence of intricate design on more than one level - that of proportionate structure as shown by Roy Howat, and of contrasting and oppositional sections and strands with clear symbolic reference. Debussy was attracted to the *clair de lune* theme, writing two songs and these two piano pieces, on which he lavished particular care. Theo Hirsbrunner's characterization of him as "Der *Pierrot lunaire*, eine Schlüsselfigur des Fin de Siècle"⁴⁸ is thus seen to be closer to the truth than ever.

Both pieces evoke dream and melancholy with some similarity of method, using arabesque, pedalpoints and repetition to suggest the unreality of the *Pierrot-moonlight* scenario. Melancholy is a part of both pieces, but it is not melodramatic, for both avoid the pathos of obvious minor progressions. The slowness of each helps set the dream mood, and in *La terrasse* the later techniques like parallel and repeated chords with hands at the piano's extremes achieve real mystery of effect.

End-notes

- 1 Marsh, J.: op. cit., 58, 59; see also her chapters beginning 17, 45, 77.
- 2 Bowers, F.: op. cit., 167.
- 3 Brown, M.: op. cit., 49, note 43.
- 4 Reise, J.: op. cit., 228; Reise calls these "weak resolutions", so that they stand halfway towards foreign notes that are not resolved at all, for reasons of emphasis, in some late compositions.
- 5 de Schloezer, B.: op. cit., 17.
- 6 Ibid, 223.
- 7 de Schloezer, B.: op. cit., 94.
- 8 Curwen Edition 999.019.
- 9 It has, unfortunately, not been possible to obtain a copy of the recently published study of Sorabji's music by Paul Rapoport: *Sorabji; a Critical Celebration*, (Scolar Press, 1992) in time for this study. The only other discussions on the work appear to be that by Michael Habermann: *A Style Analysis of the Nocturnes for Solo Piano by Kiakhosru Shapurji Sorabji, with Special Emphasis on "Le Jardin Parfumé"*, DMA dissertation, Johns Hopkins University 1985, and Roberge, M-A.: *Kiakhosru Shapurji Sorabji. Compositions Sui Generis, Sonances et musique québécoises II/3* (1983), 17-21.
- 10 It would appear from the Foreword to the Luxor Press edition (London, 1963), which is based on Burton's 1886 edition, that although certain tales and a chapter have had to be omitted on legal grounds, what is omitted fits into the broad framework of the five sections plus

- introduction and conclusion. See xv-xvi.
- 11 Sorabji, K.S.: op. cit., Chapter 5 (47-52).
 - 12 Farmer, H.C.: *Arabian Music*, Grove 5/1, 181-85.
 - 13 Marsh, J.: op. cit., 77-78.
 - 14 Jullian, P.: op. cit., 101-113.
 - 15 Mucha, J.: op. cit., 146-47.
 - 16 Harris, N.: op. cit., 242, 243.
 - 17 Pageot, E.A.: *Image de la femme dans le symbolisme: étude comparée de Gustave Moreau et Claude Debussy*, *Sonances* 8 (1988-89), 27-29.
 - 18 Hollander, H.: op. cit., 85.
 - 19 Noske, F.: *Visible and Audible Art Nouveau: the Limits of Comparison* *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13 (1984), 12.
 - 20 E.g. Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 151;
 - 21 Briscoe, J.R.: *Debussy d'après Debussy: the Further Resonance of Two Early Mélodies*, *Nineteenth Century Music* (1981), 112-116.
 - 22 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 158, 185, 213, 230.
 - 23 The manuscript title is *To a Maiden with a Daffodil*, and Lewis Foreman uses this title in his text: Foreman, L.: op. cit., 129, 450.
 - 24 *Ibid*, 129.
 - 25 There is little critical literature on Bax's piano works apart from Lewis Foreman's monograph: *Bax: A Composer and his Times*, (London, Scholar Press 1983); Gwilym Beechey has some mention of piano works in *Legacy of Arnold Bax*, *Musical Opinion* CVI/1270, 1271 (Aug-Sep 1983), 348-51, 357-63, 383.
 - 26 Robert Storey: op. cit., considers the spelling "Debureau" a later corruption; Debussy spells it as *De bureau* in his *Pierrot* (Wenk, A.: op. cit., 295).
 - 27 Storey, R.: op. cit., xiv and 5.
 - 28 Jones, L.E.: *Sad Clowns and Pale Pierrots. Literature and the popular comic arts in nineteenth century France*, (Lexington, Kentucky, French Forum 1984), but see Robert Storey's comments on Jones' work in Storey, R.: op. cit., xv.
 - 29 *Quatre mélodies inédites*, published in *Revue Musicale*, May 1926, no.3
 - 30 See Nichols, R.: *Debussy's Two Settings of Clair de lune*, *Music and Letters* XLVIII/3 (July 1967), 229-35.
 - 31 Hirsbrunner, T.: *Debussy und seiner Zeit*, (Bern, Laaber 1981), 43.
 - 32 Jones, L.E.: *Pierrot-Watteau. A Nineteenth-Century Myth*, (Tübingen, Gunter Narr Verlag; Paris, Editions Jean-Michel Place 1984), 50-51.
 - 33 *Idem*, 7.
 - 34 E.g., Schmitz, R.E.: op. cit., 53-55, even though he has earlier acknowledged some of the theatrical origins of the set-title (42-44).
 - 35 Lésure, F.: *Catalogue de l'oeuvre de Claude Debussy* (Geneva 1971), 74; see comment on this in Orledge, R.: *Debussy's Piano Music: some second thoughts*, 23.
 - 36 Howat, R.: *Debussy, "Masques", "L'isle joyeuse" and a lost Sarabande*, 17-31. For the Fromont involvement see Notes 2 in this article.
 - 37 Howat, R.: *Debussy in Proportion*, 41-45.
 - 38 In the context of the rest of the piece this passage might be termed Ionian, with its harmonies resting somewhat non-diatonically on the sub-mediante and leading-note.
 - 39 *Oeuvres complètes de Claude Debussy I/5*, Durand-Costallot, 1985, xvii.
 - 40 Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 175.
 - 41 Forte, A.: *Pitch-Class Set Genera and the Origin of Modern Harmonic Species*, *Music Theory* 32/2 (1988), 254-263.
 - 42 *Ibid*, 263.
 - 43 *Ibid*, 257.
 - 44 Parks, R.S.: *Pitch Organization in Debussy: Unordered Sets in "Brouillards"*, *Music Theory Spectrum* II (1980), 120.
 - 45 Howat, R.: *Modes and Semitones*, 81-91.
 - 46 Orledge, R.: *Debussy's Piano Music. Some second thoughts*, 21-23.

- 47 Golden Section structure (identified in Howat, R.: *Debussy in Proportion*, 158) does not seem an issue here, for increasing the total of bars from 43 to 45 only shifts the Golden Section division of the whole piece from bar 27 to 28, when the climax of the piece is 30.
- 48 Hirsbrunner, T.: *Debussy und seine Zeit*, 39-56.



The themes treated in this chapter - *Pierrot burlesque*, the grotesque, evil and death - concern the most extreme-sounding music in the Art Nouveau keyboard repertory. Together they serve to underline the fact that the fantastic world of Art Nouveau always implies a dark side, one that obsessed creative sensibilities like those of Arthur Rackham, Aubrey Beardsley, Albert Giraud and Joris-Karl Huysmans.

PIERROT *Trois mouvements de pétrouchka* 1921 Stravinsky

Concept

The *clair de lune* works discussed earlier dealt with the pale, melancholy Pierrot who was more a creation of the poets than of the theatre itself¹. The Pierrot of the work above is a much more extreme character. The original Baptiste Deburau creation was a rumbustious and lively buffoon whose pranks and *joie de vivre* were such good theatre that they were never quite forgotten even in the heyday of the poets' melancholy Pierrot. Like the French Pierrot, Stravinsky's *Pétrouchka* has developed from the *Commedia dell'arte*, but Russian traditions based on the *balagany* or booth-theatre², without the *clair de lune* bypath, retain the liveliness of the picaresque *Commedia* original.

This Pierrot stands in opposition to the melodramatic, *clair de lune* character; he is more extreme and dramatic, and continues to amuse through his suffering.

Stravinsky: *Trois mouvements de Pétrouchka*³

This is an arrangement for piano by the composer from his 1911 ballet, with some scenes compressed and run together. *Pétrouchka* is a puppet whereas Pierrot is a pantomime clown⁴, but his mixture of melancholy and manic activity, his love of the Ballerina and rivalry with the Blackamoor are essentially the Pierrot-Colombine-Harlequin scenario⁵. There is still a lively stage presence and repertoire concerning Pierrot

in the Art Nouveau period that is reflected in visual art, particularly in the illustrations of Aubrey Beardsley, for whom Pierrot is an important figure in his own right (*The Jilting of Pierrot*, *The Death of Pierrot*) and also a sub-motif in many pictures of revellers and maskers.

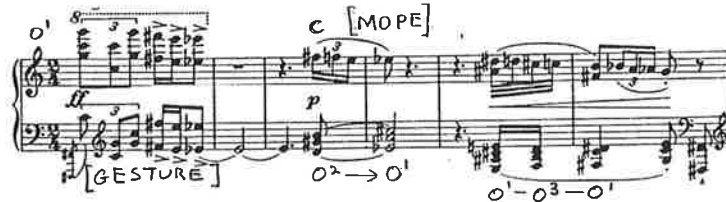
Pierrot figures prominently in the many French poems of the period that are so titled or use *Clair de lune* (notably in Verlaine's *Fêtes galantes* and Albert Giraud's *Pierrot lunaire* collection). He appears in other works in the Art Nouveau repertory: Granville Bantock's overture *The Pierrot of the Minute* of 1908, after Ernest Dowson's story; Joseph Holbrooke's *Pierrot*, a ballet suite for solo piano 1916-1919 (after his opera *Pierrot and Pierrette* of 1909; Cyril Scott's *Pierrot and the Moon Maiden* of 1912; and Abel Decaux' four *Clairs de lune* of 1900-07 (the last three, unfortunately, not procurable for this study).

That Pierrot was a key concept for Debussy is argued by Theo Hirsbrunner in the first chapter of his monograph⁶, where, after discussing his song-settings of De Banville and Verlaine and the epigraph of the cello sonata he develops the idea of Pierrot as dandy, as seen in the characters of Art Nouveau artists Aubrey Beardsley, Oscar Wilde and Debussy himself⁷. This is an interesting aspect of the Pierrot character, but not the only extreme to which the concept could be taken, as is seen in the *Pierrot tourmenté et ironique* of Abel Decaux' four *Clairs de lune* 1900-07⁸ and Arnold Schoenberg's setting of twenty-one of the fifty *Pierrot lunaire* poems by Albert Giraud. In *Die Gestalt des Pierrot Lunaire* Theo Hirsbrunner traces the development of the lunatic Pierrot from Symbolist poetry, from which much of Art Nouveau's extremism derives⁹.

The three dances of Stravinsky's *Trois mouvements de pétrouchka* - *Danse russe*, *Chez pétrouchka*, *La semaine grasse* (Shrovetide) - all portray the *très gai*, slapstick side of Pierrot¹⁰, but with hints of his reverse face of *très triste*¹¹. In this case, however, it is a different sort of

melancholy from the wistfulness of Debussy's *Clair de lune* from *Suite bergamasque*, for it is that of the sudden wry face pulled by a clown to make the audience laugh, seen in the downwards chromatic motif of bars 3-6 of *Chez pétrouchka* (II) that is interpolated between the extravagant gestures of bars 1-2 and 7-8.

Example 133:

Stravinsky: *Chez Pétrouchka*, 3-6

Here the two figures of **gesture** and **mope** are in total contrast, but the unrelated bass drum note (F[#]) at the end shows that the sad face of the mope-figure is fraudulent. This sort of mock-pathos that degenerates into bathos, or *mélancolie d'artifice*, appears at intervals like those of the falling semitones of bars 17-18 and the alternating tones of bars 112. In 46-49 the juxtaposition of mock-pathos and buffoonery results in bathos:

Example 134:

Stravinsky: *Chez Pétrouchka*, 46-49

The acciaccatura figure receives extended treatment in the *Andantino* (52-69), where its pathos is presented as self-parodying mockery, the frequent acciaccaturas sounding like mock tears or catches of the voice. The first movement has a brief moment of reflectiveness that might be construed as sad but seems ambiguous (*Poco meno mosso*, 89-95); the third has none at all, so that throughout the suite it is the burlesque rather than the

clair de lune Pierrot that is being portrayed.

(Abel Decaux' *Clairs de lune* 1-4 and Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*, on the other hand, treat the effect of the moon as causing Pierrot lunatic delusions, so that his humour is seen as desperate and inept against the terrors he dreams; this is *Pierrot lunatique*, or *tourmente*¹². Schoenberg's song-cycle can be seen as projecting from Jugendstil into expressionist dimensions¹³, and it is also possible that the Decaux works have this dimension as well as an Art Nouveau one.)

Stravinsky's three movements suit his picture of Pierrot as buffoon. First is a folk dance, with connotations of peasant, rough humour and jollity; second is the real Pierrot himself (*chez Pétrouchka*), in which we see his whole repertoire of tricks as revealing the fraudulent but engaging mountebank for what he is, with leaps and pratfalls, like mock-pathos, signifying his ironical and irreverent approach to life. The third piece is about the last frantic revelry of Shrovetide that precedes the seriousness of Lent and because of its excesses, makes lenten gloom result from the inevitable hangovers after surfeit. There is a deeper aspect to unbridled Shrovetide enjoyment of the senses - in the suggestions of hellfire in the ashes and repentance of Ash Wednesday that marks the end of Shrove festivities.

Danse russe

Example 135:

Stravinsky: *Danse russe*, 1-8

The first movement begins with relatively simple figures whose plainness of movement (the parallel diatonic progressions of bars 1-8, 35-

44 and later sequences, the four-note repetitive motif of bars 9-34) easily suggests unsophisticated folk dance. The pattern for the whole movement - one in which simple chords are set in opposing alternations - is established at the very beginning as the left hand texture of $I^7 \times I^6_4$: The repetitions are varied only in rhythm and accent, so that there is patterning in which subtle transformations of the two-bar M_1 take place over the same basic rhythmic pulse.

The second motif is even shorter:

Example 136:

Stravinsky: *Danse russe*, 9-21

M_2 can be seen as a single-bar unit that begins in bar 11, whose raw notes are heard in a series of kaleidoscopic permutations from 15-20. In 21 the motif shifts suddenly to \underline{D} to continue the same process. The limited-gamut M_1 and M_2 (each ranging over only five consecutive diatonic notes) provide solely through permutations and key-shifts the development of the movement. Intensive repetition of such limited material is excessively narrow, and to add to its hypnotic effect is the fact that each repetition-unit consists of the same notes whose order keeps changing, so

that the aural senses begin to spin. These sequences keep rising through a succession of key-shifts as follows:

Analysis 47:

key	G	a	d	f [#]	g	G	e	A	a	G	G
	M ₁	M ₂	→	→	→	M ₁	M ₂	→	→	M ₁	M _{1a}
units	2	2	1	1	2	2	4	3	3	4	6

Stravinsky: *Danse russe*, structure

Although the tempo does not alter even fractionally during the rise of the two M₂ sequences, the impression caused by the rise is that tension is increasing, to be released in the returns of M₁. Thus the music is powerfully affective.

The other important feature revealed in the example above is the transformability of motif: not once in 15-20 does the original form of M₂ as presented in bar 11 appear, and yet all the material is recognisable as stemming from it. Here is a method of transformation that suggests the way Art Nouveau line based on natural forms is used in profuse variety for patterning in its pictures. The essence of motif in each case is not its form, but its components as bases for interweaving. In Art Nouveau pictures this is line; in Stravinsky it is fragments of motivic shape - here the G\F[#]\E/A\E basic unit split into mini-sequences beginning at different points, and differently rhythmmed, all within the overall context of the pedalpoint and relentless pulse of each four-bar unit.

Thus each bar contains echoes, distorted and jumbled, of the original motif. These developmental or, rather, permutational sequences are a realm where everything is constantly shifting - except for the insistent rhythmic pulse.

Returning from this consideration of the detail to that of the larger picture of the whole, textural complications can be seen beginning to intrude into these sequences from bar 45, like the inner figures of demisemi-quavers, the acciaccaturas in the high treble, and the 8-5-1 movement in bass octaves that initiates the episodes in bar 44 and is

heard again in bar 52.

Example 137:

Stravinsky: *Danse russe*, 45-48

In the last bar of this example the bar 45 treble motif may be seen transformed in the treble of 48 into something like the gesture of Example 133, while the germ of the moping-motif in that example may be seen in the tenor of this, in the same bar. The original of the gesture-motif is found in bars 10-12 of this first movement, and in transformations like these continues to resonate throughout its length. Not the smallest part of this resonance is due to its ostinato rhythm, which only pauses for the *poco meno mosso* of seven bars.

This driving rhythmic pulse is not checked by the cross-rhythms that complicate it from bar 59, or from the series of rushing bass scales after bar 71 that further the complexity, approaching the interrupted cadence of bar 88 where it finally breaks down. It is almost as if Pierrot has been increasingly interfering with the dance until it breaks down, when he has the centre of attention for his few bars of parodying echo (89-95). While the piece's origin as ballet-scene means that there is at least this much linear progression suggested, the most notable thing about this aspect is the relative **lack** of progression, as the piece constantly repeats sequences that are themselves made from very limited motivic materials. It is the nature of dance to be repetitive, and earlier consideration of works under the theme of dance have shown just how important the form of the dance is to musical Art Nouveau: the movement of figures moving repetitively and circularly through formalized sequences is the balletic equivalent of imitative swirls and decorations on the two-dimensional surfaces of Art Nouveau pictures. The pictures eschew depth in the same

way that literary Art Nouveau tends to ignore simple linear time-narrative: what is being portrayed is pattern rather than progression, states of being rather than movement through time.

In *Danse russe* this is reflected in three ways: firstly the ostinato repetitiveness of the folk-dance sequences¹⁴ in which there is movement without progression. Secondly, in the extensive use of pedalpoint, with the piece changing suddenly from one pedal to another, usually unrelated (the only non-pedal sequence being the rising chromatics of bars 49-51) so that there is no harmonic linearity of progression. Thirdly, the unprepared changes of sequence or cadence (seen for instance at bars 8-9, 21-22, 44, 58-59, 70-71, 88-89, 96, and especially in the startling effect of the fortissimo chords in bars 122, 127 and at the very end), the effect of which is a further sense of disorientation from the normal perspectives of formal progress.

Between these sudden changes of movement the dance proceeds so repetitively and with such limited, plainly moving motif-permutation that there is an effect of monotony produced by the ostinato of rhythm and motif. This monotony occurs despite, or perhaps partly because of, the sudden changes from one pedal-point and its figure to another. It is as if the Pierrot-acrobatics are for the most part defeated by the stolidity of the peasant dance. That it is a deliberate effect is seen in the last piece particularly, but also, surprisingly enough, in the second.

Chez pétrouchka

The discords of the first bars, seen below and continued throughout the movement, arise from the uses to which Stravinsky puts his octatonic sets. The opening gesture or flourish is one that Debussy makes oblique reference to in *Brouillards*, as will be shown in Chapter 20. It will be seen that most of the two lines is constructed from the O¹ pitch-set, with the chromatic set used for the treble of 3-6 over transforming O-sets.

Example 138:

Stravinsky: *Chéz Pétrouchka*, 1-12

The double fanfare of 9ff is composed from two arpeggios of O^1 , the major triad on the \underline{C} and the first-inversion major triad on the $\underline{F^\#}$ or tritone. The two intervals of major second and tritone become twin focuses of the movement, forming two of its dimensions.

Analysis 48:

Stravinsky: *Chez Pétrouchka*, pitch-set O^1 utilization

The two major triads at the tritone $\underline{C}-\underline{F^\#}$ are the twin and equal dimensions of much of the movement; they are connected by the first-inversion of the $\underline{F^\#}$ triad in the first trumpet-call of bars 9ff. The second trumpet-call of 23ff has different twin dimensions - those of the same first-inversion $\underline{F^\#}$ chord and of the \underline{G} triad of set O^2 . The very discordant accompanimental texture to the *Furioso* trumpet call in 35-43 is simply formed from putting together these two chords.


The juxtaposition of differently-centred trumpet-calls parallels that of the expected and the bizarre all through the movement. All is surprise and ambiguity of tonality. This is a different aural realm from that of *Danse russe*, where all is a mosaic of sounds; here there is a sharp differentiation of tonal planes based on the two arpeggios that derive from the O^1 pitch-set.

Just before the ending, in the *Lento* passage, there is a hint of

melancholy, but all the rest of the movement, showing Pétouchka on his home ground, is *Pierrot grotesque*.

This movement proceeds by means of sudden changes of motif and figure, as might be expected from the nature of Pierrot's clowning, and continues with many short sequences of a bar or more for the first fifty-seven bars, when the *adagietto* pathos-motif of bars 46-48 becomes a dirge-like figure that underlies all the fits and starts of the upper voice until bar 70. At the *andantino* pace of this section this is a long and repetitious episode, with the droning of the pathos-motif never being quite subdued by all the filigree above it. The tension between the pathetic and clowning motifs is patent: pathos is mocked and ridiculed by the runs, leaps, grace-note figures and sudden changes of sequence. The filigree of this movement is as excessive and exaggerated as anything in the repertory:

Example 139:



Stravinsky: *Chéz Pétouchka*, 64-66

Here the acciaccaturas in the treble are sheer acrobatics, but with a taste of pathos in their rising through consecutive chromatic steps in 64-65 and echoing this in 66, all over the drone figures of the lowest stave, and the typically limited nature of the melody in the middle stave.

Whether Stravinsky copied limited-gamut folk-tunes here or deliberately aimed at narrowness of range, there is an effect, felt throughout the three movements, of an intensity of focus that with the obsessive rhythms is highly mesmeric, despite the frequent juxtaposition of interrupting musical patterns.

The acrobatics of the filigree are summed up in the cadenza (the lengthened bar 88), and while in the drone passage of the last example the

narrowness of the focus is hypnotic, in the cadenza the furiousness of the movement belies the temporary pauses on the B.

The bizarreness of the movement also lies in the juxtapositions of discordant voices over the pedalpoints, and the ways these pedals often waver between contiguous notes, both producing an effect of uncertainty as to the harmonic basis of each sequence. For instance, the opening bars 1-8 (seen in Example 137 above) lie over a pedal on E^b, but this tonality is confused by the initial acciaccatura on the bass F[#], the slide from D to E^b in bars 3-4 and from E to F to F[#] in bars 5-6, and another bass F[#] in bar 6 before the slide from E^b to E in bars 7-8 that sees the sequence finish a semitone away from its original tonal base. The second sequence, from bar 9, begins with simultaneous pedals a tone apart, and this bitonality continues for most of the next thirty-eight bars. The cadenza itself is based around oppositions of tonal base - B^b / C[#] against B - the three upper notes of the three octatonic sets. Thus while the piece consists of a series of sequences over pedals just as in the first movement, the pedals are themselves constantly confused, producing a different but equally effective sense of disorientation and lack of linear perspective that may be seen as an analogue of visual Art Nouveau's lack of depth in its "flat" canvases, and juxtaposition of the real and the unreal in its imagery. Around this limited perspective the filigree motifs of grace-notes, leaps and runs provide a decorative ornament like the swirls and stylized shapes of visual Art Nouveau.

La semaine grasse

The third movement has as its setting the revelry of the pre-Lent period that attempts by excess to compensate for the austerity that is to follow, beginning with Ash Wednesday. As with the first movement there is the suggestion of folk-dance at the beginning in the plainness of both motif and bass. All the motifs and figures except the main theme of 49-52 have once more very limited gamuts, so that the narrowness of focus means

much intensive repetition of notes as well as of phrases. The bass is either a simple pedal or one wavering between D and E for the first thirty-four bars, which sets the pattern for the whole of the piece until bar 248 (with only a short moment, at 67-70, where the bass moves through semitonal steps). Where the bass occasionally expresses a melodic motif the pedalpoint (or simultaneous pedals) merely shifts to the treble (for instance, 83-93, 136-140), so that as with the other movements there is the strange effect an absence of normal harmonic progression.

As with the other two movements, this is based on the oppositions of simple triads. Here the oppositions begin with $I^5_3 \times II^6_5$, over which a figure of only four consecutive diatonic notes plays in thirds for twelve bars. There are thus the simplest of repetition-patterns to open this movement, even simpler than those of the first movement. Despite the appearance of a motif-fragment (with a gamut of six notes) in 13, the opposition of I and II chords continues unchanged until bar 24. There are other similarly lengthy patterns of opposing chords throughout the movement, and the effect of the sustained pedalpoints is that of the limited dimensionality of the puppet-theatre.

From bars 168-203 and 248-289 there is another unusual effect in which the E bass pedal and the chords above it (typically based around 7_4_2 , in effect a variant of the dominant seventh) suggest that the E is the dominant of A, preparing for a resolution to it that never comes. This leaves a feeling of working towards climax and resolution that is suspended for a total of seventy-nine bars, interrupted only by an unprepared jump to a G pedal for bars 204-247. This is a case where the accompanimental figures actually suspend all melody, and in its overall effect is typical of Art Nouveau excess (like the Pierrot character itself). Meanwhile the reiteration of the pedal E with every crotchet beat during all this time (merely shifting to G for the interpolated bars 204-247) provides a voodoo-like effect that not only takes hold of the

dancers but also of the listener: it is an insistence of rhythmic pulse that goes well beyond ordinary ostinato in its affective power.

Example 140:

Stravinsky: *La semaine grasse*, 182-89

From the quasi-cadenza passage beginning at 290 the rhythmic monotony begins to lessen, especially with the 5_4 sequences of 316-344, and the actual climax comes only with the glissandi and final chord of the closing four bars.

Throughout the entire suite, normal harmonic progression is replaced by extended pedals, as outlined above, or by occasional intervallic leaps, so that the nearest approaches to harmonic motion are parallel progressions over pedals like those of the final twenty bars of the last movement. This abandonment of conventional harmonic utterance is seen throughout the other Art Nouveau repertoire but is fully developed here. This is not only a new harmonic methodology (although owing much, perhaps, to Ravel's use of bitonality), and thus in accordance with the Art Nouveau ideal of producing an entirely new art (perhaps more closely achieved in such music than in most visual art), but it is dramatically affective, with a power not possible through conventional means¹⁵.

GROTESQUE *Sérénade grotesque* 1893
 Étrangeté Op.63/2 1911

Ravel
 Skryabin

Concept

Preoccupation with the grotesque is a direct result of Art Nouveau methods of stylization: the turning of figures and landscapes into patterned compositions necessarily involves distortions that can be shaped into fantastic conceits. Thus the hideous crones and devils that attend Aubrey Beardsley's *Salomé* and *Herodias*¹⁶, the terrified face in Edvard Munch's *The Scream*¹⁷, or the horrible creature being wrestled with in the swirls of dark water in Brunellei's *Novissima* 1902 illustration¹⁸. The grotesque is not necessarily evil, as can be seen in the comic bourgeois couple of Bruno Paul's *Simplicissimus* caricature¹⁹, the absurd coiffes and garments of the belles and beaus in Beardsley's *Rape of the Lock* series²⁰ or the common Art Nouveau method of making twining flowers, grasses and vines taller than humans in characteristically fantastic landscapes²¹.

Ravel: Sérénade grotesque

This early work (c.1893) shows his early fascination with the grotesque that later is to flower in *Gaspard de la nuit*, and recall Ricardo Viñes' description of this side of Ravel as "a mixture of the Middle Ages, Catholicism and satanic impiety"²².. It was possibly influenced by Chabrier's *Bourrée fantasque* of 1891²³. In his 1928 lecture on contemporary music in Houston, Texas, Ravel acknowledged his early debt to Chabrier, Edgar Allan Poe and Mallarmé - "illimitable visions but of precise design enclosed a mystery of sombre abstractions"²⁴ - the description fits Ravel's *Sérénade* and *Gaspard*.

The work explores the outer limits of the diatonic system rather than essaying a new one like the octatonic. His principle is to employ discords for their own sake without any considerations of resolution, and already in this, his first composition for piano, he is fascinated with the dissonance of the major second, particularly in parallel sequences, and anticipates in the $\#^4_2$ doubled chords of the opening bars (1-10) some of the later effects of *Scarbo*.

Example 141:

Très rude ($\text{♩} = 100$)

The musical score consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked 'Très rude (♩ = 100)' and includes the instruction 'tritone' with an arrow pointing to a chord in the right hand, and 'pizzicalissimo' below the bass line. The second system continues the piece with similar complex harmonic structures.

Ravel: *Sérénade grotesque*, 1-7

An additional disorientating effect in this passage is the avoidance of the tonic F^\sharp , so that with the parallel chords and reinforcement of G at the beginning of bars 4 and 8, followed by what is in effect a $7^b_{5^\sharp}$ broken chord on that G , the hearer's sense of tonic bass is confused. Thus from the outset there is ambiguity of tonic reference.

When the first *Presto* section begins rhythmic ambiguity is added to that of tonality. Firstly, the pulse changes from crotchet 100 in 2_4 to dotted crotchet 120 in 6_8 . Secondly, all the accompanimental right-hand chords are syncopated, and thirdly, the second note of the melodic line has a suspension that delays any quick comprehension of the new rhythmic order. While tonality begins as being clearly based over F^\sharp , it is soon clouded by appearing to shift to G as before (bars 20-28). Above this the syncopated chords have so many sharp dissonances (without resolutions) that mean that they seem to float in an atonal realm of their own; most chords are based around major seconds, sevenths or ninths, with especially piquant ones like the $9^5_{\sharp_4}$ in bar 16 to be played *sforzando*. The ascending and descending inversions in bars 19-23 end in note-clusters of major seconds - all the four tones of the tritone sounded together - which is again tonally disorientating.

From bar 33 the first notes of an ostinato are sounded that reappear throughout the rest of the piece after every few bars. This ostinato, in contrast to everything around it, firmly states its tonality since it

consists of simple repetitions of octaves and fifths. But its repetitions occur in different parts of the compass, merely serving to signal that the tonic bass has suddenly jumped from where it was before. In bars 41-56, for instance, each jump is preceded by some bars of indeterminate major seconds and followed by the ostinato. Even this device, therefore, fails to provide a simple tonal horizon, but appears in different places like an elusive echo.

From bar 53 the ostinato is seen at last to be guitar imagery that is to punctuate the performance of a the serenade proper. The melody is rhythmically free, with duplets and triplets juxtaposed in its phrases, so that the pulse between bursts of the ostinato is uncertain. But by far the most disorientating effect is that of the accompanimental chords that cause the nominal tonic to appear to waver back forth between G^b and E^b .

Example 142:

The musical score for Example 142 is a piano piece by Ravel. It is in 3/4 time and features a melody in the right hand and a complex accompaniment in the left hand. The tempo is marked 'Poco piu lento' and the mood is 'très sentimental'. The left hand features a prominent ostinato of triplets. The right hand melody consists of phrases with duplets and triplets. The score is numbered 57-59.

Ravel: *Sérénade grotesque*, 57-59

Apart from the confusion of the D^b in the preliminary broken chord, the left-hand triplets alternate between apparent chords of the seventh on G^b and triads on E^b . A few bars later there is a brief moment of tonal tranquillity as the ostinato reappears embellished with thirds; only the reprise of this later (132-33) is to provide any further clarity of tonality, for with the return of the *Presto* figures in 75 ambiguity also returns. The last page features alternations of the opening figure and the ostinato in a *stretto* that ends the piece as ambiguously as it began.

The overall effect throughout is of harsh discords and many sudden changes that startle and confuse. The hearer is constantly unsettled, with tonal and rhythmic horizons always at question in a surrealist world.

Skryabin: *Étrangeté*

This 1911 work is paired in Opus 63 with *Masque*, which is almost as unusual in sound. The title [Strangeness] is connected to Skryabin's mystical notions, to his adopting the notion from the Greek mysteries that music is the materialization of the unseen forces of nature²⁵, and Faubion Bowers connects this work to Sonata 9, the *Messe noir*²⁶. At this stage of his life everything was directed towards the projects of the *Acte préalable* and *Mysterium*²⁷, and the significance of the title may have to do with his belief in occult forces that could be affected through music. Leonid Sabaniev feels that this is evidence of Skryabin's satanism²⁸, but Boris de Schloezer explains how this is to misunderstand the fundamental dualism of symbolist systems that seek to harmonize opposing forces by embracing both²⁹. Art Nouveau can be said to adopt something like this ambivalent attitude to good and evil, even if only for artistic rather than philosophical reasons; the philosophical stance is, however, implied in its that part of its iconography drawn from primitive and Classical animism.

Étrangeté is based on octatonic sets, whose strangeness of sound to diatonically accustomed ears has already been remarked, but there is an echo of M_1 and possibly even of M_2 in the contemporaneous Sixth sonata to *Étrangeté*'s M_2 in this work that may suggest something of that sonata-motif's character of winding deviousness.

Example 143:

Handwritten musical notation for Example 143, showing three motifs. The first motif is labeled "ÉTRANGETÉ M₂" and the second "SONATE VI M₂". The third motif is labeled "SONATE VI M₁". Each motif is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various rhythmic values and accidentals, with "LO²" written above the first two motifs.

Skryabin: *Sonata 6*, M₁; *Étrangeté* 8-9

All three motifs share the same octatonic set, and *Étrangeté*'s M_2 is based on C^\sharp (its first long note), which makes its set left-handed, like those

of the Sixth sonata. Its first motif is ambiguous in this respect, with its first and last notes (C, D[#]), both emphasized, indicating right-handed O^1 , but with its harmonic context being the foundation of B^b, which would indicate left-handedness. Without following the many ambiguities of both motifs' manifestations through the work in detail, enough is clear about them to show that Skryabin is certainly invoking evil.

Two further pieces of evidence may be adduced. Firstly, the work is largely formed of arpeggios, which at their first appearance in bar 3 are described as *aigu*, *avec une étrangeté subite*, and although they clearly begin right-handedly (O^1 emphasizing F[#] and C), they end the work on a high B^b which, although *pianissimo*, is accented, and **may** indicate left-handedness - "may", because the same arpeggio begins from a long A that would indicate right-handedness. Invoking evil powers is not a light matter to Skryabin, who by this ambiguity shows their uncertainty of appearance - an essential quality already noticed in the rubrics and motifs of the Sixth and Ninth sonatas.

Secondly, the French rubrics accompanying the two motifs here are, for M_1 , *gracieux, délicat*, and for M_2 *avec une fausse douceur* [false sweetness]. The import of the second rubric is unmistakably that of veiled evil, while that of the first, from which the arpeggios arise, is perhaps beneficent. The first is fairy-imagery, the second sorcerer/sorceress imagery as in the sonatas.

Example 144:

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is for the first motif, labeled 'Lo' gracieux, délicat' and 'p'. It features a melodic line with a grace note and a bass line with a sustained chord. The bottom staff is for the second motif, labeled 'avec une étrangeté subite' and 'aigu'. It features a more complex, arpeggiated melodic line with a grace note and a bass line with a sustained chord. Both motifs are in 3/4 time and feature arpeggiated figures.

Skryabin: *Étrangeté*, 1-3

The piece is thus a series of ambiguities, with even the M_2 motif

veiling its left-handedness by being over a right-handed bass foundation (C^\sharp , the first note of set O^2). The arpeggios are throughout the piece of contradictory "handedness", so that it never quite becomes clear whether its *aigu* figures are to be seen as benign or evil.

Both motifs are like Art Nouveau visual motifs, the first constructed from whiplash figures and the second from sinuous windings with some chromatic elements that suggest sensuality. Like M_1 in the Sixth Sonata, M_2 in *Étrangeté* begins gradually, with a similar syncopation on its second note and a pronounced *douceur*, particularly in its last three notes. The arpeggio figures, the dominant element in the piece, are themselves like whiplashes, so that the piece is largely composed of flourish or mannerisms - another strangeness.

Between most arpeggios are single notes either reiterating the final note of M_1 (thus forming an inverted pedal) or echoing the last two notes of M_2 ; only once does this vary, when these notes rise through a tritone in whole tones in 21-23 as O -sets change to allow this. Apart from this the pattern of the piece is set by bar 9 without any development of motif or figure, so that it is a study in repetitions that except for three bars merely move in step-multiples of minor thirds (natural steps in octatonic scales).

Étrangeté is thus a piece of the sharpest contrasts, firstly between the soft, sensual motifs and sharp arpeggio figures, secondly between the subtle ambiguities of motif-tonality and the stark precision of arpeggio tonality (for each clearly defines its set). Yet its being constructed of repetitions without development, and relying so much on its limited arpeggio-figures, means that at the same time it features a monotony of figure that is the opposite of contrast. All this takes place in the context of the work's limited dimensionality as the ear accustomed to diatonics finds it, although Skryabin would surely have felt that rather than limiting tonality, his symmetrical sets enabled him to enter a new

harmonic realm of cosmic significance.

Summary

The strangeness of the two pieces lies firstly in their pitch-sets, with Ravel's seconds, sharpened fifths and ninths being more abrasive and grotesque at the fast tempo and sharp attack (*Très rude, pizzicatissimo*) he specifies. However, both are most unconventional in more than one way, and rely on the juxtaposition of opposites to make their effects. They are therefore appropriate musical counterparts to the *grotesquerie* of visual Art Nouveau mentioned at the beginning of the section.

EVIL	<i>Méphisto valse 2</i>	1880-81	Liszt
	<i>Méphisto valse 3</i>	1883	Liszt
	<i>Méphisto valse 4</i>	1885	Liszt
	<i>Méphisto Polka</i>	1883	Liszt
	<i>Csárdás macabre</i>	1881-82	Liszt
	<i>Unstern!</i>	1880	Liszt
	<i>Poème satanique Op.36</i>	1903	Skryabin

Concept

Many Decadents and Symbolists tended to adopt Art Nouveau as a means of expression during its ascendancy, as has been argued in Philippe Jullian's study³⁰, and as can be seen in the work of Decadent painters who were its contemporaries, like Aubrey Beardsley, Gustav Klimt, Thorn Prikker, Jan Tooroop, Fernand Khnopff, Marcel Lenoir, Frantisek Kupka, and Georges de Feure who are illustrated in Jullian's work, and in Symbolists like Jean Delville, Paul Gauguin, Émile Bernard, Maurice Denis, Paul Ranson, Félix Vallotton, Carlos Schwabe, Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh, Francis MacNair Macdonald, John Singer Sargent (*Astarte*, 1892), Ferdinand Hodler, Edvard Munch and Koloman Moser, who are all illustrated in Edward Lucie-Smith's *Symbolist Art*³¹. These movements enlarged and developed the range of Art Nouveau themes to include a fascination with the occult, the macabre and the forbidden. Such literary creations as Des Esseintes in Joris-Karl Huysmans' *A rebours*, or the sickly, sodomite knight "who, after hungering for lewd exploits, is dying under the weight of his sorrows"³² from Huysmans' *Antiquités* (1887), or *Salomé* in Oscar Wilde's play, all

explore evil deliberately, since it could be argued from Aestheticism that evil is an artistic experience as important as beauty; it is simply beauty's reverse face.

The *Méphisto* and Skryabin pieces derive from evil personified in the figure of Satan and also the long historical tradition of fascination with the idea of evoking his spirit, which in a general way is similar to the fascination that the Decadents found in exploring taboos. The *Csárdás macabre* shares the spirit of the other pieces but has a title denoting a less personified or specific evil. There is the vaguely implied suggestion that it is a dance of evil spirits or one that will evoke them.

Liszt as Art Nouveau figure

The general question of considering very late Liszt works as of possible Art Nouveau provenance, even though they are within the time-frame for this study, needs to be referred to again, for the evidence of the earlier satanic pieces mentioned above shows that they were a recognized part of the Romantic milieu in their time, and raises the objection that the four late ones merely continue this tradition and thus are essentially Romantic rather than Art Nouveau. It can also be argued that the later ones, including the polka, are simply variations of the first. But it is this last point that justifies their Art Nouveau candidature, as it were, on grounds of method alone, for they are above all essays in compositional mannerism, as aesthetically asymmetrical as the earlier ones are well proportioned. Liszt is experimenting with certain devices at the expense of compositional balance:

1. using parallel repetitions of figures instead of modulation and normal development
2. basing these repetitious figures on mere fragments of motif
3. using extended pedalpoints
4. reducing the texture to a minimum - often to recitative
5. exploring new tonalities and their resulting harmonies

6. exploring open forms, often with motto-beginnings and uncadenced endings, and featuring alternations of episode rather than linear structure - chordal, ostinato, recitative, trilled - almost a Brechtian, Imagist or Joycean use of alternations of texture and matter.

His work is introducing new horizons to musical composition at the same time that Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo, Walter Crane and others³³ are exploring the mannerisms of line that become visual Art Nouveau. This is not to suggest that mannerism is all there is to Art Nouveau, but its mannerism of line and stylization is, with a fantastic subject, a sufficient condition to justify calling a work Art Nouveau, as has been discussed in earlier chapters. Thus while Liszt cannot have known Art Nouveau in its high period, since he died in 1886, many late piano works from 1880 show him exploring manneristic devices that are to be important to music of the fantastic in the high Art Nouveau period as they are to his own music of the fantastic.

Liszt: *Méphisto vales 2,3,4*

The fascination of the satanic, especially the Lenau (1836-46) and Goethe (1808, 1832) versions of the *Méphisto-Faust* legend, interested Liszt from the time of his *Malédiction* (1830-40), through the *Faust* symphony (1857), *Totentanz* (1849-59) and the orchestral *Méphisto valse* of 1860, to the *Méphisto vales 2,3,4* (1881, 1883³⁴, 1885) and the *Méphisto-Polka*³⁵ (1883).

The first *Méphisto valse* (arranged by Liszt for piano in 1863) is subtitled "Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke aus Lenaus 'Faust'", and provides the general setting for the later three. All four develop three basic elements - an opening figure evoking the Devil (F_1), a *presto* dance-motif (M_1) and an *espressivo amoroso* slower motif (M_2). The Faust story, although centuries old, appeals to the Art Nouveau artist precisely because of these three elements - daring to evoke evil, abandoning the

senses to its hysteria in dance, and tasting its delights, all of which are sensual.

It is impossible to consider the waltzes II, III and IV without the 1863 original (I), for the later ones are only to be understood in the light of the earlier one. All four are studies in transformation: firstly, transformations of Mephistopheles and Faust in reverse ways - the one into the plausible *Monsieur* and the other into a damned soul; secondly, transformations of themes, as in waltz I when the slow-movement motif is transformed into a dramatic one, and thirdly in that the later waltzes are transformations of the earlier one.

Example 145:

Liszt: *Méphisto waltzes, invocations*

Waltz I evokes the devil in its F_1 of upwards-moving chains of fifths with acciaccaturas suggesting the detuned devil's fiddle - conventionally represented (Berlioz' *La Damnation de Faust*, Saint-Saens' *Danse Macabre*) as the tritone. The later three begin by transforming this element. The second changes it fully into the tritone (the *Diabolus in musica* of mediaeval prohibition³⁶) that while nominally the same interval is spelled out in whole tones at the very beginning of the piece and thus establishes new tonal possibilities³⁷. The third waltz begins with a 9_6_3 broken chord whose major third plus two fourths create a much more dissonant effect, abandoning the tritone³⁸, and the fourth with a heptatonic scale whose two tritones are divided (counting in semitones)

312 and 2121. III has echoes of I's acciaccaturas from bar 27, this time with simultaneous fourths so that the diminished fifth of I becomes the fourth of III; II and IV abandon the acciaccaturas.³⁹

The M_1 presto element undergoes similar transformations, developing in II and IV from their F_1 figures, but in III from an echo of F_1 in I.

Example 146:

Liszt: *Méphisto valse*, M_1

The three later waltzes, however, reverse the procedure of I in introducing the dramatic statement of M^2 as a main feature of the presto section, showing it transformed later into the *espressivo* slow movement M_2 , and finally its return as a presto theme.

Example 147:

Liszt: *Méphisto valse*, M_2

II and IV invert M_2 as it becomes the dramatic *forte* theme of the final sections, so adding another aspect of transformation to these works.

The ABA overall structure of the later waltzes is still based on

that of I, but with the M_2 transformations dominating the corresponding ABA sections. Thus the waltzes of the Art Nouveau repertory are primarily about (evil) transformation in more than one sense, and with their techniques of motif-transformation (to be outlined below) anticipate some of the techniques of Skryabin in the Sixth and Ninth Sonatas and in *Étrangeté*.

Each piece has further discordances, although these are not so violent as to be incompatible with the pathos of the *amoroso*-motifs; Mephistopheles as an Art Nouveau character is as much seductive as threatening.

The second waltz features constant contrasts of tonality that make any sustained tonal perspective uncertain; the third and fourth continue this ambiguity with their restlessness of modulation (usually unprepared, often merely moving a chromatic step, or because of a modified chord or varied tone-set) and frequent change of key-signature). For instance, the third waltz establishes a C^\sharp pedal (as the dominant of F^\sharp , something like plagal-Ionic) from bars 27-50, moves without preparation to F^\sharp in bar 51, again without preparation to F natural in bar 67, to E in 71, E^b in 75, D in 79, and then to a whole page of descending chromatic chords. The fourth waltz has two pages each with three different key-signatures (pages 5 and 7 in the Liszt Society edition), but there are more than three key-changes because of the ambiguous tonalities of many passages within these nominal key-boundaries. From the first bars of the second waltz to the last ones of the fourth there is tonal ambiguity and restlessness: there is therefore the unsettling effect of constantly shifting tonal horizons, as if to suggest that the devil can move through time and space.

As will be seen later in other late pieces of Liszt, chromatic sequences of melodic line or parallel chords symbolize death. Parallel chromatic progressions are found in the *Méphisto valse*, *Csárdás macabre* and *Nuages gris*, but not in *Am Grabe Richard Wagners* (which deals with

memory, not death), nor in *Schlaflos, Frage und Antwort*. Death in these waltzes is implied in the bargain Faust makes with Mephistopheles, and such chromatic sequences as those of the third waltz will be found echoed in other of the late pieces, as well as chromatic series of single melodic notes. The point to be made here is that sequences of pure chromatic movement are not just included here for effect, although that is powerful, but for symbolic purposes. In his later years at least Liszt is concerned in these pieces about evil to make a moral point about its consequences; his religiosity, however, does not prevent his Art Nouveau sensibility from being fascinated by it.

These pure chromatic effects need to be distinguished from the mere admixture of chromatic elements to melody in which there is no complete chromatic sequence, and certainly not one that is reiterated. Chromatic admixtures are seen in all the *amoroso* motifs of the waltzes, and as elsewhere in the repertory, signify sensuality.

Repetition beyond the bounds of the conventionally-balanced composition is a major feature of the three waltzes. The first type of repetition is that of a complete phrase, but always with one or more changes, like an altered note that transforms tonality (the first two runs of waltz II where F becomes F#, changing tonality from whole-tone to major diatonic; page 7 of waltz III (bars 81-96) where successive lines change through Lydian mode (the scale of the naturals on F), an artificial tone-set on F with C# only, the whole-tone set, plagal-Ionic on C#, Dorian on C#, and an unresolved V⁷ on C# in different positions.

Waltz IV has passages that show the same repetition-with-variation that confuses tonality, especially in the last bars (159-200); each appearance of the *amoroso*-motif (bars 9-12), however, is always immediately repeated unchanged in this piece, the variations thus occurring between double-sets of repetitions. This waltz is thus the most intensely repetitive of the three late ones, and without the middle-

section that Liszt left uncompleted (page 58 of Liszt Society edition) is so repetitive because based on such limited motivic material that its hypnotic effect is at least as compelling as that of the others. In all three this slight but profoundly significant variation of repetition takes the place of normal development.

Liszt: Méphisto-Polka

Although in rhythm a very different dance from the waltzes, being in 2/4 time, the work begins with a figure not unlike that of the opening of waltz II, so that it can be regarded as an invocation-figure:

Example 148:

Liszt: Méphisto polka, 1-22

It remains within the diatonic set, however, and makes use of chromatic parallel progressions as well as acciaccaturas throughout to show its *Méphisto* legacy as containing the implication of death.

The polka is similarly constructed to the third waltz (which structurally is more complex in that it introduces more fragments of motif and figure than II or IV): a phrase is immediately repeated verbatim and then varied, this variation itself repeated, and so on. There is less variation of tonality, however, this being replaced by unmodulated shifts along the steps of the tone-set employed for most of the piece - F^\sharp key but based on the mediant A as root - as can be seen in the sequences from bars 130-151. (The sequence of bars 81-110 is related, moving in upward steps as if to a climax that is dissipated into repetitions.)

As in the waltzes, this process of repetition with slight variation and unmodulated stepping takes the place of normal development and modulation. Since repetition is so much stressed there is the same hypnotic effect, enhanced in this piece by the feeling of being suspended in time without any real progression, partly from the repetitions themselves and partly from the use of the mediant as root. This is seen, for instance, in M_1 (bars 18ff in Example 146), which the ear accustomed to diatonics treats as a temporary stage in the cadence to the tonic-root that never comes, since the piece tails off without cadence to the unrelated F .

Perhaps the most surprising feature of the work is its apparent almost complete absence of discordance; yet it sounds strange. Firstly, there is the constant use of acciaccatura that is the vestigial echo of those in the first *Méphisto valse*, where they suggested the detuned fifths of the devil's fiddle; secondly there is the use of the mediant as root that gives an uneasy feeling of being suspended as in a nightmare (from the unfulfilled expectation of cadence); thirdly there is the hypnotic repetition; fourthly the atmospheric rushing scales and tremolando effects of the *ossia* alternatives; and fifthly the chromatic parallel progressions mentioned above. But the most subtle use is made of the tritone, seen in the second of the introductory sets of runs ($\underline{B}/\underline{F}$), and in the $\underline{F\#}/\underline{B\#}$ interval in bar 51 that recurs so often during the work. Here the principal macabre element of the *Méphisto* works becomes briefly explicit.

Humphrey Searle is perhaps judging the piece from the point of view of balanced conventionality when he dismisses it as being "overlong and not of great interest"⁴⁰, for its excesses of repetition and lack of normal development are deliberate Art Nouveau mannerism aimed at achieving a fantastic, not a conventional mood. As earlier with Rakhmanoniv's *Études tableaux I* such criticism misses the point: the over-emphasis on repetition is a deliberately affective Art Nouveau feature.

Tremolando was noticed as one of the devices contributing to a feeling of evil: this technique may be seen in many late piano works of Liszt, where it always symbolizes ill omen. It will particularly be noticed in the following piece.

Liszt: Unstern!

Unstern! (unlucky or fatal star, given in French as *Sinistre* in the Breitkopf and Härtel edition), is a symbol drawn from astrology, but Liszt is perhaps just using it in the general sense of an evil omen or luck that casts its shadow on a particular person or episode.

The first part of the work is, like the *Polka*, based on repetition, its quite long phrases (ten bars of *Lento* common-time) being repeated mostly at the semitone until the slow scalar ascent of bars 58-84. It begins in the major but from bar 5 the tritone⁴¹ emerges, leading to the atonalities of wholetones and chromatics that dominate the first part of the piece (1-84). There is a conflict between these atonalities and their accompanying pedalpoints, but as the pedals themselves change semitonally (bars 21-52) before fixing on an F (bars 58-77) each tonal point seems just as arbitrary as the others, including the long pedal on F just mentioned. The study by Thomas Kabisch on this work, however, attempts to place all these within a structural system based on rhythmic units as well as harmonic ones, and shows that the work is constructed on principles that are partly atomistic.⁴²

As a whole the piece is remarkable for its lengthy ostinato-pedals and chromatic parallel progressions. The ostinatos begin in bar 21 with a symbolically funereal double-dotted rhythm that changes to a tremolando bass in 58, over which the first of the chromatic progressions begin. The symbolism of each figure is clear: for the first figure, the dramatic effect of the tremolando bass is an omen, whose rhythm echoes that of the conventional funeral-march; the second always signifies death, as noticed above. Thomas Kabisch also notices possible palindromic and star-like

formations that are peculiar to the symbology of this work⁴³; palindromic phrases are of course also to be found in *Richard Wagner - Venezia* (opening bars).

When in the final section the *quasi-organo* chords commence (bar 84) it is equally clear that religious exorcism is symbolized (diatonics in late Liszt always symbolize God and religion), but unlike the *Antwort* section in *Schlaflos, Frage und Antwort* this episode does not manage to come to a full close after the incomplete cadences of 84-91 that anticipate one. The attempts at cadence founder, instead, in repetition that leads to the violent discord of bar 103:

Example 149:

85 *sostenuto, quasi Organo*
 mp
 con 8^{va} bassa.....

96
 con 8^{va} bassa.....

Liszt: *Unstern!*, 85-104

At bar 102 the ostinato G has almost accidentally created a concord, but its continuation into 103 prevents the formation of a chord of the seventh on the E whose upper note would have been F[#]. Thus the chromatic fall of the inner voices from D to D[#] ushers in not diatonic resolution but the chromatic echo of the bass figure that began under the first ostinato in bar 22. The evil of the chromatic progressions negates the exorcism, so that the piece ends indefinitely, with the shadow of the star of ill omen remaining over the future. The tonality at this ending is uncertain, with an unresolved subdominant chord of bars 129-30 and a slow bass wholetone mirror-image of the chromatic unisons ending still on the subdominant, so that despite the implied tonality (B major) of the whole final section the piece ends with the ambiguous tonality with which it began.

Liszt: Csárdás macabre

As one of Liszt's three Csárdáses from his last years (the others being *Csárdás obstiné* and *Csárdás allegro*) it is an intense, exhausting dance of repetitions. It seems to have been this aspect of the form that attracted Liszt, for in each case he writes a work of driving, obsessive intensity that is quite outside conventionality, and is quite different in this way from his other late Hungarian works, the Portraits. In pursuing such intensity of affective repetition Liszt is clearly aligned with the principle of excess that is part of Art Nouveau's essence.

This Csárdás is the most pronounced example of obsessive, narrow-focused repetition in his late works, and by this suggests a voodoo-like spell. It extends for over six hundred bars of 2/4 but is remarkable for its limited material. It begins with twenty-seven bars of bare consecutive fifths moving chromatically, an effect probably unique in the literature for its unrelieved starkness, and a device signifying evil, as noticed above in other late Liszt composition. When the first melodic motif enters (bar 32) it ranges only over a tritone (another symbol of evil, as seen in the *Méphisto vales*) and has a folk-rhythm that quickly becomes an ostinato and soon narrows in range even more:

Example 150:

The musical score for Example 150 consists of four systems of music. The first system (bars 31-32) shows a chromatic sequence of fifths in the bass clef. The second system (bars 33-34) continues this sequence. The third system (bars 35-36) introduces a melodic motif in the treble clef. The fourth system (bars 37-38) shows the motif becoming an ostinato.

When the second melodic motif enters in 95 it ends with an upwards leap of a sixth that startles and relieves tension somewhat by its extravagance of movement compared to all the narrowness of range that has preceded it. But it is the only such relief amongst the work's motifs and figures, except for octave-figures like those of 407ff that merely reinforce their parallel chromatic movements, and are thus associated with the inexorability of death rather than the dancers' abandon signified by the leap of the sixth in M_2 . An associated symbol of omen is the use of tremolando in 424ff and the last page's 575ff.

Despite the "relief" offered by this second motif John Ogdon finds a close resemblance to the *Dies irae* theme that first appears in *Malédiction* in 1830-40. Here the connotations are of doom and the Day of Judgement. Ogdon also argues that the *Csárdás* is in a miniature of sonata form, but its structure may not be so simple⁴⁴.

All the work that is not composed of parallel chromatics has strangenesses of Hungarian or quasi-Hungarian idiom (for instance, using the mediant as tonal centre in the motif announced in bars 33-36, the fifth as centre in the motif of bars 67-70, the seventh as centre in bars 95-99). These sit well with the consecutive fifths effects in establishing an effect that is foreign to the realm of normal diatonics.

Repetitions are the dominating feature, however, with slight but transformative changes in almost every repeated phrase - from major to minor, a bass moving contrarily to that of the original, a chromatic parallel shift, or a contraction. In a sense these are transformations, so that just when repetition of a phrase has set it firmly in the mind of the hearer it is modified slightly but perceptibly, with the effect of a constantly shifting image that appears the same but is always fluid and ambiguous.

In a piece of this length there is some development, but always of the phrase, never into any extended passage; development is subordinated

to repetition, parallel shifting of phrase, recitative, long chromatic sequences and octave or *piano* echoes. There is also much unmodulated changing of key and modality that together with the non-tonic motif centres tends to break down any sense of fixed tonality.

The intensity of the piece is well beyond normal aesthetic limits, with hardly any relief, and although there is frequent change of figure there is little real variety, for the figures tend to be narrow in range, and repetitive of rhythm. The unrelenting *allegro* pulse continues without pause for the whole length of the piece and contributes powerfully to the obsessiveness of effect. When to all this is added the parallel chromatic sequences, particularly those in fifths or octaves, there can be no doubt that the affectiveness of the whole is deliberately sought by Liszt, and that the work is the final statement of the preoccupation with the dance of evil that begins with *Malédiction* and its *Dies irae* motif in 1830-40.

Skryabin: *Poème satanique*

This opus 36 of 1903 is an earlier work than others of Skryabin considered in this study, but shows him exploring the macabre effects that the octatonic pitch-set can suggest. Boris de Schloezer states that at least as early as 1900 Skryabin was thinking of the *Mysterium*, so that he would even at this early stage see the necessity of confronting and reconciling the forces of evil. The work is therefore no dalliance with evil but a serious attempt to evoke it so that he can eventually harmonize it. Liszt invokes evil to expose and exorcize it; Skryabin invokes it to harmonize and reconcile its force.

The work has harmonic and repetitious extremes that take it beyond even the wide latitude of effects allowed conventional pieces on evil, although as a 1903 Skryabin piece of sonata-movement length (236 bars of 6/8) it is cast in otherwise normal developmental mould except for its being without any orthodox recapitulation section. It has the power from use of extreme effects that belongs to the tradition of later Romantic

evil-fantastic works like the pre-1880 Liszt ones and Alkan's *Quasi-Faust* (*Grande Sonate*, second movement), *Scherzo diabolico* and *Allegro alla barbaresca* (*Douze études dans le tons mineurs* 3 and 10) rather than to the milder genre of Saint-Saens' *Danse macabre* and Dukas' *L'apprenti sorcier*.

The first chord of the work, *ironico*, with the tritone between the upper notes, is quite uncompromising, and although it moves towards an expected resolution on \underline{F} at the beginning of bar 3 this is balked by the *pp* chord that instead of being a 5_3 on \underline{F} is a second inversion IV^{7b}_{5b} on it; the \underline{F} chord is actually reached in the bars 5-8 repetition of the sequence, but only when a fresh approach is made beginning a tone higher:

Example 151:

Skryabin: *Poème satanique*, 1-10

It will be seen that these extremities of harmony appear to come from use of octatonic sets, with notes accidental to their sets being relatively few but important, like the very first bass \underline{D} s. In accordance with later practice when invoking evil, the octatonic sets of M_1 and M_2 are left-handed, M_1 beginning and ending on the last note of O^3 (\underline{C}), thereby implying its reversed form LO^3 , and M_2 as will be shown below. The hypothesis of left-handed octatonic sets as symbolizing evil seems to begin in this work with the clearest indications possible. The rubric under M_1 - *dolce appassionato* - is in the light of later practice to be interpreted as evil veiled in sweetness - it is a winding motif, and therefore is sensuousness posing as innocence.

The opening figure F_1 bears the rubric *ironico*. Irony is a turn of

phrase or events that reverses normal expectations, so that here the figure implies a mirror of some normal procedure. Four-note fragments like this can carry symbolism in Western music - for instance the *Dies irae* opening, and the BACH motif. F_1 is possibly a retrograde or inversion of a Russian religious theme, but there is a resemblance to the main theme of *Poème tragique* op.34 of the same year that may be numerologically significant:

Example 151a:



Skryabin: *Poèmes tragique & satanique*, M₁

The intervallic analysis of the motifs is 313 (=7) and 311 (=5) respectively which might just possibly refer to the motifs' intervallic sums spanning but not encompassing the evil tritone (6). The 7 of the first work is a perfect fifth and the 5 of the second the less perfect fourth.

When the rubric next appears it is *riso ironico* (bar 9). Normal procedure here would be for the three notes of this figure to end on G, making a triadic chord, but here a tritone is formed between C and G^b - the devil's laughter.

Example 152:

Skryabin: *Poème satanique*, 17-20

M_2 has a familiar rubric-type: *dolce, cantabile, amoroso*, the outer words

being significant as forerunners of the M_2 motifs of the late sonatas, which all show the softer side of sensuousness.

Here the motif begins in LO^2 by having D as its first long note, but veils this by leading to it by E, and then transforms to LO^3 , where it finishes on C, the last note of O^3 , thereby confirming its reversed-set nature.

The work is premised about the contradictions between the *ironico* F_1 and the veiled sweetnesses of the two motifs M_1 and M_2 . For instance, in the first two bars the treble line would be chromatically sensuous if it were not accompanied by the harsh bass and the harmonies of the inner parts, just as M_1 is contradicted by the strangeness of the bass chord over which it appears (confirming the nature of Skryabin "basses" under melodic motifs as being contrapuntal-polyphonic rather than accompanimental-homophonic; they are thus typical Art Nouveau interweaving). These inner parts contain some winding chromaticism that signifies the sensuality of *amoroso* but this seems distorted in the tortuous path seen in Example 152 between the B^b bass of its beginning and the F of the end, whose abruptness in descent to E^b is opposed to the complex suspensions in the inner parts.

The three elements of *ironico* (F_1), *appassionato* (M_1) and *amoroso* (M_2) mean that the work begins like a sonata first-movement, but with the *ironico* figures (including the *riso ironico* tritonic chord of bar 9) opposing their every development. For instance, the *appassionato* passage of 53-70 is immediately confounded by one based on the *ironico* bar 1 treble figure (71-78), and the *amoroso* passage 79-93 by *ironico* and *riso* passages to bar 110. At the close of the work it is the satirical sequences that are triumphant. In this way normal motivic development is limited in the manner familiar in the Art Nouveau repertory, where motifs tend to be repeated unchanged over transforming contexts.

By the end of the piece the context becomes right-handed octatonic, and the determining factor seems to be the stressing of A^b through the

last three lines:

Example 153:

Skryabin: *Poème satanique*, 221-226

Throughout these lines the lower staff is set in LO^3 , with its foundation the \underline{C} that is its last note conflicting with its own use of \underline{A}^b , a note which, followed by the semitone \underline{A} in that set, would make it right-handed if it could become the foundation. This \underline{A}^b is taken up by the chordal figure of the upper staff, where it is a note foreign to its LO^1 set based on \underline{E} . The \underline{A}^b eventually resolves to \underline{G} in bars 225 and 227, but not before it has been repeatedly stressed in the unresolving series of $\underline{E}\backslash\underline{D}^\sharp/\underline{E}$ chords in *stretto*. The negativity of the \underline{A}^b and \underline{C} are only finally defeated in the climactic bars 225-32, when the left hand transforms to O^1 on \underline{C} and is joined by the upper staff's transforming from LO^1 to O^1 . It will be noticed, however, that since 225 the upper staff has effectively been O^1 , basing its chords on \underline{C} rather than the earlier \underline{E} . Thus Skryabin harmonizes and thus naturalizes the evil aspects of the work at the end.

Summary

All the Liszt pieces show hypnotic repetition, mostly reinforced with ostinato rhythms or figures; all except Liszt's *Méphisto-Polka* show pronouncedly dissonant harmonies and ambiguities of tonality, but even the *Polka* subtly stresses the tritone. All are pieces showing even more extremity of effect than is seen in the licence allowed traditional Romantic pieces about the fantastic and evil.

A significant use is made by both composers of the contrast between *amoroso* and evil motifs. The *Méphisto valse* thus highlight the tragedy

of Gretchen's despoiled innocence, and the opposition between the chromatic *dolce* motifs and the *ironico* ones in Skryabin has significance in the late sonatas.

