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Extended Program Notes For A Master Of Music Degree In Conducting

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EXTENDED PROGRAM NOTES FOR A MASTER OF MUSIC DEGREE IN CONDUCTING

by
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A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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Approved by:

Edward Benyas, Chair

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research paper to my parents, who have always supported my aspirations to pursue music and have gone to great lengths to help my dreams come true. Thank you.

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PYOTR ILYICH TCHIAKOVSKY'S THE NUTCRACKER, OP. 71

1.1 TCHAIKOVSKY AND THE RUSSIAN BALLET PRIOR TO NUTCRACKER

When discussing the genre of ballet repertoire only one composer comes to the forefront with such prominence. Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-93) wrote a trio of monumental ballets that received poor reception at the time of their debut, but would land among the great standards of ballet repertoire. Tchaikovsky's unique compositional style contributed to his prominence in the world of ballet. Many scholars refer to Tchaikovsky as a master of the melody. While Tchaikovsky composition's lacked formal perfection, his compositional technique compensated with heightened intensity of melody and rhythm, both strongly influenced by folk music.[1] That ability to focus on the heightened intensity of melody and rhythm contributes greatly to the success of his ballets. According to Percy M. Young in his book, *Master of Music, Tchaikovsky*:

> The result (of this focus to melody and rhythm) is a kind of vibrant quality—a kind of reflection of human life as it is. Tchaikovsky's music is moving, in one sense, because, in another, it moves, or it has movement. Tchaikovsky composed many fine dances – especially waltzes, and marches, which are from the same origins of dance. His music, whether intended or not, stands in close proximity to ballet." [2]

Tchaikovsky was a fan of Leo Delibes. Upon hearing the Vienna orchestra play music from *Sylvia* toward the end of 1877, the Russian composer corresponded with Delibes, informing him that he had heard the orchestra perform the work, though he had only heard the piano arrangement prior to then. Tchaikovsky had already completed his music for the first ballet, *Swan Lake,* Op. 20, in March of the year before, which had been commissioned by the Imperial Opera of Moscow in 1875. Clearly, Tchaikovsky was strongly inclined to write music suited to

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[1] Percy M. Young, *Masters of Music:Tchaikosvky.* (London: Benn, 1968) 67

[2] Ibid 67

ballet, even before his encounters with other composers of the genre.[3] The score to *Swan Lake* was completed in March 1876, but production was delayed an entire year. It is unfortunate that Tchaikovsky's fame as one of the great masters of ballet composition did not come until the final three years of his life, due to the poorly debuted production of *Swan Lake*. It was not until after his death that the work was rehabilitated and deemed a success.

The second of Tchaikovsky's three ballets, *The Sleeping Beauty,* Op. 66, was commissioned by I. A. Vsevolozhsky, Director of the Emperial Theatres at St. Petersburg, and was completed in the summer of 1889. The first performance took place at the Maryinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg, in January 1890. This ballet consists of some thirty numbers and is undoubtedly Tchaikovsky's masterpiece in the genre.[4] His ballets include Russian folk elements, while staying true to the French origins of the genre. Tchaikovsky's friend Herman Laroche, observed:

> That such a powerful talent as Tchaikovsky, following the general current of his time, turned to ballet and thus promotes the ennobling of musical taste in this sphere also…The Russian way in music, besides being strong in Tchaikovsky in recent years, is the issue at hand. The music completely suits the costume, the characters; in it there is a French nuance, but at the same time it savours of Russia… [5]

1.2 AN ADAPTATION OF E.T.A. HOFFMAN'S FANTASY STORY

The Nutcracker ballet was an adaptation of an 1816 story by German author Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffman, widely known as E.T.A. Hoffman. The original title was *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King.* This had not been the first time a composer had written music

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[3] Gerald Abraham. *The Music of Tchaikovsky*. (New York: Kennikat Press, 1946) 186

[4] Ibid, 187

[5] Roland John Wiley, "The Symphonic Element in Nutcracker." *The Musical Times* 125, no. 1702 (1984): 693

inspired by the writings of Hoffman. In 1834-40, Robert Schumann composed numerous works for solo piano that had been inspired by Hoffman. These include *Carnaval,* Op. 9, *Fantasiestücke,* Op. 12, *Kreisleriana,* Op. 16, *and Nachtstücke,* Op. 23.[6] French author Alexandre Dumas wrote a shorter adaptation of the Hoffman story in 1844, titled *Casse-Noissette,* or *The Nutcracker*. Dumas shortened the story and lightened the details for a less nightmarish affect. He left out a long flash-back story that the godfather Drosselmeyer tells the children, along with details of the broken cabinet and Marie's cut arm, which ultimately led her parents to believe her experiences were the result of fever dreams. Another difference is that in E.T.A. Hoffman's story, the little girl is named Clara rather than Marie, and the brother is named Fritz rather than Franz. The basic synopsis remains the same: Marie Stahlbaum receives a toy nutcracker from her godfather Drosselmeyer. The nutcracker comes to life, and after defeating the seven-headed mouse king in battle, takes Marie away to a magical kingdom populated by dolls. I have always found similarities between Hoffman and Tchaikovsky in the youthfulness of their spirits. Hoffman inspired the growth of imagination with fairy tales. He also incorporated a child-like darkness to his stories that was left to the reader's interpretation. Tchaikovsky provided children with opportunity and musical substance. Percy Young discusses his relationship to youth in his book *Masters of Music: Tchaikovsky*:

> Tchaikovsky, as his intimate friends knew him and as we know him through letters, was a personally tragic figure. He was, however, a man who loved rather than hated. His greatest affection was for children, and throughout his life he made countless young friends – whose birthdays he never forgot. To them he was a kindly, amusing, sometimes playful, uncle, who had not forgotten what it was to be young. The last two ballets are the works of "Uncle Peter":[7] and tokens of the hopes that he placed on the future that was represented by his young friends.

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[6] John MacAuslan, *Schumann's Music and Hoffmann's Fictions.* (University of Manchester 2013) 9

[7] Percy M. Young, *Masters of Music:Tchaikosvky.* (London: Benn, 1968) 69

While Tchaikovsky was personally not interested in the idea at first, the adaptation by Dumas reflected his interest in providing children something of quality. This has been reflected in the ballet's success.