DEATH <i>Nuages gris</i> 1881	Liszt
<i>Die Trauer-Gondel 1,2</i> 1882	Liszt
Richard Wagner - <i>Venezia</i> 1883	Liszt
<i>Canope (Préludes II/10)</i> 1912-13	Debussy
<i>Guirlandes Op.73/1</i> 1914	Skryabin

Concept

Death is an important theme for the Symbolists, who see it as a transformation to the spirit-world, with which some of them attempt to communicate in theosophical practice. It is also an important facet of Art Nouveau, as can be seen for instance in Munich, where a number of the major cemeteries have *Aussegnungshallen*⁴⁵ or chapels in Art Nouveau design, and such design is commonly found in graveyard memorials of the period. It is also seen in such pictures as Jan Toorop's *Disintegration of Faith*⁴⁶ and in Beardsley's *Elektra* and *Salomé* drawings. Non-Symbolist Art Nouveau artists still treat death as transformation without the specifically theosophical overtones, and in addition extend the Romantic and Pre-Raphaelite preoccupation with morbid melancholy. From the Decadents they absorb the horror of, yet fascination with, death, particularly when associated with beauty, as seen in portrayals of *Salomé*, *Electra* and *Judith*.

This complex set of attitudes is far from the Romantic fascination with death, and equally far from the heroic side of its great theme of love and death. The Art Nouveau theme of death is seen *par excellence* in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (1924) where death awaits any of the guests in the Berghof, is the inevitable end of the Joachim-Marusja love, even of the great life-embracing Mynheer Peeperkorn's vitality, and ultimately of Hans Castorp's dreamlike existence; it is actually sought in the Settembrini-Naphta rivalry. When uncle James, therefore, visits Hans and his *Insel-Berg* he is seeing the living dead who no longer have any

connection with or desire for life below on the plain. Death in Art Nouveau is thus fascinating as well as horrible, *Insel* and Hades together with Hell, a spell like that of nereids who lure mariners to drowning. None of this is peculiar to Art Nouveau, of course, but death is its most extreme fantasy, in music giving rise to some of its most original composition. Death is transformation into another state of nature, into an ideal *Insel*-paradise, perhaps, but the process of transformation is melancholy and harrowing, through darkness and uncertainty.

Liszt: *Nuages gris*

The term is a typical Art Nouveau metaphor for death, although it has been mistaken as impressionist tone-painting, which is to ignore the title's obvious connotations in favour of a narrow concentration on its denotation. Its first title was *Trübe Wolken* [dull clouds, perhaps "leaden/gloomy skies"]; figuratively this seems to imply what in English idiom is "bleak outlook" or lack of hope - dark or black thoughts, consonant with the figurative meaning of *Nuages gris* - death and mourning, as will now be explained. Snow is winter, the season when nature appears to die, and greyness is the evening or night appearance of snow, and also its colour when mixed with dirt from grave-digging - the only digging normally undertaken in snow, so that there are overtones of the diurnal sleep/death of nature and life at night, and the seasonal sleep/death in winter. Liszt would have had death in mind at this time of his life, of course.

The work is based on ostinato, alternations and chromatic parallel movements - all forms of repetition, forming regular rhythmic pulses and harmonic patterns. The ostinato begins from the first bar with the two-bar syncopated figure that is repeated three times and then rested until the tremolando ceases at the end of the first page (bar 20). Its pulse then resumes, first in a curtailed melodic bass line, and then from bar 25 to near the end (bar 43) it continues its steady rhythm. The quiet

inexorability of this ostinato strongly suggests the approach of death, particularly when everything - ostinato and ascending chromatic octaves - ceases gradually, with silence ensuing before the last unresolved chords of the ending.

Since all four of Liszt's pieces on death discussed in this chapter have a similar syncopation or rhythmic hiatus in the middle of their ostinato figures, it seems that the arrhythmic pulse must be of symbolic value, suggesting uncertainty on the one hand and possibly mortality on the other. The failing heart-beat as death approaches may be indicated, but the slow phrases are far slower than any heart, so that the metaphorical sense seems more likely: the Art Nouveau sensibility imagines death as an experience, as a dream of passage to another realm, as the ultimate impinging of the fantastic on the real. The ostinato itself implies the inexorability of death, and its arrhythmic pulse may imply the uncertainty of the passage through it.

The bass tremolando pedals of the first page and the chromatic parallels are symbols of omen and death respectively, as in the metaphorical title.

Example 154:

Liszt: *Nuages gris*, 6-15

In the second page the tremolando is replaced by bass pedal-alternations that echo those of the tremolando's B^b-A wavering. These alternations and waverings echo the ostinato figure's harmonic basis: it consists of two broken chords - a rising discord 7_4_1 and a falling minor triad, which the tremolando's wavering reflects (although in reverse sequence, because it

begins consonantly with the minor triad and then falls a semitone away from it). The effect of these quiet, rhythmically insistent devices of ostinato and pedals becomes eerie when the descending chromatic chords begin at bar 9. For the first two only the top note falls, turning a $\#V^6_3$ chord into a $\#5_3$, but this latter chord then falls chromatically in a parallel series (thus signifying death, as seen earlier in Liszt works) as the tremolando wavers on its own semitones. The pattern this creates is interesting, for two separate but interacting motions are proceeding, and all in a ceaseless, very slow and quiet rhythm - the process of death, where two times, earthly and cosmic, approach and gradually meet.

Larry Todd suggests that the augmented triad (the constituent of this falling chromatic series) denotes death and mourning in Liszt, calling it "the unwelcome guest", tracing it back to *Funerailles* in 1849, then *Trauer-Gondel I*, and *Am Grabe Richard Wagners* as well as *Nuages gris* (Todd does not mention its appearance in *Trauer-Vorspiel*, or its first inversions in *Trauer-Marsch* and *Unstern!*)⁴⁷. This may be so, but since it does not appear in all the death-pieces, especially in the important *Trauer-Gondel II*⁴⁸, it may have a more specialized signification than this that has yet to be identified. Its role in non-death pieces, including the songs, must also be examined (a process Alan Walker has begun), comparisons made with its significance in Wagner, and care taken to discover whether in the late pieces its role is changed. It is clear, however, that parallel chromatic progressions and chromatic sequences of melodic line do signify death for Liszt, at least in the late works.

The only melodic fragments occur in the two simple statements a fourth apart over the resumed ostinato. Their impact as melodic lines in the midst of ostinato figures is poignant, and makes the ensuing ascending chromatic octaves seem like a continuation of the melody rather than a simple chromatic scale.

This scale takes place over the bass pedals that alternate between

B^b and A, as previously mentioned. In the middle is the echo of the ostinato that begins the piece, now formed into a further echo of the descending chromatic chords of bars 9-20 by being an exact repetition of them without their lowest component, leaving a succession of minor thirds. Against the ascending chromatic octaves and the descending minor thirds the bass pedals alternate semitonally, so that the resultant harmonies are constantly transforming, yet not according to normal sequential processes. Here the different strands of life and death meet as the music rests unfinished in A, indicating that Liszt does not see death as the end - neither his particular religious sensibility nor his more general Art Nouveau one allows this finality.

Example 155:

Liszt: *Nuages gris*, 33-48

Liszt: *Die Trauer-Gondel 1 & 2*

Both funeral barcarolles, written in 1882, combine the key Art Nouveau concepts of water and death, with Venice itself (the home of the gondola) almost an *Insel*-setting. The idea of a funeral boat carries connotations of Charon ferrying dead souls across the Styx, and for Anglo-Breton Art Nouveau it connotes the myth of King Arthur's funeral barge taking him to the island of Avalon. Water's fluidity symbolizes transformation into another dimension of existence, and it is only through water that the *Insel*-paradise can be reached.

Both the funeral barcarolles use chromatic sequences to signify death, and share particular sequences in which the melody, over a pedalpoint, progresses through a descending then ascending minor third. They also share some asymmetrical pitch-sets, whose symbolic significance, if any, is not clear.

Liszt: Die Trauer-Gondel 1

Like *Nuages gris*, the work begins with an ostinato (again with an arrhythmic syncopation of pulse that runs through the whole piece in direct or indirect form). This ostinato is composed of two left-hand broken chords, the second of which to some extent resolves the first's beginning on the leading note by its finishing on the dominant. The tension between VII and V, however, produces an uneasiness by its constantly preparing for a resolution to the tonic. This is postponed until bar 19, when the "resolution" is seen to be the basis of another discordant series with minor ninths clashing in the second quaver of the triplets. James Baker gives an account of the piece's harmonic structure in which he points out that there is an avoidance of confirmation of the implied tonic (F) throughout, even at the end, so that tonality seems suspended in space.

Example 156:

Liszt: *Trauer-Gondel I*, 6-17

The "melody" through these two passages is basically just a simply moving scale over these ostinato figures, but both ostinato and melody are formed from an unusual octatonic pitch-set 1212 2121 whose second half is a reversal of its first. The chromatic nature of this set, and the fact that it is based on C, not F, and does not actually contain an F, produces

an eeriness of sound not found in symmetrical octatonic sets. At bar 28 the melody breaks into a descending scalar recitative that peters out into very slow semitones in bars 31-38. This scale is an adaptation of the set above, in which an extra semitone is added in the middle to produce an asymmetrical nonatonic scale of 2121 11211 on F, which is simply the minor scale with semitones added before the fifth and octave).

Analysis 49:

bars	LH	set	clash	RH	set		
1-18	<u>E</u> (<u>F</u> implied)	817	<u>E-E^b</u>	<u>C</u>	1212 2121]	A
19-27	<u>F</u>	3113		<u>C</u>	111]	
27-35				<u>F</u>	212 111 211]	
36-56	<u>D</u> (<u>D[#]</u> implied)	817	<u>D-C[#]</u>	<u>A[#]</u>	1212 2121]	A'
57-65	<u>D[#]</u>	3113		<u>D[#]</u>	111]	
65-76				<u>D[#]</u>	1221 2112]	
76-85	<u>C-G[#]</u> trem.	8		<u>G[#]</u>	1212 2121]	B
86	<u>B-G</u> trem.	8]	
87-93	<u>B^b-F[#]</u> trem.	8		<u>B^b</u>	1212 2121]	B
94	<u>A-F</u> trem.	8]	
95-98	<u>A^b-E</u> trem.	8	<u>E-E^b</u>	<u>C</u>	1212 2121]	B'
99-100	<u>A^bC-E</u> trem.	44	<u>E-E^b</u>	<u>C</u>	1212 2121]	
101-120	<u>EA^b-E</u> trem.	48	<u>E-E^b</u>	<u>C</u>	1212 2121]	

Liszt: *Trauer-Gondel I*, harmonic structure

The repetition of **A** as **A'** has an octatonic, not a nonatonic set for its recitative - the same set as for all the piece except the first recitative. Part of the chilling atmosphere of the RH+LH sequences are the clashes noted, and part is that **A'** is a tone lower than **A**. The second and third **B** sequences are each a tone below their forerunners, but reach these through semitonal bridges of single bars (86, 94). The third and final form of **B** reaches exactly an octave below the first section of the piece, the piece having travelled through the five whole-tones of the octave - motion without progression.

The effect of tonal disorientation caused by the disalignment of left and right hands' tonal centres, produces a feeling of uneasiness. However, probably the most important effect Liszt is signifying is what he would believe to be the juxtaposition in death of the two planes of existence that cross but do not touch - the natural and supernatural

planes.

Some other resemblances with *Nuages gris* suggest themselves: firstly, the bitonal nature of the ostinato recalls its wavering bass pedals; secondly there is tremolando bass signifying death; thirdly the melody in octaves whose movement is fully chromatic in bars 19-26 and 57-64 and not far from simple chromatics elsewhere. There are also the suspensions that make the progress of the melody even slower, and the establishment of a regular pulse that lasts in this case until the final section commences and the tremolando takes over. This is unusual in a barcarolle, where the rhythm of boat on water normally underlies the whole piece.

Liszt: Die Trauer-Gondel 2

The second barcarolle is, like the first, not as discordant as *Nuages gris*, but nonetheless based around the repetition of strange-sounding figures, in this case the diminished broken chord (based on \underline{G} , a VII^{6b}_3 , which is really a first inversion of a V^{9b}_7 on an implied \underline{D} that never resolves to \underline{G}) of the opening sequence, a chord that contains the tritone⁴⁹. The ostinato once again is based around a syncopation that produces an arrhythmic pulse echoed through most of the piece, suggesting uncertainty in conjunction with the inexorability of the ostinato itself.

The ostinato figure alternates with recitative that repeats the pattern of the first barcarolle by petering out into movements over two or three slow semitones: the effect is of a quasi-dramatic recitative statement that loses its momentum in introspection, and whenever this statement is returned to this is the pattern for the rest of the piece, until by bar 69 the slow semitones have become the main statement - over yet another ostinato pedal-figure (below). This second figure is of simple octaves and fifths, so that the semitonal alternation of the melodic figure causes shifts between major and minor at almost every bar, parallelling the uneasy feeling noticed at the beginning, and continuing

the wavering tonal effects of the previous two pieces.

Example 157:

69 Un poco meno lento. Metr. d. 204
dolcissimo, dolendo

74 Pedale ogni battuta

Liszt: *Trauer-Gondel II*, 69-78

The first of these chord pairs is emphasized by its being raked, while the octaves only are made to fall a semitone, so that the whole effect is that of a slow appoggiatura. Under this the bass ostinato echoes the syncopations of that at the beginning of the piece, with the pathos of the chromatic falls in the melody against the uncertainty of pulse of the ostinato. Here the symbols of grief, uncertainty and inexorability combine powerfully as the tension increases with the gradual rise of the melodic line.

From here to bar 139 a melody proper develops from the early recitative and eventually relapses into plain recitative as its impetus dies away. It rises through two sequences to two high points in bars 103 and 121, the second being a dramatic climax from which everything gradually falls away. Both these high points, however, are approached through a series of pedalpoints, so that there is no suggestion of harmonic progress: there has been a progression of feeling, but not of action.

The final bars (140-168) are a series of repetitions of chromatic parallel chords (first-inversion minor triads) with fragments of chromatic melodic line moving parallel to and syncopated between them, with a chilling bareness of effect as once again parallel chromatics imply death.

The final seventeen bars consist of single, slow notes in groups

interrupted by pauses and tending to begin off the beat, so that rhythm is difficult to discern. The melodic line forms first from fragments of recitative and then from chromatic sequences, but finishes with an ascending wholetone half-octave that falls to the reversal-figure of the earlier grief-motif:

Example 158:

Liszt: *Trauer-Gondel II*, 148-168

With such explicit reference to earlier motifs and figures, including the significant inversion of the grief-motif in the last two bars, and the symmetrical perfection of the wholetone phrase implied in its use at such an important final stage, it is quite clear that Liszt is using musical symbolism that is consistent within this piece and within the context of his late piano works.

Analysis 50:

set	basis	bars	composition	asymmetrical	irregular
1	$\underline{f\#}, \underline{f}, \underline{e}$	1-22	3111 1113	*	
2	\underline{f}	23-34	212 111 211		*
3	\underline{f}	47-51	3111 1 1113	*	
4	\underline{f}	49-84	31 31 13	*	
5	$\underline{f\#}$	85-88	221 223	*	
6	\underline{E}	89-104	31 31 13	*	
7	\underline{E}	105-08	31 12 23		*
8	\underline{f}	109-20	2121 1131		*
9	\underline{f}	121-24	3311 1111		*

Liszt: *Trauer-Gondel II*, pitch-sets

The pitch-sets for the various motifs and sections are again non-

diatonic. The evidence appears to indicate that Liszt is using asymmetrical sets, which are octatonic or nonatonic for the sequences that extend for more than just a few bars⁵⁰. Only one resemblance will be noticed with the first barcarolle - the sets for the first recitatives are in each case 212 111 211. Not shown are other similarities - the bass figures of 817 and 3113 under parallel passages in the first two pages of this work, and the 111 limited chromatic set over the pedalpoint \underline{F} in bars 43-46. The issue is complicated by the possibility that Liszt has broken some theoretical models he is working from with chromatic accidentals, for instance in the nonatonic sets. There can be no doubt that chromaticism is emphasized in such passages as bars 69ff, where the upper note of every first inversion chord falls to make it drop from major to minor, signifying perhaps the fall from life to death. But the last two notes of the work reverse this, perhaps signifying hope or resurrection at the last.

Liszt: Richard Wagner-Venezia

This is the third funeral barcarolle, for which the first two, having inadvertently prefigured Wagner's death and funeral in Venice, partly set the pattern.

Example 159:

Liszt: Richard Wagner - Venezia, 1-12

Although written for the occasion of his death, the work is also an Art Nouveau combining of death, water and Insel-destination; the music was not written as scene-painting or recollection - Liszt was not in Venice at

Wagner's death - but as imaginative dwelling on death by water. It combines the broken-chord ostinato of the first barcarolle (with a dotted rhythm rather than syncopation in the middle, however) and the more dramatic nature of the middle of the second.

The bass ostinato, with a rhythmic hiatus like those of the other barcarolles, is formed, as announced in 1-2, from a symmetrical pitch-set 444 (major thirds), and the chordal movement above it is formed from modifications of this set.

Analysis 51:

The diagram consists of two musical staves. The top staff is labeled 'OSTINATO' and shows a bass line with a series of chords and fingerings: 4 4 4, 4 5 3, 5 4 4, 5 5 3, 6 4 2, 6 4 4. The bottom staff shows two chordal figures, A and B, with fingerings 4 5 4 and 4 4 4 respectively.

Liszt: *Richard Wagner - Venezia*, pitch-sets

The first stave summarizes the chords produced by the ostinato, which begins with 444 and varies this throughout the sequence by moving one note at a time. The effect of the ostinato is in its unceasing rhythmical asymmetry, and in its always beginning from and falling to $\underline{C\sharp}$ (for only the ascending half of each ostinato unit is shown). This $\underline{C\sharp}$ forms a pedalpoint, over which slow but inexorable transformations of the ostinato-figure are taking place.

At the same time the right hand has a series of chordal figures. Each begins and ends with a 4_4 chord (the sequence shown as **A**), and in between has a variant on the simple chromatic melodic progression through a minor third seen in the other two barcarolles - one based only on its ascending component (shown as **B**). Furthermore, the whole sequence represented by the **A** and **B** components (bars 4-10) is repeated a semitone higher in bars 14-20. In the other two barcarolles such sequence

repetition takes place a semitone lower. This and the fact that only the ascending fragment of the 111 chromatic repetitions of the other barcarolles is utilized here, seems to indicate that Liszt is suggesting optimism as against the pessimism of the earlier two. This is supported by the material of the second page. It is also supported by the long ascending chord-sequence that now follows:

Example 160:

19

8^{va} bassa.....

(cresc. -

25

ritenuto -

INTERVALS: 3 4 3 4 → 5 4 3 4 4 5
 4 4 4 4 4 4 5 4 3 4

Liszt: Richard Wagner - Venezia, 24-30

The sequence of chords begins in bar 24 as a 4_4 chord, or two major thirds, and gradually proceeds as shown through just over two octaves, finishing on another 4_4 . There is a parallel chromatic progression of six 4_4 chords - the chromatic parallel progression being a Lisztian symbol of death - but this time ascending. The 4_4 chord-form is clearly the prime form of which the others are variants, giving the whole progression something of the character of the ostinato that it replaces.

Analysis 52

PROGRESSION 24-30

Liszt: Richard Wagner - Venezia, 24-30

The melodic aspect of the progression is summarized in the analysis, which shows its rhythmic nature as including crotchet-rest pauses that echo those of the ostinato. The intervals marked show that at first the

progression is purely chromatic, but in the second half finishes symmetrically with 31 22222 31.

The very contrasting diatonic fanfare-like figures that follow these chords (bars 31-42) echo Wagner's earlier operatic ones. There are three such fanfare sequences, whose character possibly suggests the entrance of the gods into Valhalla in *Götterdämmerung*. These sequences end, however, in incomplete cadences involving transformations over static basses on V that become III:

Analysis 53:

Liszt: Richard Wagner - Venezia, fanfares

The three sequences are again an ascending series (through 33, or two minor thirds), but end on a high unresolved 4_4 chord on $\underline{C^\#}$ - where the work begins.

The coda is the simplest of downwards slow arpeggios of the pitch-set on $\underline{C^\#}$ of 4413, through three octaves from this high point, finishing on the $\underline{C^\#}$ that begins the piece.

The inclusion of some mid-period Wagnerian diatonics in this non-diatonic work serves to accentuate what diatonic ears feel is the non-resolving nature of the all the sequences, including the non-diatonic ones. Normal aural horizons are missing, especially that of linear harmonic movement, so that the feeling of limited dimensionality is strong. Added to this, there is constant transformation of harmony, ascending shifts of tonal base, and steady motion without any normal progression; all these seem to suggest a timeless realm.

Debussy: Canope

Canope denotes an Egyptian or Etruscan funeral urn⁵¹, decorated with

stylized pictures or frieze, with connotations of the passage of much time, and of matter transformed by fire to dust. Debussy actually possessed two tops of canopic urns, so that there can be little doubt about the initial source of the title. Death is an important theme in his works, as has been argued by Jan Ingehoven, who also posits its connexion with water in his symbolism. But the important symbolism of the piece appears to lie in its asymmetries, which are presumably connected with the stylized nature of the decoration of canopic urns⁵².

Canope begins with patterns of ascending and descending movements of parallel chords:

Example 161:

-X.

Très calme et doucement triste

Cédez - - //

pp

p

più p

b

D

Debussy: *Canope*, 1-4

The first and third chord-groups have balancing movements, while the descending nature of the second and fourth groups is to some extent countered by the ascending fifth; the whole pattern is asymmetrical, and although it ends on a short ascending half-group the balance is a downwards movement. The chords are not strict parallels, because four major triads contradict the minor modality of the others, clouding modality enough to produce typical Art Nouveau ambiguity.

Another asymmetry is found in the pitch-set of the descending runs of bars 24-25, where the two halves of the set 1131 411 on A^b are almost identical, except that 31 is replaced by 4, its equivalent.

Some further asymmetries are revealed in the two melodic motif-fragments, both arch-shaped, but in opposite directions, that follow the chords:

Example 162:

Debussy: *Canope*, 9-12

M_1 actually appears in the two previous bars, and is reinforced here by being stated in octaves. It immediately suggests the octave triplets of *La danseuse aux crotales* from the *Bilitis* music of 1901. Likewise, M_2 recalls the descending arabesque in the last page of *Le tombeau sans nom* from the same incidental music:

Example 163:

Debussy: **A** *La danseuse aux crotales*, 31-32**B** *Le tombeau sans nom*, 28-29

Not only are the two fragments similar, but their directions as well. The connotations are significant: *Pour la danseuse aux crotales* recalls the priestesses of Cybele, in Phrygia, and *Pour une tombeau sans nom* the funerary purpose of the canopic urns. Both are associated with the *Bilitis* dreams of distant times and lands.

The chords over which M_1 and M_2 appear are composed of notes that are derived from the natural harmonic series, with the fundamentals being respectively the lowest D and the second-lowest G of the piano keyboard.

The veering between $\underline{B^b}$ and \underline{B} in the M_1 chords accords with this, because the keyboard major thirds are much sharper than the true third, which lies in this case between $\underline{B^b}$ and \underline{B} . The resemblance to the natural series continues throughout the piece to the end whenever these motifs are heard. Its significance may be its "natural" element, which is associated with death as being part of natural world.

The dual tonality of these motif-contexts may also be symbolic of the different dimensions of life and death, which is also seen in the nature of the two elements: the motifs are moving, the chords are still. The natural series basis of the chords thus takes on added significance as timeless nature to which all life returns.

Reference may also be made to the symbolism of bars 14-19, which deal with elements different from those above, but related to them.

Example 164:

Debussy: *Canope*, 14-19

Over similar natural-series chords an arabesque fragment M_{2a} derived from M_2 alternates with another (M_{1a}) akin to M_1 ; the second appears over a chord a fourth above the other, but both motif-fragments are descending ones. In the latter three bars of this section downwards movements of the

M_{2b} fragment are placed between the single ascending one of M_{1b}. This partial balancing of directions is asymmetrical to those of 14-16, which can be summarized thus:

Analysis 54:							
	14	15	16	17	18	19	
M ₂	/\	/\	--	\\		\\	
M ₁	/\	/\			//		
Debussy: <i>Canope</i> , 14-19, directional movements							

The six bars thus fall into asymmetrical groups of three. The structural pattern of the whole six bars is AAB CDC - again asymmetrical.

While there is probably some symbolism of death or the returning of all life to dust in the predominance of descending over ascending movements in the piece, it is likely that Debussy is at least as much concerned with the Art Nouveau features of patterning and symmetry. Perhaps the use of arch-shapes /\ in the chord-groups and motif-fragments shown above itself suggests the dust-life-dust cycle of nature.

Skryabin: *Guirlandes*

Guirlandes, or funeral wreaths, is placed alongside *Flammes sombres* in the Op. 73 *Deux danses* of 1913. The title is rich in Art Nouveau imagery: the gloom of death and mourning; flowers, the nature-symbol of regeneration, arranged in an intertwining circle (the images of circle and intertwining always being key elements in symbolist systems); and the ambiguity of the word "guirlandes" itself, that can have the opposite meanings of "wreaths" or "garlands" and thus connote transformation - of life and time in the *Acte préalable* and *Mysterium*, for which the two op. 73 pieces were written.

Unlike its companion-piece *Flammes sombres*, *Guirlandes* is composed with both hands in the same octatonic set as each other throughout. The piece is one in which the transitions from one set to another seem to be emphasized as being of symbolic importance in signifying transformation. The first occurs at the beginning of bar 6, preceding the first of the descending chains of figures that suggest the entwined flowers of a

garland or wreath:

Example 165:

Avec une grâce languissante.

Skryabin: *Guirlandes*, 1-12

The whole picture leading to the beginning of the chain is thus revealed: beginning in the O^1 set there are two two-bar sequences leading to minims in the upper voice, followed by four shorter ascending figures that echo the longer ones. The third of these can be heard to be composed from a different set of notes (semitonal intervals: 442) to that of all the others (443), and this is because the music is in the process of transforming into the O^3 set. Octatonic transformation as seen in this work involves the altering of a context around a key point of tonality: a note or note-pair common to the old and the new sets is the link, remaining fixed while the tonal universe around it changes. In the example above the key notes are D^\sharp , which begins the first and third bars, and F^\sharp , which begins the second and fourth. Arrows show the chromatic return to D^\sharp (transformed into E^b) through bars 5-6. The two notes D^\sharp and F^\sharp finish the sixth bar, the last before the pitch-set changes to O^3 . At the beginning of bar 7 D^\sharp has become E^b , which in the third beat begins the chain an octave higher, and is at the same time seen in the relation of a

tritone (semitonal interval 6) to the A below. At this point the chain begins, but in an anti-tritone manner, as it twines either side of the interval 6 but never touches it, proceeding in a series of 8-5-9 intervallic movements until it reaches the point where its treble is on E^b. It lingers around this note for four repetitions before the next section of the piece commences. The purpose of the chain is thus seen to be more than a link between sections, or imagery of twining flowers, but a winding around the tritone to veil its evil.

The symbols are complex, but it is the tritone that is evil, for the key notes D[#] and F[#] are benign, signifying that O¹ is a right-handed octatonic set, and the tritone does not appear anywhere in bars 1-6. When the context transforms to O³, however, E^b is a left-handed signifier, as is the chain that begins and ends on it, although its winding avoids stating its interval explicitly. The whole O³ section then is seen as a balance to the O¹ section. The whole piece bears the single rubric *Avec une grâce languissante*, so that the winding descent of the chain may be seen as an *amoroso* element as well as the ascending, more hesitant motif of bars 1-2.

The work is a series of transformations like that of bars 1-6 | 7-12, with key notes as agents of transition:

Analysis 55:

passage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
bars	1-6	7-17	18-25	26-36	37-47	48-55	56-65
sets	O ¹	O ³	O ²	O ¹	O ³	O ²	O ¹
centres	<u>D[#]/F[#]</u>	<u>G^b/D</u>	<u>D/A[#]</u>	<u>B^b/C</u>	<u>C/A^b</u>	<u>A^b/E</u>	<u>E/B^b</u>

Skryabin: *Guirlandes*, transformations

The paired notes of the O² and O³ passages are a major third (semitonal interval: 4) apart, while those of the O¹ passages are 3, 2 and 6 apart. These last intervals may seem irregular, but in fact they are key intervals of the octatonic scale - the tone, minor third and tritone, which intervals dominate the changes of tonal centre within the same set all through late Skryabin.

These central notes are akin to pedalpoints in Skryabin and may

often actually appear as such anywhere in the texture, as the G^b at the end of Example 165 does. When there is in this piece a transformation of sets the linking centre-notes common to both remain for a short time while the new notes of the new pitch-set are heard. The effect is as if the fixed points of centre-notes remain while the tonal universe around them alters: this is a realm without normal tonal dimensions, where changes occur although time is suspended and there is no normal diatonic-type progression, which is just what Skryabin is suggesting in the context of the set-title - *Dances*, but cosmic dances.

Conclusion

All the pieces in this chapter show strangenesses of harmony which, with are enhanced by the hypnotically repetitive figures used in the case of Liszt. All have a use of pedalpoints and narrowness of variation that combine with unresolved discordances and incomplete cadences to give the effect of being suspended in time and space. They are much more concerned with the fascination of death rather than with the grief of dying, and thus reflect the Art Nouveau of death as experience and process rather than heroic, tragic or pathetic end. Each composer sees the titles and associated compositions as being important promptings to symbolism, and while each has different signifiers for the most part, common to them all appears to be the simple one of descending and ascending motions to signify dual aspects of the process of death.

End-notes

- ¹ Storey, R.: op. cit., xiv; For Pierrot as Art Nouveau subject see Hirsbrunner, T.: *Debussy und seine Zeit*, particularly Chapter 1, and Storey, R.: op. cit., particularly the epilogue (Chapter XI, 314). There is also a considerable literature on Arnold Schoenberg's 1912 *Pierre lunaire* that deals with the Albert Giraud transformation of Pierrot into *Pierrot tourmenté et lunatique* that is relevant to the Abel Decaux *Clair de lune* works.
- ² Delogu, M.: *Stravinsky: Petruska e il balagan*, Nuova rivista musical italiana XVIII/4 (Oct-Dec. 1984), 589-61; Wiley, R.J.: *The Balagany in Petrushka*, Ward Festschrift, ed. Shapiro, A.D. and Benjamin, P., (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University 1984), 305-16.
- ³ Arranged by Stravinsky for Artur Rubinstein from the 1911 *Petrushka* ballet and published in 1922 by Édition Russe de Musique.
- ⁴ Pierrot/Petrushka (both are diminutives) needs to be distinguished from

- Punch/Polichinelle/Pulcinella, although both developed from the *Commedia del'arte*. In Russia both are booth-theatre traditions.
- 5 They can also be seen as part of the tradition of the Moor as villain in European art, from Shakespeare's *Othello* to Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.
 - 6 Hirsbrunner, T.: *Debussy und seine Zeit*, 43.
 - 7 Idem, 46-47.
 - 8 The Decaux pieces that show *Pierrot lunaire* are prefaced by a prose poem, very reminiscent of Aloysius Bertrand's morbid fantasy, by one Louis de Lutèce (whom Theo Hirsbrunner suspects to be Decaux); although a score was not available for this study the LP recording by Meral Guneyman is (Finnadar Records SR 9031) and shows a demented Pierrot. See Hirsbrunner, T.: *Abel Decaux, der Entdecker der impressionistischen Atonalität*, *Melos/Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 11/5 (1976), 372-74.
 - 9 Hirsbrunner, T.: *Die Gestalt des Pierrot Lunaire*, *Bund* 164 (July 1971), 2.
 - 10 The original orchestral version has four scenes and is described as *Scenes burlesque en quatre tableaux*, the *burlesque* perhaps denoting the burlesque theatre like the *Funambules* as well as the character of Pierrot.
 - 11 Using Verlaine's distinction: see Jones, L.E.: op. cit., 50-51.
 - 12 Rufer, J.: *The Works of Arnold Schoenberg*, transl. Newlin, D. (London, Faber & Faber 1962; originally Kassel, Barenreiter 1959), 40.
 - 13 The dual nature of Schoenberg's song-cycle is discussed in Platt, P: *Pierrot lunaire - Mannerist or Baroque?* (*Miscellanea Musicologica* 13 (1984), 233-34.
 - 14 The general importance of ostinato in Stravinsky has been discussed by Wolff, H.C.: *Ordnung und Gestalt. Die Musik von 1900 bis 1950*, (Bonn, Verlag für systematische Musikwissenschaft 1978), 91ff. For folk-elements in Stravinsky see Stephan, R.: *Vom alten und neuen Petruschka: Igor Stravinsky 1910 + 1946*, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 143 (1962), 255ff; and Grigos'yeva: *Russian Folklore in Stravinsky's Works*, *Muzyka i sovremennost vi* (1969).
 - 15 Recent studies of Stravinsky's piano composition include Joseph, Charles M.: *Stravinsky and the piano* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, UMI Research Press, 1983).
 - 16 Harris, B.S.: op. cit., 59-67.
 - 17 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 113.
 - 18 Ibid, 202.
 - 19 Lorenz, O.: op. cit., 120. The journal's name suggests or implies caricature.
 - 20 Harris, B.S.: op. cit., 105-112.
 - 21 Ibid, 117.
 - 22 Orenstein, A.: *Ravel: Man and Musician*, (New York, Columbia University Press 1975), 18.
 - 23 Orenstein, A.: notes to the 1975 Salabert edition of the piece (Paris: Editions Salabert S.A. et A.R.I.M.A.).
 - 24 James, B.: op. cit., 19-20.
 - 25 Bowers, F.: op. cit., 107.
 - 26 Ibid, 121.
 - 27 de Schloezer, B.: op. cit., 161.
 - 28 Sabaniev (Ssabanejew), L.: *Geschichte der Russische Musik*, (Leipzig, Breitkopf & Härtel 1926), 164-69.
 - 29 de Schloezer, op. cit., 137-38.
 - 30 Jullian, P.: op. cit., 20-21, 26.
 - 31 Lucie-Smith, E.: *Symbolist Art*, (London, Thames & Hudson 1972).
 - 32 Idem, 241-42.
 - 33 Masini, L-V.: op. cit., 30-33.
 - 34 Dating from Searle, H.: op. cit., 167 - that from the Liszt Society edition (Vol.1) appears to be inaccurate.

- 35 So spelt; German rather than French title, (New Grove 11, 61; Breitkopf and Härtel ii/10, 197).
- 36 Quoted as epigraph to Sorabji, K.S.: op. cit., 12; for its application in later Liszt see Nagler, N.: op. cit., 26.
- 37 See Serge Gut's analysis of fifths and whole-tone elements in both Liszt and Debussy: Gut, S.: *Liszt et Debussy, comparaison stylistique*, in *Referente des 2 europäischen Liszt Symposiums*, Eisenstadt 1978, (ed. Gut, S.), (München & Salzburg, Katzschichler 1981, 63-77.
- 38 Alan Walker's likening this to Schoenberg's experiments in fourths is interesting, but the chord begins with a major third: Walker, A.: op. cit., 360.
- 39 In the three examples that follow, the parts for II have been transcribed from Leslie Howard's recording (no score for this work being procurable) so that errors of form are possible.
- 40 Searle, H.: op. cit., 114.
- 41 Zoltan Gárdonyi sees these chords as deriving from gypsy elements rather than from the tritonic concept: *Die ungarische Stileigentümlichkeiten in dem musikalischen Werken Franz Liszts*, (Berlin-Leipzig 1931), 70-71.
- 42 Kabisch, T.: *Struktur und Form im Spätwerk Franz Liszts. Das Klavierstück "Unstern" (1886)*, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* XLIII/3 (1985), 178-199. Other studies are Rexroth, D.: *Zum Spätwerk Franz Liszts - Material und Form in dem Klavierstück "Unstern"*, *Bericht über den Internationalen musikwissenschaftlichen Kongress Bonn*, (ed. Dahlhaus, C. et al.), 1970, 544-47; Forte, A.: *Liszt's Experimental Idiom and Music of the Early Twentieth Century*, *Nineteenth-Century Music* 10/3 (1987), 221-23; Baker, J.M.: *The Limits of Tonality in the Late Music of Franz Liszt*, 163-167; see also Lemoine, B.: *Tonal Organization in Selected Late Piano Works of Franz Liszt*, and Kovacs, S.: *Formprinzipien und ungarische Stileigentümlichkeiten in dem Spätwerken von Liszt*, both in *Referente des 2 europäischen Liszt-Symposiums*, Eisenstadt 1978, (ed. Gut, S.), (München & Salzburg, Katzschichler 1981); Torkewitz, D.: *Anmerkungen zur Liszts Spätstil. Das Klavierstück "Preludio funèbre" (1885)*, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* XXXV/3 (1978), 231-36.
- 43 Kabisch, T.: op. cit., 192-93.
- 44 Ogden, J., in Walker, A. (ed.): *Franz Liszt*. See also the general comments on the Hungarian elements in the late pieces in Szabolcsi, B.: *the Twilight of Liszt*, (Budapest, Hungarian Academy of Sciences 1959).
- 45 Chapels of consecration from which there is procession to burial or cremation.
- 46 Jullian, P.: op. cit., 86.
- 47 The use of the Phrygian mode in association with death is discussed in Kimmel, W.: *The Phrygian Inflection and the Appearance of Death*, *College Music Symposium* XX/2 (Fall, 1980), 42-76.
- 48 The apparent formation of these by recitative in 150 and 152 is momentary and probably accidental; it certainly is not stressed.
- 49 Ibid, 163-167.
- 50 See the discussion of pitch-sets common to Liszt, Debussy and Messiaen in Street, D.: *The Modes of Limited Transposition*, *Musical Times* CVII (Oct. 1976), 810-23.
- 51 Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 181-182; Lewis, S.: *Some Instances of Parallel Voice-Leading in Debussy*, *Nineteenth Century Music* 11 (1988), 297-98.
- 52 Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 182-82. Robert Schmitz describes the nature of this stylization for both the Egyptian and Etruscan types of urn. Since Debussy owned two urn-tops with stylized decoration - presumably of heads, it is likely that stylization is as much the focus of the piece as death.



CHAPTER 19

THE ORGAN REPERTORY

(It is convenient to consider all the organ works of the Art Nouveau keyboard repertory together, not because they are by the one composer, but because the special nature of the organ and its registration *vis-à-vis* the music may thus be dealt with more compactly.)

Louis Vierne, organist at Notre Dame, Paris, from 1901-37, is one of the last composers still working in the idioms of Art Nouveau in the nineteen-twenties, publishing his four books of *Pièces de fantaisie* for organ in 1927, although writing most of them before that year. Their titles, as will be seen, are clearly of Art Nouveau provenance, and the music non-ecclesiastical in intention.

Vierne's organ:

This is one of the principal achievements of France's leading organ-builder of the nineteenth century, Aristide Cavallé-Coll, in 1868. At this stage of his work he was influenced by theories of design based on the natural harmonic series¹, and included on the first and third manuals (*Grand-choeur, Bombarde*) and *Pédale* mutation ranks (ranks of pipes pitched at other than the note or its octaves) that sounded all the harmonic partials to the third octave, including the non-diatonic tones of the seventh. Since these pitches are important to an understanding of Vierne's organ and his music they can be considered in full:

Analysis 56:

partial:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
diatonic note:	1	8	12	15	17	19	^b 21	22
interval:	fund.	8 ^{ve}	5 th	8 ^{ve}	3 rd	5 th	^b 7 th	8 ^{ve}
		+-----+		+-----+				+-----
		1 st 8 ^{ve}		2 nd 8 ^{ve}				3 rd 8 ^{ve}

The natural harmonic series and Vierne's organ

The organ at Notre Dame was constructed so that the natural harmonic series, as far as it is represented by this table, is used for three complete choruses of ranks. The earlier French organ tended to have these ranks as far as the sixth²; Cavallé-Coll merely made the set complete. He

envisaged them sounding together as a chorus, whereas the older practice was to use these ranks as colour for solo timbres, and Vierne certainly follows the latter practice in the pieces to be discussed in this chapter.

The first manual provided the complete set 1-8 based on 8-foot pitch, the third another complete set at 16-foot (sub-octave) pitch, and the pedal section a further complete set at 32-foot pitch. From directions throughout his works and the traditions handed to his successors at the organ like Pierre Cochereau³, it is clear that Vierne extended the normal practice of organists and used all these ranks as colouring sounds for his solo voices and certain *mélanges* like those of his scherzo movements, producing sounds of extreme character.

For instance, when a rank is sounding at normal 8-foot pitch together with one sounding a non-unison partial like the third, fifth, sixth or seventh (respectively twelve, seventeen, nineteen and twenty-one notes above), the ear hears two tones that the brain, to some degree, interprets as one (since they are concordant, being tuned pure). The listener, however, is often still able to distinguish them as distinct pitches, and is thus listening to the melodic line in two distinct aural planes. These planes seem to the ear only tenuously related, yet sit together because they are tuned perfectly to a simple arithmetical multiple of the fundamental (8-foot) and produce no dissonant beats. The blending effect that the brain registers, in the addition of such an upper partial reinforcement to an 8-foot sound, colours its tone remarkably: a flute-sound becomes transformed into hollow, reedy, or other sharply differentiated or piquant varieties of tone, and the effect is made more complex still when more than one of these mutation ranks is used, or when the 8-foot and 16-foot mutations are used with other than their appropriate foundation-pitch rank. In the latter case non-harmonic close intervals like a fifth, seventh or fourteenth can be used, or wide intervals produced by using 8-foot mutations with a 16-foot foundation. Even this does not

exhaust the possibilities, for there is a wide tonal range of ranks that can be used as foundational.

Many of these combinations are bizarre in sound, and as such suit the extremes found in Art Nouveau imagery and expression. In *Fantômes Vierne* specifies the pitches 8,4, $2^{2/3}$ (notes 1,8,12 or C,C',G') for the *Positif*⁴ manual, with the top pitch, to which the ear adjusts for the melodic line, sounding a fifth, and not "covered" by the unison 2-foot. The $2^{2/3}$ rank is found on most organs, but Vierne, with his uniquely endowed instrument, would from the evidence available in the practice of Pierre Cochereau, his successor, have used the mutation (off-pitch) ranks most adventurously and produced even more strange sounds. In her recording, Marie-Andrée Morisset uses the *Cromorne* or *Clarinette* reed-stop as extra colour for the low chords on the *Récit* manual, and it is customary for organists, in the context of romantic instruments of a largely unified design, to exploit the resources at their command in the spirit rather than the letter of the directions.

Two points arise from this that are of importance to musical Art Nouveau - firstly, the distinct perception of separate but harmonizing planes of sound caused by the use of mutation ranks, strangeness of dimensionality being characteristically Art Nouveau, and secondly the bizarre sounds that match bizarre or grotesque Art Nouveau imagery. These sounds were generally not previously available on organs built in the nineteenth century, and one, the *Septième* (seventh), almost never heard before. Whereas in the older organ such non-unison ranks tended to be voiced to blend, their more assertive character in the Cavaillé-Coll organ means that their effect in such contexts tends to be more grotesque. Olivier Messiaen later exploited this characteristic in his *Catalogue d'oiseaux*.

DREAM *Fantômes (Pièces de fantaisie op.54/4) 1927*

Vierne

Fantômes is "pour le concert seulement" - specifically not a church

work - and has the following text at the foot of the piece:

L'évocateur: 1 *Qui donc prépare l'avenir?...*
Le jeune aesthète: 2 *C'est moi...Je suis libre!*
Le vieux pédant: 3 *C'est moi... Je garde la tradition!*
Le nègre: 4 *L'avenir est au danseur.*
Le singe: 5 *L'avenir est à la fantasia...*
Le mendiant (joueur d'Orgue de Barbarie):
 6 *Il est à la misère..."Solo Mio"*
Le destin fate: 7 *Il n'est nulle part et partout.*

[The evoker: Who then prepares the future?
 The young aesthete: It is I...I am free!
 The old pedant: It is I...I maintain the tradition!
 The negro: The future belongs to the dancer.
 The monkey: Future is in the hands of fancy/whim.
 The beggar (who plays the street-organ):
 It belongs to misery..."Sole Mio"
 Fate: It is nowhere and everywhere.]

The numerals refer to delineated sections of the work, but do not indicate its form, for it is not a narrative but is structured according to musical and symbolic considerations, as can be seen from the way in which sections devoted to each voice, represented by Vierne's numerals, are deployed and grouped:

1 2 1 2 3 1 2 1 3 4 1 2 3 5 6 5 6 5 6 5 6 1 7

The gaps suggest what seem to be the main groupings, but the list does not include the respective numbers of bars, which vary from two to twenty-one, the latter being the sole appearance of 4. It is clear that there is antiphonal resonance of all the passages except 4 and 7, and that the method of alternating sections is that typical of so much Art Nouveau.

This poetic scenario is apparently not connected to any theatrical occasion but would probably have been used in the programme of its first performance. Marie-Andrée Morrisset links it to Vierne's own statements about four of the pieces in his op.36 *Préludes* for piano, whose titles *Seul* [alone], *Hantise* [obsession], *Nuit blanche* and *Ronde des revenants* [round-dance of spirits] are explained by him as reflecting the depression and hallucinations he frequently suffered from⁵. It is clear from the comments and from the general evidence of his titles that Vierne's peculiarly melancholic imagination habitually found expression in Art Nouveau imagery,

as can be seen in *Feux follets*, *Clair de lune*, *Naiades*, and *Gargouilles et chimères* from the organ works, for instance, and in his descriptions of the piano preludes mentioned above:

Hantise: *Le souvenir des disparus hante le solitaire.*

Nuit blanche: *O douleur, invisible compagne, tu veilles inlassablement près de celui dont tu as mis l'âme en deuil, et déchiré le cœur.*

Vision hallucinante: *Arrière! Spectre sangiant, si tu n'es qu'une vaine image.*

Ronde des revenants: *Troublés dans leur repos par les échos de la joie des vivants, les morts se lèverit et dansent aussi sous le clair de lune.*

From the outset the harmonies are uncompromising, with unresolved complex chromatic discords (\underline{E} major) $I^{\#6}_{\#5} \#3_2 \setminus VII^6_{b5} \#4_2$. Vierne achieves the transition from the first to the second discord by a contrary movement of the three voices in the right hand, the upper note ascending a minor third and the lower two descending a semitone. This is paralleled in the two voices of the left hand, with the upper note rising a semitone and the lower falling a semitone so that a major second becomes a major third. This is a characteristically contrapuntal method of Vierne's (also seen throughout the organ symphonies⁶), and is in effect a transformative one in which the various voices of discords move oppositionally into new chromatic discords:

Example 166:

Vierne: *Fantômes*, 1-2, 5-6, 14-15

The method fits the subject of the work, in which each of the phantom utterances (numerals 2-7) transforms those of the others into its own answer to the question posed by the first.

In the case of bars 5-6, over the same falling pedal there is a different pair of chords with a slightly different transformative method - the inner part falling while the outer ones rise. In the third case, bars 14-15, the upper two rise and the lower two diverge. In each of the three cases the movement is different, the chords different, but the basic transformative method the same, and over the same pedal. During the longer passage in the idiom of *The Invoker*, bars 18-22, in the left hand for each successive pair of chords, the voices draw together semitonally, while the right hand voices fall semitonally in parallel:

Example 167:

The musical score for Example 167 shows three systems of music. The first system is for the piano accompaniment, starting at bar 18. It features a falling pedal point on D in the left hand. The right hand has a melodic line with chromatic movement. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'R. Sic.', 'cresc.', and 'f'. The second system is for the Hautbois and Oboe, starting at bar 19. It features a melodic line with chromatic movement. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'f'. The third system is for the piano accompaniment, starting at bar 20. It features a falling pedal point on D in the left hand. The right hand has a melodic line with chromatic movement. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'f'.

Vierne: *Fantômes*, 18-22

All this takes place over a pedalpoint on D, so that over a flat sonic plane the voices move in chromatic patterns (since each chord-pair is a tone above the last). The last of these chord-pairs breaks the pattern, thus emphasizing that the progression to this point has been a patterned one. This chord-pair itself then transforms in 21-22, by an echo of the previous right-hand falling semitonal movement, from a \flat VII diminished seventh through a German sixth (first inversion) into a German sixth with flattened upper note - the form of the first chord of the first bar, or the

original "question". Thus the transformative method of Vierne's chromaticism is again seen to be symbolically significant.

Similar method is used for the groupings of semiquavers played in unison that represent the Young Aesthete. Here a semitonally reduced form of the first chord of the Invoker (the lower part reduced to a semitonal interval and the upper to a minor third) is transformed firstly by being formed into a joined series of broken chords, and secondly by its falling through a semitonal series of patterns, then rising through major thirds:

Example 168:

The musical score for Example 168 consists of two staves. The upper staff is marked 'p con fantasia' and the lower staff is marked 'p con fantasia'. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. Brackets above the notes group them into three 'A' groups (A, A', A'') and five 'B' groups (B, B', B''). The notes are semiquavers. The score is numbered 17.

Vierne: *Fantômes*, 16-17

(The bars 16-17 illustrated are identical to 3-4 but are chosen here because there is more room in the score to display brackets.) Not only is there contrary motion indicated by the plain and dashed letters, but expanded design, for the three **A** groups are followed by five **B**. This sits with the expansion method of the chord-pairs (described above) in bars 5-6 and 18-22 immediately following this sequence.

The Old Pedant sequences (3) take place within double pedal points set at chromatic intervals: in 23-25 the interval is first a major seventh and then a tritone, followed by ascending parallel chords that comprise the double tritone (four notes each a major third apart).

Example 169:

The musical score for Example 169 consists of two staves. The upper staff is marked 'f' and the lower staff is marked 'f'. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The score is numbered 24. Performance instructions include: 'R. Ajoutez Trompette et plein-jeu Sw. Ume Cornepean and mixture', 'G.R. G.Sw.', 'cresc.', 'R. dim.', and 'Ped. G.R. Ped. G.Sw.'. At the bottom right, there are instrument markings: 'Flûte 8, Bourdon 8, Velle 8, Prestent 4 et Quinte', 'Flute 8, Stop diap. 8, Cello 8, Octave 4, and Quint'.

Vierne: *Fantômes* 23-25

Furthermore, the upper pedal moves in semitones through a tritone over the

three bars; and the inner semitonal unison-groupings, initially pitched a tritone from the upper pedal, each span a tritone, and successively rise in semitonal steps over a tritone. It is just possible that there may be some reference to the Old Pedant as Devil, following the focusing on the tritone, which has been noted in earlier chapters as being a traditional sign of evil or death. More likely, however, is the mild inference that the pedant's "tradition" has already been cursed by the dead weight of history, for the pedant passages are as gloomy as any in the work.

With the sole, more extensive passage based on dance (4 - The Negro: the reference is perhaps to such figures as that portrayed by Henri Toulouse-Lautrec's *Chocolat dansant*⁷, or to the entertainers who imitated negroes, like the Christie Minstrels), the type of patterning changes from chromatic transformations into repetitive figures and pedalpoints. The manuals-figure for the first bars (26-30 forms an E inverted pedal maintained by two ostinato figures (26-33, 34-39), under which the feet move in an ostinato rhythm until bars 40, when they iterate G[#] while the manuals maintain still more complex ostinati to the end of the passage.

The monkey and beggar/organ-grinder passages (5 and 6) introduce bathos, not inappropriate to the grotesquerie of this work. Both are based on ostinato and pedalpoint, with the syncopations (between hands and feet) of the monkey passages, and the first four bars of *O solo mio* in the beggar passages, turned into ostinato, also featuring banal syncopations (bass-tenor accompaniment alternations). The final voice, Fate (7), is of six slower bars beginning with wholetones proceeding from the tritone D-G[#], and ending with chromatics moving in gradual oppositional movement to a minor chord on C[#], the close of the work.

The complex, interweaving patterning and symmetries evident in the detail of this work are as characteristic of Art Nouveau as the title and subject-matter of the scenario itself. These interweavings take place around pedalpoints, as the tangled vines and hair of Art Nouveau paintings

form patterns on their flat surfaces. Vierne's systematic use of chromaticism is a method that creates asymmetrical relationships; these continually transform into new patterns. Ostinato in several forms, but particularly those of rhythm, give the work not only the imagery of phantasmagoria but achieve this in typically Art Nouveau mesmeric fashion. With the extremes of registration specified, with much use of the lower parts of the manuals for chords, and with the effective use of the many pauses between passages to allow the cathedral's echoes to be heard dying away, the work is one of an extremely affective character, creating a powerful atmosphere.

WATER Naiades (Pieces de fantasia 4/4) 1927 Vierne.

Naiads, the river-sprites, are in Greek mythology less menacing than their counterparts of the sea, the nereids, and are associated with bubbling freshwater streams rather than the darker and more mysterious sea, although Wagner's *Ring* cycle has the Rhine-maidens in a setting between the two. They embody motion above all else - the incessant and always-changing fluidity of the streams flowing over and around obstacles, and forming spray. This motion is force, and its noise one of the complex sounds of nature: behind the naiads' play, therefore, is the power of nature itself, as is shown in Vitezslav Novák's *Hory* (Mountains) in his *Pan* suite. Louis Vierne, like Novák, uses unorthodox musical materials to suggest mystery behind his water-imagery, and not the least of these is to set this work for organ rather than piano or orchestra, for such imagery of lightness is unusual on an organ.

This *moto perpetuo* (a form suited to Art Nouveau because of its excessive intensity) of one hundred and thirty-five bars is divided into four-bar phrases, with hiatuses in this pattern before key-signature changes, and more subtle variations in the patterns of foot-pedal use within the four-bar units, that keep the phrasal metre just a little unpredictable without any interruption of intensity. The whole work is

quiet, varying between *piano* and *pianissimo*, and registered for ranks of delicate tone, the nature of which will be discussed later.

Each section between key-changes is modal, thus fitting the Greek subject, for the traditional modes, whether Classical or not, bear Greek names and therefore ancient Greek associations. Their disposition in the work is shown together with the thirty-three full and partial four-bar phrases and the tonal centre within each key-section:

Analysis 57:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

Lydian | Mixolydian | Aeolian | Mix.

22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33

F F# E B
|Lyd. | Mix. | Lydian | Ionian

[In this analysis the numerals have been italicized to signify that they are not bar-numbers but four-bar phrase numbers, except for those underlined, which are incomplete phrases.]

Vierne: *Naiades*

The ways in which the three modes compare with the diatonic major set can be seen thus:

Diatonic major:	221 2221
Mixolydian:	221 2212
Lydian:	222 1221
Aeolian:	212 2122

It is clear that there is only a single difference between the first two, which means that the plagal form of the Mixolydian (beginning four notes below) is the major diatonic scale. In *Naiades* there are passages where part of the texture seems in the one and part in the other, so that tonality is confused; this will be illustrated below.

The incomplete phrases, (underlined digits in the analysis above), are immediately followed by a change of key, thus breaking the pattern, and in so doing they create metrical ambiguity as well as confusion as to tonal centre. Each key-change also changes the mode employed, adding a further element of ambiguity. These features, together with variations in the patterning by which the foot-pedals and accompanimental chords mark rhythm

within the phrase, can be seen as symbolizing the "otherness" or supernatural nature of the naiads, which are not of the human realm, just as the work is not diatonic.

But the three modes employed, especially the Mixolydian (which merely flattens the leading-note of the major diatonic scale), sound sufficiently like the diatonic sound-realm for much of the time, so that their strangeness is subtle. In the same way, the naiads' frolicking only carries subtle hints of their mystery as water-spirits.

From the first bar until three bars before the end the semiquaver triplet figure is a *moto perpetuo* of eighteen notes to the 3/4 bar at *Allegro* tempo, never ceasing for a single note, even at the key-changes. For the first twenty-seven bars it is in the right hand, and returns to this hand from bar 53 to 133. For all this time there is no melody except in the patterns of rushing triplets, so that most of the work is cadenza-like filigree. From bars 28-52 the left hand takes over the triplets or shares them with the right, so that a sketchy melodic line begins to be heard in the right hand.

Example 170:

P. Ajoutez Unda maris
Ch. Dirige Unda maris
dolce cantabile
R. pp
Ped. solo

Vierne: *Naiades*, 28-30

This melody is delivered in snatches between quaver pauses at the beginning of bars, and the first phrase shown ends on A in the following bar; the melody is thus in the same four-bar phrases as the *moto perpetuo*, but after a sixteen-bar sequence it, like the *perpetuo*, ends the section with a three-bar hiatus. It can be seen that in the example above the *moto perpetuo* is for the first time in the work fixed into an ostinato pattern, as the feet are also fixed to a rhythmic and tonal pedalpoint.

The ostinato and pedalpoint emphasize an ambiguity of tonal centre between melody and accompaniment. The accompaniment, considered by itself (as it has been for the whole work to this point) is in the Mixolydian mode, which is the scale of D major but without C#. The foot-pedal staccati at the beginning of each four-bar phrase have defined the tonal centre thus. But from the viewpoint of the melody, the accompanimental ostinato is the dominant of its apparent tonal centre G, so that it is taken by the ear at first to be in a simple diatonic tonality, and it avoids F# until bar 35. But when it reaches this point the ostinato and pedalpoint begin to break, so that tonal centre and the question of Mixolydian or diatonic major tonality that seemed to be dual system now becomes confused. When the full picture of the passage is considered it becomes clear that both melody and accompaniment are in fact Mixolydian, with some modulatory variation within the ambit of the mode, but the ambiguous suggestions of diatonicism mixed with modality are perceptible, and echoed in similar passages later in the piece.

Analysis 58:

bars: 28-31 | 32-35 | 36-39 | 40-43 | 44-46 | 47
 bass: D D D# \ B \ A / E G - G / C \ B \ A \ G / E \ G #

Vierne: *Naiades*, 28-47

The same effect occurs at other stages during the piece where there are fragments of melody, but the most important is that at the final cadence, after a pedalpoint on B from 118 to 122, in relation to which the *perpetuo* figure above has been seen as a dominant of E (the Mixolydian tonal centre), on which a *stretto* has been building up. Thus the movement has been towards a final E, but when the *perpetuo* is finally stilled it is on a B⁵₃ chord, with the foot-pedals' B creating the ambiguous effect of ending on the Mixolydian dominant which is also the diatonic's tonic. Throughout the work the ear has been uncertain as to which tonality is intended, and even at the end the tonal picture is left unanswered.

This tonal confusion is furthered by the actual sounds of the *moto*

perpetuo, registered for the *Unda maris* rank on the *Positif* manual. This is a rank that consists of two unison-pitch flute-pipes slightly detuned⁸, their beating adding to the gentle effect of confusion caused by the unusual (non-diatonic) elements in the sound of the mode. This melodic sequence is continued in the left hand from 70 to 88, after which it is lost for the remainder of the movement. Melody is therefore in this work a secondary effect, employed only in the mid-sections as an adjunct to the "accompanimental" *perpetuo*, a reversal of roles that is part of Art Nouveau's asymmetrical aesthetic.

From 47 to 52 the hands alternate the triplet figure, and from 103 there are passages where the hands combine, with contrasts of similar and contrary motions in the patterning. Thus although it is too fast to take in the details, the ostinato is perceived as a kaleidoscopic *moto perpetuo* of tone-colours and forms, weaving around the series of gradually changing tonal centres summarized in the analysis above.

The foot-pedals and other hand combine in a rhythmic series of staccato chords in which two sequences interact with the ostinato; the pattern, which is of chords on the last (crotchet) beat of one bar and the first of the next (3/4), is varied just enough to give some of the unpredictability of the ostinato.

As a final touch of ambiguity the registration of the *perpetuo* may be noticed: Flutes 8, 8, 4 and $2\frac{2}{3}$. This last is at the octave and a fifth from normal (8-foot) pitch, and although, being a flute rank, it is more inclined to blend with the foundation 8-foot ranks than the sharper-toned *Quinte* $2\frac{2}{3}$, it can nonetheless be perceived by the ear as sounding a series of consecutive fifths with the main note.

The rapidity of the *perpetuo* figure dominates the whole work, producing a cascade of soft, changing patterns that hover between modality and diatonicism. In its wealth of detail and soft effects it is very like an Alphonse Mucha poster, and is also reminiscent of the naiad/nereid

drawings and paintings of Alfred Roller, Gustav Klimt, Fritz Endell and Aristide Maillol⁹.

AIR Feux follets (Pièces de fantaisie 2/4) 1927 Vierne

The title is the equivalent to the English "will o'the wisp", and thus means a fleeting spirit - one "that deludes by fugitive appearances"¹⁰. It is mysterious, evanescent and ambiguous, and thus a typical Art Nouveau spirit, non-substantial, like air. Its musical expression is especially suited to Vierne's organ at Notre Dame, with its many mutation (non-unison) ranks and wide sound-palette in a building with a long reverberation to add a sense of mystery.

The registration Vierne sets for *Récit* and *Positif* deliberately aims at bizarre sounds - for concert rather than church performance. The *Récit* has *Cor de nuit* (a stopped flute with prominent third and fifth partials, sounding like the *chalmieu* register of the clarinet), together with an octave flute and *Voix humaine* - a reed stop that despite its optimistic name sounds something like sheep or goat-voices, and is derived from the short-pipe Regal family of pipe-types (which it sounds much more like than it does the human voice), and is thus somewhat buzzing in tone. On the *Positif* Vierne specifies flutes of 8, 4, $2\frac{2}{3}$ and 2-foot pitches (the first [fundamental], second, third and fourth partials], which is a bright effect with some sparkle from the two highest ranks, especially the $2\frac{2}{3}$ rank¹¹.

Example 171:

Vierne: *Feux follets*, 3-6

These sharp and unusual sounds are necessary to suit the strangeness

of the music. The opening figures by themselves convey only some idea of the individuality of sound that is achieved with the *Positif* registration, especially the discords on the second and third beats of bar 4, and the rapid (*Vivace*) alternations of bars 5 and 6. Bars 3-4 repeat 1-2 exactly, so that the whole sequence of the first six bars can be understood. The silent third and fifth beats of bar 3, and the pause at the end of 4, at once break the rhythm, and in so doing actually emphasize the irregular nature of the 5/4 metre. Any simple perceptions of rhythmic pattern at the outset of the work are frustrated, although the patterns of bars 5-6 help establish at least a sense of the 5/4 pulse.

The patterns of the note-groups themselves are typical of Vierne in their use of contrary motions, which are seen in the deployment of the hands in 3, 4 (first beat), and throughout 5-6. Later in the work (bar 8, for instance), the patterns are reversed, with the divergence of the hands in the middles of 5 and 6 replaced by convergence. Their sound, with Vierne's registration, is reminiscent of the bizarre octatonic chords from bar 121 in Ravel's *Scarbo*, although Vierne's pitch-set is not octatonic, merely heavily chromatic.

As in some of the other Vierne works in this study, there is some ambiguity of pitch-set, however. The key-signature throughout has two sharps, and the work ends in B minor, but as can be seen above the implied tonal centre is F#, which is confirmed when the *Pédale* enters in bar 7 and holds a pedalpoint for that bar on that note. Thus a Mixolydian modality is indicated, only to be contradicted by the bass moving to B in bar 9 for a repeating of the opening six bars, this time with a bass. But where in bar 4 there is a general pause, in the corresponding bar 12 the *Pédale* has a discordant quaver-pair on E^b before falling again to B. This is another strange effect that sits with the rhythmic and discordant ones noticed so far.

The contradiction of modality by diatonicism in the first section of

the work needs to be seen against the later appearances of the opening figures. At bar 55 they appear over a B tonal centre, so that diatonicism is clear, but at bar 95 the *Pédale* begins on G and emphasizes this in 98, 102 and 103 before moving to set up a pedalpoint on B that ends the work.

The main melodic motif, set in 3/4 metre and first appearing in bar 17, is strange in two ways that are typical of Vierne's use of extreme effects. Firstly, it is announced over a C[#] pedalpoint that remains until bar 28, which with its syncopated quaver ostinato, confirms itself as the tonal centre. But with the same key signature (two sharps) this indicates the Locrian mode, the least used and least satisfying to ears accustomed to diatonics, for it begins with a semitonal step (122 1222 - the same as the white-note scale from B). It is followed by another lengthy pedalpoint (33-44) - on F[#] supporting a repeating of the melody heard over the first, different, pedalpoint, so that the effect is of a transformation of harmonies. Although the melody itself is unchanged, over this new tonal centre it sounds different: here is an **apparent** transformation, appropriate to the spirit-nature of *feux follets*.