1.3 THE SLOW DEVELOPMENT OF THE NUTCRACKER

Just as with *The Sleeping Beauty,* Tchaikovsky worked with French Ballet master Marius Petipa on *The Nutcracker.* Petipa, however, soon fell ill after beginning the choreography, and enlisted Lev Ivanov to complete it. Although *The Nutcracker* received high praise following Tchaikovsky's death, the composer was not fond of the idea at first. Fresh off the success of *Sleeping Beauty,* the same team was to produce another magnificently staged ballet based on a children's tale. Ivan Vsevolozhsky, the director of the Imperial Theatres in Russia, commissioned the ballet following the success of *Sleeping Beauty* in early 1891 alongside Tchaikovsky's lyric opera *Iolanta.* Vsevolozhsky was too diplomatic of a patron to insist that the composer accept a particular story, but apparently, the director chose *The Nutcracker* himself, and asked Tchaikovsky to write the music. The composer agreed, although Tchaikovsky's younger brother, Modeste, recalled:

> Peter Ilyich did not experience on this occasion that urge to compose which *Sleeping Beauty* and the scenario of *The Queen of Spades* awakened in him, and the reasons for this were several. For the first place, the subject of *Nutcracker* did not much please him. In the second place, Peter Ilyitch grumbled at the Directorate of the Imperial Theatres for inviting foreign singers to sing French and Italian on the Russian operatic stage.[8]

Tchaikovsky was preparing to travel to Paris and America for a conducting tour in 1891 when *The Nutcracker* was commissioned. The death of his sister in April would delay the composition's completion until 1892. It is on record that in a fit of depression, the composer

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[8] Roland John Wiley, "The Symphonic Element in Nutcracker." *The Musical Times* 125, no. 1702 (1984): 693

confided with his nephew Vladimir Davidov, that the ballet was "infinitely worse" than its predecessors.[9] The first performance was at the Mariinsky theatre in St. Petersburg on December 18th, 1892 alongside Tchaikovsky's final opera *Iolanta.* Riccardo Drigo conducted the orchestra. Despite the approval expressed by the Tsar at the dress rehearsal, the premiere had little success at first. Many criticized the story for altering Hoffman's original, and the overall structure of the ballet was deemed "lopsided". According to Roland Wiley, "The story, while quaint, offers little promise for good theatre. It has obvious structural defects: an action-filled Act I is followed by an almost static Act II. In addition, the librettist of Nutcracker lost the satisfactory merging of the fantastic and everyday worlds which E.T.A. Hoffmann had taken pains to create in his prose."[10] Though the story was not greatly admired, Tchaikovsky's score received mixed reviews. Subsequently, it was the score that saved *The Nutcracker* and laid the foundation for its subsequent popularity. [11]

The Nutcracker remains to this day a favorite holiday tradition and is one of Tchaikovsky's most well received pieces. The most popular of the music is contained in a concert suite put together by Tchaikovsky prior to the ballet's premiere, titled *The Nutcracker Suite* Op. 71a. Over his career, Tchaikovsky mastered other genres, including chamber music, concerti, operas, and symphonies. He received an honorary degree from the University of Cambridge in England for the high quality of his symphonies.[12] His melodic and rhythmic

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[9] Gerald Abraham. *The Music of Tchaikovsky*. (New York: Kennikat Press, 1946) 190

[10] Roland John Wiley, "The Symphonic Element in Nutcracker." *The Musical Times* 125, no. 1702 (1984): 693

[11] Gerald Abraham. *The Music of Tchaikovsky*. (New York: Kennikat Press, 1946) 186

[12] Walter Frisch, *Music in the Nineteenth Century*. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013) 191

material, enriched with a combination of his Russian heritage and knowledge of ballet's French origins, makes Tchaikovsky the great master of Russian Ballet.

CHAPTER 2

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY NO 5 OP. 67

2.1 THE FATEFUL FOUR NOTES AND PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS

The Fifth Symphony of Ludwig Van Beethoven is arguably the most recognizable symphonic work in all of western music. There are many myths surrounding the opening motif. The most popular of these myths concerns its apparent ability to foresee the future; his declining hearing and the inevitability of what was to come, i.e. fate knocking at the door. [13] It was the "popular" elements of Beethoven's middle period compositions like the Third and Fifth Symphonies that ultimately influenced their success. Beethoven himself preferred his Third symphony to his Fifth. Its success was influenced by the combination of supreme compositional craft applied to material of seemingly great simplicity, as well as developing great climaxes in the music. This simplicity is recognized by Matthew Guerrieri when discussing the opening motive in his book *The First Four Notes: Beethoven's Fifth and the Human Imagination;* "short enough to remember and portentous enough to be memorable, seeming to unlock the symphony's meaning but leaving its mysteries temptingly out of reach, saying *something* but admitting nothing." [14]

Beethoven does not use a pick-up measure at the beginning of the symphony, but instead uses an eighth note rest followed by the famous three eighth note G's, descending a minor third to a half-note E flat. The opening two fermatas of the section leave room for the interpretation by the conductor. Beethoven actually placed an extra half note in the second of the two

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[13] John Bell Young, *Beethoven's Symphonies: A Guided Tour.* (New York, NY: Amadeus Press 2008) 65

[14] Matthew Guerrieri,*First Four Notes: Beethoven Fifth and the Human Imagination.* (New York, NY: Vintage Books 2014) xii

fermatas; therefore, he must have insisted the second be longer than the first. The length of the fermata, the amount of space between the cut off and the following eighth notes, and the amount of space following the second fermata in measure 5 are all things that the conductor must consider before attempting to begin the symphony. I believe the fermata should be respected for what it truly is: a stopping point. Conductors often interpret the second fermata as less of a stopping point but rather as a transition, lacking the effect of a pause. The Oxford Dictionary of Music defines fermata as: "A pause. Sometimes the use is a special one – the pause mark in a concerto that indicates the point at which the cadenza begins."[15] When considering this definition and maintaining respect to the marking on the page (rather than recorded renditions), I prefer to hold the first fermata the amount of time the upper strings generally need to produce two bow strokes. I then cut off the ensemble in measure 3, allowing for just a breath in the clarinet section, and continue abruptly with the second of the two opening motives. The second fermata should be respected as well, and therefore should be completely cut off before continuing forward with the movement. "Giving the fermatas a generous amount of time tends to detach this opening from the rest of the movement, creating an imposing introduction, but perhaps at the cost of some energy that Beethoven intended from the beginning."[16] This sense of motion is most important in the opening movement of the symphony and gives plenty of supporting reasoning to not take too much time with the first five measures.

> "It's a problem that has no single solution – and it depends greatly on the larger context – particularly on the tempo relationship between this opening and the main body of the movement. This is just one of the many reasons that the music never sounds quite the same twice and exercises such a continuing fascination – and we're still only discussing

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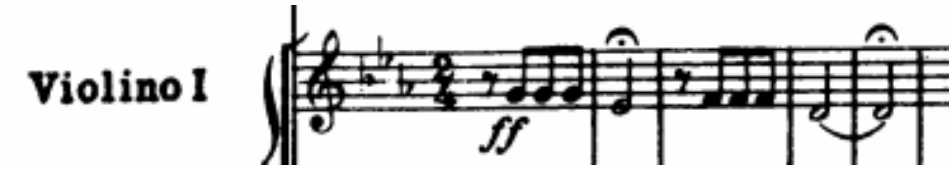
[15] Michael Kennedy, Joyce Bourne Kennedy, and Tim Rutherford-Johnson. *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013)

[16] David Hurwitz, *Beethoven's Fifth and Seventh Symphonies: A Closer Look.* (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group 2008) 12

the first few measures."[17]

I have always maintained that the opening motives can have a slight reservation in tempo compared to the measures following the second fermata, but it needs to be close to the tempo of the rest of the movement.

Figure 1. Beethoven Symphony No. 5, *Allegro con Brio* mm.1-5. [18]



2.2 ANALYSIS OF THE *ALLEGRO CON BRIO*

Formally, the first movement does not stray drastically from classical tradition, a basic sonata form with exposition, development, recapitulation and coda. The departure from classical tradition occurs through expansion. What is innovative is that the lengths of each section are all relatively equal to one another in size. The development and coda are extended and equal in length to the exposition and recapitulation. In the classical symphonies of Haydn and Mozart, the development and coda are much shorter. Beethoven had already begun to explore extending these classical forms, having written even longer development and coda sections in the opening movement of his Symphony No. 3*, "Eroica"* Op.55.