Secondly, the melody is given out on the *Récit*, with the strange-sounding *mélange* of ranks discussed above, in parallel tritones - an effect unique in the keyboard repertory. Parallel thirds produce an effect of mystery, when quiet, as has been seen in many examples, and the harsh effects of parallel sevenths as utilized by Stravinsky's *Le sacre*, and the major ninths in Skryabin's *Étude* op.65/1, are no more strange than Vierne's effect, especially over the pedalpoint. From the halfway-point of the sixteen-bar melodic sequence, however, the pattern changes: while the melody is still heard in two simultaneous voices, the tritones are varied with major thirds and minor sixths. But with the *Voix humaine* registration the sound is still very strange.

The melody is not developed in any way, but merely heard at different pitches and against different tonal contexts, as seen in Ravel's *Ondine* and

so much other Art Nouveau, where there is repetition rather than development, suggesting a state of suspended time. From bar 31 the melody appears over an F^\sharp pedal, as mentioned above, and from 64 it appears in the *Pédale* (and thus in single notes), but set a minor third lower, over which figures derived from those in bar 3 are centred around C^\sharp - the tonal centre accompanying the melody's first appearance. From bar 80 the melody appears in the tenor at the same pitch, but against an A pedalpoint that falls to F^\sharp at the end of the sequence, again as in the first pair of sequences, but in the second pair the melody is set a minor third higher, and therefore sounds transformed in its different treatment.

Vierne has thus used ambiguity of rhythm, tonality and setting, together with bizarre effects of discordance, to suggest the mysterious nature of *feux follets*. The strange sounds produced by the combination of discords and registration is only exceeded in the repertory by those of his *Gargouilles et chimères*, where again the subject connotes mystery.

CLAIR DE LUNE

Clair de lune (Pièces de fantaisie 2/5), 1926 Vierne

The piece echoes in its gentle melancholy the earlier work of Debussy from *Suite bergamasque*, written over thirty years before. It bears the same name, is in the same key-signature, is in the same ABA form, and there are other less obvious resemblances, such as the lack of modulation in the outer sections and related step-movements of the bass between V and I. It therefore seems that Vierne is deliberately echoing the famous Debussy piece, with all its connotations of the poets' *Pierrot triste*.

From the outset a syncopated accompanimental ostinato is established in the left hand that is unbroken through the first twenty-six bars of the thirty-two bar first section. For most of this time it forms a pedalpoint on the dominant, with the harmony seeming suspended there until in bar 19 a tonic pedalpoint joins it, remaining until 26. This parallels Debussy's

not introducing any tonic bass until his ninth bar.

During this first section there is a drifting strand composed of two voices (occasionally becoming three) that by moving chromatically, especially in parallel descending minor thirds, tend to confuse any feeling of sureness of tonal centre that the pedalpoint might suggest. Instead, such drifting actually accentuates the feeling of slow swirls on a single plane that seems suspended in space, without any of the harmonic progression that gives it tonal perspective. Here again Vierne is echoing Debussy, for this descending drifting parallels the descending progressions of his opening sequence. But the contrast is important: Debussy's progression is down a series of diatonic steps, while Vierne's is chromatic, the diatonic steps confirming tonality and the chromatic ones, especially in conjunction with the dominant pedal, weakening it.

As a further factor in clouding tonality, the characteristic opening phrase of the melody is repeated at the interval of a tritone from bar 11, and at the minor third (half a tritone) from 23. And although it is basically diatonic, this melody has enough chromatic excursions to make its tonality less than certain, especially in the context of the pedals and chromatic movement below it.

The short bridge between the first and second sections (the parallel to Debussy's bars 25-26 that fall to a dominant seventh to introduce his middle section), show characteristic Vierne chromatic patterning:

Example 172:

Vierne: *Clair de lune*, 33-36

The melody, in the treble for the first two bars, is an adaptation of that of the first section, and moves in contrary motion to the descending

accompanimental major thirds before and after its fall from C to produce a series of transforming harmonies. In the second two bars the voices are inverted with respect to each other, so that the contrary motions are also reversed, and move towards instead of apart from each other.

Through the long mid-section (37-80), there is again an accompanimental ostinato, but this time in semiquavers, so that there is increased tension. Once more the parallel with Debussy's *Clair de lune* can be seen, for he also moves from a quaver to a semiquaver accompanimental movement. Vierne shifts the melodic line to the feet, using an 8-foot rank, and produces a quite different effect from that of the outer sections, where the melody seems high above the accompaniment. Here it weaves through it, for the actual pitch of the foot-pedals' melody is in the middle of the accompaniment on the manuals. This close texture in five parts, with the uppermost being a counter-melody, means that melody, counter-melody, accompanimental ostinato and bass mingle and separate by turns throughout the whole section. The resultant ambiguity is typical of Art Nouveau practice. It is important to remember that on the Cavallé-Coll organs for which French composers wrote, all ranks from all departments except the heavily winded chorus reeds are of approximately the same volume, encouraging blending rather than contrasting of voices and the various manual and pedal departments, so that there are many moments when the melodic lines become temporarily confused. Art Nouveau music frequently clouds the relative importance of melody and accompaniment in various ways as part of its basic asymmetry of aesthetic effect, and here the writing, reflecting Vierne's thorough understanding of his organ, is deliberately aimed to produce this effect. (Although the *Pédale* has the extra volume and definition of being coupled to the *Positif*, Vierne directs that the hands on the *Récit* be heard *forte*, with the swell-box well open, so that the *Pédale* melody does not dominate. Furthermore, the hands are playing fairly close harmony in four parts low in the compass, producing

some thick sounds, and the *Voix célestes* specified for this, consisting of two slightly detuned ranks, is, on the French organ, besides being quite comparable in volume, itself produces a confused sound because of its beating.)

Through the mid-section there are pedalpoints, chromatic parallel movements moving in contrary motion to the melody, and quasi-pedalpoints where the lowest manual voice moves semitonally around a temporary tonal centre, but never seeming to rest for long. Where there are pedalpoints there is chromatic drifting around them, so that ambiguity of tonal perspective is maintained through the section. The semiquaver ostinato likewise constantly drifts, or rather, transforms, chromatically.

The reprise of the first section is a modification of it, with the *Pédale* holding a tonic $\underline{D^b}$ from the outset, but over a different, though equally ambiguously tonal, accompanimental figure. The melody begins a seventh above it, and when it repeats from bar 92 over a dominant ($\underline{A^b}$) pedalpoint, it is now a minor seventh above it, so preserving the tritonic interval between its repetitions that was noticed in the first section.

The work ends, after the typical parallel chromatics of 101 (below), with a series of relatively simple, more diatonic (mainly 6_4_3) descending chords that oppose the ascending (broken) ones with which Debussy ends his piece. But their movement is not simple, for on their first descent they fall to \underline{C} , not the tonic $\underline{D^b}$.

Example 173:

The musical score for Example 173 is presented in a three-staff format. The top staff is the right-hand part, the middle staff is the left-hand part, and the bottom staff is the pedal part. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo marking 'Tempo' is placed above the first measure. The score shows a series of chords and melodic lines. A bracket under the first two measures of the left hand indicates a specific harmonic structure. Roman numerals V and VII are marked below the bottom staff, indicating the chord structure. The piece ends with a complex chord structure in the right hand.

Vierne: *Clair de lune*, 100-04

The VII (\underline{C}), as well as being unexpected after the V, which anticipates a fall to the tonic, is a complex chord, with an 8_3 chord on $\underline{B^b}$ superimposed

on the 5_3 left-hand foundation on C. In effect the right hand moves II \ VI while the left moves V \ VII. The symbolism of this temporary divergence or dualism of harmonies is perhaps that of the distance between Pierrot's dream and his real self.

Finally, the inner parts drift slowly and chromatically at last around the only concord (both hands) of the entire work - a 5_3 chord on the tonic D^b.

Ambiguity of tonality and of the relative importance of the voices produce a sustained uncertainty of harmonic and contrapuntal perspective that is characteristically Art Nouveau. Together with the gentle but persistent ostinato accompanimental figures, it gives this work a subtly mesmeric effect that suits the vague melancholy of the subject - *Pierrot triste du clair de lune*.

GROTESQUE *Gargouilles et chimère*

(Pièces de fantasia 4/5) 1927

Vierne

Gargoyles are the water-spouts shaped in grotesque figures of demons, projecting from mediaeval French cathedrals, and supposed to help repel devil-spirits from holy places. Those of Notre-Dame are particularly horrifying, one being shown as eating an infant alive, and another as having a bat-like face and humped body¹². Figures like these were expected to inspire fear of hell and its torments in the mediaeval mind through their grotesque deformities, and are another example of the importance of elements of the mediaeval world-view and culture to Art Nouveau.

Chimaeras are Classical - the head of a lion, trunk of a goat and tail of a serpent or dragon. Bellerophon slew such a monster in Lycia with the aid of Pegasus. Hans Hofstätter shows two examples¹³ - a 1901 literal depiction of the Classical monster by Stanislaw Debicki, a member of the Viennese Secession, and a 1902 more symbolic representation by Edward Okun, who studied in Munich and Paris, which shows a nymph of fire rising in flames from a garden urn against a dark and forbidding landscape. The

reference is obscure, but seems to be concerned with the metaphorical meaning: chimaeras, especially when spelt (in English) "chimeras", have become wild and fanciful notions that it is vain to pursue¹⁴.

Both types of mythical creature are ugly and menacing, and part of the supernatural world of Art Nouveau mythology. The metaphorical extension of the meaning of "chimera" is apposite, for Art Nouveau deliberately fosters the conceit of belief in the impossible in opposition to the positivism of science which, with its derivative technologies, is seen as shaping the world towards the colourlessness of merely utilitarian and materialistic values.

Since the music has two very contrasting strands throughout, it is probable that Vierne wishes to contrast the two types of creature, seeing the gargoyles as relatively static, striking horrible attitudes (they are, after all, functioning parts of the cathedral's fixed structure), while chimaeras move in a serpentine fashion and threaten attack.

Before considering the discords that Vierne uses to suggest gargoyles and chimaeras, it is necessary to see the nature of the registration he specifies for these sounds. For the gargoyle motifs (*Poco lento*), seen in the opening bars (M_{1A}), he specifies the *Positif* rank *Clarinette*, without signifying pitch. At Notre-Dame he had a family of these hollow-sounding reeds - 16, 8 and 4 - on the *Positif*. In a Cavaillé-Coll organ this rank has much of the assertive liveliness, even coarseness, of the Baroque rank-type, and bears its traditional name *Cromorne*. It is customary for it to be specified with flutes of 8-foot (normal) pitch to smooth its assertiveness, but here Vierne uses it alone, and in its darkest low register - the lowest two octaves of the manual. The effect this produces in the close chords (^b3 parallels) employed is quite startling in its harshness and hollowness. It is also probable, since he does not specify pitch, that Vierne would have used the 16 or 4-foot *Cromorne* ranks in addition for some of the gargoyle passages, which would make the effect

even more bizarre.

The answering passages (M_{1B}), set in the middle of the *Récit* manual, are again for a single rank - the stopped, narrow flue pipes of the *Quintaton 8*, that produce a very hollow, clarinet-like sound not unlike that of the *Clarinette/Cromorne*, but without the bite of the reed-rank. These ranks are voiced in an extreme manner, so that some transitory partials are heard as its sound commences (termed "chiff") and the third or fifth partials can be heard beside the first or fundamental when the pipes have settled to their speech. The echo of the fundamental at the interval of an octave plus fifth or tenth, particularly in the chords of the seventh employed in these passages, is singular. Again, this is a rank that in the conventional usage of the time was used to colour other ranks, not to be used alone.

For later entrances of the answering-motif, variants occur: *Quintaton 16 + Flûte 4* (the absence of an 8-foot rank again producing an unusual sound; *Flûte 8 solo*; *Flûte et Gambe 8* - more normal, and therefore contrasting sounds. It is clear that Vierne expects the organist to vary his tone-colours for these passages to match the changing nature of each appearance of M_{1B} .

Example 174:

The musical score for Example 174 is divided into two systems. The first system, labeled 'MANUELS' and 'PÉDALE', is marked 'Poco lento' with a tempo of 63. It features a melody in the right hand of the manuals and a bass line in the pedals. The second system, also labeled 'MANUELS' and 'PÉDALE', is marked 'Allegro' with a tempo of 84. It continues the melody and bass line with more complex rhythmic patterns. Performance instructions include 'R. Fonds et anches 8.4' and 'Sto. Fond. stops and reeds 8.4'. Fingerings and pedal markings are provided throughout the score.

Vierne: *Gargouilles et chimères*: 1-12

The chimaera passages (M_2 , *allegro*) are by contrast to be heard with chorus reeds and flues, more normal organ colours associated with dramatic

tension.

Vierne's harmonies are chromatic for the gargoyle passages and more diatonic/modal for the faster and louder chimaera passages. This is the typical pattern of M_{1A} and M_{1B} passages throughout the work, but no two are quite alike. Vierne contrasts the parallel minor thirds of M_{1A} with the variety of M_{1B} , the latter having parallel mixed with converging chromatic movements. It will be seen that Vierne is forming patterns, the falling minor thirds of the right hand in the B passages being contrasted with the convergent pairs in the left, the basis of the motion being semitonal, and the use of convergence providing just sufficient contrast with the strict parallels.

Patterning is one of Vierne's purposes in the piece, for when all the gargoyle passages are compared, an overall harmonic pattern is evident:

Analysis 59:

	M_{1A}		M_{1B}	
1-2	[F [#] -B ^b]		D ^b -G]	3-6
7-8	[F [#] -E]		E -A	9-12
20-21	[F [#] -D [#]]		D [#] -G	22-25
26-27	[F [#] -C [#]]		C [#] -D]	28-31
42-43	[C [#] -B]		B -G [#]]	44-47
48-49	[C [#] -A [#]]		A [#] -A	50-53
77-78	[G -B]		B -G [#]	79-82
83-86	[G [#] -C]		C -C [#]]	87-91

Vierne: *Gargoyles et chimères*, M1 sequences

The numerals refer to bars, and are placed to the left of the A sequences and to the right of the B sequences. The letters denote the bass notes that begin and end each chordal sequence.

The details have been grouped so that patterns may be observed by making vertical comparisons. In the A groups it is first clear that all the first four begin on F[#], while in the second four two are C[#] and the second pair a semitone apart. This latter hiatus is, however, paralleled by their moving to a symmetrical pair of basses - B-A[#] being a drop of a semitone while B-C is a rise of a semitone. In the first four the finishing basses first form a tritone B^b-E and then move towards C[#] in a

similar, but not semitonal, manner to the way the last three of the second four move towards C.

All the B groups begin from the same notes on which the A groups finish, except for the first. The first four end similarly to the second four, the former using the intervals of a major second and a fourth, and the latter the intervals of a minor second and a fifth.

Such patterning parallels the fact that Notre-Dame's gargoyles are part of the cathedral's asymmetries of design, being structural as well as ornamental, and regularly positioned, although excrescences from the main structure. In Art Nouveau all ornament is structural, and composed from the forms of living things, whether real or imaginary. In the case of the gargoyles, each is recognisably similar to the others, yet distinctive, just as each M_1 sequence seems like the others, but is subtly (as can be seen from the analysis).

Vierne is therefore not only concerned to produce bizarre sounds, but patterns of such sounds. The A sequences are composed from parallel minor triads, with only that of 83-86 being extended outside this strictness to end in a dual chord - $C^5_3 + \#F^6_{4b}$ - a tritonic construction. All these are heard in the harsh, low, buzzing tones of the *Clarinette* rank, and at their slow pace are most suggestive of the gargoyles' leering and devilish nature.

The B sequences, because of their mixture of parallel thirds over convergent or contrary pairs of chords, seem like transforming patterns. The principle behind this can be observed in the musical example above. When the two-note chords of either hand move in parallels, they do so in thirds, major or minor; when the left hand chords move in convergent pairs, one is a concord and the other a discord, and the patterning is so arranged that the combination of the two chords produces the **effect** of passing resolution, even though each chord is a discord in itself. In the example, in bars 3-6 there is always the interval of a third between the hands,

meaning that the upper three notes of the four are always thirds, major or minor, with the lowest note leaping to produce a suitable bass. This bass then appears to resolve, like other notes above it, simply because it then moves semitonally. There is thus an illusion of regularly-spaced resolution that is also found in the B sequences. Such transformative method is the essence of Vierne's chromaticism: it is a patterned movement, even if the pattern produces appearances rather than real resolutions.

There are three basic forms of chimaera sequence ($M_{2A,B,C}$), all *allegro* and *forte*, suggesting thereby movement, and an active menace as against the passive one of the gargoyles. Their composition is contrapuntally articulated, in contrast to the lock-step movement of the gargoyle sequences. The feet are actively involved, and part of their patterning is that the voices exchange roles in different sections of the same sequence.

It is not necessary to outline the three M_2 types, but it is important to draw attention to some further aspects that concern their patterning and nature: major-minor alternations, inversions of figure and role between the voices, the suggestion of modal harmonies (achieved by pedalpoints on the dominant that appears to be the tonic), contrary motions, and patterning of inner voices, like those of 64-69 which are the convergent pairings seen in the M_{1B} sequences above. On the last page there is a series of broken chords in each hand that comprise the coda, so patterned that while each chord is a diminished seventh (minor-third intervals), it is set a major third from that in the other hand. These alternate with contrary-motion bars. The two types move through the steps of diminished seventh chords, until the first has reached the octave above that at which it began, when the second begins to descend in similar steps until the final cadence.

Throughout the work the static nature and harsh sounds of the gargoyle sequences are opposed by the dynamic nature and more insinuating

harmonies of the chimaera sequences. It seems clear that Vierne wished the piece to be seen as a series of oppositions, but on more than one plane, with M_{1A} and M_{1B} opposing each other, the various contrapuntal elements of the M_2 sequences similarly opposing each other, all in addition to the basic M_1 - M_2 oppositions. Within each sequence the hands, or the hands and feet, form patternings of oppositions. The work is thus formed from Art Nouveau device of patterning and extremity of effect.

End-notes

- 1 Douglass, F.: *Cavaillé-Coll and the Musicians*, (Raleigh, Sunbury 1980), vols. I & II letters show some of this development of thought, influenced by figures like Helmholtz. Nineteenth century-acoustical theory did not take sufficient account of the fact that in actual instrumental sounds these partials are to varying degrees out of tune with the fundamental.
- 2 Douglass, F.: *The Language of the French Classical Organ*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press 1969), 70-92.
- 3 See his many recordings, particularly that demonstrating the resources of the organ: Philips LP Très Ors Classiques 836.732 LY.
- 4 The fourth manual on Vierne's organ, but normally the second on the standard three-manual Cavaillé-Coll instrument for which contemporary French registrations were specified (the third being the *Récit-expressif*). Details of the organ are those given in Goodrich, W.: *The Organ in France*, (Boston, Boston Music Company 1917), 116-17.
- 5 Morrisset, M-A.: sleeve-notes to LP recording LYM 780120 of the work as part of the complete set of *Pièces de fantaisie* opp 51, 53, 54, 55, quoting Vierne (the source not given, but possibly included in the published edition of the piano *Préludes*, which has not been available for this study.
- 6 For instance, the first movement of the First and Fourth, and the scherzos of the Third, Fifth and Sixth; the later slow movements also illustrate the principle.
- 7 Sutton, D. and Sugans, G.M.: op. cit., Plate L.
- 8 Since few organs possess this rank, the average organist would transfer this voice to the *Récit* and use the beating *Voix célestes* rank with a flute, thereby achieving a similar effect.
- 9 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 230, 213, 184, 56.
- 10 New Oxford English Dictionary, XX, 353.
- 11 Even the wide resources of Vierne's organ did not possess the actual rank(s) named (Flageolet-Nazard) on the *Positif* or anywhere else, but as a term from the French pre-Romantic organ it was familiar enough. The important factor was that rank(s) of high pitch with fifth-sounding element are needed, which could also be supplied by a Mixture rank. Vierne could well have used his *Cornett*, which had third-sounding ranks as well.
- 12 Jacobs, J.: *The Horizon Book of Great Cathedrals*, (London, Hamish Hamilton 1968), 48-51.
- 13 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 268 and 271.
- 14 Okun may have the Young Poland movement in mind, portraying it as a chimera.

SECOND-ORDER KEYBOARD ART NOUVEAU

This division of the repertory involves consideration of works normally but arguably incorrectly assigned to other musical or historical categories. In the case of the keyboard repertory the debate revolves around works normally considered impressionist, either because their Art Nouveau (mannered fantastic) aspects have been overlooked, or because these aspects have been considered part of impressionism. This latter tendency does full justice neither to impressionism nor Art Nouveau.

This chapter focuses on some works that seem to have much more claim to Art Nouveau than to impressionist inspiration and character, and argues that to consider them from the limited viewpoint of impressionism as has been done hitherto is to misunderstand them, to ignore their most significant dimensions.

"Musical impressionism" as portmanteau term

The whole question of impressionism in music as far as it impinges on the study of Art Nouveau is reviewed in Appendix E, where the critical literature on the subject is examined, but its argument may be summarized here. As a movement in painting Impressionism¹, compared to the mannerism of Art Nouveau, is a form of consciously unsophisticated realism in simple settings that uses a sketchiness of technique partly for speed in capturing the outdoors light of the moment, and partly for transmitting through the mannerisms of the painter his or her own interpretation of the scene. Its differences from Art Nouveau are in essence those of realism as opposed to idealism, and may be illustrated by considering a theme common to both - the pastoral: Impressionism omits what is essential to Art Nouveau - the addition of fantasy that sees Pan and the dream world behind the forms of nature, which thus evokes all the imaginative associations of the past, the exotic and the mysterious.

In music the term "impressionism" has come to be a portmanteau term to mean any depiction of visual or other sensory imagery, even though the

imagery and treatment may be anything but impressionist-picturesque. It has also come to include the fantastic - but only from the standpoint of its depiction of visual imagery: any such depiction is automatically termed "impressionist" and its dimensions other than tone-painting thereby not sufficiently considered, if at all. This is merely to confuse the two streams of artistic creation to the detriment of both, with such labelling preventing the asking of appropriate questions about Art Nouveau music, as for instance, those that have led to the revaluations of many of the pieces considered above, like the later Skryabin sonatas, *La fille aux cheveux de lin* and *La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune*.

The other danger of this labelling is that it draws attention away from Art Nouveau's stylized and manneristic method, which is integral to the expression of its ideas, and focuses instead on its imagery without stressing its symbolic importance and Art Nouveau stylization into pattern.

Many musical works have a mixture of impressionist and Art Nouveau strands in their inspiration, for as has been noticed already, some composers may not have cared to differentiate the two to any significant extent. In this chapter both influences are considered in arguing the provenance of each work, but in all cases the Art Nouveau element is considered far stronger, so much so that all these pieces could well be considered alongside the First Order pieces as constituting the repertory proper.

Some Second-Order repertory works

There are some works like Debussy's *Les collines d'Anacapri* or *Feuilles mortes* where it might be argued that there is a mixture of impressionistic and Art Nouveau elements. Thus *Les collines*, in this view, could be seen as part tone-painting in its recalling of folk-tune, and part *Insel-exotic*, while *Feuilles mortes* could be part tone-painting of fluttering leaves and part evocation of death, mortality and the cycle of the seasons. The two examples would then show that impressionism and Art

Nouveau might overlap as well as intermix.

A second category of works might be considered primarily tone-painting, like Edward Macdowell's *Woodland Sketches* or Grieg's *Lyric Pieces* and the many examples in the character-piece genre.

The works to be considered in this chapter, however, although generally considered impressionist, prove to have little real claim to any such provenance, either from title or musical evidence.

TIME *V Mlhách* (In the Mists) 1,2,3,4 1912 Janáček

Janáček has given a title to the set but not to the individual pieces. The title can be seen as indicating Impressionist scene-painting of mists, and the music has been described as itself being "misty"², although without any supporting explanation or evidence. Scholarly opinion about the origins of the set is divided, with Jaroslav Vogel stating it to be, like *Po zarostlem chodnicku*, a series of "intimate confessions"³ - that is, reliving certain poignant memories in something like a Proustian manner. The editors of the Supraphon edition give their opinion that Janáček is expressing in this set his mental state of anguish at his isolation and lack of success⁴. Other commentators echo Jaroslav Seda, who merely says that Janáček's intentions in the set are not clear⁵. The important point, however, is that the title's ambiguity is typical of the oblique reference of Art Nouveau, with mists as metaphor for the difficulty of seeing the path from the past to the future (with "path" a key transformation symbol in Art Nouveau and an important metaphor for time in Czech⁶); in a mist it is possible only to see a little way, so that it is as if one is in a dimensionless and timeless world, with tantalizing glimpses of the beyond. If it is true that the set reflects Janáček's frustration with his life and career⁷ then this metaphor is most appropriate, implying more than picturesque mists of impressionist tone-painting.

Likenesses to the *Po zarostlem chodnicku* set

1. Janáček's method in the four pieces is to begin with a folk-like melody and then break into its continuity with fragmentary motifs of two or more other tunes or figures, constantly alternating and mixing the strands thereafter so that each piece seems to exist on several levels independently, as the memory alternates between them in Proustian manner without building up a complete narrative sequence. Each of these strands is itself fragmentary in nature, for even though the first ones in each piece form some sort of balanced song-structure there are the frequent half-closes, the pauses in pieces II and IV, and the breaking-up into repetitions (I bars 19-25, II 25-47) that prevent any sense of sustained narrative. This fragmentation is even more marked with the subsequent strands, even in II, the longest of the set.

2. Exaggerated repetition that is associated with this fragmentation is obvious in all four pieces, for none shows much real development as the strands alternate: there is little interaction to suggest linear progress in time. When a strand is repeated after an interruption by another it tends to be little changed apart from being heard at a new pitch, or being slightly augmented, as if the memory recalls more of it than before. The fourth piece appears to show some development from bar 121, but this is soon seen as repetition based on the brief fragment of bars 70-72.

3. Incessant motion is also a general characteristic of the set. Within these pieces there is little change of movement apart from that introduced by a change of motif, and despite the short pauses in bars 46-49 and 82-84 of II there is no dramatic or developmental variation of motion within sequences as is found in conventional pieces. The feeling with all four, even the improvisatory IV, is that each motif has its own pace that holds until it is interrupted by another motif, so that there is constant movement throughout each piece. All this notwithstanding, some motifs are hesitant, like the second in II (first seen from bar 17) and the first

motif of IV, and show this hesitancy in proceeding by stages. The small gaps between these stages are like sudden forgetting and then remembering, for they cut momentarily into the flow without being anything like the planned and rhetorical pauses of normal music that occur at the ends of completed sequences.

4. Indefinite beginnings and endings are not a feature of this set as they are in the Liszt pieces seen in the First Order repertory, but each begins and ends without introduction or coda material, and the solitary chord that finishes the first piece - the only one to have even this fragment of a contrived ending - is a little surprising, for the material that leads to it is that already used to break into the second section at bar 52, that elsewhere has been allowed to tail into silence. The second and fourth end in the mild ways that their various sections have ended, and the third closes at the end of a bar instead of at the beginning of one as is usual.

5. The use of pedalpoints is unusual and marked, with pieces I and IV beginning with inner pedals like drones (I bars 1-10, IV 1-4) and continuing the effect into their subsequent strands (I 49-59 and afterwards still implied until 63 or even 72, IV 56-64, 68-76, 77-89). Piece III has its own form of "pedal" - the invariable minim or sustaining-pedal equivalent in virtually all bars except those of the 37-61 sequence. Piece II has an inner pedal on the dominant (A^b) that is actual or implied throughout the whole first page; none for the second sequence (28-36) and varied tonic and dominant pedals thereafter. All pieces therefore display the typical Art Nouveau suspension of time-progression, as well as the fragmentary and repetitive qualities looked for. Incessant motion, however, is present in modified form, each strand having its steady motion that is interrupted by frequent pauses, as if there are series of steps but no certainties of direction or sense of progression, just as there would be in a mist. Perhaps the most telling musical characteristic from an Art

Nouveau point of view is the mood of each piece, seen in each strand - restless motion without progression, searching motifs, sad introspection (that is, almost completely non-dramatic music with many incompletenesses).

Other Art Nouveau characters

Three vital characteristics of these pieces have not been sufficiently elucidated by the foregoing discussion - mystery, sensuality and ambiguity, all essential principles of Art Nouveau, and therefore important in establishing the provenance of the works.

Mystery and sensuality both result from the nature of the pitch-sets, which are all strange to ears accustomed to diatonics, and are reiterated with little development over the drone-basses. While all this is suggestive of or derived from folk-music idiom, the fragmentary nature of sequences, their broken and ambiguous rhythms and frequent changes of tempo indicate that the pieces are a lot more complex, and that the folk-base is being used for something more than nationalistic folk-evocation, as Milan Kundera⁸ has pointed out.

The following analysis lists the main pitch-sets of the four pieces, sets that vary widely in range and composition. A similar analysis could be made of the very individual rhythms of the various motifs and figures, and of the mosaic-like structures in which they are interwoven. The effect of this is to produce melodies that combine the appealing sensuousness of naive folk-idiom with the artifice of Art Nouveau ornate presentation, resulting in pronounced sensuality and mystery.

Analysis 60:

I	M ₁ octatonic	$\underline{D^b}$ 12221112	M ₂ trichord	$\underline{D^b}$ 212
	M ₃ pentatonic	$\underline{A^b}$ 22314	M ₄ hexatonic	$\underline{A^b}$ 221214
II	M ₁ pentatonic	$\underline{A^b}$ 44112	M ₂ septatonic	$\underline{A^b}$ 1312122
III	M ₁ tetratonic	$\underline{G^b}$ 2214	M ₂ hexatonic	\underline{E} 214122
IV	M ₁ tetrachord	$\underline{B^b}$ 1221	M ₂ hexatonic	$\underline{A^b}$ 221331

Janáček: *V Mlhách*, pitch-sets

None of these melodic sets is conventional, and two (the trichord and

tetrachord) do not cover an octave. Even in the other sets that do, no individual phrase ranges over more than six notes. This adds to the fragmentary nature of the whole, as if glimpses of the past or the future are all that can be perceived. No two sets are the same, and all, being very different from diatonics, sound strange. The four and three-semitone intervals (major and minor thirds) have an Eastern flavour, but their relationship to the drone-pedals is equally coloured, for most have as their melodic centre a note different from that of the drone.

Example 175:

The musical score for Example 175 consists of two systems of piano music. The first system is marked 'Andante (♩ = 90)' and 'cantando'. It features a melody in the right hand and a drone-like accompaniment in the left hand. The melody is composed of five notes: G^b, A^b, B^b, C, and D^b. The drone accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern. The second system is marked 'rit.' and continues the melody and accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'p', 'dolcissimo', and 'simile'.

Janáček: *V Mhách/1*, 1-12

Here the melody is centred on either G^b or B^b while the drone is D^b . The tonal picture is further confused by the fact that the drone is really on the dominant, but with contradictory signals coming firstly from the off-beat quavers and secondly from the lowest notes in each phrase. In the first bar (lower stave) the initial quaver-pair signals a D^b root and its A^b dominant while the second pair signals a reversed order dominant-tonic with root on G^b , particularly as this is the melodic centre. The hiatus between the quaver-pairs continues for the whole of the M_1 section (1-49), changing (as in 9) without reconciling.

The chromatic nature of the initial four-bar phrase comes from the composition of its irregular octatonic set that has three consecutive semitonal intervals. As a melodic phrase its outer notes are clear but its inner ones not so easily distinguished because of their winding nature and their close contiguity. This is thus a sensual but ambiguous-sounding five notes whose effect is magnified by immediate repetition; such sensuality

and ambiguity combines to produce an effect of mystery all through the set of four pieces.

The second line in the example sets off more straightforwardly but finishes its last three bars away from the G^b centre of the other three phrases, so that again ambiguity of direction is suggested - or perhaps ambiguity of nature, because of the sensuality in the initial chromaticism and the exotic-sounding arabesque in bar 9.

It is obvious from the example as a whole that a quite passionate as well as mysterious effect is being produced. Contributing to this powerfully is the hypnotic monotony of the bass ostinato-rhythm and its ambiguity of tonal reference as against that of the melody-centres.

Rhythmic ambiguity is very evident in the length and nature of melodic phrases, as well as in melodies' frequently ending at the end of bars instead of on the anticipated first beat of the following bar (as in bar 12 of the previous example). The three-bar phrases of that example are unusual to the ear accustomed to four-bar *mélodie* units, but even this pattern is upset by an extra bar (25) before the twenty-four bar sequence is repeated (in tonally modified form), this time with two extra bars (47-48). In the full statement of M_4 between 73 and 80 there are three sources of rhythmic irregularity:

Example 176:

73
tempo, ff espr.
p (p) (p) (p) simile

76

79
ff *ms*
p

Janáček: *V Mhách/1*, 73-81

The accompanimental figure begins each descending run of two triplets one third of a crotchet after the first and third beats so that it is rhythmically offset from the melody. The melody itself begins each of its first three (two-bar) phrases unusually, with quavers followed by a minim. The fourth phrase begins with a syncopation after the crotchet rest that puts the whole phrase awry and involves it in the sort of rhythmic complexity that is reminiscent of *Pétrouchka*. Bar 81 is followed by three similar ones so that the beat-horizon is lost, and when the next sequence begins on the beat the hearer's rhythmic senses are again disorientated.

The second piece again features rhythmic ambiguities with its *Presto* figurations that are followed by pauses and interpolated between *Molto adagio* statements of M_1 , themselves heavily punctuated by rests. Each motif and section in the piece begins after the beat, which means that certainty of rhythmic bearings can take a bar or two to achieve. The section from 51-61 is fully syncopated, *espressivo* and *Grave*, so that beat is even less certain.

In the fourth piece there are whole sequences where the tempo may change every two or three bars, with *accelerando molto* and pauses compounding the pronounced ambiguity.

A final note is needed about the threads of continuity that unite the contrasting short sections of the second and fourth pieces in particular (the sections of I and III being longer, although still contrasted).

Example 177:

The musical score for Example 177 consists of two systems of piano music. The first system begins at measure 13 and is marked 'Presto' with a 3/15 time signature. It features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and syncopation. Dynamics include *P simile*, *p*, *una corda*, and *P*. The second system begins at measure 18 and is marked 'Tempo I' with a 2/15 time signature. It continues the rhythmic complexity with similar patterns. Dynamics include *P*, *p*, *tre corde*, and *P simile*.

This is a typical cross-section from the first page of the second piece, showing two principal changes of section (the double lines), but with pauses marking divisions within the *Presto* section. The Tempo I outer sections (*Molto adagio*) are to be played *piano* and *dolce*, and at the very slow pace, and with the very chromatic melodic line, are definitely sensual. The same chromaticism is seen in the winding lines of the *Presto* figures, and the suddenness of their starting and stopping is equally passionate, although just an echo in volume. Both have drone-effects in the left hand, and both are rhythmically akin in their stop-start patterns. Subtle rhythmic likenesses are found in their beginnings and endings, with the silent semiquaver beats before the *Molto adagio* commences and after it finishes, and the anticipatory drone-beat before, and echo after, each *Presto* unit. These are beats that at least partly register on the consciousness by this stage of the piece even if they are ambiguous and puzzling at first. A similar analysis can be made of any cross-section of the fourth piece: both II and IV are tightly-woven versions of the same interlocking strand-structure as in I and III, and gain in passion and intricacy thereby.

As a set, the four pieces are difficult to classify against almost anything else in the piano repertory by contemporary composers, so that Janáček is thereby considered essentially unique - a Moravian original. But this is to ignore the strong evidence of links in his musical character and methodology with the most widespread and influential avant-garde sensibility of the time - Art Nouveau. Seen from this viewpoint these pieces of apparently eccentric idiom are seen as having much in common with the mosaic method of late Liszt, late Skryabin, Satie's mystical pieces and Stravinsky's *Pétrouchka*, all of which in their different ways come from the same aesthetic of the interweaving of sensuous, strange lines into a complex and ambiguous whole. In this light Janáček is seen to be close to fellow-Czechs Alphonse Maria Mucha, Frantisek Bílek and Frantisek Kupka.

It becomes difficult in the face of so many instances of Art Nouveau characters to sustain an impressionist case for the whole set. Such a case rests only on an (unsupported) reading of the title as scene-painting, and on the folk-nature or naivety of the motifs. These motifs, however, are fragmented, alternated and repeated in a manner that has nothing to do with folk-dance or folk-song, but everything to do with Art Nouveau interweaving of delicately sensuous motifs on the flat surface of drone-pedal.

MASKS	<i>Voiles (Préludes I/2)</i> 1910	Debussy
	<i>Brouillards (Préludes II/1)</i> 1912-13	Debussy

The theme of Masks - of appearances belying realities - is one aspect of the central notion of transformation in Art Nouveau. Both reality and dream can appear to be transformed when they are viewed differently, and in the cases of the two works considered here this sort of ambiguity is present in title and music.

These two works are among the most discussed of the Preludes, with specific studies by Rudof Böckl, Richard S. Parks, David Paul Goldman and Renato di Benedetto⁹, together with many other cases where they are used as illustrations of whole-tone, octatonic or other techniques. None of this literature pays specific attention to the Art Nouveau viewpoint.

Debussy: *Voiles*

Voiles has two possible meanings - veil or sail. The impressionist looks to the second meaning, while Art Nouveau looks to both, to the ambiguity of intent that the use of the single word inevitably possesses. Robert Schmitz testifies that he remembers Debussy giving it both meanings¹⁰, but Marguerite Long quotes Debussy as saying that it "is not a photograph of the beach"¹¹, which seems an argument for its ambiguity. Edgar Varèse asserts that it was inspired by Loie Fuller's veil-dances.¹² "Veils" is rich in Art Nouveau associations - masks and bergamasks, disguises, shows, pretences, the veils of Loie Fuller and Salomé, veils of swirling hair, veils of mourning, the waves and spray that surround Ondine,

and the Eastern *yashmak* that veils women's faces. "Sails" have less richness for Art Nouveau, except as forming patterns on a seascape or suggesting the many-sailed ships of former times that voyaged for spices or battles. To the impressionist sails mean the many familiar paintings of yachts on calmly rippling waters.

On one level *Voiles* is simply a piece in ABA form with whole-tone set harmonies in the A sections and pentatonics in B. Both pitch-sets are strictly followed, with a common link in the $\underline{B^b}$ pedalpoint that runs through fifty-four of the sixty-four bars. These sets alone give the piece a strangeness of sound that at the slow pace and sustained softness is dream-like. There is a subtle opposition between the pitch-centres of the various strands of motif and the pedal, with gently sensuous discords, particularly those involving the tritone. The indications instruct the player to avoid metrical exactness, and use the terms *caressant, très doux, expressif, très souplé, comme un très léger glissando, doucement en dehors* for various strands. Thus a soft, insinuating sensuality is maintained throughout that easily suggests the swirling veils of Loie Fuller that were essentially Art Nouveau in their curving, teasing and fantasy. The pentatonic mid-section (42-47) can be seen as a suggestion of or reference to Eastern veil-dancing, or that of Salomé herself - in theatrical terms a contemporary of Loie Fuller; as will be seen below, no other satisfactory explanation for this six-bar hiatus has yet been advanced. It is also worth noticing that an impressionist reading of the work as sails on water cannot account for the passage at all.

Another level has recently been suggested by David Paul Goldman¹³: the whole-tones and pentatonics are veils cleverly concealing a symbolist harmonic structure based on Pythagorean divisions by harmonic and arithmetic means of two and three-octave gamuts, the two-octave one on \underline{C} giving the augmented triad $\underline{C-E-G^\#}$, and the three-octave one on \underline{C} giving an alternative augmented triad of $\underline{B^b-D-F^\#}$. The whole piece and its two pitch-

sets can be seen as deriving from these two elements of mathematical proportion. Although his case is not entirely well made as to its detail¹⁴ his main concept seems interesting, for it explains the puzzle of the ostinato B^b pedal that other theories cannot¹⁵, and convincingly accounts for its tonality as being diatonic C, seen in the opening and closing phrases more clearly, under the veil of the whole-tone and pentatonic sets. His account of the pentatonic mid-section is weakened, however, by his unsustainable argument that "its central tone [is] at F-sharp (or G-flat)" when the examples he quotes seem to show that they rest both rhythmically and tonally on E^b as the true tonal centre of the whole section. (Both A^b and E^b are more accented in the examples he cites, but since E^b begins the two glissandi, begins and ends the 43-44 *Emporté* segment, and is the resting-point of the four 45-46 figures in both their top and bottom notes, E^b seems the tonal centre. It is thus because it must be the quasi-dominant of B^b in a pentatonic system, just as F[#] is in a whole-tone system.)

A vital point illustrated by Goldman's article is that the idea of a meta-music beyond the sensuous veil of whole-tones and pentatones comes as a result of asking questions about the work from the symbolist viewpoint. Goldman begins his investigation from the sort of Symbolist theory that gives rise to the Golden Section ratio and other mathematical proportion, and advances it as a possible solution to the cryptic statements Debussy made in his letter to Ernest Chausson of 3 September 1893 about "esoteric music".¹⁶ It is much less likely that his insights into *Voiles* could have come about from other approaches. For instance, recent intensive work in Schenkerian and Fortean analysis of the piece¹⁷ has not suggested anything like Goldman's essentially simple idea that seems to be indicated behind its outer veils. An Art Nouveau viewpoint, slightly different in approach from that of Symbolism, may uncover still more, as will be shown.

Art Nouveau naturally focuses on things like ambiguities, patterns,

resonances, dimensionalities and transformations - factors that like the Symbolist ones of hidden codes and structural and harmonic proportion are also less likely to be noticed by studies from other viewpoints, especially that of impressionism. It is once obvious that the piece is at to a large extent based on ambiguities, with the conflicting tonalities of \underline{C} and $\underline{B^b}$ evident from bar 5:

Example 178:

Debussy: *Voiles*, 5-13

The first strand of the piece (S_1), the whole-tone major thirds, has just finished its opening statement on the \underline{C} chord (a statement that is repeated almost verbatim in 10-14). Its tonal centre is immediately contradicted by the $\underline{B^b}$ pedal (S_2), and both are further contradicted by the ambiguous S_3 octaves *expressif* that begin on $\underline{A^b}$ and move through the other two centres, only to finish with the bar 13 $\underline{A^b}$ minim (emphasized) that is confirmed by another in the following bar. Thus far three tonal centres are proposed in descending order, but are echoed in the **ascending** fragment of S_3 (that of bar 7) that appears transformed as a full octave chord (S_4) with raised fifth. Between 17 and 21, instead of descending to $\underline{C+E}$ as in its first appearance, S_1 ascends to $\underline{E+G^\#}$, the latter note being the enharmonic equivalent of $\underline{A^b}$ but spelt differently - another dimension of ambiguity.

At 21 yet another tonality is suggested by the inverted pedal \underline{D} , even though the $\underline{B^b}$ pedal is still sounding its ostinato, like the bell- $\underline{B^b}$ in Ravel's *Le gibet*, which may well have suggested it¹⁸. S_5 sets up its own

ostinato that sways backwards and forwards between D and F[#] - and yet another tonal centre is posited.

Meanwhile a turn-figure S_6 appears from 22 that, based on A^b (the note on which it begins and towards which it always falls), is the first new figure to repeat an already introduced tonal centre. But it is strangely constituted, breaking into a two-note form and then having its second note-sequence vanish into the first, or into the S_5 ostinato that has been going all the while.

Example 179:

Debussy: *Voiles*, 29-31

At the the second quaver-beat of 29 the note D belongs to the S_5 strand (the parallel is at the beginning of 24) and finishes that strand by ascending to the B^b of the second beat, while a new strand S_7 begins below on the F[#]. But the new strand then vanishes into that of the turn-figure (S_5) at the same place in the next bar, simultaneously reappearing as itself again on that bar's F[#]. This is one veil vanishing into another and reappearing - more Art Nouveau ambiguity. Again, in bar 26 the lower voice of S_5 reappears, but appears to be the continuation of the scale-figure of S_7 . (The *Oeuvres complètes* score here is identical with that of the example [U.M.P. 1968 reprint of the original Durand edition], and presumably therefore reflects the layout of the manuscript, so that the "vanishing" of one voice into another is intentional¹⁹.) Loie Fuller's two veils must similarly have seemed like a succession of veils, each one flowing into another as the musical strands do here.

At this point (bar 26) S_7 sets up a new pattern that becomes the ostinato of the following six bars, but it is based on two notes, the newer of which (E) is emphasized as such in that bar, while the B^b pedal momentarily ceases (until 33). This cessation is deliberate, for the left hand is free to resume it in 32 but does not; Debussy is therefore establishing an ambiguous double tonal centre that sits with the resumed bass pedal (making a trio of centres - B^b, D, E) from 33-37, when the E component disappears as quietly as it began.

Tracing all the strands in this way confirms the conclusions already reached about ambiguity of tonal centres, the interweavings of strands, and their appearances, disappearances and reappearances. The following analysis summarizes the whole picture, but a word is necessary first concerning transformations of strands. One type has already been noticed in the previous example where S_7 dissolves into S_6 but reappears as the scale-figure continuing its original ascending motion. The more important type occurs at the transitions into and from the mid-section in bars 41-42 and 47-48. The whole-tone S_8 becomes without any break a pentatonic (black-note) arabesque, transforming its tonal centre from A^b to E^b. At the other end S_{11} becomes S_{12} , its E^b centre transforming to one beginning on F[#] that follows from the G^b component of S_{11} (last chord, bar 47, in the left hand), the enharmonic respelling signifying transformation.

Analysis 61:

	bar		centre	type
S_1	1	RH	C/E	major.3rds
S_2	5	LH	B ^b	bass pedal
S_3	7	RH	A ^b	octaves
S_4	15	LH	A ^b	chords ⁸ 5 [#] ₃
S_5	21	RH	D/F [#]	inverted pedal
S_6	23	RH	A ^b	turn; 1-2 voices
S_7	29	LH	D/E	WT ascending scale, extension of S_5
S_8	38	RH	A ^b	chords, mixed; 1-3 voices
S_9	38	LH	D	descending scale; transforming into S_{10}
S_{10}	42	RH	E ^b	arabesque, 1-3 voices
S_{11}	43	LH	E ^b	4ths & 5ths complement of S_{10}
S_{12}	48	RH	?	glissandi alternately F [#] -D/A ^b -E
S_{13}	54	RH	G [#]	chords [#] 6 ₂
S_{14}	54	LH	F [#]	chords ^b 7 ₄ [#] alternately. C-F [#] /D-A ^b

Debussy: Voiles, textural strands

This analysis shows fourteen strands with the bar and hand of their first appearance, but since 3 and 4 are the same, and 9 transforms into 10 at the beginning of the pentatonic mid-section, there are twelve actual figures, which might symbolize twice six, the number of wholetones in the octave. All these tones are represented at some stage as tonal centres, with A^b being emphasized by its four entries (five, with the G^\sharp); it is also a component of S_{12} , making six. It might be interesting to explore further symbolisms, but the odd centre of E^b , together with its pentatonic section 42-47 is going to seem difficult to fit into any pattern. The important points that the analysis uncovers for the Art Nouveau perspective are firstly that there is a pattern of interweaving strands, secondly that there is ambiguity of tonal centre at any point of the piece, and thirdly that some strands are ambiguous as to their number of voices or tonal centres. As a puzzle the piece is fascinating symbolism and teasing Art Nouveau; as Art Nouveau it has changing, indefinite tonal and textural dimensions, all interfused with a gentle, strange sensuality that results partly from its exotic pitch-sets and partly from the delicate clashes that their contrapuntal interwindings create. *Voiles* as "veils" is therefore certainly itself an ambiguous title, and the piece a mixture of Symbolism and Art Nouveau far richer in reference and suggestion than can be implied by considering it as impressionistic scene-painting of sails on the water, beautiful as such paintings are in the hands of Monet or Renoir²⁰.

Debussy: *Brouillards*

Brouillards - fogs, mists, haze - is either literal or figurative, but without the metaphorical reference to time of Janáček's *V Mlách*. The indistinctness of Impressionist painting can be used to argue the impressionist case, or just the beauty of mists themselves inferred. The Art Nouveau case can rest on the ambiguity between literal and figurative meanings, and especially the idea of reality being disguised in swirls of mist. There are also the mists that hide this life from the next, with

enough strangeness in the music to suggest this strand of interpretation. In the end there is not the clear preference for one interpretation or the other of the title that there is with *Voiles*, so that the musical evidence must speak for itself: this it does with remarkable clarity, as will be seen, leaving no doubt that the title is about the obscuring and confusing of musical dimensions and boundaries. It should be remembered, of course, that the Art Nouveau interpretation will encompass both real and metaphorical mists, so that any musical imagery suggesting actual mist is not decisive evidence of impressionistic scene-painting or blurred method, as is commonly assumed.

The title *Brouillards* is plural: there is more than one layer of fog obscuring the musical dimensions of this piece. The most fundamental musical dimensions are those of rhythm and tonality, and both are systematically disordered throughout the piece.

Example 180:

Debussy: *Brouillards*, 1-3

The basic pulse of the first bar is set by the left-hand quavers, which is upset in the second bar by the left hand's semiquavers. Time-signature changes in both 3 and 4 to 3/8 and 3/4 respectively confuse the rhythmic unit of two quaver-pulses established in 1-2 in two ways: firstly, bar 3 is a triple-quaver unit, and secondly, bar 4 reverts to duple-quaver unit but has three of them, not two. Bar 4 reverts to the first metre (4/8), but instead of being divided into two two-quaver pairs it becomes a different duality of four semiquavers and two quavers. There are two

sequences where an even rhythm is maintained for several bars (7-15, 32-37), but they are followed by changes similar to those of the first bars.

Tonality is ambiguous throughout every bar, with several types of contradiction, often running simultaneously; there are, for instance, three in the first bar alone. The first is that of the hands being based on opposing tonalities of white (left) and mainly black (right) - those of diatonic triads opposed to pentatonic and near-pentatonic sets. A second layer of tonal complexity is introduced by the second and fourth quaver figures being a semitone offset from the first and third. From one point of view this is contrast of the sort just at this time being explored by Stravinsky, and for the same reasons - those of octatonic sets, which contain different polarities from the tonic-dominant of diatonic ones. Some of the parallels between *Pétrouchka* and this work are pointed to by Roy Howat.²¹ The pairs on C are from the octatonic set O^1 and the others from O^2 , with the left hand taking white notes only and the right black ones mainly. Thus the semitonal difference is that between different transpositions of octatonic sets²².

These three tonal oppositions do not exhaust the types employed. If the various strands and segments of the piece are examined it will be noticed that S_3 (RH, bar 2) sets up the first hints of a pedal (inverted) that suggests a whole-tone set on G with the left-hand figure's upper notes that from the original view of the first beat of the piece appear diatonic C. S_4 , the lowest-stave figure of bar 4 reaffirms with its octaves and fifths the diatonic aspect of S_1 , this time also in G, which reaffirmation contradicts the WT (whole-tone) suggestion of S_3 . In bars 5 and 6 opposing fifths briefly suggest a C/D^b nexus that again suggests a merely chromatic aspect to the tonal debate - this time an upwards-pointing one (with enharmonic equivalents in 20-21, 24-25 and 44). There are later oppositions based on other intervals - F[#]/G in 10-15, G/C[#] in 16-17, and G[#]/C in 42.

The most interesting are those that seem to entail reference to *Pétrouchka*, some of which have been pointed out by Roy Howat²³. He draws attention to the first two quavers of bar 1, in which the first contains the set of the "Pétrouchka chord" of the $\underline{C}/\underline{F^\#}$ triads (both hands), and the second (right hand) that of the *Tristan* chord. Here there is an opposition of the old and the new, with both musical icons challenging the compositional niche that Debussy had made midway, so to speak. Dr Howat also sees a hint of the Fool's song in *Boris Godunov*, so that *Tristan*, Golaud and the two fools come together, as it were. He mentions that bars 20-30 see "the most obvious musical similarities" with *Pétrouchka*²⁴ but there is an even more striking one in 18-20 (repeated in 22-24, but possibly not noticed by him).

Example 181:

Debussy: *Brouillards*, 18-20
Stravinsky: *Trois mouvements de pétouchka*/2, 1

The Debussy octaves-figure is from the same octatonic set as the Stravinsky (3111 3111), but is a retrograde (1113 1113) that is inverted and transposed up a semitone. These alterations are themselves symbolic, and sit with the reversal of the bar 112 Stravinsky figure²⁵ that is seen in Debussy's first and last bars. The symbolism of these reversals is explained by Dr Howat as Debussy's feeling that just as he had once to rid himself of the incubus of *Klingsor* now he has to oust *Pétrouchka*; his composition pauses and changes direction between the Preludes and the Etudes.

Besides all the rhythmic and tonal dimensions in *Brouillards* discussed so far there are other Art Nouveau aspects of the piece that should be mentioned. As with *Voiles* the piece is a pattern of interweaving

strands, this time appearing and reappearing from nowhere as in a fog, rather than dissolving and reforming from each other as do swirling veils. Furthermore, different appearances of the same strand can show transformations. The S_3 figure in the first example appears in bar 2 twice but does not reappear until 16-17, when it is transformed into a simpler arpeggiated octave that in turn becomes the octaves-motif of the second example. Its subsequent appearances in 25 and 42 revert to its first form. The S_4 figure of bar 3 reappears in 32-37 in a different tonality (D^\sharp) and extending over three octaves; this time it appears to oppose rather than confirms the established diatonic tonality (D), but is actually a member of the same sets as the left-hand chords and melody - O^3 and O^2 (with the transition in mid-bar 35). Thus strands appear and reappear in different transformations, but the most fascinating is one that can only be seen, not heard - the enharmonic change between bars 38 and 39.

Example 182:

Debussy: *Brouillards*, 38-41

The chord is tied from the broken chord S_4 of the previous two bars, where it appeared as $A^\flat + D^\flat + A^\flat$ - the left-hand component of the bar 38 chord. Its right-hand counterpart is $G^\sharp + C^\sharp + G^\sharp$, which of course is the composition of the S_7 reversed *Pétrouchka* figure mentioned earlier. The S_4 figure thus transforms into S_7 through their common notes, which is one reason why S_7 is transposed up a semitone when it first appears in 18-19. There can be no other reason for this enharmonic conceit: the actual S_7 motif appears in the bass, and when it finishes on the low C^\sharp of 40, S_4 reappears in its original tonality of bar 4, this time in the upmost stave, and appearing to contradict the diatonic tonality of C^\sharp when in fact it is a member of the

same O^2 set²⁶. The bass echo of S_7 in 41 modulates to \underline{C} (O^1) in 43 as the bar 1 alternations of O^1 and O^2 make a brief reprise, and the piece draws to a close with the same echoes of Wagner, Stravinsky and perhaps Mussourgsky as glimpsed earlier.

Throughout the piece Debussy plays deliberately on the appearances and realities of his pitch-sets, whose tonality from different angles appears diatonic, chromatic and octatonic (both symmetrical and Stravinskyan). Its tonal dimensions are thus never certainly grasped by the ear, especially when the opening bars give it ambiguous clues. In these fogs or mists the tonal horizons and landmarks appear only fitfully, and take on different conformations that resonate unevenly and confusingly. All these uncertainties, echoes, appearances and transformations amply justify the title's ambiguities of reference from the Art Nouveau viewpoint.

WATER	<i>Jeux d'eau</i> , 1901	Ravel
	<i>Reflets dans l'eau (Images I/1)</i> 1905	Debussy
	<i>La cathédrale engloutie</i>	
	(<i>Préludes I/10</i>), 1910	Debussy

These are pieces that are normally taken to be clear cases, in fact paradigms, of musical impressionism. The first is held to follow the alleged impressionism of Liszt's *Les jeux d'eaux à la villa d'Este* of 1877_ and to be followed by the second in 1905. All have appeared together as impressionist music in concert programmes or recordings_. But since water is an image important to the historical movements of both Impressionism and Art Nouveau, it is possible that either or both influences can be in a composer's mind; the point has already been made that composers may not have cared to differentiate the two very clearly. As all pieces have obvious water-imagery it has been assumed that the composers' intentions are to do with scene-painting, but since Art Nouveau music on water must also use water-imagery it is not reasonable to assume that all water-imagery means tone-painting alone, or even at all.

The three pieces are about different subjects: the way water moves, the way it appears, and the sea-legend of Ys, which last is also set in a 1903 cantata by Henry Kimball Hadley (*The Princess of Ys*). The third, as fantastic legend, has nothing to do with painterly impressionism, although it is popularly supposed to be musical impressionism because it has recognisable sea and other imagery plus narrative content. The first two could from their titles be either impressionism or Art Nouveau: the musical evidence must decide.

Ravel: *Jeux d'eau*

The title means the play of water - an ambiguous image, referring to the way water moves, or to its patterns, whether in streams or fountains, or a reference to Liszt's *villa d'Este* work. Water in play or motion, whether in stream, fountain or wave, demonstrates motion without progression: the "play" never ceases, and is mildly mesmeric to watch. The watcher is conscious of force, movement, sound and pattern, and an endless store of poetic associations. The Régnier quotation suggests a stream-setting, so that associations of water-spirits are to be considered, and the fancy that the water is alive.

The piece is dedicated to Gabriel Fauré, who is not generally considered a musical impressionist; this may be of no importance. But the epigraphical quotation from Henri de Régnier is very important - and rarely mentioned: "Dieu fluvial riant de l'eau qui le chatouille." [the river god smiling at the water that tickles him]. Here is an Art Nouveau image of Pan or a river god like Achelous, from a contemporary Symbolist poet, a leading figure of *la belle époque* whose most famous works include the 1902 novel *La cité des eaux*, a disenchanting portrait of Versailles whose lakes and ponds are symbols of dreams. His Aestheticist "the delightful and always novel pleasure of a useless occupation" was used as epigraph for *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, and his poem *Les grands vents venus d'outre-mer* was set by Ravel in 1906. The epigraph makes Art Nouveau

provenance certain, with something like the Classical reference of Novák's Pan and Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* mixed with the general image of water as the element of dreams and transformation in Régnier's work, and with *Ondine* from Ravel's later repertoire.

From the outset Ravel's 1901 piece establishes a duality of tonal perspective based on a bitonality between the hands at a distance of major and minor sevenths. It is difficult to see what this can have to do with impressionist scene-painting, but easy to see how it symbolizes the dual nature of water as element and living spirit. The discordances resulting from the sevenths provide a tension that positively reinforces the implications of both title and epigraph that the water is alive, with the rhythmic doubling at the ends of each two-crotchet segment being imagery of laughter. Thus the tension and movement begins from the first quaver with a 7_5 chord whose soft discordance sets the basis for the major and minor sevenths that feature throughout the work. The hands are deployed in parallel but softly dissonant tonalities, with the left in E and the right in D[#], which can be seen to be maintained when the left hand moves to the subdominant A in bar 3 and the right moves to its subdominant G[#], keeping the major seventh interval. This bitonality gives rise to some delicate discords in the softer passages, like that on the last half-beat of bar 6, emphasized by the double acciaccatura, those in bars 29-33 where the hands cross, and in the opposed hands passages of bars 38-48, where as the volume rises the discordances become more striking in effect, especially in the filigree passage of bars 66-71. Besides this bitonality and hand-opposition there is the use of simultaneous major seconds in accompanimental figures in bars 19-20 and 76-78 that is very delicate in discordance because so soft. The effect of all this is certainly to put the piece outside mainstream conventions of harmony - the first principle of Art Nouveau being originality of style, but more importantly, to reinforce the essentially dual view of nature, in this case the element of

water, a key symbol in Art Nouveau. The two aspects of the water in Régnier's epigraph are its nature as *l'eau* and *le dieu fluviant*; it is their interaction or *chantouille[ment]* - the pleasant discordance of the hands - that causes the laughter.

Whole-tone sets are introduced almost casually into the right hand via the initial use of a tritone in bar 3, which by bar 6 becomes a full scale ascending over left-hand descending sevenths:

Example 183:

Ravel: *Jeux d'eau*, 5-6

To this point the hands have been seen in movement that has been parallel, if offset tonally. In bar 6 the left begins to move chromatically away from the right's ascending wholetones, creating a chain of soft discords that suggests a shower or spray of water-drops - but also the laughter of the river-god. Here is a case where to consider the piece mere scene-painting is to ignore the plain implication of the epigraph, and to miss its fantastic dimension.

There is obvious duality of right-hand and left-hand strands of texture. Black-note pentatonics are seen first in the left-hand motif of 19, but as with the wholetones are incorporated into the basically diatonic harmonic framework, for in 22 their C# tonal centre passes naturally into diatonic E.

A cognate effect of bitonality between the hands is the tendency to alternate tonic basses between intervals that can vary from phrase to phrase. The first page has alternations of fourths, minor ninths and minor thirds, setting the pattern for variety within the basic framework of implied and real pedals that limits harmonic movement (which will be discussed below). Allied with these are the passages where the bass moves

symmetrically, as through the minor thirds of bar 4, the semitones of 6 or the diatonic steps of 22. But the most common pattern within the bar-unit is for the bass to move in fourths and fifths formed from its pedal note so that there is movement without normal harmonic progression. Progression over the length of a phrase does occur, but it is by shifts of tonality (the term is used to denote unprepared movement) rather than through modulatory progression. Perhaps the longest sustained passage of one texture where progression does occur is that from 38 leading to the climactic glissando of 48. For the first three bars there is a C# pedal that firmly establishes itself as an initial tonal centre. At 41 it shifts without preparation to F# where the sequence is essentially a modified parallel of 38-40. At 43 it shifts upwards a semitone and runs through the steps of a diminished triad on that note (F#), commences another diminished triad on A in 45, and finishes by ascending in semitones through the third and fifth of that triad, to fall a fifth from its peak D# and rest a fifth from where it began. The movement can be summarized I-IV-#IV-#V-V, which is essentially one of chromatic shifts rather than of diatonic modulation. The purpose of these shifts is to provide different tonal platforms for essentially parallel phrases - for variety within mesmeric monotony, or motion without progression. The effect is that of dream, not reality - of dream states where episodes are not connected into the normal flow of time and reality, but can repeat and transform endlessly.

The processes of repetition and transformation that are occurring throughout the eleven bars of climax (38-48) discussed earlier are typical of the rest of the piece. The bar 38 figures of each hand gradually transform into the climactic ones of 46-47 that explode into the flourish of 48 and subside into the return of M_2 from 50²⁷. This motif itself illustrates a different process of transformations during the piece.

Example 184:

The musical score for Example 184 consists of five systems of piano music. The first system (measures 19-20) shows a staccato melody in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand, marked *pp*. The second system (measures 21-25) shows the hands exchanging roles, with the left hand playing the staccato melody and the right hand playing broken chords in quadruples, marked *3 Cordes*. The third system (measures 29-30) shows close harmony in the treble and an ostinato figure in the bass, marked *a tempo* and *pp*. The fourth system (measures 74-75) shows a slower texture with a different harmonic underpinning, marked *tres expressif*. The fifth system (measures 24-25) shows a murmur above the flow of the left hand, marked *pp subito* and *Une Corde*.

Ravel: *Jeux d'eau*, M₂ transformational contexts

These are the main appearances of M₂, the pentatonic motif that has no particular Eastern character in the bitonal contexts in which it appears, so that it merely suggests strangeness - that of the god in the water. As a theme it itself does not undergo significant change, but its character varies with its context, and even within a sequence. For instance, the bar 19 texture changes in 21-25: the hands exchange roles, with the accompanimental left now turning the bar 19 triplets in simultaneous seconds into broken chords in quadruples, so that the melody ceases being staccato and flows easily. The close harmony in the treble in bar 29, together with the ostinato right-hand figure, returns the melody to the staccato of bar 19, but with a different effect, one of a slightly greater tension. Bar 50 follows the main climax, where the theme is only a murmur above the flow of the left hand; here its mood is of underlying rather than actual movement. Bar 72 follows the long *pianissimo* cadenza and although it is the same in texture as 29 the context is different: it is slower, and pitched a minor sixth lower, which reduces its piquancy. Only two bars later, in 74, it is totally transformed by a different harmonic and figurational underpinning, one that rocks in alternations in the left hand

while the middle voices maintain a double-time quasi-ostinato. The motif appears just once more in 77-78, in a reprise of 14 where the right-hand seconds now flutter over two octaves in the same time that they formerly did one, echoing the soft extended flourish of the whole second half of the piece, and setting the character of accompanimental filigree that dominates the end of the piece in 83.