The first theme of the exposition is a layering of the motivic fragments presented at the beginning of the movement. As soon as the second fermata ends in the 5th measure, the second violins begin the over-lapping effect of motivic movement. This continues for 14 measures before reaching a climax in measure 19. Three full chords are played *tutti*, and on the third chord

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[17] David Hurwitz, *Beethoven's Fifth and Seventh Symphonies: A Closer Look.* (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group 2008) 12

[18] Ludwig Van Beethoven, *Symphonies Nos 5, 6 and 7 in Full Score* (New York, NY: Dover Publications 1989)

the first violins sustain on the dominant note of G. The opening motive is repeated once again, followed by a repetition of the first theme, this time colored by the clarinets and oboes, leading to a climax in measure 44. A six-note horn interlude in measure 59 leads to the beginning of the new second theme in E flat major. I will return to discussing this motive in the development section. The second theme greatly contrasts with the opening theme, marked *dolce* and with slurs. The first violins play the first four bar phrase, ascending and descending a total interval of a fifth. Beethoven uses chromaticism to ascend to a climax in measure 94, culminating in E flat major and ultimately finishing the exposition with the same over-lapping motives as in the beginning.

The development begins with yet another statement of the opening motif, this time by the horns and clarinets. The strings respond with a descending minor second, giving the statement more question and uncertainty. The second violins get the motion rolling again in the same fashion as the opening. This veers off into a gentle dialogue with the woodwinds that modulates through D major to G Major and chromatically upward to a climax in measure 168. Next is one of Beethoven's greatest passages. He deconstructs the six-tone horn phrase that sends the exposition's second theme into motion, while deconstructing the opening "fate" motive into smaller and smaller sizes. Eventually, the strings and woodwinds pass back and forth single half notes.

The recapitulation begins in the tonic in measure 248. This time, however, the entire orchestra plays the opening motif unison and *fortissimo*. It should be clear at this point why Beethoven chose to only use the clarinet with the strings at the beginning of the movement: he was saving the full orchestration for this moment and the coda. What happens next is just another example of the unexpected twists to which Beethoven exposes the listener. In measure

268, the phrase comes to an end just as it had in measure 21, but this time, the oboe holds the G extending it into a brief cadenza, that weeps slowly and quietly in diminuendo as it articulates a subtle but extended ornament.[19] It was revolutionary to have an oboe cadenza in the middle of a full symphonic movement. Just as the motion seems to be completely static, it begins once more in the first violins, over-lapping down through the string section. The second theme is introduced with the six-note passage in measure 303, this time in the bassoons. The Coda begins at measure 374 with an exhilarating *fortissimo* statement of the combined opening motive overlapping itself. This overlapping escalates to repeated eighth notes until a grand pause in the orchestra is answered by an inverse of the "fate" motif in the clarinets, bassoons, and horns. Almost as soon as the calm begins, the orchestra drives forward now combining the six-note introductory passage of the second theme in the violas and cellos with an ascending scale passage creating embellishment at the peak. The climax begins to descend before landing at measure 439, a final iteration of the deconstructed theme before gaining motion again and reaching the final statement of the opening motif, orchestrated for the entire ensemble. And just as he had done the five times before (seven if you consider the repeat of the exposition), Beethoven lets the strings begin the flow again, stacking the motives one by one. Suddenly, after eight measures the orchestra storms in *fortissimo* with three more monophonic statements of the opening motif, thrusting forward to three final concluding chords.

2.3 PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUTH ENSEMBLES

When approaching repertoire for younger ensembles it is common to direct attention away from larger works and focus more toward arrangements more suitable for younger players' ability level. But this is not always necessary, with the ability to double the wind section and

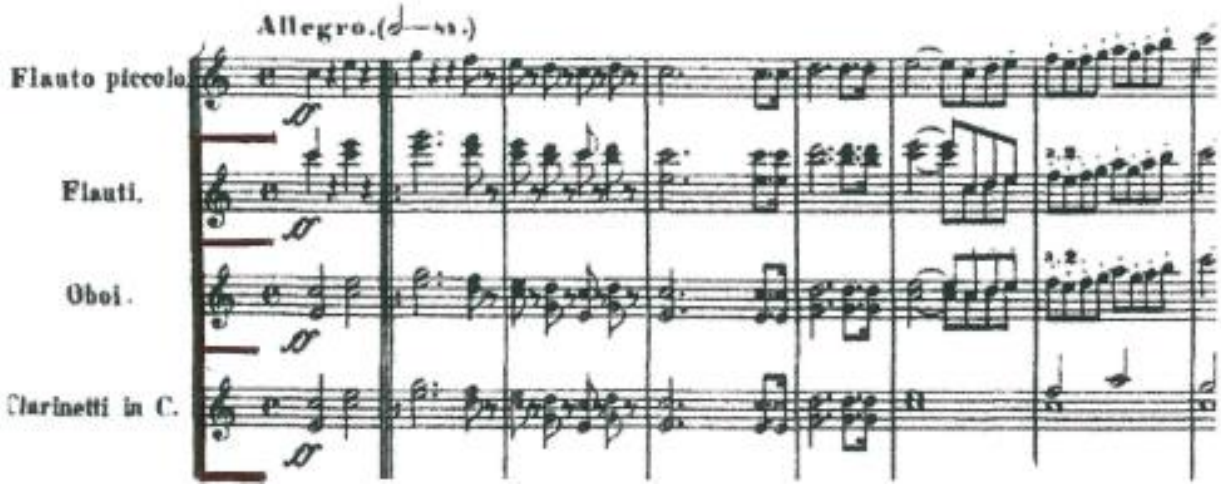
[19] John Bell Young, *Beethoven's Symphonies: A Guided Tour.* (New York, NY: Amadeus Press 2008) 67

provide the young players a chance to experience such standard symphonic repertoire at a young age, provided that there are more experiences players in the ensemble. I conducted Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 with a large ensemble comprised of a huge range of musical abilities. To obtain a satisfactory result in performance, I needed to edit the parts in such a way as to allow less experienced players the opportunity to play some of this great music. Beethoven's compositional style adheres to this task quite easily. When preparing the parts for the Southern Illinois Symphony's April 2nd concert featuring Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, I went through the process of selecting sections within the symphony that would be doubled, primarily *fortissimo* sections and larger *tutti* sections. All parts are doubled in the flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and horn sections for the entire symphony, with the addition of a less experienced fifth and sixth clarinet, second violins and celli for the fourth movement *tutti* sections only. By giving these less experienced players the opportunity to play in the fourth movement only, they can focus practice time to learning the more difficult passages in the movement without having to worry about the first three. Our ensemble was able to rehearse ten times prior to the performance. This included eight one-hour rehearsals on the Fifth Symphony, and two dress rehearsals, with the addition of a sectional night divided into one hour for strings, and one hour for winds and brass.

Every passage in Beethoven's Symphony no. 5 deserves respect due to both technical difficulties and ensemble cohesiveness. I am going to identify several from the fourth movement that should be focused on when including less experienced musicians. The first of these passages occurs at the beginning of the movement. At this point the entire symphony is playing in rhythmic unison, so it is important that not only the articulations match between the strings and winds, but also that the dotted half note in measure 365 is sustained the same duration

throughout the ensemble. The winds and brass should use the third beat as a short breath point, preparing to attack the eighth notes on the fourth beat and following measure. (Figure 2)

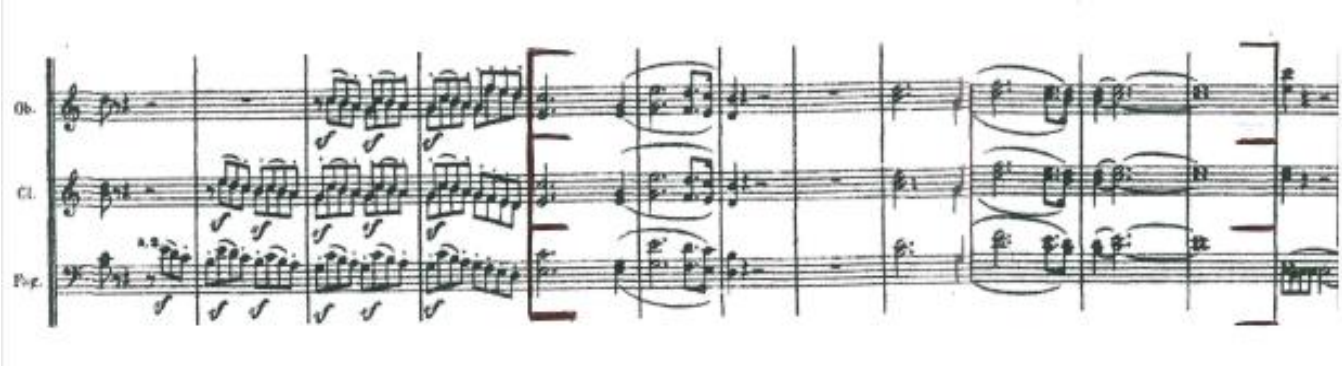
Figure 2. Beethoven Symphony No. 5, *Allegro* M. 374-378[20]



This attention to detail will be most important, as now the balance of the orchestra has been changed to a larger wind and brass section and the heaviness of a large ensemble can diminish the energy of this fourth movement. At measure 399 the oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns play the second theme in C major, providing an excellent opportunity for doubling. (Figure 3) Following the eighth note run in measure 398, brackets can be placed from measures 399 to 406. The assistant players can stop at measure 407 so that the upper string melody and lower string/bassoon counterpoint are not overpowered. It is important through this section to have the oboes, clarinets, bassoons and especially horns not overblow and to focus on producing a good tone. There should be more focus on sound quality than dynamic volume.

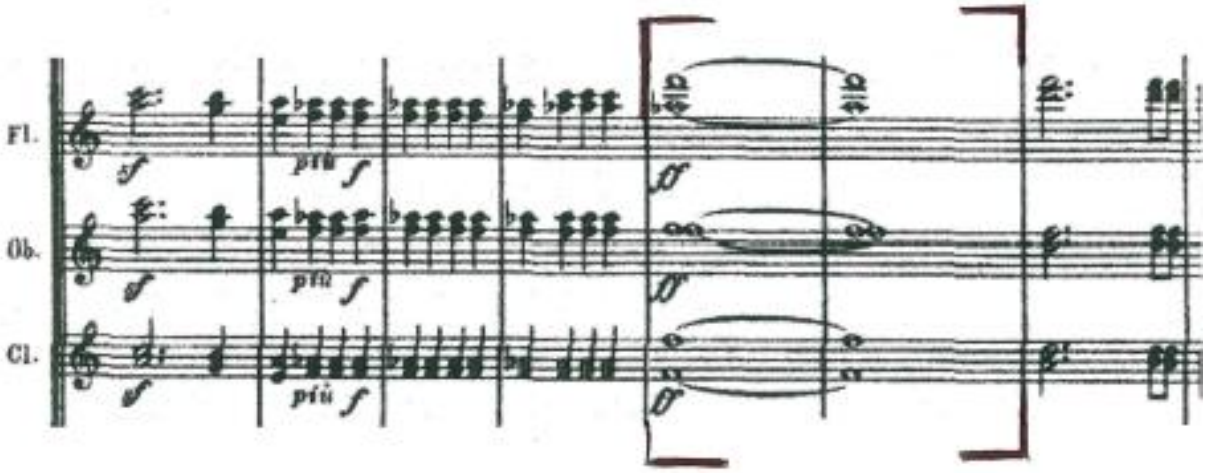
[20] Ludwig Van Beethoven, *Symphonies Nos 5, 6 and 7 in Full Score* (New York, NY: Dover Publications 1989)

Figure 3. Beethoven Symphony 5 Finale m. 399[21]



Measure 453 presents an example of a brief *tutti fortissimo* chord that can be doubled by less experienced assistant players. (Figure 4) A crescendo in the three bars prior to the *fortissimo* allows for a good breath and preparation for these measures. Emphases on attacking the note and then backing away is important, as the underlying motion in the low strings needs to be audible, and intonation is always a concern. Here is another moment where attention to sound quality is much more important to the dynamic level, especially since there are more important elements taking place at this point.

Figure 4. Beethoven Symphony 5 Finale m.450-456[22]

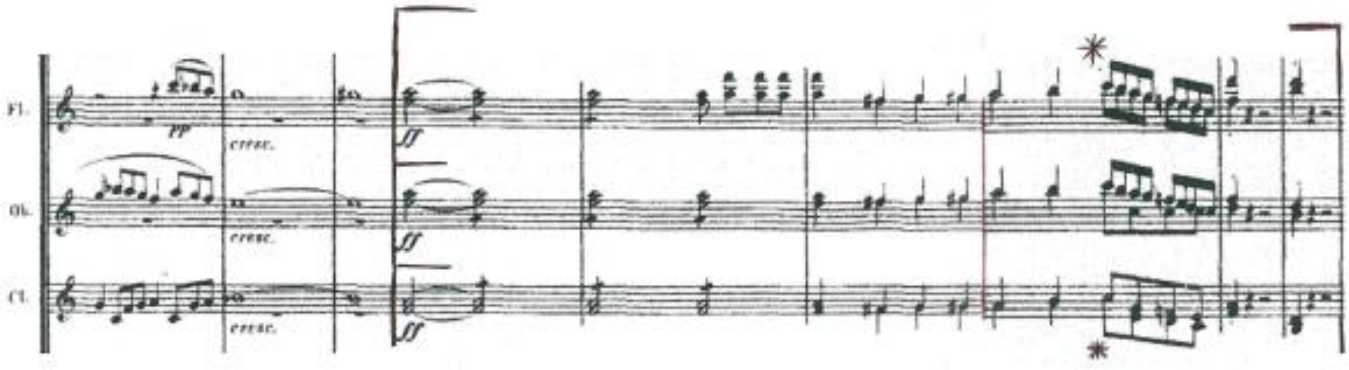


[21] Ludwig Van Beethoven, *Symphonies Nos 5, 6 and 7 in Full Score* (New York, NY: Dover Publications 1989)

[22] Ludwig Van Beethoven, *Symphonies Nos 5, 6 and 7 in Full Score* (New York, NY: Dover Publications 1989)

The fourth of these selections comes after the recapitulation, following the second theme in measure 640. This section present concerns similar to those discussed in the opening of the movement. The tied half note in measure 640 must be released on beat three so that the three eighth notes leading to the following measure are not late. This is unison between the (doubled) entire wind section (minus flutes) and the low strings. In measure 643, one option for simplifying difficult passages might be to omit the sixteenth note scale (Figure 5), they can play the first two quarter notes of 643, rest on the third beat, take a big breath on the fourth beat, and rejoin in the *tutti* chords of measure 644.