The piece's basically duple rhythm is presented in a complex way that underlines its dual dimensions. Firstly, there are many bars of irregular time-signature that break the phrasal pattern just as the demi-semiquavers do each fourth quaver; the imagery is that of a stream's flow broken by rocks on the one hand and the laughter on the other. But these irregularities do not break the gentle monotony of quaver pulse that produces the characteristically mesmeric effect of Art Nouveau music. It is important that the doublings of figure-rhythm on each fourth quaver occur on weak beats, which are thus upbeats to emphasize the following main beat and maintain the quaver pulse. These doublings of rhythm are delicately extended as the piece progresses, and gradually shape the whole character of the piece into sustained filigree and arabesque, seen in the brilliance of 14-16 and 43-48 as well as in the delicacy of 34-40. There are passages exploiting cross-rhythms, like bars 19-22 and the independent movements of the hands of bars 38-47 that sustain and emphasize this cross-rhythmic effect; and finally the lightly asymmetrical pentuplets and septuplets of bars 6-68 and the extended bar 71: all these serve to show again a duality of effect, this time more hidden, in which the complexities of rhythm suggest the complex nature of the river or stream itself. In the light of the Régnier quotation it is unlikely that all this duality of texture is merely of pictorial significance.

The nature of harmonic movement by tonal shifts, discussed earlier, is typical of Art Nouveau compositional practice, and allied with these shifts are pedalpoints, among the most characteristic of Art Nouveau

devices. There are pedals of greater or lesser length in the first half of the piece (1-2, 7-8, 11-18, 26-28), together with the similar effect of a rocking between two pedals, as for instance in the announcement of M_2 in bars 19-20 and in its later appearances, including developments of it in bars 24-25 and 35-37. From the long movement to the first climax beginning at bar 38 there are more pedals, with the piece ending on a series of them, and the bar 19-20 motif finally appearing over the last two, so that their rocking is at last stilled. Pedalpoints over which floridities like those of bars 38-48, 66-71 and 77-84 play again suggest movement within the flattened planes of Art Nouveau - motion without progression. It is akin to the paradox of movement and stillness in a wave, where the molecules move up and down but do not progress linearly. This movement is rhythmic, and its pulses suggested in those of the music, both the lesser and greater ones creating patterns on the rhythmic plane that sit with those on the tonal plane. But there is no conventional time-plane because there is no conventional modulatory progression, just patterns of tonal shift.

There is thus no narrative, commonly held to be a component of musical impressionism. There is water-imagery, common to both musical scene-painting and Art Nouveau, but it is the subject of patterning, not the incidental colour to narrative. Above all, the limited planes are descriptive not of everyday reality but of the fantastic world of meta-reality - that of *Le dieu fluvial* of R gnier's epigraph.

Debussy: *Reflets dans l'eau*

This work needs first to be seen in its context as one of the three *Images 1* (the other two being *Hommage   Rameau* and *Mouvement* - hardly Impressionist titles). *Images* is one of the set-terms of the piano repertory at this time whose ambiguity or obscurity is deliberate, like *Tableaux*, *Miroirs*, *Mirages*, *Ombres*, *Masques*, *Metopy*, *Gymnop dies*, *Gnossiennes*. *Images* are versions of something that can be repeated or transformed, and as such are the raw material of Art Nouveau. Debussy uses

the word in the plural, so that it may not only refer to the three pieces but to the way each is constructed of repetitive patterns of images.

The individual title, *Reflets dans l'eau*, can be seen as (Impressionist) Monet/Renoir-like shimmering reflections, or (Post-Impressionist) Georges Seurat/Paul Signac pointillist patternings of water, or the many Art Nouveau paintings in which water is seen as giving mysterious images. One of the best of these is Will Bradley's title-page *The Inland Printer*, in which the water-surface with lily-pads and leaves seems more interesting than the river-bank it reflects, for it hints at the mysteries of its depths²⁸. Debussy's use of the preposition "dans" includes the meaning "within", so that as in Bradley's title-page there can be an implication of mysteries.

From the beginning Debussy forms patterns, not a feature of Impressionist painting (patterning begins with Cezanne and the Post-Impressionists, and is fully developed in Art Nouveau). The first two bars form an arch-shape of semiquaver groups, each of which is itself arch-shaped. Four semiquavers make each small arch, and four groups each large arch; there are four such arches over the D^b pedal to bar 8.

Example 185:

Debussy: *Reflets dans l'eau*, 1-2

The work's main recurring motif-fragment also appears (in the tenor line); its comprising a third and a second is reflected in the chords from which the small arches are composed, seen in the chords with seconds in the example above. In the larger arch-shape focus (the unit of two bars) it can be seen that the second (bars 3-4) is an altered version of the first, while bars 5-8 are an exact repetition of 1-4.

With bars 9-16 come some mirroring features: as the hands combine in

an ascending move in 9-10, and then pause, there is a contrary-motion descending answer, with the process echoed in 10-11, 12-13, and a similar pair of figures in 13-15. Finally come the contrary-motion chords with the hands at the extremes of the keyboard, and the widely-spaced *pianissimo* chords answered by middle-range effects in 17-19.

This pattern of ascending and descending movements is broken by the *Quasi-cadenza*, whose title, denoting an interpolated section, is thus justified. It begins a long ascent of sextuplet-figures, each arch-shaped, moving in the steps of a diminished seventh chord until the arches, now extended, reach the limits of the keyboard. From bar 23 an ostinato broken chord sweeping over three octaves is established, and the piece proper resumes in 24 with this ostinato over an A^b pedalpoint. Once more the arch-shape is seen with the sweeping of the ostinato, and the mid-keyboard melody of 24-27 is an arch with an inverted arch following.

From bars 43-47 arches are again replaced with contrary-motion patterns, when the post-cadenza figures recur, but in a version of the original of 24-30, including the melodic double arch:

Example 186:

Debussy: *Reflets dans l'eau*, 49-52

This patterning is developed in the following bars to 64, and in passing the melodic phrase comes to sound not unlike *L'après-midi d'un faune* [the counter-melody from bar 38-39 - Piano I]: this gives the word "reflections" a wider sense typical of Art Nouveau and Symbolism, just as a poetic image recalls so much besides its simple meaning.

With the repetitions of the last two pages, both exact and similar, it becomes clear that the "reflets" are as much to do with the music as with water. Arch shapes are curved, as ripples on water are curved: it is unlikely that they can therefore be meant to suggest the broken straight lines of Impressionist painting. But they fit the curved lines of Will Bradley's title-page, or the curves of the sea in Edvard Munch's *The Scream*, Heinrich Vogeler's *The Fisher and his Soul*, Otto Eckmann's *The Two Swans*, Alberto Micheli's swan-illustration for *Novissima* of 1902, and above all those of Brunelli's illustration for *Novissima* of 1902²⁹.

The great majority of the piece takes place over pedalpoints: the effect is of patterning over a flat surface, like that of Art.Nouveau design. There is little modulation as such, and until bar 43 the piece does not move from its D^b tonality, all the pedals to that point being either tonic or dominant. At 43 there is a left-hand partly melodic figure in whole-tones, but another pedal, on B , is soon established (48-53), to be followed by minor pedals until D^b is re-established from 71 until the end (94). This is an extreme use of this device that helps maintain the feeling of artificiality - that of Art Nouveau's stylizations rather than any natural scene.

As a final point the use of transformation can be adduced as being peculiarly Art Nouveau. The most important of these are the sudden key-shifts in bars 66-67 and 68-69, which take place very softly, both building and confirming over an ascending broken 5_3 chord their A tonality, only to shift without preparation to C and A^b respectively. After the *fortissimo* scales and broken chords of the bars preceding these transformations are all the more effective for their extreme softness, and again refer to patterning - of ripples interacting with wind or each other to produce new forms, or distort reflections already there. Reflections are distortions or mirrors in the sense that what is seen on the surface of the water is an upside-down version of reality, so that with such devices the music

parallels this juxtaposition of the opposites of appearance and reality. When reflections are shown as patterns they show the order behind nature, not just nature as it is simply observed. In this repetitive music over pedalpoints the mystery of water as primal element is shown.

Debussy: *La cathédrale engloutie*

The work is normally seen as tone-painting and associated with Monet's pictures of Rouen cathedral; since Monet is one of the Impressionists the implication is that the music must be impressionist tone-painting³⁰. It is doubtful, however, whether the Rouen pictures do not represent more of Monet's inner state than Rouen's west front, but in any case Rouen is not Ys. (The legend of Ys is not new to French composition: vide Lalo's opera *Le roi d'Ys*.) The alternative impressionist argument therefore turns instead to the concept of a narrative of the drowned cathedral of Ys rising momentarily from the waves only to sink once more. This ignores the title: the cathedral is already drowned, so that the original story is not being retold. What is really "happening" is the imagining that ghostly bells can still be heard, which is an Edgar Allan Poe dream or fantastic conceit, not a story.

The error springs from the desire to see a linear narrative in music. Since there is imagery of water, bells, chant and the like, and a story to be associated with it, it is conventionally assumed that the piece is only a narrative with corroborative imagery, and so it is termed musical impressionism, the two elements being considered sufficient to close the argument. Yet even Robert Schmitz, who sees impressionism and tone-painting everywhere in Debussy, remarks at some length on what he terms the "mystic" dimensions of Debussy's subject - the Breton morality legend of Ys and "the impiety of the inhabitants", the power of Celtic traditional belief, the "pagan rite of the sea" in the cathedral's resurrection at sunrise, and the symbolism of the arch-shape expressed in the main organum-like motif and in the general shape of the other motifs.

Without following Schmitz into arch-shape symbolism (a view for which he offers only the loosest support) it is clear that the subject is one symbolizing the power of water, and that to appreciate only its scene-painting and narrative aspects is to fail to do the piece justice.

The Ys legend is a mediaeval version of the Classical Atlantis archetype, and as a drowned *Insel-paradise* is an Art Nouveau archetype as well. The idea of the cathedral rising periodically, with its bells and choir supposedly to be heard by the special few, is the very stuff of Art Nouveau fantasy. Water is a natural element with mysterious powers over those impious enough to ignore the meta-world of nature and its gods.

The music is as mysterious as Ravel's *Jeux d'eau*, but about the sea as avenging spirit, in which can be heard the echoes of bell and chant - themselves icons of the supernatural; Reginald Haché points out the connexions with mediaeval church modes and fauxbourdon.³¹ Debussy's directions indicate mystery of effect - *dans une brume doucement sonore* [with a hazy sweetness of sound], *doux et fluide* (M_1 , 7), *peu à peu sortant de la brume* [leaving the haze little by little], *flottant et sourd*. [floating and muffled - possibly indicating the left pedal]. As has been argued in Chapter 4, the main new effect of the modern piano has been the velvety, somewhat neutral softer tones that have a muffled attack, especially in the Bechstein, Debussy's piano. The chords at the piano's extremities, seen from the very beginning, produce a muffled, mysterious effect with a brief, soft brilliancy as the right-hand notes quickly die that gives a little piquant colouration to the sustained bass chords. These chords, because they sound the first three upper partials of the harmonic series, set the pattern for the jumble of confused overtones and summational tones of the whole piece. The harmonic series is specifically evoked in bars 40-41 (the accented notes), and is probably the major part of the *brume* [thick fog, haze] effect sought in the early part of the piece. When to this is added the blurred pedalling that Debussy is known

to have favoured (for his Bechstein would have had no middle pedal for selective sustaining), the result is a mystery of effect new to the piano at that time. The mix of sounds is thickened with thirds and closer harmonies from bar 16 and fragmentary bell-motifs from bar 20 to the first climax, and then drops to the softer contrast of bars 47-50 of single notes. The long final statement of the chorale theme makes even more of the mystery of the opening by thickening the bass even more with the sustained broken figure whose D is gently discordant, producing, with a held or feathered sustaining pedal, the hazy variety of sounds and overtones indicated.

Haziness of effect is of course an impressionist device in painting, originally a result of hurried sketch-like technique in order to catch a moment of light, but also a way of interpreting a scene through the individual painter's sensibility. It is also just as much an Art Nouveau effect of ambiguity: although Art Nouveau painting, with its sharply defined lines, is never hazy in the same way as Impressionist painting, it constantly suggests ambiguity in the multiplicity and interweaving of its lines. In contrast to some other Debussy pieces (*Brouillards*, *Feux d'artifice*, *Poissons d'or*) most notes in this piece are sharply defined, the notes that are parts of harmonic series frequently being accented (for instance, the E-succession in 6-12, the F and D in 20, and accents in 40-41, 62-64), and almost all the others mostly well separated from other by the slow tempo. All these notes, whether single or chordal, sound clearly against the haze of sustained (pedalled) sounds, which they in turn support as they die. In the context of the Ys legend, which is not an impressionist subject at all, the haze may be seen as harmonic, as symbolic of nature's veiled powers and the harmonic series as its underlying Order, that the impious Ys citizens ignored to their cost. This viewpoint is supported by the deliberate evocation of the harmonic series mentioned above, and its echoes all through the piece, particularly in 14-21 where

the term *brume* is used for the second time, and where all notes are members of the series of their pedalpoints (although that of 19-21 should be an octave lower to accommodate the semiquavers). To sum up: the haziness of sound in this piece is the background or residual effect of the sustaining and interweaving of many sharp sounds; as a technique this is essentially analogous to Art Nouveau, not impressionism.

The other devices that give this piece its mystery of sound are its pitch-sets and parallel progressions. M_1 appears in bar 8, weaving around an inverted pedal that is unusual in being at a sixth (E) from the set-centre or tonic (G[#]). The set itself is Aeolian (212 2122) - the natural minor scale (without raised seventh), but although M_1 does not use the seventh in its initial statement, its windings around E feature intervals that at first appear to be from the black-note pentatonic set apart from E (and later B); the initial intervals of thirds and fourths, and the moving around the dominant D[#], which clashes with the pedal E, all add to produce an unusual effect. Before this the parallel chords without thirds, as well as the widely-spaced pedal-chords, have begun the piece just as strangely, with cessations of movement to let the haze of sustained sounds be heard. M_2 (28) is Mixolydian (221 2212), this time on the same tonic as its pedalpoint (C), but delivered in fortissimo parallel white-note chords. The Aeolian and Mixolydian sets are close to the minor and major diatonic sets, and have in common the feature that both have flattened sevenths. With the parallel-chord statement of M_2 the imagery of plainchant becomes clearer; it is obvious imagery like this (and that of bells in 20-21) that taken out of context causes the piece to be called impressionist.

The basic pulses of the piece are complex. The foundation is the dotted semibreve or bar-unit itself that is some seconds in length, and is therefore most unusual as a basic pulse. It is felt clearly enough all through the piece, whether or not the bars 7-12, 22-85 are taken at double time³², although the long bar is also perceived, of course, as a number of

sub-units.

Example 187:

Profondément calme (Dans une brève doucement sonore)

Debussy: *La cathédrale engloutie*, 1-7

The chief of these is the crotchet-figure of ascending chords seen from bar 1, but M_1 and M_2 are based on minims. The pulses are ambiguous, however, for in bars like 2 and 6-7 there are pauses that confuse them. The player counts the crotchets in the pauses but the listener, with only the cues of the crotchets in alternate bars, must feel the ambiguities of beat, especially in 6-7, as he or she is meant to do by Debussy. That the ambiguity is deliberate is indicated in the accented E components that eventually establish the inverted pedal lasting until 13: the first accented octaves are on the second beat of 6, but this is, as a weak beat, not one of the series of pedal-notes that begins three crotchet-beats later and sets the semibreve and tied-minims pattern on strong beats. What this first accented note does is to continue the syncopations begun in 2 with its first crotchet, but the bar 6 notation is the opposite of that, being minim-crotchet, not crotchet-minim, which is the more logical equivalent of the three crotchets with tie of bar 2. Thus not only is the hearer confronted with a rhythmic hiatus, so also is the player reading the score. The deliberate ambiguity continues to 13, because the accented pedals, being four crotchet-beats in length, only coincide with the first beat of every second bar. When, as in 9-10, the pedal falls on the fourth beat of six together with the melody, and both are tied until the third beat of the following bar, there is again an upsetting of rhythmic pattern that

produces more subtle ambiguity.

Debussy establishes a complex interweaving of three components of his basic pulse, therefore, and plans the discontinuities to create deliberate ambiguity. The conclusion must be that this is part of the symbolism intended. The images, if any, in the dotted semibreve chords and crotchet ascending figures, are not clear, although the E pedal could be bell-tones. The clearest thing about all three is their combined rhythmic import that suggests the complexities of wave-rhythms. Debussy's subtlety and ambiguity here can hardly be accounted for solely in terms of sea-sounds, and must instead refer to the mystery of the sea as a personification of nature that takes action against the people of Ys: the discontinuities in the patterning, themselves patterned, show a deeper dimension behind the regular sounds of the waves. The final proof comes in the last page, because after bar 72 almost all the rhythmic pulses are easily comprehensible - the cathedral has returned to the depths and the surface is unbroken; but even here there is a last hint of mystery in the two dotted minims of 83 that upset the triple pulse.

Serge Gut's recent analysis of the piece from two separate viewpoints³³ confirms that on an orthodox level (as well as on the symbolic level of proportionate division³⁴) it is basically ternary in structure, which finding could be taken to confirm the piece as narrative - the cathedral's rising from the waves, its sounds being heard once more, and its falling back - presumably what Robert Schmitz refers to as its arch-structure. Ignoring for the moment that narrative and impressionism are disparate phenomena, and that evidence for narrative would not of itself support the impressionist case, it is at once obvious that Debussy is contrasting two moods - that of the apparent benign calm of the sea in the outer sections, and its more menacing side in the central section where its power as an element of nature over impious man is asserted. This is the whole point of the legend, where the narrative exists only to support the

moral.

This point is strengthened by the essentially static nature of the music, which thus offers relatively little suggestion of linear narrative on a detailed level. The whole piece is constructed over pedalpoints, including the complex bass figure of bars 72-83 and the inner pedal of bars 5-13 and 24-28, with only the parallel chords of bars 62-63 being free from tied tonality (and even here $G^\#$ being **implied** as pedal). There are few other pieces in the repertory with such a pronounced use of pedalpoint: it is therefore a piece of extreme device, and as such typical of Art Nouveau. Over such extensive and prevailing pedals harmonic progression is limited, parallelling the limited dimensionality of the flat surfaces of Art Nouveau pictures. In music without the dimension of normal harmonic progression any imagery therefore tends to be that of dream or unreality compared to that of reality in a typical narrative - Tchaikowsky's 1812 Overture. While there is an element of narrative in Debussy's piece in that the cathedral begins to be heard and then is silent once more, it is a dream or fantastic narrative in the unreal setting of limited dimensionality, not a retelling of the events that saw the original drowning of the cathedral. It is long drowned; what is happening is that its ghostly sounds are heard mixed with those of the sea.

The piece's many parallel progressions mean a complementary lessening of normal tonality, so that mystery of effect is created. The plainchant-like M_2 is only harmonized in white-note parallel chords, as has been noticed earlier, which adds to its strangeness of vaguely mediaeval sound. Repetition again tends to rob the piece of normal dimensionality - of time; repetitions are an obvious part of the structure from the first bars to the last. Perhaps the most important is that of the ostinato pedal of 70-83, but except for the long-breathed M_1 and M_2 Debussy tends to repeat figures immediately, and at the slow pace their time-stilling effect is clear.

A final point can be made pointing to the piece's Symbolist

proportion. Roy Howat has shown that it is planned according to symbolist canons of proportion³⁵. This is another layer of symbolism, suggesting that Debussy saw the piece as an essentially complex work with appropriate levels of meaning, and not simple tone-painting.

La cathédrale is, therefore, from both the evidence of title and music, in the Art Nouveau domain. Its obvious imagery and apparent narrative, however, will continue to suggest to many that it is merely tone-painting, even though this means devaluing its essentially fantastic nature.

AIR *Noctuelles (Miroirs/1)* 1905 Ravel

This piece is from the set titled *Miroirs*, itself a term with complex implications for the Art Nouveau sensibility, as has been seen earlier. A mirror is a flat surface reflecting a reversed image, so that what is seen is a version of the original, not reality. Ravel might have chosen a less ambiguous word like "scenes", but instead uses the name of an artefact in connexion with natural and dream subjects. The connecting link between the five subjects of the set is that all are objects of fantasy - night creatures, sad birds, the archetypal frail barque at the mercy of the ocean's elemental and mysterious forces, the crazy reveille of a fool, and patterns of bell-sounds through the trees and distance.

Night moths are strange and hidden, at home in the darkness that is full of mysteries for humans. As creatures of the air and the night they inhabit a sinister realm, that of the spirits of darkness.

The impressionist arguments about the set and this piece need to be considered. The most common mistake here is to apply to impressionism attributes that belong to Art Nouveau and Symbolism, showing that the fundamental nature of the piece under question is being properly understood but wrongly applied. Marguerite Long, for instance, writes about the title *Miroirs*: "This title in itself is an aesthetic proposition. It underlies

what the Impressionists have amply proved - the pre-eminence of reflected light from the direct image in the appeal to our sensibility and in the creation of an illusion"³⁶. There is a fundamental philosophical flaw here, because to talk of reflected light as different from the "direct image" is to imply that only the latter is real and the former an illusion, which is the idealist view, not the impressionist/realist one. This exposition therefore applies to impressionism an idea foreign to it, that of reality being directly unperceivable, whereas it was a central Impressionist doctrine that only what is immediately seen is true: while the same object will look different from different angles and at different times there is no unseeable perfect Platonic view. What Mme Long is doing is to use the mirror as Art Nouveau metaphor. The Impressionist does not paint the reversals, illusions or distortions of mirror-images, but what is actually seen; when a mirror is used, as in Edouard Manet's 1882 *The Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, it is to show a different but equally true view, not a distorted one. When an Aubrey Beardsley sophisticate sits before a mirror, as in many of his drawings, one may judge from her self-satisfied expression that she sees a flattering version of herself - she sees what she wants to see. (The spectator outside the picture, however, notices that the mirrors are mostly blank, reflecting only the essential vapidness of the sitter.)³⁷

The impressionist case for *Noctuelles*, however, is quite simple and appealing - that it is simple scene-painting, and that the others in the set are the same. All that can be done is to look at the evidence of the music; in this case there is imagery of fluttering and darting that can be taken as tone-painting, but this may be to see only one of the piece's dimensions. There are at least three others that are much more striking and central - its sensuality, mystery and patterning. If the piece had not been titled by Ravel it would probably have been regarded from the beginning as a study in the bizarre and macabre.

Noctuelles shows its sinister mystery in its use of discordances from the very first bars, as in the direct clashes of minor seconds in the first and ninth semiquaver beats of the first two bars, which are accented, besides the passing ones of \underline{E} and $\underline{E^b}$ of bar 3, minor ninths on the first beat of bars 4 and 5 and the repeated major seconds of bars 8 and 9. As all these are very soft the effect is delicate but still strange; here the night-moth is closer to the bat than the butterfly.

Some of this may be seen in the modified repetition of the opening sequence that commences from bar 10:

Example 188:

Ravel: *Noctuelles*, 10-15

When the hands come together on the crotchet beats there is always a discordant interval - minor and major seconds or major ninths. In between these the hands form broken chords that are either themselves discordant, as with the semiquaver pairs of the right hand, or combine discordantly with the chords of the other hand, as in the first half of 12 or the whole of 14.

These discordances are accompanied by rhythmic ambiguity between the hands of a complexity and subtlety that suggests the night-moths to be anything but simple natural fauna. The right hand's quadruplets of 10-11 fall between the left-hand triplets in uneven patterns because of the hiatus on the third semiquaver, but in 12 this patterning changes completely as the second left-hand triplet joins with the fourth right-hand one (now semiquaver triplets) to transform the rhythm from 3/4 into 3/8 + 3/8, creating a hemiola effect. From this point the 3/8 and 5/8 bars

further break the pattern, following which Ravel indicates that bars will be a mixture of duple and triple pulses. The hands continue to change their roles throughout the piece in just the manner of these six bars, so that rhythmic dissonance constantly accompanies harmonic dissonance, underlining the essential complexity of these creatures of the night.

The (accented) beginnings of the two beats of bars 20 and 23 emphasize their discords and it becomes clear that the hands have been moving quasi-bitonally (actually more an offsetting of the hands' tonal centres in the same diatonic and chromatic sets) and bi-rhythmically. This illustrates a fundamental duality in the piece that is carried through to the end, especially in the cadenzas of the extended bar 118. As with *Jeux d'eau* this duality of effect is on the one hand a characteristic compositional method of Ravel but, on the other hand, one that is peculiarly suited to the fantastic subjects of so much of his repertoire: he naturally gravitates towards subjects whose complexity and ambiguity of reference can be reflected in this sort of music. So it is with the music of *Noctuelles*, whose pauses and flutterings show moths, but whose secondary effects from the offsettings of the hands (patterns of discordances in harmony and rhythm) show their sinister side as creatures of the night.

The slow mid-section of bars 36-60 is *sombre et expressif* and is intensely atmospheric. It is dominated by ostinato pedalpoints and descending chromatic effects offset by sporadic figures that briefly move upwards and vanish. The whole section is full of suggestions of the eeriness of strange noises and movements in the night, with the focus clearly on the eeriness. Until bar 61 the ostinato is syncopated, which produces an oddness of pulse against the fairly steady crotchet movement of the main melodic line. The first four ${}^7_{3b}$ chords of this line (37-39) move in almost perfect parallel sequence before they move to a chromatically contrived resolution in 40 - the only completed cadence in the whole piece until the final bar. The finality of cadence so early in the mid-section

is itself strange, and it is emphasized in the ascending echoes of 40-44. Thereafter sequences of parallel chains of major thirds descend without reaching any finality, interspersed with the brief ascending figures mentioned above. None of these sequences reach any conclusive point, so that despite the fixity of the pedalpoints there is a feeling that there are no other firm harmonic horizons, just disconnected groups of disparate sounds. The atmosphere is morbid from the funereal descent of the parallel major thirds, and surreal from the sudden interjections of other motifs:

Example 189:

Ravel: *Noctuelles*, 48-51

In the example bars 48-49 are the end of a six-bar sequence that sees the ostinato pedal dying with it. The suddenness of the following figure is therefore all the more startling, but it too vanishes into nothing with the bitonal arpeggios. After the pause this figure is repeated with slight elaboration, but it lasts only two bars before another pause, only to be succeeded by seven bars of descending chromatics over a sporadic pedal - the most developed of these passages.

Example 190:

Ravel: *Noctuelles*, 54-61

Their sound was earlier described as funereal; with repetition it becomes morbid and even evil. This is no simple tone-painting of moths, but a

Virgilian descent into a realm of ghastliness.

One other aspect of the mid-section needs mentioning - its sensuality. It is most noticeable in the melodic line of the first bars 37-40 as a winding, chromatically descending line, and in the fragments of 63-65 and 66-68 that end in tied syncopations under a brief inverted pedal - these latter are like sudden, passionate movements. Sensuality is most evident in moments like these in the mid-section but is present all through the piece, for its main motifs and figures are themselves based on chromatics and move in a winding manner, like the right-hand figure of 10-11 (M_1), the top notes of the left hand figure below (M_{1a}), the *expressif* M_2 of 20-22, and the chains of two-handed windings in 32-34 that are developed from M_{1a} .

These sensually shaped motifs and figures are fashioned into repetitive patterns: the piece does not tend to progress in conventional linear modulations. A typical pattern begins after a pause, with the hands, partly offset tonally and rhythmically, forming sequences of interwindings and chains, with the interweaving motifs and figures moving through triads, forming lines winding back on themselves, or moving chromatically. At the end of the patterning there is a filigree figure - arpeggio, trill or acciaccatura - employing both hands and ending in another pause. The structure of the piece is thus formed from a series of many-layered patterns, and is thus essentially Art Nouveau in its method. Perhaps the clearest example is that of the last two pages³⁸, whose units of patterning are clearly visible from the shapes the notation takes. Thus 103-106 are two identical sequences, 109-110 and 111-114 two others less like, 115-117 an ascending chain to the two-handed trill and pause. From there the three patterns of descending arpeggios, *l'ointain* effects, and ascending chains are obvious. Thus not only the music but the score appears as Art Nouveau patterning, a structure that has almost none of the conventional guideposts or methods of progression but is clearly formed

into a systematic (but asymmetrical) composition.

Thus the music fails to support an impressionist interpretation beyond some rhythmical imagery of fluttering. Its sombreness goes far beyond portrayal of ordinary nature at night, and its systematic complexities and dualities on several levels indicate symbolic intent. At the same time, particularly in the mid-section pedalpoint-ostinatos, there is a feeling of space without horizons and a mesmeric, somewhat decadent sensuality, so that the sounds of night are in the sort of garden Baudelaire evokes in *Correspondances*, not that of cottage-pastoral. *Noctuelles* relies on extremity of effect, especially when compared to tone-painting pieces like Grieg's *Sommerflügel* (Butterfly) Op. 43/1 that emphasizes fluttering and other delicate effects of movement in the context of a conventional character-piece.

Summary

The works discussed above do not exhaust the list of possible works that could be included under this heading, but are the clearest cases where misleading labelling has prevented due attention being paid to their dimensions of mannerism and the fantastic.

There are other works where there is at least a strand of mannerism in their music, although it is usually not looked for, and so not noticed. The great value of musicological investigations into the subject of Art Nouveau has been that new questions have been asked about familiar works, revealing further dimensions that add to our appreciation of them.

The second-order repertory must also include works that seem to have a dual or even more complex character, perhaps with elements of Art Nouveau and impressionism mixed - or, more subtly, an ambiguity as to which is intended by their title. Some examples are Charles Griffé's *Nightfall* and *Clouds* from his *Roman Sketches*, which by their titles and epigraphical poems certainly seem to indicate tone-painting. But both music and verse show mannerisms like their fellow-pieces *The White Peacock* and *The*

Fountains of the Acqua Paolo, and in turn lead to consideration of Griffes's other works with titles that at first suggest tone-painting: for *Lake at Evening* and *Night Winds* (from *Three Tone-Pictures* op.5), Griffes chose poems by William Butler Yeats and Edgar Allan Poe after composition, and the other title of the set, *Vale of Dreams*, itself suggest some Art Nouveau inspiration, especially as Griffes again turned to Poe, one of the most fantasy-minded and manneristic of poets, for an epigraphical text. (His *Three Fantasy Pieces*, op.6: *Barcarolle*, *Notturmo* and *Scherzo* [especially the last, orchestrated as *Bacchanale*] probably would have similar inspiration, but since they have genre-titles, therefore suggest themselves as third-order works.)

End-notes

- 1 "Impressionism" with the capital letter denotes the painters' movement of the later nineteenth century; "impressionism" denotes the method itself (in analogous musical style and genres).
- 2 Vogel, J.: op. cit., 209.
- 3 Loc. cit.
- 4 *Sourboné kritické vydání del Leose Janáčka*, iv, (Prague, Supraphon), ed. Kundera, L. & Burghauser, J.
- 5 Seda, J.: *Janáček*, (Prague, Orbis 1958); Hollander, H.: *Leos Janáček*, 198; *New Grove* 9, 479.
- 6 Horsbrugh, I.: op. cit., 94.
- 7 Vogel, J.: op. cit., 211; Complete edition, Preface, 4; John Tyrell's *New Grove* entry vol. 9, 479.
- 8 Kundera, M.: *Janáček* (transl. Huston, S.), *Cross-Currents* XXXIII (1983), 380 (note 14).
- 9 Parks, R.S.: *Pitch Organization in Debussy*, 119-34.
- 10 Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 133.
- 11 Orledge, R.: *Debussy's Piano Music*, 27.
- 12 Idem, loc. cit.
- 13 Goldman, D.P.: *Esotericism as a Determinant of Debussy's Harmonic Language*, *The Musical Quarterly* 75/2 (Summer 1991), 141-147.
- 14 The paper is marred by misprints, as for instance on p. 143, where "simple B minor" should be "B^b", and footnote 8, where Lendvai's major third should be 4, not 3, and his counting of chord-spans is not based on "the semitones separating the end-points" but on the number of intervals between all the semitones in a chord-span. His numbering of the bars in *Voiles* is also awry on p.143: 43-44 should read 41-42 et sequ. However, his hypothesis is not thereby invalidated.
- 15 For instance those of Böckl, R.: *Claude Debussy Prélude II (...Voiles). Über Material und Form. Ein Versuch*, *Musikforschung* XXIX/1 (1976), 321-26; Benedetto, R.: *Congetture su Voiles*, *Revista Italiana Musicologica* XIII/2 (1978), 312-44; Whittal, A.: *Tonality and the Whole-Tone Scale in the Music of Claude Debussy*, *The Music Review* 36/4 (Nov. 1975), 261-71.
- 16 The thirteen-year gap between the letter and the music is a serious (but not insoluble) problem for Goldman's case that is not properly addressed.

- 17 Parks, R.S.: *The Music of Claude Debussy*, 26-30, 59-64, 304-07.
- 18 Howat, R.: *Modes and Semitones*, 88.
- 19 David Grayson's detailed review of the *Oeuvres complètes* volume does not mention any discrepancy between manuscript and printed score; Grayson, D.: *Editing Debussy: Issues en blanc et noir*, Nineteenth Century Music XIII/2 (Fall 1989), 243-57.
- 20 For instance, Harris, N.: op. cit., 131-135.
- 21 Howat, R.: *Modes and Semitones*, 85-86.
- 22 There is a detailed account of all the sets and their tonal ramifications in Parks, R.S.: *Pitch Organization in Debussy*, 119-34.
- 23 Ibid, loc. cit.
- 24 Ibid, 90.
- 25 Roy Howat compares the Debussy figures to those of the downfall of Petrouchka at the end of the piece, but the reference to bar 112 of the second movement is more direct.
- 26 Parks, R.S.: op. cit., 125-26.
- 27 Not published until 1883.
- 27 E.g. *French Impressionist Piano Music*, recorded by Cristina Ortiz, (Pickwick Digital compact disc PCD 846); "*Water Music*" of the *Impressionists*, recorded by Carol Rosenberger, (1983 Delos Digital compact disc D/CD 3006).
- 27 M₁ is the bar 1 RH figure, M₂ the bar 14 LH motif.
- 28 Hofstätter, H.H. : op. cit., 79.
- 29 Ibid, 112, 158, 135, 208, 202.
- 30 Werner-Jensen, A.: *Malerischer und musikalischer Impressionismus. Gegenüberstellung von Mozart und Debussy*, Musik und Bildung IX/7-8 (1977), 402-07; see also a typical association of Monet and Debussy in Halbreich, H. et al.: *Collection génies et réalités: Debussy*, (Paris, Hachette 1972), 173.
- 31 Haché, R.: *The Legendary Cathedral of Brittany*, Journal of the American Liszt Society 19 (June 1986), 67-76.
- 32 Grayson, D.: op. cit., 254.
- 33 Gut, S.: , *prélude à Claude Debussy: Interférences entre de materiau, la structure et la form*, Analyse Musicale 4 (June 1986), 78-81.
- 34 Howat, R.: *Debussy in Proportion*, 159-61. Dr Howat gives the proportionate form as ABCBA, as against Serge Gut's broader ABA division.
- 35 Howat, R.: op. cit., 160.
- 36 Quoted without reference in James, B.: op. cit., 44.
- 37 Harris, B.S.: op.cit., 107, 163, 174, 181, 195.
- 38 Schott edition ED 1786, 10-11 (bars 103-end).

THIRD-ORDER KEYBOARD ART NOUVEAU

The pieces examined in the previous chapters as First and Second Order keyboard Art Nouveau were primarily identifiable because their specific titles indicated Art Nouveau themes, symbols or imagery, and an examination of their music supported this attribution. Not all the Art Nouveau keyboard repertoire, however, may be identifiable through specific titles like these. Composers may have used genre titles like Barcarolle, Arabesque, Dithyramb or Poem instead of more specific ones, or have brought Art Nouveau style or intention to works with neutral titles like Sonata or Prelude. Some discussion as to the delineation of this repertory will follow, but there are so many works to be considered under such titles that consideration of them must await further studies.

Reinhard Gerlach's recent *Musik und Jugendstil der Wiener Schule 1900-1908* examines string quartets by Schoenberg and Webern besides works like songs that have specific titles and texts as cues to Jugendstil content; he first, of course, establishes his definitions of musical Jugendstil and discusses these composers' contact with Jugendstil figures and their work¹. (The Webern work has a motto from Jacob Böhme, whose mystical nature enables the work's provenance as fantastic genre to be decided with some clarity, but the Schoenberg work has only circumstantial, that is, indirect, evidence of Art Nouveau influence.)

Professor Gerlach's approach, therefore, shows that, at least in theory, works in the third-order repertory should have just as good a claim to Art Nouveau status as works in the other two. What they lack in specific title or reference can be supplied by internal evidence and association with First-Order works. When some more consensus develops as to the musical yardsticks of Art Nouveau style and character it will be possible to examine the third-order repertory in the sort of detail that has been employed in this study for the first two orders.

This chapter, therefore will indicate possibilities for further

study, but will not examine any of this repertory in detail.

The categories to be discussed are:

1. Works with genre-titles especially relevant to Art Nouveau
2. Works with neutral titles that might have some other claim to be considered Art Nouveau
3. Transformed character-pieces: pieces with normal character-piece titles that might be considered Art Nouveau

In each of these cases the prerequisites remain the same as for other orders - there must be reasonable evidence that composer was exposed to Art Nouveau influence and was sympathetic to it, and the music must be outside conventional norms of style. If transference can be argued between specifically-titled or texted Art Nouveau composition like song or opera and works with neutral titles then there may be effects flowing back and forth between the two sorts of composition.

1. Specific Genres

The two genres that have obvious relevance to Art Nouveau are the Barcarolle, associated with water, and the Arabesque, part of its fundamental method. There are relatively few Arabesques, however, apart from the two early Debussy pieces (which may be seen as having some manneristic nature), but there are some interesting barcarolles in addition to Liszt's three already considered. Amongst these are Gabriel Pierné's *Barcarolle* op.26, Vitezslav Novák's *Barkaroly* op.10/1-4, Isaac Albeniz' three, and barcarolles amongst sets of pieces like Bernhard Sekles' *Fünf fantastische Stücke* op.10, Granville Bantock's barcarolles of 1894 and 1912², Joseph Holbrooke's op.17/6 of 1905, Vitezslav Novak's set of four of op.10, and Rakhmaninov's from his op.10/3. All these that have been available for perusal seem to show more emphasis on mesmeric repetition than Mendelssohn's from an earlier period, for instance. The most important barcarolles of the Art Nouveau period, however, are the thirteen written by Gabriel Fauré between 1880 and 1921.

Fauré wrote music for other mediums that has been considered Art

Nouveau, especially the *mélodie* with its smoothly flowing, non-dramatic, timeless character, suggested as Art Nouveau, but unfortunately not really discussed by Marie-Claire Beltrando-Patier³. Jean-Michel Nectoux has more fully discussed as Art Nouveau Fauré's songs *La fée aux chansons*, *Le jardin clos* cycle, *Les roses d'Ispahan*, *La rose*, *Parfum impérissable*, and *Prométhée*⁴; in addition there is the evidence of titles suggesting Art Nouveau themes like his music for *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Masques et Bergamasques*, the song-cycles *Mirages* and *L'horizon chimérique*. *Mirages* (1919), for example, has titles all of which seem directly related to Art Nouveau themes: *Cygne sur l'eau*, *Reflets dans l'eau*, *Jardins nocturnes*, *danseuses*. For his piano works, however, he seems to have preferred less specific titles, writing many *préludes*, *études* and *impromptus* besides *barcarolles*.

Some general points can be made. Firstly, the *barcarolle* was a Romantic form popularized for keyboard by Felix Mendelssohn at the end of each of his books of *Lieder ohne Worte*, where it is typical of other serenade-forms in being a vehicle for melody; in Art Nouveau this is merely another strand in the general texture, as seen earlier in Rakhmaninov's example (Chapter 9 - *I noch, I liubov*). As a genre it can have obvious Art Nouveau suggestions: its being based on the themes of water, love and (mostly) night, with the unceasing motion of water in the left-hand gentle *ostinato* and a general sense of being lost in the timeless present of love. In a metaphorical sense the gondola represents *die Insel*, a self-contained Arcadian setting cut off from reality and time by water.

Secondly, Fauré carries into the *barcarolle* the same qualities of smoothly flowing melody, non-dramatic development and a sense of timelessness seen in his *mélodie*. He uses *pedalpoints* (I: 35-44, 53-59, 69-78, IV: 1-11) but not in every piece nor very often, for as a form the *barcarolle* needs a moving bass through its basic pattern of eight-bar sections, even though Fauré varies this pattern with some freedom. The

melodic line is essentially developed by elaboration or arabesque, which is an Art Nouveau tendency.

Perhaps the most important characteristic the barcarolles share with Art Nouveau is the emphasis on unchanging pulse, producing an effect that is definitely mesmeric, with the many subtleties of rhythmic variation being subordinate to the basic pulse continuing through each piece virtually unbroken. This is perhaps Fauré's equivalent to other composers' use of pedalpoint to suggest timelessness or flat dimensionality: the actual method is not important as long as the hypnotic effect is achieved of being suspended in time or space.

A final point may be suggested, that it may be useful to think of these barcarolles that are without specific titles as being like abstract Art Nouveau design, like the motifs and patterns built from them that architects and book-designers used for their non-specific decoration and book-ends. Since Art Nouveau has often been defined purely in terms of its style, so it may be possible to consider pieces like these as being of Art Nouveau style - not because they conform to certain stylistic norms, but because those they use produce the same effects.

Other genres and genre-titles

Tableau

The special case of Rakhmaninov's second suite for two pianos of 1916-17 is the most obvious candidate for consideration as a third-order repertory work because of its essential likenesses to the first suite, which has titles and epigraphs to each piece, whereas the titles for the second are only general: *Introduction, Waltz, Romance, Tarantella*. Rakhmaninov is said to have decided against supplying titles for the second suite because he was most unhappy with the programme-building interpretations given by other people to the first. But that he is still at least partly looking outside music itself for inspiration is seen in the term *Études-tableaux* for the two sets he published in 1911 and 1917: the

term "tableau" is common. This then suggests these works as possible third-order repertory. They are constructed around repetitive figures and arabesque, and have the same intensity of *moto perpetuo* as at least the first two movements of the first suite.

Tombeau/Hommage

This, while not a genre, is a subject and manner of some importance in the period, with Art Nouveau overtones of evoking the mourned composer's spirit. Two examples mourning Debussy - Florent Schmitt's *Et Pan, au fond des blés lunaires, s'accouda* and Paul Dukas' *La plainte, au loin, du faune* - have already been considered under the *Pan* theme (Chapter 7). In addition there are Ravel's *Le tombeau de Couperin*, Debussy's *Hommage à Rameau*, and Albert Roussel's *L'accueil des muses (in memoriam Debussy)*. The scope might be widened to include the many pieces *à la manière*, of Ravel and others.

Other genres like the Fantasy, Poem, Reverie, Nocturne, Dithyramb, Serenade, Elegy or Romance have titles that coincide to a greater or lesser extent with Art Nouveau themes, but in the keyboard repertory of this time they tend mostly to be used as narrative/programme pieces or character pieces. Nonetheless, it should not be assumed that they will all be conventional.

A probable exception are the *poèmes* of Skryabin, which, being in the same style as his other piano music, are another special case for further investigation. There are enough of these pieces to make an interesting study:

<i>Deux poèmes</i> Op.32	1903
<i>Poème</i> Op.41	1905
<i>Deux poèmes</i> Op.44	1905
<i>Poème</i> Op.52/1	1906
<i>Poème</i> Op.59/1	1910
<i>Poème-nocturne</i> Op.61	1911
<i>Deux poèmes</i> Op.69	1913
<i>Deux poèmes</i> Op.71	1914

By its nature the theme and variations form might be expected to show some Art Nouveau arabesque and repetition; Ravel's orchestral *Bolero* can be

seen as an odd example of this type, without harmonic variation, making it into the most extreme of all ostinato works, and in the orchestral repertoire an example of Art Nouveau *par excellence*. Alban Berg's unpublished variations for piano⁵, and Fauré's *Thème et variations* in C# Op. 70 of 1897 are just two possibilities for investigation.

Nikolai Medtner's *Contes*, of which he wrote over thirty, might possibly prove to have Art Nouveau characters (only a few have been available for perusal). The term *Contes* is usually rendered in English as "Fairytale". He also wrote seventeen Forgotten Melodies that may have Lisztian connotations, and Dithyrambs and three Arabesques, so that a common thread of Art Nouveau provenance might be seen to run through the titles.

2. Evidence from neutral genres

The barcarolle and arabesque as genres are not entirely neutral in character because they can suggest Art Nouveau themes of Water and Pattern. But since there has already been discussion elsewhere of such neutrally titled works as Alban Berg's *Sonata* and Arnold Schoenberg's *Drei Klavierstücke* Op.11⁶, there could well be examination of other neutral genres.

Such neutrality is relative: many of Skryabin's later preludes carry directions in French or Italian that indicate Art Nouveau mood (*douloureux, déchirant; impérieux; vague, indécisif; vague, mystérieux; languido*) and the last group of *Études* (op.65) have terms even more reminiscent of the *Sonatas* and smaller late pieces (No.1 has its M_1 and M_2 *Allegro fantastico* and *très doux avec langueur*, and No.3 has a motif *impérieux* and a figure *étincelant*). There seems little doubt that such works are as much Art Nouveau as his others already discussed in earlier chapters.

Another case is that of Fauré's later *préludes*, *impromptus* and *études*, which could be considered alongside his barcarolles. Rakhmaninov's two books of *Préludes* share the same repetitive method as his *Études*-

tableaux, while the first three concertos are studies in elaboration of arabesque to the point where accompanimental texture tends to become an end in itself, the outstanding moments being the cadenzas to the first two movements of the First. However, concertos of the period are by their nature dramatic works, and generally, at least until Rakhmaninov's Fourth outside the period, of more conventional nature, even though with many modernizations that distinguish them from those of the nineteenth century.

The organ *Symphonies* of French composers are not in general promising sources for music of Art Nouveau character, but there are some exceptions, like the prelude to Louis Vierne's first organ *Symphonie* Op.14 of 1899 that has very swirling chromatic figures:

Example 191:

Vierne: 1ère Symphonie, 1-9

The first movement of his 4^{ième} *symphonie*, the scherzos from 4, 5, 6, and the slow movements from 5 and 6 are also heavily winding chromatics. The scherzos in particular are very individual works of impish, *Scarbo*-like character, whose registration, using the *cornet*, *tierce* and *nasard*, emphasizes their discordances:

Example 192:

MANUELS

PÉDALE

Vivace $\text{♩} = 100$

5

G.P. G.C.A. P. Ch. semiti

G.C.A. G.P. P. Ch. semiti

P. G.A.

Vierne: 6^{me} symphonie, scherzo 1-8

The use of a horn-motif at the beginning of the 5^{me} symphonie has already been remarked in Chapter 8. The fifth and sixth symphonies are late works at 1925 and 1931 respectively, but as has already been seen in earlier chapters, Vierne uses unmistakable Art Nouveau imagery in some specific titles of his 1926-27 *Pièces de fantaisie* for organ (*Feux follets, Clair de lune, Fantômes, Naiades, Gargouilles et chimères*) for music that is much more extreme than that of mere character-pieces, so that it is possible to see that in his case the Art Nouveau influence is still powerful well into the nineteen twenties. His desire seems to be to explore the limits of chromaticism, and as this is essentially sensuous and often extreme, he is arguably still writing in the same *milieu* right to his death in 1937.

The last two organ symphonies of Charles-Marie Widor - *Symphonie Gothique* Op.70 of 1894 and *Symphonie Romane* Op.73 of 1900, are also to be considered.

Example 193:

Moderato $\text{♩} = 70$

Quasi recitativo, espressivo

G.P. ff

a piacere.

Widor: *Symphonie romane*, 1st movement 1-5

Both use mediaeval motifs - *Puer natus est* and *Haec dies* respectively - and so are modal in character with the arabesque figuration of the latter seeming to reflect Flamboyant tracery: Alban Berg's *Sonate* Op.1 of 1907-08 is very like Louis Vierne in its advanced, almost extreme chromaticism, not unlike that of Zemlinsky's *Fantasien über Gedichte von Richard Dehmel*:

Example 194:

The image shows three systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, starting at measure 5, features a complex, chromatic melody in the right hand with a bass line in the left hand. It includes performance markings: 'accel. e cresco.' (measures 5-6), 'stringendo' (measures 7-8), and 'molto rit.' (measures 8-9). The second system, starting at measure 9, shows a more melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line. It includes markings: 'rit. e dim.' (measures 9-10), 'Rascher als Tempo I.' (measures 11-12), 'espressivo' (measures 11-12), and 'p' (measures 11-12). The third system, starting at measure 13, continues the chromatic texture with markings: 'poco ritard.' (measures 13-14) and a triplet of eighth notes (measures 15-16).

Berg: *Sonate*, 5-13

and Theodor Adorno's analysis of it notes its repetitive and entangled opulence ("dem kombinatorischen Reichtum der Exposition wäre es tautologisch und verwirrend")⁷.

Before any firm statements about the music of neutral genres can be made it is necessary to carry out more comparative studies of specifically-titled Art Nouveau works, from which it may appear that there are effects achieved and possibly techniques shared with the composers of Art Nouveau music, that can be looked for in non-specifically titled music.

There is also music of composers considered in earlier chapters that is not specifically titled but may be influenced by Art Nouveau. The following is a list of some possibilities, which includes keyboard works of composers not dealt with in this study, but who have music in other genres that has received some consideration as being Art Nouveau:

Conrad Ansorge	Sonatas 1-3
Arnold Bax	Sonata 1 (1910, revised 1921)
Bela Bartók	14 Bagatelles op.6 1906
	Sonatina 1915
Alban Berg	Sonata op.1 1907-08
	Variations
Eugene d'Albert	Sonata 1893
Paul Dukas	Sonata 1899-1901
John Ireland	Sonata (1918-20)
Joseph Holbrooke	Grande suite moderne op.18
Leos Janáček	Sonata: I.X.1905
Charles Koechlin	5 Sonatines op.59 1915-16
Albèric Magnard	Trois pièces op.1
Arnold Schoenberg	Drei Stücke 1909

3. Transformed Character-pieces

Many character-pieces in the period have titles suggesting Art Nouveau likeness or inspiration, but prove merely to be picturesque conventional music, with a stereotyped image or two suggesting the fantastic or exotic incorporated into their conventional structures and approach. There are firstly genre titles like Arabesque, Barcarolle, Fantasy, Serenade, Dithyramb, Erotik, Poem; secondly specific or semi-specific titles: The Spirit of the Woods, Fantastic Dance, In an Indian Bazaar, Chinese Temples, Persian Dance, and the like. Such music was important for composers and publishers for its ready saleability, and can be of a high standard in the hands of a composer of craftsmanship and inspiration, like Edvard Grieg, Camille Saint-Saens, Emmanuel Chabrier, Josef Suk, Cyril Scott and many others.

But Constantin Floros' recent article on supposed programme-music⁸ that is really of deeper significance than that merely carrying narrative or tone-painting roles, means that as in so much music discussed earlier in this study it can be important to be aware of other strands. Professor Floros mentions Janáček amongst others as cases where there may be symbols and oblique reference vital to a proper understanding of what seems simple music, and the method of semantic analysis he suggests has been one of the techniques of this study. So with the character-piece, that can be transformed from the conventional into music that although simple in presentation can be complex in reference.

Each case needs to be argued on its merits, for many character-pieces can bear titles whose promise of Art Nouveau is not fulfilled by the music. Perhaps the most remarkable example of Art Nouveau-inspired titles for character-pieces of average quality are those of one of the most prolific composers of the period:

- Granville Bantock
- Arabian Nights 1890
 - 1 The fisherman and the Jinn
 - 2 The lake of the magic fish
 - 3 The miraculous fish & the damsel
 - 4 The porter & the ladies of Bagdad
 - 5 On the way to Damascus
 - 6 A princess of Cathay
 - 7 The magic horse
 - Tales and Dances (Lalla Rookh) 1902
 - 1 Introduction & Bridal Embassy
 - 2 The Veiled Prophet of Khosaran
 - 3 Paradise and the Peri
 - 4 The Fire-Worshippers
 - 5 The Light of the Harem
 - 6 The Feast of Roses
 - A Marionette Show - Suite 1918:
 - 1 Overture
 - 2 Columbine
 - 3 Harlequin
 - 4 Pantaloon
 - 5 Valse sentimentale
 - 6 Cortège
 - 7 Pierrot
 - 8 Valse fantasque
 - 9 Finale

Despite the fantastic inspiration of the titles the music seems of fairly conventional character-piece idiom, although doubtless Bantock, like so many others, felt constrained by the limitations of children's genres.

Sometimes this genre (children's music) can provide music of some originality that tends to transcend its nominal status, and although very little of this music has been available for examination, other evidence suggests that it might repay further investigation. The listing that follows has been compiled from composers whose other music suggests that their character-pieces might transform the genre into music of character. A particularly interesting case is that of Charles Koechlin, whose titles seem to promise quite conventional scene-painting and narrative, but whose music, judged by his *Paysages et marines*, is quite different.

- THIRD-ORDER REPERTORY
- Frank Bridge⁹ Four Characteristic Pieces 1916
 The Princess
 Fragrance
 Bittersweet
 Fireflies
 A Fairytale Suite 1918
 The Princess
 The Ogre
 The Spell
 The Prince
 The Hour-Glass 1920
 Dusk
 The Dew Fairy (in 1st Order repertory)
 Midnight Tide
- Eugene d'Albert Suite 1883 op.1
 4 volumes of characteristic pieces
- Joseph Holbrooke Four Futurist Dances op.66
 Leprechaun Dance
 Demon Dance
 Troglodyte Dance
 Ensemble - Trollops' Dance
 Grande suite moderne op.18b
 Scherzo humoreske
 Valse romaneske
 Nocturne. Night by the sea
 L'orgie. Fantasie bacchanale¹⁰
- Charles Koechlin Les Heures Persanes 1916-19
 1 Sieste, avant le départ
 2 La Caravane (rêve)
 3 L'Escalade obscure
 4 Matin frais dans la haute vallée
 5 En vue de la ville
 6 A travers les rues
 7 Chant du soir
 8 Clair de lune sur la terrasses
 9 Aubade
 10 Roses au soleil de midi
 11 A l'ombre, près de la fontaine de marbre
 12 Arabesques
 13 Les Collines, au coucher de soleil
 14 Le Conteur
 15 La Paix du soir, au cimetière
 16 Derviches dans la nuit

This is not a complete listing, of course, and since none of this has been available for examination it may include children's pieces that do not show real Art Nouveau characteristics, although the pieces themselves may be of fine quality.

However, this is another category that may prove interesting to consider. For instance, it includes Florent Schmitt's *Une semaine du petit Elfe Ferme-l'oeil, ou Les songes de Hjalmar*, which is in duet form, with melody in octaves for the pupil and accompaniment for the teacher. The melodies are restricted to five and six-note spans, and the limitation

helps produce a simple modal effect. The individual pieces follow the seven parts of the Hans Christian Andersen story known in English translations as *Ole Luk-oie*¹¹. This work shows that the genre of children's works may well prove of some interest for further studies. Erich Korngold's *Märchenbilder*, of seven pieces based on children's rhymes, is another example.

Conclusions

It seems clear that there is a field for further study of Art Nouveau repertory of the third order that could be as extensive as those of the first two orders. It is in this field that it becomes important to consider Art Nouveau compositional techniques themselves, and confidence in identifying and discussing these will follow further studies of the first two orders in other repertories besides that of the keyboard. The repertories that could well now receive systematic study to aid in the formation of views about Art Nouveau techniques are the textured ones of opera and song, together with ballet.

End-notes

- 1 Gerlach, R.: op. cit., 59-66, 161-171.
- 2 For literature on Bantock see Anderton, H.O.: *Granville Bantock*, (London, John Lane 1915); Pirie, P.: *Bantock and his Generation*, Musical Times CIX/1506 (Aug. 1968), 715-17; Bray, T.: *Bantock - Music in the Midlands before the First World War*, (London, Triad 1973); there is also mention of him in Carley, L.: *Delius - His Life in Letters I: 1862-1908*, (London, Scolar Press/Delius Trust 1983).
- 3 Beltrando-Patier, M-C.: op. cit., 113-115.
- 4 Nectoux, J-M.: op. cit., 22-26.
- 5 Redlich, H.: *Alban Berg: The Man and his Music*, (John Calder, London 1957), 249-259.
- 6 Gerlach, R.: op. cit., 134; Brinkmann, R.: *Arnold Schönberg: Drei Klavierstücke Op.11. Studien zur fruhen Ätonalität bei Schönberg* (Beihaft zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft 7, Wiesbaden 1969).
- 7 Adorno, T.: *Alban Berg*
- 8 Floros, C.: *Verschwiegene Programmusik*, Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften CXIX (Dec.1982), 204-25.
- 9 Also: *Hidden Fires*, 1927; Gargoyle, 1928
- 10 Spelt "Bachanalle" in the Cary & Co. 1907 edition, as recorded in the British Library Catalogue of Printed Music g.1174.f.(8.)
- 11 Oxford edition of Andersen p.199-211; *Contes D'Andersen*, (Paris, Hachette 1876), 210ff.

CHAPTER 22
COMPOSERS' ORCHESTRAL VERSIONS
AND ARCHETYPAL MOTIFS

In the discussion of the keyboard repertory above three types of motif have been identified as seeming to be central to many compositions, so that they may be regarded as being as archetypal as the *topoi* of Pan, of water as motion and mystery, of woman-as-enchantress, of *clair de lune* and the others that form the subject-headings of chapters. These motif-types are:

1. the panpipe-motif of long-note-plus-flourish/arabesque
2. the horn-motif of uneven or dotted rhythm and altered triadic harmony
3. the winding-motif of undulating line.

Where composers themselves produce an orchestral version of one of the works in the Art Nouveau keyboard repertory, they can by their instrumentation of these motifs and other passages reveal further evidence of work's nature and symbolism. (Harald Goertz and Helmut Loos have considered the reverse process - the piano arrangement by a composer of his orchestral work. Such arrangement leads to compression and therefore concentration on a work's basic intentions¹.)

In the course of an article on an arrangement of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* for chamber group², Theo Hirsbrunner remarks the roles assigned to various instruments in French music around 1900. The flute was associated with Pan, and with the Orient, especially its arabesque or melisma. Strings were used for the then strange sounds of modal and chromatic harmonies, and woodwinds for *lontain* (distant) effects. Klaus Leidecker has discussed instrumental roles against compositional devices, including the use of thirds as calling-signals - the horn-motif of this study, in his study of European fairy-music³.

Sylvia Sowa-Winter has highlighted the use of the harp as a symbol-bearing instrument in Art Nouveau⁴, and distinguished two functions of orchestral instruments in the context of Art Nouveau - their symbol-bearing character (*Symbolträchtigkeit*), and their symbolic tone-colour

(*Klangmetaphor*)⁵. Thus in the first case a harp can by its form as a plucked-string instrument represent Orpheus' lyre, and in the second case a flute can by its sound recreate the imagined sound of Pan's reed-pipe.

Composer-orchestrations of the following pieces have been available for this study:

		piano	orch.	ppM	hM	wM
Novák	<i>Pan</i>	1910	1913	17	6	124
Schmitt	<i>Tristesse de Pan</i>	1920	1925	7	3+5	14
Debussy	<i>Prélude à l'après-midi</i>	1905 ⁶	1892-94	1	5	31
Debussy	<i>Chansons de Bilitis</i>	1915.	1901			
Griffes	<i>The White Peacock</i>	1915	1919	13	4	19
Ravel	<i>Alborada del gracioso</i>	1905	1920			
Stravinsky	<i>Pétrouchka</i>	1921	1911 ⁷			

[ppM = panpipe-motif; hM = horn-motif; wM = winding-motif. The bars quoted are for their first entries]

The original music by Debussy to accompany the *Bilitis* readings can be compared to the *Six épigraphes antiques* if due allowance be made for the extent to which the latter is a recomposition of material in the former.

(It is also possible to adduce evidence from *La flûte de Pan*, the first of the song-set of 1897, *Chansons de Bilitis*, which has a cognate subject and origin to the first of the *épigraphes*.) The connexions between the other *Bilitis* works are as follows:

<u>Les chansons de Bilitis</u>		<u>Six épigraphes antiques</u>	
1	<i>Chant pastorale</i> [ppM 1]	1	<i>Invoquer Pan</i>
7	<i>Le tombeau sans nom</i> [ppM+hM 1]	2	<i>Un tombeau sans nom</i> ⁸
4	<i>Chanson</i> [wM 2]	3	<i>Que la nuit soit propice</i>
10	<i>La danseuse aux crotales</i> [ppM 11, wM 7]	4	<i>La danseuse aux crotales</i>
		5	<i>L'égyptienne</i> *
12	<i>La pluie au matin</i> [ppM 13]	6	<i>Remercier la pluie au m.</i>

[* This is a new composition, not a recomposition of material from the similarly named No.8 of the *chansons* (*Les courtisanes égyptienne*).]

The relevant pieces of *Bilitis* incidental music are, because of their fragmentary nature, based more around single motifs, but there are some second motifs in the pieces that Debussy chose to recompose as the piano set, which may explain why he selected those pieces.

The works by Ravel and Stravinsky are *grotesquerie* and so will be discussed separately from the others (which will be referred to as "the

main group").

The panpipe-motif

In the main group each work employs the flute for its panpipe-motif, and always in association with the harp. This association, as Sylvia Sowa-Winter notes in Debussy's works, is a faun/Pan *topos*, the flute being symbolic of Pan and the harp of Orpheus, with the combination being a general pastoral evocation⁹. The important first statement of these motifs is that compared here, for it sets the character of the sound-imagery; later appearances or reworkings of the panpipe-motif in a work may be made by other instruments. For instance, Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'une faune* begins the work as a flute solo, and is almost immediately (bar 4) associated with horns and harp. Later appearances of the panpipe-motif are taken by flute with cellos doubling below (100), and finally by horns (with violins in effect as the third horn). This last entry, in the fourth to last bar, is an echo, about which more will be said below.

Debussy's *Chansons de Bilitis* incidental music is scored throughout for two flutes, two harps and celesta. The significance of this instrumentation, in the context of Art Nouveau generally, can now be seen as faun-evoking, in accordance with the Arcadian settings of Louÿs' *Bilitis* poems. Florent Schmitt's work is an *hommage-work* to Debussy, and thus employs the celesta (employed by Debussy in the incidental *Bilitis* music): the connotation here is Debussy's *Bilitis*, not the faun-*topos* as such. The significance of Griffes' employment of this instrument in *The White Peacock* is less clear, but he may have known Debussy's *Bilitis*, and he always uses the celesta in conjunction with the harp, as in the first panpipe-motif entry.

Horn-motifs

Novák and Schmitt use strings and winds; Debussy horns; and Griffes the clarinet. The common factor is the woodwind group in the orchestra, which usually includes horns. This accords with the shepherd's-horn

concept of the horn-motif as first identified and discussed in the Pan-works (Chapter 6). As with the panpipe-motif, the connotation is of the supernatural rather than the natural pastoral setting. It also accords with the *lontain* effect noticed by Theo Hirsbrunner, for horn-calls are often associated with distant effects.

Winding-motifs

These are motifs that are sensuous because of the slightly vertiginous effect of their undulation, but do not have a Classical or traditional iconographic element like the other two types, so that instrumentation is likely to be governed by associations of *Klangmetaphor* or just *Klang* rather than *Symbolgeträchtigkeit*. Thus there is some divergence: Novák chooses clarinet and strings; Schmitt strings and winds; Debussy (*Prélude à l'après-midi*) horns; and Griffes flutes with harp.

The emphasizing of Art Nouveau effects by instrumentation

When Debussy uses horns for the echo of his panpipe-motif in the last bars of his *Prélude* he is using a distance or echo effect common in orchestral music (as Theo Hirsbrunner notes) - for instance the distant horns in the Prelude to Act II of *Tristan und Isolde*. In Art Nouveau such an effect connotes more than distance - it is an echo of the spirit-world or the mystical, as in Schreker's *Die Ferne Klang*.