Figure 5 Beethoven Symphony No. 5, Finale m. 640-645[23]

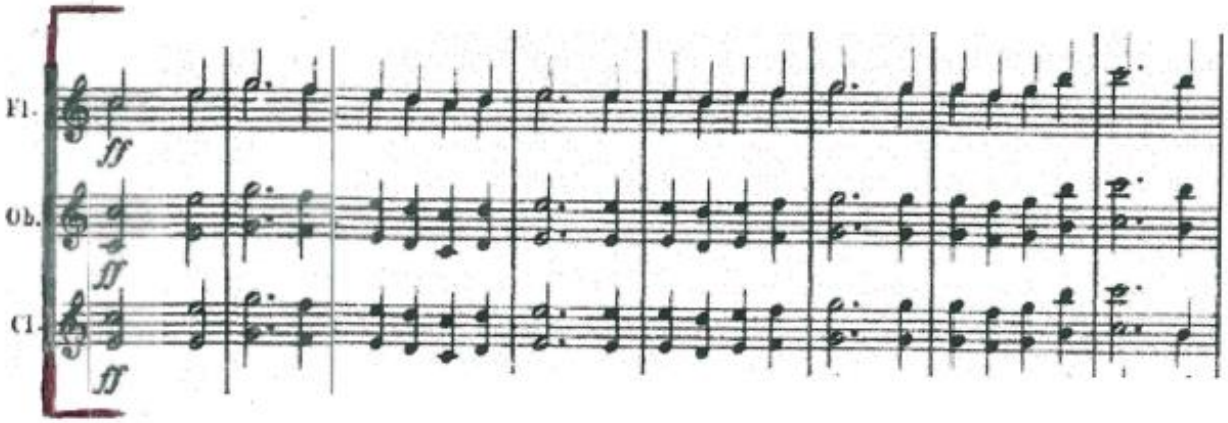


The fifth and final passage I want to discuss is possibly the most difficult. In the beginning of the *Presto* (measure 735) I double the horn and trumpet for the first 28 measures. I do not want to double the winds yet, as it will be too heavy, and with the dotted quarter notes it would not maintain the energy and briskness necessary. The full doubling of the winds begins at 763, where Beethoven restates opening theme of the Finale, now in double time (figure 6). It will take practice with the younger players starting slowly and working up to a *presto* tempo, but with the amount of rehearsing this passage through the duration of the semester, it can be done

[23] Ludwig Van Beethoven, *Symphonies Nos 5, 6 and 7 in Full Score* (New York, NY: Dover Publications 1989)

successfully and prove to be beneficial.

Figure 6 Beethoven Symphony No. 5, Finale, Presto m. 763-772[24]



[24] Ludwig Van Beethoven, *Symphonies Nos 5, 6 and 7 in Full Score* (New York, NY: Dover Publications 1989)

CHAPTER 3

FELIX MENDELSSOHN'S KONZERTSTÜCK NO. 2 IN D MINOR OP. 114

3.1 MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Jacob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn was born on February 3,1809 in Hamburg, Germany. His parents were Abraham and Leah Mendelssohn (formerly Solomon), and Felix was the second of what would be four children. His older sister, the celebrated composer Fanny Cäcilie Mendelssohn, had been born 4 years prior on November 14, 1805. Felix's younger sister Rebecka came in April 1811 while the family still resided in Hamburg. Due to its occupation by the French that same year, they left for Berlin, where the youngest child, Paul, was born in October 1813. The Mendelssohn family had a Jewish heritage, and at the time of Paul's birth still claimed to be Jewish. Leah's brother had, however, converted to Christianity and had taken the name Bartholdy. This decision was not accepted well by the family at first, leading him to be cast off by his mother. But ultimately it may well have been the advice of Abraham's brother-in-law that led him to decide that his children should be brought up in the Christian faith. In 1816 the children were all baptized under the surname Mendelssohn Bartholdy, and in 1822 both Abraham and Leah were also baptized.[25] The composer, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, wrote essays in the fields of theology, philosophy, and literature. His is religious thinking was highly original and has been well described in these words: "Religion was concentrated in eternal truths, which one cannot be commanded to believe since one must necessarily believe them from proof by reason." [26] It was apparent that for Mendelsohn, all great monotheistic religions were

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[25] Phillip Radcliffe, *Mendelssohn.* (London: Dent 1967) 4

[26] Eric Werner, *Mendelssohn: A New Image of the Composer and His Age.* (Westport: Greenwood Press 1978) 3

emanations of the eternal truth, however different their respective doctrines and rituals appear to be.[27]

Mendelssohn was a prolific composer, whose output included 5 full symphonies, 12 string symphonies, the oratorio *Elijah, Incidental Music to Midsummer Nights Dream*, 2 piano concertos, a violin concerto and a variety of chamber music. Mendelssohn's complete chamber works include 6 completed string quartets with opus numbers, a string octet, 2 piano trios, 2 string quintets, 3 early piano quartets, a piano sextet, and a number of duo sonatas. Mendelssohn also wrote 5 single-movement works for solo instruments and orchestra, known in German as Konzertstück (Concert pieces). Three of these are *Capriccio brilliant*, Op. 22 (1832), *Rondo Brillant*, Op. 29 (1834), and *Serenade and Allegro giocoso*, Op. 43 (1838), all for piano and orchestra. The final two Konzertstück are the Op. 113 in F minor and Op. 114 in D minor, both for clarinet, basset horn, and orchestra, though originally with just piano accompaniment.

3.2 CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO THE COMPOSITION

In 1829, Felix Mendelssohn met Heinrich Joseph Baermann (1784-1847). From the moment they met, both men got along wonderfully and became very close friends. Following the first encounter with his new friend, Mendelssohn wrote: "These were the most delightful days I ever spent. You know that I owe them to you, and you can imagine how grateful I am." In the same letter, another passage seems to outline the peculiar circumstances that led to the composition of the Konzertstück, Op. 113 and 114: "…and if everything turns out as I hope, then I will perhaps visit you again this fall…eat dumplings, play the A-flat major sonata – and then you will say: this is bliss."[28]

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[27] Ibid, 3

The intimacy of the relationship between the two would grow through the years as their correspondence become more casual. Baermann was unanimously regarded as the most outstanding clarinetist of his time. His relationship with Mendelssohn led to the creation of the two Konzertstück for clarinet and basset horn. Baermann's career was closely associated with the transformation of the tonguing technique of the clarinet near the beginning of the 19th century. Whereas clarinetists had previously touched the vibrating reed with the upper teeth, a new technique using a downward turned mouthpiece began to appear around 1800. With this new technique the reed was not muted with the teeth, but with the lower lip, which made it possible to strike the reed directly with the tongue, allowing much more differentiated phrasing.[29]