In Ravel's *Alborada del gracioso* and Stravinsky's *Pétrouchka*, trumpet-and-drum fanfares are used to give a circus or fairground sound-image. Ravel's castanets and crotales (finger-cymbals) clearly signify Spanish/exotic imagery, and together with cymbals, triangle, *tambour militaire* and bass drum provide easily identifiable circus-like sounds. But this is not normal tone-painting. In both cases the music is extreme, with extended triple-tonguing in Ravel and the bizarre employment of an octatonic pitch-set in Stravinsky (II [*Chéz Pétrouchka*] 35-43). Such evocation of clowning in each work is, in an Art Nouveau context, evocation of the grotesque, and is furthered by Ravel's use of the bassoon for the

serenade in the mid-section and Stravinsky's use of clarinets for the echo-fanfare figures in parallel major seconds, with a bassoon ostinato of a falling major second in the middle (II/9ff). The bassoon is commonly stereotyped as comic, and the clarinet given mocking figures like those of the dying Till Eulenspiegel in Richard Strauss' tone-poem, but here both effects are extreme, and thus grotesque. This sort of instrumentation abounds in *Pétrouchka*, as for instance the grotesque dance of II/58ff where the Cor Anglais, with bass clarinet foundation, seems a parody of the role of the oboe in serious music. Ravel's use of the harp with bassoon for the syncopated chords that accompany the initial dance-motif is similar. The harp, of all instruments, is normally associated with beauty, but here with bathos.

Conclusions

Composers' instrumentation of their own works reinforces the evocation of their Art Nouveau character. Certain *mélanges* of instruments tend to be associated with the three motif-types, and instrumentation in the Ravel and Stravinsky clown-pieces emphasized their grotesqueness. Such sounds, whether in the serious or the comic works, evokes supernatural or bizarre, not natural or merely comic, imagery.

The general character of the three motif-types identified throughout the Art Nouveau keyboard repertory - panpipe, horn and winding-motifs - is thus confirmed by their instrumentation in the composers' own orchestrations.

End-notes

- ¹ Goertz, H.: *Auf dem Prüfstand: Der Klavierauszug*, Musica XXXVI/1 (1982), 34-38; Loos, H.: *Zur Klavierübertragung von Werken für und mit Orchester des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, Schriften für Musik 25 (München und Salzburg, Katzwichler 1983).
- ² Hirsbrunner, T.: *Debussys "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune"*, 31-42.
- ³ Leidecker, K.: *Zauberklänge der Phantasie: Musikalische Motive und gesungene Verse im europäischen Märchengut*, Diss. Saarbrücken Universät 1983. He also identifies circling consonances, hexachord sequences and recitations/psalm tones.

- 4 Sowa-Winter, S.: op. cit.
- 5 Ibid, 107.
- 6 The original was composed as a four to five-stave draft score not unlike a two-piano version; see Note 7, Chapter 6.
- 7 The original 1911 score has been used for comparison rather than the 1947 revision that is now always recorded, even though Stravinsky preferred the later version - see his sleeve-notes to his 1962 LP recording CBS SBR 235138.
- 8 Theo Hirsbrunner also notes that material from no.8, *Les courtisanes égyptiennes*, can be found in the second of the *épigraphes*; see Hirsbrunner, T.: *Claude Debussy und Pierre Louÿs*, 433.
- 9 Sowa-Winter, S.: op. cit., 57.

CHAPTER 23
COMPOSITIONAL DEVICES
THE ELEVEN PRINCIPLES REALIZED IN KEYBOARD MUSIC

This chapter will briefly summarize the methodology of compositional and keyboard technique by which the eleven principles essential to Art Nouveau are realized. An essential point to make at the outset is that devices like pedalpoints, parallel progressions, unusual pitch-sets and the like are not equivalents of any of the principles, even when almost exclusively used for the realization of particular ones. It is not the device that is important, but the effect. Composers may use different devices or forms of device to achieve similar effects, and differ in the emphasis they give them. Almost every piece uses all the devices in some degree, but the impossibility of defining, for instance, any clear dividing line between short pedalpoints and longer tied notes, or between mild/normal (for the period) and pronounced chromaticism, means that there is in the study of device alone no formula for a hypothetical Art Nouveau musical technique, and thus no objective way of recognizing it. Bearing this in mind, some generalizations can be made, however, about the relationships between various compositional and keyboard-specific devices encountered all through the repertory, but varying in extent and manner from one piece or composer to another.

1. Originality of style

Tone-sets: modes, folk-sets, pentatonics, wholetones, chromatics, synthetic tone-sets.

Tonality: loosened, varied, ambiguous, alternating, bitonal, multitonal.

Harmony: non-functional, dissonant (from delicately piquant to cacophonous: major and minor seconds, sevenths and ninths, diminished/augmented fourths, fifths), unresolved sequences and cadences, chains of parallel or consecutive chords (including dissonances), tritones, unrelated or partly-related basses, drone-basses, basing composition around chords or pitch-sets of special significance, floating harmonies over pedalpoints (often unrelated).

Sequence: parallel progressions, uncadenced sequences, unfinished final cadences, alternation or interruption of sequence, unrelated or unprepared modulation, extended use of pedalpoints, suspensions as a means of deliberating, prolonging or preventing cadence.

Development: a tendency towards lack of normal development, replacing this with immediate and subsequent repetition, circularity, pedalpoint, ostinato. An avoidance of climax by leading towards then diverting from climax.

Structure: a tendency towards repetitious models, circular rather than

linear; structures consisting of a series of modified repetitions at different pitches; some proportional-structure experiments for purposes of Art Nouveau asymmetry as well as Symbolist significance.

Rhythm: a marked tendency towards ostinato, whether of a special motif or general pulse, producing a hypnotic effect. Thus forms like the dance. Metrical ambiguities, cross-rhythms, independent rhythms between the parts, shortened or lengthened bars, 5- or 7-pulse rhythms, alternations or mixtures of rhythms.

Motif: a tendency towards motifs of similar rather than contrasting character, fragmentary motifs, motifs explored together while in different tonalities, a de-emphasis of motif and emphasis on "accompanimental" figure.

Treatment: various forms of arabesque: acciaccatura, appoggiatura, broken chords, arpeggio, trills and multiple trills, tremolando, elaboration, cadenza. Florid figuration of motif and accompaniment.

2. Sensuality

Monotonous nature of pulse and repetition leading to a **mesmeric** effect

Vertiginous effect of winding (**undulating**) melodic lines

Pronouncedly **chromatic** effects

Grotesque effects, especially discordances

3. Mystery

Parallel progressions, especially when chromatic

Strange tonalities and harmonies

Complexities of pulse (cross-rhythms), texture and the interplay of strands

Non-directional nature of sequences

Exploitation of **very soft effects**, with heavy use of the three pedals

4. Ambiguity

Indefinition of tonal centre

Bitonality, polytonality

Differentiation between the tonalities or roles of the hands

Complexity of textures

Concealment of motif in texture

Making accompanimental figuration overshadow melody

Having a title or text that is full of possible denotations and connotations

Symbolist proportion, numerological clues

Musical quotation and reference, reference to other Art Nouveau mediums and other arcane or esoteric import.

5. Extremity of effect

Assymetry of emphasis - focusing on discordance

repetition

affectiveness - effect over form

accompaniment over melody

6. Stylization

Motif-fragment into repetitive melody, and into fragments of figuration, where they interweave into complex, repetitive textures

Flourish - ornament and arabesque in the form of turns, trills, arpeggios, acciaccaturas, sweeping scale-work, glissandi and cadenzas

7. Emphasis on Detail

On the local rather than the whole picture - because of non-linear and non-dramatic structures
Patterning replacing development

8. Repetition

Structural: the basis of patterning of fragments of flourish, motif and figure - patterning rather than progression. Dance forms are important here.

Affective: deliberately building mesmeric effect, especially through ostinato

9. Interweaving

Arabesque and textural patterning
Melody as just another textural strand with those of accompaniment
Interweaving of sequences and sections emphasized over linear progression towards dramatically-based ends

10. Absence of depth

Long sequences over pedalpoints, or reliance on a series of shorter ones (without functional modulation from one to another) suggest limited dimensionality
Ostinato - which is embellished pedalpoint - suggests the same because it emphasizes movement in only one plane

11. Timelessness

Motion without progression:
Non-linear structures
Non-functional progressions
De-emphasis of resolutions, cadence, dramatic outcomes

CHAPTER 24
FULL LIST OF THE KEYBOARD REPERTORY OF THIS STUDY

This chapter will list the first and second-order works studied above, and in addition a supplementary list of works that have been unprocurable for the study but could prove to be worthy of inclusion. What has been available comprises a reasonably comprehensive sample of the whole repertory - a body of about a hundred and fifty works.

Many of the works studied and sought are long out of print. Since the quality of those studied is so high it is to be hoped that photographic reprintings of archival copies in publishers' and library collections will eventually be made commercially available.

THE REPERTORY EXAMINED IN THIS STUDY

FIRST-ORDER A

Based on visual Art Nouveau

Les fées sont d'esquises danseuses (Préludes II/4) 1912-13 Debussy

Based on the Pan theme

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune 1905 Debussy

Pan/1-5: Prolog, Hory, More, Les, Zena 1910 Novák

Et Pan, au fond des blés lunaires, s'accouda (Mirages/1) 1920 Schmitt

La plainte, au loin, du faune... 1921 Dukas

Based on Symbolist verse

Fantasiën über Gedichte von Richard Dehmel 1-4:

Stimme des Abends, Waldseligkeit, Liebe, Käferlied 1900 Zemlinsky

Sonate 5 (Le poème d'exstase) 1905 Skryabin

Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut (Images II/2) 1907 Debussy

Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir (Préludes I/4) 1910 Debussy

Based on other verse

Gaspard de la nuit 1-3: Ondine, Le gibet, Scarbo 1908 Ravel

Fantasia-tableaux I/1-4: Barkarolla; I noch, I liubov; Slezi; Svetlie prazdnik 1893 Rakhmaninov

Based on patterning

Ogives 1-4 1886 Satie

Metopy 1-3: Wyspa syren, Kalipso, Nauzykaa 1915 Szymanowski

FIRST-ORDER B

TRANSFORMATIONS

DREAM *En rêve - Nocturne* 1885-6 Liszt
Réverie Op.49/3 1905 Skryabin

REPERTORY LIST

659

TIME	<i>Valse oubliée 1</i> 1881	Liszt
	<i>Valse oubliée 2</i> 1882	Liszt
	<i>Valse oubliée 3</i> 1882	Liszt
	<i>Valse oubliée 4</i> 1885 ¹	Liszt
	<i>Po zarostlem chodnicku</i> [On overgrown path]	Janáček
	1901: 1. <i>Nase vecery</i> (Our evenings)	
	2. <i>Listek odvanuty</i> (Fallen leaf)	
	3. <i>Pojdte s námi!</i> (Come with us)	
	4. <i>Frydecká panna Maria</i> (Madonna of Frydek)	
	5. <i>Stebetaly jak lastovicky</i> (they chattered like swallows)	
	6. <i>Nelze domluvit!</i> (Words fail)	
	7. <i>Dobrou noc!</i> (Goodnight)	
	8. <i>Task neskonale áske</i> (Unutterable anguish)	
	9. <i>V pláči</i> (In tears)	
	10. <i>Sycek neodletel!</i> (The screech- owl still flies)	
	1908: 1,2 plus paralipomena 3,4,5 (all untitled)	
MASKS	<i>Suite Bergamasque</i> 1890/1905	Debussy
	1. <i>Prélude</i>	
	2. <i>Menuet</i>	
	3. <i>Clair de lune</i>	
	4. <i>Passepied</i>	
	<i>Masques</i> 1904	Debussy
	<i>Masque Op.63/1</i> 1911	Skryabin
	<i>Maski</i> 1916	Szymanowski
	1. <i>Szecherezada</i>	
	2. <i>Blazen Tantris</i>	
	3. <i>Serenada Don Juana</i>	
	<i>Enigme Op.52/2</i> 1906	Skryabin
	<i>Mirages Op.70/2</i> 1920 <i>La tragique chevauchée</i>	Schmitt
<u>SYMMETRIES</u>		
RESONANCES	<i>Cloches à travers les feuilles</i> (<i>Images II/1</i>) 1907	Debussy
	<i>L'oiseaux tristes (Miroirs/2)</i> 1905	Ravel
	<i>La vallée des cloches (Miroirs/5)</i> 1905	Ravel
DANCE	<i>Csardas obstiné</i> 1884	Liszt
	<i>Gymnopédies 1,2,3</i> 1888	Satie
	<i>Gnossiennes 1,2,3</i> 1890	Satie
	4 (1891), 5 (1889), 6 (1897)	Satie
	<i>Danseuses de Delphes (Préludes I)</i> 1910	Debussy
	<i>Danse languide Op.51/4</i> 1906	Skryabin
MYSTICAL	<i>Danses Gothiques</i> (1893)	Satie
	<i>Prélude de la porte héroïque du ciel</i> 1894	Satie
	<i>Cants mágics</i> 1919	Mompou
	Skryabin - The late sonatas as mystical works:	
	Sonata 6 1911-12	
	Sonata 7 (<i>Messe blanc</i>) 1911	
	Sonata 8 1912-13	
	Sonata 9 (<i>Messe noir</i>) 1913	
	Sonata 10 1912-13	

FOUR ELEMENTS

FIRE	<i>Vers la flamme</i> Op.72 1914	Skryabin
	<i>Flammes sombres</i> Op.73/2 1914	Skryabin
WATER	<i>Une barque sur l'Océan</i> (Miroirs/3) 1905	Ravel
	<i>Poissons d'or</i> (Images II/3) 1907	Debussy
	<i>The Fountains of the Acqua Paola</i> (Roman Sketches/3) 1915-16	Griffes
	<i>Le poisson d'or</i> 1919	Berners
AIR	<i>Poème ailé</i> Op.51/3 (1906)	Skryabin
	<i>La danse de Puck</i> (Préludes I/11) 1910	Debussy
	<i>The Dew Fairy</i> (The Hour-Glass/3) 1920	Bridge
NATURE	<i>Polka for the swan and the peacock</i> (Zivotem a snem/2) [things lived & dreamt] 1909	Suk
	<i>Paysages et Marines</i> /7-12 1915	Koechlin
	7 <i>Soir d'angoisses</i>	
	8 <i>La chanson des pommiers en fleurs</i>	
	9 <i>Paysage d'octobre</i>	
	10 <i>Chant de pêcheurs</i>	
	11 <i>Dans le grand champs</i>	
	12 <i>Poème Virgilien</i>	
	<i>The White Peacock</i> (Roman Sketches/1) 1915-16	Griffes

THE DISTANT DREAM

MYTH	<i>Six épigraphes antiques</i> , 1914	Debussy
	1. <i>Pour invoquer Pan, dieu du vent</i>	
	2. <i>Pour un tombeau sans nom</i>	
	3. <i>Pour que la nuit soit propice</i>	
	4. <i>Pour la danse aux crotales</i>	
	5. <i>Pour l'Égyptienne</i>	
	6. <i>Pour remercier la pluie au matin</i>	
EXOTIC	<i>Pagodes</i> (Estampes/1) 1903	Debussy
	<i>Alborada del gracioso</i> (Miroirs/4) 1905	Ravel
INSEL	<i>L'isle joyeux</i> 1904	Debussy
	<i>The Island Spell</i> (Decorations/1) 1915	Ireland
	<i>The Princess's Rose-Garden</i> 1915	Bax
<u>EROS</u>		
LOVE	<i>Danse languide</i> Op. 51/4 1906	Skryabin
	<i>Poème languide</i> Op. 52/3 1906	Skryabin
	<i>Désir</i> Op.57/1 1907	Skryabin
	<i>Caresse dansée</i> Op.57/2 1907	Skryabin
	<i>Le jardin parfumé</i> 1923	Sorabji
WOMAN	<i>La fille aux cheveux de lin</i> (Préludes I/8) 1910	Debussy
	<i>Ondine</i> (Préludes II/8) 1912-13	Debussy
	<i>The Maiden with the Daffodil</i> 1915	Bax

CLAIR DE LUNE

Clair de lune (Suite bergamasque/3) 1890-1905 Debussy
La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune
 (Préludes II/7), 1912-13 Debussy

EXTREMES

PIERROT *Trois mouvements de pétrouchka* 1921 Stravinsky

GROTESQUE *Sérénade grotesque* 1893 Ravel
Étrangeté Op.63/2 1911 Skryabin

EVIL *Méphisto valse 2* 1880-81 Liszt
Méphisto valse 3 1883 Liszt
Méphisto valse 4 1885 Liszt
Méphisto Polka 1883 Liszt
Csárdás macabre 1881-82 Liszt
Unstern! 1880 Liszt
Poème satanique Op.36 1903 Skryabin

DEATH *Nuages gris* 1881 Liszt
Die Trauer-Gondel 1,2 1882 Liszt
Richard Wagner - Venezia 1883 Liszt
Canope (Préludes II/10) 1912-13 Debussy
Guirlandes Op.7/1 1914 Skryabin

The Organ Repertory

DREAM *Fantômes (Pièces de fantaisie op.54/4)* 1927 Vierne
 WATER *Naiades (Pièces de fantaisie 4/4)* 1927 Vierne
 AIR *Feux follets (Pièces de fantaisie 2/4)* 1927 Vierne
 CLAIR DE LUNE *Clair de lune (Pièces de fantaisie 2/5)* 1926 Vierne
 GROTESQUE *Gargouilles et chimères*
 (Pièces de fantaisie 4/5) 1927 Vierne

SECOND-ORDER REPERTORY

TIME *V mlhách 1-4* 1912 Janáček
 APPEARANCES *Voiles (Préludes I/2)* 1910 Debussy
Brouillards (Préludes II/1)
 1912-13 Debussy
 WATER *Jeux d'eau* 1901 Ravel
La cathédrale engloutie
 (Préludes I/10) 19190 Debussy
 NATURE *Noctuelles (Miroirs/1)* 1905 Ravel

POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL WORKS

Granville Bantock *The Isle of Dreams*
 Fred Barlow *Jeux d'ondine*
Trois poèmes chinois (1916)
 Bela Bartók *Deux images (1910)*
 Arnold Bax² *The Happy Forest (1913)*
Nereid (1918)
Water Music (1920)

REPERTORY LIST

- Havergal Brian
Three Illuminations (1917)
Four Miniatures (1918-20)
2. The Land of Dreams
- Frank Bridge
A Fairytale Suite (1917³)
1. The Princess
2. The Ogre
3. The Spell
4. The Prince
The Hour-Glass 1-3 (1920)
1. Dusk
[2. The Dew Fairy]⁴
3. Midnight Tide
Hidden Fires (1927)
Gargoyles (1928)
- Feruccio Busoni
Raconti fantastici (1878)
An die Jugend (1909)
- Emmanuel Chabrier
Bourrée fantasque (1891)
- Abel Decaux
Quatres Clairs de lune (1904-07)⁵
1. Minuit passe (1900)
2. La ruella (1902)
3. Le cimitière (1905)
4. La Mer (1907)
- Josef Bohuslav Foerster
Snenyi (Dreaming) Op.47 1-5 (1898)
Erotovy [erotic] maski Op.98 (variations) 1912
- Charles Griffes
Three Tone-Pictures Op.5 nos.1-3
1. Lake at Evening (W.B.Yeats)
2. Vale of Dreams (Poe)
3. Night Winds (Poe)
Three Fantasy Pieces Op. 6 nos.1-3
2. Notturmo (Verlaine)⁶
3. Scherzo (Griffes) [Bacchanale⁷]
The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan (Coleridge)
- Josef Holbrooke
Four Futurist Dances Op.66
An Enchanted Garden nos.1-3
Pierrot Op.36
Red Masques Op.65
Op.2/7 Acrobats
Op.4/8 Arlequinade
- John Ireland
Decorations nos. 1-3
[1. The Island Spell]⁸
2. Moonglade
3. The Scarlet Ceremonies
- Charles Koechlin
24 Esquisses Op.41
Paysages et marines nos. 1-6⁹
1. Sur la falaise
2. Matin calme
3. Promenade vers la mer
4. Le chant du chevrier
5. Soir d'été
6. Ceux qui s'en vont pêcher au large
dans la nuit
Les heures persanes Op.65 1-16¹⁰
8. Clair de lune sur les terrasses
11. A l'ombre, près de la fontaine de
marbre
12. Arabesque
15. La paix du soir, au cimitière
16. Derviches dans la nuit
- Erich Korngold
Don Quixote Pieces (1908)
- Albéric Magnard
Promenades Op.7
- Federico Mompou
Festes llunyanes [Festes lointaines] 1-6

Vitezslav Novák	Eklogy 1-4 op. 11, 1905 ¹¹ Charmes [spells]
Gabriel Pierné	Cydalise et le chevre-pied Boutique Japonaise
Maurice Ravel	Entre cloches
Erik Satie	Première pensée Rose+Croix Fête donnée par les Chevaliers Normands 3 Préludes from "Les fils des étoiles" Vexations Caresse Le poisson rêveur
Florent Schmitt	Ombres Op.64/1-3 Dionysiaques Op.62
Bernhard Sekles	Skissen - 5 fantastische Stücke Op.10
Deodat de Séverac	La nymphe émue ou le faune indiscret 1908

End-notes

- 1 This date is given in Searle, H.: op. cit., 166, but questioned in *New Grove* 7, 61.
- 2 Also: *The Poisoned Fountain*, 1928
- 3 The last of these pieces (*The Prince*) has come to hand and shows that the set is not simple music for beginners, nor conventional characteristic-piece music.
- 4 The single piece only has been found and is discussed in this study (Chapter 15).
- 5 See Brelet, G.:
- 6 The epigraph is the second stanza of Verlaine's *La bonne chanson*, so that the character of the piece may be expected to be Art Nouveau.
- 7 Given the second title in the orchestral version.
- 8 Discussed in this study in Chapter 16.
- 9 Although the titles themselves do not suggest Art Nouveau, the overall title with its Virgilian-pastoral connotation (discussed in Chapter 15 in relation to nos. 7-12) does.
- 10 The sixteen titles are laid out in a narrative form, but those quoted are clearly candidates for inclusion. If the music is like that studied in Chapter 15, then it is unquestionably *avant-garde*, but the evidence of all the titles seems to suggest that Koechlin is influenced by more strands of culture than Art Nouveau by itself.
- 11 The title implies the Virgilian pastoral.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has been based firstly on an attempt to define Art Nouveau in terms of the visual, literary and musical arts, which has given rise to the eleven-principles model empirically derived from visual and literary Art Nouveau. This model has been tested in the first and second-order repertory studies that comprise the main body of this work.

This keyboard repertory is only a part of a much larger one that includes song, opera, ballet, incidental music, works for other instruments, and the symphonic poem. It is a major strand of musical art that recent studies show as one standing clear of the mainstream of the time in a way not yet generally appreciated. This has come about because Art Nouveau as an expression of the fantastic strand in culture has itself not been well understood, and because it has been thought sufficient to consider its musical repertory as tone-painting or impressionism, whereas its aims, themes, imagery and symbols are distinctly different.

Although the keyboard repertory is only a part of the larger picture, and caution needs to be observed in drawing general conclusions from this partial picture, some initial statements about Art Nouveau and music suggest themselves.

Definition

Musicological studies on the subject of Art Nouveau in music attempt as a body to establish three things: firstly, the probabilities of its existence as an entity, secondly, its extent, and thirdly, its nature, none of which can be defined more precisely than any other cultural phenomenon. Its time-span is wider than that of visual Art Nouveau and its emphases a little different because it is a different medium, but it is clearly part of that esoteric and anti-realist strand of the arts that is the mannered (stylized) fantastic. This strand runs through every epoch of musical history but seems to have one of its special flowerings in the period of this study (c.1880-c.1920) in visual, literary and

musical arts. This phenomenon has been given the names Art Nouveau or Jugendstil that are drawn from the visual arts, where it is very distinctive and thus readily identifiable. It should not be thought, however, that the visual arts alone define the phenomenon: musical or literary Art Nouveau are not to be defined solely by reference to visual Art Nouveau, but all three by reference to the concepts and expressions of the strand of the mannered fantastic in the period, and by reference to each other.

Historical epoch v cultural strand

Art Nouveau is not itself an epoch but a strand in an epoch of change, whose dominant factors, insofar as they are reflected in the arts, are the fading influence of the older romanticized historicism, naturalism and realism, against the growing dominance of the ethos of industrialism-materialism and its philosophical base of scientific positivism. Art Nouveau is a strand that stands against the older romantic and newer materialistic-positivistic mainstream, its creative artists providing a distinctively different art by which the new bourgeoisie can differentiate itself from the old. It is an irony of history that the exclusiveness of Art Nouveau becomes a fad marketable to the *nouveau riche* upper middle classes whose ethos of art (as status-symbol) its own ethos (of the universal artist-craftsman) is aimed against. It is a further irony that its high period of 1895-1905, with its emphasis on exclusivity and luxury, is followed by mass marketing of mass-produced wares modelled on the inspiration of its artist-craftsman artefacts. Yet even as a dominant fashion fad for new money around 1910-15 it is not the only important cultural influence, but one strand amongst the many that range from conservative to avant-garde.

As a strand it can then be seen against the complex picture summarized in Diagram I (at the end of this chapter), together with those opposing it, like Historicism, Naturalism, Impressionism, and others

sharing with it some of the fantastic, like Aestheticism, Decadence and Symbolism.

This model of cultural history is essentially opposed to that which sees history as a series of stages along a single spectrum or timeline, and thus means that debate about when a phenomenon like Art Nouveau begins or ends is to a large extent obviated.

Symbolism and Art Nouveau

These are two strands of the fantastic that find expression across the artistic media and overlap significantly. In painting, Symbolism does not always adopt Art Nouveau style or mannerisms (these are not seen, for instance, in its leading painters like Puvis de Chavannes, Gustave Moreau, Odilon Redon, George Frederick Watts or Arnold Böcklin), although all Art Nouveau art has strongly symbolist inspiration and composition.

Art Nouveau and Impressionism

Musical impressionism, with which Art Nouveau and Symbolism have long been confused, is clearly distinguishable from it in visual art, and clearly enough distinguishable in music. Its pieces tend to be short and light in treatment, reflecting a deliberate naivety of approach; scene-painting is a primary aim, with emotion held within the limits of conventionally balanced composition; and its music is fairly orthodox in harmony and structure for the day, falling within the mainstream of characteristic piece, song and symphonic poem.

By contrast musical Art Nouveau is sophisticated, intense, exaggerated, affective and mannered, with emotive effect the primary aim; its music is clearly outside the mainstream in concept and construction. Impressionism is about stereotypes of the pastoral, Art Nouveau about the dream world of the imagination. The first is about scene-painting, the second about mood-evocation over a much wider and more intensely expressed range. The two are confused, however, when the domain of musical impressionism is made so wide that any identifiable musical imagery is

thought to make a piece "tone-painting" and therefore impressionist.

As the central composer in both fields, Debussy's music is quoted by both sides of the argument. It is doubtful if even he is concerned to differentiate the two with any sharpness, and amongst the twenty-four *Préludes* there are works that tend more towards impressionism's simple pastorals (*Bruyères*, perhaps, although even this has overtones of purple and *demi-deuil* [half-mourning]) and others that tend towards the evocation of Art Nouveau's strange dreams (those studied above), together with some that are somewhat indeterminate (*Les collines d'Anacapri*, with its folk-song evocation but also its overtones of *Insel*). Despite the clear differentiation possible, therefore, a composer may well mix the two. There are also other strands like Decadence and Pre-Raphaelitism that may influence a work's character and be mixed with others.

The character-piece actually takes over and stereotypes for its own purposes some Art Nouveau subjects in much the same way that retailers mass-market Art Nouveau fashion and furniture; thus pieces are composed in conventional idiom but with titles like *Nocturnal Tangier*, *Twilight Phantoms*, *Enchanted Glen* and even *The Temptress*¹ - but all to music that at most is quaint rather than striking in mood. In embracing certain of Art Nouveau's subject-matter, the character-piece merely adds more stereotypes to its repertoire.

Art Nouveau composers and Art Nouveau music

In the keyboard repertory it is not possible yet to instance a composer whose whole work we can be sure falls within its limits. Composers come to Art Nouveau from other kinds of composition (like Liszt), or move from it (like Satie), or appear to compose outside it at the same time (as with some of Debussy's Preludes that can be seen as impressionistic scene-painting²). Thus the term "Art Nouveau composer" is as yet unjustified; there are only Art Nouveau compositions, or compositions with Art Nouveau characters amongst other characters. It is,

however, possible to say that many composers are particularly drawn to it for a time, but it is not yet possible to be sure that in this time they devote all their music to its inspiration. In this respect they may differ from their visual-artist contemporaries, for whom the milieu seems total. It is possible that it is just as total for composers, but since at this stage of scholarly investigation the boundaries and markers of the milieu are less well-defined, it is more proper to talk of Art Nouveau compositions rather than composers. The boundaries of this study have been limited to works with specific titles, but that is no reason to assume that those without - the third-order repertory - are less Art Nouveau.

The problems of considering a wider repertory

This study has confined itself to works with specific titles indicating Art Nouveau signification, (first order works) and works with titles previously thought to be impressionist but actually indicating Art Nouveau provenance (second order). There are works with generic titles that may denote Art Nouveau inspiration (barcarolle, arabesque) and many works with non-specific titles (etude, sonata, prelude) that are very like a composer's first or second-order works, and may thus be of a general rather than specific Art Nouveau inspiration (third order).

It is possible to argue from the evidence of a composer's songs to his piano works: Fauré is a clear example, for his *mélodies* include works with Art Nouveau titles (*Le jardin clos*, *Mirages*, *L'horizon chimérique*) and lead to consideration of at least his later barcarolles as being of Art Nouveau inspiration or influence.

Empirical, extrapolative and A Priori theory

Argument for works where there are no specific associations must come from a different theory, one less directly dependent on the sorts of empirical associations that this study rests upon. Such theory can be formed either as extrapolation from empirical theory, or from

philosophical first principles. It seems probable that most studies will have to combine at least two of these three approaches, like Reinhard Gerlach's study that examines *a priori* and empirically-based inductive theory³ against evidence from early works of the Vienna School.

The question of an Art Nouveau musical style

Between 1880 and 1920 many composers explore new sounds, but not all do this in terms of Art Nouveau, some preferring in their keyboard works impressionistic subjects (Sigfrid Karg-Elert), others extending the boundaries of conventional abstract forms (Busoni), while Stravinsky, the Vienna School and Satie go well beyond all of these. However, new sounds suit the development of the Art Nouveau repertoire of the fantastic, where it culminates in pieces like those of the keyboard repertoire that are still, like all visual Art Nouveau, expressed within broadly familiar idiom (in contrast to that of serialism, for instance), but one so based upon exaggerated affective device that it almost constitutes the extremes of development in that direction.

There are enough features common to most composers of the Art Nouveau repertoire (summarized in the previous chapter) to make it at first glance tempting to hypothesize that there is a recognizable Art Nouveau style. But the widely differing approaches of composers and their sheer differences of sounds as seen from the point of view of the keyboard repertoire seem to make this a doubtful proposition: there is no gainsaying the differences in sound even between the compatriots Rakhmaninov and Skryabin, for instance, or between Novák and Janáček, or even between the mutually admiring Szymanowski and Sorabji. At this stage of research into the subject it is more helpful to see Art Nouveau as not so much a common style as a common **sensibility**, a source of inspiration each approaches from his own sonic viewpoint and makes into something entirely individual. All this notwithstanding, some generalizations can be made, and these have been summarized in Chapter 23.

The question of Art Nouveau archetypal motifs

A first step in looking for common compositional methodology among composers of the repertory has often been the shape of motif, particularly those curved or whiplash-shaped. While some motifs can clearly be seen as whiplash, winding or curved, such perception is always somewhat subjective when it comes to marginal cases, which make accurate definition difficult. Nonetheless, there seem to be three broadly definable types in the keyboard repertory at least. The first is the panpipe-motif of long-note-plus-flourish, the second its frequently complementary horn-motif (or distance-motif) of dotted rhythm and chordal composition that moves chromatically or modally, the third the winding motifs that curve up and down around a centre or incline. All these seem to have a general application over and above the depiction of specific natural imagery, and that is their sensuality of effect. This can be said to correspond with the sensuality of curving line in visual art Nouveau, but the horn-motif is more jagged than curved, so that the likeness is not with the simple appearance of line in the two arts.

Art Nouveau has many jagged, irregularly directional and rhythmic motifs, like that of Satie's third *Gnossienne*, Ravel's *Ondine*, Novák's *Sea*, the bar 11 right-hand motif of Zemlinsky's *Stimme des Abends* or Rakhmaninov's *Barkarolla*, to mention only a few smoothly flowing pieces. General statements about curving motif thus seem unlikely or unhelpful, and in any case it is difficult to define "curve" as opposed to "jagged" in motivic shape.

The important thing about such motifs, then, is not their shapes as written down, but their emotive effect, which tends to be sensual. For the three identifiable shapes, the pan-pipe motif onomatopoeically produces an effect of the dizzying sudden release of pent-up emotion, the horn-motif is mysterious and atmospheric as parallel chromatics based on thirds tend to be, and the winding one is vertiginous/mesmeric to a

greater or lesser extent. While the panpipe-motif is whiplash-shaped to some degree there are whip-shapes that are not panpipe-motifs, like the *scintillant* figure of Debussy's *Ondine* (bar 11), for instance.

It is possible that composers may deliberately wish to suggest visual curves with melodic ones, as in pieces with sea or other wave imagery, but in Art Nouveau simple pictorial mimesis is not the primary aim or effect. It may even be possible to analyze Art Nouveau motif and figure as being analogous to a rhetorical scheme of *Affekte*, but at this stage of research judgement must be reserved as to the importance of **type** compared to overall emotional **effect**.

Curving of motif, therefore, even if it can be satisfactorily defined and demonstrated in the repertory, is not significant to musical Art Nouveau in the way that the general reliance on curve and its patterning is in most visual Art Nouveau; the two are not simple analogues.

The limitations of the keyboard repertory

It must be remembered, of course, that conclusions drawn from the keyboard repertory may not have wider validity. Firstly, there is the limited proportion of the Art Nouveau repertory that these keyboard works represent; secondly, there is the special nature of piano-writing (or that for organ or harmonium⁴) that limits what a composer may essay, so that the same device, say the arpeggio, has perforce to fulfil more than one function. Comparisons of piano and orchestral versions of his or her works actually done by the composer can shed light on this, and this subject has been briefly opened in Chapter 22.

The importance of musical Art Nouveau

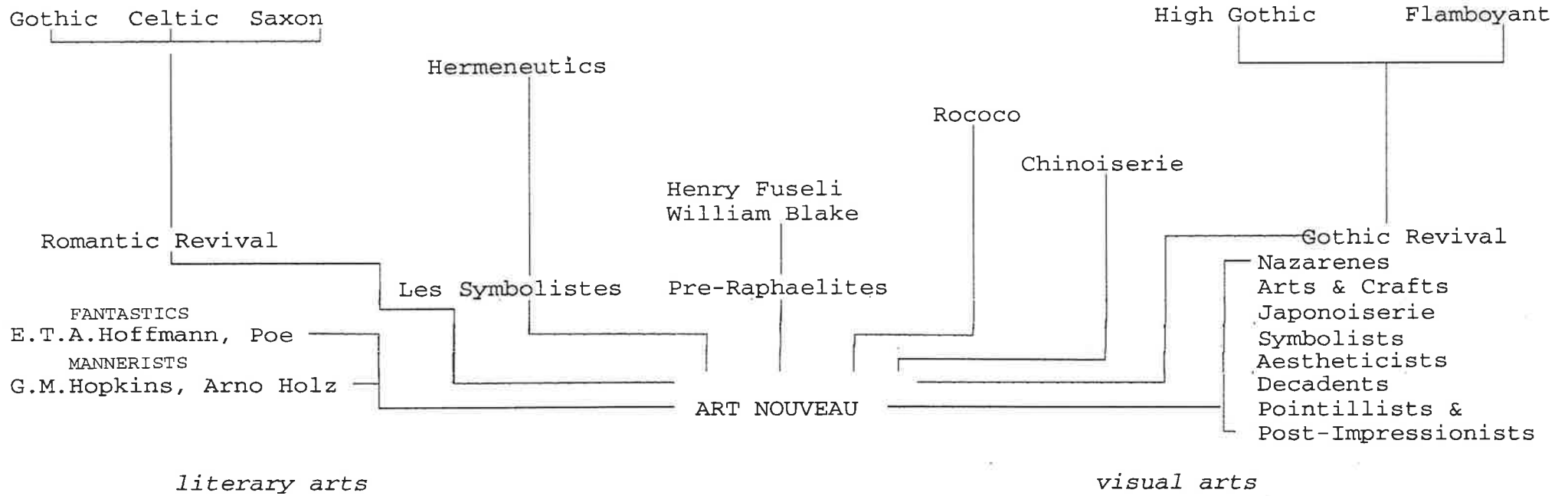
As a particular flowering of the stream of the mannered fantastic across the arts and nations of the West, and as having a very wide reference in theme, image and symbol in time and culture, Art Nouveau is too important and too distinctive not to have influenced at least some

music profoundly, and the empirical base of this study, in works that have Art Nouveau titles and originality of style, has sufficed to delineate some part of such a repertory. The strength of this empirical method of delineation has been its building up a substantial degree of probability that there is an Art Nouveau repertory that must be taken seriously; the sheer size of the repertory studied here - about a hundred and fifty pieces, some of substantial length and many of crucial importance in keyboard literature, indicates this.

The conclusions formed from the repertory studied in this dissertation will be modified by later studies, but it is to be hoped that the sort of systematic examination of musical Art Nouveau called for by the contributors to the McCredie and Stenzl symposiums can be carried forward, and the eventual place of the phenomenon in musical and wider cultural history properly evaluated.

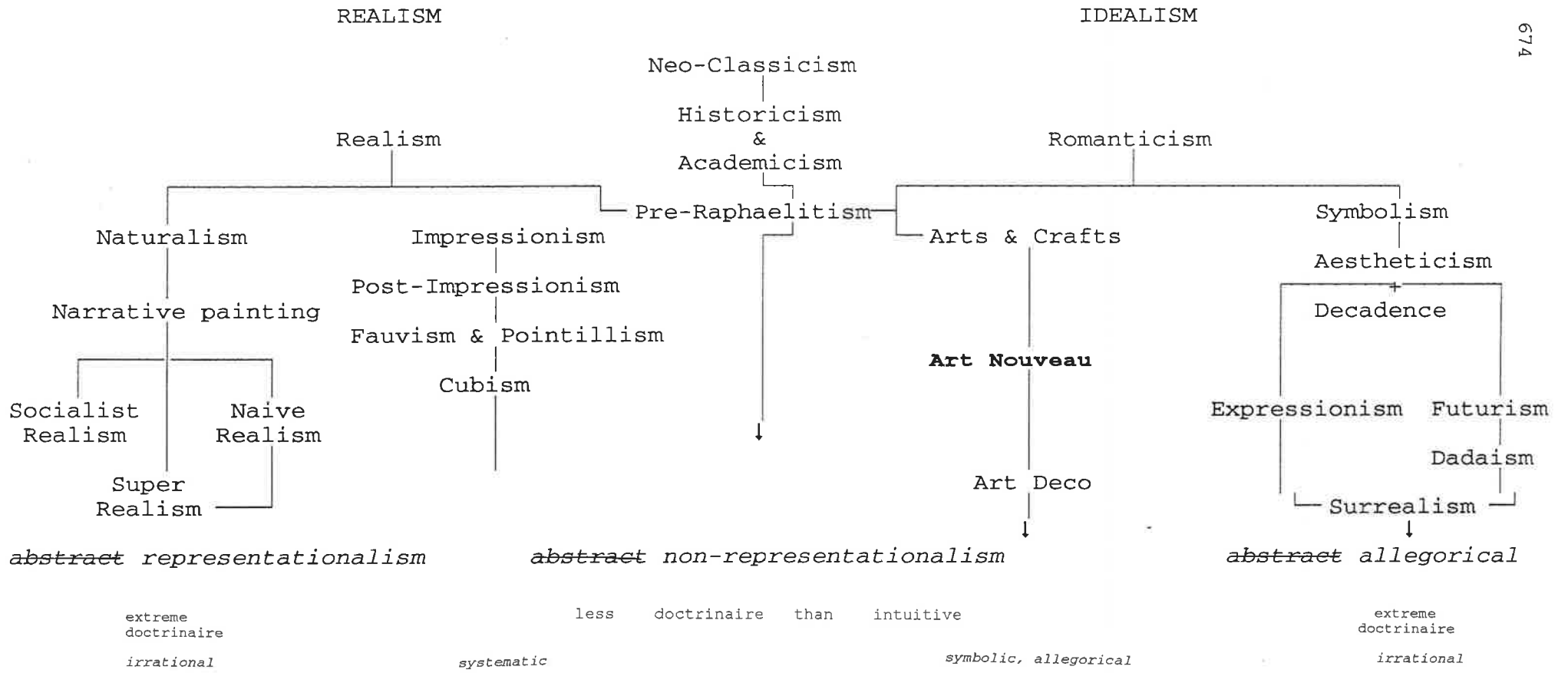
End-notes

- 1 Leopold Godowsky, *Triakontameron* 1,2,3.
- 2 Arguable cases might begin with *Le vent dans la plaine* or *Ce qu'a vu le vent d'Ouest*.
- 3 Gerlach, R.: op. cit., 3-52.
- 4 Some pipe-organ works are written for harmonium as well (Louis Vierne's *Pièces en style libre*, for instance). Janáček originally published the first pieces of *Po zarostlem chodnicku* as being suitable for piano or harmonium, but appears to have changed his mind soon afterwards (see p.5 of the Complete Edition). Liszt wrote *Angelus* from Year 3 of his *Années de pèlerinage* as being suitable for piano or harmonium (see the Hungaroton compact disc HCD 12768 of this work played on Liszt's own harmonium by Zsuzsu Elekes).



SOURCES OF ART NOUVEAU STYLE

DIAGRAM I



VISUAL AND LITERARY MOVEMENTS 1775-1925

APPENDIX A

THE ORIGINS OF ART NOUVEAU

Although Art Nouveau lasted a relatively short time, its spirit and methods ran through all fields of art and craft - painting, drawing, graphics, book design and illustration, sculpture, pottery, glassware, architecture, interior design, furniture, stained glass, literature, music, dance, stage design, fabrics, wallpapers, city design, streetscape architecture and decoration, magazines, jewellery and metalwork. The upper and upper middle classes, faced by the end of the nineteenth century with the prospect of mass-produced goods that made the lower middle classes able to emulate their betters in furnishing their homes, needed an exclusive source of ornament and furnishing that was essentially too expensive for the lower middle classes, that was hand-made and distinctive. Since William Morris' Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, founded in 1882¹ and devoted to the revival of the artist-craftsman, inspired similar activity in Europe quite quickly, there was a small but exclusive market for its genuinely hand-made works of art and craft. These had three essential features: they were expensive, they were all originals, and they were in an undeniably different yet easily recognizable style. The first two differentiated them from the mass-produced goods and the imitations of conventional art of the academies that the lower classes bought, while the third suited the connoisseur and rich philistine alike: the one could understand it and the other at least recognize it.

The origins of Art Nouveau lie primarily in symbolism and stylization, features that are as old as art itself; they are, indeed, the basis of the most primitive art, certainly of the oldest *homo sapiens sapiens* art, that of the Australian Aborigines' mystic circles and "X-ray" representation of natural forms². Art Nouveau's stylized symbolism is similarly nature-centred, or rather mystery-centred, and as such stands in opposition to realism, and in particular to the Classical historicism of

the later nineteenth century. Realism, because it claimed for itself accuracy and naturalistic portrayal of the world, was a definite stand against stylization (even though it inevitably had stylization of its own). Taken to its extreme form in highly skilled academy painting, however, where it was hard to tell a Landseer from a Briton Rivière or from an early photograph, for example, except in idiosyncrasy or subject matter, there was little room left for undirected imagination. Thus Realism helped provoke its Hegelian antithesis - the Aesthetic Movement, where Wilde was to assert that "Art never expresses anything but itself"³, and Art Nouveau, with its doctrine, borrowed from the Parnassians, of "L'art pour l'art".

The specific source of Art Nouveau's symbolism was the main current running through the Pre-Raphaelites and the French Symbolists of the later nineteenth century. Symbols like the Ondine-nymph and water, heroes ensnared in women's hair, remote but beautiful swans and peacocks, twining vines and roses, dreams, the hypnotically enticing folds of women's dresses and tresses, and above all, the mystery of nature and its rituals, were some of the currency common to artists from Morris and Rossetti, Huysmans and Ensor, through to Beardsley and Klimt. The Pre-Raphaelites, the Symbolists and Art Nouveau all stood for mystery, enchantment and symbol, and against the certainties of science and technology that had threatened to destroy the mysteries of traditional lore.

Les Symbolistes

The Symbolists, deriving their title from Baudelaire's

Correspondances:

*La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers
Laisser parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
Qui l'observant avec des regards familiers.⁴*

and joined by Puvis de Chavannes, Odilon Redon, Gustave Moreau and their followers, deliberately explored the mysterious, and constructed poems and pictures with hidden meanings for the initiates. Nature could only be

understood indirectly, its meanings and beauties hidden behind barriers that only the artist's special intuitions could penetrate. Science and reason saw only surface, but the real, intuitively known truths were deep, complex and essentially esoteric.

Furthermore, nature had its own morality, not necessarily pretty or even benign, as Baudelaire's 1857 anthology title partly implies: *Fleurs de mal*; thus savagery in nature and the beast in humans had to be faced and embraced, with sadness and evil to be tasted as well as joy and innocence. Finally, Symbolist poems and pictures had to reflect in their inner patterns and rhythms the arcane movements of nature.

The direct influence on Art Nouveau of the symbolists was clear from the beginning in the waving, plant-like lines of Mackmurdo's 1883 title page to *Wren's City of Churches*⁵, because the lines suggested indefinable nature rather than scientifically laid stone. The suggestion is fully exploited in pictures like Frances Machair Macdonald's mysterious *Kysterion's Garden*⁶, and lies at the heart of the mystery and unexplained sadness of Maurice Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, where Mélisande's sadness is associated with water and Golaud's despair intensified deep in the caves that bring him closer to nature's depths.

Art Nouveau pictures are unmistakable in their patterning and symbolic intent, from the cascading hair and chequered gowns of Gustav Klimt's seductive ladies that suggest waterfalls of abundant life-force, to the borders of twining vines and roses of posters like those of Alphonse Mucha. To see Art Nouveau as so much encrusted ornamentation, like the London Exhibition of 1851, or the German romantic Baroque revival of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, is to miss the point⁷: the repetitions and development of device in Art Nouveau are the patternings whose *instress* shows *inscape* (inner patternings of art reflecting nature's ideal landscape), to use Gerard Manley Hopkins' terminology⁸.

Pre-Symbolists

Some pre-Symbolist strands contribute significantly to Art Nouveau. The eighteenth-century painters Watteau and Fragonard are figures frequently recalled in Art Nouveau painting and writing, Watteau's *Embarquement pour Cythère*⁹ and other Arcadian paintings being directly inspirational to Debussy¹⁰, for example, partly through Baudelaire¹¹. William Blake was a major pre-Symbolist figure whose influence only began to show itself in the Pre-Raphaelite dream world half a century after his death. Blake's symbolic and stylized pictures prefigure Art Nouveau almost uncannily¹².

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

From the Pre-Raphaelites Art Nouveau gained three important elements - limited dimensionality, the image of woman-as-mystery, and the importance of literary inspiration.

Art Nouveau is always non-representational or non-realist, and it is its limited dimensionality that ensures this. A portrait of Sarah Bernhardt, for instance, is stylized into perfect feminine beauty and set in a fantasy of swirling vines and flowers rather than in a room or field¹³. While much Pre-Raphaelite painting is three-dimensional as to its figures, their background is often idealized and approaching the flatness of mediaeval paintings, and filled with the same vines, leaves and flowers that become stylized as Art Nouveau textural and border motifs.

The Pre-Raphaelite image of woman was a many-sided one, from Tennysonian saint¹⁴ to fallen Magdalen¹⁵ and sorceress¹⁶, and this ambivalence over woman's nature was continued in Art Nouveau. Both movements seemed obsessed by the mystery of woman's nature, with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, as Victorians, wishing to portray her as fundamentally innocent and pure, but finding her also a sensual being, and sometimes one twisted into evil¹⁷, while Art Nouveau treats her as sensual and seductive, whose innocence is merely a ploy for the ensnarement of

men¹⁸. In both fields she is a complex and fascinating creature, essentially mysterious¹⁹. Art Nouveau reacts against the seriousness and worshipful attitude of the PRB by treating its subjects, particularly woman, with irony and cynicism²⁰.

The Nazarenes

Although removed from Art Nouveau by nearly a century, the Nazarenes, formed in Italy in 1806, pioneered the Romantic vision of naivety and sincerity, particularly about woman. The PRB took over this naivety but enriched it with allegory until the naivety was more manner than substance, more intention than realization. Art Nouveau is a powerful statement against naivety, even the seemingly innocent Mucha poster-girls being artfully voluptuous and sensual. But it retains the **appearance** of naivety as an essential aspect of its art, where it becomes studied innocence, pretended insouciance or stylized coquettishness: simplicity becomes a pose behind which hide the greatest sophistication, but it is also the means by which Art Nouveau speaks with directness, sharing with the Nazarenes and the PRB an intensity of utterance that conventional Victorian painting and other art felt indelicate or unrecognisable.

Celtic, Saxon and Gothic Art

Through the PRB and Victorian poetry the symbolism of Celtic, Saxon and Gothic art flows into Art Nouveau. Such ancient art as that of *The Book of Kells*, the Celtic Cross, Gothic stained glass representation, Saxon religious symbols and architectural motifs all powerfully influence Art Nouveau iconography. Illumination by its nature is an interweaving of text and symbol; the influence of *The Book of Kells* on Art Nouveau motifs, particularly in book design, is often profound²¹. Stylized motifs drawn from nature or religious symbolism echo the mysterious complexity of the Celtic world, half-Christian and half-pagan as it was²². The Saxon goddess Freya-shape of blooming motherhood is important in windows and smaller

artefacts²³; the same shape is found in Art Nouveau hearths²⁴: it is a symbol of enfolding and completion deriving from Freya, suggesting fecundity. The twining symmetries of both the Celtic and Saxon cosmoses are shown quite strikingly in metal Art Nouveau and the like,²⁵ and are often evident in hearths, overmantels²⁶ and the flattened Saxon arch²⁷.

The influence of Gothic stained glass is everywhere obvious in Art Nouveau stained glass and in much painting, where its stylizing and simplifying of nature's three visual dimensions into two emphasize the posture and gestures of its formal, magical figures: their reality taken away, their essence is revealed²⁸.

Among the many Gothic influences on Art Nouveau are the Flamboyant motifs and tracery, symbolic of the life of nature flowing through so much Art Nouveau architectural decoration, wallpaper, painting and book design. Together with the fire is the rose, symbol of divine love in the Middle Ages, and of earthly love in Art Nouveau, for the rose can be seen as a stylized pattern of flame-motifs²⁹. In architecture the Flamboyant style is used directly³⁰ or for detail in the working-out of curving motifs³¹. It is also as much a feature of iron lacework as the wave-motif³².

Rococo Art

The pale, fantastic, slender flames of the Rococo are also powerful Art Nouveau motifs. They seem essentially to be inspired by the swirling tongues of flame that have lost connexion with a main fire and curl, still burning, upwards on their own. The essential paleness of the Rococo tracery motifs³³ comes to its lightest and most Amalienberg-silvery in Mucha's half-tone Seasons and other series³⁴. The Rococo is, above all, stylized decoration, in the patterning of which a certain restraint of colour is always evident. The impression the viewer gets of Rococo lavishness is of the sheer numbers of figures that constitute any composition, and Art Nouveau is even less restrained in line and more lavish in composition. The pale colours and silver of Rococo tones, the

half-light of the Art Nouveau painters' dream world, as contrasted, say, with the primary and vivid colours of posters, are the same symbols of dream and unreality. Perhaps half of all Art Nouveau is in half-tones, which comes through the Rococo, Blake, Burne-Jones and Walter Crane to Art Nouveau, and thereby shows its Rococo origins. Jan Tooroop and Johann Thorn-Prikker's nightmares, Eugene Grasset and Maurice Denis' dreams, Maeterlinck and Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* - all are the Rococo side of Art Nouveau, soft, melancholy, ethereal, or palely fantastic.

The Parnassians

*La Parnasse Contemporain*³⁵ includes verse by Léconte de Lisle, Hérédia and even Verlaine and Mallarmé - all set by composers later, in the Art Nouveau period. In its reaction to what it saw as the excesses of Romantic hyperbole and apostrophe, the Parnassians' verse became allusive, indirect and understated - the first two of these features being taken over by Art Nouveau generally, and even the last being seen in some Art Nouveau, particularly that of Ernst Kreidolf, Ferdinand Hodler, Arthur Rackham and Fidus (Hugo Höppener). There is, however, some irony in the Parnassian's allusiveness of restraint becoming Art Nouveau allusiveness of exaggerated flourish.

There is specific connexion between Parnassian verse and musical Art Nouveau, with composers like Debussy³⁶, Ravel³⁷ and others setting poems of Baudelaire, Léconte de Lisle, Verlaine, Rimbaud that are Parnassian in tendency³⁸. (These poets are also important points of contact between Wagner and French literature). Debussy's piano works sometimes carry titles or epigraphs taken from the Parnassians, as in the *Prélude 8* from Book 1, titled with Léconte de Lisle's poem *La Fille aux cheveux de lin*³⁹. In pictorial Art Nouveau there are direct connexions, as in Pierre Bonnard's 1900 illustrations to Verlaine's *Parallement* poems.

Overall, however, the significance of the Parnassians for Art Nouveau is in their name, claiming supreme craftsmanship and inspiration,

and art that exists for itself only: *l'art pour l'art*⁴⁰. Art Nouveau takes from this slogan its right to be above any morality, so that it can be non-didactic; nor does it have to restrict its arabesque according to conventional canons of balance.

The Aesthetic Movement

This movement also derived from the Parnassians' slogan *l'art pour l'art* and flourished at first as an English branch of this movement, but as a revolt against English philistinism, as defined by Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869); the English movement therefore turned against restraint as keenly as the Parnassians sought it, becoming as bohemian and vivid as Hérédia and Léconte de Lisle could be austere. Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin* best sums up the preciosity of Aestheticism: "All ecstasies and all excesses were justified in the search for sensation and the delight in beauty which ... was a law unto itself"⁴¹. In the first place, then, Aestheticism stood for sensation, for beauty as a self-sufficient end and law, that therefore stood beyond justification, even beyond consequences.

Art Nouveau derives two important principles from this: that a work of art is not to be held to any canons of conventional taste or balance (as already stated), and that it exists for itself, independently of any scientific explanation or mensuration that might attempt to tie it to considerations of representations or meaning that ordinary people could understand. (It is perhaps a revealing comment on the twentieth-century Post-Object Art movement: ordinary people can have no interest in high art, and can therefore have no possession of it.)

This also frees the artist from the bounds of subject-matter: "Form is everything", declares Wilde, echoing Pater before him⁴² - "It does not matter what is said, as long as it is said beautifully"⁴³. This is the artist's counterpart of the bourgeois aesthete's "the consciousness of exquisite living"⁴⁴ so caricatured by W.S. Gilbert⁴⁵ and from this Art

Nouveau takes its freedom to carry its mannerism of line and subject wherever inspiration led, untroubled by considerations of meaning, relevance or representation.

Wilde's statement that "It does not matter what is said, as long as it is said beautifully" has significant bearing on the aesthetic battle of form versus content in nineteenth century musical criticism, for it raises the questions of absolute versus programme music, or autonomous versus heteronomous music, as Carl Dalhaus⁴⁶ sees the nineteenth-century debate that occupies the energies of critics and musicians, from Eduard Hanslick and Richard Wagner to Debussy's *M. Croche*. Like Wilde, the musicians do not see that their art has necessarily to be "about" any scene or narrative, and would still hold this position even in the face of Hegelian-Marxist criticism⁴⁷.

The Decadent Movement

Art Nouveau follows some of the Decadents' theory - that neither morality nor moderation is to stand in the way of art. Following sensation for sensation's sake allows, even encourages, them to explore sensation beyond bourgeois good taste⁴⁸. To George Moore "what was not nature was art"⁴⁹, but not all Art Nouveau artists and writers follow the Decadents' need to embrace the unnatural. Decadence is provocative, while Art Nouveau is at least challenging and new. In 1905 Roger Fry summed it up by still talking of form and art "more profound and more significant spiritually than any of the emotions which have had to do with life"⁵⁰.

Walter Crane referred to Art Nouveau as "a decadent influence": although affected by it himself in some of his work he nonetheless rejected the side of it that flirted with evil⁵¹. Aubrey Beardsley, on the other hand, affected the views of extreme figures like Jean Lorrain⁵², John Addington Symonds⁵³ and Joris-Karl Huysmans⁵⁴, for whom the experience of depravity was a necessary part of art: it was beauty's reverse face; therefore it was still beauty. Aubrey Beardsley was the main Art Nouveau

link with both Aestheticism and Decadence, from the fantastic penmanship of his Abbé, the scarcely veiled suggestiveness of the Arcadia drawings, the vivid eroticism of the Lysistrata series to the near-necrophilia of Salomé. The paintings of Jan Tooroop⁵⁵ and Jan Thorn Prikker⁵⁶ took the Pre-Raphaelite pale, chlorotic maiden through to the other side of death, and the more dramatic colours of Jugendstil's Carl Strahtmann⁵⁷, Thomas Theodor Heine⁵⁸, and of Sezession's Gustav Klimt⁵⁹ and Koloman Moser⁶⁰ were more Gothic still. Maeterlinck's *Mélisande*, was destined to gloom and sorrow, Maurice Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit* setting of Aloysius Bertrand's *Scarbo* shows him as malignant, and *Le Gibet* as morbid.

Orientalism

The Japanese section of the London Exhibition of 1862⁶¹, Soye's *Porte de Chinoise* shop in the Rue de Rivoli⁶², Frederick Dresser's writings⁶³, the Javanese gamelan band at the Paris Expositions of 1889 and 1899 that influenced Debussy⁶⁴, the Bing gallery from 1894⁶⁵, together with Manet, Degas, Monet and Whistler's championing of the prints of Hokusai, Horoshige and others⁶⁶ were all important factors in the rediscovery of oriental ideals of beauty seen in the design of prints, screens, fans and vases. The Rococo had seen a wave of *Chinoiserie* that had partly inspired its soft colour-schemes and wave-like motifs; now *Japanoiserie* provided a similar inspiration.

Art Nouveau firstly recognizes that the mystical insights of the East are another rich source of knowledge and inspiration to counter the effects of positivism and historicism. Lafcadio Hearn⁶⁷ and Max Dauthenday⁶⁸ provide some literary and philosophical background to support this, emphasizing the importance of myth and mystery in history and culture.

The other important Eastern influence on Art Nouveau is the simplicity and rhythmic design of Japanese art, springing as it does from natural motifs like water, waves, leaves and mountains that are stylized

almost symmetrically on some woodcut prints and were echoed from one print to another in Hokusai and Horoshige series. The imagery of nature, whether water, willows, peacocks or mountains, and that of Japanese artefacts like fans, porcelain and kimonos, is expressed with a simplicity that deeply impresses Art Nouveau painters and designers.

Holistic Theory

Like many of the movements discussed above, Art Nouveau is formed around a theory that attempts to cover the whole of life. William Morris' ideal of the artist-craftsman, as enshrined in the Arts and Crafts Movement, his *News From Nowhere*⁶⁹ and *The Dream of John Ball*⁷⁰, is the most important of the models around which Art Nouveau practitioners form their theories. Morris derived the idea from John Ruskin's vision of the Guild of St George (1871) and *Fors Clavigera*⁷¹; both men shared a vision of a land where art and labour ennobled each other, based on a romantic view of the mediaeval craftsman as artist, in reaction to the tastelessness and ultimate meaninglessness of mass-produced ornamental wares and the over-decorated artefacts that dominated the 1851 and 1862 London Exhibitions. The debt of Art Nouveau to this theory is indirect but great: in Art Nouveau the ideal of the mediaeval artist-craftsman is transformed into that of the primacy of the universal artist over dilettante, critic and of course, philistine.

It is also seen in Art Nouveau's ideal of style embracing all aspects of life, from architecture to interior decoration, from art and literature to music. Richard Wagner's ideal of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or synthesis of all the arts, is taken up by Henry Van de Velde⁷², and through the medium of the ubiquitous swirling line the same spirit of Art Nouveau pervades all the arts. Robert Schmutzler has made this point best⁷³, drawing together the boundary-crossing art and theory of Maurice Denis, Gauguin, Beardsley, Walter Crane, Gaudi, Wilde, Arnold Schoenberg, Toorop and others.

From this idea follows another, that of music as the ideal art, as being the most abstract. Gauguin⁷⁴, Verlaine⁷⁵, Wilde, Schopenhauer⁷⁶, all held this idea; von Hofmannsthal summed up the year 1892 as having as its spirit "the music element"; Whistler named his pictures with titles that were combinations of music and colour: *Nocturne in Blue and Green*; *Symphony in White*⁷⁷. Here the notion of synaesthesia that Whistler is invoking suggests that attributes of one art can cross the boundaries of another, which is another view of the oneness of the arts, an idea cognate to Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and implied in the interdependence of sensations in Baudelaire's *correspondances*. Synaesthesia is an important idea for some composers of the time - for instance, Skryabin, Schoenberg, Webern, Cyril Scott⁷⁸.

Debussy's statement that "the musical arabesque or rather the ornament is the basis of all forms of art"⁷⁹ is related, and conveniently covers not only the idea of the oneness of the arts, but also of the Art Nouveau key motif - that of the decorative swirling line that binds them. Debussy's "arabesque" is thus most accurately translated; the principle is that of decoration springing from the essential line or form of an artistic conception, so that the decoration is not something added but springs from the germ itself. In music, of course, development cannot spring from anything else, (except for programmatic sources), so that music is the paradigmatic art. It is this principle that Debussy sees as uniting all the arts: they have a common method that may be seen in music *par excellence*. Thus Walter Pater's "all art constantly aspires to the condition of music"⁸⁰. All art, like music, aspires to be nothing but itself.

Finally, a further note is needed on the doctrine of *l'art pour l'art* that Art Nouveau takes over from the Parnassians, transmitted through the Aesthetic Movement. When Léon Bakst wrote of "the current notion of 'art for art's sake'"⁸¹ he was enunciating an ideal that Art

Nouveau took quite seriously. The doctrine, however, meant different things to each movement. To the Parnassians it meant above all that art should not be distorted by mawkish emotion; to the Aesthetic Movement, that art should follow its whims and own directions wherever they might lead. To Art Nouveau, art should be free to explore the possibilities of sinuous line, to explore and exploit itself, which is its principle of stylization. *L'art pour l'art* is thus a convenient doctrine, but for all that an important one for Art Nouveau. Arthur Symons talks of "making one's life into art"⁸², which is like Fernand Khnopff's concept of art as being "like glass enclosed in silence, completely devoted to its interior spectacle"⁸³. But J.M.Olbrich's inscription on his Sezession Building, Vienna, expresses the essential sovereignty of art:

*Der Zeit ihre Kunst
Der Kunst ihre Freiheit*⁸⁴

This also means freedom for the artist, who is gifted with superior vision. Wilde speaks of "those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things" as "the elect"⁸⁵. Only initiates understand, which means that conventional bourgeois tastes are irrelevant. "There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all."⁸⁶ But Wilde's Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* also distances art from honest artefact: "All art is quite useless"⁸⁷ and thus denies Morris' artist-craftsman, not even relegating him to a naive or low-art status, for there is only high art. Morris' "art for the people, not for art" is in essential contradiction here, the socialist as against the aristocratic approach.

This tension or contradiction (in Art Nouveau, not in Aestheticism) acts according to Hegelian dialectic in producing a synthesis, but not a resolution, for it is antithetical to both: Art Nouveau after 1905 now spread to the masses, or at least to the lower middle classes, through its actually being mass-produced. Here life imitated art, as in Liberty fabrics, imitation Lalique glassware, imitation Glasgow School furniture,

and Art Nouveau poster design that could be seen everywhere from café advertisements to those for the London Underground. Alphonse Mucha's high art often came from commissions about bicycles, beer or cigarettes, while Will Bradley never saw himself as anything but an artisan⁸⁸.

With its birth of popularity died its *avant-garde* originality of inspiration, but not its vigour, and not before before its Will Bradleys produced its final flowerings in the years leading to the Great War. By this time its great figures in the visual arts had moved on to other *avant-garde* preoccupations (although some literary and musical artists did not complete their exploration of it until the nineteen-twenties), but the popular movement after the war, Art Deco, only became such from the marketing techniques learnt during the later years of Art Nouveau. In this way Art Nouveau can be seen as the first great fashionable consensus or fad, soon over and forgotten, until a revival of interest began in the nineteen-seventies on both the scholarly and popular fronts.

End-notes

- 1 Lucie-Smith, E.: *Dictionary of Art Terms*, 21.
- 2 Recent (1992) datings of rock art in the north of South Australia show it to be over 42,000 years old, which is well beyond the 27,000 years of La Ferrassie in France; the datings are by American geomorphologist Professor Ron Dorn.
- 3 Wilde, O.: *The Decay of Lying*, 59.
- 4 Baudelaire, C.: *Fleurs de mal*, 1857.
- 5 Rheims, M.: op. cit., pl. 519.
- 6 Lucie-Smith, E.: *Symbolist Art*, 137.
- 7 E.g.: Crane, W.: *William Morris to Whistler. The Art of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 232: "that strange decorative disease known as Art Nouveau"; *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entry: "ornamental style of art", Vol. 1, 596.
- 8 Hopkins, G.M.: journals and letters, e.g. 122, 131, 184 in the Penguin edition of Hopkins (ed. Gardner).
- 9 Lucie-Smith, E.: op. cit., pl. 13.
- 10 Debussy: *L'Isle joyeux*.
- 11 Baudelaire C.: *Un Voyage à Cythère*.
- 12 *The Ancient of Days*, (Lucie-Smith, op. cit., pl. 25).
- 13 Mucha, J.: *Alphonse Mucha. The Complete Graphic Works*, (Academy Editions, London 1980), 47ff.
- 14 Marsh, J.: op. cit., 61-76.
- 15 *ibid*, 77-92.
- 16 *ibid*, 109-122.
- 17 Holman Hunt: *The Awakening Conscience*, (*ibid*, 83).
- 18 E.g. *Ondine*, *Mélanide*, *Yseult*, *Guinevere*, *Salomé*.
- 19 Wenk, A.: *Claude Debussy and the Art Nouveau image of Woman*, *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13 (1984), 67-73.

- 20 E.g. Debussy's early setting of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel*, compared with his *Mélisande* and *Ondine*.
- 21 E.g. Burne-Jones and Beardsley's vignettes, Arthur Gaskin's illustration for Spenser's *The Shepherdes Calender* (Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 67); Burne-Jones' *The Well at the World's End*, (ibid, 61).
- 22 Markale, J.: op. cit., chs 12, 13.
- 23 Charles Fouquet's (ascribed) comb, (Rheims, M.: op. cit., pl. 486).
- 24 Olbrich's hearth design for the 1900 Universal Exhibition, Paris, (ibid, pl. 116).
- 25 ibid, pl. 129-134.
- 26 ibid, pl. 120, 124.
- 27 Hector Guimard's Castel Henriette of 1903, (ibid, pl. 13); the Pavilion of 36 Rue Sergent-Blandeau, Nancy, by an unknown hand in 1900, (ibid, pl. 17).
- 28 Oscar Paterson's *The Enchanted Wood*, (Warren, G.: op. cit., 18); Alex Gascoyne's *Gather Ye Rosebuds*, (ibid, 5).
- 29 Adria Gual Queralt: *The Rose Bush*, (Cassou, J.: *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Symbolism*, 33).
- 30 Cuypers Castle: De Haas, Vleuten, Netherlands (Rheims, M.: op. cit., pl. 270).
- 31 Moulin's Café Americain, Paris, (ibid, pl. 73); the Rupricht-Robert door at 50 Avenue de Ségure, Paris (Plate 92); the door by Wagon at 24 Place Félix-Faure, Paris, (Plate 99).
- 32 Victor Horta's Hotel Tassel staircase, Brussels, 1893, (Masini, L-V.: *Art Nouveau*, (New York 1976), 100).
- 33 Maurice Denis' *The Sacred Wood*, (Cassou, J.: op. cit., 68); Obrist's *Cyclamen*, (Harding, J.: op. cit., 11).
- 34 Mucha, J.: op. cit., 21-22, 26-27.
- 35 Published by Lemerre in 1860, 1871 and 1876.
- 36 Wenk, A.: op. cit.: Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Louÿs.
- 37 Hirsbrunner, T.: *Zu Debussys und Ravel's Mallarmé-Vertonungen*.
- 38 Thorlby, A. (ed.): op. cit., 596.
- 39 De Lisle, L.: *Poèmes antiques: chansons ecossaises*; see Frits Noske's alternative view in Noske, F.: *Visible and Audible Art Nouveau: the Limits of Comparison*, *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13 (1984), 12.
- 40 Gautier, Y.: *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, 1835, Preface.
- 41 Gaunt, W.: *The Aesthetic Adventure*, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin 1957, originally London, Jonathan Cape 1945), 13.
- 42 Gaunt, W.: op. cit., 141.
- 43 Ibid, 71.
- 44 Ibid, p. 76
- 45 Bunthorne, in W.S. Gilbert's *Patience*.
- 46 Dalhaus, C.: *Realism in Nineteenth Century Music*, 3.
- 47 ibid, 4-5.
- 48 That Decadence is a strand running through other periods in history, even in music, is argued in Heister, H.W.: op. cit., 37-43
- 49 Gaunt, W.: op. cit., 140.
- 50 Ibid, 253.
- 51 Crane, W.: *The Art of the Nineteenth Century*, in his *Morris to Whistler*, (London 1911), 232.
- 52 Jullian, P.: *Esthètes et magiciens*, ; idem, *Dreamers of Decadence*, 236.
- 53 Symonds, J.A.: *The Valley of Vain Desires*, ibid: 234.
- 54 Huysmans, J-K.: *A Rebours*, 1884.
- 55 Lucie-Smith, E.: *Symbolist Art*, pl. 153, 154.
- 56 Ibid, pl. 153; Jullian, P.: op. cit., pl. 31.
- 57 Schmutzler, R.: *Art Nouveau*, 178, 179.
- 58 ibid, 180, 181.
- 59 Comini, A.: op. cit.
- 60 Masini, L-V.: op. cit., pl. 2, 26, 104, 521, 526, etc.

- 61 Warren, G.: op. cit., 6.
- 62 Seidlitz: *History of Japanese Colour-Prints*, (in Orpen, W.: op. cit., p. 635).
- 63 Dresser, F.: *Japan: its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures*, (1882).
- 64 Lockspeiser, A.: op. cit., p.
- 65 von Fischer, K.: op. cit., 49. Lorenz, O.: op. cit., gives the date of the shop's founding as 1871 where Schmutzler, Warren and Fischer give it as 1894 or 1895.
- 66 von Fischer, K.: loc. cit.
- 67 Hearn, L.: *Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan*, 1894; *Out of the East*, 1895; *Kokora*, 1896; *In Ghostly Japan*, 1899; *Japan, an Attempt at Interpretation*, 1904.
- 68 Dauthenday, M.: *Eight Faces by the Biwa Lake*, (Schmutzler, R.: op. cit., 8).
- 69 Morris, W.: *News From Nowhere*, 1891.
- 70 Idem: *The Dream of John Ball*, 1888.
- 71 Ruskin, J.: *Fors Clavigera*, begun 1871.
- 72 Schmutzler, R.: op. cit., 11.
- 73 Loc. cit.
- 74 Gauguin, P.: letter of August 14, 1888 to Schuffenecker.
- 75 Verlaine, P.: *L'Art poétique*, 1.
- 76 Noske, F.: *Visible and Audible Art Nouveau*, 16.
- 77 See von Fischer, K.: op. cit., 49-56 for a clear account of Whistler's aesthetics as they impinge upon Art Nouveau.
- 78 E.g.: Critchley, M. and Hanson, R.A.: op. cit., 220-227; see also their bibliography 230-32 that lists literature on the subject around 1900; Abel, A.: *Die Zwölfton technik Weberns und Goethes Methodik der Farbenlehre. Zur Kompositionstheorie und Ästhetik der Neuen Wiener Schule*, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 19, 1982; Stein, I.: *Musikereibnis als Bildenssage*, (*Musik Geschichte* XXXIII/6 1983; Frings, M.S.: *Harmony and Logos: The Origin of the Musical Work of art*, (*Journal of Musical Research* IV/3-4, 1983. C.f. Max Dauthenday, poems.
- 79 Debussy, C.: *La Revue Blanche*, 1 May 1901, (Lesure, F. (ed.): *Debussy on Music*, (Secker & Warburg, London 1977), 27.
- 80 Quoted by Grout, D.J.: *A History of Western Music*, 494.
- 81 Spencer, C.: *Léon Bakst*, 27.
- 82 Jullian, P.: op. cit., 265.
- 83 Ibid, 261.
- 84 Ibid, 265.
- 85 Wilde, O.: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Preface xvi.
- 86 Loc. cit.
- 87 Ibid, xvii.
- 88 Bradley, W.: Memoir to his 1951 retrospective exhibition in San Marino (*Will Bradley, His Work*, catalogue of Huntingdon Library and Art Gallery, Pasadena, California).

APPENDIX B

THE ESSENCE OF VISUAL ART NOUVEAU
EXPRESSED IN THE ELEVEN PRINCIPLESDefining visual Art Nouveau

This chapter will amplify and justify the essential principles of Art Nouveau summarized in Chapter 3, using wherever possible the utterances of the artists themselves and the evidence of their works across the visual spectrum of pure and applied arts. Only when the whole subject is approached systematically can there be any confident linking of Art Nouveau in the three fields of visual, literary and musical art, of the sort Reinhold Brinkmann has called for¹.

From a study of visual Art Nouveau and of those writers who have attempted to list the main principles guiding its artists (for example Hamman², Hermand³, Schmutzler⁴, Hofstätter⁵, Lorenz⁶, Masini⁷, Rheims⁸, Weber⁹, Noske¹⁰, Kropfinger¹¹ and Gerlach¹²) the essential principles guiding visual Art Nouveau can be seen to be:

1	Originality]	style and intention
2	Sensuality		character
3	Mystery		
4	Ambiguity		
5	Extremity		
6	Stylization]	method
7	Emphasis on detail		
8	Repetition		
9	Interweaving		
10	Absence of depth]	dimensionality
11	Timelessness		

These principles can be seen to be shared by the other two arts, literary (in Appendices C and D) and musical (in the main body of the study).

The principles of Art Nouveau as seen in the visual arts1 Originality of style and intention

The artists, craftsmen, musicians and, to a lesser extent, the writers of the Art Nouveau milieu see themselves as the decisive break with

past art, or what nineteenth century art has, to them, become - as soulless as the industrial process itself - "tons upon tons of unutterable rubbish", as William Morris says of The Great Exhibition of 1851¹³. Thus their self-conscious names - L'Art Nouveau, Jugendstil, Stil Moderne, New Style, Sezessionstil - and their delight in the freshness of their inspiration and their distinctiveness: for Peter Behrens "a new cult comes into being...we have been woken up. We shall have a new style, a style of our own in everything that we are doing."¹⁴ Georg Hirth proclaims in *Jugend* that "unserer Zeit ist nicht alt, nicht müde"¹⁵. Henry van de Velde claims that "the course of events runs on a regular pattern; art declines and crumbles away and dawns again anew...It is our fate now to stand on such a watershed"¹⁶. Debussy says "When I shall no longer stir up controversy I shall reproach myself bitterly"¹⁷, and his controversial premières of *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Prélude à l'après midi d'un faune* leave the public in no doubt as to their novelty.

The distinctive feature of their method is its casting aside conventional canons of balance, form and representation in order to allow their mannerisms - repetition, exaggeration, simplification, complication, flourish - to have full rein. The new style is immediately obvious and immensely attractive to those from the upper middle classes who patronize it for its distinctiveness from conventional art and its exclusiveness: its cultural pretensions match their social ones.

At the same time Art Nouveau sees itself as returning to the lost Classical ideals of the Parnassians, and the mediaeval ones of Ruskin and Morris, thereby breaking with the mediocrity surrounding and confining them.

But it is the very novelty of its style - and of its doctrine of novelty - that causes its enormous and widespread popularity, with "this new taste for eddying or swirling movements, for subtle and sophisticated harmonies, whose justification was their very novelty, ... every innovation

being eagerly taken up by others and turned into the fashion of the moment"¹⁸. This accent on novelty causes Art Nouveau's equally rapid eclipse, as other novelties, like Cubism, Dadaism, Expressionism and their counterparts in the other arts since 1905, sweep it away. In the end novelty becomes mere novelty. Novelty is infectious and exciting, but inevitably evanescent, leaving the followers of each new wave in the limbo of outmoded fashion. Art Nouveau may be said to originate, if not to intend to cause, this popular worship of fashion - later fad - of novelty, to its own glory and cost.

2. Sensuality

Pre-Raphaelite painters' set-pieces of mediaeval imagery comprise an almost still-life, posed centre-subject, surrounded by tangled flowers or leaves, that hints at the archetypal mediaeval allegory of entranced princesses, frozen in time inside a castle made impenetrable by the tangled branches of centuries' enchantment. Rossetti's *The Girlhood of Mary* and *The Day Dream* are such compositions¹⁹. In Millais' *Mariana*²⁰ nature is only seen through the leaded window, but is already menacing, tangling and surrounding the moated grange; dead autumn leaves lie on the floor. In Burne-Jones' *Briar Rose* series²¹ nature has overcome princess and maidens completely. By the time of Alex Gascoyne's *Gather Ye Rosebuds*²², nature has become a stylized border, echoed on the decorative swirls on the maiden's dress, its timeless, two-dimensional movement contrasting with the stillness of the maiden.

The point of this brief return to Pre-Raphaelite imagery is to show the contrast between the sensual movements of nature and the idealized, still, Courtly Love maiden, the stylization of nature revealing its sensuality, and hinting at hers. This contrast of still centre and restless border is transformed, in Gascoyne's Art Nouveau composition, to an allegory where, in outdoors scenes, the whole of nature is caught in a sensual motion of swirls that echoes the brambles' restless movement. The

maiden in the picture's centre would be as free and sensual as entwining nature if only she were free: this is the paradigm of the Victorian male view of women's sexuality that alternately enticed and tormented men, so that they kept women repressed: there might have been gaiety and light on their surface, but the brambles' menace was never entirely absent; thus the fear of these demi-goddesses²³.

Interior settings, like Beardsley's *Rape of the Lock* series, show the formal swirls as the finesses of sophistication, with all its artifice, its affected and self-satisfied, inward-looking folds, flounces and gestures of fashion. Here, where the pictures' subjects are most removed from nature, artists have two ways still of emphasizing nature's dominance - by using indoor plants, peacock-feathers or plant-like swirls, or by omitting nature entirely, but showing by the swirls the origins of sophistication's posturing, where the more fashion and coxcombery attempts to remove itself from nature, the less it succeeds. Such drawings are mocking of man and his pettiness.

In Beardsley all is cynical, with the triumph of evil suggesting the illusoriness of mediaeval questing for ideals; in Toulouse-Lautrec's more cynical portraits it suggests the victory only of hardness and venality, in Munch the despair of reason and control. These are the extremes of menace, but even the lightness of mood in Mucha's bicycle and cigarette-girls convey the sadness of unattainable, ideal beauty, laughing at men's attempts to possess it. In this way the ephemerality and evanescence of time's creature, beauty, is emphasized by its very stylization: left in time, beauty can be possessed, although fading away, while frozen in the timelessness of two-dimensional, idealized form it becomes forever unattainable and thus infinitely melancholy.

The essential sensuality of Art Nouveau is always, therefore, in tension with its formality, with the sensuality preserved in the frozen time of stylized motion - of pattern. In this way patterning, or

stylization, dominates subject, and may be seen as part of the Art Nouveau aim to pursue beauty as an end in itself, but the subject - sensuality - does not therefore disappear. Art Nouveau does not go beyond emotion to a realm of pure forms, unless the pure form be pure emotion: it is sensual, emotional, in essence, which is again its link with nature. The very fact that curves are everywhere preferred to straight lines (until the starkly dramatic furniture of 1905 - the straight-backed chairs of the Glasgow School and the block-designs of Frank Lloyd Wright, at least) is the clearest evidence of this²⁴. The curves of Art Nouveau are anything from langorous, sensuous, enticing or sensual to decadent and actually evil. They are also well planned, contrived to set the tone of a picture. Even abandon or insouciance is only apparent, for it is carefully posed. All is mannered and sophisticated - even the innocence of an early Mucha flower maiden, so that one is not surprised in Mucha's later *Medée*²⁵ to see her with bloody dagger, where she seems essentially the same woman.

Overall, however, the sensuousness and eroticism of Art Nouveau is not always evil in statement or implication: it is not even always langorous. It may be fresh and charming, as in Mucha's maids of *The Seasons* or *The Flowers* series, or gay, like the von Zumbusch *Jugend No.40* cover²⁶, or formalized like the many bookmark and endpaper designs, but it is always sensual, erotic, suggestive, and simultaneously frozen in stylized, ritualized nature.

The most obviously affective feature of the Art Nouveau line is its sensuality, its curve, that Schmutzler characterizes as "long, sensitive, sinuous ... always moving in a sort of narcissistic self-delight", but which in Edvard Munch becomes self-tormenting, and, while anything but delightful, is the other, neurotic face of eroticism. Most of the sensuality, however, in earlier Art Nouveau is positive. There is much abandon and gaiety, although stylized and seductive. Isadora Duncan and Loie Fuller's scarves²⁷ stylize into the waving lines of Leda's hair in Jan

Tooroop's pictures²⁸, or the fuschia-serpent motif in Carl Strahtmann's *Totentanz*²⁹, or Albert Weisberger's *The Peacock's Dance*³⁰.

As Art Nouveau progresses, the sinister side of eroticism is more and more explored, particularly in Beardsley and also in *Ver Sacrum*, which is often serious, gloomy and frightening. Here there is an influence of Decadence, noted by Schmutzler and others³¹, perhaps not as thorough-going as Rimbaud's "théorie de voyant", which is "to get beyond good and evil, to the expressible, by evil and delirium"³², but certainly going as far as Huysmans' *Des Essientes* in *A Rebours* and Wilde's *Dorian Gray*. The whole concept of the Pre-Raphaelite/Art Nouveau pale maiden, from *The Blessed Damozel* to *Mélisande*, has melancholy overtones; by the time of Ravel's *Ondine* she has become a menacing figure too, yet seductive, irresistible, siren-like. The pure Pre-Raphaelite Millais maiden³³ is offset by Rossetti's *Lucretia Borgia*³⁴ and Holman Hunt's *Isabella*³⁵, whose menace finally develops into the *Judith* of Thomas Heine³⁶ and Beardsley's *Salomé*³⁷.

3. Mystery - the unseen forces behind nature

Art Nouveau by this concentration on line and its arabesque does not abandon nature, for it draws from vines, flowers, femininity and feathers the inspiration for its sinuous lines. The Glasgow School and some Jugendstil make abstractions of these sinuous lines into clusters of straight ones, as for example Charles Rennie Mackintosh's high-backed chair³⁸, which show the duality in Art Nouveau. Just as the Renaissance is half mediaeval and half modern, retaining a belief in alchemy and hermeneutics while prefiguring the Age of Reason (as seen in Isaac Newton, for instance), so Art Nouveau is part late-Romantic and part futuristic. On its Romantic side it develops the sinuous line; on its modern side it develops the patterning of straight ones. The formal perfection of Behrens' *Der Kuss*³⁹, of Josef Hoffmann's *Ex Libris*⁴⁰, or of Hermann Abeking's ladies greeting⁴¹ - the most symmetrical of Art Nouveau paintings

- is essentially composed asymmetrically. The Art Nouveau cosmos is not the perfectly symmetrical one of Renaissance theology, with God the centre, and man the measure, of all things, but of Nature, whose essential unpredictabilities are only inferred from its visible asymmetries. This is the nature of Gerard Manley Hopkins' *Pied Beauty*:

All things counter, original, spare, strange;

Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)

and the nature of Henri Bergson's *L'Évolution Créatrice*, which is fundamentally mysterious, surprising and ultimately irrational. This is best seen in the most characteristic device of line - the whiplash-shape, whose basic asymmetry suggests not only the irrationality, the surprise, the "freshness that lives deep down the hearts of things"⁴² in nature, but also the simultaneous restless movement and the freezing of that movement - the tension between sensuality and stylization - which is so characteristically Art Nouveau.

The whiplash-shape, derived from curling tendrils, hair, gestures, flame, the swirls of water, cloud or rock-strata, is the most characteristic line-motif in Art Nouveau⁴³, symbolizing its asymmetry - or its symmetry with surprises in it to prevent its being wholly predictable. The surprise, or irrational element, is Nature; through its whiplash symbol it is seen as rampant, triumphant and universal, but always mysterious.

Nature is whimsical - either kind or cruel - in this art, and so is frequently menacing, but may be enticing and enfolding. It is menacing in Jan Toorop's imaginary landscapes⁴⁴, or Beardsley's *Arcadia*⁴⁵, but even in Mucha's friendly *Seasons*⁴⁶, or von Zumbusch's title-page to *Jugend*⁴⁷, nature is seen as **Other**, as somehow mysterious in its swirlings and intertwinings. Saki's *Pan*⁴⁸ is capricious, and vengeful if crossed; Kenneth Grahame's friendly guardian of the woodlands, *Pan*, is nonetheless to be awed⁴⁹. In much of Pre-Raphaelite and Art Nouveau landscapes even heroes are dwarfed by nature, which is always seen as all-pervading, all-

enfolding, but above all mysterious.

As well as its key whiplash symbol, the vital symbol of water is a key to nature's dominance and mystery, for water is at once all-pervading in the lush northern European forests of Art Nouveau pictures' backgrounds, and sinuous and indefinite in form. Water is mysterious, impenetrable enigma when still lake or pond, and is even slightly menacing in the otherwise gay 1897 Jugend cover of Ludwig von Zumbusch⁵⁰ - because it is black, as so often throughout Art Nouveau. When it is flowing it is intangible, ever-changing, sinuous. It is like the whiplash motif, a paradigmatic Art Nouveau symbol because it is changeable, indefinable, sensuous and mysterious. Thus the Art Nouveau preoccupation with sea-creatures like mermaids and monsters (Okun⁵¹, Exner⁵², Roller⁵³, Moser⁵⁴, Klimt⁵⁵, Brunelli⁵⁶), with winding streams, swans⁵⁷ and fish. The others of the Four Elements are also winding and sensual - air, fire and the landscape forms of earth.

The swirls and border-decoration in Art Nouveau, especially in graphic art, show the tendency towards abstraction that is its future-facing side. Nature is expressed and interpreted through its essentially swirling, sinuous rhythms: as these dominate every work of Art Nouveau, so nature dominates the real world, but only perceived at the edges of things. The swirls and symbols express its essence, and by their patterned dominance in Art Nouveau, using natural forms like leaves, flowers, stems and vines, stylized into motifs, they show nature as everywhere, all-encompassing, immanent.

But nature is also mystery, the irrational principle whose symmetries are asymmetrical; this is the nature of the Symbolists, and Art Nouveau's chief link with that movement. The poetic imagination can bring insights into the mysteries of nature, but never show more than metaphors or symbols of it. The chief contribution of Art Nouveau to Symbolism is to explore its asymmetries, to appreciate its essential mystery, and its primacy. It

follows, therefore, that the artist's craft is esoteric, not the province of M. Croche's detested dilettantes, who will attempt to use reason to put a gloss on the unknowable. To Peter Behrens "Art ... is the fulfilment of psychic intentions"⁵⁸ - hardly a rational activity, yet this can accord with Debussy's aim "to extend the harmonic dream of Nature"⁵⁹ - through his art, of course, through what Rilke calls his "Einsehen"⁶⁰.

The essential primacy and mystery of nature in Art Nouveau is finally seen by nature's surrounding and overshadowing man in pictures like Ferdinand Staeger's *Youth*⁶¹, Beardsley's Arcadian drawings, or Arthur Rackham's drawings. Nature is greater than man, but there is a symbiosis of man and nature⁶², what Debussy meant by "the correspondences between Nature and imagination"⁶³, lying somewhere between the joyous May dance of Zumbusch's 1897 *Jugend* cover⁶⁴, and the Beardsley *Pan and the Wood-Nymphs*⁶⁵ or his Savoy 1 figures in landscapes⁶⁶.

Nonetheless, man is the lesser element in Art Nouveau, subordinate to nature. Portraits as such hardly occur in Art Nouveau, although there are many symbolic or even archetypal figures; the emphasis is not on mankind as such but on man in nature, or man in interiors, where he is grotesque simply because he is in the artificial, unnatural setting of sophistication and artifice: nature-less interiors actually assert the dominance of nature by showing the emptiness of man. Without nature he is ridiculous, while in the forest or landscape he is in his natural element and proportion, reflecting the sensual rhythms of nature, and thereby acquiring significance and purpose. Only in nature can man be seen in proper perspective, where he is only a part of its mysteries, and not the measure of all things. Flowers pattern the ritual dance of Curray's *Fiesta maiden*⁶⁷, the vine festoons Mucha's Sarah Bernhardt⁶⁸, and Klimt's madonnas swoon in floral swirls⁶⁹. In Art Nouveau mankind is humbled before nature; he is only dignified when in proper perspective to it, and ridiculous when, in the sophisticates' salon, he attempts to forget it, and is mocked by the

nature-echoing swirls and entwinings of his very garb and gestures.

4. Ambiguity

As soon as Art Nouveau pictures are seen as arrangements or patternings of visual components, the ambiguous, dual nature of these components as object and symbol is apparent. It is the intertwining of the hair in Behrens' *Die Kuss* that shows it to be symbolic: firstly the locks of hair are of winding forms that reflect natural forms and thus symbolize nature and sensuality, secondly their lapping over each other in lovers' knots signifies union, and thirdly they frame the faces. This framing draws attention to the focal point of the kissing faces, but also draws attention away because its lines are so florid and intricate that the eye is compelled to follow them. In an exact parallel to melody and accompaniment in musical Art Nouveau the border patterning of locks intertwining is so interesting in itself that it tends to overshadow what would normally be the main focus of composition. This is found all through Alphonse Mucha's pictures, where the eye becomes fascinated by the wealth of detail at least as much as by the feminine icon at the centre. The flat canvas of Art Nouveau pictures means that there is no perspectival point towards which the eye is drawn, so that it becomes lost in the detail.

The mannerism of this detail entraps the eye with repetition and exaggeration of motif that has an affective pulse, or rhythmic tension, and mesmerizes the senses. It is not only the subject-matter of an Art Nouveau picture that is fantastic, but its handling of detail and patterning, taking them to extremes that give such patterning its own life within the context of the picture. The work is thus both picture and design, and it is not clear if the figures or the patternings are the main focus. In Franz von Stuck's 1887 *Jugend* cover the swirling dresses of the dancers break out of the picture-frame in their exuberance, and in Hans Christiansen's 1900 decoration for that magazine the twining vines forming a border to Carl Busse's poem break from their pattern to trail across the



stanzas and draw attention from them⁷⁰. Similarly, there are many designs where the lettering of motto or title is so fantastically mannered as to conceal rather than reveal its meaning⁷¹.

Thus there are ambiguities of meaning (objects and their complex layers of symbolism), of compositional focus, and of signification or communication itself.

But there is an even more fundamental ambiguity or duality - that of intention. It is clear to any sensibility familiar with the other artistic movements and styles of the later nineteenth century that the heavy emphasis on curving lines in Art Nouveau is sensual in a more direct way than even the nudes of the academy painters can be. Even the straight lines of the Glasgow school and some of Beardsley's drawings are so exaggerated in their contexts that they are laden with sexual tension. A high-backed chair, a walking stick, a fan or even a furled umbrella is phallic because so starkly presented, especially when the fan or umbrella are held by women⁷². Not all this tension is sexual, of course, but there is always a definitely emotional content in all Art Nouveau.

Its ambiguity lies in the fact that the sensuality or emotionality, although palpable, is either overtly contradicted by the posed innocence of the subject and composition or, if actually directly suggested, is tinged with evil so that it repels while it attracts. A case illustrating the first type is that of Jessie M. King's illustration for *The Magic Grammar* of 1902⁷³, in which a line drawing of a maiden reading by a window is ostensibly as innocent as can be. Yet one hand is on her knee, drawing attention to it under her frock, an ankle peeps from beneath the billowing folds of frock, whose sleeves and skirt are of highly exaggerated curves. The slippers have fluffed pom-poms that catch the eye, her hair falls in ringlets that also catch the eye, and the decoration of the window-glasses is such that they suggest so many eyes watching her. Thus the most innocent scene possible is teased out with suggestions of sensuality that

begin with the title itself, whose vagueness is enough to set the imagination searching for clues as to its possible meaning in the detail of the picture, although at the end of the process there is still no certainty as to suggestion or intention, except that she is perhaps an apprentice sorceress - like all Art Nouveau maidens.

In a picture that is directly sensual like Franz von Stuck's *Sinnlichkeit*⁷⁴, the intention is still ambiguous, for although there can be no doubt about the sensuality expressed in the intertwining of serpent and nude, there is much doubt as to whether the Eve-figure attracts or repels. This is reflected in the background against which she leans, which may be bed, waterfall or the side of an abyss. The same sort of fascination and aversion is found all through Aubrey Beardsley's drawings.

This basic ambiguity of intention runs through all Art Nouveau, reflecting the ambiguities of nature itself - attracting and compelling yet also disquieting.

There is another vital aspect of ambiguity - the emphasis on transformability. As has been seen, every image, whether line or figure, is both a form for visual stylization and symbol for implication. But as an image it is always transformable, for all the devices and effects of visual Art Nouveau combine to portray dream and transformation in their subject-matter and in their viewers. It is easy enough to see this in pictures where hair becomes landscape, as in Edward Okun's *Salve Regina*, or where tree becomes dripping blood, as in Thomas Theodor Heine's *Judith* illustration⁷⁵, but it can also be seen in the simplest of pictures. Without depth, even everyday scenes like mother and child outdoors in Henri Evenpoel's *At the Playground*⁷⁶ become unreal: there is no background at all, and both girl and mother are dressed and posed to make a picture, not a *sortie*, so that even in this appearance of conventionality there is the suggestion of the fantastic. And the child is somehow more imp or elf than human; Pan is not far away. Very few Art Nouveau pictures, of course, show

such "ordinary" scenes, most being composed of fantastic juxtapositions and arrangements, with plants becoming decoration, figures becoming distorted or stylized and colours being used for patterning rather than verisimilitude. They are essentially imaginative in composition, and with their repetitions and exaggerations produce an effect like that of the mesmeric patternings of Art Nouveau music.

The overriding theme through all the many themes of Art Nouveau is that of transformation into dream and the fantastic, just as the central icon is that of Pan. As god of all nature Pan is not a barely comprehensible conception of Order like monotheistic gods, but a faun, definitely shaped into a personality and a purpose - to pursue the dream of love, and transform order into the chaos of mystery and sensuality⁷⁷. Beyond the laws and symmetries of nature, therefore, is mystery, in a dimension of dream where perception and experience are transformed into ideal states of knowledge and feeling. This is the realm of the Art Nouveau imagination.

5. Asymmetry of effect

In essence this is the following of art for its own sake, wherever it may lead: art becomes an end in itself, so that normal artistic canons of balance, symmetry, composition and restraint of secondary effect are swept aside. Secondary effect becomes dominant, asymmetries of proportion, composition and structure are emphasized.

When Walter Crane writes "line is all-important"⁷⁸, and Oscar Wilde "form is everything"⁷⁹ they are stating what Art Nouveau practitioners want to say most about their difference from the art of the academies and the artistic establishments, which is to allow their art to lead them where it will, rather than be representational or in any way be shackled by subject matter. The two statements mean that the elements of a composition are to be developed independently of any of the subject matter they may derive from or nominally represent; they have a life of their own that is on a

higher plane than their actual subjects: the patterning of flowers and their allegorical meaning as pattern is more important than actual flowers in Abegg's Gewerbe-Museen poster, for instance⁸⁰.

When van de Velde says "I want to exclude ugliness from my surroundings"⁸¹, and Jiri Mucha says of Alphonse Mucha that "a woman for him, was not a body, but beauty incorporated in matter and acting through the matter"⁸², we are in Parnassus, in the realms of pure Form. The same spirit explains Wilde's characteristic "form is everything"⁸³ - where purely aesthetic and musical considerations carry a piece along, not some external dictate like a story-line, or a didactic aim - as M. Croche constantly points out. It also partly explains Debussy's notion of "musical arabesque"⁸⁴ - for to allow compositional elaboration to grow from the nature of a motif itself is to let beauty be the sole criterion of whatever is composed, painted or created. "Musical" is the word that is forgotten when considering Debussy's dictum - purely musical considerations should determine the development of motif. The second term, "arabesque", is equally important, not more so, and refers to what Debussy felt was central to his music - a working-out of the motif's possibilities by elaboration.

Thus Art Nouveau is Aestheticist in its determination to follow where purely artistic criteria lead it, as in its exploring the principles of ornament, or new scales, or the novel in architecture, interior design and furniture for their own sakes. It thus stands against "committed" and socially conscious art like that of Daumier or Courbet from an earlier age, and stands against Naturalism, Victorian genre-painting or Wagner's linking his *Ring* to nationalistic aspirations. What it does stand for is a Negative Capability that deliberately avoids any particular advocacy. Even for those accepting commercial commissions to produce posters extolling beer or bicycles, Art is above cause and occasion, above cafés, singers, cigarettes, liqueurs, Liberty fabrics and Samuel Bing's commercial gallery,

because it can transform them.

Debussy's contempt for dilettantes is pertinent here: Art Nouveau is for aesthetes - but for devotees, who are practitioners, prepared to follow its muses wherever they lead; it is not for dabblers, critics or onlookers to understand its mysteries or its methods, although they can play the role of patron, of course. It is not *l'art pour le peuple*, but *pour l'artiste*. For Debussy, Wilde, Odilon Redon and others art is special, mysterious, arcane, needing high priests to utter, interpret and control it. Odilon Redon, who in his paintings of the female and nature⁸⁵ employs Art Nouveau manner and fantasy besides symbolist meaning, says "I think I have submitted myself docilely to the secret laws which led me, for good or ill, to build things out of my dreams, as well as I am able, in which I laid my whole ego ... I suppose my whole originality lies in the fact that I allow improbable beings to live like man according to the laws of the probable by putting, as far as I can, the logic of the visible in the service of the invisible"⁸⁶. What the artist needs is not so much special knowledge as special insight, devotion and effort, but his utterances are to be cryptic, veiled and allegorical to the layman. Art is thus the new mystery to replace traditional religion, which has become rigidified by its institutionalization and restrictive morality, and by Darwin's superseding it with scientific theory to replace its theological dogma. Painting and literature thus become an *Ars arcana* while music becomes a new *musica reservata*.

Hans Hoffstätter is right to see Art Nouveau as a phase between "the traditionally-orientated afunctional principle on the one hand, and the future-orientated [functional] principle on the other"⁸⁷, in that it firstly follows beauty for its own sake into the realms of decoration and stylization, and yet seeks to explore a new functionalism in furniture, architecture, glassware and ceramics, where forms based on nature, but stylized heavily, are transformed into new roles. This is perhaps the

chief difference between Art Nouveau and Aestheticism: the Aesthetic Movement can hardly accept that functionalism is an artistic ideal of any sort, or that art and bicycles can go together. The art of the poster is likewise transformed into a quite novel blending of afunctional decorative stylization and the functional impact of this novelty. Art Nouveau, nonetheless, is primarily idealistic, standing against the materialism of the industrial nineteenth century, and the encrusted, functionless decoration of exhibits in the 1851 and subsequent Exhibitions and Expositions. A cast-iron fountain from 1851⁸⁸ is just a cast-iron fountain, however ornamented, and bespeaks its mass-production inspiration, while even an Art Nouveau cigarette poster makes a statement about life, Nature and mystery⁸⁹.

In a deeper sense Art Nouveau is making a statement about philosophy, rejecting the reductionist, positivist view of the cosmos that claims all to be ultimately knowable and quantifiable - the view science and positivists like Auguste Comte, Ernst Mach and their schools hold. This philosophical position is essentially that of the artistic movements Realism and Naturalism, movements whose certainties of empirical base are contradicted by the mystical ones of Art Nouveau. Art Nouveau is definitely more akin to the idealism of F.H. Bradley and Henri Bergson, where the cosmos is not so easily apprehended directly, or even knowable at all in important respects. Art Nouveau artists, perhaps, are hardly well read on the great philosophical debates of their time, (although some critics would be), but they have an intuitive grasp of the directions of either side, and know what they believe in: the mystery of things, and their special insights as artist-seers.

6. Stylization

While this is by no means a principle peculiar to Art Nouveau it is certainly one of its most important, with all elements of a composition, whether subject, background or border, transformed to formal, often

patterned, swirling lines, so that the subject-content tends to lose its particularity in the interests of the overall style of the whole - the swirl or sinuous line, that suggests a frozen, ordered motion through the whole piece. Thus Maurice Denis, in his Catalogue comments on the 1895 Exhibition of Impressionist and Symbolist Painters, held in the Galerie Le Barc de Boutteville, Paris: "In their work they have preferred expression by the pattern, by the harmony of forms and colours, by the texture of the points to the expression of the subject"⁹⁰. In other words, stylization overrides literal (or even impressionistic) rendering, and is of the essence of Art Nouveau; Edelgard Hajek feels it sufficient to define Art Nouveau by reference to stylization alone⁹¹.

It is now commonplace for writers to define Art Nouveau as a "decorative style"⁹² or "an ornamental style"⁹³, which tends to miss the point, for these two words must always connote something added or peripheral to the essence of a picture - as if Art Nouveau were mere *décor*, an amusing and now quaint style of interior decoration of the period. But for the Art Nouveau artist of whatever medium, style is more important than subject, manner than matter: stylization **is** the subject. Just as brambles overweigh the Burne-Jones castle and princess, so Art Nouveau curve, swirl and pattern overweigh representation of nature or any impressionistic effect of light. Any nominal subject is just a vehicle for the expression of style and pattern, although the subjects are often chosen for their provocative value as well as for their potential as stylized line. Pattern and style are all.

As an overlay to this stylization of detail is a stylization of the whole, a harmony, an asymmetry of lines, forms and swirls that shows an essential unity of purpose. Each element, for all its apparently freely-swinging line or air of sensual abandon, is a tightly controlled part of a whole. This is most easily seen in those works that tend towards the greatest stylization, like Peter Behren's *Der Kuss*⁹⁴ or any Beardsley

drawing or Mucha portrait, but is still there in apparently free works like Toulouse-Lautrec's posters or Lalique's asymmetrical glassware. To thus unify works is to make a statement different from Impressionists' natural landscapes or casually-arranged still-lives, but not dissimilar to the statuesque, formalized landscapes of Post-Impressionists like Seurat, where one looks not so much at scenes as at their composition.

Stylization is sophistication, of course, with even the naive maiden presented as a carefully staged appearance of the real thing. This is further accentuated by the folds on her gown, the curling of her hair, the posed repose of her hands in typical drawings by Arthur Gaskin⁹⁵, Fairfax Muckey⁹⁶ or Will Bradley⁹⁷. Such a maiden, seen in the flat landscape of romance is not real but a type of all maidens of legend, the stylization of detail matching the stylization of character and representation that the maiden-concept evokes.

It is perhaps not too much to say that an Art Nouveau artefact becomes an essay in style. Tendrils from the borders of an Arthur Gaskin picture interweave so much that they may leave the border and enter the picture; in the picture itself folds of dress, hair and the attitude of arms and legs move to the pulse of the baroque motion of the borders. In a Beardsley drawing everything is fantastically curved and exaggerated - even the large empty areas of still white or black are exaggerated in their relation to the main figure. All this is curve piled upon curve and stylized to the point of virtuosity, until the whole is a highly mannered artefact - stylization exaggerated to the point of hyperbole.

In this mannerism a border becomes the chief point of a picture; trees and grasses overpower the frail figures of humans; gestures become caricatured; dresses assume exotic shape and scale; facial expressions become distorted, until the whole composition of a picture is pattern. When realism is so decisively scorned it is because the painter is emphasizing the symbolic dimension of his or her art; character becomes

caricature to make a point about people in general, and curve becomes whiplash to enable the artist to descant on the nature of curve.

Mannerism can in the end be seen as an end in itself, as an example of art (in the sense of artifice, *Kunstmittel*) for its own sake. This affective side of mannerism runs through all Art Nouveau and is mesmeric on the viewer. It is clear that Aubrey Beardsley is well aware of the strong suggestiveness of his drawings, of their subliminal power to shock yet by so doing to seduce the viewer, to numb critical objections, the better to absorb the sardonic comment he is making on society and manners. In general, Art Nouveau tends to work on its viewers by this sort of powerful but unseen suggestion that casts its own spell: to this end all the patterning and rhythms of its mannerism conduce.

7. Emphasis on detail

Where there is no perspectival vanishing-point in a picture the eye wanders over its detail as if in search of it. This makes all the elements of the picture of equal importance on a flat canvas, which can be seen in every Art Nouveau picture, even in those with obvious and ornate borders that contrast with the figures they enclose, like the pictures of Heinrich Vogeler or Josef Auentaller⁹⁸.

Each picture with perspective has a compositional focus that except in perspective-exercises like those of Canaletto's Venetian paintings is different from its vanishing-point. This focal point is often at a Golden Mean from its borders, and even in Art Nouveau this compositional focus-point is often found. In Ludwig von Zumbusch's cover for *Jugend* of 1897, that forms the front cover of Hans Hofstätter's *Art Nouveau*, the compositional focus in the traditional sense is the point on the sea-horizon below the meeting of the girls' hands as they dance about this common centre, and this is about a third of the distance from the picture's left-hand and bottom edges - or Golden Mean distance⁹⁹. As back cover of the same book is Peter Behrens' *Der Kuss*, where the lovers' lips meet in

the precise centre of the picture. These are the two main choices for technical compositional focus in visual Art Nouveau, but the second violates conventional canons of balance, and has caused pictures like this to be thought of primarily as design, like the many scraps of patterned design scattered throughout Hofstätter's volume.

But while there may be compositional points of focus like these in Art Nouveau pictures, they do not draw the eye to them as in pictures with perspective. Thus all features of the picture are equal, and while the eye wanders from one to another the impression is gained that all these features are still, frozen on a still landscape. This is the real reason the picture seems primarily design or patterning: all the emphasis is away from representationalism and towards the artistic arrangement of the picture's components, which are arranged for their effect, aesthetic and sensuous. Thus the feeling that all the figures are posed on a still plane, rather than moving through a real landscape.

This is painting's equivalent of omitting the linear element of plot in the novel and modulatory progress in music. Just as interest in these last two centres is on the episodes or scenes for their own sake rather than on development of the whole along a time-line, so the eye must dwell on the various details and notice their symbolism, rather than focus only on the picture as a whole.

All this is part of a picture's ambiguity, of course, and also its patterning: it is seen as design as much as composition. Albert Weisgerber's *The Peacock Dance*¹⁰⁰, drawn for *Jugend* in 1902, would appear to be a picture with clear compositional focus (although no perspectival one) - the column in the centre of the picture that supports the peacock, around which girls are dancing. But although the column is topped by some symmetrical curved lines of lacework, with the curve of the peacock's neck around the centre of a lacework circle, it fails to draw the eye at first glance, because the peacock itself is highlighted in white against the dull

russet of the column and lace. Yet the fact that the peacock is asymmetrically arranged on the column, and exaggerated lengthwise, also fails to hold the eye, which may equally well at first, as at later glances, devolve to the dancers. They look up to the peacock, so that the eye moves from dancers to peacock, and the peacock looks down at them, causing the eye to reverse. Thus the eye cannot be still, and wanders to the detail of the base of the pillar, the quasi-horizon of the straight line passing through this detail, to the dancers' limbs and hair, to the peacock's exaggerated tail, to its head-feathers, to the lacework patterning, and so on circularly.

This guiding of the perception towards detail is universal to Art Nouveau, whether picture, furniture, architecture, sculpture or other craft, and whether the work is complex or simple. It is part of the sensuous experiencing of a work, as the eye luxuriates in the detail of a complex work or in the rhythms of a simpler one.

8. Repetitive rhythm of line and pattern

Art Nouveau's use of sharp-edged line and outline, in contrast to conventional shading and *chiaroscuro* techniques on the one hand, and impressionistic sketchiness on the other, is characteristic all through the varieties of visual and plastic arts that it covers. It is the essence of woodcut, lithograph, stained glass, furniture, book design and the poster, of course, but through all the other visual media it is adopted as a technique necessary for patterning. Under Principle 4 it was noted that one of the prime causes of ambiguity in Art Nouveau is the dual nature of the art-work as both picture and design. It is sharp-edged line and outline that can be seen in every detail of patterning, and this patterning is built from repeated, sensually affective rhythms. Any Art Nouveau picture with ornate borders or multiplicity of texture is heavily patterned, but repetitive rhythm can also be seen in and between lines isolated from close patterning.

Art Nouveau line is seen as an end in itself, to be exploited for its graphic power, and its powers of symbolism and suggestion. Line's stylistic essence is arabesque that explores the inherent possibilities of rhythmic shape and sensual motif; this arabesque may be formed from curved or straight lines, either in whole or segmented line-units. The curve is usually considered the principal factor causing the sensuality of Art Nouveau, but it is the rhythmic pulsations, or asymmetries of line, not the curves themselves, that affect the senses. A typical expression of this misconception is that of Robert Schmutzler, for whom Art Nouveau has as "its main theme a long sinuous line ... always moving in a sort of narcissistic self-delight"¹⁰¹. This is undoubtedly true of the curving line but not of the straight one. Hans Hofstätter is more cautious: "a certain line keeps recurring, an undulating arabesque-like line", so that he does not actually define it as being essential¹⁰². But Geoffrey Warren, whose book has some straight-line illustrations, begins with "a sensuous line...a flowing line; a line which bends and turns back on itself...the feminine form, rounded and curving"¹⁰³. It is therefore necessary to note some of the many examples of mainstream Art Nouveau across Europe that are entirely or virtually entirely without curves but are powerfully sensual. In Geoffrey Warren's book there are the Baillie Scott Music Room of 1902, the Charles and Margaret Macintosh chair for the 1902 Turin Exhibition, and the Koloman Moser cupboard of 1907¹⁰⁴, Joseph Hoffmann's pair of cabinets of 1910-11 that are totally composed of squares and rectangles but still have repetitive rhythms that are striking and mesmeric, C.F.A.Voysey's writing desk designed between 1896 and 1900, Baillie Scott's Broadwood "Manxman" upright piano, Sidney Barnsley's completely straight-lined cabinet of 1910¹⁰⁵, Joseph Hoffmann's Wiener Werkstätte desk of 1905, Gustav Klimt's design for a mosaic in the Villa Stoclet, Brussels, 1908-11¹⁰⁶, Hendrik Petrus Berlage's New Holland House facade, London 1914, Otto Wagner's facade for the Majolikahaus, Vienna 1890¹⁰⁷. The Glasgow Four

(Charles and Margaret Macintosh, Herbert and Frances McNair) and their followers, and to some extent the Vienna Secession, were influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement's use of straight lines, and the Charles Macintosh high-backed chair of 1902, his wife's design for a menu for Miss Cranston's Tea-Rooms, and the collection of his chairs for the Milan Triennale of 1973 are typical¹⁰⁸.

Walter Crane's 1889 statement of The New Art said that "Line is all-important. Let designer, therefore in the adaptation of his art, lean upon the staff of line - line determinative, line emphatic, line delicate, line expressive, line controlling and uniting"¹⁰⁹. Here the line as staff implies that line will take upon itself a life of its own, with the artist as enabler and unfolders of its beauties of arabesque. The important point is that the arabesque, or variation inherent in the line-motif, is not mere decoration, but essence. It can be misleading to see Art Nouveau as ornament, as many encyclopaedists do, for this fails to differentiate it from the merely decorated urns, pianos, epergnés and candlesticks of the Great Exhibition catalogues¹¹⁰. For these, decoration is appliqué; for Art Nouveau the arabesque is structural, of the essence, going to the very heart of each figure. This structural arabesque - rhythmical repetition of variations in line, whether curved, straight, enclosing geometric figures, or merely forming patterns with other similar lines, is sensual because of its pulsations; arabesque in Art Nouveau is variation that is stylized, aesthetically asymmetrical and affective - but structural because it is rhythm and patterning inherent in the nature of the line itself, not something grafted to it, as it were.

This repetition of pulse in line or combination of line does not have to be regular, as in borders to pictures, pictures with a pair or group of similar figures, architectural facades, or the Macintosh chairs just mentioned. The Herman Obrist Whiplash wall-hanging, for instance, is only partly regular, while Aubrey Beardsley's cover-design for Ernest Dowson's

volume of poems, 1896, has three quite different principal lines that all end with whiplash-curves that again are not the same¹¹¹. In the Mackmurdo title-page to Wren's City of Churches (1883) that is often thought to be the first visual Art Nouveau, none of the vibrating lines is identical to any other, but all lines move in groups, and the groups interact on eye and senses; the point is simply made by considering any of the illustrations in the same chapter of Lara-Vinca Masini's work in which she discusses the characteristics of Art Nouveau (Chapter 2), for whether there is a closely repetitive design (like that on the same page by William Morris) or one of varied lines like that of Louis Sullivan's Carson, Pirie, Scott store of Chicago, 1899-1904, on the facing page, the rhythmic groups into which the lines are gathered reinforce each other by repetitions¹¹².

9. Interweaving

In nature, plant forms intertwine and tangle, either amongst their own branches, leaves and petals, or with those of other plants. Vines entwine other plants, and petals are enfolded together, with regularity of form, which is echoed in the symmetrical borders and patterns of much Art Nouveau painting, drawing, jewellery and architectural design. In the works of Henry van de Velde and Victor Horta alone the principle of symmetrical interweaving of iron lacework and stone or plaster moulding is seen at its clearest, and it is essential to all regularly patterned Art Nouveau design, seen in wallpapers, book-covers, borders, and many drawings such as the van de Velde designs, those of the Spanish group that collected around Antoni Gaudi, those of Jan Bukowsky and Elek Falus being clear examples¹¹³.

Interweaving is also an essential principle of asymmetrical and non-symmetrical design, as can be seen in Arthur Rackham's drawings, where brambles and trees entangle. The trees in Reginald Knowles' *Tales from the Norse. The Haunt of the Troll* curve in pattern with the land-forms so that all looks menacing, as both interweave to suggest that both natural forms

are alive and working together to entrap unwary travellers; the figure of the troll himself is just another form, with his hair, garment and bludgeon echoing the interweaving swirls of branches and trees¹¹⁴. Dance, one of the great themes of Art Nouveau, always involves interweaving of limbs, veils and other dancers, and in itself is of course interweaving pattern.

Line and figure in Art Nouveau are essentially elements of design rather than of representation, although they are representative in the sense of being symbols. Thus the peacock is a symbol of opulence, display and the exotic on the one hand, and a subject for rhythmical flow of line on the other. The two aspects merge in this case, for the sweep of line from long neck through to tail is as extravagant as the symbol, and the interweaving patterning of tail-feathers echoes that of nature. Here the two meanings of figure - its symbol and form - interweave just as they do in the Art Nouveau view of nature, where form is thought to follow function, and the entwining curve of locks of hair reveals the entwining charms of her who wears it. The deepest acts of culture and nature are the interweaving of steps and gestures in dance and the intertwining of limbs in embrace; both are thus suggested by every seemingly innocent weaving of one line with another, even in the mildest of Alphonse Mucha posters or the most abstract furniture of Charles Macintosh. Thus interweaving of line in rhythmical pattern is of the essence of Art Nouveau.

10. Lack of depth

The two-dimensional, flat appearances of Art Nouveau paintings are a result of the emphasis on line, especially outline. Perspective is foregone for the symbolic reduction of real space and depth into the simplified, stylized allegories of Art Nouveau; reality is sacrificed for metaphor. This is the greatest possible contrast to the very three-dimensional, voluptuous Classical figures featured by academicians like George Frederick Watts, Lord Leighton, Edward Poynter (or their continental equivalents like Hans Makart, Theodore Chasserian and Felicien Rops). The

relatively few Art Nouveau landscapes, like Ferdinand Andri's colour lithograph for the poster of the Tenth Exhibition of the Vienna Sezession¹¹⁵, or Adolf Böhm's *Autumn Glow*¹¹⁶, are an even greater contrast to the naturalistic landscapes of the fashionable painters. With the flat surface Art Nouveau is in the timeless world of the eternal verities of the Gothic stained-glass window, and for the same purposes - allegory and symbolism; but the main reason for the two-dimensional stylized surface is that in this way the essence of stylized line can best be seen - and the essence of a painter: "A line is a force, filled with the energy of him who drew it"¹¹⁷.

The limited dimensionality that is obvious in Art Nouveau's pictorial art as an omission of perspective, of the dimension of depth, derives partly from its adherence to the principle of art as an end in itself, for this leads to a lessening of realism. Here form is more important than representational truth. Its figures might be so many cardboard cut-outs, and their backgrounds likewise; indeed, for most Art Nouveau, decoration and border **is** the landscape, for a stylized tapestry-like background is used, or even no background at all. This is the realm of mediaeval painting, where the emphasis is on symbol, allegory and stylized effect - not on truth of perspective or of ordinary visual perceptions, but on heightened perceptions of inner truths.

11. Timelessness

Where there is an absence of depth there is likewise an absence of the dimension of time, except as a restless, swirling, breeze-laden motion that is nevertheless frozen, timeless. The clearest example of this is perhaps Aubrey Beardsley's drawings where, even when a time-sequence is being illustrated, as in his *Morte d'Arthur*, *Rape of the Lock* or *Lysistrata* drawings¹¹⁸, each scene is nonetheless posed, artificial, symbolic, even archetypal, representing not so much the passage of actions in the plot as a timeless series of attitudes, and illustrating truths, not scenes. The

gestures of the characters are not movements but symbols.

There is a difference between the photograph's freezing of time and the Art Nouveau artist's frozen time: the first is still in real time while the second is in no time. The poses of Art Nouveau's figures are artificial, stylized, patterned and sophisticated, representing posturings in the human dance through time but not the common movement of time. These postures are the essence of movement rather than movement itself; they are typical movements rather than particular ones. So Beardsley's *Rape of the Lock* sequence is as unmoving as Alexander Pope's printed words on paper, and is faithful to their spirit as they comment on the essential trivialities of the world of society that this mock-epic of manners parodies. So all Art Nouveau is concerned with ideal time rather than real time, or with experiential rather than actual time, like von Zumbusch's maidens dancing in a ring¹¹⁹: for them time has no meaning while they circle. Henri Toulouse-Lautrec's posters of dancers capture what he remembers of their movement, its overall essence rather than one or two actual moments, just as in a dance one can be conscious of movement but not of actual steps or even the passing of time. Complementing this timelessness are the many paintings that have no element of movement at all, like Alphonse Mucha's paintings of Sarah Bernhardt and other idealized figures. Yet even these have curling hair, dress or decoration, so that the paradox of incessant curling line around a still centre echoes T.S.Eliot's "still point of the turning world"¹²⁰.

The world of Art Nouveau, therefore, is an ideal, unreal timeless one, with its roots in the Parnassus of Gautier and Baudelaire, in the still world of Pre-Raphaelite mediaevalism, in the single-minded following of beauty for its own sake of the Aesthetic Movement, and in Symbolism's archetypal dreams.

Conclusion

The eleven principles of visual Art Nouveau adduced and discussed in

this chapter sum up what seems, from a study of Art Nouveau itself, in all its manifestations, and also from what critics like Schmutzler, Hofstätter, Rheims, Masini, Lorenz, Hammand, Hermand and Weisser have said about it, to be its essence. Whether, like Hofstätter, they have taken pictorial art to be the principal medium of Art Nouveau, or like Fritz Schmalenbach have denied painting to be Art Nouveau at all, or like Geoffrey Warren have claimed that the crafts of jewellery, furniture and glass are paramount, or like Maurice Rheims, Masini and Schmutzler have tried to draw from all the arts and crafts in establishing the essence of Art Nouveau, it does seem possible to define what the rich diversity and individuality of all these creators have in common.

End-notes

- 1 Brinkmann, R.: *Schoenberg und George*, 26ff.; *On the Problem of Establishing "Jugendstil" as a Category in the History of Music*.
- 2 Hamman, R.: opp. cit.
- 3 Hermand, J.: opp. cit., particularly *Stilkunst um 1900*.
- 4 Schmutzler, R.: op. cit., 8-16.
- 5 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 7-16.
- 6 Lorenz, O.: op. cit., 1-8.
- 7 Masini, L-V.: op. cit., 36-53.
- 8 Rheims, M.: op. cit., 7-11.
- 9 Weber, H.: op. cit., 181.
- 10 Noske, F.: op. cit., 12.
- 11 Kropfinger, K.: op. cit., 131-138.
- 12 Gerlach, R.: op. cit., 3-53.
- 13 Warren, G.: op. cit., 5.
- 14 Noske, F.: op. cit., 23; Kropfinger, K.: op. cit., 134.
- 15 Garland, H. & M.: *Oxford Companion to German Literature*, 461.
- 16 van de Velde, H.: *Allgemeine Bemerkungen zu einer Synthese der Kunst*, 261.
- 17 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Debussy entry, 309.
- 18 Daval, J-L: *Modern Art. The Decisive Years 1884-1914*, (London Skira/Macmillan 1979), 84.
- 19 Harding, J.: *The Pre-Raphaelites*, (London, Academy Editions 1977), 64, 69.
- 20 Ibid, 29.
- 21 Ibid, 92-93.
- 22 Warren, G.: op.cit., 5.
- 23 See the discussion of this in Marsh, J.: op. cit.
- 24 Daval, J-D.: op. cit., 74.
- 25 Bridges, A. (ed.): *Alphonse Mucha: The Complete Graphic Works*, (London, Academy Editions 1980), 65.
- 26 Hofstätter, H.H.: op.cit., 167.
- 27 Warren, G.: op.cit., 63.
- 28 Hofstätter, H.H.: op.cit., 106.
- 29 Ibid, 179.

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- 30 Ibid, 189.
- 31 Schmutzler, R.: op. cit., 262; Symons, A. in Harris, B.S.: op. cit., X-XI.
- 32 Rimbaud, A.: *Lettre du voyant*, 1871.
- 33 Harding, J.: op. cit., 73.
- 34 Ibid, 67.
- 35 Ibid, 61.
- 36 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 180.
- 37 Harris, B.S.: op. cit., 51ff.
- 38 Masini, L-V.: op. cit., pl. 397, p. 146.
- 39 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 139.
- 40 Ibid, 238.
- 41 Ibid, 200.
- 42 Hopkins, G.M.: *God's Grandeur*.
- 43 Warren, G.: op. cit., 11.
- 44 Jullian, P.: *Dreamers of Decadence*, 31.
- 45 Walker, R.A.: op. cit., 93.
- 46 Bridges, A.: op. cit., 146.
- 47 Hofstätter, H.: op. cit., 167.
- 48 Saki (Munro, H.H.): *The Chronicles of Clovis*, 1912.
- 49 Grahame, K.: *Wind in the Willows*.
- 50 Hofstätter, H.: op. cit., 167.
- 51 Ibid, 270.
- 52 Ibid, 235.
- 53 Ibid, 230.
- 54 Ibid, 224.
- 55 Ibid, 213.
- 56 Ibid, 202.
- 57 Ibid, 208.
- 58 Hoeber, F.: *Peter Behrens*, (Munich, 1983), 13, quoted in Brinkmann, R.: *On the Problem of Establishing Jugendstil as a Musical Category*, 32.
- 59 Lesure, F.) ed.): op. cit., 45-6.
- 60 Graf, W.L.: *R.M. Rilke*, (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press 1956) 18.
- 61 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 191.
- 62 Noske, F.: op. cit. 12.
- 63 Sadie, S. (ed.): *New Grove*/4, 307.
- 64 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 167.
- 65 Harris, B.A.: op. cit., 160.
- 66 Ibid, 120.
- 67 Lorenz, O.: op. cit., 154-155.
- 68 Bridges, A.: op. cit., 57.
- 69 Communi, A.: *Gustav Klimt*, (London, 1975), 33.
- 70 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 165, 161.
- 71 Ibid, 100, 105, 132, 146, 149.
- 72 Ibid, 76, 82.
- 73 Ibid, 95.
- 74 *Sensuality*: ibid, 164.
- 75 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 270, 180.
- 76 Ibid, 103.
- 77 See Reinhard Gerlach's opposing of Pan (passion, Disorder) and logos (symmetry, Order) in the first chapter of his work on Jugendstil in the Vienna School (op. cit., 3-6).
- 78 quoted by Samuels, R.: *Literary Jugendstil*, *Miscellanea Musicologica* 13 (1984), 3.
- 79 loc. cit. [Wilde, O.: *The Critic as Artist*, 1891].
- 80 Lorenz, O.: op. cit., 133.
- 81 Samuels, R.: op. cit., 3-4.
- 82 Mucha, J.: *Alphonse Mucha: Master of Art Nouveau*, (New York, Tudor

- 1967), 75.
- 83 Wilde, O.: *The Critic as an Artist*.
- 84 Lesure, F. (ed.): op. cit., 27.
- 85 Wilson, M.: *Nature and Imagination. The Work of Odilon Redon*, (Oxford, Phaidon 1978), 58, 63, 67, 68, 74, 75.
- 86 Lorenz, O.: op. cit., 121-122.
- 87 Hoffstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 7.
- 88 *The Crystal Palace Exhibition. Illustrated Catalogue*, (Dover Reprint, 1970 of the George Virtue 1851 *Art Journal* original), 114-115.
- 89 Warren, G.: op. cit., 71.
- 90 Daval, J-L.: op. cit., 73.
- 91 Hajek, E.: *Literarischer Jugendstil*, 12.
- 92 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*/I, 596.
- 93 Billcliffe, R.: *The Glasgow Style*, (World Antiques, Vol.10, London, Caxton 1974), 1917-1920.
- 94 Hofstätter, H.H.: op.cit., 139
- 95 Ibid, 67.
- 96 Ibid, 70.
- 97 Ibid, 78.
- 98 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 158-59, 214-18.
- 99 The Golden Mean or section is 0.618034... which is just appreciably less than two-thirds (0.66...). The two sections of line thus delineated are such that the ratio of the smaller to the larger is the ratio of the larger to the whole line.
- 100 Ibid, 188.
- 101 Schmutzler, R.: op. cit., 7.
- 102 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 12.
- 103 Warren, G.: op. cit., 4.
- 104 Ibid, 28, 33, 34.
- 105 Riley, N.: *World Furniture*, (New York, Mayflower Books 1980), 195-211.
- 106 Kassatz, H-H. & McKinley, G.: *Art Nouveau Furniture*, in *World Antiques* vol.10, (London, Caxton 1974), 1868-9.
- 107 Masini, L-V.: op. cit., 159, 198.
- 108 Ibid, 146, 147, 156.
- 109 Warren, G.: op.cit., 4.
- 110 *The Crystal Palace Exhibition Catalogue*; Mactaggart, P. & A.: *Musical Instruments in the 1851 Exhibition*, (Welwyn, Herts, Mac and Me 1986).
- 111 Masini, L-V.: op. cit., 36, 38.
- 112 Ibid, 52-53.
- 113 Ibid, 115-118, 126-131, 247; Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 262-64.
- 114 Ibid, 88-90.
- 115 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 219.
- 116 Ibid, 231.
- 117 Schmutzler, R.: op. cit., 273.
- 118 Harris, B.S.: op. cit., 16-45, 95-104, 105-114.
- 119 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., 167.
- 120 Eliot, T.S.: *Four Quartets*.

APPENDIX C

LITERARY AND THEATRICAL ART NOUVEAU

Since many illustrations of Art Nouveau mood and style in this chapter are drawn from writers who are usually denominated Pre-Symbolists, Decadents, members of the Aesthetic Movement, Symbolists, and so on, some explanation is necessary if their writings are to be seen as examples of Art Nouveau. For writers, as for musicians, there was no Art Nouveau, Jugendstil, Secession or other Movement to which they belonged; they formed and reformed themselves into Parnassians, Decadents, Symbolists, the *Insel* group, the Worpswede group, the Stefan George circle and so on, all over Europe. Art Nouveau was a common feeling about style, mood and subject that ran across most such anti-Establishment groups at the time of visual Art Nouveau, and was fostered by their friendships with and knowledge of Art Nouveau visual practitioners and their work.