Baermann and his son Carl were in Berlin in 1832 for a concert tour. Mendelssohn asked the two to prepare his favorite dish at his home, sweet dumplings and cheese strudel. As a form of "payment" for the meal, the Baermanns requested a composition, more specifically a duet for clarinet and basset horn with piano or orchestral accompaniment. As described by Carl Baermann: Mendelsohn set a 9 a.m. appointment time, by which Carl showed up. He put a chefs hat on Carl's head, while putting a pen behind his own ear. He led Carl to the kitchen and returned to the room where he was going to stir and knead the tones, add salt and pepper, sweeten them and make a spicy sauce, before cooking everything over a hot fire. Everything had to be ready for the ominous hour of 5 o'clock. Carl brought the finished strudel and dumplings to the composer, who also had his duet in a covered dish. After rehearsing the duet that very evening in his music salon, and making minor technical and instrumental changes to the piece,

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[28] Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Konzertstuck Nr. 2: Fur Klarinette, Bassetthorn und Klavier*. (Wiesbaden: Brietkopf & Hartel)

[29] Ibid

the senior Baermann and his son were still more delighted with the charming piece than Mendelssohn was with the dumplings and strudel – although Mendelssohn kept saying that Carl's dumpling composition was more ingenious than his.[30] Mendelsohn completed and sent an autographed manuscript of the completed piano version for Op. 114 in January 1833. Mendelssohn never orchestrated the accompaniment. Instead that task was left to the Baermanns, setting it for pairs of flutes, oboes, bassoons, and horns, plus strings.

ANALYSIS

The form of Op. 114 is similar to that of the earlier Op. 113. It is divided into three large sections, referred to as movements. These larger movements are comprised of smaller concise phrase groupings, unified harmonically. The first and third movements are similar in style and tempo, while the middle movement is in a contrasting *legato* style. The work is labeled as being in D minor and the first movement stays true to the tonic. The second movement eventually modulates to the relative major. The third movement begins and ends in F major.

The opening four measures act as a short introduction. Ascending and descending scales foreshadow material to come. Running scales are a constant in all three movements, particularly the first and third. These scale passages land on the dominant A on beat two of measure 4 setting the stage for the first theme in D minor with the pick up to measure 6. This descending antecedent phrase featuring a combination of three eighth notes and a dotted quarter note lasts 8 measures before giving way to another scale passage for the solo clarinet and basset horn. A *tutti* section finishes the first phrase of the first movement, and a transitional development follows.

The second *Andante* movement is in 6/8 meter. It begins after the double bar in measure 96 with a chorale passage in the bassoons and horns resolving to C major. The solo clarinet,

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[30] Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Konzertstuck Nr. 2: Fur Klarinette, Bassetthorn und Klavier*. (Wiesbaden: Brietkopf & Hartel)

basset horn, and strings respond to this chorale passage. This phrase repeats twice for 8 measures before reaching a fermata leading to a cadenza-like passage between the clarinet and basset horn in F major. This duet features an arpeggiated passage in the basset horn that accompanies a legato melody in the clarinet, until the strings are reintroduced to accompany the end of the phrase in measure 117. The introduction of the strings in measure 116 acts as a prolongation of the theme, resolving to C major. Measure 118 marks the beginning of a new (consequent) "B" phrase, now moving from C major to G minor and ultimately to F major, where the antecedent "A" phrase returns in its original key. This lasts for 4 measures before Mendelssohn provides a coda comprising more cadenza–like arpeggiated motion in the basset horn and ascending arpeggios in the clarinet. The overall form of the middle movement is ABA.

Like the first two movements, the third movement, *Allegro grazioso* opens with introductory material, presented by the string section with a light *staccato* motif that resembles the dance-like style of the first movement. Starting *piano*, the ensemble crescendos to a *tutti fortissimo* in measure 153, allowing the solo clarinet solo to present a sixteenth note phrase in measure 154. From measures 154 to 203, Mendelssohn creates a dialogue between the two solo instruments. The clarinet's theme (theme A1) is brisk and flows both downward and upward. From measure 154 to 161 the clarinet plays a flowing sixteenth note motif for 8 measures, punctuated by a reoccurring neighbor. (Figure 7)

Figure 7. Solo Clarinet Mendelsohn Op. 114, m.154

This phrase repeats again with slight variation for eight more measures from 162 to 170, but in the same fashion as many phrases before, Mendelssohn prolongs the phrase for six more measures, modulating from C major to what appears to be F major. The basset horn takes a

different direction in measure 176, with a much more direct *staccato* melody (theme A2), reflecting the material presented by the strings in the introductory measures 146-15 (Figures 8 and 9)

Figure 8. Solo Clarinet Mendelssohn Op. 114 m.146

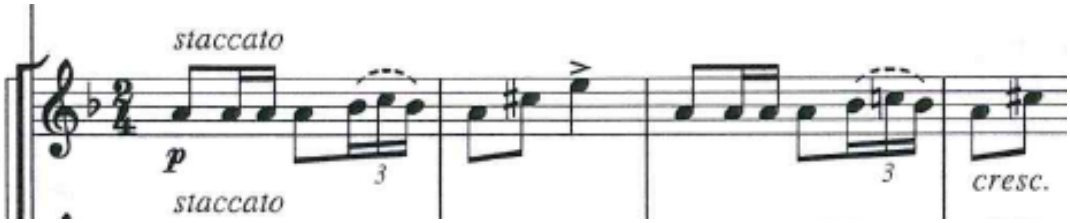

Figure 9. Solo Clarinet Mendelssohn Op. 114 m. 176

In measure 188, the clarinet reenters with its descending sixteenth note passage, now in C major, while the basset horn counters with an ascending eighth note line. Through a transitional eight-measure passage from measure 195 to 203, the clarinet and basset horn continue to trade dialogue through an echo effect, reaching F major and a sweeping unison sixteenth note passage. The first sixteen measures of this passage (theme B) between the clarinet, basset horn, and strings is unison between the solo instruments, until the final eight-measure phrase where the clarinet and basset horn pass the sixteenth note runs back and forth every three measures. Through this process Mendelssohn modulates from F major to G major, or V of V. A *tutti* section in G major occurs in measure 226 with the clarinet reprising its dialogue section from measures 154 to 203 (theme A1). The *tutti* only lasts 12 measures before Mendelssohn returns to a dialogue between the two solo instruments, ultimately landing back in F for a final unison sixteenth note run in measure 271. This material slowly loses its force through the decreased density of orchestration. From measures 295 (coda) to 306 the strings divide their rhythms from

eighth notes to tied half notes. They then cut off underneath the F major arpeggios of the solo instruments. After a short fermata, the *piu mosso* tempo marked *con fuoco* blasts forward with clarinet and basset horn playing sweeping sixteenth note passages, culminating in a climactic F major arpeggio. In the final 6 measures, the full ensembles surges forward to a final F major chord. The overall structure of the third movement is A (A1-A2) B, A (A1-A2), B, Coda.