The following discussion, while referring as widely as possible to the general Art Nouveau literary scene, tends to concentrate on four novels by writers in Germany, France and England as exemplars of Art Nouveau. This is done because the sort of wide, promiscuous quotation called for in discussing visual Art Nouveau is by itself insufficient to make a case for literary Art Nouveau, unless supported by the evidence that comes from the more intensive study of some representative examples, the novel and play being by their nature much larger productions than any picture. In particular, the novel, with the widest scope of any literary form and, in the period at least, the most direct expression, provides the clearest and most comprehensive base for demonstrating the nature of literary Art Nouveau.

Delineating Art Nouveau character in literature

This can best be done by looking at the subject matter, imagery and general character of that literature roughly contemporary with visual Art Nouveau and readily distinguishable from the more accepted current streams of mainstream late Romanticism and Realism. Literary Art Nouveau, or more

of mainstream late Romanticism and Realism. Literary Art Nouveau, or more properly, literature with at least some Art Nouveau characters, is, of course, generally identified as that connected with visual Art Nouveau and of the period, of, for instance, the literature of *The Yellow Book*, *The Savoy*, *The Studio*, *La Revue Blanche*, *Ver Sacrum*, *Jugendstil*, *Insel*, *Simplizissimus*, *Pan* and so on that featured Art Nouveau artists, and an excellent example is the Arthur Symons monograph on Aubrey Beardsley, which characterizes him as Pierrot and is an exemplar of the ambiguous, paradoxical, rhetorical style that will be discussed all through this chapter¹.

But much literature that is arguably Art Nouveau has no such direct connection as Symons had with visual art, and Beardsley in particular, while editing *The Savoy*. While even with this wider literature (which is much greater in amount and importance) there are usually indirect connections with Art Nouveau people or art-works, this aspect is less stressed here than the evidence provided by textual and stylistic analysis, because mere association with Art Nouveau does relatively little, compared to analysis, to confirm the probability that a given literary work is Art Nouveau-influenced.

Research into Literary Art Nouveau

Dominik Jost claims that literary Jugendstil, at least, has been a recognized category since 1900², but the first significant scholarship that Jost Hermand collates in the *Literatur* section of his *Jugendstil* of 1971 is that of Wilhelm Emrich in 1933 and Paul Fechter in 1935³. Emrich briefly paints the background of literary and cultural movements from which "der Kunst an einer ausweglosen Ironie"⁴ arose, an art whose irony lay in its sumptuousness, which was ultimately surfeit - an interesting view that accords to some extent with the thinking of his contemporary Fritz Schmalenbach in being relatively dismissive of the phenomenon. Fechter takes it seriously enough to discuss its possible origins in

Nietzsche - in the thirties a writer undergoing some reevaluation. Volker Klotz' *Jugendstil in der Lyrik* of 1957 and Walter Lennig's *Der literarische Jugendstil* of 1958 both attempt to define the essence of Art Nouveau, Klotz seeing it in ornament⁵, like Lennig, but the latter seems to take it less than reverently - "ornamentale Dekoration und drollig verschlungenes Rankenwerk"⁶, going on, however, to make connexions between painterly ornament and *Wortarabeske* in early Rilke, as well as discussing other writers like Gerhart Hauptmann and Stefan George. Art Nouveau as ornament was to be a preoccupation of some scholars from the nineteen-fifties onwards, and produced some excellent, detailed studies, like those of H.W. Belmore and Karl Eugene Webb on the mannerism of early Rilkean style⁷ and Dominik Jost's more general picture of Jugendstil that he subtitled *Tradition des Manierismus*⁸.

An alternative approach has been to trace links between authors and painters, or to note the symbology common to both worlds, like Claude David⁹, Wolfdietrich Rasch¹⁰ (whose lengthy article is able to do full justice to his subject, with all its mediaeval, Wagnerian and fin-de-siècle overtones), Bert Herzog¹¹ and Horst Fritz¹². There are also specific studies of certain aspects of iconology and symbology, like Jost Hermand's *Undinen-Zauber. Zum Frauenbild des Jugendstils* in his 1971 collection¹³.

Jost Hermand's *Lyrik des Jugendstils* (in his own collection, 1971) argues from the total picture of the main artistic and literary movements of the *Jahrhundertwende* that Jugendstil is stylistically influential and important across the artistic media.

The various approaches are all valuable, and should be further pursued, for there are many writers still to be considered,¹⁴ especially in other European languages.

Setting, imagery and symbology

Settings, whether external or internal (in the hero's mind) are

always fantastic, and feature the characteristic symbology of Art Nouveau visual art, like timelessness, sylvan and pastoral existence, mythological subjects, and the flora and fauna of Art Nouveau - roses, lilies, swans, peacocks and so on. Other literary inspiration for visual Art Nouveau is not from nature or folk-mythology - as in Eastern, Classical, Biblical, mediaeval or Rococo mythology and literature - but here again it displays the same fantastic setting and symbology, as, for instance, Pan, satyrs and fauns, sirens, Circes, harems, sultans, the Lost Domain (Samarkand or Camelot, for instance) or the grotesquerie of such works as *The Rape of the Lock* and *Salomé*. Thus the literary counterpart to visual Art Nouveau tends to be the literature of fantasy. The worlds of both visual and literary Art Nouveau are the same world - of extravagant, exotic, fantasy that stretches the imagination and often outrages the proprieties. There is an important group of exceptions - those novels that purport to be novels of realism, set ostensibly in the real world, like the *Grossbürgerliche* settings of Thomas Mann's works, but really set inside the imaginations of their heroes (really anti-heroes) who retreat to their inner worlds because they cannot fit into the mundanity of commerce and social convention. The inner settings of these novels are as potentially fantastic as that of any *Insel-oper*.

Character and plot

Just as the settings may be timeless, with narration often in the continuous present tense, so the characters may appear to live timelessly, with no sense of progress, as, for instance, in Aubrey Beardsley's *The Three Musicians*¹⁵, where present pleasures and pains are all that motivate the characters: their decisions are, however, not so much existential as automatic, since like all such characters they are allegorical, representative of types rather than individuals. Such characters are young, innocent (in the sense of being unburdened by experience), amoral and in this respect timeless, like *La Damoiselle Éluë*, *Mélisande* or

Salomé: in their greenness they may be pure or sullied. Love and death will be their experience, in a world where reality and fantasy merge into the dream-vision. But on the whole these stories are without any sort of plot that carries forward to a conclusion that suggests that the characters have progressed, gaining wisdom or experience: either there is a contrived, fairytale ending that is implied from the beginning and automatically applied at the end, (as in the *Insel-oper*), or there is a tragic outcome that is a direct result of either the hero's inability to change (as in Joris-Karl Huysmans' *A Rebours*, 1884) or to affect the fate his setting impels (as in Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*, 1901).

Style and mannerism

This follows the nature of the setting, whether it be one of profuse, extravagant images, inviting the characters into the tasting of its delights and sensations, or a fin-de siècle surfeited world of Des Esseintes, the anti-hero of *A Rebours*, or the *Grossbürgerliche* world that Hanno Buddenbrooks inherits but does not belong to. If it is the light, pastel Rococo world of the English fairy-tale - of Barrie's *Peter Pan*¹⁶ or Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows*¹⁷ - the style will be similarly whimsical and fey. If it is the vivid, dramatic world of Saki's *Clovis* stories¹⁸ or those of Oscar Wilde's comedies the style will be richly ironic and epigrammatic. If it is the dark, shaded world of *Die Kaiser und die Hexe*,¹⁹ or *Medée*,²⁰ the prose will be plainer and often stark²¹. In each case it is as richly filled with symbols and imagery as a Beardsley drawing. In the extravagant conceits of Max Beerbohm's *Zuleika* Dobson Oxford is strewn with the bodies of young men dying for love of the irresistibly bewitching Zuleika; the Duke himself is the paragon of all the excellences, whose description runs on for pages, as does hers; his proposal of marriage to her alone entails an account of his ancestry, titles and wealth, which takes five pages²². This exaggerated description is characteristically carried past normal bounds almost to the point of

surfeit, and is the prose counterpart of that repetitive, rhetorical, affective verse that in Poe sets the style for writers from Baudelaire to Art Nouveau.

*Hear the tolling of the bells -
iron bells!*

*What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!
For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats
Is a groan.
And who tolling, tolling, tolling,
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
On the human heart a stone -
They are neither man nor woman -
They are neither brute nor human -
They are ghouls:
And their king it is who tolls;
And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls
A paean from the bells!²³*

Some brief examples of Art Nouveau literature will show the same fantastic lushness and affective rhythm.

*Fremd ist, was deine Lippen sagen
fremd ist dein Haar, fremd ist dein Kleid
fremd ist, was deine Augen fragen
und auch aus unsern Wilden Tagen
reicht nicht ein leiser Wellenschlagen
an deine tiefe Selsamkeit.²⁴*

*Les sanglots longs
Des violons
De l'automne
Bercent mon coeur
D'un lamenteur
Monotone²⁵*

*He heard while he sang and dreamed
A piper piping away,
And never was piping so sad,
And never was piping so gay.*

*And he saw young men and young girls
Who danced on a level place,
And Bridget his bride among them,
With a sad and a gay face.*

*The dancers crowded about him,
And many a sweet thing said,
And a young man brought him red wine
And a young girl white bread.²⁶*

Art Nouveau prose likewise features affective repetition and a tendency towards musical effects that help suggest the patterning and strangeness of nature. Again Poe is the model: in his *A Descent into the Maelstrom* three pages are devoted in the first instance to the description of the maelstrom - a typically affective image that Hopkins is later to imitate as

A pool so pitch-black, fell, frowning,

It rounds and rounds despair to drowning.²⁷

and this leads towards the ten pages of the adventure itself that become the type of all such extended fantastic description in Art Nouveau. Perhaps the briefest illustration of this is in Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*, which is written in French, not the least of the work's mannerisms:

J'ai baisé ta bouche, Iokanaan,

J'ai baisé ta bouche.

Another key aspect of mannerism is the effect of lushness, often to the point of surfeit, of the repetition and piling-up of particular images and motifs. *A Rebours* devotes seemingly whole chapters to descriptions of all the many pleasures of literature and the other arts that Des Esseintes runs through. In Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), similarly, page after page is filled with a plethora of imagery rather like a Gustave Moreau canvas, flamboyant and fantastically cluttered. This clutter is, in fact, an effort deliberately aimed at: image is piled on image to create a sense of excess, of lush ornamentation, of stylization for its own sake - obsessive, fascinating, compelling. Time is suspended, and disbelief, while the reader is carried into the peak or abyss of fantasy and sensation. Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (1924) goes even farther into timelessness, dispensing to a large measure with conventional plot and action while Hans Castorp and his various mentors explore the realms of theory about life, science and metaphysics in their eyrie in the mountains that ignores the daily round of life on the plains below. Much of the novel is fantasy, with Hans

speculating and even acting as if entranced as soon as he arrives and even in the war sequence that ends the novel.

Novels like *A Rebours*, Max Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson* (1911) and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* derive in part from Baroque extravagances like Cervantes' or Rabelais' creations, or the Rococo follies of Lawrence Sterne, Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* or Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*. Arno Holz' *Phantasmus* and Gerard Manley Hopkins' poems like *Windhover* and *St Winifred's Well* are of the same mould, with their torrents of images and words tumbling over and rushing into each other. Verse, in fact, can show this sort of mannerism even better than prose.

Allegory and symbol

The profusion of imagery in all these worlds is always highly symbolical, just as the plots are themselves allegorical, and thus universal. The characters are therefore two-dimensional or flat, acting out fables that are universal human experience, but without any moral overtones. They are idealized, stylized, moving towards their fates like marionettes, so that again reality and unreality merge into fantasy. Only nostalgia and melancholy may cloud the stage: together with innocent delight and gaiety they denote the limited depth of emotions these automaton-characters may feel, even though their readers may be drawn through terror or amazement in contemplating their toils. Their despair, delight, ardour or hatred are no deeper than those of fairy-tale characters. Even the decadents like Beardsley's Abbé, Des Esseintes or Dorian Gray seem to be in the grip of a neurosis or neurasthenia that compels them to vices that do not move them: they are no Marquises de Sade, deriving exquisite sensation from their debauchery, but roués for whom all pleasures have palled, who are driven by compulsion, pride and memory only to act out their symbolic Moralities, but as No-man rather than Everyman.

This world embraces the subtle, the exotic, the arcane, although it

is not as esoteric as that of the Aestheticist. It is an Arcadia, Eden or pastoral, or a Lost Garden, nostalgic and fantastic in the memory, the archetype of all gardens. There may be the timeless innocence of the pastoral dreamscape, with echoes of a melancholy for lost innocence or dreams of love, like Mallarmé's *L'Après midi d'un faune*. The dreamscape may feature the four elements or air, fire, water and earth, with their symbolic connotations. The flora and fauna are that of the dream garden, with plants that have special significance, like the lily, the rose or the bramble, and fantastic as well as real creatures: swans, peacocks, fish, satyrs, Pan, demigods, Nixen, giants and so on. All these elements are woven together so that Arcadia is fascinating in the old sense of that word - entrapping.

This is a fantasy-world, having, like that of the Rococo, a combination of Pastoral and mannerist treatment of its imagery, and like it expressing a complete rejection of realities around it²⁸. As the powdered and frilled fantastics of the court of Louis Quinze are a statement denying the existence of an outside world, so Art Nouveau desires to escape from the world of industrial materialism and bourgeois morality - a point that is of the essence of visual Art Nouveau, with its powerful inspiration from Willian Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement. Like the not-quite contiguous literary worlds of Symbolism, Decadence, Late Romanticism and Aestheticism that overlap it, it can nonetheless be identified as a fairly distinct world within and around these worlds. The boundaries are not clear but the centres are - such works as those of Wilde, Huysmans, Beerbohm, Alain-Fournier, Proust and Thomas Mann as will be used for detailed reference below.

Exemplars of Art Nouveau prose style

Some studies like those of Belmore, Webb and the contributors to Hermand's collection have shown Art Nouveau characters in poetry and the novella²⁹ but there is less work on the extended novel. Since the proper

establishment of any literary model for Art Nouveau that is to be based on the essential (eleven) principles model involves structural method and the development of plot, some examples of the novel need to be considered, not in the sort of confirmatory detail that Belmore and Webb give to Rilke, but as general examples of the eleven principles.

Marcel Proust's *A la Recherche du temps perdu*, published between 1913 and 1927, has much Art Nouveau character, with its theme of experiential time blotting out real time, dream being more important than perceived reality, narcissistic and idealistic love, the importance of mood rather than action, and a wistful longing for past shadows. The style is consciously mannered, endlessly-flowing and punctuated with rhetorical device that is subdued in expression. Much use is made of the present continuous tense and indefinite constructions so that a feeling of timelessness is achieved:

Et toujours le charme de toutes les idées que faisaient naître en moi les cathédrales, le charme des coteaux de l'Isle-de-France et de plaines de la Normandie faisait refluer ses reflets sur l'image que je me formais de Mlle Swann: c'était être tout prêt à l'aimer. Que nous croyions qu'un être participe à une vie inconnue où son amour nous ferait pénétrer, c'est, de tout ce qu'exige l'amour pour naître, ce à quoi il tient le plus, et qui lui fait faire bon marché du reste. Même les femmes qui prétendent de juger un homme que sur son physique, voient en ce physique l'émanation d'une vie spéciale. C'est pourquoi elles aiment les militaires, les pompiers; l'uniforme les rend moins difficiles pour le visage; elles croient baiser sous la cuirasse un coeur différent, aventureux et doux; et un jeune souverain, un prince héritier, pour faire les plus flatteuses conquêtes, dans les pays étrangers qu'il visite, n'a pas besoin du profil régulier qui serait peut-être indispensable à un coulissier.³⁰

Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (1924) likewise flows in typical Art Nouveau style, firstly with its alpine equivalent of an *Insel* setting, where the real world is left far below so that in the suspended time of the Berghof dream and tense become confused; love and self-love are mixed with hero-worship and self-projection in the immature Hans Castorp, who looks back to his school-hero/love Pribislav as he looks forward to the siren Madame Chauchat, confusing Pribislav's borrowed pencil with Joachim's borrowed and Fräulein von Mylendonk's purchased one, confusing

his schoolboy sketched ships that are to take him away from school to the engineering cadetship that is never fulfilled, with the sleighs that bring the only contacts with the real world below that he is never to rejoin (except *en passant* to his death). Even when in the unreality of Walpurgis Night he consummates his love for Claudia, it is as if it has never happened, and yet is as much always to be remembered as it is never to be repeated; the dream is more real than the fact:

Die vier von der Fastnachtsgeselligkeit übriggebliebenen Personen saßen unbeweglich. Die Stille dauerte mehrere Minuten. Langsam neigten sich unter ihrem Druck die Köpfe des Paares am Piano tiefer und tiefer, der des Mannheimers gegen die Klaviatur hinab, der Fräulein Engelharts auf das Notenheft Endlich, beide gleichzeitig, wie nach geheimer Verständigung, standen sie vorsichtig auf, und leise, auf den Zehen, indem sie es künstlich vermieden, sich nach der anderen noch belebten Zimmerecke umsusehen, die Köpfe eingezogen und die Arme steif am Leibe, verschwanden der Mannheimer und die Lehrerin miteinander durch das Schreib- und Lesezimmer...

"Tout de mond se retire", sagte Frau Chauchat. "C'étaient les derniers; il se fait tard. Eh bien, la fête de carnaval est finie." Und sie hob die Arme, um mit beiden Händen die Papiermütze von ihrem rötlichen Haar zu nehmen, dessen Zopf als Kranz um den Kopf geschlungen war. "Vous connaissez les conséquences, monsieur."

Aber Hans Castorp verneinte mit geschlossenen Augen, ohne im übrigen seine Stellung zu verändern. Er antwortete:

"Jamais, Clawdia. Jamais je te dirai 'vous', jamais de la vie ni de la mort..."

Seine Zähne schlugen aufeinander. Er hatte den einen Fuß unter seinem knisternden Stuhl hervorgezogen, während er phantasierte, und indem er ihn vorschob, diesen Fuß, berührte er mit dem anderen Knie schon den Boden, so daß er denn also neben ihr kniete, gebeugten Kopfes und am ganzen Körper zitternd. "Je t'aime," lallte er, ~~"Je t'aime"~~, lallte er, "t'ai aimée de tout temps, car tu es le Toi de ma vie, mon rêve, mon sort, mon envie, mon éternel désir..."³¹

Again the elements of Art Nouveau are there: the novel is experimental in the sense of not having a linear plot, for nothing seems really to happen, nor to come to a definite point, except that Hans goes off to war, presumably to die for no purpose at the end. The emotion of the passage is intense and langorous yet its setting unreal, as the sounds of the piano and voices die away, leaving these unlikely lovers to their dream-like sequence of passion, whose ending is unstated and uncertain at this stage of the novel. Hans' falling into French for the expression of his love heightens the exotic, unreal atmosphere of what appears above all an adolescent fantasy; expressions like *unbeweglich*, *Die Stille*, *Langsam*

neigten, unter ihrem Druck help to set the atmosphere of time being suspended so that the dream sequence can commence. (A whole section of the novel is devoted to the subject of the suspension of time³²). Claudia³³ and Hans seem possessed by a power outside themselves - love -, so that Hans *während er fantasierte...und am ganzen Körper zitternd*. Such words are exaggerated, and the repetitions in passages like *jamais, Clavdia. Jamais je te dirai "vous", jamais de la vie ni de la mort* are affective mannerisms heightening the air of unreality about the whole passage. Above all, the passage is suffused with sensuality, a typical *Liebestraum*.

Alain-Fournier's *Le Grand Meaulnes* of 1913, although written with apparent regard for verisimilitude, is a recalling of lost time, like Proust's, and has many elements of Art Nouveau fantasy, again with an adolescent fantasy of a journey into a strange domain where Meaulnes does not know what is about him, yet seems to be known, and undergoes experiences of such intensity of feeling that their memories haunt him thereafter almost in the manner of Poe. His journey is a quest, in effect, for ultimate, unattainable beauty. His puzzlement and wonder in this strange land are seen here:

*Il pouvait être trois heures de l'après-midi lorsqu'il aperçut enfin, au-dessus d'un bois de sapins, la flèche d'une tourelle grise.
- Quelque vieux manoir abandonné, se dit-il, quelque pigeonnier désert!...*

Et, sans presser le pas, il continua son chemin. Au coin du bois, débouchait entre deux poteaux blancs, une allée où Meaulnes s'engagea. Il y fit quelques pas s'arrêta, plein de surprise, troublé d'une émotion inexplicable. Il marchait pourtant du même pas fatigué, le vent lui gerçait les lèvres, le suffoquait par instants; et pourtant un contentement extraordinaire le soulevait, une tranquillité parfaite et presque enivrante, la certitude que son but ~~avait~~ était atteint et qu'il n'y avait plus maintenant que du bonheur à espérer. C'est ainsi que, jadis, la veille des grandes fêtes d'été, il se sentait défaillir, lorsque à la tombée de la nuit on plantait des sapins dans les rues du bourg et que la fenêtre de sa chambre était obstruée par les branches.

Tant de joie, se dit-il, parce j'arrive à ce vieux pigeonnier, plein de biboux et de courants d'air!...

Et, fâché contre lui-même, il s'arrêta, se demandant s'il ne valait pas mieux rebrousser chemin et continuer jusqu'au prochain village. Il réfléchissait depuis un instant, la tête basse, lorsqu'il s'aperçut soudain que l'allée...³⁴

There is so much that suggests the fantastic and the inexplicable - *manoir abandonné, pigeonnier désert, émotion inexplicable, le suffoquait par instants, un contentement extraordinaire*, and references to *la tombée de la nuit* and *obstrée les branches* to further the mystery. The repetition and accumulation of these starts of surprise and wonder - *quelque, Tant de joie*, is manneristic, together with the affective shifts from stopping and resuming the journey, *il continua, s'arrêta, Il marchait*; the novel has no orthodox plot nor satisfactory ending, but a sense of circularity as the mysterious quest must again be relived; and there is intense, sensual emotion that is not relieved.

As a final example, Max Beerbohm's 1911 fantasy *Zuleika Dobson* exemplifies the lighter side of literary Art Nouveau in every respect:

But the carpet, which had faded under his immemorial visitations, was now almost entirely hidden from him, hidden under layers of fair fine linen, layers of silk, brocade, satin, chiffon, muslin. All the colours of the rainbow, materialised by modistes, were there. Stacked on chairs were I know not what of sachets, glove-cases, fan-cases. There were innumerable packages in silver-paper and pink ribands. There was a pyramid of band-boxes. There was a virgin forest of boot-trees. And rustling quickly hither and thither, in and out of this profusion, with armfuls of finery, was an obviously French maid. Alert, unerring, like a swallow she dipped and darted. Nothing escaped her, and she never rested. She had the air of the born unpacker - swift and firm, yet withal tender. Scarce had her arms been laden but their loads were lying lightly between shelves or tightly in drawers. To caclulate, catch, distribute, seemed to her but a single process. She was one of those who are born to make chaos cosmic.

Insomuch that ere the loud chapel clock tolled another hour all the trunks had been sent empty away. The carpet was unflecked by any scrap of silver-paper. From the mantelpiece, photographs of Zuleika surveyed the room with a possessive air. Zuleika's pincushion, a-bristle with new pins, lay on the dimity-flounced toilet-table, and round it stood a multitude of multi-form glass vessels, domed, all of them, with dull gold, on which Z.D., in zianites and diamonds was encrusted. On a small table stood a great casket of malachite initialled in like fashion. On another table stood Zuleika's library. Both books were in covers of dull gold. On the back of one cover BRADSHAW, in beryls, was encrusted; on the other, A.B.C.Guide, in amethysts, beryls, chrysoprases and garnets. And Zuleika's great cheval-glass stood ready to reflect her. Always it travelled with her, in a great case specially made for it. It was framed in ivory, and of fluted ivory were the slim columns it swung between.. Of gold were its twin sconces, and four tall tapers stood in each of them...

She saw it not, heeded it not. She seemed to be thinking of herself, or of something she desired, or of someone she had never met. There was ennui, and there was wistfulness in her gaze. Yet one would have guessed these things to be transient - to be no more than the little shadows that sometimes pass between a bright mirror and the brightness it reflects.³⁵

Here the setting is timeless, in an Oxford somewhere in the Edwardian imagination. Its descriptions are fantastic, with richness piled on richness until repetition begins to dull the reader's sensibilities with the rhythmic repetition of image, phrase and clause. It is full of virtuosity of rhetorical device, with alliteration (*fair fine linen, packages...pyramid...pink*, and other musical effects like consonance (*calculate, catch*), transpositions of word-order (*Of gold were its twin sconces*), archaisms (*Insomuch that, ere...*). The imagery is exaggeratedly profuse (*Stacked on chairs were...sachets, glove-cases, fan-cases. There were innumerable packages in silver paper and pink ribands. There was a virgin forest of boot-trees*). It is sensual (*swift and firm, yet withal tender, the jewel-encrusted books, ivory, gold*). There are subtle touches like *a virgin forest* and the cheval-glass with ivory columns and gold sconces that is to reflect Zuleika, the whole scene recalling Cleopatra's barge³⁶ or Belinda's toilet³⁷ and prefiguring that of the princess Marie in T.S.Eliot's *The Wasteland* of 1922³⁸, where sensuality is implied in every image. The anti-climax of Zuleika's "library" of two timetable-guides is typical of the whimsical cynical nature of this sort of Art Nouveau. Decadence is implied not only in the lavishness of the *objets* but in the setting - Judas College; it is eventually fulfilled in her siren-like destruction of the Duke of Dorset who is foolish enough to show that he too, like all the rest of the world of stricken and therefore contemptible beaux, loves her.

Thus the same elements that comprise visual Art Nouveau are found in its literary manifestation - its experimentalism of style and form, its getting away from any sense of a conventionally constructed and balanced story, its extremism and amorality, affective mannerism, sensuality and surfeit, caricature and exaggeration of detail. There is more than a hint of Zuleika's representing the Other Realm of nature that has mysterious power over men, seen in the flat dimensionality of the world wherever

Zuleika goes - her strange and compelling beauty surrounded by a landscape whose paths are strewn with her admirers. It is also seen in its timelessness that is set in an imaginary Oxford somewhere before Nuffield³⁹, for its plot is circular, being in effect just another episode in Zuleika's Circean destruction of great men who have dared flutter too close to her dazzle. The climax is constantly threatening but never arriving, instead petering out in the irreverent anticlimax that has after all been presaged by the witty commentary's preventing us from taking anything seriously. Like all Art Nouveau, its mannerisms and studied unreality have fascinated the reader and taken her or him into another charming but also sinister imaginary world.

Operatic libretti and the Fantastic: Art Nouveau style

Opera is a medium that brings together visual, literary and musical elements, and so is an important point of connexion between the three main expressions of Art Nouveau considered in this study. In England Ethel Smyth's *Der Wald* (1901) features spirits of the woodland in a manner somewhat reminiscent of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and in *Fête Galante* (1923), with its obvious Watteau and Verlaine connotations, Maurice Baring's libretto is described as "a dance dream in one act"⁴⁰. In France, Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1892) is set in a vague mediaeval landscape; we are not told any reasons for Mélisande's reluctance or Golaud's melancholy, and the scene in the grotto is full of unspoken menace. Debussy's intentions were to find a librettist "who, saying things by halves, would allow me to graft my dream on to him; one who could conceive characters whose story and background belonged to no time"⁴¹.

A glance at the European scene of new operas between 1890 and 1920 shows that most of them fall into three broad categories: late Romantic tearful dramas in the mainstream led by Puccini⁴²; comedies of manners, led by those of Richard Strauss that are predominantly Art Nouveau; and

fantasy-pieces in the Celtic or enchanted-lands mode, which are almost wholly Art Nouveau, of which *Pelléas et Mélisande* is the exemplar. Thus, for instance, Gabriel Piérne's *La Coupe enchantée* (1894), Hamish MacCunn's *Diarmid* (1897), Paul Dukas' *Ariane et Barbe-Bleu* (1907) to Maeterlinck's libretto, Franz Schreker's *Die Ferne Klang* (1913), Louis Aubert's *Le Forêt bleue* (1913) based on Perrault fairy tales, Josef Holbrooke's *Dylan, Son of the Waves* (1914) from his Celtic trilogy *The Cauldron of Anwon*, Rutland Boughton's *The Immortal Hour* (1914), Horatio Parker's *Fairyland* (1915), Walter Courvoisier's *Lanzelot und Elaine* (1917) to Tennyson's Arthurian poetry and Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1919). In these works are found sorcerers, magic charms, spirits of trees, druids, elves, mysterious temples, waters, fountains, fire-spirits - everything represented in English by the orthograph "faery". The ostensible setting may be Classical, as in Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1912) or *Die ägyptische Helena* (1927), it may be Celtic, mediaeval or simply fairyland, but the essence is enchantment as a key element in plot, setting and action. Here the timeless juxtaposes with real time, immortals with mortals, poetic justice and happiness with human fates, so that the poet is supreme, and nature overshadows man. In Boughton's *The Immortal Hour* the mysterious fairy-prince Midir enchants Etain from her earthly heaven of marriage to the Irish King Eochaidh away to the Land of Heart's Desires. This ending is to some extent reversed in Holst's *The Perfect Fool* (1923) when the Fool is able to win the Princess from the Wizard by drinking the potion the Wizard has prepared for himself, whereupon the Wizard retires to the spirit-mountains in wrath, to summon djinns, gnomes, goblins and so on to punish earth - but is unable to do so. In the end magic prevails, for the Fool must marry the Princess he does not wish to because he has meddled thoughtlessly with magic in drinking the potion. In *Die ägyptische Helena* there are again magic drinks, so that Helen's phantom causes the Trojan Wars while she is still under Mount Atlas in the mysterious kingdom of

Aithra's father. In Dukas' *Ariane et Barbe-Bleu*, Ariane is able to penetrate the toils of the enchanted castle with her golden key. In Strauss' *Feuersnot* (1900) the mystical power of Diemut's virgin innocence is able to save the stricken, fireless city from the thralls of Konrad. Fire is a strong Art Nouveau/Symbolist motif, of course.

For Germany, A.D.McCredie has summed up the Jugendstil music-theatre of Ludwig Thuile, Clemens von Franckenstein, Alexander von Zemlinsky, Julius Weismann, Hans Pfitzner, Bernard Sekles and others as follows:

"The plots of their operas emphasize fable, fantasy, the moral supremacy of the poet's world ... the Insel syndrome, distant kingdoms, mixed mythologies, overlapping layers of cosmic and experiential time, of dream, fantasy and reality."⁴³

The very titles of these operas indicate their fantasy-worlds: Schreker's *Die Ferne Klang*, *Das Spielwerk und die Prinzessin*, Zemlinsky's *Traumgörge*, Pfitzner's *Die Rose von Liebesgarten*, Franckenstein's *Des Kaisers Dichter*, Siegfried Wagner's *Schwarzwannereich*, Bartok's three operas - *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, *The Wooden Prince* and *The Miraculous Mandarin*; but it is in the detail of the operas that the fantasy-world is seen.

This world is not just a fairy world, however, for it may be set in the East, as in Sekles' *Die Hochzeit des Faun*, or in the Middle East, as in his *Schahrazade*, von Franckenstein's *Rahab*, or in European fantasy-mythology, as in Sekles' *Die Zehn Küssen*, after H.C.Andersen. The setting may even be familiar, with an added dimension of fantasy, just as it is in contemporary short stories like those of Saki and E.M.Forster. Finally, there is the *Insel* setting, as in Jugendstil operas like *Li-Tai-Pe* that reflect the *Inseln* of Yeats' *Lake Isle of Innisfree*, Gauguin's Tahiti paintings and Debussy's *L'Isle Joyeuse*. In all these the actual setting is less important than the fantasy, and the fantasy may be frankly satirical or simply charming.

This chapter has looked at literary Art Nouveau in the round; examination of it from the viewpoint of the eleven principles will follow, as the necessary third part of the justification of the eleven principles

as defining the three main fields of art, literature and music.

End-notes

- 1 Symons, A.: *Aubrey Beardsley: An Appreciation*, in Harris, B.S.: op. cit., vii-xii.
- 2 Jost, D.: op. cit., 30.
- 3 Hermand, J. (ed.): op. cit., 346-348; 349-357.
- 4 Ibid, 346.
- 5 Ibid, 358.
- 6 Ibid, 368.
- 7 Belmore, H.W.: op. cit.; Webb, K.E.: op. cit.
- 8 Jost, D.: op. cit.; revised version in Hermand, J. (ed.): *Jugendstil. Ein Forschungsbericht*, 462-468.
- 9 David, C.: *Stefan George und der Jugendstil*, (Hermand, J. (ed.): op. cit.), 387-8.
- 10 Rasch, W.: *Thomas Manns Erzählung "Tristan"*, (Hermand, J. (ed.): op. cit., 413-455.
- 11 Herzog, B.: *Der Gott des Jugendstils in Rilkes "Stundenbuch"*, (Hermand, J. (ed.): op. cit., 366-381.
- 12 Fritz, H.: *Gottfried Benns "Nocturno"*, (Hermand, J. (ed.): op. cit., 456-461.
- 13 469-494.
- 14 See Dominik Jost's long list of only some of them in his *Literarischer Jugendstil*, 41.
- 15 Beardsley, A.: *Under the Hill and other essays in prose and verse*, (J. Lane, London 1904), 63-69.
- 16 Barrie, J.M.: *Peter Pan, or the Boy Who Would Never Grow Up*, 1904.
- 17 Grahame, K.: *Wind in the Willows*, 1908.
- 18 Saki (Munro, H.H.): *The Chronicles of Clovis*, 1912.
- 19 Hofstätter, H.H.: op. cit., p.159.
- 20 Bridges, A.: op. cit., 65.
- 21 See the discussion of this point in Samuels, R.: op. cit., 5-8.
- 22 26-29, 15-20, 45-50.
- 23 Poe, E.A.: *The Bells* (1849).
- 24 Rilke, R.M.: *Sämtliche Werke* (Frankfurt am Main, 1955), 123.
- 25 Verlaine, P.: *Chanson d'Automne*.
- 26 Yeats, W.B.: *The Host of the Air*.
- 27 Hopkins, G.M.: *Inversnaid*.
- 28 E.g. Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas, (The Prince of Abyssinia. A Tale, 1759)*.
- 29 Belmore, H.W.: op. cit.; Webb, K.E.: op. cit.; Hermand, J. (ed.): *Jugendstil*, 1971, articles by Klotz, Lennig, Herzog, David, Hermand, Rasch, Fritz, Jost.
- 30 Proust, M.: *A la Recherche du temps perdu; Du Coté de chez Swann*, (edit. Gallimarde, Paris, 1919), 139.
- 31 Mann, T.: *Der Zauberberg, (Gesammelte Werk, III, Oldenberg, 1960)*, 474-476 (selectively quoted).
- 32 Ibid, chapter four, section two.
- 33 The practice of Mann and his translator in the Penguin edition (H.T.Lowe-Porter) is followed, in the differentiated spellings of Mme Chauchat's forename in the three languages, reflecting conventions of pronunciation. Thus *Clawdia* (German), *Clavdia* (French), *Claudia* (English).
- 34 Alain-Fournier: *Le Grande Meaulnes*, (1913), 72-73.
- 35 Beerbohm, M.: *Zuleika Dobson. An Oxford Love Story*. (London, 1911) 5-6.
- 36 Shakespeare, W.: *Antony and Cleopatra*, II, 2.
- 37 Pope, A.: *The Rape of the Lock*, I.

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- 38 Eliot, T.S.: *The Waste Land*, II.
- 39 Beerbohm, M.: op.cit., Note by author to 1947 edition.
- 40 Blom, E.: *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, (Fifth Edition), Vol. 7, 861.
- 41 Debussy, 1889, quoted by Felix Aprahamian, 1979, in his preface to the EMI recording, SLS 5172.
- 42 Even these are not unaffected by Art Nouveau - *La bohème* deals with the young living for art alone, while *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot* with the dream of the East. Puccini's operatic composition perhaps shows a similar absorption of Art Nouveau idioms into the musical mainstream to that of the keyboard character piece.
- 43 McCredie, A.D.: *Some Aspects of Jugendstil Lyric*, 226.

THE ESSENCE OF LITERARY ART NOUVEAU
EXPRESSED IN THE ELEVEN PRINCIPLES

Literary Art Nouveau shares the spirit of visual Art Nouveau and can be seen to exemplify its essential principles, set out in the eleven-principles model of Chapter 3

1. Originality and universality of style

There can be no doubt that in their efforts to build on the models of affective verse pioneered by Edgar Allen Poe, some poets in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries deliberately experimented with new devices, or with older ones used in new ways. There are startlingly novel effects of word-play, word-music, syntax and diction to be found in the poetry of Gerard Manly Hopkins, the young Rainier Maria Rilke and in Arno Holz' *Phantasmus* that will be dealt with under more specific headings below.

Synaesthesia like

*kühle Becken
und mit den Händen ihre Lichte lecken
und raten; Sind sie Silber oder Gold¹*

is deliberately used by Rilke to explore a new range of descriptions; its confusing effect tends to take the reader away from the world of empirical verities. W.B.Yeats talks of an enchanted Celtic Twilight where anything can happen but everything is merely suggested:

*The bread and the wine had a doom
For these were the host of the air ...*

*His neck and his breast and his arms
Were drowned in her long, dim hair²*

Art Nouveau poets wish to be free from form, perspective, symmetry and convention, so that they employ unusual effects that offend the conventional traditions of literary craftsmanship, providing irregularities and surprises that their new freedom makes possible. In his study of Rilke, H.W.Belmore notes many such effects, often with some puzzlement³ but Karl Eugene Webb explains them as asymmetries, an Art Nouveau feature⁴.

Verlaine's scorn for conventional scansion matches his scorn for conventional morality: his manner matches his matter. His principle of *l'impair*, of uneven lines of seven, nine or eleven syllables is deliberately designed to get away from normal prosodic models, like his freedom with vulgar vocabulary and syntax.

Art poétique as poetic philosophy is deliberately novel, especially with its advocating a dreaming atmosphere, muted colours and indefiniteness of statement. Mallarmé's *voyant* is one who will attain supreme knowledge by experiencing every sensation - perhaps the type for Des Esseintes. In prosody his effects could be as inventive as Verlaine's:

Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui

is unconventional but freely and hauntingly rhythmic, for although it scans into roughly accurate anapaests it has more than a hint of Gerard Manley Hopkins' sprung rhythm and ends with a whiplash rush on the final syllable: Mallarmé is actually conducting experiments in metre like those of his contemporary Hopkins, not to get away from it like Walt Whitman in America, but to explore its affective possibilities. When Debussy returns to Paris in 1887 he is delighted to find "Verlaine, Mallarmé, Laforgue nous apportaient des tons nouveaux, des sonorités nouvelles."⁵ He like them is seeking new tones and sonorities to distance his art from the mainstream.

Other poets are determined to explore extreme effects: Isidore Ducasse in his surrealist *Les Chants de Maldoror*⁶, Jules Laforgue's iconoclastic metres and vocabulary, Émile Verhaeren's *Les Soirs*, *Les Débauches* and *Flambeaux noirs*, Maurice Maeterlinck's *Serres chaudes* and Henri de Regnier's early *Jeux rustiques et divins*. This exploration of novelty of effect in French verse ends as abruptly as visual Art Nouveau does, although a year or two earlier, as Jean Moréas leads the reaction to it in his *École Romane*: it is not part of any inevitable drive towards modernism any more than it is in England, but a phenomenon that anticipates and parallels the rise and fall of visual Art Nouveau. When its

experimentalist spirit reappears later in England, for instance, it is as part of a new, expressionistic movement that begins with T.S.Eliot, D.H.Lawrence and James Joyce.

In the novel there is a similar freeing from conventional restrictions, easily seen in the comparative unimportance of plot. Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* suspends action for whole chapters while Hans Castorp discusses medical theory with Hofrat Behrens or theology with Settembrini and Naphta. Joris-Karl Huysmans' *A Rebours* likewise suspends action while cataloguing all Des Esseintes' experiments in vice or his collections of sensation-producing works of art. The endings of all three are anti-climactic, with Mann's novel petering out into suggestions of the future rather than coming to a completion of the present narrative. All this anticipates the experiments of the period after 1918 - such things as Virginia Woolf's later relatively plotless novels, James Joyce's stream of consciousness techniques and structures in *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*, and such innovative verse as that of T.S.Eliot, Gertrude Stein and Dylan Thomas.

2. Sensuality of feeling

One result of mannerist use of language, where effect is used for its own sake, is a new sensuousness where affective diction, combined with an exotic vocabulary and fantasy-settings, produces a strikingly new impact. The subject-matter of both visual and literary Art Nouveau is more subtly sexual and carefree-decadent than that offered by the more restrained late-Romantic consumptive heroines of the popular novels and the conventional nudes of the academies. Swinburne's swimmer is surrounded

*With lustrous shadow that lures the swimmer,
Lures and lulls him with dreams of light*⁷

and Mallarmé's faun dreams of lost encounters:

*Je t'adore, corroux des vierges, ô délice
Farouche du sacré fardeau nu qui se glisse
Pour fuir ma levre en feu buvant, comme un éclair
Tressaille! la frayeur secrète de la chair.*⁸

mystery. It is essentially the Other Realm where gods and spirits rule, and is therefore as far away as it is possible to be from the realist pastorals of Impressionism, where nature is essentially friendly. Art Nouveau writers wish to show nature as essentially foreign to the Order of the scientific and positivistic view of life: Pan brings mystery and therefore disorder into man's conceitedly ordered civilization, the conceit being the denial of what Pan embodies - sensuality as natural imperative. Thus the sceptic, the sophisticate and the cold are mocked or punished, while the naive, the dreamer and the impulsive are rewarded. The short stories of Saki (Hector Hugh Munro) illustrate the primacy of nature over man, or, more usually, imperious women, as the boy's ferret and Pan mock and triumph over human presumption¹². In the short stories of E.M. Forster the gods of the woodland are equally sure in vanquishing the presumptuous as their votive *sacrificienda*, with Mr Bons as affected literateur falling appropriately enough from the path to Parnassus_ and Evelyn the pure spirit actually becoming one._

In poetry as in picture nature and its mystery is the constant background, its elemental and basic rhythms presupposed in every stanza. It is a different nature from the picturesque artifice of Baroque poetry, from the idealized, thrilling wildness of early Romantic prospects, and from the sentimental gardens of late-Romantic love-poems; it is a nature that overshadows man, if he has eyes to see this and notice its jealous menace for those who take it lightly - the clear meaning of the Forster and Saki stories. Nature looks larger than humans in these stories simply because their presumptuous folly makes them seem very small.

The emphasis on nature in Art Nouveau comes from poets' feeling that the truths behind reality are not simple, that life is a mystery and that poems should reflect this. To Mallarmé a poem was a mystery to be unravelled, a type of truth from the Other Realm that contrasted with the obvious follies of mankind in this one_. This is a general belief from the

Pre-Symbolists through to the Symbolists, Decadents and the Aesthetic Movement, for whom all art must be indirect and allusive, since it is about the directly unknowable. Some of this stems from Arthur Schopenhauer's belief that only art, particularly music, can see into the realm beyond ordinary reality. This other realm, that of the evil, unconscious life-force, lies behind nature, so that nature is mystery. Viktor Hartmann's doctrine of the blind, evil life-force is almost equally uncompromising, except that by gradual knowledge of man's subordinate relationship to it he may eventually come to some sort of terms with it - but never really know it.

Thus although nature is sensuous, it can for Art Nouveau be enticing or cruel, like Diana and Pan themselves. It is in the snow that Hans Castorp dreams of Arcadia and watches the duel take place, and it is by the waterfall that he first sees his real self. The artificiality of Des Esseintes partly lies, as it does with Dorian Gray, in his cutting himself from nature: he is no longer able to endure the cold and scents of fresh air for they remind him of how sick in soul he really is. While on the one hand the novel's title - *Against Nature* - is a rallying cry for the Decadents' and Aestheticists' desire to escape naturalism and realism, it is on the other a demonstration of nature's centrality to the spiritual domain that Des Esseintes fatally ignores.

4. Ambiguity

The basic ambiguity of Art Nouveau literature is the dual nature of all its elements - character, plot, setting, imagery - as representation and symbol. Verisimilitude can be so convincing that realist representation may at first seem paramount, as in the wealth of circumstantial detail in *Der Zauberberg* and *A rebours*, for instance, while other stories, like those of *Zuleika Dobson* or the *Insel*-operas, may seem so fantastic that there may seem little intention of representation. Yet on reflection the eccentric characters of *Der Zauberberg* represent the

incongruities of the real world, with their irrelevant philosophical debates and tragic deaths, while the escape of Hans to die on the battlefield of the absurd national ambitions of the Great War is Aeschylean irony. A *rebours*, for all the surfeit of detail, is about a Faust who would be Mephistopheles. On the other hand, the representational aspects of *Zuleika Dobson* and the *Insel*-operas, while not those of everyday reality, are those of dreams that are recognisable as such, so that there is still dramatic suspension of disbelief while reading or watching.

The comedy of manners is constructed around verbal repartee and situation based on paradox, in an overall setting in which sophisticates are seen to be foolish in proportion to their pretence. Every word, gesture and action has ambiguity of more than one kind: each character is aiming to deceive the others, and all are deceiving themselves. Meanwhile the audience is deceiving itself by assuming that it is only **other** people who are being satirized, and on a symbolic level all the characters are stereotypes of social follies and evils. Thus the whole genre is founded on ambiguities, not the least of which perhaps is that scholars pay serious attention to its fantasy.

Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* contains a word-play on "earnest/Ernest" in its title alone, and shows in another term "Bunberrying" the hypocrisy of the middle-class idler-about-town: Jack Worthing righteously condemns Algernon Moncrieff's deceptions but is himself discovered to practise what he condemns. Algernon and he coolly construct elaborate but harmless deceits as ways of winning Cecily and Gwendolen, to the approval of the middle-class audience of such people as themselves, whose social fabric is interwoven with white lies and polite conceits. The audience laughs at the absurdity of it all, elegantly put in paradoxical forms:

The truth isn't quite the sort of thing one tells to a nice, sweet, refined girl.

The truth is rarely pure and never simple. Modern life would be very tedious if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility.

From the last clause it is clear that Wilde is conscious of the ambiguity of a playwright's commenting on the play as such through dialogue, and the rest comments on social hypocrisies. He puts the whole matter succinctly in another context: "If one tells the truth, one is sure, sooner or later, to be found out"¹³.

Poetry almost by definition is based on ambiguities, with the fundamentals of the interplay of multiple denotation and connotation always present. Symbolism adds layers of esoterism to connotation, and Art Nouveau adds an emphasis on the affective where words and sounds can be used for their patterning effects as well as meanings, so that the basic purpose of the poem turns towards an ambiguity between effect and meaning. From Boris de Schloezer's account of it, the text of Skryabin's *Acte préalable* in the original language is an example of the marriage of the ambiguities of Symbolism and Art Nouveau, because as well as arcane symbolisms of death as white sun, towards which life rushes from its first moment of being, dooming itself to ecstasy, "whole passages in the text of the *Acte préalable* are built on artful assonances and alliterations...The variety of prosody is extraordinary; the metrical lines are precisely articulated...[in] intricate rhythmic designs"¹⁴.

Ambiguity is also shown in the de-emphasis of plot in Art Nouveau; the purpose of episodes is not so much to point towards the final outcome as to develop the feelings of repetitious action and its consequent suspension of time (both to be considered below). Action is not so much furthered as repeated or mirrored in resonating patterns, which makes the whole function of plot as the ostensible purpose of a work become redundant. This is the reader's experience in *Der Zauberberg*, whose whole plot is ambiguous throughout, as Hans' visit to his cousin gradually extends indefinitely for no clear reason. It is not clear whether Hans is ill too, or even if he is suffering a sympathetic illness; nor is his strange acceptance of, and acceptance by, the Berghof community, or his

relationships with Claudia, Naphta, Peeperkorn and Sascha ever explained. Episode after episode goes over similar ground, with each purporting to look to plot-development, but without ever furthering it, no matter how dramatic some them may be, like the deaths of Sascha, Joachim and Marjusa, the vision in the snow, or the duel. The reader is being taken through states of mind rather than along a course of actions, but the actions are there, seeming to lead nowhere, serving only to further an ambiguity of intention.

5. Extremity of effect

This principle is seen in writers' determination to explore amorality and extremism. This is realized in Art Nouveau literary work by writers' preparedness to exploit effects of manner where they may lead, even where this conflicts with conventional dictates of form. Thus the conceits of dialogue in the plays of Wilde and Shaw, especially in the latter, cause plays that in other respects seem to be conventionally crafted to be disproportionately slanted towards dialogue. In a comedy like *Major Barbara* Shaw has characters taking extreme positions that offend even his own conceptions of morality, like those of Andrew Undershaft who with impeccable logic maintains it a crime to be poor, and therefore a moral duty to act immorally in order to become rich:

"I am a millionaire; that is my religion!"

Adolphus Cusins, although a professor of Greek culture and morality, actually follows Machiavelli in his life-plan; he is derisively termed "Dionysos" (sic) by the bourgeois Undershaft for his anarchism, and yet by the play's end it is he who is taking over Undershaft's role and will undermine the Establishment, for which purpose he the bohemian becomes bourgeois. The free thought of Settembrini in Mann's *Der Zauberberg* and the portrayal of burgher-establishment decline in his *Buddenbrooks* is again a case where the author's characters and aims take on a life of their own to point in anarchistic or at least anti-establishment directions, and in

so doing actually wrench the structure of their novels from orthodox proportion. Whole chapters of *Der Zauberberg* are taken up in speculative philosophizing while the frequent brevity of *Buddenbrooks'* chapters shows a lack of development of plot-sequence in detail, a method that transgresses normal canons of procedure. Perhaps the converse is Wilde's *Salomé* that, while being a beautifully (in Wilde's Aestheticist sense) structured and proportioned drama, is totally decadent in sentiment despite the execution of *Salomé* at the very end: an ugly story is told with the utmost refinement. The novels *A Rebours* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* are likewise decadent, the former even more so than *Salomé*, but as will be discussed below under mannerism (in Principle 6) they are clearly Art Nouveau in style. Wilde's "No artist has ethical sympathies"¹⁵ is a statement of defiance against mainstream literary practice that his writings certainly demonstrate.

6. Stylization as the dominant feature

Stylization in literature is mannerism of stylistic devices. This can be seen as a characteristically late-cycle phenomenon, just as Flamboyant architecture and Rococo decoration are late Gothic and Baroque styles respectively. Early in an artistic epoch, its purity of ideals and desire to differentiate itself from the tired and overburdened forms of the previous epoch are seen in its clarity and economy of utterance. Towards the end of the epoch devices and complications are added to the original pure forms until its utterance becomes manneristic, and this proceeds until its extremes provoke a reaction that ushers in a new epoch of pure forms and expression. In this case the mannerisms of Art Nouveau may be seen as the final complications of Romanticism, but in their searching for novel effects they also look forward to the experimentalism of the twentieth century.

Literature shows mannerism in the period under study in the effects of sound, arrangement, diction and metre, (and it may be thought that preciosity of subject-matter and imagery is equally mannerist).

The effects of sound are seen most strikingly in the verse of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Arno Holz and the early verse of Rainer Maria Rilke, the latter being thoroughly analyzed by Karl Eugene Webb¹⁶. He feels that what Sternberger calls "the atmosphere of the soul"¹⁷ - the feeling of Rilke's verse as opposed to its meanings - is conveyed through its decorative effects, presumably because these are indirect in their effect on the reader. Structuralist theory would support this view by supposing that the patterns of unconscious desire and feeling will tend to be expressed involuntarily in the patterns of expression. The patterning of verbal device and diction includes the obviously musical effects of alliteration, assonance, consonance or inner rhyme, formation of compound words, transposition of word-order, transformation of syntax and so on that are concentrated in their effects in the verse of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Rilke, the Arno Holz of *Phantasia* and found to a lesser but still significant degree in Swinburne, Aloysius Bertrand, Mallarmé, Verlaine, Stefan George, W.B. Yeats, Nietzsche and so on. The metres chosen are more adventurous than those of mainstream verse, and can feature anapaestic and dactylic rhythms, rhyming within lines and often in tercets, use of feminine endings, together with repetitions and resonances of all sorts to produce an aural effect that mesmerizes and strongly builds a predisposition in the hearer towards the sensuousness of the imagery and meaning.

Thus the characteristic luxuriance and soporific splendour of such verse as that of Algernon Swinburne's *Before Dawn*:

Ah, one thing worth beginning,
One thread in life worth spinning,
Ah sweet, one sin worth sinning
With all the whole soul's will;
To lull you till one stilled you,
To kiss you till one killed you,
To feed you till one filled you,
Sweet lips, if love could fill;

or the equally luxuriant melancholy of Stefan George's *Wir schreiten auf*:

*In träumen unsere arme sich verschränken
Wir laben uns am langen milden leuchten.*

The hypnotic effect of such verse owes much to its sound, to repetitions or resonances that are subtly - or frankly - affective.

Mannerisms of arrangement, that is, transpositions of word-order like Hopkins'

*Things, like the leaves of man you,
With your fresh thoughts care for can you?*

have a two-fold effect, firstly musical, and secondly of delight at the way meaning is clouded and made gnomic by artistry. The same thing is seen more subtly in Max Beerbohm's habit of beginning a sentence with a verb-unit, Proust's with "Alors" or Mann's with an "aber" construction, but the most typical use is the deliberate disordering of normal sentence-order not for purposes of elegant variation but as habitual characteristic. In Hopkins, the early Rilke and Charles Péguy, manner is as important as matter, and could almost convey the poem's import without reference to word-meanings:

*As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung
bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name¹⁸*

*Schimmernde Schwäne in prahlended Posen
gleiten leise auf glänzendem Glatt...
und sie lächeln und lauschen und warten,
und wir gragen uns nicht, auf wen...¹⁹*

*Adieu, Meuse endormeuse et douce à mon enfance
Qui demeure aux prés, où tu coules tout bas²⁰*

H.W.Belmore examines in detail the manneristic effects of the early Rilke, from double and triple consecutive rhymes, repetition, assonance, transposition, alliteration (in the early verse he "more than any other modern poet, with the exception perhaps of G.M.Hopkins, uses it in every poem, often in every line"²¹). K.E.Webb adds to this analysis the primary importance of modifiers (adverbs, adjectives, modifying phrases), the emphasis on intransitive, reflexive and copulative verbs and the relative

unimportance of subject and normal verb, effects of synaesthesia, his two-dimensional plane resulting in lack of temporal reference: all these effects are employed so lavishly and single-mindedly that the affective nature of the verse overshadows any direct orthodox "meaning"²².

The experimental verse of Arno Holz' *Phantasmus* (1898), in its efforts to describe all possible aspects of a love-bed or a sea-scape, in its formal arrangement of words around a central axis and the sheer profusion of decorative imagery, is pure Art Nouveau mannerism. He sees the line as unit, not the foot or rhyme-group or stanza, and wishes it to have its own rhythm that will carry it on its own, independently of the lines around it²³. The profusion of words that make up a given line are mostly strings of adverbs, adjectives, participles and quite outrageously long compound words, all of which dazzle the reader:

Ein
 löwenpratig...ein löwenklaugig, ein...löwentatzig
 tiefes...breites,
 niederes,
 karfunkelddämmerflimmerüberblutetes,
 rubinampelscheinschimmerüberflutetes,
 duftend, dampfend,
 sinnberasuchend, sinnbetäubend,
 sinnunnebelnd
 weihrrauchbeckenwolkenumwirbelglutetes,
 seidenweiches,
 seidenwonniges, seidenwohliges,
 seidenwogiges,
 seidenwiegiges, seidenschmiegiges,
 seidenkühliges, seidenpüppiges, seidenpfühliges
 ...Purpurlager...²⁴

The verse is planned to have complex underlying *unvermeidlich* rhythms that express the essence of a subject²⁵ - a concept that is very close to Gerard Manley Hopkins' *instress*, in which his strikingly novel diction and metres attempt to suggest the *inscape*, or teleology, of the natural world. Both poets use extended alliterative, assonantal, consonantal and onomatopoeic effects, combined with a heavily repetitive manner and the use of transposition of word-order, all simply for their musical and cumulative effect. Neither can have known the other's work, but the resemblances are striking, despite their very different milieus and doctrinal bases. Not

the least of these resemblances is their acknowledged debt to mediaeval diction and rhythms - Holz' *Mittelachsenpoesie* and Hopkins' *Sprung Rhythm*²⁶ deriving from Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse. Hopkins' baroque, ingenious, musical vocabulary and diction is, like Holz's, highly suggestive of Art Nouveau, although he died in 1889, with much of his poetry being written in the seventies and eighties. In English literature Hopkins is not regarded as belonging to any school (nor did he found one, because most of his work was not published until after the Great War, when his one disciple was perhaps the Expressionist Dylan Thomas). His mannered verse, however, anticipates much of the Art Nouveau revolution in the arts. In theme he is perhaps Pre-Raphaelite, with his pronounced mediaevalism, innocence of approach and religious inspiration, but in style decidedly modern, although his *Sprung Rhythm* is, of course, based on mediaeval models. In *Windhover* he even uses the whiplash-shape as he describes the hovering and sudden diving of the bird - pure Art Nouveau some years before Hermann Obrist's *Cyclamen* (1895);²⁷ his uneven metrical feet are themselves essentially whip-shaped: [stresses added]

Nóthing is so béautiful as spríng
 When wéeds, in whéels, shoot lóng and lovely and
 lúsh²⁸

And the mídriff astráin with leaning of, lácéd with fire of
 stréss²⁹

On méadow and river and wínd-wandering, wéed-wínding bánk³⁰

The same comment might well be made about Holz' remarkable stanzas:

See, See, sonnigste See,
 soweit
 du ... siehst!
 - - -
 in
 meine
 irreproschabelste, inkomparabelste,
 wunderdämmerigste, zauberschummerigste,
 rubintraumlichtkarfunkelndste
 purpurgrotte!³¹

So striking is this literary mannerism of Holz and Hopkins that their verse must be considered as Art Nouveau. Holz' exotic subject-matter in

Phantasmus brings him even closer to it, and Hopkins' whole religious world and conceits are as fantastic as anything else in Art Nouveau.

The use of mediaeval devices for affective ends is also seen in the verse of Thomas Hardy after his last naturalistic novel (*Jude the Obscure*, 1896), where he shows a more restrained mannerism, if not the exuberant fantasy of Holz. Like Holz, he can hardly have known Hopkins' verse, yet leans strongly towards mediaeval alliterative verse and vocabulary-models: his vocabulary has many "slightly strange coinages out of existing words"³² like "outleant",³³ "blast-beruffled",³⁴ "scath",³⁵ "salamandrine",³⁶ "illimited"³⁷ and so on that are reminiscent of Hopkins in their being formed for their musical effect in their contexts. His verse-rhythms and alliterative style are most reminiscent of mediaeval models:

*Confident I in her watching and ward through the
blackening heather,
Deeming her matchless in might and with measureless
scope endued...
Heard of a world wheeling on, with no listing or
longing to join,
Even then! while unweeting that vision could vex or
that knowledge could numb,
That sweets to the mouth in the belly are bitter,
and tart, and untoward...³⁸*

Mannerism of language is also at home in the theatre where the long influence of the verse-play colours even the usage of non-verse. Affectation is accentuated in the Art Nouveau period deliberately to distance its utterance from that of realism; nothing could be more affected than Wilde, whose paradoxes are as elegant as Bernard Shaw's are brutal. Theatrical expression finds its way into the novel in this period as never before or since, with Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson* and J.K. Huysman's *A Rebours* using the most luxuriant language for page upon page, where resonance of phrase, clause and sentence - even of whole paragraphs - is deliberately done to produce hypnotic effect. Combined with such elaborate diction is richness of imagery piled upon imagery. Repetition beyond formal canons of taste is the first of these, from Edgar Allan Poe's *The Bells*, through Hopkins and Arno Holz to Beerbohm's excessive descriptions in *Zuleika*

Dobson, where hyperbole and conceit are extravagantly heaped upon one another in praise of the incomparable Zuleika and in pity of her despairing lovers. Deliberate archaisms abound, and again are used solely for effect; both these devices are discussed in the comments to the extract from the novel in the previous chapter.

Des Esseintes overdoes everything in his search for exotic sensations, his fabulous wealth making anything possible except the increasing or even maintenance of pleasure in proportion to his pains. He surrounds himself at one time with every exotic precious stone, their names reeled off in paragraph after paragraph, or at another time he seeks the most exquisite perfumes, whose description fills pages: such richness of effect cloyes the reader's palate as surely as Des Esseintes'. In *Der Zauberberg*, Settembrini and Naphta argue their way endlessly into more and more abstruse theological and philosophical dilemmas and the baroque, Falstaffian figure of Mynheer Peeperkorn orates fantastically far into the night. All is overdone, with richness heaped on richness to the point of surfeit.

All this is essentially the same as the verbal extravagance of Arno Holz, Gerard Manley Hopkins and the young Rilke, who delight in word-play for its own sake - manner before matter. To a lesser extent the more orthodox poets like Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Algernon Charles Swinburne and Coventry Patmore feel more free with the voluptuous possibilities of dactylic and anapaestic rhythms, as well as feminine endings that sound free and somewhat sensuous in poems like Swinburne's *The Garden of Proserpine*. Finally, it must be noted that not all mannerism is towards lushness of diction; Wilde's *Salomé*³⁹ and some of the verse of Arthur Symons⁴⁰ and John Addington Symonds⁴¹ experiment with the starkness of syntax that avoids dependent constructions, for an effect of directness unusual for the day. Mallarmé's vocabulary is deliberately compressed into a different, cryptic mannerism that tends to exclude prepositions, relative

pronouns and conjunctions; he further complicates his diction by devices of transposition⁴², an involved syntax, archaisms⁴³, special terms of his own (*espoir du corridor*⁴⁴, *agonie, vierge, aboli*), unattached appositions and absolute clauses, all creating the possibility of a wealth of cloudy meanings and sensations⁴⁵.

7. Emphasis on detail

With the substantial lessening of the role of linear plot in literary Art Nouveau, interest devolves naturally towards detail - the episodes, the characters, the imagery. The focus thus falls on the immediate rather than the future, as has been seen in respect of *Der Zauberberg's* episodes, all of which are sufficiently absorbing in themselves without any reference to any linear outcome except Hans' inner development. *A rebours* similarly deals with inner process - in this case disintegration. In *Zuleika Dobson* the focus is upon the extravagance of word, action and description; the novel's fascination lies in the manner of its actions rather than in the actions themselves. In *Le grand Meaulnes* the real action is inside Meaulnes' memory, for the beauty of the original dream-sequence can never be regained.

In a conventional novel or play character is seen in relation to plot: traits or actions lead towards outcome. In Art Nouveau the interest is in characters for themselves, even though they are "flat" - that is, without the natural psychological depth that makes them lifelike, and focuses of empathetic interest. They seem incapable of doing other than they do, as if they are enchanted or obsessed, so that how they act is more interesting than why. Meaulnes and the Duke of Tankerton - and even Zuleika herself - are enchanted; Des Esseintes and Dorian Gray are obsessed. Not only the characters but the reader is under a spell: it is known beforehand what they will do, but there is fascination in their doing it. The reader is lost in the detail of the moment, and is thus absorbed because he wishes to be drawn into dream; the dream-sequences are deep

structures of his experience. For instance, the Settembrini-Naptha duel is that between revolt and authoritative tradition, Hans' vision in the snow is the archetypal dream-vision of primal beauty and the Hofrat the Wise Old Man of Jungian psychology. Like the characters, the reader's interest is in being rather than becoming; paradoxically, therefore, the highly artificial creations of literary Art Nouveau are as psychologically appropriate as any conventional or realistic novel.

There is also a natural focusing towards the detail of word, gesture and mannerism, including the building of detail towards surfeit, but these have already been discussed above (Principle 6 - Stylization).