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 4 -- CLAUDE DEBUSSY'S *PREMIÈRE RHAPSODIE* OP. 73

4.1 DEBUSSY AND IMPRESSIONISM

Achille-Claude Debussy was born at Saint-Germain-en-Laye on August 22nd, 1862 into an impoverished family. He was accepted into the Paris Conservatoire in 1872 and studied *solfege* with Albert Lavignac and piano with Antoine Marmontel.[31] He was a composer of piano, ballet, voice, chamber, and orchestral repertoire, composing recognizable works like *Clair de lune* and *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune.* His compositional style is Impressionist, the musical equivalent to the great French Impressionist painters like Monet, Degas, and Renoir. Leonard Bernstein remarked during one of his Young People's Concerts that French Impressionists (poets, painters and composers alike) generally believed that "in art, you can make a deeper effect by suggestion than you can by realistic description."[32] Impressionist painters present blurry, dream-like portrayals of an image rather than a true picture of it, emphasizing color rather than realism. Few composers of orchestral music could "paint" musical colors like Debussy, with his innovative orchestration and harmonies. Moreover, in often abandoning more traditional formal musical structures, Debussy gave this musical coloration greater emphasis. The American composer, Virgil Thomson, wrote about Debussy: "Like any Frenchman building a bridge or cooking a meal, painting a picture or laying out a garden, he felt, he imagined, he reasoned, he constructed—and in that order."[33]

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[31] Arthur B Wenk, *Claude Debussy and Twentieth-Century Music* (Boston: Twayne 1983)

[32] Bernstein, Leonard. *Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts*. Pompton Plains, N.J.: Amadeus Press, 2005.

[33] E. Robert Schmitz, *The Piano Works of Claude Debussy* (New York, NY: Da Capo Press 1950)

4.2 CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO THE COMPOSITION

Debussy faced the last stage of his life around 1909. Suffering from symptoms of cancer the composer wrote: "I shall look like a man condemned to death. I can't get out of it."[34] His opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, was being performed in Covent Garden in London, and he was to oversee the rehearsals. Just before departing for London in February 1909, Debussy was appointed a member of the supreme council of the music section of the Paris Conservatoire. Gabriel Fauré was said to have been largely responsible for this appointment, although the two composers were not close friends. Two years earlier in 1907, Debussy had been a judge at the Paris Conservatoire's wind-instrument examinations. His interest in the sonorities of woodwinds led him to pursue an interest in composing for these instruments as soloist.[35] His appointment to the council provided Debussy with a stipend, desperately needed due to his wife's elevated lifestyle and his recent cancer diagnosis. The Paris Conservatoire commissioned Debussy to compose for their annual examinations in 1910. Debussy wrote two works for the examinations, the *Première Rhapsodie* for the standard proficiency examination, where the music was given to the students to be learned and memorized one month prior to the exam, and his charming *Petite Pièce* for the sight-reading examination. Both pieces were originally composed for clarinet with simple piano accompaniment. Debussy completed the full orchestration for the *Première Rhapsodie* in 1911 after the successful premiere performance by Prospère Mimart. Debussy dedicated the work to Mimart, who was the professor of clarinet at the Conservatoire from 1904-1918. Debussy was very proud of the work and would see it performed several times before his death in 1918.

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[34] Percy M Young, *Debussy* (New York: Cornerstone Library 1969) 61-62

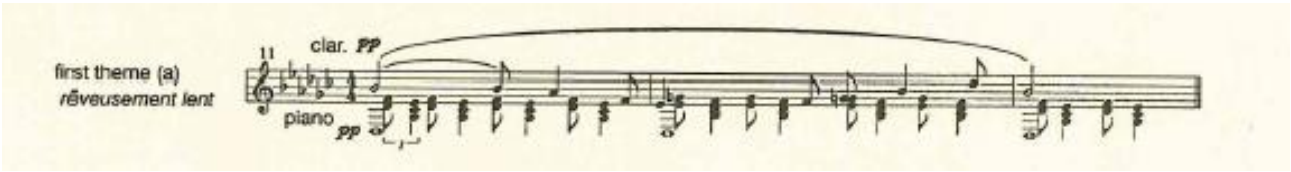
[35] Oscar Thompson, *Debussy, Man and Artist* (New York: Dover Publications 1969) 163

4.3 ANALYSIS

Debussy's *Première Rhapsodie* strikes a balance between his unique compositional style and the technical requirements expected in the Paris Conservatoire's *Concours* pieces. These *Councours*, or contests, are held every year for students at the Conservatoire. Most *Councours* repertoire employs a bipartite plan, in which a second fast paced virtuosic section follows a slow lyrical first section, Debussy's *Première Rhapsodie* alternates lyrical passages with those demanding velocity in a rondo-like scheme rotating among four distinct thematic entities.[36]

The placement of these themes is distinctive and well organized. However, it is unclear whether the overall form is binary or ternary. The introduction, from measures 1 to 8, is not interrupted by melodic material until measure 11. The harmony changes to D flat (V of G flat) in measure 9, however, so I mark this as the beginning of the next section. Theme "a" is introduced in measure 11.

Figure 10 Debussy *Première Rhapsodie* First Theme[37]



The first two themes are legato, contemplative, and melancholy. Theme "a" is marked *rêveusement lent* (very slow) Toward the end of theme "a", the clarinet solo begins to foreshadow theme "b" in measure 18, before slowing into a *poco mosso* section. Theme "b" begins in measure 21. (Figure 11)

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[36] Simon Trezise, *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007) 219

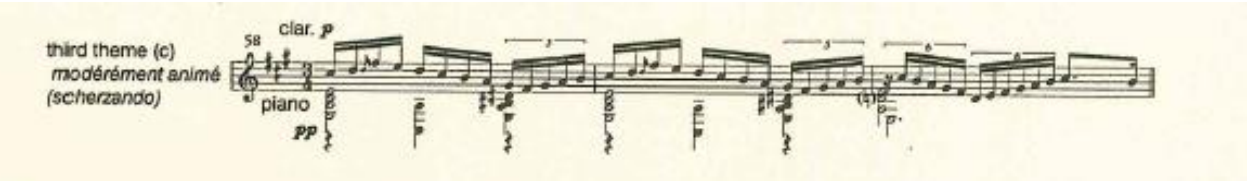
[37] Ibid, 220

Figure 11 Debussy *Première Rhapsodie* Second Theme b[38]

This melody, spanning an octave divided by a descending and ascending third and sixth, is divided by brief passages of virtuosic scale and contrasted articulation. The "a" theme is repeated for a brief 4 bars in measures 40 and 45-57 as a transitional passage. Thus, the overall form of the first large A section of the piece is Intro-a-b-a-transition.