A last aspect of the emphasis on detail needs to be discussed - the tendency to the avoidance of climax, to an evenness of dramatic interest spread amongst the episodes rather than concentrated in climaxes. There may be a constant leading towards climax, but towards a prolonging of tension without satisfactory resolution, without even anticlimax, sometimes, until the end. Des Esseintes works constantly towards new pleasures but each is less satisfying than the last and he knows before he begins each that this will be the inevitable outcome. Dorian Gray similarly pursues his vain hope that through pleasures he can escape his damnation, even though each one makes his dissolution more certain. Mallarmé's satyr (*L'Après-midi*) also suffers constant disillusion: even his dreams cannot recapture the thrill of remembered pleasure. The outcome of such sighing towards, but not gaining, pleasure is the melancholy of disenchantment.

8. Repetition

The detail, or microstructure, of literary Art Nouveau is formed by repetition and resonance. At the level of the episode this is most obvious, for in the novel it is as if the same sequence is being varied rather than new ones created, for the characters, being flat, do not develop, their experiences confirming rather than modifying their natures.

This can be seen in the obsessed characters like Des Esseintes and Dorian Gray, but it is also true of the enchanted ones like Hans Castorp, Meaulnes and the Duke of Tankerton. The repetitive nature of the episodes of *Der Zauberberg* firstly springs from their being a series of initiations of Hans into the dream-world of the Berghof, which seems outside the real time and experience of the world below. It is significant that the first two chapters deal with his arrival at the sanatorium and his birth into the bourgeois world below. Then follow his initiation by Settembrini (Satana) into scepticism, his initiation into illness and medicine, his initiation by Claudia (Humaniora) into love, his introduction to the counter-arguments of Catholic orthodoxy (Civitas dei) by Naphta the Latinist, and finally into the battle between revolt and tradition, in the duel (Hysterica passio) that foreshadows his bleeding on the battlefield. The seven days of his creation have been about his learning of the different faces of love, including its reverse face of hatred, and the last words of the novel are of the vision of love he first had in the snow. In this sense, then, all the seven chapters and fifty-one sequences are equal in a way that they cannot be in the plot-directed novel; here the interest lies in the detail that is the justification of the overall seven-chapter scheme.

9. Interweaving

Literary Art Nouveau's lack of realism is seen in its simplified settings, which are dreamlike, and in its flat characters, who tend to repeat sequences rather than develop along a dramatic plot-line towards *dénouement* or catastrophe. As the units of line and outlined shape in visual Art Nouveau interweave to form patterns, so the symbolic rather than realistic characters are manipulated by their stereotyped roles into patterns of stage-design - into a series of gestures, attitudes and sequences illustrative of their symbolism.

In Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson* Zuleika plays her role of man-destroyer as if a marionette; like a Siren or Calypso there is no possibility of any

other course. All the other characters in some way serve this end, their roles being as acolytes or votive offerings to her beauty. She must even destroy the only being she has ever loved - the Duke, who alone of men, by being able for a time to dissemble his love for her, causes her to love him. His apparent disdain infatuates her, but she must demand total subjection, so that when the Duke capitulates and reveals his abject adoration, she discards and destroys him; the inevitable patterning of captivation and destruction thus continues.

Mann's *Der Zauberberg* illustrates clearly the nature of the interweaving of stereotyped characters and settings to make design rather than plot. The novel is a series of episodes, all at the Davos *Insel*-sanitorium, with a coda at the last setting that is the nightmare of the trenches where young idealist-dreamers kill each other. Hans is rather passive, wishing to remain in the suspended time of the Berghof life rather than to take any steps towards pursuing his career: he seems a prisoner of enchantment. Across Hans' dream existence interweave the flat characters of the serious Joachim and his giggling Marusja, Claudia the Siren, Naphta the casuist, Settembrini the philosopher, the Controller Behrens, the princely Peeperkorn, with the strange settings of the bedrooms, dining-hall, assembly rooms, Behrens' consulting rooms and house, the snow, the walking-route, and the most shadowy of all - Claudia's bed. Each of the sequences is a repetition of the others - an episode in Hans' initiation into this Mountain of Dream and its strange life and values. This education for unreality is his preparation for the real nightmare of the battlefield.

10. Lack of depth

The flat surfaces of visual Art Nouveau, giving an idealized view of reality, are of symbolic importance, showing the underlying patterns or forms of nature that are hidden by normal appearance. The logical counterparts in literary Art Nouveau are flat character and fantastic

setting, both lacking realism but gaining in symbolism thereby. Characters are simplified into stereotypes or distorted into caricatures, and behave more like automata than real people. Settings are in dreams or fantastic imaginary constructs like *die Insel* or idealized memory.

The symbolic importance of a flat or stereotyped characters is enhanced by their lack of psychological depth. The relatively few characters in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* are, except for Gray, tightly-drawn types of their respective classes and habitats, and Gray himself is single-minded, shallow despite all his experience. His role is not that of Faust, who might have chosen otherwise and suffers agonies when he realizes his evil, but that of one who cannot choose, and is driven on by an obsessive evil he neither chooses nor regrets. This is equally so in *A Rebours*, where Des Esseintes is repetitive, obsessive in his pursuit of pleasure to the point that it bores even him - yet he cannot stop.

Flat characters like these, created as symbols rather than realistic portraits, can be all the more vivid for being limited. Evil characters like Salomé, Zuleika, Des Esseintes, Dorian Gray, and Naphta, idealized ones like the Duke, Hans Castorp, Joachim Ziemssen and Wilde's *The Young Syrian* are fascinating despite their dreamlike sayings and actions. Character so drawn is the greatest possible contrast to that of realism from Émile Zola and Guy de Maupassant, where often an individual, although certainly fully rounded, is as colourless and indistinct as his milieu. Finally it is worth noting that Art Nouveau character is caricatured, but not distorted as T.S.Eliot's Stetson, Burbank, Prufrock, Sweeney, Princess Marie and other *Hollow Men* are to be in Expressionist literature: Peeperkorn, Claudia, Salomé, Des Esseintes and Dorian Gray are recognizable symbols, not distorted humans.

Setting can similarly be both symbolic and striking, as in the gorgeous spectacles of the *Insel* operas, Arno Holz' baroque seascapes, Dorian Gray's depraved world and the portrait that in effect becomes the

setting or mirror for all his actions, the Oxford of Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson* (that Beerbohm explains is the Oxford of his imagination, set in no time), the Floressas des Esseintes' Chateau de Lourps, the dream-setting of Meaulnes' Lost Domain, the twilight-world of fauns, satyrs, naiads and the like, from the faun-poems of Mallarmé, Bierbaum, Trakl and Heym to E.M.Forster's short stories.

Not only the principal settings for these works are important, but also the interior settings of dreams and occasional scenes; the remote, closed world of the Davos sanitarium in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* is itself an *Insel*, a retreat that is set above the normal world and its happenings. Scenes like the masked ball, Peeperkorn's late-night party, the duel in the snow and Hans Castorp's dream of Arcadia while caught in the blizzard are as much internal dream as external fantastic.

11. Timelessness

In visual Art Nouveau one looks not so much at actions and gestures as at action and gesture itself; all is stylized so that the act of dancing, say, in a Toulouse-Lautrec poster is suggested by the symmetries of the curve of a dancer's body, arm or dress that are like the symmetries of other Art Nouveau dancers. The gesture is frozen in time; what is seen is the art of the dancer in every age, not just that of a particular dancer at a particular time.

In literary Art Nouveau, and especially in poetry that does not have the element of plot, timelessness can be suggested by the use of the present tense, particularly in its continuous and imperfect forms, as in poems like Mallarmé's *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, by infinitive and participial constructions, by the use of "and" as well as repetitions, as in much early Rilke:

*Das war ein Aufstehen zu dem weissen Kleide
und dann durch Gassen ein gesmücktes Gehn
und eine Kirche, innen kühl wie Seide,*

und lange Derzen waren wie Alleeen,
 und alle Lichter schienen wie Geschmeide,
 von feierlichen Augen angesehen.⁴⁶

The work of Edelgard Hajek⁴⁷ and Karl Eugene Webb⁴⁸ on the Rilke's achieving of timelessness in his early poetry clearly supports the evidence of this sort of example. Bergson's distinctions between cosmic and experiential time are apposite here, for in Rilke *time durée* - experiential or subjective time - seems not to move, as infinitives, gerunds, participles and constructions favouring *sein*, copulatives and reflexives are constantly used⁴⁹.

Aiding the impression of timelessness is the comparative lack of plot-development, as in *Der Zauberberg*, or by a fantasy-setting and plot that bears no relation to reality, as in the *Insel*-operas that rely on magic or supernatural entities for their outcomes: here the plot is essentially that of dream or "Once upon a time" fable, and the time that passes is not real time any more than the characters or actions are real. In Proust's novel *A la Recherche du temps perdu* the reader is constantly borne back to a timeless realm that is the narrator's recollections or reliving of the past, but not to the past itself, for each feeling and action is coloured by dream, so that it is neither present nor past.

In *Der Zauberberg* time only exists as a construct of the people down on the plains, so that Hans finds his former conception of the passing of time confused and ceases thinking about it. They live in real time - he in experiential time that scarcely moves for whole chapters or sequences. Even his languishing for the return of Madame Chauchat seems as unreal as her return, for it seems a different Claudia that appears, so that their one night of bliss might never have happened. The unconsummated passion between Joachim and Marusja remains unconsummated, as they are frozen by the strange setting into immobility until they die.

End-notes

- 1 Rilke, R.M.: *Sämlichte Werke*, III, 227.
- 2 Yeats, W.B.: op.cit.
- 3 Belmore, H.W.: op. cit.
- 4 Webb, K.E.: op. cit., 109.
- 5 Quoted in Wenk, A.B.: *Debussy and the Poets*, (Berkeley, 1976), 2.
- 6 From which a quotation is appended to the first of Florent Schmitt's *Ombres* (1917) -
- 7 Swinburne, A.: *A Swimmer's Dream*, II.
- 8 Mallarmé, S.: *L'après-midi d'un faune*
- 9 Hofmannsthal, H.v.: *Die Beiden*.
- 10 Swinburne, A.: *Hesperia*.
- 11 Wilde, O.: *Salomé*.
- 12 Saki: *Sredni Vashtar (The Chronicles of Clovis, 1912)*.
- 13 Forster, E.M.: *The Celestial Omnibus* (1912).
- 13 Idem: *Other Kingdom* (1912).
- 13 Mallarmé, S.: *Hérésies artistiques, L'Art pour tous*, (*L'Artiste*, 15 September 1862); letter of June 1884 to Léo d'Orfer.
- 13 Schopenhauer, A.: *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (1819).
- 13 Hartmann, V.: *Philosophie des Unbewussten* (1865).
- 13 Huysmans, J.-K.: op.cit., ch.10.
- 13 Wilde, O.: *Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young*, Chameleon, December 1894.
- 14 Schloezer, B.de: op. cit., 300, 296.
- 15 Wilde, O.: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Preface.
- 16 Webb, K.E.: op.cit.
- 17 Ibid, 47.
- 18 Hopkins, G.M.: *As kingfishers catch fire*.
- 19 Rilke, R.M.: ibid, I, 112-113.
- 20 Péguy, C.: *Mystère de la charité de Jeanne d'Arc*.
- 21 Belmore, H.W.: op. cit., 44.
- 22 Webb, K.E.: 106-113.
- 23 Holz, A.: *Werke*, Vol. 5, *Kunsttheoretische Schriften*, 67.
- 24 Idem: *Werke*, Vol. I, 68.
- 25 Idem: Vol. 5, loc. cit.
- 26 Hopkins, G.M.: letter to R.W.Dixon, Oct. 5, 1878, (*Penguin edition* 182-185).
- 27 Warren, G.: op. cit., 11
- 28 Hopkins, G.M.: *Spring*.
- 29 Hopkins, G.M.: *The Wreck of the Deutschland*.
- 30 Hopkins, G.M.: *Binsey Poplars*.
- 31 Holz, A.: *Barocke Marine*.
- 32 Kermode, F & Hollander, J.: *Modern British Literature*, (*The Oxford Anthology of English Literature*, Oxford, 1973), 14.
- 33 Hardy, T.: *The Darkling Thrush*.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Idem: *In Tenebris (I)*.
- 36 Idem: *The Convergence of the Twain*.
- 37 Idem: *The Darkling Thrush*.
- 38 Idem: *In Tenebris (III)*.
- 39 Samuels, R.: op. cit., 7-8.
- 40 Symons, A.: *In the Wood of Finvara, The Crying of Water*.
- 41 Symonds, J.A.: *In the Key of Blue*, 1893.
- 42 Mallarmé, S.: *Propos*, (October 1886), p. 147.
- 43 Chassé, P.: *Les Clefs de Mallarmé*, (1954, ch.3)
- 44 Mallarmé, S.: *Toast funèbre*.
- 45 Idem: *Divagations; La Musique et les lettres*.

- 46 Rilke, R.R.: *ibid*, I, 387.
47 Hajek, E.: *op. cit.*
48 Webb, K.E.: *op. cit.*
49 *Ibid*, 108-114.

IMPRESSIONISM IN MUSIC

Summary of the argument of this chapter

The conventional definition of musical impressionism is that of musical tone-painting¹, which is allowable where the imagery is like that of the simple pastoral-realism of the painters' Impressionist movement, and where there is simple depiction of imagery, rather than use of imagery for deeper purposes. But by extension musical impressionism is usually held to cover all imagery, whether realistic, fantastic, symbolic or mannered, and whether there is simple depiction or complex evocation and reference. Since it is possible to differentiate between the different sorts of imagery and the different purposes for which it may be employed, it is helpful to do so, and to think of impressionism, realism², symbolism and the mannered fantastic (Art Nouveau) as separate cultural strands that can run through different works by the same composer, or even through the same work. To do this is to appreciate more of the complexity of a composer or work, and to do both more justice.

Conventional notions of musical impressionism

[Note: Throughout this chapter the historical movements Impressionism (painters of the *Salon des refusés* and their school) and Symbolism (the poets and artists who identified with Baudelaire) will be distinguished by capital letters from analogous aesthetics and techniques in other arts or periods.]

Impressionism in music is firmly fixed in usage, with dictionary entries in standard references like Blume (*Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*) and New Grove, as being musical tone-painting of visual or literary imagery. It seems reasonable to allow such a term when it refers to the imagery of historical Impressionism - that of natural scenes, especially those coloured with the naive realism and connotations of the pastoral seen behind the works from the eighteen-seventies of Monet, Manet, Renoir and others.

But by extension musical impressionism, unlike that of the painters' historical movement, is also considered to cover other imagery, so that Hans Albrecht's entry in *Blume* vol.6 covers the exotic (1059), *fontain-Effekt/Fernwerk* (1057, 59) and *mystischen-Zauber* (1060). Here it leaves any strict correlation with Impressionist painting, which never ventured into the strange or supernatural, although of course Post-Impressionism did. Thus until recent years works whose titles suggested tone-painting of almost any sort have tended automatically to be considered impressionistic. This arises partly from conventional ideas about musical impressionism as reflected in dictionary entries³ and in the critical literature⁴, at least until the nineteen-seventies, and partly because Art Nouveau, despite the work of specialist writers, has not been generally thought of as an important musical strand of the era, and even Symbolism little understood.

Conventional ideas on musical impressionism have tended to rest on loose definitions now undergoing revision as a result of the questionings of Stefan Jarocinski in 1966, Edward Lockspeiser in 1962 and 1973, Claudia Zenck-Mausser and the specialist studies of Art Nouveau in music since the nineteen-sixties (listed in the Bibliography)⁵. It will be necessary to review recent musicological discussion on musical impressionism and to attempt to clarify it in order to differentiate more clearly between impressionistic, Art Nouveau and other influences that may be important to an understanding of these pieces.

First it is necessary to consider three factors - complexity and ambiguity or intention, and the nature of reference itself.

The complex nature of some music

If scholars have been confused over musical Impressionism or Symbolism then it is equally likely that composers were also less than clear as to how their music might be regarded. Composers even as interested as Debussy in the cultural currents around them may not have bothered to differentiate between Impressionism, Art Nouveau, Symbolism or

Aestheticism in their music - or even as historical movements, for there is much overlapping and interaction - as well as scholars with hindsight claim to do, nor may they have wished to do so.

Debussy, for instance, made conflicting statements about Impressionism⁶, which may be very much like Walter Crane's attack on Art Nouveau⁷: although some of their work can be identified with the movements they are deprecating, they are not so much antithetical to the movements as concerned against being so narrowly labelled, for such easy labelling ignores the breadth of what they wish to do.

Ambiguity of intention

In the cases of Debussy and Crane, as with other artists as intelligent about and sensitive to the variety of stimuluses around them, there were other influences working powerfully on their creativity, so that a given piece could well reflect more than one strand of artistic inspiration. Thus a piece like Debussy's *Brouillards* from *Préludes II* can be seen as having some reference to impressionist scenes of mists as well as to symbolist imagery of the ghostliness of the dream world, and this very ambiguity (along with its patterning) may be seen as an Art Nouveau character. But from what has already been argued, its having some impressionist reference is not necessarily to justify its being considered just as musical Impressionism.

Reference and meta-reference

In the imagery of Art Nouveau and Symbolism an image like the mists of Debussy's *Brouillards* exists on two levels - the visible image and the more important invisible reality it symbolizes, in this case the obscureness of the meta-world's realities. This meta-reference is of primary importance in symbolist imagery: like impressionism, naturalism and realism it uses much of the common imagery of nature, but with very different connotations. Behind any impressionist image of a mist is a particular aesthetic of simple beauty and a relatively uncomplicated

philosophy of perception that is the opposite of symbolism's sophisticated aesthetic and Art Nouveau's mannered technique. Both impressionism and symbolism must use simple imagery, often the same imagery, but with this difference: impressionism's emphasis is on the image's simple reference, Art Nouveau and symbolism's on the complexity of meta-reference.

The importance of mood

There is an important corollary of this emphasis on meta-reference, which is that of an emphasis on complexity and subtlety of mood: mood is reflective, a commentary on the imagery's implications rather than a simple reaction to imagery. In the discussion of the First-Order repertoire a serious attempt is made to show that moods of mystery and sensuality, and feelings of timelessness and disorientation, can be discerned with reasonable probability; since extremity of mood is a significant and discernible variable in musical Art Nouveau and symbolism, it is likely to be an important indicator of symbolism as against impressionist character. Symbolism is about dream-painting rather than scene-painting, and about the evocation of the more exotic and extreme moods rather than the simple ones of Impressionism⁸.

Differentiating Art Nouveau and symbolism in music

This has been dealt with in the main body of the study but will be summarized here: in music, the two influences overlap but can be differentiated in some respects. Symbolism is seen in proportionate systems like those based on the Golden Mean, in Skryabin's use of symmetrical pitch-sets as having perfections of form not available to diatonic or modal sets, and in titles that have specific symbolist reference like those of Satie between 1892 and 1894, or Rakhmaninov's tone poem based around Arnold Böcklin's *Isle of the Dead*. It can be seen in all numerological aspects of works, and in evocation of the ghostly Other World of death.

Art Nouveau begins with the Other Realm of life as seen behind nature - the supernatural and fantastic - but also deals with death, timelessness, transformation and all the other themes dealt with earlier. It is concerned with patterning, interweaving and mannerism of figure and motif to make its peculiar textures. It can share with symbolism its sensuality, ambiguity, and even lack of depth and timelessness, but is uniquely asymmetrical and mannered.

Both symbolism and Art Nouveau are in a philosophical sense idealisms, where impressionism is a variant of realism. Perhaps the simplest differentiation is to say that impressionism depicts, while Art Nouveau evokes and symbolism metaphorically represents [its concepts of Order].

But the three strands have become confused in music at least, and some contradictory definitions employed.

Impressionism and music

The popular view is that there is a "lighter" (what Adrian Stokes terms "anti-monumental"⁹) or relatively non-dramatic and non-abstract repertoire of music from the late nineteenth century onwards that is "Impressionistic"; not only music but composers tend to be so termed, with Claude Debussy (always the first mentioned¹⁰), Maurice Ravel, Arnold Bax, Cyril Scott, John Ireland, Sigfrid Karg-Elert, Edward MacDowell and Edward Grieg often named¹¹.

Debussy's supposed status as the leading impressionist composer (and sometimes even Impressionist, as though he were a member of Monet's school and his contemporary)¹² has been argued in all sorts of ways, perhaps the simplest being the conflation of impressionism and symbolism (together with Art Nouveau, if it is ever considered at all) as the one movement, in music at least. This of course ignores the separateness of both Art Nouveau and symbolism, the introduction of which immediately destroys this equation, for neither can be equated with impressionism. This ignoring of Art

Nouveau and symbolism as separate strands of culture is the general opinion reflected as late as *New Grove* (1979), which fails to include an entry on Art Nouveau, even though William Austin's *Music in the Twentieth Century* (1996), Otto Deri's *Exploring Twentieth-Century Music* (1968) and Martin Cooper in the *New Oxford History of Music* (1973)¹³ show that there is a growing awareness that Debussy's music shows affinities with Symbolism at least, rather than with Impressionism.

Common concepts of musical Impressionism

Just what is meant by musical impressionism is not often clearly defined and has tended to vary in the century since it was first applied to music, but for the greater part of the twentieth century it has probably clustered around these points:

Firstly it is music primarily devoted to the capturing of the picturesque, particularly of stereotypes of the rural commonplace or scenes of natural beauty - the sounds of water, birds, winds, trees, typical village scenes, different times of day, or the moods that contemplation of such things evoke. This was probably the view of it in the discussion between Renoir and Wagner in 1882, with Chabrier's *Pièces pittoresques* as examples¹⁴.

Secondly, by extension almost any musical scene-painting is held to be the forming of an "impression" that can be "first unconscious sensations"¹⁵ - that is, an unconscious poetic response.

Thirdly, musical impressionism means a lightness of treatment and intention¹⁶, so that shorter pieces, and in particular the character-piece, rather than longer or more "serious" works, are its most typical expression, although there are also longer orchestral works like tone-poems based on nature that are considered sufficiently delicate in style and mood; Debussy's *L'après-midi d'un faune* is usually considered the type of these¹⁷.

Fourthly, there is a feeling that such music is stylistically sketchy or blurred as to detail¹⁸, suggesting the atmosphere of natural scenes rather than their detail - an idea that is as vague as its reference_. This can be either a general response to much post-1890 quieter music that breaks from the constraints of orthodoxy with freer tonality and harmony¹⁹, or to simple reflective character-pieces without well-defined programmes. Thus the many names like Sketch, Impression, Poem, Reverie, Memories, Idyll, or vague scenes like At Evening, Sunrise, By the Lake, Seascape or In the Forest. Debussy, for instance, is reported as having used the terms "sketch" and "improvisation" in respect of *D'un cahiers d'esquisses* (1903)²⁰, which, because it is held to mark a turning-point in his composition for piano²¹, is supposed to indicate his impressionistic persuasion. All this seems to rest on two assumptions: firstly, that the blurred painting technique of Impressionists and the "indefinite" mood of their paintings are the same blurring, and secondly that these are satisfactorily translated into music - neither of which should be lightly assumed, as later discussion will show.

There is a fifth definition that is historically the first one used - that of impressionism as meaning "revolutionary", in the sense that the painters in the original 1874 *Salon des refusés* exhibition, and in particular Claude Monet's *Impression: soleil levant*, was thus derisively termed by the critic Louis Leroy in *Le charivari*²²; Debussy's 1887 *Printemps* had the same term applied to it with the same spirit of conservatism²³. In some senses this definition is still considered part of the conventional musical one, with Debussy being considered to music what Monet was to painting.

Other factors emphasized as part of overall definitions of impressionism as painting that may be relevant to musical impressionism include its non-didactic simplicity of approach²⁴; its essentially pointillist or atomistic technique that was based on its theories of

light²⁵; the importance of *plein-air* as against studio painting²⁶; its stand against Historicism's static idealism²⁷, Realism's photographic and pessimistic approach²⁸ and Naturalism's human-centred approach²⁹; its emphasis on vibration or movement of light³⁰; its emphasis on the response of sensations rather than overlying, intrusive interpretation of the subject - rather like Keats' concept of negative or neutral capability³¹; and its emphasis on the evanescent in nature and perception³². Most definitions tend to form various combinations from these dozen or so points, and differ in their emphases accordingly.

Scholarly discussion on musical impressionism

The long article in Blume vol.6 by Hans Albrecht³³, although now outdated (1949-51) is so serious and thorough that it remains an important historical document. It shows that impressionism for many years was regarded as including strands of cultural history like Symbolism, Art Nouveau, Decadence and Aestheticism that now would be considered as being antipathetic to it. The movements that are seen as opposing Impressionism are not Symbolism and its fellows but Realism and Naturalism, with Historicism and late Romanticism the contrasting mainstream against which its new theories of light and truth are best seen (Diagram II, in Appendix A). The concern of its proponents over Realism and Naturalism as a first issue can now be seen to have arisen because Impressionism is essentially another aspect of the realist approach - of truth to what is immediately perceivable; Impressionism is therefore concerned to differentiate itself from what it is close to - Realism's refusal to soften the uglinesses of life, and from Naturalism's cult of human-centred trivia, so that its vision of the beauties of nature and simplicity can be appreciated³⁴.

Hans Albrecht's account of Impressionism tends to link it with other movements opposed to the cultural mainstream as one of the essentially revolutionary movements of the time like Dandyism and Decadence in the *anti-bürgerliche* Oscar Wilde, the "romant. Ironie" of the slogan "Épatez le

bourgeois!", the perverse literature of "satanisme"³⁵ and the exotic (the Far East, Spanish, ancient cultures)³⁶: all these would now be considered sophisticated reaction to, or escape from, the naiveties of impressionism and other realisms, rather than their being fellow-movements in the common struggle against bourgeois conventionality. This confusion leads Albrecht to consider Art Nouveau works like Stravinsky's *L'oiseau de feu*, *Pétrouchka*³⁷ and Strauss' *Salomé*³⁸ as impressionist. Debussy is the most quoted composer, so much so that he becomes the type of musical impressionism, although Albrecht's comparative method at least partly rests on the idea of contemporaneity³⁹, which would make Chabrier's *Pièces pittoresques* or Liszt's earlier *Années de pèlerinage* more appropriate models⁴⁰. In this way Albrecht reflects the general feeling of his day, which is part of the task of the lexicographer. The really valuable insights are those drawn from such works as Hans Mersmann's 1928 *Moderne Musik seit der Romantik, Der Tonsprache der neuen Musik* of 1930 and Werner Danckert's 1950 *Claude Debussy*, which make detailed parallels between visual and musical techniques including passivity, monotony or undynamicism of line (page 1051), formlessness (1057), the effect of distance (1057), pointillist techniques as equivalent to functionless harmonies (1058), parallel progressions (1069), blank tones (without thirds) (1070), functionless dissonances (1071), flourishes (1073), melodies over stationary harmonies (1073), non-rhetorical nature of melody (1074-75), conflicting rhythms and Debussy's use of triplets (1077). These are effects that in recent studies have been adduced as examples of Art Nouveau/ symbolism, and result from the unnecessarily wide initial definition of impressionism that writers still tend to use. There can be no doubt that the techniques like those listed above are Debussyan; but there can be doubt about whether this is impressionism.

Richard Hamann and Jost Hermand's *Impressionismus* of 1960 further illustrates the view of scholars of its time in its including as

impressionism much that now would be considered symbolism. For instance, its chapter on *Pikanterie* uses the paintings of Louis Corinth and Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, the writings of Oscar Wilde and Richard Dehmel, and the music of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* and Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* as examples of decadent impressionist sensuality. None of this would now be regarded as impressionism, yet this was the view of the time, at least in some schools of thought: Max Picard's 1920 *Das Ende des Impressionismus* is quoted, seeing sensuality as a logical development and ultimate cause of the death of impressionism⁴¹. The chapter *Neuro-mantische Stimmungskeit* instances "neurotic" and mystical works like Gotthardt Kuehl's symbolistic painting of the interior of the Munich Johanneskirche⁴², Rilke's *Larenopfer*, Stefan Zweig's *Silberne Saiten*, Hugo Wolf's *Möricke-Lieder*, Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* and Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*: like the former chapter, it is a detailed and in many ways a model study of its subject, but a subject that would not now properly be considered as impressionist.

In its fusing the two it sees Impressionism and Symbolism (with Decadence, Aestheticism and Dandyism) as being revolutionary movements essentially opposed to Realism, although when considered by itself Impressionism has much in common with Realism while Symbolism has nothing. Impressionism stands between the extremes of Realism and Symbolism's idealism: it shares Realism's acceptance of the realities of nature and the world while rejecting its pessimism and its method of perception; on the other hand it seems to be like Symbolism in its ambiguities and indefiniteness. It is indefinite, however, only in its expression, not in its meaning, whereas Symbolism suggests its complex ambiguities of meaning with more conventional expression - well-defined shapes and figures in painting, and images in verse whose simplicity belies their wealth of connotation.

It is thus of the first importance to arrive at a definition of impressionism that is sufficiently tight to exclude those strands that are in fact opposed to it, and that will encompass its expression, if any, in music or literature. There has been recent questioning of defining or even admitting the existence of musical impressionism, inevitably revolving around the music of Debussy, with Stefan Jarocinski⁴³ and Edward Lockspeiser⁴⁴ making a case for Symbolism rather than the former assumption by Werner Danckert, Arnold Schoenberg, Emile Vuillermoz, Léon Vallas, Robert Schmitz and others⁴⁵ that impressionism was the source of inspiration for important repertory like his. This new view began to find favour from about 1966 in general reference works like William Austin's *Music in the Twentieth Century*⁴⁶, and eventually *New Grove*⁴⁷. Since then Roy Howat has argued for symbolist proportional and numerological design in Debussy structures, strengthening the symbolist case⁴⁸, together with some more general studies by David Hertz, Lothar Hoffmann-Erbricht and Elaine Brody on symbolism in music⁴⁹, and Sylvia Sowa-Winter has found that the literature of the harp in the period cannot support the ascription of impressionism, especially in the case of Debussy⁵⁰, concluding that in Debussy the harp is a symbol-bearing instrument rather than just an instrument of colouration⁵¹.

Scholarly definitions of musical Impressionism

Three more serious attempts to grapple with the concept of musical impressionism deserve mention. Stefan Jarocinski's 1976 *Debussy, Impressionism and Symbolism* identifies several views: firstly, anything novel in the eighteen-eighties and nineties; secondly, music focused on harmony at the expense of melody; thirdly non-functional harmonies; and fourthly, attempts to apply hermeneutical, phenomenological and Bergsonian approaches.

Edward Lockspeiser's 1973 *Music and Painting* repeats the two common ideas of "an unconscious response to the cultural matrix", and lack of

clarity leading to suggestion rather than statement⁵², but goes on to reject theories of synaesthesia like those of Goethe, Carl Maria von Weber, E.T.A.Hoffman, Vassily Kandinsky, Schoenberg's *Die glückliche Hand* and Skryabin's *Prometheus* and *Mysterium*⁵³.

Christopher Palmer's 1973 *Impressionism in Music* argues that the indistinctness theory can be supported as follows: our perception of a scene or object is modified by the distance between it and us, which causes some indistinctness or blurring; (this indistinctness is also a product of our individual sensibilities, which will variously distort or interpret reality). The factor of distance produces a haziness or effect of potential movement in the picture⁵⁴. Since indistinctness means dreaminess of feelings, and since symbolism is about dreams and states of feeling, impressionism is the visual counterpart of (literary) symbolism, to which some music is strongly related⁵⁵. This view makes much of the suggestiveness or allusiveness of literary symbolism while forgetting that this is not a poetic attribute peculiar to it. Much of Palmer's book thereafter is spent on illustrating symbolist dreaminess and imagery in music, with statements like "the Impressionists' dream world" and their being "drawn to scenes not only of mist, fog and haze but also of snow and particularly of water, with its reflections of images and consequent sense of unfathomable depths, mystery and dreams"⁵⁶, illustrating the difficulty of a controversy where both sides use the same sorts of supporting instances.

There are several points here about which there can be debate, such as an individual's interpretation of reality necessarily leading to indistinctness, indistinctness necessarily being equated with dreams, and the alleged effect of movement even in Impressionist still-life pictures, but the principal point is Palmer's equating of impressionism and symbolism through indistinctness, which is an attempt to provide a theoretical justification for common attitudes to impressionism in music, as for

instance those of Edward Lockspeiser, whose views are frequently referred to.⁵⁷

(There has been no serious attempt to argue for a musical link with the basic impressionist preoccupation with the changing nature of light, because any simple transferring to music of this feature does not seem possible, but it is such an important aspect of impressionism that any future sophisticated theory of musical linkage should at least address it.)

Blurring or indistinctness

The particular form of the indistinctness theory advanced by Palmer is easily explainable in terms of *plein-air* Impressionist painting, but not of the many interior still-lives, and others without much distance between painter-viewer and subjects, as in Renoir's *The Luncheon of the Boating Party* (1881), Monet's *Beach at Trouville* (1870) or the many portraits. Indistinctness, however much it became an affectation that was present even in close-ups, originated not only from the effects of distance of which Palmer talks but also from haste in attempts to capture the light and colours of the moment, especially in *plein-air* painting. It reinforced the effect of the painter's naivety in recording a simple, unreflecting response to nature or life. If later it became a sophistication it was one that still purported to give the effect of spontaneity. The painter was apparently recording the simple scenes of nature or life as he or she saw it, without the overlays of secondary meaning and commentary that symbolism was concerned with.

Indistinctness in painting is easy enough to understand, but it is not easy to decide what it might mean in music, for all musical attempts at scene-painting, distinct or blurred, are necessarily stylized, which argues against impressionistic musical spontaneity. (Not even folk or improvised music can avoid stylization.) Furthermore, most musical representation of natural images is necessarily imperfect or vague, usually needing programme notes or commentary to guide the hearers' responses. Finally, it may be

noted that blurring or haziness, however it may be defined or recognized, suggests symbolism just as easily as impressionism: the impressionist mist may be the symbolist transformation-image into the Other Realm⁵⁸.

There are some compositional devices that can be held to denote indistinctness - functional harmonies, abnormal use of the sustaining pedal, incomplete cadences, unresolved discords or relative atonality, but these are not peculiar to musical impressionism, although they are more helpful than Palmer's talking of Debussy's "fluid sound-shapes"⁵⁹, or Robert Schmitz of his "half-shades and half-lights"⁶⁰, both being undefined and probably undefinable⁶¹.

Indefiniteness in Impressionism and Symbolism

All commentaries on Debussy's impressionism agree that his vagueness/dreaminess/suggestiveness - as seen in such things as his loosened tonalities, drifting chords, preponderance of slow tempi and non-dramatic utterance - parallel the blurred brush-technique and gentle moods of Impressionism. However, all commentators on symbolism/Art Nouveau in music agree that it also parallels the highly associative and indefinite nature of symbolist verse - for instance, Verlaine's *Chevaux de bois*, apparently clear in language and image but full of connotative suggestions and overlaid with affective device, as Arthur Wenk has explained⁶². Indefiniteness, it would seem, is an attribute common to impressionism and symbolism, and this has been one of the chief means on linking the two in both popular and scholarly conceptions of musical impressionism. Debussy's ideal is a haze of sound, as revealed in his use of both piano pedals for full and half-pedalled effects (as mentioned earlier) in his efforts to make the piano sound like an instrument without hammers, and those indications affirming that he wants the listener to concentrate on sensations: "Dans une brume doucement sonore", "Doux et fluide", "Peu à peu sortant de la brume" (*La cathédrale engloutie*); "Toujours plus loin"⁶³.

But the indefinitenesses of impressionism and symbolism are essentially different - and neither is really like that of Debussy. Visual impressionism is certainly indefinite in its techniques like the mixing of colour-patches and blurring of edges, but it is not easy to confirm any equivalence of this in music: although much has been made of things like non-functional harmonies, loosened tonalities and phrasing without cadence in Debussy, it is sensible to ascribe these devices neither to impressionism nor symbolism but to Debussy's search for affective sounds - an Art Nouveau characteristic.

There is another aspect of impressionism that is generally considered to go with this - its absence of overt interpretative or dramatic character, usually expressed as "indefiniteness". This concept, however, is actually misleading, for there is an uncomplicated, affirmative response to nature and beauty (including humanity) in all impressionism, even in the portrayal of man-made objects like bridges and roads. Impressionism in this aspect is not indefinite but (avowedly) neutral, letting nature and beauty speak their positive messages. Thus the first, verifiable indefiniteness of impressionism cannot be confidently translated into music, while the second is itself chimeric.

Symbolism's indefiniteness, as has been argued above, lies primarily in its deliberate ambiguities and suggestivenesses of imagery - in its content. While all poetic imagery involves play on denotation and connotation, that of symbolism is extreme, with denotation or primary meaning deliberately ambiguous or of lesser importance than the wealth of secondary meanings words and phrases can convey, intellectually and affectively. Symbolism's indefiniteness, therefore, is intentional, and to do with the reader's response - especially the response of the *coterie*. Where impressionism is simple, symbolism is complex; to call the former indefinite (except in its technique, which cannot be translated simply to

music) is to misunderstand it, while to call the latter ambiguous, veiled or indefinite is to show that one has begun to understand it.

Debussy's indefiniteness is different again, but closer to that of Art Nouveau. He is concerned with sensuous effect first and foremost, which is the same as the affective element in symbolism and Art Nouveau. Since this is necessarily inexpressible it is indefinite, vague, blurred or whatever other term is preferred, but it is the feeling, not its indefiniteness, that is central. It follows from this that imagery of title or text is for Debussy quite often secondary (where in literary symbolism the affective and cognitive are at least equal), its role being to aid emotive effect through its suggestions. (This is also the role of technical devices like loosened tonalities, parallel progressions, non-functional harmonies, and techniques of pedalling, vocalizing or bowing.) Debussy, therefore, is not just painting mists or flaxen-haired girls, nor even primarily evoking the feelings that contemplation of them produces, but is evoking the feelings that **suggestions** of them may produce in conjunction with the suggestions of the musical sounds he is producing.

What is true of Debussy is true of other composers of his day who, although in varying degree, are like him in being more concerned with the effects their music has on feelings than with other factors, which is essentially the Art Nouveau emphasis, not impressionist nor even primarily symbolist. This study argues that the Art Nouveau keyboard repertory is one in which effect is the overriding principle, to the achievement of which the normal considerations of orthodox structures, linear harmonic flow to cadences, resolution of discords, opposition of contrasting motifs, development of motifs, overall balance of technique and effect are sacrificed. From a consideration of the eleven essential principles Art Nouveau is seen to be concerned with the evocation of mystery through certain stylistic mannerisms and techniques - in other words, with the effect these produce. While in a sense all music is aimed at the feelings,

musical Art Nouveau exaggerates this to produce an essentially asymmetrical art.

Synaesthesia theory

This has been a familiar accompaniment to many discussions of musical symbolism, and to some composers' Art Nouveau/symbolist practice. It may be said that as soon as a systematic approach to synaesthesia is adopted the artist becomes a symbolist. Symbolism of its nature tends towards mystical systems, and the unifying theory for most of these attempts arise from applications of E.T.A.Hoffmann's theory⁶⁴ and Baudelaire's exposition of this in his *Correspondances* - that the five senses are linked in a series of equivalences, since all are perceptions of the same underlying but hidden reality:

*Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent
Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,
Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,
Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.*

This concept is about the indefiniteness of perceptions that are normally taken as certain: things are not what they seem. Symbolists tend to take this general poetic idea and construct systems of equivalences (or to believe that such systems are possible. These systems can be like that of Kandinsky's colour-wheel that Arnold Schoenberg uses for his *Die glückliche Hand* (recently illustrated and discussed by Reinhard Gerlach⁶⁵). Alexander Skryabin's *Prométhée (Le poème de feu)* Symphony with choir, keyboard and colour-clavier, Op. 60 of 1911, is based on not just a colour-and-music theory of linkage but on a uniting of these with dance, poetry and philosophy (discussed by Faubion Bowers, Malcolm Brown and Dorothee Eberlein⁶⁶).

Systems based on synaesthesia theory, however, have never been able to reach agreement with each other, nor find general acceptance⁶⁷. Perhaps the whole idea of constructing or seeking to discover synaesthetic systems is misguided: correspondences only exist through the feelings, as they are affected by painting, music, poetry or nature, and can vary not only from

person to person but from occasion to occasion, so that attempts to connect the feelings through systems are essentially antipathetic to the feelings' sensuousness, ephemerality and existentiality.

For this discussion the importance of synaesthetic or other mystical or quasi-mathematical systems, whether Debussy's fascination with the Golden Mean⁶⁸, the numerological preoccupations of Schoenberg and Berg, the structural experiments of Erik Satie (as discussed recently by Robert Orledge⁶⁹) or the still largely arcane one of Skryabin, are, in this period, more likely to be indicators of symbolism rather than of impressionism. They are much more complicated and esoteric than the theory of light and perceptions of reality on which Impressionism was originally based, and essentially opposed to its naivety.

Impressionism differentiated from Art Nouveau & symbolism

A summary can now be made of the essential points of difference discussed above:

1. Impressionism portrays simple reality while Art Nouveau and symbolism treat reality as a metaphor respectively for the Other Realm (mystery, the supernatural) and Other World (death) behind it. This is true for all three fields - painting, literature and music.
2. In titles and text impressionism is primarily concerned with denotation - that is, the simple meanings of words, while symbolism is primarily concerned with connotation - their indirect associations and hidden meanings - and both symbolism and Art Nouveau with their affective powers (affecting the feelings through rhythm, repetitions, sounds and suggestions). Again this applies to all three fields - to literature itself, and to its use as title or inspiration in painting or music.
3. The indefinitenesses of impressionism and symbolism are different and neither comparable nor connected.

Impressionism's indefiniteness is firstly assumed, incorrectly, to arise from its neutral attitude towards nature and the world (it has an

affirming, realist view), and secondly, correctly, from certain painterly techniques (aggregations of colour-blobs rather than definite lines). Symbolism's indefiniteness results from its ambiguities and complexities of suggestion, and not from its techniques, which are based on clarity of line in both Symbolist and Art Nouveau painting, although the latter is mannered. Impressionism is blurred in technique but not in its meaning, while symbolism and Art Nouveau are blurred in meaning but not in technique. Impressionism is not indefinite in intention, whether in painting, literature or music, whereas symbolism and Art Nouveau are.

4. The idea that impressionism, symbolism and Debussy are connected through their indistinctnesses is fallacious, because there is no straightforward equating of painterly, literary or musical indistinctness.

5. Impressionism as a historical movement (excluding the various Post-Impressionisms) is fundamentally simple pastoral, with moods mainly focused on the affirmation of beauty, whereas Symbolism is essentially sophisticated, complex, and wide-ranging in its moods, which all reflect the mystery of unseen powers. This applies in all three fields of the arts.

6. It is not justifiable to term Debussy or any of his contemporaries impressionist on the grounds of their being revolutionaries, even though their experiences at the hands of the musical establishment were similar to those of the Impressionists a generation earlier at the hands of the *L'Académie des beaux arts*. The Impressionist and the Debussyan revolutions were different phenomena, in different times and fields.

7. Impressionism has to do with unconscious response, while symbolism and Art Nouveau appeal to sub-conscious response. Impressionism purports to be a simple, if subjective, rendering of reality, in which the artist is an unreflecting transmitter of beauty. The symbolist is a seer who affirms his knowledge of the arcane and seeks to inspire mystery through suggestion.

8. Impressionism emphasizes movement (vibration) and the evanescent in nature and perception, while symbolism and Art Nouveau emphasize that this motion and evanescence is only perceived, not real: appearances may change and dissolve but only because of their ambiguity, not because of the passage of time. Impressionism is about Bergson's *time durée* while symbolism is about *time espace*.

Musical Impressionism and musical Art Nouveau

As a first principle, any definition of musical Impressionism must focus on the popular perception of it as tone-painting, on its simple imagery rather than that of any imaginary meta-world, on scene-painting and naive response rather than on complexities of mood and treatment, which are the stuff of musical Art Nouveau and musical symbolism. One implication of this view of impressionism is that its pieces are likely to be comparatively simple in structure and treatment while Art Nouveau's may be more complex. Another is that the imagery of impressionism is likely to be stereotyped into comparatively disparate (and therefore readily identifiable) bird-calls, running stream-motifs or rushing wind arpeggios, while that of Art Nouveau is stylized into complex repeating patterns that are woven into the texture of the music. A corollary of this is that impressionism will show progression in linear time as a narrative or sequence of events unfolds, while Art Nouveau will tend to show timeless states as musical figures repeat in patterns around pedalpoints or phrases without cadence.

Edvard Grieg's *Notturmo* Op.54/4 of 1891 may serve as to illustrate these features of musical impressionism. It opens with a slow chromatic falling bass motif that sets the mood of evening quietness and may signify the falling of the last rays of light; the following diatonic treble motif (bars 5-6) has a contrasting upwards movement set over the falling bass, but this upwards movement falls a fourth or fifth at its end (bars 7, 10, 12, 14) and reinforces the downwards movements of the bass and the initial

treble motif-fragment of bars 2 and 4. At bar 15 there a simple bird-call sequence begins that is quite different in texture from what has preceded it, although there are links in the falling fifths of bars 17 and 20; from bars 21 to 33 there is a further complete change into a short-breathed series of motions that may represent a breeze stirring. The piece then develops the material of the opening fourteen bars to bar 54, when the bird-call sequence supervenes until the brief coda (bars 62-63). The piece thus falls into clearly distinguishable scene-painting sections, with some linking devices like falling fifths to give unity.

The effect of this structure is to suggest progress in linear time, giving rise to the simple quasi-narrative programmes like "Evening quietness: the last light falls and the shadows rise; birds are heard giving their evening calls. Breezes begin to stir and shake the leaves rhythmically, until they die away and leave the trees still as the last light fails and shadows gradually envelop the landscape. Some last bird-calls are heard; then the peace of night." While there may be disagreement over the interpretation of particular images, the important points are the disparateness of the sections, each based on different images, and the sense of progression through time. Music like this carries on the simple programmatic realism of works like Beethoven's sixth symphony and the numerous battle-pieces of the earlier piano that followed Franz Kotzwara's 1778 *The Battle of Prague*. Whether it is to have the detailed sequential programme of a battle-piece or one of vague scene-painting it is still set in the world of real space and time.

Ravel's *Oiseaux tristes* (*Miroirs*/2, 1904-05) presents a very different aspect, firstly through its being without the clear sectional divisions of *Notturmo*, and secondly through its moving without any sense of linear time-progression. As to the first point, there are changes in texture and emphasis through the piece but no really clear demarcations between them; there is constant changing of the interwoven figures so that

the whole piece is a continuously transforming pattern, rather like that of a turning kaleidoscope. As a consequence, there is no orthodox structure, ternary or otherwise, like that of the conventionally formed Grieg piece, and Ravel permits himself extended bars (16, 23), shortened bars (3, 9, 22) and long pedalpoints (7-9, 19-14, 23, 24-30) so that he can be free to explore the possibilities of various stages of the transformation process.

Three points of detail need to be noticed: firstly, the Ravel piece uses its motifs formed from natural imagery (in the case of this piece, bird-song motifs) as elements of its complex patterning, whereas Grieg states his natural images separately as ends in themselves (the only exception in Ravel's piece being the recitative of the first three bars, from which much of the subsequent patterning follows). Secondly, the whole texture of the piece is formed from the patterning of these motifs, so that they become "accompanimental" or "melodic" by turns, with harmonies resulting from their fluid movements and interchangings; this patterning is seen in all its rhythmic and harmonic complexity from its initial bar (4) with the rocking motions of the three lower voices and the single repeated note of the upper. Thirdly, there is a rocking-movement ostinato of alternating seconds or thirds in every bar after the recitative, producing, with the pedalpoints and free movements over them, a feeling of constant but timeless movement, totally different from the sense of narrative progression in Grieg.

These two pieces, roughly contemporary and based on natural imagery, may serve as models for differentiating in this period between musical Impressionism and Art Nouveau.

The stylization of imagery into Art Nouveau patterning

Since there is recognisable birdsong-imagery in both the pieces just discussed it is understandable for a naive interpretation to assume that both are tone-painting and therefore impressionist. Since such imagery may

be the first thing specifically noticed it is easy to bind all later observations into this interpretation.

But while Art Nouveau and symbolism inevitably use natural imagery, it is for different purposes. It is easy to appreciate impressionism because it is only necessary to look at its surface; to call *Oiseaux tristes* impressionist is to look no further than part of its surface. In musical impressionism the imagery is the end; in musical Art Nouveau and symbolism it is a means.

Musical Art Nouveau, like its visual and literary manifestations, stylizes its images into stereotypes, in so doing transforming them from simple realist representation. Recognisable nature-motifs become fragmented into ostinatos, into flourishes over pedalpoints, into interweaving elements of texture that produce complex moods rather than the primary ones of naive response to nature. A bird-song motif becomes important not for its representational purposes but for its referential possibilities of patterning and exploration; the image is less important than the treatment.

It is perhaps helpful to see this aspect of Art Nouveau as being a modern version of the rhetorical concept of *aemulatio* - the taking of a model (nature) and improving upon it, which in Art Nouveau is the taking of mere appearance and showing the deeper realities not normally perceived. Here is the fundamental difference between Art Nouveau and impressionism: where impressionism is concerned to depict the appearances of things, or *repraesentatio*, Art Nouveau is concerned with adding to what is merely seen that which the artist intuitively knows. *Aemulatio* is an adding to or improving upon nature - in this case what is often referred to as Art Nouveau's decorative nature, accomplished through mannerism and stylization of device and image. Images that both movements have in common - water, woman, love, for instance - are dealt with quite differently.

Conclusion

It is now possible to recognize the three phenomena - impressionism, symbolism and Art Nouveau - as separate cultural strands, ones that are present in most other periods of modern history, and have sporadic flowerings, in this case over the half-century before the Great War. They can be to some extent fused or interwoven, and it is certainly possible to see them all in Debussy and other composers of the time. Where Debussy has a subject that is not primarily fantastic, like *Le vent dans la plaine*, *En bateau* or *Minstrels*, and where the intention seems simply to capture mood and scene, or like *Des pas sur la neige* to produce a narrative⁷⁰, then one may begin to liken it to impressionism, and remember that Debussy owned Impressionist pictures. It must be confessed, however, that most of Debussy's titles carry overtones of the fantastic, just as much of his music is mannered, so that impressionism is not perhaps its major component.

It is therefore facile to label a composer as one thing or another when it is possible to see that different cultural strands are present in his consciousness and technique. It is the individual piece that may be so labelled, but even then only when it is unambiguously formed. A great many works are as complex as the times that produce them, and like their creators, show more than one dimension of these times.

End-notes

- 1 Music as tone-painting is discussed in Leslie, L.: op. cit., 11.
- 2 That even this strand can co-exist with others seems to follow from Carl Dahlhaus' discussion of realism in Wagner, amongst others, in his *Realism in Nineteenth Century Music* transl. Whittall, M., (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1985), 66, 92-94.
- 3 E.g. Blume, 1949-51, entry by Hans Albrecht (unchanged in 1979 Supplement); Michel, 1959, entry by Dorel Handmann; New Grove, 1980, entry by Arnold Whittal.
- 4 Jankélévitch, V.: *La vie et la mort dans la musique de Debussy*, (Neuchâtel, Baconnière 1968). Typical examples are Muñoz, P.R.: *Impressionism: Trends and Parallels in Music and Painting as Related to the Works of Maurice Ravel*, (Diss. North Texas State University 1973); Hollander, H.: op. cit., 61-64; Kotler, N.: *Impressionistic Features in Karol Szymanowski's Style*, in *Problems in musicology II* ed. Orlov, H. et

- al. (Moskva Sovetskij Kompositor, 1975); Samson, J.: *The Music of Szymanowski*, chapter 8 "Impressionism and the Piano", 99ff.
- 5 Jarocinski, S.: *Debussy, Impressionism and Symbolism*, transl. Myers, R. (London, Eulenberg 1976), originally in Polish edition 1966; Lockspeiser, E.: opp cit.; Zenck-Mausser, C.: *Versuch über die Wahre Art Debussy zu analysieren*, Berliner musikwissenschaftliche Arbeiten, (München, Katzschichler 1974). The specialist writings begin with Johannes Schwermer: *Jugendstil-Musik in de ästhetischen Enklave*, Neue Zeitschrift für Musik 126 (1965), 2-5, who begins the task of defining musical Art Nouveau, but there has been little revision of definitions of musical Impressionism as such, except by Edward Lockspeiser's *Music and Painting* and Christopher Palmer's *Impressionism in Music*, both of 1973. See, however, Toncitch, V.: *Impresions sur impressionnisme*, Anuario musical 36 (1981), 149-68, which begins with the notion of blurring (149) but develops a more sophisticated psychological theory (160-62).
- 6 Debussy, C.: *M. Croche* (Dover Publications, New York 1962, 6, 8; Lesure, F. (ed.): *Debussy on Music*, transl. Smith, R.L., (London, Secker & Warburg 1977), 14, 48, and notes 1 p. 17, 4 p. 18; Whittall, A.: op. cit., 30-31; Austin, W.W.: op. cit., 25. The issue arises throughout Trillig, J.: *Untersuchungen zur Rezeption C. Debussys in der zeitgenöschen Muzikkritik*, Frankfurter Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft 13, (Tutzing, Schneider 1983).
- 7 Masini, L-V.: op. cit., 55.
- 8 But see the conventional argument that literary symbolism and musical impressionism are the same thing in Cupers J-L.: *Correspondance entre l'impressionisme musical et le symbolisme littéraire*, Revue des archelgues et historiens d'art de Louvain IV (1971), 199-224, which sees linking through mood and common opposition to romanticism.
- 9 Stokes, A.: *Monet*, (London 1958), quoted in Arnold Whittall's *Impressionism* entry in *New Grove* 9, 30.
- 10 Austin, W.W.: *Music in the Twentieth Century*, (J.M. Dent, London 1966), 24; see also Note 1.
- 11 E.g., Byrnside, R.L.: *Musical Impressionism: The Early History of the Term*, *Musical Quarterly* LXVI/4 (Oct 1980), 522-37; *New Oxford Histoy of Music* 10. Yet in 1974 David Cox recommended Symbolism as a label preferable to Impressionism - Cox, D.: *Debussy's Orchestral Music*, (B.B.C. Music Guides 1974). Lesure, F. and Cogeval, G.: *Debussy e il Symbolisme*, catalogue of the 1984 Exhibition at the Villa Medici (Roma, Palombi 1984), specifically challenges Impressionism as a label for Debussy, and Johannes Piersig rejects it as a label for composers around 1900: *Das Fortschrittsproblem in der Musik um die Jahrhundertwende. Von Richard Wagner bis Arnold Schönberg*, (Regensburg, Bosse 1977).
- 12 See such critical literature as Bartag-Drexler, I.: *Debussy, der Impressionist*, *Musikerziehung* XXXII/6 (June 1979), 198-204; Stegemann, M.: *Ausdruck und Eindruck. Claude Debussys misverstandere Ästhetik*, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 10 (Oct. 1986), 8-18, and *ibid*, 11 (Nov. 1986), 13-18; see the reply in Jung-Kaiser, U.: *Zum Thema - Debussy - kein Impressionist?*, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (Feb 1987), 1-2; Denisov, E.: *Über einige Besonderheiten der Kompositionstechnik Claude Debussys*, transl. Hellmundt, C., in *Jahrbuch Peters: Aufsätze zur Musik I*, ed. Klemm, E., (Leipzig, Peters 1979), 147-72, which advances several different aspects of impressionism in Debussy. But a less cautious attitude is seen in standard dictionary entries on Impressionism like Friedrich Blume's *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Hans Albrecht), François Michel's *Encyclopédie de la musique* (Dorel Handmann), Stanley Sadie's *New Grove Dictionary of Music* (Arnold Whittall). On the other hand,

- the 1975 edition of Hugo Riemann's *Musiklexicon* still has no entry on the subject.
- 13 Austin, W.W.: *Music in the Twentieth Century* (J.M.Dent, London 1966, 24ff; Deri, O.: *Exploring Twentieth Century Music*, (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York 1968), 154ff; Cooper, M., in *The New Oxford History of Music*, 10, 91-92.
 - 14 Palmer, C.: op. cit., 105.
 - 15 Lockspeiser, E.: *Music and Painting*, (Cassell, London 1973), 51.
 - 16 See note 6.
 - 17 Palmer, C.: op. cit., 18, 28.
 - 18 Heinrich Wölflin in *Principles of Art History* (transl. 1932), quoted in Lockspeiser, E.: op. cit., 61-62; Palmer, C.: op. cit., 15; Whittall, A.: loc. cit.
 - 19 See the discussion on this of Martin Cooper, op. cit., 74.
 - 19 Whittall, A.: *New Grove*, IX, 30.
 - 20 To Ricardo Viñes: James, B.: op. cit., 44.
 - 21 Schmitz, E.R.: op. cit., 81.
 - 22 Michel, F.: op. cit., 2/524.
 - 23 Whittall, A.: loc. cit.
 - 24 Lockspeiser, E.: *Music and Painting*, 51.
 - 25 Lucie-Smith, E.: *Dictionary of Art Terms*, 103; Lockspeiser, E.: *Music and Painting*, 15.
 - 26 Lucie-Smith, E.: loc. cit.
 - 27 Jarocinski, S.: op. cit., 7.
 - 28 Ibid, 7, 9.
 - 29 Ibid, 10.
 - 30 Ibid, 6; Palmer, C.: op. cit., 20.
 - 31 Lockspeiser, E.: *Music and Painting*, 51.
 - 32 Jarocinski, S.: op. cit., 6; Palmer, C.: op. cit., 15.
 - 33 Blume 6, 1046-1090.
 - 34 Ibid, 1049.
 - 35 Ibid, 1048.
 - 36 Ibid, 1059-61.
 - 37 Ibid, 1051.
 - 38 Ibid, 1049.
 - 39 Ibid, 1052.
 - 40 Ibid, 1053. See Pisk, P.A.: *Elements of Impressionism and Atonality in Liszt's Last Piano Pieces*, *Radford Review* xxiii/3 (Summer 1969), 170-76.
 - 41 Hamann, R. & Hermand, J.: *Impressionismus*, 342.
 - 42 Ibid, 389.
 - 43 Jarocinski, S.: op. cit., chs 2, 4, 5.
 - 44 Lockspeiser, op. cit., passim, particularly II, App.E.
 - 45 Jarocinski, S.: op. cit., documents the use of the term in musicology from its first appearance in connection with Debussy in 1887.
 - 46 Austin W.W.: op. cit., 24-25.
 - 47 Nichols, R.: *Debussy*, in *New Grove* 5, 307.
 - 48 Howat, R.: *Debussy in Proportion*.
 - 49 Hertz, D.M.: op. cit., - but see the review of this by Daverio, J. in *Nineteenth Century Music* 13/3 (1990), 257-61; Hoffmann-Erbrecht, L.: *Von der Urentsprechung zum Symbol. Versuch einer Systematisierung musikalischer Sonnenbilder*, in *Bachiana et alia musicologica* ed. Rohm, W. (Kassel, Barenreiter 1983), 116-25; Brody, E.: *Musical Settings of Symbolist Poems*, in *The Symbolist Movement in the Literature of European Languages*, ed. Balakian, A. (Budapest, Akadémia, 1982), 483-91.
 - 50 Sylvia Sowa-Winter (op. cit.) discusses the whole Impressionist/Art Nouveau debate pp 7-9, and Debussy in particular, pp 29-31. Wolfgang Dömling gives a cautious approval of the term in respect of some similarities in outlook between Debussy and some painters of the period, but not as a general description of Debussy: *Debussy und der*

- Impressionismus. Zu einem Abgestandenen*, Neue Zeitschrift für Musik CXXXII/6 (June 1971), 290-92. See also Borris, S.: *Claude Debussy, Musik Unterricht B/LIV/12* (1968), 430-33.
- 51 *ibid*, 107.
- 52 Lockspeiser, E.: *op. cit.*, 51, 61-62.
- 53 *Ibid*, 75.
- 54 Palmer, C.: *op. cit.*, 13.
- 55 *ibid*, 15-16.
- 56 *Loc. cit.*
- 57 *Ibid*, 16, 22, 23, 28, 30, 35, 71.
- 58 E.g. Robert Browning's *Prospice*.
- 59 Palmer, C.: *op. cit.*, 20.
- 60 Schmitz, E.R.: *op. cit.*, 54.
- 61 Some of the confusion surrounding the subject has been discussed by Wolfgang Andreas Schulz in his study of free form in Expressionist and Impressionist music - Schulz, W.A.: *Die freien Formen in der Musik des Expressionismus und Impressionismus*, Diss. Hamburg Universität 1974.
- 62 Wenk, A.: *op. cit.*, 111-114.
- 63 *New Grove* 5, 302.
- 64 Palmer, C.: *op. cit.*, 16; Lockspeiser, E.: *Music and Painting*, 15-16, 38.
- 65 Gerlach, R.: *op. cit.*, 129-138.
- 66 Bowers, F.: *op. cit.*, 180; Brown, M.: *op. cit.*, 48-51; Eberlein, D.: *op. cit.*, 86-87.
- 67 Lockspeiser, E.: *op. cit.*, 75.
- 68 Howat, R.: *op. cit.*, *passim*.
- 69 Orledge, *Satie the Composer*, 144-84.
- 70 It must be remembered, however, that Impressionist painters avoided narrative, so that it is more proper to talk of a narrative that uses impressionistic technique.

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- Longyear, Ray: *Towards the Fin de Siècle: stylistic change and Symbolist connotations in French music 1875-1905*;
- Austin, William W.: *The rhythms of Satie and oriental timelessness*;
- Beltrando-Pater, Marie-Claire: *The inheritance from Gabriel Fauré in the formation of the contemporary vocal style*;
- Kirk, Elise Kuhl: *Art Nouveau and the melodic style of Charles Koechlin*;
- Kropfinger, Klaus: *The shape of line*;
- Finscher, Ludwig: *Richard Strauss and Jugendstil: the Munich years*;
- Weber, Horst: *Figur und Grund - secessionistic instrumentation of Alexander Zemlinsky*;
- Roman, Zoltan: *From congruence to antithesis: poetic and musical Jugendstil in Webern's songs*;
- Wickes, Lewis: *Jugendstil consideration of the opening and closing sections of the Vorspiel to Franz Schreker's opera "Die Gezeichneten"*;

- McCredie, Andrew D.: *Some aspects of Jugendstil lyric and dramatic texts and their musical settings.*
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THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES

OF ART NOUVEAU

Originality & Universality

Sensuality mesmeric pulse
panpipe motifs
winding motifs
chromaticism

Mystery chromatic progressions
horn-motifs
soft & distance effects
multi-textures

Ambiguity of tonal centre
of tonality
accompaniment v melodic roles
opposition of hands

Extremity asymmetry of proportion
discordance
repetition
affective device

Stylization motif → figuration
flourish → pattern
these replace development

Emphasis on
detail accompaniment
flourish & texture
focus on microstructure

Repetition ostinato & patterning
rather than progression

Interweaving of strands in contrapuntal
and arabesqued textures

Absence of
depth pedalpoints

Timelessness parallel and non-
functional progressions

FRENCH SIXTHS O₁ OCTATONIC SETS DIMINISHED SEVENTHS MAJOR TRIAD MINOR TRIAD HARMONIC SERIES

The image displays three staves of musical notation, each representing a different harmonic concept. The first staff, labeled 'O₁', shows a progression starting with a French Sixth chord (F#4, C#5, G#2, D#3), followed by an octatonic scale (F#4, G#4, A#4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5), a diminished seventh chord (F#4, A#4, C5, E5), a major triad (F#4, A4, C5), a minor triad (F#4, A4, C#5), and a harmonic series (F#4, A4, C5, E5, G#5, B5, C#6, F#6). The second staff, labeled 'O₂', shows a progression starting with a French Sixth chord (F#4, C#5, G#2, D#3), followed by an octatonic scale (F#4, G#4, A#4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5), a diminished seventh chord (F#4, A#4, C5, E5), and a major triad (F#4, A4, C5). The third staff, labeled 'O₃', shows a progression starting with a French Sixth chord (F#4, C#5, G#2, D#3), followed by an octatonic scale (F#4, G#4, A#4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5), a diminished seventh chord (F#4, A#4, C5, E5), and a major triad (F#4, A4, C5).