The larger B section of the piece begins in measure 58 with a new A-major theme "c", marked *modérément animé* (moderately animated). This fast moving sixteenth note passage is accompanied by transparent orchestration, leaving the clarinet solo very exposed. (Figure 12)

Figure 12 Debussy *Première Rhapsodie* Third theme c[39]



The "c" theme is interrupted by transitional material in measures 74-75 marked *un peu retenu* (a bit held back) before giving way to a return of the "b" theme from the first A section. This short restatement lasts from measures 76 to 83 before returning to the "c" material for several measures. Following a short transitional passage from measure 92 to 95, theme "d", marked *scherzando,* appears. (Figure 13)

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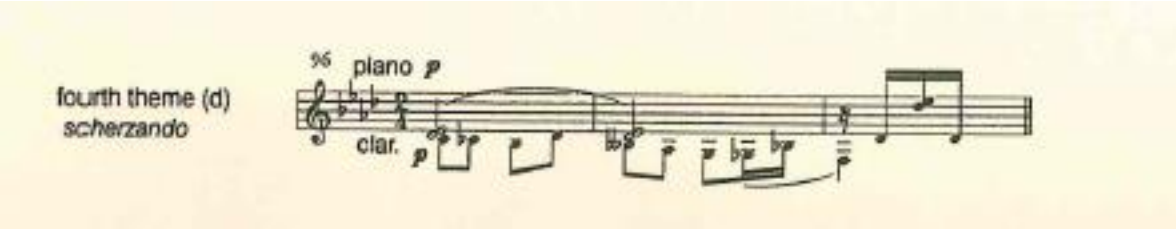
[38] Simon Trezise, *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007) 220

[39] Ibid, 220

Figure 13 Debussy *Première Rhapsodie* Fourth theme d[40]



Theme "d" lasts from measures 96 to 131, but also refers to previous thematic materials Namely the "b" theme in measure 124, for 4 measures, and again in measure 132. Debussy uses this "b" passage as another means of transition, as he modulates back to D-flat (V/Gb) to reintroduce the "a" theme in measure 152. Now appearing to diminish in length, the phrases continue to intertwine. The "b" theme returns in measure 158 one final time, now marked *Animé et augmentez peu à peu.* (animated and increasing little by little). Through this animation, the tempo increases and modulates from the dominant D-flat to the new tonic of G-flat. Transitional material from measures 163 to 168 gives the clarinet one last opportunity to show its virtuosity, before the "d" theme returns in measure 169 to close out the piece. This final return of the "d" material constitutes a coda, as now the tempo increases, and ends in the tonic of G flat.

The larger question still stands: is the overall form binary or ternary? I believe in an attempt to satisfy the guidelines set forth by the Conservatoire, Debussy composed a work that could be formally analyzed in a bipartite plan. (Table 1) But, when focusing more directly on the transition from what would be the larger B section back to the larger A section, there are discrepancies amongst scholars. According to Richard S. Park's chapter in *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, the returning A section begins in measure 132 with the return of the "b" theme material. (Table 2). I believe this is incorrect, and that the return of the A section is in measure 152, not only because of the return of the "a" theme material, but also because it is in

[40] Simon Trezise, *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007) 220

the same key as the first statement marked *rêveusement lent*. I interpret the "d" section from measures 96-131 and the "b" section from measures 132-151 as transitional material back to the A section. In this way, the work can be classified as a rounded binary form. (Table 3) Since the A section returns in its original tonic, my final conclusion that this work is in an overall form of rounded binary, ABA. However the form is conceived though, it is Debussy's innovative harmonies and orchestral colors that make this music important.

Table 1. Debussy *Première Rhapsodie* Bipartite form[41]

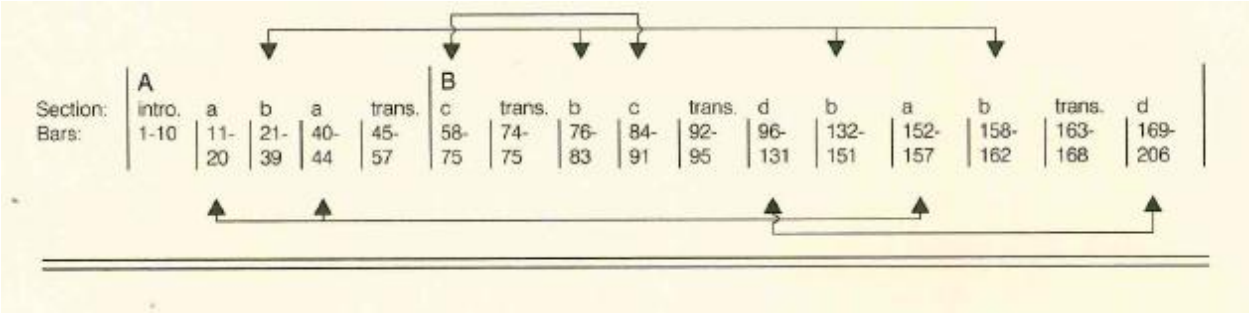
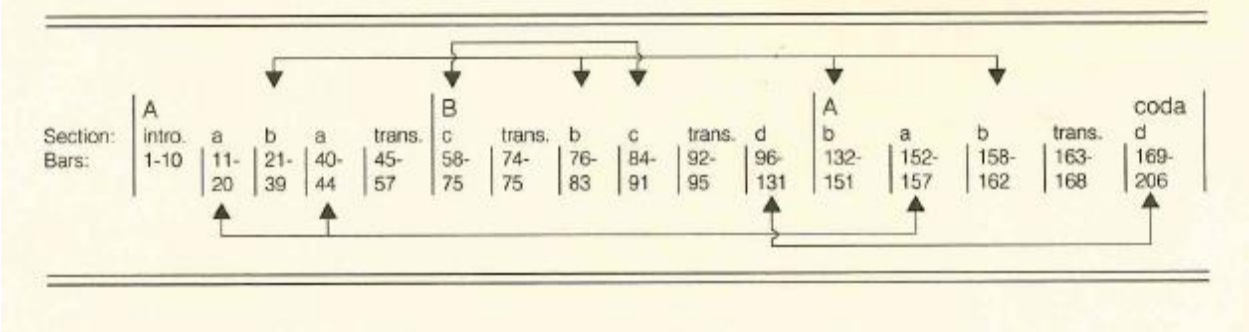


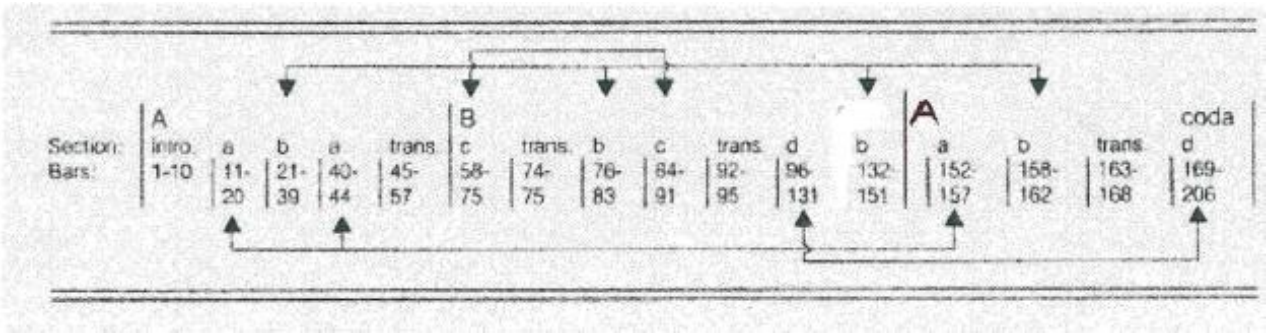
Table 2. Debussy *Première Rhapsodie* Tripartite form (according to Park)[42]



[41] Simon Trezise, *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007) 221

[42] Ibid, 221

Table 3. Debussy *Première Rhapsodie* Tripartite form. Edited version of Table 2. Rounded binary.[43]



Debussy's *Première Rhapsodie* continues to be an important piece in the solo clarinet repertoire for its challenges to endurance, breath control, and the subtleties of tone and intonation. Through colorful harmonic Impressionism Debussy's non-conformist style is on full display in the *Première Rhapsodie*, while also satisfying the Paris Conservatoire's *Councours* requirements.

[43] Simon Trezise, *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007) 221

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